
Optimization of Educational Da'wah on Social Media as a Communication Strategy for Islamic Religious Education for Gen Z in High Schools in Blitar City

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Abstract

The digital revolution has influenced the pattern of Islamic da'wah communication, especially among Generation Z, who grew up in a social media ecosystem. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have now become the main sources of religious information for high school students. This study aims to analyze effective educational da'wah communication strategies on social media to support Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation at three high schools in Blitar City: SMA 1, SMA 2, and SMA 3. The data analysis technique in this research follows the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by sorting and simplifying the results of observations, interviews, and documentation deemed relevant to the research focus. Next, data presentation was arranged systematically in a narrative form to make it easier for researchers to fully understand the problem's context. The final stage involved inductive conclusion-drawing based on findings in the field to answer the research problem statements. The study's results show that social media can enhance students' understanding, participation, and interest in PAI material when conveyed through visual, communicative, and contextual content. PAI teachers play a crucial role as facilitators in designing digital da'wah that is not only aesthetically appealing but also strengthens students' Islamic character. This study recommends an integration of the PAI curriculum that is adaptive to digital technology as well as digital competency training for teachers as efforts to develop relevant and impactful da'wah strategies.

Keywords

Educational Da'wah; Social Media; Islamic Education; Digital Communication; Gen Z

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today's digital-age adolescents tend to constantly innovate and imagine according to the characteristics of their era, in which they grow up in fast-paced, interactive, and technology-based environments. They are used to expressing themselves through various digital platforms, creating creative content, and responding to social and religious issues in a more flexible and visual manner. These traits make them more adaptive to change, but also vulnerable to outside influences if not equipped with strong value education. Therefore, educational approaches, especially regarding da'wah and religious values, must adjust to their communication patterns and learning preferences so that Islamic messages can be delivered effectively and have an impact on shaping their character and behavior amid the currents of modernity.

The digital revolution has indirectly shifted Islamic da'wah communication in dramatic ways, especially among Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, who are very active in using social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube as their main sources of religious information, no longer from mosques or books. According to Ade Nawawi, social media enables da'wah approaches to become more interactive, visual, and accessible "using visual, audio, and text formats that are more appealing to young audiences" (Jurnal). However, this research also notes serious challenges in the form of potential distortion of teachings and the lack of digital literacy among teenagers, so digital da'wah needs to be designed with systematic, educational, and moderation-based strategies.(Nawawi, 2025)

This phenomenon presents both an opportunity and a challenge for educators and preachers to develop effective and relevant strategies for religious communication. For example, Noratur Rahmah found that Islamic educational content that is "presented in an engaging, interactive manner with attractive visuals and simple language" can increase Generation Z's interest in and understanding of religious values.(Rahmah et al., 2025) Approaches such as storytelling, humor, and current trends—as studied in Ika's TikTok case study—have also proven successful in capturing the attention of and building emotional closeness with young audiences through active interactions such as comments and live streaming. These strategies pave the way for shaping religious communication that is not only relevant but also has a positive impact in the context of formal Islamic religious education.

In the formal education environment, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and spiritual values. Unfortunately, the approach used so far has been dominated by conventional methods that are theoretical and less interactive, so it has not been fully able to meet the needs and learning styles of the digital generation, who are more visual and quick to absorb information through technology-based media.

In line with Rohman's view that technology media unconsciously influences the character of students. (M. Rohman, Naja, Ihsani, & Saputra, 2023) it can be concluded that the younger generation is easily influenced by new things. They tend to follow trends and styles that develop through the media; hence, their behaviors become unconsciously ingrained as part of their culture. The role of teachers, particularly religious teachers, is essential in addressing the dilemmas faced by the younger generation in their thirst for religious knowledge. Religious teachers should ideally have tips and tricks to provide meaningful experiences for students.

Therefore, innovation is needed to deliver PAI material in a manner that is more communicative and relevant to students' daily lives. One effective strategy is to integrate social media as an educational tool for religious propagation, which can reach students more broadly and appealingly. Through platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, Islamic values can be conveyed in creative and easily understandable ways while fostering an emotional connection between educators and students in the digital era.

