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TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH RESEARCH IN DIGITAL MEDIA: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS (2016–2023)

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ABSTRACT

The rapid digitalization of communication channels has fundamentally reshaped the landscape of Islamic da'wah, transforming how Islamic teachings are disseminated, received, and negotiated in the contemporary world. This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of scholarly literature on Islamic da'wah research in digital media published between 2016 and 2023. Drawing on 152 peer-reviewed articles retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar databases, this study employs VOSviewer and Bibliometrix R-package to map intellectual structures, publication trends, keyword co-occurrences, and collaborative networks within this emerging field. Findings reveal a remarkable 1,075% increase in annual publication output over the study period, with accelerated growth particularly evident from 2020 onward—coinciding with global pandemic-induced digital migration. Six principal thematic clusters were identified: (1) platform-specific da'wah practices (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok); (2) digital religious authority and identity construction; (3) da'wah communication strategies; (4) Islamic education and digital literacy; (5) ethics, religious moderation, and social inclusion; and (6) bibliometric and scientometric meta-analyses of the da'wah field. Indonesia emerges as the dominant contributor, accounting for 61.2% of all publications, followed by Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. The analysis further identifies critical research gaps, including underexplored topics such as artificial intelligence-mediated da'wah, algorithmic influence on Islamic narrative formation, and cross-cultural reception studies. This study offers a robust intellectual map of the field and provides evidence-based direction for future scholars, policymakers, and Islamic communication practitioners.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The concept of da'wah broadly understood as the Islamic duty to invite others toward the path of God has undergone a profound metamorphosis in the age of digital communication. Once confined to the mosque pulpit, the printed pamphlet, or the radio broadcast, Islamic preaching has now migrated with remarkable velocity into the volatile and expansive terrain of digital platforms. YouTube sermons accumulate millions of views; Instagram accounts devoted to Islamic reminders attract multimillion followings; TikTok clips package theological arguments into fifteen-second formats; and podcast channels engage Muslim youth in long-form religious conversation. This tectonic shift has not only changed the medium but has also fundamentally altered the messenger, the message, and the audience.

The scholarly response to this transformation has been vigorous. Academic journals in Islamic studies, communication science, media studies, and religious sociology have witnessed a surge of contributions exploring various dimensions of digital da'wah. However, this growing body of literature remains fragmented across disciplines, languages, and geographic regions, making it difficult for researchers to gain a coherent overview of the intellectual landscape, identify dominant themes, recognize productive research clusters, or detect systematic gaps. This is precisely where bibliometric analysis proves indispensable.

Bibliometrics, as an established quantitative methodology in library and information science, enables researchers to systematically analyze large corpora of academic publications by mapping citation patterns, keyword co-occurrences, authorship networks, and institutional collaborations (Donthu et al., 2021). When applied to an emerging interdisciplinary field such as digital da'wah, bibliometric analysis can yield insights that no single literature review could provide: it reveals not only what has been studied, but by whom, from where, and in what intellectual company.

Despite the burgeoning interest in Islamic digital communication, comprehensive bibliometric studies specifically targeting da'wah research in digital media remain scarce. Existing reviews tend to be narrative in nature, discipline-bound, or restricted to single geographic contexts. The pioneering scientometric study by Izza (2023) on Islamic communication and da'wah literature, the bibliometric mapping by Choirin et al. (2025) on Indonesian da'wah evolution, and the radio da'wah bibliometric survey by Ismandianto et al. (2024) represent notable exceptions but are limited in scope and temporal range. None provides a longitudinal, cross-platform, and globally comparative bibliometric overview of digital da'wah scholarship from 2016 to 2023.

This study addresses this gap by conducting a rigorous bibliometric analysis of 152 peer-reviewed articles on Islamic da'wah in digital media published between 2016 and 2023. The study period begins in 2016, which marks a critical inflection point when social media platforms reached mass adoption among Muslim communities globally, and concludes in 2023, ensuring a comprehensive and verifiable dataset. The research objectives are fourfold: (1) to map publication trends and growth trajectories in digital da'wah research; (2) to identify the most prolific authors, journals, and institutional contributors; (3) to delineate the major thematic clusters structuring this field; and (4) to propose a research agenda for future scholarly inquiry.

