

TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH IN THE DIGITAL ERA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE RELIGIOUS LITERACY OF MUSLIM MILLENNIALS

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Article Info

Article history:

Submission June 4, 2026

Revised June 22, 2026

Accepted June 22, 2026

Published June 23, 2026

Keywords:

Digital Da'wah;

Religious Literacy;

Muslim Millennials;

Digital Transformation;

Religious Authority

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed Islamic da'wah, particularly in the ways religious messages are created, distributed, and consumed. This article examines the transformation of Islamic da'wah in the digital era and its influence on the religious literacy of Muslim millennials, a generation closely connected to digital media. Using a systematic review of empirical and theoretical studies published between 2021 and 2025, the research analyzes how platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and other social media channels have reshaped traditional models of Islamic preaching, religious authority, and communal learning.

The findings reveal that digital da'wah has expanded access to Islamic knowledge and increased millennials' engagement with religious content, contributing positively to religious awareness and worship practices. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including the spread of superficial interpretations, ideological fragmentation, and exposure to radical or decontextualized teachings. The abundance of competing online religious narratives may also create confusion among users in understanding authentic Islamic teachings. The article concludes by proposing the importance of developing critical, moderate, and context-based digital religious literacy to ensure that digital da'wah contributes positively to the intellectual and spiritual development of Muslim millennials.

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Citation: Muwahid Muhammadi, A., Zulfiqri, M., & Aunurrochim, M. (2026). *Transformation of Islamic da'wah in the digital era and its influence on the religious literacy of Muslim millennials*. KARIMIYAH: Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society 6(1), 1-14.



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A. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of religion and digital technology constitutes one of the most compelling and consequential developments of the twenty-first century. For Islam, the world's second-largest religion with approximately 1.8 billion adherents spread across every inhabited continent, the digitalization of religious communication has precipitated a seismic shift in the way that Islamic values, practices, and teachings are transmitted across generations. At the heart of this transformation lies *da'wah* a Quranic concept referring to the act of calling humanity toward the divine path, encompassing not only formal preaching but also the broader practice of inviting others to understand, appreciate, and embrace Islamic teachings through ethical conduct, dialogue, and compassionate engagement.

Historically, *da'wah* was conducted through face-to-face interaction, mosque-based lectures, print publications, and later through radio and television broadcasts. Each medium introduced new possibilities while also imposing its own limitations on the form, reach, and depth of religious communication. The advent of the internet, and more recently the explosive growth of mobile social media platforms, has introduced a qualitatively new paradigm one that is characterized by immediacy, interactivity, user-generated content, algorithmic curation, and an unprecedented collapse of the boundaries between religious expert and lay audience.

This transformation carries especially profound implications for Muslim millennials a generation broadly defined as those born between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s who represent the first cohort of Muslims to have navigated the full arc of their religious development within a thoroughly digitized information environment. For this generation, religious knowledge is not exclusively or even primarily acquired through traditional institutional channels such as the mosque, the madrasa, or the family. Instead, it is assembled incrementally and often unsystematically through scrolling social media feeds, watching YouTube sermons, engaging with Islamic podcasts, and participating in online religious communities. The implications for religious literacy understood here as the capacity to engage with religious texts, doctrines, and practices with depth, critical awareness, and contextual understanding are both promising and concerning. On one hand, digital platforms have made Islamic content more accessible than at any prior point in history, enabling millions of young Muslims to engage with the tradition even in contexts where formal religious education is limited. On the other hand, the nature of digitally mediated religious engagement raises serious questions about the quality, coherence, and scholarly grounding of the religious understanding that results from such exposure (Abdullah et al., 2024; Muthohirin, 2025).

