

TIKTOK AND INSTAGRAM AS CONTEMPORARY MEDIA FOR ISLAMIC DA'WAH

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ABSTRACT

The rapid proliferation of social media platforms, particularly TikTok and Instagram, has fundamentally redefined the landscape of Islamic da'wah in the contemporary digital era. This study examines how Muslim preachers (da'i) strategically harness the affordances of these two platforms to disseminate Islamic teachings, cultivate religious communities, and adapt traditional preaching methods to algorithmically governed digital environments. Employing a systematic literature review methodology, this article synthesises findings from a corpus of recent empirical studies published between 2019 and 2025, with particular attention to works examining the Indonesian, Malaysian, Kazakhstani, Nigerian, and Bangladeshi contexts. The analysis reveals that TikTok's short-form video format and recommendation algorithm have created unprecedented opportunities for viral religious content, while Instagram's visual storytelling tools including Stories, Reels, and IGTV support a more sustained engagement with Islamic values and aesthetics. Both platforms, however, simultaneously introduce profound challenges: the commodification of religious authority, the risk of doctrinal distortion under the pressure of algorithmic optimisation, ethical tensions surrounding entertainment-oriented content, and the contested fragmentation of traditional scholarly legitimacy. This article further identifies key thematic trends including the emergence of digital da'i influencers, the construction of participatory Islamic communities online, the role of platforms in shaping moderate Islamic discourse for Generation Z, and the gendered dimensions of digital preaching. The study concludes that effective and ethically grounded digital da'wah requires a deliberate integration of Islamic communicative ethics with platform-specific content strategies, and that future research must more rigorously interrogate the algorithmic mediation of religious knowledge in Muslim-majority societies.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of digital technology and religious practice has become one of the most consequential developments in contemporary Islamic life. Across the globe, millions of Muslims now turn to social media platforms not merely for entertainment or social connection but as primary channels through which they receive religious instruction, engage in communal worship, and construct their Islamic identities. Within this broader landscape, TikTok and Instagram have emerged as the two most dominant platforms shaping the contemporary practice of Islamic da'wah the act of inviting others to understand and embrace Islamic teachings transforming it from a spatially bounded, orally transmitted tradition into a globally distributed, algorithmically mediated phenomenon.

Islamic da'wah has always been responsive to the communicative technologies of its time. From the early dissemination of the Qur'an through memorisation and manuscript culture, to the adaptation of radio broadcasting in the mid-twentieth century, and the subsequent adoption of cassette tapes, television, and the internet, Muslim scholars and preachers have historically demonstrated a remarkable capacity to incorporate new media into their missionary endeavours. Yet the emergence of social media platforms in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and the subsequent rise of short-video and visual content ecosystems in the second decade, has introduced qualitatively new dynamics that challenge established frameworks of religious authority, pedagogical legitimacy, and community formation in ways that earlier media transformations did not (Hidayat & Nuri, 2024; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2019).

TikTok, launched internationally by ByteDance in 2018, has grown to amass over one billion active users globally, with a particularly strong penetration among users aged eighteen to thirty-four. Its core architectural feature a machine learning-powered recommendation algorithm known as the For You Page (FYP) enables content of any provenance to achieve massive viral reach irrespective of the creator's existing follower count. This structural characteristic has made TikTok an unusually egalitarian space in which novice Muslim creators can, in principle, achieve the same discursive visibility as institutionally credentialled scholars, thereby destabilising long-established hierarchies of religious authority (Imam et al., 2025; Raya, 2024). Instagram, by contrast, launched in 2010 and acquired by Meta in 2012, has built its ecosystem around visual aesthetics, curated identity, and aspirational community-building. Its feature set spanning static image posts, Stories, Reels, carousel posts, and long-form IGTV content affords da'i a richer repertoire of communicative modes through which to present Islamic teachings in visually compelling and tonally diverse formats (Ar-Ridho et al., 2023; Efendi et al., 2023).

The scholarly literature on digital da'wah has expanded considerably over the past decade, yet it remains characterised by certain lacunae. Much existing work focuses on single-platform analyses or examines da'wah in social media in general terms without adequately attending to the specific affordances that distinguish one platform from another. Furthermore, while studies from Indonesia dominate the field reflecting both the country's status as the world's largest Muslim-majority nation and the extraordinary vitality of its digital Islamic public sphere comparative perspectives from other Muslim contexts remain underrepresented. This article seeks to address these gaps by synthesising recent scholarship to provide a systematic and analytically sophisticated account of how TikTok and Instagram function specifically as media for Islamic da'wah, what opportunities and constraints each platform's architecture creates for religious communicators, and what the broader sociological and theological implications of these developments are for Muslim communities globally.

