

Challenges and development of contemporary islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to identify various challenges and developments of contemporary Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Method – This research relies on a qualitative approach with a literature study method, where data is collected through searching written sources such as books, academic journals, news articles, historical documents, and online publications related to the development of Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Result – *Da'is* (Islamic preacher) in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan face several challenges in spreading Islam, such as: (1) The World Trade Center incident in the United States on September 11, 2001 which negatively impacted the image of Islam among East Asia society; (2) Problems related to funerals; (3) Difficulty in finding a place to perform ablution; (4) Difficulties in integrating Islamic values into East Asia traditions, and; (5) The difficulty of the older generation in passing on Islamic knowledge to the younger generation.

Implication – This research could encourage: (1) Train and empower Muslim youth in the region so that they can develop a da'wah approach that integrates Islamic teachings with culture and logy, as well as have broad insights and always follow the latest developments; (2) Understand the characteristics, interests, and needs of the local community; (3) Linking Islamic teachings to relevant social issues and offering inspiring solutions, and; (4) Muslims in the region are expected to demonstrate good behaviour and be consistent with the Islamic teachings they preach.

Originality/Value – The novelty of this study lies in the more comprehensive and up-to-date presentation of the dynamics of Islam in East Asia, especially related to da'wah challenges and strategies in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. With a focus on a wide period, from 1950 to 2025, this study not only provides insight into the changing attitudes and acceptance of Islam by society but also presents recommendations for developing more effective da'wah strategies in the future.

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Kata kunci:

Dakwah Islam kontemporer, tantangan para *da'i*, penyebaran Islam di Jepang, penyebaran Islam di Korea Selatan, penyebaran Islam di Taiwan.

Abstrak

Tujuan – Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi berbagai tantangan dan perkembangan da'wah Islam kontemporer di Jepang, Korea Selatan, dan Taiwan.

Metode – Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi literatur, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui pencarian sumber tertulis seperti buku, jurnal akademik, artikel berita, dokumen historis, dan publikasi online yang berkaitan dengan perkembangan da'wah Islam di Jepang, Korea Selatan, dan Taiwan.

Hasil – *Da'is* (penyabar ajaran Islam) di Jepang, Korea Selatan, dan Taiwan menghadapi beberapa tantangan dalam menyebarkan Islam, antara lain: (1) Insiden World Trade Center di Amerika Serikat pada 11 September 2001 yang berdampak negatif terhadap citra Islam di masyarakat Asia Timur; (2) Masalah terkait upacara pemakaman; (3) Kesulitan menemukan tempat untuk berwudhu; (4) Kesulitan mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam tradisi Asia Timur; dan; (5) Kesulitan generasi tua dalam meneruskan pengetahuan Islam kepada generasi muda.

Implikasi – Penelitian ini dapat mendorong: (1) Melatih dan memberdayakan pemuda Muslim di wilayah tersebut agar dapat mengembangkan pendekatan da'wah yang mengintegrasikan ajaran Islam dengan budaya dan teknologi, serta memiliki wawasan yang luas dan selalu mengikuti perkembangan terbaru; (2) Memahami karakteristik, minat, dan kebutuhan masyarakat lokal; (3) Menghubungkan ajaran Islam dengan isu-isu sosial yang relevan dan menawarkan solusi yang inspiratif; dan; (4) Muslim di wilayah tersebut diharapkan menunjukkan perilaku yang baik dan konsisten dengan ajaran Islam yang mereka ajarkan.

Orisinalitas/Nilai – Keunikan studi ini terletak pada penyajian yang lebih komprehensif dan terkini mengenai dinamika Islam di Asia Timur, terutama terkait tantangan dan strategi dakwah di Jepang, Korea Selatan, dan Taiwan. Dengan fokus pada periode yang luas, dari 1950 hingga 2025, penelitian ini tidak hanya memberikan wawasan tentang perubahan sikap dan penerimaan Islam oleh masyarakat tetapi juga menyajikan rekomendasi untuk mengembangkan strategi dakwah yang lebih efektif di masa depan.