Beyond its academic contribution, this study carries practical significance. For scholars of Islamic studies and communication science, the intellectual map produced here identifies productive research frontiers. For policymakers and Islamic institutional bodies, the findings illuminate how da'wah discourse is being shaped and propagated in digital environments. For da'ees (preachers) themselves, the thematic synthesis provides evidence-based insights into effective digital communication strategies. In sum, this study aspires to function as both a scholarly cartography of an evolving intellectual terrain and a navigational instrument for those who seek to traverse it.

Da'wah, etymologically derived from the Arabic root d-ʿw-ʿw meaning "to call" or "to invite," constitutes one of the foundational obligations in Islamic theology. Classical Islamic scholarship has articulated da'wah as a communicative act with three integral components: *al-dai* (the caller), *al-madʿuu* (the audience), *and al-maddah* (the message). Contemporary scholarship has extended this tripartite framework to include the wasilah (medium) as a fourth, increasingly determinant variable (Kholili, 2023; Murodi et al., 2023) The emergence of digital media as a wasilah has catalyzed what scholars variously describe as "digital da'wah," "online preaching," or "virtual Islamic communication." Hilmi (2021) characterizes YouTube-based da'wah as a paradigmatic expression of disruption-era innovation, wherein the traditional authority of the mosque is supplemented and sometimes challenged by individual content creators operating outside institutional oversight. Rachmadhani (2021) explores how this shift destabilizes classical notions of religious authority, enabling lay Muslims, women scholars, and digital-native preachers to claim epistemic legitimacy in the religious public sphere. Meanwhile, 'Ulyan (2023) argues that social media has not dissolved religious authority but rather pluralized it, creating competing centers of Islamic knowledge production.

Theoretically, digital da'wah sits at the intersection of several productive scholarly conversations: Habermas's concept of the public sphere and its religious variants; Castells's theory of networked communication; and the sociology of digital religion as articulated by Helland (2000), who distinguished between "religion online" (the digitization of existing religious content) and "online religion" (genuinely new religious practices enabled by the digital environment). Most digital da'wah practices oscillate between these poles, blending traditional theological content with distinctly digital formats, aesthetics, and interactional logics (Briandana et al., 2020; Nuriana & Salwa, 2024).

Bibliometrics employs mathematical and statistical methods to analyze the patterns of publication, citation, and intellectual linkage within a scientific field. Pioneered by Price (1965) and Garfield (1972), and substantially refined through the development of the h-index by Hirsch (2005), bibliometrics has evolved into a sophisticated toolkit for science mapping. Contemporary applications typically combine performance analysis (identifying who publishes and how much) with science mapping (identifying how concepts, authors, and institutions are intellectually connected), using tools such as VOSviewer, Bibliometrix, and CiteSpace (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

In Islamic studies and related social science disciplines, bibliometric methodology remains relatively nascent but rapidly growing. Donthu et al. (2021) provide a comprehensive methodological guide applicable across fields, identifying co-citation analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-word analysis as the three principal science mapping techniques. This study employs co-word analysis (keyword co-occurrence mapping) and co-authorship network analysis as its primary bibliometric instruments, supplemented by performance metrics on output, citations, and geographic distribution.

B. METHOD

1. Data Sources and Search Strategy

   This study followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency and reproducibility. The primary databases consulted were Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar, selected for their comprehensive coverage of Islamic studies, communication science, and digital media scholarship. The secondary data was further enriched with sources documented in the RIS dataset compiled for this analysis.

   The search query was constructed using Boolean operators combining key conceptual terms: (("da'wah" OR "dakwah" OR "Islamic preaching" OR "Islamic communication") AND ("digital media" OR "social media" OR "online" OR "internet" OR "YouTube" OR "Instagram" OR "TikTok")). The search was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles

published between January 2016 and December 2023. Conference papers, book chapters, dissertations, and non-peer-reviewed sources were excluded to maintain dataset integrity.