The significance of this inquiry extends well beyond descriptive documentation. As algorithms increasingly mediate the conditions under which religious knowledge is produced, circulated, and consumed, questions about who gets to speak authoritatively about Islam, what counts as legitimate da'wah, and how platform incentive structures shape the content and tone of Islamic messaging have become urgent concerns for Muslim communities, religious scholars,

platform governance researchers, and communication theorists alike (Alfi et al., 2025; Nuriana & Salwa, 2024). This article contributes to these conversations by offering a rigorous, evidentially grounded analysis that bridges Islamic communication studies, digital media theory, and the sociology of religion.

Da'wah, derived from the Arabic root meaning to call or invite, constitutes one of the foundational obligations of Islamic communal life. In its classical formulation, da'wah refers to the systematic effort to convey the message of Islam to both non-Muslims and to Muslims whose practice may be deficient, with the overarching aim of guiding individuals toward submission to God and righteous conduct. The Qur'anic injunction in Surah An-Nahl (16:125) to invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner has traditionally been interpreted as establishing both the imperative and the ethical parameters of da'wah communication. These parameters emphasise persuasion over compulsion, wisdom in the selection of communicative method, and the adaptation of message to audience context ('Ulyan, 2023).

Classical Islamic scholarship developed elaborate frameworks for da'wah practice, distinguishing between da'wah directed at Muslims (*tabligh*) and that directed at non-Muslims (*da'wah ila Allah*), and between different modes of delivery including oral address (*khutbah*), written communication (*kitabah*), and exemplary conduct (*uswah*). What is significant for the present analysis is that these frameworks have always been understood as historically contingent in their methodological dimensions: while the theological content of da'wah is held to be fixed and divinely mandated, the media and methods through which it is communicated have always been regarded as legitimately adaptable to historical circumstances (Aditia & Hafizah, 2025). It is within this tradition of methodological flexibility that contemporary Muslim scholars and practitioners have situated their embrace of social media platforms as legitimate vehicles for da'wah.

The concept of media affordances first developed within ecological psychology by James Gibson and subsequently applied to communication technology by scholars such as Hutchby and later Bucher and Helmond provides a productive framework for analysing how specific platform features shape the possibilities and constraints of religious communication. An affordance, in this technical sense, is a property of a medium-user relationship that enables certain actions while constraining others; it describes not what a technology deterministically causes but what it makes possible or difficult within specific social contexts (Saidah, 2024). Applied to Islamic da'wah on social media, an affordances-oriented framework directs attention away from simplistic narratives of technology as either inherently liberating or inherently corrupting for religious life, and instead asks: what does TikTok's short-video format, editing toolkit, and recommendation algorithm make possible for da'i that was not previously available, and what does it make more difficult?

Several affordances of social media platforms have been identified as particularly consequential for digital da'wah. Persistence the fact that digital content remains accessible across time enables da'wah materials to reach audiences long after the original act of communication. Replicability allows Islamic content to be shared, remixed, and redistributed across networks. Scalability enables individual preachers to address audiences of millions with resources previously available only to large religious institutions. And searchability means that individuals actively seeking religious guidance can find da'wah content through keyword-driven queries. On TikTok specifically, the algorithm's capacity to surface content to users who have not subscribed to a creator based on inferred preferences from viewing and engagement patterns adds a further affordance of discoverability that is largely absent from earlier social media architectures (Fitriansyah & Lubis, 2023).

Central to any analysis of digital da'wah is the question of religious authority: who is recognised as qualified to speak about Islamic matters, on what basis, and through what institutional or social processes is that recognition conferred and contested. Traditional Islamic