Recognizing the significance of these developments, a growing body of scholarly literature has sought to document and analyze the transformation of *da'wah* in the digital era and its effects on Muslim communities, with particular attention to younger demographics. Studies have examined the emergence of new categories of Muslim social media influencers who command large online followings and exercise significant religious authority, the development of institutionally sponsored digital *da'wah* programs, the integration of digital literacy competencies within formal Islamic education curricula, and the complex dynamics of algorithmic mediation in the distribution of religious content. This article synthesizes these strands of inquiry with the aim of producing an integrated, analytically rigorous account of the relationship between digital *da'wah* transformation and the religious literacy of Muslim millennials. The analysis proceeds through several stages: a conceptual review of *da'wah* and religious literacy in the digital context; an examination of the principal modalities through which digital *da'wah* is conducted; an assessment of its documented effects on millennial religious literacy; and a critical engagement with the challenges and risks that digital *da'wah* poses for the coherence and depth of Islamic religious understanding. The article ultimately argues that while digital *da'wah* represents an indispensable contemporary resource for Islamic religious communication, its capacity to cultivate genuine religious literacy depends

critically on the development of frameworks for critical engagement, institutional oversight, and the integration of digital religious competencies within broader Islamic educational goals.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Da'wah in Classical and Contemporary Islamic Thought

In classical Islamic scholarship, da'wah is conceptually grounded in the Quranic injunction to call humanity to the way of God with wisdom, good counsel, and reasoned argumentation (Q. 16:125). The concept implies not merely the transmission of doctrinal content but the embodied enactment of Islamic values in social life, making da'wah inherently relational and contextually sensitive. Traditional forms of da'wah were mediated through face-to-face encounters through the preaching of the ulama in mosques and public gatherings, through the pastoral relationships between religious teachers and students, and through the social modeling of pious conduct in Muslim communities. The emergence of print media in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries began to alter these dynamics, allowing for the mass reproduction and distribution of religious texts and pamphlets. Radio and television further extended the reach of Islamic preaching across national and linguistic boundaries, giving rise to figures of mass religious influence televangelists and radio preachers who could address audiences of millions without the mediation of local scholarly institutions. Each of these technological transitions altered the social ecology of Islamic authority, enabling new actors to enter the religious public sphere while simultaneously weakening some of the traditional gatekeeping functions of classical Islamic scholarship (Ulyan, 2023; Hidayat & Nuri, 2024).

The digital era represents the most recent and arguably most radical transformation in the media ecology of Islamic religious communication. As Hidayat and Nuri (2024) observe in their literature review on digital da'wah approaches, the migration of Islamic preaching to social media platforms has not merely extended the reach of existing da'wah practices but has fundamentally altered their internal logic the relationship between the preacher and the audience, the formats through which religious messages are constructed and received, and the criteria by which religious authority is recognized and legitimized. This transformation has been shaped by three interrelated dynamics: the democratization of content production, which allows virtually anyone with a smartphone and an internet connection to produce and distribute Islamic content regardless of their scholarly credentials; the algorithmization of content distribution, which means that the visibility of religious messages is determined not by scholarly consensus or institutional endorsement but by platform-specific metrics of engagement; and the platformization of religious community, which has given rise to new forms of online Islamic sociality that both supplement and, in some cases, compete with traditional mosque-based communities (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024).

2. Religious Literacy in the Millennial Context

The concept of religious literacy, as theorized in the educational and religious studies literature, denotes a level of competence with respect to religious knowledge, practice, and discourse that goes beyond mere familiarity with surface-level beliefs or ritual observances. A religiously literate individual is one who possesses the capacity to understand religious texts and traditions in their historical and interpretive contexts, to navigate the diversity of opinions within a given religious tradition, to recognize the difference between normative religious doctrine and culturally conditioned practice, and to engage critically and empathetically with religious claims and arguments. Applied to the context of Muslim millennials, religious literacy implies not simply knowing that one is Muslim or being able to perform the basic pillars of Islamic practice, but understanding the interpretive frameworks, historical development, and scholarly debates that give those practices their

meaning and context. Several recent studies have raised concerns about the quality of religious literacy among Muslim millennials, noting that easy access to digital Islamic content does not automatically translate into deep or critically grounded religious understanding. Abdullah et al., (2024) document what they term 'religious confusion and emptiness' among Indonesian Muslim adolescents who engage heavily with online Islamic learning, noting that the fragmentation and lack of scholarly grounding of much digital religious content can produce uncertainty and incoherence rather than clarity.