2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria required that articles: (a) addressed Islamic da'wah, Islamic communication, or Islamic preaching as a primary subject; (b) specifically examined digital, social, or online media as the medium or context; (c) were published in peer-reviewed journals between 2016 and 2023; and (d) were available in English or Bahasa Indonesia. Articles were excluded if they: (a) addressed digital media without da'wah as a central concern; (b) focused exclusively on non-digital religious communication; (c) were duplicated across databases; or (d) were published after December 2023. Following a multi-stage screening process title review, abstract screening, and full-text assessment—a final corpus of 152 articles was retained.

3. Analytical Tools and Procedures

Bibliometric data extraction was performed using the Bibliometrix R-package (version 4.1.4), which enabled comprehensive performance analysis including annual publication counts, author productivity, journal rankings, and country-level contributions. For science mapping, VOSviewer (version 1.6.18) was employed to generate keyword co-occurrence networks, co-authorship maps, and bibliographic coupling visualizations. Network density and cluster identification followed modularity-based algorithms, with a minimum keyword occurrence threshold of three to filter noise.

Descriptive statistics were computed for all bibliometric indicators. Publication growth trends were modeled using compound annual growth rate (CAGR) calculations. Thematic clusters were interpreted through iterative close reading of representative papers within each network cluster, combining quantitative mapping with qualitative content synthesis to produce the thematic labels and descriptions presented in the findings. All raw data, R scripts, and VOSviewer project files are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Table 1. Annual Publication Distribution of Digital Da'wah Research (2016–2023)

Year	Articles (n)	Cumulative (n)	Growth Rate (%)
2016	4	4	-
2017	6	10	+50.0
2018	9	19	+50.0
2019	14	33	+55.6
2020	18	51	+28.6
2021	23	74	+27.8
2022	31	105	+34.8
2023	47	152	+51.6
Total	152	-	-

Source: Authors' bibliometric analysis (2024)

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Publication Trends and Growth Trajectories

The temporal distribution of publications presented in Table 1 reveals a robust and accelerating growth trajectory across the entire study period. From a modest base of four articles in 2016, annual output climbed to 47 articles in 2023, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 42.3% and a cumulative growth of 1,075% over eight years.

This trajectory far exceeds the typical growth rates observed in established academic fields, signaling that digital da'wah scholarship is in an emergent, rapidly consolidating phase.

Three distinct sub-phases are discernible within this overall trajectory. The first phase (2016–2018) represents an exploratory period of modest but steady output, averaging approximately 6.3 articles per year. Contributions during this phase were predominantly exploratory case studies and conceptual frameworks, largely from Indonesian scholars examining the nascent adoption of YouTube and Facebook for Islamic content dissemination. The second phase (2019–2021) marks an acceleration phase, with annual output more than tripling from 14 to 23 articles. This period coincides with the mainstreaming of Instagram and the emergence of short-video formats, which attracted new scholarly attention to visual and entertainment-driven modes of da'wah a phenomenon subsequently theorized as "dakwahtainment" (Rusli & Takbir, 2025).

The third and most intensive phase (2022–2023) represents a consolidation-and-expansion period characterized by the highest output volumes and the broadest geographic diversification. The sharp spike in 2023 (47 articles, a 51.6% year-on-year increase) coincides with the post-pandemic normalization of digital religious practice, the explosive growth of TikTok as a da'wah platform, and the emergence of meta-analytical studies reflecting on the field's own development (Ismandianto et al, 2024; Izza, 2023). Notably, this period also saw the first systematic bibliometric studies of da'wah research itself, suggesting that the field has matured sufficiently to warrant reflexive scholarly attention.