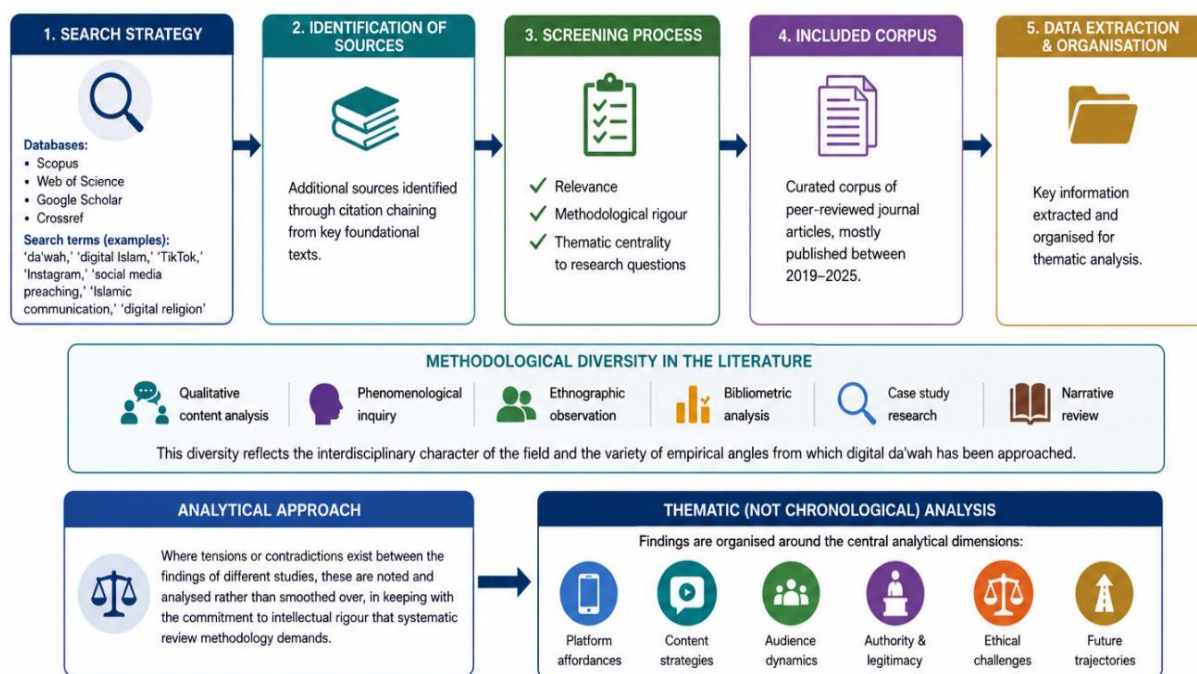
religious authority has been grounded in a complex of credentials including formal education at recognised Islamic institutions, mastery of classical Arabic and the Islamic scholarly canon, recognition by established scholars through chains of transmission (sanad), and embeddedness in local community structures. The emergence of digital platforms has introduced a set of forces that variously reinforce, circumvent, or radically undermine these traditional authority structures (Masruha et al., 2025).

On one hand, social media has enabled traditionally credentialled scholars to expand their reach dramatically beyond the confines of the mosque or madrassa, reaching global audiences instantaneously and building transnational Islamic learning communities. On the other hand, the same platforms have elevated figures whose authority rests not on classical credentials but on digital charisma, media savviness, and algorithm-optimised content production—what scholars have termed 'digital da'i influencers' or 'celebrity preachers.' This parallel system of authority-conferment, governed by metrics of engagement, follower count, and virality rather than scholarly lineage, has created significant tensions within Muslim communities about the boundaries of legitimate religious speech (Raya, 2024; Zaid et al., 2022).

B. METHOD

This article employs a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, following the procedural principles established by Tranfield et al. (2003) and subsequently refined within social science and humanities contexts by Snyder (2019). The primary source base was assembled through targeted searches of major academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and Crossref using Boolean search strings combining variations of the terms 'da'wah,' 'digital Islam,' 'TikTok,' 'Instagram,' 'social media preaching,' 'Islamic communication,' and 'digital religion.' Searches were temporally bounded to publications between 2019 and 2025, a period that corresponds to both the mainstream emergence of TikTok as a da'wah platform and the broader acceleration of scholarly attention to digital Islamic communication. Additional sources were identified through systematic backward and forward citation chaining from key foundational texts, following the snowballing procedure recommended by Wohlin (2014). The resulting corpus was screened in two stages: title and abstract screening followed by full-text assessment against pre-specified inclusion criteria requiring peer-reviewed publication status, direct thematic relevance to digital da'wah practices, and sufficient methodological transparency to permit quality appraisal. Studies failing to meet these criteria were excluded, and exclusion decisions were documented to ensure procedural transparency and replicability (Liberati et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021).

The assembled corpus reflects a deliberately preserved diversity of methodological approaches, encompassing qualitative content analysis, phenomenological inquiry, ethnographic observation, bibliometric analysis, case study research, and narrative review a plurality that is itself analytically significant insofar as it reflects the genuinely interdisciplinary character of digital religion as an emerging field, drawing variously on Islamic studies, communication studies, sociology of religion, and media studies (Campbell & Evolvi, 2019; Evolvi, 2021). Quality appraisal was conducted using adapted criteria from the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), attending to the coherence between research questions and methodological design, the adequacy of evidence for interpretive claims, and the degree of reflexivity regarding researcher positionality (Hong et al., 2018). Where tensions or contradictions exist between the findings of different studies whether arising from contextual variation, methodological difference, or genuine scholarly disagreement these are noted and analysed rather than resolved through selective citation, in accordance with the standards of rigour that systematic review methodology demands (Booth et al., 2016). The analysis proceeds thematically rather than chronologically, organising findings around the central analytical dimensions of platform affordances, content strategies, audience dynamics, authority and legitimacy, ethical challenges, and future trajectories.