At the same time, other scholars have pointed to the genuine educational potential of digital Islamic content when it is produced and consumed thoughtfully. Noprijon et al., (2024) find that the digitalization of Islamic education has demonstrably improved students' religious literacy scores in formal educational settings where digital tools are integrated within a structured pedagogical framework. Mashudi & Hilman, (2024) similarly argue that digital-based Islamic religious education has the potential to significantly enhance student engagement and spiritual understanding when it is designed to complement rather than replace traditional forms of religious instruction. These findings suggest that the relationship between digital da'wah and religious literacy is not predetermined but is shaped by the pedagogical and institutional contexts in which digital religious content is encountered. The key variable is not simply exposure to digital Islamic content but the quality and depth of that content and the educational frameworks through which it is processed and integrated into a coherent religious worldview. This insight underscores the importance of examining not only the volume and accessibility of digital da'wah but its substantive characteristics — its intellectual depth, its scholarly grounding, its capacity to foster critical religious reflection — if its effects on religious literacy are to be properly understood.

C. METHOD

This article employs a systematic narrative review methodology, drawing on a corpus of peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2021 and 2025 that address the transformation of Islamic da'wah in digital contexts and its implications for the religious understanding and literacy of Muslim millennials and Generation Z. The systematic character of the review is reflected in the deliberate and transparent selection of source materials: the article builds its analysis on twenty key studies identified through a combination of academic database searches using terms including 'digital da'wah,' 'Islamic social media,' 'Muslim millennials religion,' 'Islamic digital literacy,' and 'religious literacy Islam,' together with forward and backward citation tracing from the most substantive sources identified. The narrative dimension of the review reflects the interpretive and synthesizing ambition of the article — not simply to catalog findings but to weave them into an analytically coherent account of the phenomenon under investigation.

The selection criteria for source inclusion privileged recency (publication within the five-year window from 2021 to 2025), empirical or theoretical rigor, and direct relevance to the central themes of digital da'wah transformation and millennial religious literacy. The geographic scope of the reviewed literature spans multiple contexts, including Indonesia, the Middle East, and the broader Muslim world, with a particular concentration of empirical studies from Indonesia a context of significant importance given that Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population and has been the site of extensive empirical research on digital Islamic communication. The analytical framework applied in the review integrates theoretical perspectives from media studies (platform theory, algorithmic curation), Islamic studies (da'wah methodology, religious authority), and educational research (religious literacy, digital pedagogies) in order to produce a multi-dimensional assessment of the phenomenon. The synthesis proceeds through thematic analysis, with findings organized around six principal themes: the transformation of da'wah methods; the reshaping of religious authority;

algorithmic influences on da'wah; the construction of millennial religious literacy; risks and challenges; and emerging best practices.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. From Pulpit to Platform: The Structural Transformation of Da'wah Methods

Perhaps the most immediately visible dimension of the digital transformation of da'wah is the radical proliferation of formats, channels, and actors through which Islamic messages are now communicated. Where traditional da'wah was organized around the figure of the preacher or scholar addressing a gathered congregation, digital da'wah encompasses a vast and heterogeneous ecosystem of content short-form motivational videos, long-form doctrinal lectures, animated explainers, podcast discussions, live-streamed Friday sermons, Instagram quote graphics, TikTok recitations of Quranic verses, and interactive question-and-answer sessions on Twitter and Telegram. This diversity of formats reflects the underlying logic of social media platforms, which reward content that generates high levels of engagement (likes, shares, comments, saves) regardless of its scholarly depth or institutional provenance. Hidayat & Nuri (2024), in their literature review of digital da'wah approaches, document how this platformization of Islamic preaching has catalyzed the emergence of what they call the 'digital da'i' a new type of Islamic communicator whose effectiveness is measured not primarily by scholarly credentials or institutional affiliation but by the size and engagement of their online following. This represents a fundamental departure from traditional models of Islamic religious authority, in which recognition as a legitimate preacher or scholar required years of formal training, institutional certification, and validation by established scholarly networks.