Introduction

Along with the progress of human civilization, there has been an increase in scientific capacity that continues to develop, driven by technological advances (Mujiati & Oktavia, 2023). Although technological innovation positively impacts the physical aspects of civilization, on the mental and spiritual side, technological advances also cause negative phenomena related to religiosity (Mohamed, 2020). The development of technology and the dominance of scientific logic have resulted in a decline in moral values among religious people in living their lives, especially when logic is considered more important than religious teachings without careful selection (Rahmawati et al., 2024). This reflects a new mindset in modern society, where individuals strive to appear intelligent, non-conservative, and scientifically thoughtful (Edris, 2017). Technology is considered a tool that makes human life easier and encourages individual freedom and opinion, so that the collective consciousness or community, which is very important in religious life, begins to be neglected (Pratama, 2023).

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Da'wah activities require various effective strategies to succeed in all aspects of people's lives. The plan must include optimal planning and management of da'wah. Islam emphasizes that da'wah is a critical mission that can be carried out by every Muslim worldwide, even if it is only with one verse (Muvid, 2023). One of the challenges in da'wah is how to convey messages to diverse communities in terms of culture, ethnicity, and profession, as well as how to deal with modernity that affects various groups, both young and old, through contemporary issues today. Therefore, da'wah strategies need to be designed to overcome modern problems with a relevant da'wah approach that is in accordance with the context of the times (Majid, 2024).

Contemporary Islamic da'wah refers to a da'wah approach that utilizes modern technology, which can be identified through three leading indicators, namely: (1) The use of modern technology in da'wah; (2) Application of materials relevant to current conditions, and; (3) Utilization of media in accordance with the times (Marfu, 2018). In the context of modern life, individuals are often trapped in dependence on technology, which has the potential to shift their belief in God's power. There is a tendency to consider technology as the leading solution to various problems, thus creating an attitude that seems to favour technology (Fiqri, 2024). From an East Asian perspective, this study looks at technological advances in countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, where people show great pride in their ability to master technology. This often leads to a decrease in trust in religion, and in some cases, even leads to atheism (Ha, 2024). To face the challenges of modern life patterns through contemporary da'wah, there are three essential indicators, namely: (1) Da'i who is adaptive to the contemporary context; (2) Da'wah materials that are relevant to current issues, and (3) the use of cutting-edge technological media in da'wah activities. These three aspects are interconnected and reflect the patterns of modern society's life, including food, entertainment, clothing, and beliefs (Choirin et al., 2024). We can explore contemporary Islamic da'wah practices in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan through this background.

Da'i has a crucial role, especially in religious education, where the most effective learning method is through the example of educators or preachers. Da'i serve as role models and examples for society, considering that they have high credibility. In the context of daily life, especially related to food choices in countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, East Asians tend to consume foods derived from pork, dogs, and other illegal products, including sausages made from animal

blood in South Korea. Therefore, da'i need to have the ability to handle issues related to animal slaughter in accordance with Islamic principles (Rijal & Alhabsyi, 2024).

JID | 4 In this case, a relevant Islamic da'wah strategy is needed to establish a restaurant that serves typical East Asian cuisine that has been adapted to Islamic law and meets halal standards. This strategy can also accommodate Muslim and non-Muslim consumers to enjoy halal traditional dishes together, by differentiating places and tableware according to their needs (Ha, 2024). From an entertainment perspective, ranging from modern entertainment rides such as Disneyland to traditional tourist attractions, da'i must also collaborate with tourism industry players or local governments to build facilities that meet the needs of Muslims, such as halal restaurants and mosques to carry out prayers during tourist trips (Mukhid et al., 2023).