Picture 1. Research Methodology

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

1. Tiktok As A Platform For Islamic Da'wah

TikTok's emergence as a significant platform for Islamic da'wah is inseparable from understanding the distinctive architecture of its content ecosystem. Unlike Instagram, which built its initial audience around aspirational lifestyle imagery and curated personal branding, or Facebook, which emphasised social network connections and community groups, TikTok's defining feature is its content-first recommendation system. The FYP algorithm evaluates each piece of content on the basis of early engagement signals completion rate, replays, shares, comments, and saves and progressively distributes it to wider audiences if those signals are strong. For Muslim content creators, this architecture creates a remarkable opportunity: a da'i with zero existing following but compelling, emotionally resonant Islamic content can reach hundreds of thousands of viewers within twenty-four hours of posting, something that would have been structurally impossible on earlier social media platforms (Aldi, 2024; Husna et al., 2025).

The empirical literature documents numerous cases in which this dynamic has played out. Studies of Indonesian da'i on TikTok reveal that creators who master the platform's short-form video grammar combining punchy visual hooks in the first three seconds, accessible Qur'anic commentary, trending audio elements, and affectively engaging delivery styles can achieve viral distribution of Islamic content to audiences who may never have sought out religious programming through conventional channels (Maharani et al., 2025; Maudillah et al., 2025). Rochmah's (2022) study of the TikTok account @Basyasman00 illustrates this dynamic, documenting how a young Indonesian da'i leveraged the platform's algorithmic affordances to build a substantial following for Generation Z-oriented Islamic content by combining religious messaging with the informal, conversational register characteristic of successful TikTok creators. Similarly, Satria et al., (2023) case study of Husain Basyaiban one of Indonesia's most prominent TikTok da'I demonstrates how strategic platform literacy can translate into transformative da'wah reach, with the creator amassing millions of followers through content that consistently balances scholarly substance with entertaining presentation.

Beyond individual content creators, TikTok's features for community participation including duets, stitches, hashtag challenges, and comment sections create distinctive forms of collaborative religious engagement. Several researchers have noted that Islamic content on TikTok generates unusually active comment sections in which viewers ask religious questions, share personal testimonies of spiritual change, and engage in sometimes heated theological debates (Jamaludin, 2025; Muvid et al., 2024). This participatory dimension transforms the traditionally unidirectional character of da'wah the scholar speaking to an audience of silent recipients into something closer to an interactive learning community, though one without the structured oversight that traditional Islamic educational institutions provide. Nasution's (2024) phenomenological study of Generation Z TikTok users confirms that for many young Muslims, the platform has become a primary site of Islamic learning, generating what the author describes as a 'digital salience' for religious identity that complements rather than replaces offline religious practice.

2. Content Strategies and Communicative Formats

The literature reveals a rich diversity of content strategies employed by da'i on TikTok, shaped by both the platform's technical affordances and the communicative norms of its primarily young user base. The most prevalent format is the short Islamic lecture or *ceramah* snippet, in which complex religious concepts are distilled into sixty-to-ninety-second explanations delivered directly to camera with successful da'i developing sophisticated techniques including call-and-response structures, B-roll footage illustrating theological points, overlaid Qur'anic recitation, and multilingual subtitles to reach diaspora audiences (Amelia et al., 2024; Faisal et al., 2025)). A second major category is what researchers have termed 'lifestyle da'wah,' in which Islamic values are embedded within content addressing relationships, personal development, financial management, and contemporary social issues a format particularly effective for reaching audiences who might disengage from overtly religious material, as it meets viewers within their existing interests before introducing Islamic perspectives. Daswin (2025) observes that the most impactful TikTok da'wah tends to occupy a deliberate middle space between doctrinal instruction and entertaining narrative, refusing the false binary that positions serious religious content as necessarily dry and entertaining content as necessarily theologically shallow a finding corroborated by Yasir et al., (2025), who demonstrate that da'i presenting Islamic teachings in accessible, non-confrontational registers are measurably more effective at reaching religiously diverse audiences than those adopting hectoring or exclusivist tones.