The organizational dimension of this transformation is equally significant. Agung et al., (2025) document how Muhammadiyah one of Indonesia's largest and most influential Islamic organizations has responded to the digital era by developing what they term a 'Progressive-Digital Da'wah Model,' which seeks to harness the communicative affordances of digital platforms while maintaining the organization's commitment to rational, progressive, and contextually sensitive Islamic thought. This model represents one of the most systematic attempts by a major Islamic organization to develop an institutionally coherent framework for digital da'wah, integrating digital content production, platform management, and quality assurance mechanisms within the broader structure of the organization's da'wah activities.

The Muhammadiyah case illustrates a broader trend in which established Islamic institutions previously accustomed to controlling da'wah through hierarchical structures and formal credentialing are being compelled to adapt their organizational models to the decentralized, participatory, and fast-moving logic of digital media. This adaptation is not without tension: as Fatmawati (2025) notes in her study of Ramadan da'wah digitalization, the pressure to produce content that performs well on digital platforms can create incentives that work against the depth, nuance, and scholarly rigor that effective religious education requires. Successful digital da'wah must therefore navigate a complex tension between accessibility and depth, between the imperative to reach large audiences and the responsibility to communicate Islamic teachings with scholarly integrity and contextual sensitivity.

The temporal dimension of digital da'wah also represents a significant departure from traditional models. Traditional da'wah was typically structured around calendrical rhythms the Friday sermon, the Ramadan lectures, the annual cycle of Islamic observances that provided a framework of regularity and communal participation. Digital da'wah, by contrast, is characterized by perpetual availability and asynchronous consumption: Islamic content is accessible at any time of day or night, can be paused, rewound, and revisited,

and is consumed in radically different contexts during commutes, between classes, in the margins of other activities rather than in the focused, communal setting of the mosque. Wicaksono et al., (2025), in their bibliometric analysis of da'wah values and digital literacy integration in formal Islamic education in Yogyakarta, note that this shift in the temporal and spatial organization of religious learning has profound implications for pedagogy. The fragmented, distracted, and asynchronous character of digital religious consumption tends to favor content that is brief, emotionally resonant, and immediately applicable, potentially at the expense of the extended, systematic engagement with complex religious ideas that genuine religious literacy requires.

2. Reconfiguring Religious Authority in the Age of Influencer Islam

One of the most theoretically significant and practically consequential dimensions of the digital transformation of da'wah is its impact on the structures of Islamic religious authority. In traditional Islamic jurisprudence, the concept of authority (*sulta*) in religious matters is closely bound up with scholarly qualification the mastery of the classical Islamic sciences, including Quranic exegesis, hadith methodology, jurisprudence, and theology and institutional recognition through established scholarly chains of transmission (*isnad*). The digital era has profoundly destabilized this architecture of authority by enabling individuals without formal scholarly credentials to amass large religious followings, exercise significant influence over the religious beliefs and practices of their audiences, and construct reputational authority through the performative logics of social media rather than the discursive logics of traditional scholarship.

Zaid et al., (2022) provide a nuanced analysis of this development in their study of social media influencers and the reimagination of religious authority among Muslim millennials. They document how a new generation of Muslim content creators often young, photogenic, technologically sophisticated, and highly attuned to the aesthetics and communicative norms of digital platforms has emerged to fill what they perceive as a vacuum of accessible and relatable religious guidance. These 'Muslim influencers' speak the language of their millennial peers, address the specific concerns and lived experiences of young Muslims navigating secular modernity, and package Islamic teachings in formats that are aesthetically polished and immediately consumable.

The implications of this influencer-driven reconstitution of religious authority are deeply ambivalent. On one hand, Muslim influencers have demonstrably succeeded in making Islamic teachings accessible and appealing to segments of the millennial generation that might not otherwise engage with formal religious instruction. Their ability to address the specific concerns and aspirations of young Muslims questions about identity, relationships, career, mental health, and the compatibility of Islamic values with contemporary life in a relatable and non-judgmental register has been credited with bringing many young Muslims back into active religious engagement after periods of disaffection or distance from formal religious institutions.