Significant challenges in Islamic da'wah today are related to faith, especially among East Asian peoples who are mostly atheists and highly glorify technology. In this context, da'is must implement thoughtful and contemporary Islamic da'wah strategies so that people can accept and implement Islamic teachings in their daily lives without reducing their interest in science and technology (Hati, 2018). Modern science and technology should be used to strengthen their belief in God's overwhelming power (Hariyadi et al., 2024). Therefore, the role of da'i in contemporary Islamic da'wah must function as a living machine that can adapt and evolve along with the times, utilize technology for good, and approach people who tend to deify technology. Thus, today's da'i needs to have a deep understanding of religious science, keep up with technological developments, have broad insights, and use Islamic da'wah methods that are in accordance with the conditions of modern society (Aulia et al., 2024).

Da'wah materials that are relevant to the contemporary context need to be carefully prepared to address the issues faced by modern society. Ideally, the material should be able to reach the specific aspects of da'wah described earlier directly. In contemporary societies, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, the understanding of religion is often influenced by various challenges that arise in daily life. Therefore, the material presented in the da'wah must provide solutions to these problems to be more easily accepted and touch the hearts and minds of the people who are the target of Islamic da'wah (Efendi et al., 2024).

Today, almost all individuals, especially da'is, use various technological facilities to support their preaching and answer the questions of modern society through contemporary Islamic da'wah. The internet has the potential to become a very significant Islamic da'wah tool in this era, for example, by collaborating with local governments to develop Islamic applications that can be accessed by Muslims and non-Muslims, so that they can satisfy their curiosity and gradually learn the teachings of Islam. In addition, creating websites or blogs on popular search platforms in certain countries, such as Naver in South Korea, can also make it easier for the general public to find relevant information (Sihombing et al., 2024). Mass media and social media use as a means of contemporary Islamic da'wah have positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, information has become easier, faster, and accessible without space and time restrictions. However, on the other hand, mass media and social media can also be a means to spread propaganda that is contrary to religion. Sometimes, the use of media in Islamic da'wah is not only oriented to constructive values, but can also be abused by some parties in a manipulative way. This is where the integrity of a da'i is important (Asrizallis, 2024).

This research differs from previous research with a more in-depth focus on Muslim communities in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, which are minority groups, as well as Islamic da'wah strategies applied to spread Islam in the region. Despite being made up of a variety of racial backgrounds involving immigrants, the East Asian region, especially Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, often faces discriminatory actions against minorities rooted in racial issues, which are usually in the spotlight in the mass media and social media. Therefore, da'is must formulate effective Islamic da'wah strategies to address this challenge. In addition, research specifically examining contemporary Islamic da'wah strategy in East Asia is still very limited, especially in the regions of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Previous research has highlighted the issue of the development of Islam in general and racial conflicts in the East Asian region, such as: (1) The study "Dynamics of the development of Islam in Japan in the 20th century" which discusses the growth of religious freedom and the establishment of mosques by Islamic organizations in Japan (Zulhilmy, 2008); (2) The study "Islamophobia and the Politics of Representation of Islam in Korea" which outlines the fear of the South Korea people towards Islam due to the news of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) terrorism in 2017, resulting in discrimination against Muslim minority groups in South Korea (Koo, 2018), as well as; (3) The study "Images of Islam in Taiwan: from Chinese Islam to Global Islam" which describes the life of Hui Muslims in Taiwan from 1930 to 2019 (Hsiu-Ping, 2019).

In addition to the research already mentioned, several previous studies provide in-depth insights into the dynamics of Islamic da'wah in East Asia. For example, Rano Turaeva & Michael Brose (2023) investigated the adaptation strategies of da'is in South Korea in dealing with societies with high levels of secularization. They found that cultural approaches (such as combining Confucian values with Islamic teachings) were more effective. Still, the study did not address the role of local Muslim youth in the da'wah process. In Taiwan, Chris Meserole (2020) analysed government policies towards the Muslim community, showing that da'wah is hampered by strict supervision from the state. Still, this study lacks exploration of digital media as an alternative. Meanwhile, in Japan, Elif Büşra Kocalan (2021) noted an increase in the number of converts through personal interactions, but did not analyse the socio-economic factors that influence conversion.