The use of social media as an educational channel for religious propagation in PAI learning not only enables a more dynamic delivery of material but also facilitates active student participation. They can be invited to create religious content, such as short preaching videos, quotes from verses or hadiths, and Islamic reflections in attractive visual formats. This activity encourages students not only to receive information passively but also to internalize and re-express Islamic values using language and styles that suit their generation.

According to Hidayat, the use of social media in the context of religious education has been shown to enhance students' understanding and interest in Islamic material because the approach is more contextual and closely related to their daily reality. Thus, integrating social media into PAI learning is not just a technical strategy but also a pedagogical approach that aligns with contemporary characteristics. If teachers can position themselves as facilitators and mentors within students' digital worlds, then social media is not merely a tool but an effective bridge in building meaningful and empowering religious education. (Z. E. D. Rohman, Khamidi, Karwanto, Amalia, & Widiyanah, 2024)

Based on this, the objective of this study is to identify and analyze effective strategies for educational religious communication on social media to support PAI learning for senior high school students. This study also aims to provide practical recommendations for PAI teachers and educational institutions so that they can become more adaptive to the dynamics of Generation Z.

2. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the phenomenon of utilizing

social media as an educational preaching platform in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This approach was chosen because it can capture complex and dynamic social realities, especially in the context of digital interactions between teachers and students. The research location focuses on three high schools in Blitar City—SMA 1, SMA 2, and SMA 3—that have actively integrated social media into the religious-learning process.

Data were collected using three main techniques: observation of educational preaching content produced and shared via platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels; in-depth interviews with PAI teachers and students to understand their perceptions, experiences, and challenges; and documentation of various forms of digital interaction related to the delivery of Islamic values. Triangulation was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the data acquired for this study.

According to Sugiyono, a descriptive qualitative approach is suitable for studying behavior, perception, motivation, and social interaction within a particular environment, especially those related to media and technology usage. (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018) Similarly, Creswell emphasizes that this method is highly effective in revealing the subjective meanings experienced by individuals in their social contexts. (Creswell & Poth, 2016) Based on these expert opinions, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the role of social media in supporting the transformation of PAI learning in the digital age.

The main instruments in this study included interview guidelines and observation sheets, which were systematically designed based on the indicators of educational communication and values in Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI). The interview guidelines were used to gather in-depth information from teachers and students regarding their experiences and views on the use of social media as an educational preaching medium. Meanwhile, the observation sheets focused on documenting digital activities that reflected the transmission of Islamic values through platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels.

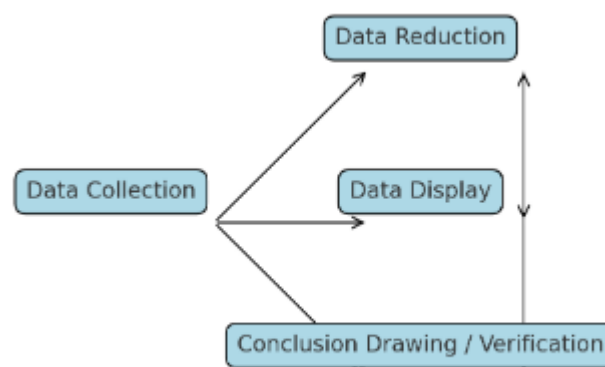


Figure. 1.1 Miles and Huberman's Model.(Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024)

In analyzing the data, this study follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was carried out by filtering and organizing important information from the interview and observation results. The reduced data were presented in narrative form and thematic tables to facilitate interpretation. The final process is drawing conclusions, which is conducted gradually through in-depth reflection on the findings obtained to answer the research focus in a valid and comprehensive manner.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The characteristics of Generation Z in consuming digital da'wah show a strong tendency toward content that is concise, visual, and easy to understand. They are more interested in fast, direct communication that touches on emotional aspects and their daily experiences. Based on interviews with students from three high schools in Blitar City, it was found that they prefer short da'wah videos delivered in a casual style, using slang that is familiar to them, and equipped with animations, illustrations, or visual effects that catch their attention.

This indicates a shift in the pattern of da'wah communication, which was originally based on long and formal lectures and now needs to adapt to the digital consumption style of the younger generation. Short videos on platforms such as TikTok or Instagram Reels are considered more effective because they can quickly convey Islamic messages without being tedious. In fact, several students admitted that they found it easier to remember religious values after watching content that was funny, inspiring, or touching compared to listening to conventional lectures delivered in a one-way format.