Beyond these primary formats, the literature also documents question-and-answer structures, responses to trending topics from an Islamic perspective, and collaborative content with other da'i or non-Muslim creators for interfaith dialogue as further strategies in the digital da'wah repertoire (Jamaludin, 2025; Rahmadhani & Wikandina, 2024). Perhaps the most creatively distinctive adaptation of platform culture to da'wah purposes, however, is the deployment of trending audio and visual templates what platform studies scholars term 'memes' in the broad sense as carriers of Islamic messages. Palupi's et al., (2021) early analysis of TikTok as da'wah media, conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, identified this meme-based Islamic content as a genuinely novel communicative form with no clear precedent in the history of Islamic media, one that raises important questions about the appropriate boundaries of religious creativity and the extent to which the formal conventions of platform culture can be harnessed for purposes of religious communication without distorting the message they are made to carry.

3. Generation Z, Youth Engagement, and Platform Identity

A consistent theme across the literature is the particular significance of TikTok as a da'wah platform for Generation Z loosely defined as those born between 1997 and 2012 whose relationship to religious authority, knowledge, and community differs markedly from earlier generational cohorts. Jalaluddin et al., (2024) research on social media da'wah for

Generation Z demonstrates that this demographic responds most positively to Islamic content that is honest about doubt and struggle, personally relatable, aesthetically sophisticated, and clearly created by peers rather than institutional representatives. Kusumawati & Sitika's (2024) study of TikTok use among Generation Z Muslim students confirms that the platform's informality and participatory culture make it a more comfortable space for religious inquiry than formal institutional settings, enabling young Muslims to engage with Islamic questions that they might feel unable to raise in mosque or classroom contexts.

This generational dimension is intimately connected to broader questions of Islamic identity formation in the digital age. Several researchers have noted that TikTok functions not merely as a channel for receiving Islamic information but as a space in which young Muslims actively construct, perform, and negotiate their religious identities through content creation, curation, and social engagement (Nisrina et al., 2025; Roslan et al., 2025). The public visibility of Islamic practice on TikTok through hashtags such as #IslamTikTok, #MuslimTikTok, and #DakwahTikTok has contributed to what some scholars describe as a 'normalisation' of visible religiosity among young Muslims, potentially reducing the social costs of religious practice in secular or plural social environments. Azizah et al., (2025) research among Islamic Religious Education students further illustrates how da'wah content has become a recognised genre within student digital culture, with young Muslims themselves becoming da'wah content creators as an expression of both religious commitment and digital citizenship.

4. Instagram As A Platform For Islamic Da'wah

Instagram's foundational architecture built around the visual image as the primary unit of communication has created a distinctive ecology for Islamic da'wah that differs significantly from TikTok's video-first, algorithmically egalitarian environment. From its earliest years as a platform, Instagram attracted Muslim creators who recognised the power of high-quality photography and graphic design to communicate Islamic values, aesthetics, and community belonging. The Islamic visual tradition encompassing calligraphy, geometric patterns, architectural photography of mosques and sacred sites, and the beauty of nature understood through a Qur'anic lens translates exceptionally well into the square-format, visually curated aesthetic that Instagram's interface historically privileged (Ar-Ridho et al., 2023; Asrovi et al., 2023).

The literature documents a range of Instagram-specific da'wah content forms. Verse of the Day posts, featuring Qur'anic ayat rendered in elegant calligraphic design against aesthetically pleasing backgrounds, represent perhaps the most widespread form of Islamic content on the platform, functioning as daily spiritual touchstones for followers who encounter them in their feeds. Baidawi & Ismail's (2023) detailed study of the Instagram account @hanan_attaki belonging to one of Indonesia's most followed Islamic preachers, Ustaz Hanan Attaki demonstrates how this simple format can serve as a gateway to deeper religious engagement when accompanied by thoughtful, contemporary-language commentary that connects Qur'anic wisdom to the challenges of modern life. Similarly, Nabila et al., (2023) analysis of prophetic communication on Instagram reveals that accounts employing what they term a 'prophetic communication style' characterised by gentleness, empathy, practical wisdom, and positive framing generate substantially higher engagement and follower loyalty than accounts adopting more legalistic or confrontational approaches.

5. Instagram Features and Multi-Modal Da'wah

The evolution of Instagram's feature set over the past decade has progressively enriched the communicative repertoire available to da'i on the platform. The introduction of Instagram Stories in 2016 enabled preachers to share ephemeral, behind-the-scenes content that humanises them for followers, providing glimpses of their daily lives, scholarly activities, family interactions, and personal spiritual practices in ways that build parasocial

intimacy and trust. The subsequent launch of Instagram Live facilitated real-time Q&A sessions, virtual study circles (*halaqah*), and interactive *du'a* gatherings that created new modalities of synchronous communal religious experience for geographically dispersed Muslim communities (Efendi et al., 2023; Sopiyan et al., 2025).