Studies on technology and da'wah have also developed. Zulfa Ilma Nuriana & Nisrina Salwa (2024) emphasize that platforms such as YouTube and TikTok have a significant role in the spread of Islamic content in East Asia. Still, their research is limited to Indonesian Muslim audiences in East Asia, without considering local communities. On the other hand, Jing Zhang, Wenlong Song, & Yang Liu (2025) found that social media algorithms in East Asia block religious content due to moderation bias. However, these findings have not been tested in cross-cultural da'wah. In addition, Izzudin Hitimala's (2023) study of da'wah podcasts in South Korea highlights the participation of non-Muslim listeners. Still, it does not address language and cultural challenges when similar content is implemented in other countries.

Several other gaps have been identified in the literature. First, most of the research focuses more on urban areas, while rural areas with limited access to da'wah are often overlooked (Tsiotas et al., 2023). Second, comparative analysis between Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan is still rare, despite significant differences in Muslim policies and demographics (Michael, 2024). Third, the impact of globalization on Islamic perceptions, such as Islamophobia or interest in Sufism, has not been

studied in depth in the context of da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Hoesterey, 2022). However, the main gap in previous research lies in the lack of comparative analysis of da'wah strategies in the country, especially in the face of unique challenges such as: (1) Lack of literature on halal tourism-based da'wah approaches in Japan (Damakhiroh & Sagena, 2024), (2) Limited studies on the effectiveness of social media such as Naver and LINE in Islamic da'wah in South Korea (Amalia, 2024), as well as; (3) The absence of an in-depth study on the role of organizations such as PCINU (Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Nahdlatul Ulama) and PCIM (Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah) in strengthening the da'wah network in Taiwan (F. Rahmawati et al., 2024b). This research makes a unique contribution by presenting a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of contemporary Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan from a multidisciplinary perspective, combining the study of history, sociology, and digital communication.

The rapid and progressive development of technology in the societies of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan certainly poses challenges in the aspect of religiosity, with the primary focus of this research being on the development of Islamic da'wah. These challenges can be seen from the modernity that has emerged in East Asia. Modernism among East Asian peoples has changed many aspects of their lives, including understanding, traditions, social structures, and perspectives on religious teachings. All aspects of life now prioritize technology, science, and lifestyles that tend to be individualistic, egoistic, and competitive, as well as separating religious elements from daily life, including in the political realm. Therefore, secularism is the main issue that must be faced in the Islamic da'wah movement in the East Asian region, especially in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Dihyah, 2024).

The significance of this research lies in the evidence-based recommendations it offers for developing da'wah policies. For example, this study proposes collaboration between the government and Islamic organizations in building halal infrastructure (such as restaurant certification and worship facilities) as a soft diplomacy tool (Yusuf et al., 2025). In addition, this study also enriched the theory of da'wah communication by introducing the framework of the "Da'wah Literacy Index" (Hakim & Dahri, 2025), which integrates technology, cultural contexts, and social issues. This approach has never been tested in the three countries. Another theoretical contribution is strengthening the concept of transnational da'wah through the analysis of the role of Indonesian migrants in da'wah in Taiwan (Arrozi & Musyafak, 2021). These findings fill a gap in the literature on cross-border da'wah that has been neglected in Islamic studies in East Asia. Thus, this research serves as an academic reference and a guide for da'wah practitioners and policymakers in designing inclusive and sustainable strategies in Muslim minority areas.

Challenges in contemporary Islamic da'wah also arise from the object or target of Islamic da'wah itself. Influenced by scientific and technological advances, an increasingly complex society shows an attitude of individualism, secularism, and even atheism. In addition, problems in contemporary Islamic da'wah also come from Muslims who tend to be less innovative in adapting da'wah methods to the development of modernization (Rafik, 2023). Therefore, this research has the following objectives, namely: (1) To describe the development of contemporary Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, as well as; (2) Identify contemporary Islamic da'wah strategies in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in facing the challenges of modern lifestyles that emphasize freedom of

thought, human rights, humanism, pluralism, and others. Thus, the researcher formulated the title "Challenges and Development of Contemporary Islamic Da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (1950-2025)".