'Ulyan (2023), in his narrative review of digital da'wah and religious authority, documents how online preachers and influencers have created new forms of parasocial religious community that provide young Muslims with a sense of religious belonging and guidance even in contexts where access to local religious institutions is limited. Sajidin & Rizki, (2025) similarly find that exposure to Islamic YouTube content has a measurable positive effect on the understanding of Islam among millennial audiences, particularly with respect to ethical teachings, the significance of religious practice, and the application of Islamic values to contemporary social issues.

On the other hand, the authority of Muslim influencers rests on fundamentally different foundations from those of traditional Islamic scholarship, and this difference has significant implications for the quality and reliability of the religious guidance they provide.

Traditional religious authority in Islam is discursive grounded in the mastery of texts, the application of established methodological tools, and the recognition of peers within a scholarly community. Influencer authority, by contrast, is performative grounded in the ability to attract and retain audience attention, to project an appealing and trustworthy persona, and to produce content that resonates emotionally and aesthetically with the target audience.

These performative requirements can, and often do, create incentives for simplification, emotionalization, and selectivity in the presentation of Islamic teachings, privileging those elements of the tradition that are most readily communicable in digital formats over those that require extended engagement with complex scholarly debates. Muthohirin (2025) raises a related concern, documenting a discernible rise in Islamic fundamentalist discourses propagated through social media, where the combination of algorithmic amplification and the emotional appeal of certainty-claiming religious narratives can create conditions favorable to the spread of exclusivist, literalist, or even radical interpretations of Islam among young audiences who lack the scholarly framework to critically evaluate such claims.

3. Algorithmic Mediation and the Ecology of Digital Da'wah

The platformization of da'wah does not occur in a neutral technological environment. Social media platforms are fundamentally algorithmic systems, designed to optimize for user engagement and advertising revenue by curating and distributing content in ways that maximize the time users spend on the platform. This algorithmic logic has profound and largely underappreciated implications for the character of digital da'wah and its effects on religious literacy. As Nuriana & Salwa (2024) argue in their narrative review of digital da'wah in the age of algorithm, the curation of Islamic content on social media platforms is shaped by engagement metrics likes, shares, comments, completion rates that bear no relationship to the scholarly quality, theological accuracy, or educational depth of the content in question. The algorithmic amplification of emotionally resonant, visually arresting, or controversy-generating content means that extreme, simplistic, or sensationalized interpretations of Islam may achieve far greater visibility and reach than more balanced, nuanced, and scholarly grounded alternatives.

This dynamic creates what might be described as an information ecology for religious knowledge that is structurally biased against complexity and depth. The conditions that platforms create for the production and distribution of religious content systematically favor content that is brief, emotionally engaging, and easily shared content, in other words, that corresponds to the genre conventions of entertainment and social media rather than to those of religious scholarship or education. The consequences for religious literacy are potentially severe. When the primary sources through which young Muslims encounter Islamic teaching are algorithmically curated social media feeds optimized for engagement rather than educational value, the cumulative effect may be the construction of a religious understanding that is emotionally compelling but intellectually shallow, morally simplified, and poorly equipped to navigate the genuine complexity of Islamic legal and theological discourse. Athoillah et al., (2023), in their systematic literature review of religious digital literacy among urban Muslim communities in Indonesia, document that while digital engagement with Islamic content is nearly universal among urban Muslim millennials, there is a significant and concerning gap between the frequency of this engagement and the depth of religious understanding it produces. High levels of digital Islamic content consumption do not automatically translate into higher levels of religious literacy as measured by the capacity for critical textual engagement, contextual interpretation, or nuanced ethical reasoning.

The concept of the 'filter bubble' the tendency of algorithmic curation to expose users primarily to content that reinforces their existing beliefs and preferences, thereby limiting their exposure to alternative perspectives has particular relevance in the context of digital da'wah. In an environment where the Islamic content an individual encounters is shaped by their prior engagement patterns, users may be progressively exposed to increasingly homogeneous and potentially increasingly extreme versions of Islamic teaching, without the corrective exposure to diverse scholarly opinions that traditional Islamic education was designed to provide. This dynamic is identified by several reviewed studies as a significant contributing factor to the polarization of religious views and the entrenchment of sectarian identities among Muslim millennials who engage primarily with social media as their source of religious education. Nuriana & Salwa, (2024) propose that effective responses to this challenge must address not only the quality of individual pieces of da'wah content but the algorithmic structures that shape their circulation — an observation that points toward the need for platform-level interventions, alongside pedagogical and institutional ones, to ensure that digital media serves the cause of genuine religious literacy rather than ideological narrowing.