Reels Instagram's short-video feature introduced in 2020 in explicit competition with TikTok has partially bridged the gap between the two platforms in terms of their *da'wah* affordances. Many *da'i* now maintain presences on both platforms, adapting the same core content to each platform's distinct audience expectations and interaction norms. The carousel post format, which allows creators to string together up to ten sequential images or graphics within a single post, has been adopted by numerous Islamic educators for what might be described as 'micro-lecture' *da'wah* presenting step-by-step explanations of Islamic concepts, hadith commentary, or *fiqh* guidance in a scrollable, infographic-style format that suits audiences who prefer reading to watching (Hidayatullah et al., 2024; Ar-Ridho et al., 2023). This format's shareability each carousel can be directly forwarded to Instagram Direct Messages or saved to a user's personal collection has made it a particularly effective vehicle for *da'wah* content that audiences wish to return to for reference.

6. Cross-Platform Dynamics, Challenges, And Ethical Considerations

One of the most theoretically significant insights to emerge from recent scholarship on digital *da'wah* is the recognition that social media algorithms function as consequential mediators of Islamic religious knowledge shaping not only who sees *da'wah* content but, more subtly, what kinds of *da'wah* content it is structurally advantageous to produce. The incentive structures embedded in TikTok's and Instagram's algorithms reward content that generates high engagement measured through likes, comments, shares, saves, and watch-time and penalise content that produces passive, low-interaction viewing. Since emotionally stimulating content whether through humour, controversy, beauty, or inspiration—typically outperforms calm, measured, scholarly content on these metrics, *da'i* face a structural pressure to adapt their communicative style in ways that may not always align with the demands of rigorous Islamic pedagogy (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024)(Amin, 2025; Fitriansyah & Lubis, 2023).

Alfi et al's, (2025) comprehensive study of the 'digital ummah' in the age of algorithms documents this tension with particular analytical precision, arguing that algorithmic mediation has contributed to a systematic 'spectacularisation' of Islamic content a drift toward the visually dramatic, emotionally intense, and controversially provocative that serves platform engagement metrics at the potential cost of theological depth and scholarly integrity. Imam et al., (2025) parallel study of participatory Muslim culture on social media identifies what they term 'creative-collaborative *da'wah*' as a promising counter-tendency, in which networks of Muslim creators support each other in producing algorithmically competitive content without sacrificing scholarly substance. Both studies agree, however, that navigating the tension between algorithmic optimisation and Islamic communicative ethics constitutes perhaps the central challenge facing contemporary digital *da'i*.

7. Religious Authority, Legitimacy, and the Problem of Digital Preachers

The democratisation of *da'wah* through social media has generated acute tensions around religious authority and legitimacy that the literature addresses from multiple angles. On one level, the emergence of these platforms as primary channels for Islamic learning has genuinely expanded educational equity, empowering Muslims in regions with limited access to qualified scholarship including remote rural communities, Muslim minority contexts in Western countries, and communities in the Global South where formal Islamic education infrastructure remains underdeveloped to access high-quality religious instruction from recognised scholars worldwide (Ali, 2025; Kerim, 2024). On another level, however, the same platforms have simultaneously elevated a new class of Islamic communicators whose authority derives not from scholarly credentials but from digital charisma, market savviness,

and platform fluency. Raya's (2024) critical study of digital Islam in Indonesia published in the SCOPUS-indexed journal *Contemporary Islam* argues that the emergence of these 'digital ulama' has created a new religious marketplace characterised by intense competition for audience attention, the commodification of Islamic teachings through monetisation strategies, and the progressive subordination of theological substance to audience entertainment preferences. ('Ulyan, 2023) similarly concludes that while social media has expanded access to Islamic learning, it has introduced a form of 'authority by popularity' that is fundamentally incompatible with the epistemological foundations of traditional Islamic scholarship (Adel & Numan, 2023; Masruha et al., 2025).

The consequences of this authority shift extend beyond questions of scholarly credentialing to reshape the religious self-understanding of Muslim audiences themselves. Bahrudin & Waehama (2024) find that constant exposure to algorithmically curated Islamic content potentially drawn from sources of deeply uneven scholarly quality is producing ambivalent effects among Muslim audiences, particularly younger ones: on one hand, increased religious knowledge, stronger Islamic identity, and greater engagement with religious practice; on the other, concerning tendencies toward religious fragmentation, ideological polarisation, and a progressive erosion of trust in institutionally qualified scholarship in favour of more accessible but potentially less reliable digital sources. This duality captures what is perhaps the defining tension of contemporary digital da'wah—that the same structural conditions enabling its remarkable reach and accessibility are simultaneously those most liable to undermine the scholarly integrity and communal accountability upon which trustworthy Islamic communication has historically depended.