By analysing these developments, we can understand Muslim communities' challenges and opportunities in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. A deeper understanding is expected to facilitate more effective measures in spreading Islam and building a strong Muslim community in the region. The novelty of this study lies in the more comprehensive and up-to-date presentation of the dynamics of Islam in East Asia, especially related to da'wah challenges and strategies in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. With a focus on a wide period, from 1950 to 2025, this study provides insight into society's changing attitudes and acceptance of Islam. It presents recommendations for developing more effective da'wah strategies in the future. The results of this study are expected to be a significant reference for academics, policymakers, and da'wah practitioners in designing a responsive approach to the context of Muslim communities in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

Research Methods

This research relies on a qualitative approach with a literature study method, where data is collected through searching written sources such as books, academic journals, news articles, historical documents, and online publications related to the development of Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The qualitative research method emphasizes a deep understanding of social phenomena and human experience (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative approach seeks to explore the meaning, context, and viewpoint of an individual or group through various data collection techniques (Stadtländer, 2009). In this approach, researchers are actively involved in data collection and analysis, which is often flexible and adaptable. The result of a qualitative approach is generally a narrative or description rich in detail, providing deeper insights into behaviours, beliefs, and social dynamics (Jamshed, 2014). By paying attention to social and cultural contexts, qualitative approaches allow researchers to understand the complexity of the human experience and make meaningful contributions in various disciplines, such as social sciences and communication (Lune & Berg, 2017). One of the methods included in the qualitative approach is the literature review method (Martin, 2023).

This study applies a systematic literature review method to analyse the characteristics and attributes of Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, emphasizing the development and strategy of Islamic da'wah in the region. This literature review aims to clarify the fundamental essence, principles, and guidelines that can be implemented, as well as the intrinsic quality of Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan through synthesizing data from various scientific sources. These sources are critically evaluated to identify the challenges and progress of Islamic da'wah from 1950 to 2025. The data analysis methods applied include content analysis and historical analysis to investigate the dynamics of da'wah, the reactions of local communities, and government policies in the three countries (Mahanum, 2021). With this approach, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive insight into the evolution of Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in a distinctive social, political, and cultural context.

Results and Discussion

Contemporary Islamic Da'wah in Japan

1. Da'wah Challenge

JID | 8 The history of the development of Islam in Japan can be traced back to the 1950s. During this period, Islamic organizations, including the Japan Muslim Association, the first organization established by Japanese citizens, began to emerge. Along with the progress of Islamic da'wah, various other organizations were also formed, such as the Islamic Center Japan, the Islamic Culture Society-Japan, and the Japan Islamic Congress. These organizations contributed significantly to the spread of Islamic da'wah in Japan, and efforts to spread Islamic da'wah in Japan continue to this day. One of the biggest challenges faced by Islamic da'wah organizations in Japan is the existence of negative propaganda against Islam after the attack on the World Trade Center in the United States on September 11, 2001. In addition, many da'is from Japan choose to continue their education in Arab countries to study the Islamic religion, before returning to Japan to preach Islam. The Japanese government also supports the Islamic Center Japan in organizing seminars, dialogues, and conferences to support Islamic da'wah activities. Da'is who have mastered Islamic religious knowledge usually form Islamic da'wah communities and are active in big cities such as Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Nagoya, and Hiroshima (Imelda, 2023).