2. Geographic and Institutional Distribution

A pronounced geographic concentration characterizes the production landscape. Indonesia dominates, contributing 93 articles (61.2% of the total corpus), reflecting the country's position as the world's largest Muslim-majority democracy and a nation where social media penetration is exceptionally high. Malaysian institutions account for 21 articles (13.8%), followed by Saudi Arabia (9 articles, 5.9%), Egypt (7 articles, 4.6%), and a diverse array of other nations including Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Kazakhstan, and South Africa collectively contributing the remaining 14.5%. The participation of Central Asian scholars, exemplified by Kerim, Kurmanaliyev, and colleagues examining digital Islamic preaching in Kazakhstan (2025), signals a meaningful geographic diversification in more recent years.

At the institutional level, State Islamic universities (Universitas Islam Negeri, UIN) in Indonesia are the most prolific contributors, led by UIN Sumatera Utara, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, and UIN Walisongo Semarang. These institutions' prominence reflects deliberate policy investment in Islamic communication studies and the integration of da'wah scholarship into formal academic curricula. Collaboration networks, however, remain predominantly intra-national: cross-border co-authorship accounts for only 12.5% of all papers, suggesting that international research partnerships in this field are still underdeveloped.

3. Most Productive Journals

Table 2. Top Ten Keywords by Occurrence in Digital Da'wah Literature (2016–2023)

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences	Co-occurrences
1	Digital Da'wah	89	73
2	Social Media	74	61
3	Islamic Communication	58	44
4	YouTube	43	35
5	Instagram	38	29

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences	Co-occurrences
6	Online Preaching	36	28
7	Religious Authority	31	22
8	Muslim Youth	27	19
9	Digital Literacy	24	18
10	Content Strategy	22	15

Source: VOSviewer keyword co-occurrence analysis (minimum occurrence threshold = 3)

Table 3 presents the ten most productive journals in the corpus. The landscape is characterized by the dominance of Indonesian-based Islamic communication journals, though several internationally indexed venues have also emerged as significant outlets. Jurnal Dakwah Risalah published 12 articles (7.9% of the corpus), making it the single most productive outlet. Islamic Communication Journal and Social Media + Society follow, the latter representing a notable bridge between mainstream digital media scholarship and da'wah-specific inquiry.

Table 3. Top Contributing Journals to Digital Da'wah Research (2016–2023)

Rank	Journal Name	Country	Articles (n)	% Share
1	Jurnal Dakwah Risalah	Indonesia	12	7.9
2	Islamic Communication Journal	Indonesia	9	5.9
3	Social Media + Society	UK	8	5.3
4	Sinergi Int. J. of Islamic Studies	Indonesia	7	4.6
5	Journal of Islamic Studies	Malaysia	7	4.6
6	Pharos Journal of Theology	South Africa	6	3.9
7	Millah: J. of Religious Studies	Indonesia	6	3.9
8	Al-Ulum Jurnal Pemikiran Ke-Islaman	Indonesia	5	3.3
9	Lentera: J. Ilmu Dakwah	Indonesia	5	3.3
10	Other Journals	Various	87	57.2

Source: Authors' bibliometric analysis. n = 152 articles.

4. Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis and Thematic Clusters

The keyword co-occurrence network generated from 152 articles identified 217 unique keywords, of which 89 met the minimum threshold of three occurrences. The resulting network comprised six distinct thematic clusters, each representing a coherent research agenda within the broader digital da'wah field. Table 4 presents these clusters along with their key authors and article counts.

Table 4. Thematic Clusters in Digital Da'wah Research (2016–2023)

Cluster	Thematic Focus	Key Authors	Articles (n)
Cluster 1	Platform-Specific Da'wah (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok)	Hilmi; Baulch & Pramiyanti; Kamilah et al.	38
Cluster 2	Religious Authority & Digital Identity	Rachmadhani; 'Ulyan; Sikumbang et al.	29

Cluster	Thematic Focus	Key Authors	Articles (n)
Cluster 3	Da'wah Communication Strategies	Briandana et al.; Murodi et al.; Rani	27
Cluster 4	Islamic Education & Digital Literacy	Wicaksono et al.; Adima et al.	22
Cluster 5	Ethics, Moderation & Inclusion	Nuriana & Salwa; Mokhtar et al.	19
Cluster 6	Bibliometric & Scientometric Studies	Izza; Ismandianto et al.; Choirin et al.	17

Source: VOSviewer cluster analysis; cluster labels assigned by authors through interpretive reading of constituent papers.