8. Misinformation, Radicalisation, and Content Moderation

The literature also addresses the darker potentials of social media as a platform for Islamic content specifically, the risk that algorithmic amplification of emotionally engaging content may inadvertently facilitate the spread of religious misinformation, extremist ideologies, or intolerant sectarian content. Wahyuningsih et al. (2025) identify this as one of the most significant challenges facing social media-based Islamic religious education, noting that the same algorithmic dynamics that can amplify genuine da'wah can equally amplify theologically distorted or ideologically extreme Islamic content, particularly when such content is emotionally provocative and thus naturally optimised for high engagement. Supriatna et al., (2025) offer a more optimistic counter-argument, contending that social media platforms when used thoughtfully by da'i committed to moderation and inclusivity can serve as powerful instruments for promoting religious tolerance and countering extremist narratives, citing Indonesian examples of da'i who have leveraged TikTok and Instagram precisely to reach young Muslims who might otherwise be vulnerable to online radicalisation.

The platform governance dimension of this challenge remains underexplored in the Islamic da'wah literature, which tends to treat TikTok and Instagram as neutral infrastructure rather than as politically and commercially motivated actors whose content moderation decisions have profound implications for which forms of Islamic expression achieve visibility and which are suppressed. Kerim et al., (2025) comparative study of Islamic preaching in Kazakhstan is notable for beginning to address this gap, documenting how content moderation decisions by global platforms can systematically disadvantage Islamic content in certain national contexts. Future research would benefit from more direct engagement with platform governance scholarship and with the perspectives of platform operators on the specific challenges of moderating religious content.

DISCUSSION

1. Tiktok Versus Instagram For Da'wah

A direct comparative analysis of TikTok and Instagram as da'wah platforms reveals both significant differences and important complementarities between the two ecosystems. TikTok's primary strength lies in its unparalleled capacity for organic reach to new audiences—its recommendation algorithm's willingness to surface content to non-subscribers makes it the most powerful tool currently available for expanding Islamic content beyond existing networks, rendering it particularly valuable for what classical da'wah scholarship terms *da'wah ila ghayri al-muslimin* or for reaching lapsed and nominally practising Muslims not actively seeking religious content (Jima'ain, 2023; Rokibullah & Laksana, 2025). Instagram, by contrast, excels in depth of engagement with existing communities: its visual richness, feature diversity, and community infrastructure make it better suited for sustained Islamic education and the cultivation of long-term relationships between da'i and their audiences less a discovery platform than a space where initial interest sparked by a TikTok video can mature into sustained commitment to Islamic learning and practice (Ar-Ridho et al., 2023; Baidawi & Ismail, 2023). Several studies document da'i who explicitly manage their cross-platform presence with this complementarity in mind, deploying TikTok as a discovery funnel and Instagram as a community depth platform a strategy reflecting sophisticated platform literacy and effective da'wah communication design (Choirin et al., 2024; Najib & Rohman, 2025).

Demographically, while both platforms skew toward younger audiences, Instagram's user base includes a somewhat older and more economically affluent demographic than TikTok, which remains disproportionately popular among those in the eighteen-to-twenty-four age bracket. This distinction carries direct communicative implications: da'i on Instagram can assume somewhat greater baseline religious literacy and a stronger appetite for substantively complex content, whereas TikTok da'wah must typically account for lower prior religious knowledge and reduced tolerance for extended attention. The educational da'wah literature addresses this explicitly, with several researchers recommending that da'i calibrate the complexity and format of their content to platform-specific audience characteristics rather than mechanically reposting identical material across platforms without adaptation (Wahyu & Nugroho, 2023; Ridho & Sabil, 2023). Taken together, these differences suggest that the most strategically sophisticated and theologically responsible approach to digital da'wah is not a choice between the two platforms but a deliberate, audience-aware integration of both within a coherent communicative framework.