The obstacles in Islamic da'wah in Japan today relate to the limited number of da'i, especially those with Japanese language skills. In addition, there is a shortage of imams who can fill the position of high imam in mosques. Therefore, the Japanese government continues to open job opportunities for Muslims from abroad to play the role of da'i and mosque administrators in Japan. In addition, the issue of funerals is also a significant challenge. The high cost of buying and renting cemetery land makes it very difficult to access cemetery land in major cities, except in some agricultural regions in Japan. It is estimated that in the coming years, the issue of burial grounds for Muslims living in urban areas will need to be addressed immediately to avoid difficulties in the future (Budianto, 2024).

The number of mosques in Japan continues to increase every year. However, several challenges exist, including the lack of handwashing facilities in some worship halls. Public toilets in Japan are generally dry toilets that only come with tissues and a sink for washing hands. Sinks are often used as an alternative for Muslims in Japan to perform ablution when they are in a place that does not provide ablution facilities. Regarding accommodation, the Japanese government has started providing several hotels that offer services per Sharia principles, including halal food, access to prayer rooms, prayer mats in rooms, and the Qur'an. However, the Japanese government has not fully prepared to welcome Muslim tourists who come during Ramadan, where no hotels or inns provide suhoor meals to support fasting (Nabila et al., 2024).

The development of Islamic da'wah in Japan has shown significant progress in recent decades, especially with organizations such as the Japan Muslim Association and the Japan Islamic Center that actively spread Islamic teachings (Badawi, 2023). However, the main challenges da'is face in Japan are language and cultural barriers. Recent surveys show that only about 15% of da'i in Japan can communicate fluently in Japanese, thus hindering the effective delivery of da'wah messages (Nashrulloh et al., 2024). In addition, Japanese culture highly values politeness and social harmony, which makes people reluctant to discuss religious topics openly, especially those considered foreign

or controversial (Nakayama, 2019). Another cultural challenge is the Japanese public's lack of understanding of Islam, which is often associated with negative stereotypes due to global media coverage. A Kyoto University study (2024) found that 62% of Japanese respondents have a negative perception of Islam, especially after the event of international terrorism. This is exacerbated by the lack of accurate and easy-to-understand Islamic literature in Japanese (Nia, 2025). On the other hand, the Japanese government's policy of being neutral towards religion is a challenge in itself, due to the lack of structural support for the development of da'wah, such as the difficulty of obtaining permits for the construction of mosques in the city centre (Shiraishi & Terada, 2024).

2. Efforts to Respond to Challenges

Mosques in major Japanese cities serve as information centers about Islam for Japanese people interested in learning more. The mosque provides services and question-and-answer sessions in Japanese and English. Some mosques in major Japanese cities also offer accommodation for visitors who come on weekends. Since the Japanese government introduced visa extensions for Iranian, Bangladeshi, and Pakistani citizens in 2013, the number of mosques has increased significantly (Pratama, 2023). This contributed to the development of Islamic da'wah in Japan. The diversity of the Muslim community is evident, with Shia Muslims from Iran living side by side with Sunni Muslims. The Indonesian Muslim community is the largest Muslim community in Japan, but Pakistani Muslims show higher activity in establishing and managing mosques. In 2021, Pakistani Muslims also recorded the highest percentage of marriages to Japanese natives, thanks to their prominence in the country's business field (Raymo et al., 2022).

Pakistani Muslims have formed various Islamic organizations with the primary goal of establishing mosques and spreading Islamic da'wah in Japan. One example of an Islamic organization founded by Pakistani Muslims is the Islamic Circle of Japan, which was founded in 1992. This organization played a crucial role in the construction and management of the Asuka Mosque, Gytoku Mosque, and Tatebayashi Mosque, as well as in acquiring land for constructing other mosques in Ibaraki Prefecture. In 1994, the Islamic Circle of Japan successfully built the Otsuka Mosque in Tokyo and planned to open more mosques there. Until 2025, Japan will have 91 mosques (Minarti et al., 2025).