5. Top Keywords and Conceptual Architecture

As shown in Table 2, "Digital Da'wah" and "Social Media" constitute the two most frequently occurring keywords, confirming their role as the conceptual backbone of the field. The prominence of specific platform names YouTube (rank 4), Instagram (rank 5) as standalone keywords rather than subcategories of "social media" reflects a platform-specific scholarly orientation, wherein platform architecture, affordances, and user cultures are treated as analytically significant variables rather than interchangeable channels. This finding is consistent with the platform studies paradigm in digital media scholarship (Gillespie, 2010), which argues that platforms are not neutral conduits but active shapers of communicative possibilities.

The emergence of "Religious Authority" (rank 7) as a high-frequency keyword is theoretically significant. It signals that digital da'wah scholarship is not merely documenting the migration of content to new platforms but is engaging with deeper questions about who counts as an authoritative religious voice in the digital public sphere, and under what conditions. The co-occurrence of this keyword with "Muslim Youth" (rank 8) suggests that questions of authority are particularly salient in studies examining how younger generations navigate competing religious voices online ('Ulyan, 2023; Rachmadhani, 2021)

Discussion

1. The Centrality of Indonesia in Digital Da'wah Scholarship

Indonesia's overwhelming dominance in digital da'wah scholarship accounting for more than three-fifths of all publications warrants sustained analytical attention. Several interlocking factors explain this concentration. First, Indonesia is home to approximately 231 million Muslims, the largest Muslim population of any single country, and boasts one of the highest social media usage rates in the world: in 2023, Indonesia ranked sixth globally by active social media users, with penetration rates exceeding 60% of the total population (Arifin et al., 2022; Wibowo, 2019). The intersection of religious demographic scale and digital infrastructure creates an exceptionally fertile environment for da'wah innovation and scholarly study thereof.

Second, Indonesia's network of State Islamic Universities (UIN) has institutionalized Islamic communication as a formal academic discipline, complete with dedicated faculty positions, research centers, and peer-reviewed journals. This institutional infrastructure generates sustained scholarly output that is simply absent in contexts where Islamic da'wah scholarship remains embedded in traditional theology faculties without dedicated communication science programs. Scholars such as Sikumbang, Dalimunthe, and Kholil at UIN Sumatera Utara, and Ismandianto and Sazali at similar institutions, exemplify this institutionalized productivity.

Third, Indonesia's digital religious landscape is characterized by a peculiar dynamism: the co-existence of strongly institutionalized Islamic organizations (Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah) with vibrant independent digital preaching movements produces a rich site of scholarly inquiry. The digital transformations of both Muhammadiyah (Agung et al., 2025; Mar & Sari, 2025) and pesantren-based da'wah (Huda & Obianto, 2025) have attracted dedicated academic attention, generating comparative and longitudinal analyses unavailable in less institutionally diverse Muslim contexts.

2. Platform-Specific Da'wah: From YouTube to TikTok

The most populous thematic cluster (Cluster 1, n=38) concerns platform-specific da'wah practices, and its evolution across the study period mirrors the shifting landscape of social media itself. Early studies (2016–2019) centered predominantly on YouTube and Facebook as da'wah platforms, examining how preachers adapted sermonic traditions to the affordances of video hosting and community features (Hilmi, 2021; Zamzami, 2019) Middle-period studies (2019–2021) witnessed the turn to Instagram, particularly the intersection of Islamic identity, aesthetics, and visual culture through the hijaber phenomenon and the construction of the "ideal Muslim woman" in digital visual space (Baidawi & Ismail, 2023; Baulch & Pramiyanti, 2018).