This opinion aligns with the findings of Ulfah, who stated that Generation Z are digital natives accustomed to receiving information quickly and interactively; therefore, learning and da'wah must adapt to their characteristics. (Ulfah, 2020) Additionally, according to Nasrullah, digital media has tremendous potential for transforming religious communication, as it can reach a wider audience and present messages in various engaging formats, such as short videos, memes, and infographics. (Nasrullah, 2022)

Therefore, understanding the characteristics of Generation Z's consumption of digital da'wah is critical for developing relevant and effective religious communication strategies. Da'wah that touches on visual, emotional, and contextual aspects will not only be more easily accepted, but will also build a closer connection between religious messages and real life. Thus, integrating digital da'wah according to Generation Z's preferences is urgently needed in today's religious education world.

Educational da'wah strategies on social media require innovative approaches that fit the digital communication style of today's generation, especially Generation Z. Effective da'wah content generally has several main features, such as containing clear moral messages or Islamic values, being presented narratively or through storytelling, using engaging visuals and audio, and being relevant to the problems faced by youth. This approach not only makes religious messages more easily accepted but also strengthens students' memory and emotional involvement in the values being conveyed.

Teachers of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) play a strategic role in packaging da'wah material into educational and enjoyable content through social media. For example, they can create interactive quizzes about morals and Islamic law (fiqh) in Instagram Stories or hold prayer memorization challenges on TikTok that invite students to actively participate. This strategy not only strengthens religious understanding but also creates a friendlier and more relaxed dialog between teachers and students. Teacher creativity is key to connecting learning material with the digital world, which is part of students' daily lives.

According to Nasution, da'wah delivered via social media is effective if it is educational, communicative, and contextual. This means that Islamic messages must be adjusted to the character and needs of the audience without diminishing the teachings' substance. Meanwhile, Nasution adds that religious narratives packaged visually and tailored to social media algorithms are more likely to gain attention and increase the reach of da'wah. (Simatupang, Nasution, & Azhar, 2025)

Accordingly, integrating da'wah and social media requires PAI teachers to be not only educators but also content creators who understand the tastes and digital tendencies of their students. This approach is in line with educational principles that emphasize material contextualization to create greater meaning. When teachers can present da'wah content that is informative, inspiring, and enjoyable, social media becomes not only a space for entertainment but also an effective means of reinforcing Islamic values in the digital era.

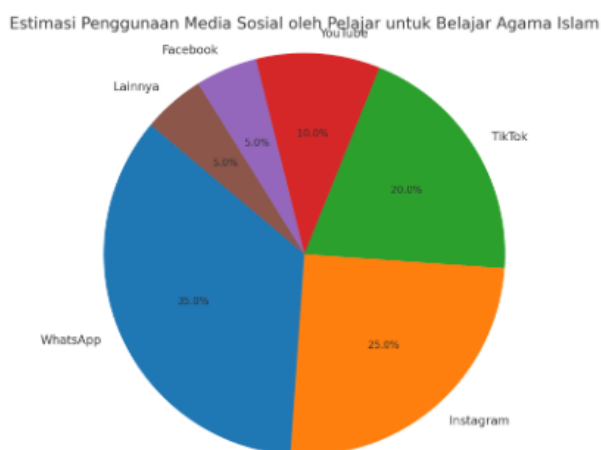


Figure 1.2 Data on social media users in Blitar City at the Senior High School Level (Results of observation and interviews at 3 high schools in Blitar City)

Based on observations, WhatsApp (35 %) was found to be the social media platform most widely used by students for learning and communicating with teachers is WhatsApp (35%), followed by Instagram (25%), TikTok (20%), YouTube (10%), Facebook (5%), and others (5 %). These data show that platforms based on instant communication and visual content are the top choice for students in accessing information, including Islamic Religious Education material. This is an important indicator that the learning process, including educational da'wah, must adapt to the media preferences of students in their daily lives.

Thus, PAI teachers must keep pace with students' digital culture by improving their social media literacy and skills in delivering material through these popular platforms. Teachers serve as material providers and da'wah content creators who can package Islamic values in a way that is attractive, concise, and relevant to students' lives. This strategy is vital to ensure that religious education does not fall behind in the digitalization wave but can be present and exert a positive influence in the digital space, which is a fundamental part of young people's lives.