The Japanese government has taken significant steps in developing the halal tourism sector, focusing on improving services that include the availability of halal restaurants and food and the accessibility of places of worship. The increasing number of Muslim tourists has prompted the Japanese government to strengthen the halal tourism industry by providing suitable and much-needed facilities for Muslim tourists. This reflects Japan's commitment to providing optimal service through the *omotenashi* principle, which emphasizes hospitality to travellers. To support the development of halal tourism, the Japanese government has collaborated with various Islamic institutions, both local and international, with one of the main goals being to obtain halal certification for the Japanese products offered. When it comes to information regarding halal food, the Japanese government provides access through the www.halalgourmet.jp website, which includes information on the number and location of halal restaurants throughout Japan. The Japanese government is cautious in accessing halal food in Japan, considering the importance of food as a basic human need (Damakhiroh & Sagen, 2024).

In the context of Muslim fashion, since July 2017, Uniqlo, a fashion company, has introduced a collection of Muslim women's fashion in collaboration with a famous Japanese designer, Hana Tajima. In addition, Watashi Japan LLC is also active in producing Muslim-friendly clothing, such as hijabs and cardigans, by adopting kimono elements as a form of acculturation between Muslim and Japanese cultures. These products still maintain religious, cultural, aesthetic, and economic values. Japanese companies are also committed to producing a variety of beauty products that are halal certified. For example, Greate Corporation launched a beauty product line with the Melati brand that uses Indonesian. This product has received halal certification from the Japan Islamic Trust (JIT) in 2017. In the same year, the Japan Islamic Trust (JIT) also provided halal certification for another cosmetic product known as Blanc Elena. In addition, the Japan Islamic Trust (JIT) also issues halal certification in the culinary sector, which is an attraction for Muslim tourists visiting Japan. Restaurants serving traditional Japanese dishes such as miso and sukiyaki have obtained halal certification from the Japan Islamic Trust (JIT). One of the main drivers for a company in Japan to certify halal products is the increasing number of Muslim tourists, especially from Malaysia and Indonesia (Shifra, 2023).

Looking at the data on the number of Muslims from 1950 to 2025 in Japan, giving a definitive answer to this question is a difficult question to answer. One of the factors that makes data on the number of Muslims in Japan difficult to obtain is the view of the Japanese people towards religion as a private matter, so there is no initiative from the Japanese organization or government to count the number of religious believers in the country. Official activities such as censuses or questionnaires related to religion in Japan are almost non-existent (Pratama, 2023). Japanese society tends not to take issue with the existence of one's faith, but instead focuses on maintaining good social and family norms. However, according to information from the Islamic Center in Japan, let us consider the data on the Muslim population in Japan in 2025. It is estimated that there are between 70,000 and 200,000 Muslims in Japan (Minarti et al., 2025).

The personality of Japanese society in the context of contemporary Islamic da'wah shows quite interesting characteristics. Most are not interested in Islam through social media, television, or other communication channels. On the other hand, Japanese people's interest in Islam often arises from their first-hand experience of interacting with a Muslim, whether in the context of tourism, study abroad, business affairs, or other motivations. Socially, they greatly admire the sense of brotherhood among Muslims from various racial backgrounds. In addition, the Japanese are satisfied when the da'is can explain the teachings of Islam clearly. Many Islamic teachings are considered logical and in line with Japanese culture. However, some Japanese citizens convert to Islam for pragmatic reasons, such as marriage, business, or Islamic education scholarships. The slow but stable growth of the Muslim population in Japan can be explained by the ease of social interaction in Japan, the good atmosphere of tolerance in society, and the freedom provided by the Japanese government without any pressure on specific religious groups (Kocalan, 2023).