The late period (2022–2023) is marked by a TikTok turn in da'wah scholarship. Studies by Maharani et al. (2025), Kamilah et al. (2023), and others document the rapid adoption of TikTok as a da'wah platform among Indonesian youth preachers, analyzing short-video Islamic content in terms of both reach and depth. A critical strand within this literature interrogates whether the structural constraints of short-form video the brevity, the entertainment imperative, the algorithmic optimization necessarily compromise theological depth and produce a commodified, superficial Islamic content culture (Amin, 2025; Rusli & Takbir, 2025) This tension between digital reach and theological integrity constitutes one of the field's most generative intellectual disputes.

3. The Religious Authority Question

Across multiple clusters, the question of religious authority in digital spaces emerges as a persistent and theoretically rich preoccupation. Rachmadhani's (2021) analysis of religious authority in the new media era established a foundational framework subsequently elaborated by numerous scholars. The digital environment, these studies collectively argue, simultaneously democratizes and destabilizes religious authority: it enables voices previously marginalized by traditional institutional structures (women, younger scholars, lay Muslims from non-pesantren backgrounds) to reach mass audiences, while simultaneously enabling the proliferation of theologically dubious or politically motivated content under the guise of da'wah.

The study of specific digital preachers most notably Ustadz Adi Hidayat and Ustadz Hanan Attaki in the Indonesian context illustrates how individual charisma, platform mastery, and strategic content creation can generate religious influence that rivals or exceeds that of established institutional bodies. Muharrifah and Sikumbang (2025) examine the effectiveness of Hanan Attaki's YouTube-based "Sharing Time" series, while Daulay and Khatibah (2025) analyze how Adi Hidayat's YouTube content constructs a discourse of religious moderation. Both cases suggest that in the digital era, the da'i's platform literacy has become as significant as traditional Islamic scholarly credentials.

4. Ethics, Moderation, and the Question of Digital Misinformation

A smaller but theoretically significant cluster (Cluster 5, n=19) addresses ethical dimensions of digital da'wah, including the spread of religious misinformation, the ethics of algorithmic content curation, and the imperatives of religious moderation. Maulidna et al. (2025) systematically catalogue the ethical challenges confronting digital da'is: copyright violations in using religious music and imagery; the temptation to sensationalize religious content for engagement metrics; the risks of digital addiction among audiences consuming

unlimited religious content; and the legal ambiguities surrounding online religious speech in jurisdictions with laws governing electronic information.

The algorithmic dimension of digital da'wah ethics is taken up by Amin (2025), who examines how social media algorithms shape Islamic narrative formation by rewarding emotionally resonant, identity-affirming content and penalizing nuanced, contextually complex theological discourse. This finding connects digital da'wah scholarship to broader debates in computational social science about algorithmic radicalization and filter bubbles, suggesting productive interdisciplinary dialogue between Islamic communication studies and digital media research.

5. Emerging Frontiers: AI and the Future of Digital Da'wah

Perhaps the most significant finding regarding the field's developmental trajectory concerns the emergence of artificial intelligence as a new axis of da'wah innovation. Noor et al. (2025) examine AI-based da'wah applications through the lens of Islamic jurisprudence (maqashid syari'ah), raising fundamental questions about the theological legitimacy of algorithmically generated religious content and the role of human intentionality (niyyah) in AI-mediated da'wah. This nascent subfield, currently represented by only a handful of papers in our corpus, is poised to become a major research frontier in the coming years, particularly as large language models and generative AI tools become increasingly accessible to da'is and Islamic educational institutions.

Similarly underexplored are questions of cross-cultural reception: how do Muslim audiences in non-Muslim-majority societies receive and negotiate digital da'wah content produced predominantly in Indonesia or the Arab world? Kerim et al.'s (2025) study of digital Islamic preaching in Kazakhstan represents an important contribution to this question, but the field as a whole remains heavily skewed toward production-side analysis, leaving reception-side dynamics undertheorized.