4. Muslim Millennials and the Construction of Religious Literacy Through Digital Da'wah

The central empirical question addressed in this article concerns the relationship between digital da'wah and the religious literacy of Muslim millennials a relationship that the reviewed literature consistently characterizes as complex, bidirectional, and highly context-dependent. The most straightforward finding emerging from the literature is that digital da'wah has significantly expanded the volume and diversity of Islamic content to which Muslim millennials are exposed. Studies conducted in Indonesian contexts consistently find high levels of digital engagement with Islamic content among millennial and Generation Z audiences on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and messaging applications such as Telegram and WhatsApp and document positive associations between such engagement and self-reported measures of religious knowledge, practice, and identity. Faizah & Tuhah (2025) find that social media plays a significant positive role in increasing religious understanding among the millennial generation, particularly with respect to the accessibility of Islamic jurisprudence and ethical teachings. Jalaluddin et al., (2024) document comparable findings for Generation Z, noting that social media da'wah functions as an important supplementary resource for deepening religious understanding, particularly with respect to issues not adequately addressed in formal educational settings.

The contribution of digital da'wah to millennial religious literacy is, however, uneven across different dimensions of religious understanding. The reviewed literature suggests that digital Islamic content is most effective at transmitting accessible, practically oriented religious knowledge guidance on prayer, fasting, ethical conduct, and the application of Islamic values to everyday situations and at fostering a sense of religious identity and community belonging. It is least effective at cultivating the deeper dimensions of religious literacy that require extended engagement with complex texts, familiarity with the diversity of scholarly opinion within the Islamic tradition, and the capacity for independent critical evaluation of religious claims. Aditoni & Rohmah (2022), in their study of campus-based millennials' learning preferences toward da'wah in the urban context of Surabaya, find that millennial audiences express a strong preference for da'wah content that is interactive, contextually relevant, and emotionally engaging a preference that, while entirely understandable, tends to favor the consumption of simplified or pre-digested religious teachings over the more demanding engagement with primary Islamic texts and scholarly commentary that genuine religious literacy presupposes.

The relationship between digital da'wah and religious literacy is also shaped by the educational backgrounds and critical capacities of the audiences involved. Pabbajah et al., (2021), in their pioneering study of Indonesian engineering students' responses to the digitalization of Islamic education, find that students with stronger academic and critical thinking skills are better positioned to engage productively with digital Islamic content, demonstrating a greater capacity to evaluate sources critically, situate digital da'wah within a broader scholarly framework, and resist the simplifications and distortions that characterize much social media Islamic content. This finding suggests that the impact of digital da'wah on religious literacy is not independent of the educational resources and critical competencies that audiences bring to their engagement with digital content a finding with significant implications for Islamic educational policy. If the benefits of digital da'wah are to be realized and its risks mitigated, investment in the development of critical digital religious literacy skills among Muslim millennials through formal educational institutions, family-based religious socialization, and community-based religious programs appears to be a necessary complement to the expansion of digital da'wah itself.

5. Risks, Challenges, and Critical Dimensions of Digital Da'wah

While the positive contributions of digital da'wah to the accessibility and reach of Islamic education are well documented, an honest assessment of its impact on the religious literacy of Muslim millennials must also engage seriously with the significant risks and challenges that the reviewed literature identifies. Chief among these risks is the phenomenon of ideological fragmentation the tendency of the pluralized, unregulated digital religious information environment to produce not a richer and more diverse Islamic religious culture but a fractured one, in which competing and often incompatible interpretations of Islam vie for authority in the absence of the unifying frameworks that traditional Islamic scholarship provided. Muthohirin (2025) documents how the digital era has seen a significant rise in Islamic fundamentalist and literalist discourses propagated through social media, and argues that the algorithmic amplification of emotionally compelling content has created favorable conditions for the spread of religiously exclusivist and potentially radical narratives among young Muslims who encounter them through their social media feeds without the scholarly or institutional frameworks needed to critically evaluate their claims.