2. Toward A Framework For Ethical Digital Da'wah

Drawing together the findings of this systematic review, it is possible to articulate a provisional framework for what might be termed 'ethical digital da'wah' a set of principles guiding Muslim communicators seeking to leverage TikTok and Instagram effectively without compromising the theological integrity, scholarly responsibility, and communicative ethics that Islamic tradition demands. The first principle is **scholarly grounding**: effective and responsible da'wah, whatever its medium, requires engagement with and fidelity to the Islamic scholarly tradition not necessarily through formal academic credentials, but through demonstrated familiarity with Qur'an and Sunnah, awareness of jurisprudential diversity, and epistemic humility about the limits of one's knowledge (Ulyan, 2023; Armita, 2025). This is inseparable from a second principle of **audience centrisms balanced by doctrinal fidelity**: da'i must understand and address the specific concerns of their audiences while refusing to distort Islamic teachings merely to maximise appeal. The most effective digital da'i are those who have developed 'platform wisdom' the capacity to communicate authentic teachings in platform-resonant registers without sacrificing theological substance a capacity requiring not only scholarship and communication skills but sustained critical reflection on how platform architectures shape communicative possibilities (Chalim et al., 2025; Choirin et al., 2024).

Equally essential are two further principles that together constitute the ethical infrastructure of responsible digital da'wah. The principle of **ethical consistency** demands that da'i maintain alignment between the Islamic values they proclaim and their actual conduct within digital environments encompassing their manner of engaging critics, transparency regarding commercial sponsorships, attribution practices, and willingness to acknowledge errors. Munawaroh & Marlina (2025) identify this congruence between proclaimed values and platform conduct as a particularly decisive determinant of audience trust, noting that followers are acutely sensitive to perceived hypocrisy in public religious figures. Finally, **community accountability** requires that da'i maintain meaningful connections with established scholarly communities, institutions, and local congregations rather than operating as isolated digital personalities answerable only to algorithmic feedback. The literature consistently identifies such community embeddedness including peer accountability with other scholars, engagement with mosque and educational institutions, and receptiveness to scholarly critique as a significant protective factor against the doctrinal drift and authority inflation that rapid digital fame can invite. Solahudin & Fakhruroji's (2019) foundational study of Indonesian Islamic learning communities emphasises the importance of embedding digital da'wah *within*, rather than against, the institutional structures of traditional Islamic learning, an insight that remains fully as relevant in the age of TikTok and Instagram as it was in the era of Islamic websites and blogs.

D. CONCLUSION

This systematic review has examined the rapidly expanding body of scholarship on TikTok and Instagram as contemporary media for Islamic da'wah, synthesising findings from a diverse corpus of empirical studies spanning multiple national and methodological contexts. The analysis has demonstrated that both platforms offer remarkable opportunities for the dissemination of Islamic teachings to unprecedented scales and demographic profiles of audience, while simultaneously introducing profound challenges that require careful navigation by da'i, religious communities, and Islamic institutions. TikTok's algorithmic egalitarianism and short-video ecology make it a powerful tool for reaching new audiences and engaging younger Muslims in accessible Islamic discourse, while Instagram's visual richness and community infrastructure support deeper, more sustained forms of Islamic education and community building. The two platforms are best understood not as competitors but as complementary elements of a broader digital da'wah ecosystem that effective contemporary preachers can leverage in a strategically integrated fashion.

The literature also establishes clearly that digital da'wah is not a uniformly positive development. The commodification of religious authority, the risk of doctrinal distortion under algorithmic pressure, the ethical complexities of entertainment-oriented religious content, and the potential for platforms to amplify misinformation or extremist content alongside genuine scholarship represent real and documented challenges that cannot be dismissed. Addressing these challenges requires not only platform-level policy responses including more thoughtful content moderation approaches to religious material but also internal Islamic scholarly engagement with the theological and ethical questions that digital media environments raise, and the development of da'i training programmes that equip religious communicators with both scholarly depth and critical platform literacy.

Looking forward, several research directions emerge as priorities for the field. First, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of digital da'wah consumption on religious knowledge, practice, and community affiliation are needed to complement the cross-sectional and case-study designs that currently dominate the literature. Second, comparative research examining digital da'wah dynamics across different national and cultural contexts moving beyond the current Indonesia-centric bias of the field would provide important insights into how institutional religious authority structures, political contexts, and platform regulatory

environments shape the possibilities and limits of digital da'wah in different Muslim societies. Third, research engaging more directly with the algorithmic and platform governance dimensions of digital da'wah including studies that examine how platform content moderation decisions affect Islamic content in particular would help situate digital da'wah scholarship within the broader field of platform studies and digital governance.

Finally, there is a need for more sustained theological engagement with the questions raised by digital da'wah from Islamic scholarly and jurisprudential perspectives as a complement to the social scientific analyses that currently dominate the field. Islamic scholars of communication and media are beginning to develop the conceptual tools needed for this engagement, but the conversation between traditional Islamic communicative ethics and contemporary digital media theory remains in its early stages. Advancing this dialogue represents perhaps the most intellectually ambitious and practically consequential task on the research agenda for the study of TikTok, Instagram, and Islamic da'wah in the contemporary world.

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