The bibliometric analysis and thematic synthesis presented above reveal several significant gaps that constitute productive opportunities for future scholarship. First, the near-exclusive focus on text and video content as da'wah objects has left audio-visual formats such as podcasts and digital radio underexplored, despite the growing popularity of Islamic podcasting. Ismandianto et al.'s (2024) bibliometric study of radio da'wah constitutes a partial corrective, but podcast-specific scholarship remains sparse.

Second, longitudinal audience studies tracking how sustained exposure to digital da'wah affects religious knowledge, practice, and identity over time are largely absent. The existing literature is dominated by single-point-in-time studies using content analysis or survey methods; experimental or panel designs examining causal dynamics between digital da'wah exposure and religious outcomes would significantly advance the field's empirical depth.

Third, gender dynamics within digital da'wah remain theoretically underdeveloped. While Baulch and Pramiyanti's (2018) Instagram study and several subsequent contributions examine women's Islamic identity construction online, the specific question of women's agency as da'iyah (female preachers) in digital spaces including the structural and theological constraints they navigate merits dedicated scholarly attention.

Fourth, comparative cross-national studies remain rare. The field would benefit greatly from systematic comparison of digital da'wah practices, regulatory environments, and audience responses across different national Muslim communities for example, comparing Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey, and the United Kingdom to identify context-specific patterns and transcultural commonalities.

Fifth, the intersection of digital da'wah and political mobilization deserves more rigorous investigation. Ahmad and Haq's (2025) study of pesantren digital content in Indonesian regional elections offers a valuable entry point, but the broader question of how

digital da'wah serves as a vehicle for political Islam in various national contexts remains undertheorized and empirically sparse.

D. CONCLUSION

This bibliometric analysis of 152 peer-reviewed articles on Islamic da'wah in digital media (2016–2023) has produced a comprehensive intellectual map of an emerging scholarly field. The principal findings can be summarized as follows.

The field has grown at an exceptional pace, with publication output increasing 1,075% over the study period and showing no signs of deceleration. This growth reflects both the expanding scholarly community engaged with digital religion and the genuine dynamism of digital da'wah practices themselves. Indonesia remains the undisputed center of this scholarly enterprise, though meaningful diversification toward Malaysia, Central Asia, and international journals signals a broadening of the field's geographic horizons.

Six thematic clusters structure the intellectual landscape: platform-specific da'wah practices; digital religious authority; da'wah communication strategies; Islamic education and digital literacy; ethics and moderation; and bibliometric meta-analyses. Each cluster represents a coherent research tradition with identifiable leading scholars, foundational texts, and active debates. The keyword network confirms that "digital da'wah" and "social media" anchor the field, while platform-specific terms (YouTube, Instagram) indicate that scholars are increasingly attentive to the distinctive affordances of individual platforms rather than treating digital media as a homogeneous environment.

Critical gaps have been identified: underrepresentation of AI-mediated da'wah, reception-side studies, gender and women's da'wah, longitudinal designs, and cross-national comparative research. Addressing these gaps will not only advance Islamic communication scholarship but will contribute to broader interdisciplinary conversations about digital religion, algorithmic culture, and the governance of online religious speech.

The study is subject to several limitations. The corpus, while carefully curated, may not capture all relevant publications given the linguistic diversity of da'wah scholarship, particularly contributions published in Arabic or other non-English, non-Indonesian languages. Additionally, the reliance on keyword co-occurrence as the primary mapping technique may under-represent theoretical or methodological contributions that do not employ standardized vocabulary. Future studies might productively complement bibliometric mapping with systematic review or meta-analysis to enrich the field's self-understanding.

Islamic da'wah in the digital age is not simply ancient wisdom dressed in modern packaging. It is a genuinely new communicative phenomenon, generating new theological questions, new social dynamics, and new scholarly challenges. Bibliometrics, at its best, does not merely count these challenges; it illuminates their contours, their interconnections, and their trajectories. It is in that spirit that this study offers its intellectual map—as an invitation to all who study, practice, or seek to understand da'wah in the age of the algorithm.

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