A related and extensively documented risk is that of religious misinformation the circulation through digital networks of Islamic content that is inaccurate, distorted, or deliberately falsified. Nurpriatna¹ et al., (2025) address this challenge directly, arguing that the proliferation of Islamic hoaxes and negative content through social media networks poses a serious threat to the religious literacy and spiritual wellbeing of Muslim adolescents, and advocating for the integration of digital literacy competencies including critical source evaluation, verification skills, and media awareness within formal Islamic education curricula as a necessary counter-measure. The concern is not only that individual pieces of misinformation may distort specific religious beliefs or practices, but that the cumulative effect of exposure to an information environment saturated with unreliable Islamic content may produce what Abdullah et al., (2024) term 'religious confusion and emptiness' a generalized state of uncertainty and incoherence in which the proliferation of competing, unvetted, and often contradictory Islamic claims online undermines rather than enriches the religious understanding of young Muslims. Their empirical study of online Islamic learning among Indonesian Muslim adolescents documents a troubling pattern in which extensive engagement with online Islamic content correlates with increased levels of religious confusion, suggesting that more digital Islamic content does not automatically equal deeper or clearer religious understanding.

The challenge of cyberbullying and online religious harassment represents a further concern documented in the literature. Putra et al., (2025) address the intersection of digital Islamic literacy and cyberbullying, arguing that Muslim adolescents who lack robust digital literacy skills including the capacity to engage constructively and ethically with online religious disagreement are particularly vulnerable to both perpetrating and experiencing religiously inflected cyberbullying. They propose that the development of progressive Islamic digital literacy a framework that integrates Islamic ethical values with critical digital competencies is essential not only for fostering religious literacy but for enabling young Muslims to navigate the online religious information environment safely and constructively. Sariningsih (2025), in her critical analysis of social media framing in millennial preaching, raises a further concern about the commodification of Islamic da'wah the tendency for the logic of social media influence, with its emphasis on personal branding, audience cultivation, and commercial sponsorship, to distort the intrinsic religious motivations of da'wah and transform it into a vehicle for personal reputation management or commercial interest rather than genuine religious service.

6. Emerging Models and Best Practices for Digital Da'wah and Religious Literacy

Against the backdrop of these challenges, the reviewed literature also documents a range of innovative responses at the levels of institutional organization, educational practice, content design, and platform governance that suggest pathways toward a more constructive and educationally substantive approach to digital da'wah. At the institutional level, the case of Muhammadiyah's Progressive-Digital Da'wah Model, documented by Agung et al. (2025), illustrates how established Islamic organizations can adapt their da'wah frameworks to the digital environment without abandoning their commitment to scholarly rigor, moderate religious values, and systematic educational goals. The Muhammadiyah model represents a deliberate attempt to harness the communicative affordances of digital media while maintaining institutional quality assurance mechanisms and scholarly oversight a model that other Islamic organizations might productively emulate. Wicaksono et al. (2025) similarly document efforts in Yogyakarta to integrate da'wah values and digital literacy within formal Islamic educational settings, demonstrating that bibliometrically significant scholarship is emerging around the systematic development of digital da'wah pedagogy within institutional Islamic education.

At the pedagogical level, Mashudi & Hilman (2024) and Noprijon et al. (2024) both find that digital tools and platforms can make significant positive contributions to student religious literacy and engagement when they are integrated within structured, pedagogically informed educational frameworks rather than used as unmediated substitutes for traditional religious instruction. These findings point toward a model of digital da'wah literacy education in which digital content serves as a gateway to deeper engagement with primary Islamic sources, scholarly commentary, and the interpretive traditions of Islamic jurisprudence a model in which the accessibility of digital Islamic content is leveraged as a motivational resource while the intellectual depth of traditional Islamic scholarship provides the framework for critical evaluation and contextual understanding. Fatmawati (2025) documents the particular effectiveness of Ramadan as a context for digitalized da'wah programming, finding that the heightened religious motivation of the Ramadan period creates favorable conditions for the delivery of more substantive and educationally oriented digital Islamic content, suggesting that strategic calibration of digital da'wah to the motivational rhythms of the Islamic calendar may enhance its educational impact.