The integration of educational da'wah into Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) teaching through social media has become an effective approach to bridging lesson material with the digital lives of students. In this digital era, students tend to respond better to material packaged in visual and interactive formats, such as short videos, infographics, or online quizzes. Da'wah content delivered through social media not only communicates religious messages but also shapes a deeper understanding and moral awareness because it is conveyed in a language and style of communication that resonates with their world.

In practice, social media encourages teachers to be more creative in delivering Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material to their students. Through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, teachers can present content that is not only informative but also inspirational and communicative. For example, teachers can create prayer memorization challenges, Q&A sessions about exemplary morals, or motivational Islamic videos. Students are also motivated to contribute by creating constructive Islamic content, which, in turn, strengthens their understanding of Islamic teachings in an applied, not just theoretical, manner.

The impact of this integration of educational dakwah is evident in the increased participation of students in learning. They are more actively involved in discussions, ask questions, and dare to express their opinions regarding Islamic values relevant to current social issues. These activities create a dialogical and participatory learning environment in line with the principles of andragogy and contextual learning. When students feel that religious material is directly related to their daily lives, the process of internalizing values becomes stronger and more meaningful. (Nasution, 2023)

According to Fathin, social media can serve as a tool for transformation in religious education if used with an educational approach that touches upon the psychological aspects of learners. She emphasizes the importance of contextualizing PAI material so that students not only understand Islamic teachings but also practice them in their social lives. By utilizing social media as a medium for educational dakwah, teachers play the role of facilitators of Islamic values within the digital world of their students. (Fathin & Utami, 2025)

Furthermore, Safitri states that social media is not only a medium for entertainment but also has the potential to be a space for moral and spiritual education, especially for the younger generation. In the context of PAI, digital media serves as an alternative learning space capable of building new habits, such as sharing positive content, following dakwah accounts, and discussing current Islamic issues. (Safitri & Suhaidi, 2025) This means that learning no longer only takes place in the classroom but also extends into the virtual spaces students are familiar with in their daily lives.

This integration also strengthens character education based on Islamic principles. When students are frequently exposed to dakwah content that emphasizes values such as honesty, compassion, responsibility, and tolerance, these values gradually become ingrained in their behavior. Social media allows these values to be delivered in a more personal and relevant way, such as through inspirational stories, visually appealing quotes from verses and hadith, or vlogs by relatable young Muslim influencers like the author.

Conversely, teachers must also equip themselves with digital literacy and content design skills for dakwah, ensuring that the messages conveyed remain authentic, aligned with Islamic teachings, and consistent with pedagogical principles. Challenges such as misinformation, the spread of hoaxes, and negative content must be addressed by strengthening control and curation of content presented to students. Therefore, collaboration among teachers, schools, and parents is crucial to ensure that educational dakwah on social media aligns with the objectives of PAI learning.

Considering all these aspects, it can be concluded that integrating educational dakwah into PAI learning through social media is a strategic step in responding to changing times and the learning needs of students. When religious education is developed in line with advancements in technology and digital communication, Islamic values will not be marginalized but will instead become more alive and relevant in the lives of the younger generation. This approach not only makes PAI learning more engaging but also directly impacts the formation of a strong Islamic character amid the challenges of modernity.

4. CONCLUSION

Optimizing educational dakwah on social media is a highly effective communication strategy for supporting Islamic Religious Education (PAI), especially for Generation Z, who live in a digital ecosystem. Communicative, visual, and contextual content has proven to be more easily received and understood by students, as it matches their fast, interactive, and visually based learning styles. Through social media, Islamic values can be conveyed more creatively and in ways that are closely linked to everyday realities, thus encouraging active student engagement in understanding and internalizing religious teachings and values.

Based on the research findings, this strategy has a positive impact on improving students' understanding and interest in PAI material. Therefore, this study recommends the development of a more adaptive PAI curriculum that keeps pace with developments in digital media so that the learning process remains relevant and contextual. Additionally, it is necessary to provide specialized training for PAI teachers in producing and managing educational dakwah content that is engaging, accurate, and meaningful, thereby effectively integrating Islamic values into the digital world that is familiar to students.

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