The role of critical digital religious literacy as a competency in its own right emerges as a particularly significant theme across the reviewed literature. Athoillah et al. (2023), Nurpriatna¹ et al. (2025), and Putra et al. (2025) all converge on the conclusion that equipping Muslim millennials with the skills to critically evaluate digital Islamic content to

assess the scholarly credentials of sources, to identify the markers of reliable versus unreliable religious information, to recognize the rhetorical strategies used by extremist or sectarian content, and to situate digital da'wah within the broader landscape of Islamic scholarly opinion is a necessary condition for the realization of the positive potential of digital da'wah as a vehicle for religious literacy development. This calls for an expanded conception of Islamic education that encompasses not only the transmission of traditional religious knowledge but the cultivation of the critical, evaluative, and media-aware competencies needed to navigate the contemporary digital religious information environment effectively. Such an expanded conception of Islamic literacy aligns with the broader ambitions of progressive Islamic education to produce Muslims who are not merely knowledgeable about the tradition but capable of engaging with it critically, contextually, and constructively in the face of the complex challenges of contemporary life.

E. CONCLUSION

The transformation of Islamic da'wah in the digital era represents one of the most significant developments in contemporary Islamic life, with profound and wide-ranging implications for the religious literacy, spiritual development, and communal identity of Muslim millennials. This article has sought to contribute to the scholarly understanding of this transformation by synthesizing a body of recent empirical and theoretical literature into an analytically coherent account of the relationship between digital da'wah and millennial religious literacy. The synthesis reveals a picture of considerable complexity: digital da'wah has undeniably expanded the reach and accessibility of Islamic teaching, created new avenues for religious community and belonging, and enabled innovative forms of Islamic communication that speak to the lived experiences and communicative sensibilities of Muslim millennials. At the same time, it has introduced significant risks ideological fragmentation, the destabilization of scholarly religious authority, the algorithmic amplification of simplistic or extreme religious content, and the potential for shallow, decontextualized religious engagement to masquerade as genuine religious literacy that demand serious scholarly attention and practical response.

The central argument of this article is that the contribution of digital da'wah to the religious literacy of Muslim millennials is not predetermined by the nature of the technologies involved but is shaped by the educational, institutional, and critical frameworks through which digital religious content is encountered, evaluated, and integrated into a coherent religious worldview. Digital da'wah has the potential to serve as a powerful resource for the development of genuine religious literacy among Muslim millennials, but only when it is embedded within broader educational frameworks that cultivate critical thinking, scholarly awareness, and the capacity to engage with the full complexity of the Islamic intellectual tradition. This conclusion has significant implications for Islamic educational policy, da'wah organizations, social media platforms, and Muslim community institutions, all of which bear responsibilities for shaping the digital religious information environment in which Muslim millennials develop their religious identities and competencies.

Future research in this area should prioritize longitudinal empirical studies that track the long-term effects of digital da'wah engagement on religious literacy outcomes across diverse Muslim populations; comparative studies that examine the differential effectiveness of various digital da'wah modalities and formats for different dimensions of religious literacy; and policy-oriented research that explores institutional and platform-level interventions for improving the quality and educational depth of digital Islamic content. Scholarship that bridges the fields of Islamic studies, media and communication studies, and education research as exemplified by the best works in the corpus reviewed here is particularly needed to advance the field. The stakes of this scholarly engagement are high: in an era when the digital information environment is increasingly the primary arena in which young Muslims form their religious identities and develop their religious knowledge, the quality of that

environment and of the scholarly and institutional frameworks that shape it is a matter of the utmost importance for the future of Islamic religious life.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Methodology; Writing – review and editing.

Author 2: Data curation; Investigation; Formal analysis; Writing – original draft.

Author 3: Supervision; Validation; Resources; Visualization.

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