However, a number of innovations have been made to address these challenges. The "Islamic Literacy Initiative" program, initiated by the Islamic Center Japan in collaboration with several leading universities such as the University of Tokyo and Waseda University, has increased public understanding of Islam through public lectures and interactive workshops (Asikin, 2025). In addition, a new policy from the Japanese Ministry of Tourism regarding developing Muslim-

friendly facilities has prompted an increase in halal restaurants from 300 in 2020 to more than 1,200 by 2024 (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2024). Contemporary da'wah strategies also take advantage of digital platforms and creative content. The YouTube channel "Japanese Muslim" has content explaining Islam in the context of Japanese pop culture, such as anime and manga (Hidayat & Nuri, 2024). This approach has proven effective in reaching out to Japan's younger generation, where recent surveys show a 20% increase in interest in Islam among Japanese teenagers aged 15-24 (Moriguchi et al., 2019).

According to a report from the Japan Islamic Trust (2025), the number of mosques in Japan has shown a significant increase, from only 15 mosques in 1980 to 91 mosques in 2025, with an average growth of 3-4 new mosques every year since 2010 (Islamic Center Japan, 2025). This data shows that although Muslims remain a minority group (only 0.2% of Japan's total population), religious infrastructure continues to grow, especially in urban areas such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2025). Participation in da'wah activities can also be measured through the level of attendance at mosques and Islamic events. A Nippon Research Institute (2025) survey of 500 Muslims in Japan revealed that 65% of respondents attend weekly recitations, while 35% are involved in digital da'wah programs such as webinars or social media content. However, participation from non-Muslim communities is still relatively low, with only 12% having attended interfaith dialogue events (Herrera & Bayat, 2025). The graph below (Table 1) shows the trend of mosque growth and participation in da'wah activities over the past decade.

Table 1. The Growth of Mosques and the Participation of Da'wah Activities in Japan

Year	Number of Mosques	Muslim Participation	Non-Muslim participation
2015	45	58%	8%
2020	72	63%	10%
2025	91	65%	12%

Source: Japan Islamic Trust (2025)

Contemporary Islamic Da'wah in South Korea

1. Da'wah Challenge

To maintain the spirit of Islamic Da'wah amid South Korea's economic challenges in the 1960s, leaders of the country's Muslim community gathered all Muslims at the Seoul City meeting hall in May 1965. This event was held with the theme "Unity and Mutual Encouragement" to encourage the creation of solidarity between Muslims in South Korea. The South Korean Muslim community was later reorganized and formed into the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF), or in Korean, Hanguk Isullam Gyo, with Sabri Suh Jung Kil as chairman and Abdul Aziz Kim as secretary. The Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) was officially recognized by the South Korean Ministry of Culture and Information in 1969. The da'wah program implemented by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) includes several activities, including: (1) Holding monthly recitations; (2) Carrying out da'wah programs from house to house; (3) Printing study modules containing Islamic information based on the Qur'an, Hadith, and current issues regarding the Muslim world; (4) Publishing Islamic books in Korean language to avoid misunderstandings about Islam; (5) Organizing one-hour seminars

every Sunday in mosques involving religious discussions with non-Muslim citizens; (6) Hold Arabic classes every Sunday in mosques; (7) Disseminating Islamic information through various mass media channels (Amalia, 2024).

JID | 12 According to a recent report, only 18% of active da'is in South Korea can communicate well in Korean, resulting in difficulties in effectively conveying da'wah messages to local communities (Paradays, 2025). Korean culture, which strongly emphasizes social harmony and hierarchy, makes conventional da'wah approaches often ineffective, as people tend to be reluctant to discuss religious topics openly (Qian & Zhao, 2025). Another cultural challenge is the still-strong negative stigma against Islam. The Gallup Korea survey (2023) shows that 54% of respondents in South Korea have a negative view of Islam, mainly due to the influence of the media that often associates Islam with terrorism issues (Koo, 2018). In addition, the lack of quality da'wah literature in Korean is a significant barrier. Only 30% of da'wah materials on digital platforms such as Korea Islam Portal use easy-to-understand and straightforward Korean language (Gwag, 2018). On the policy side, the South Korean government recognizes Islam as the official religion, but concrete support is still minimal. For example, only 40% of mosques in Seoul have permanent permits, while the rest operate in rented buildings due to strict zoning regulations (Sports and Tourism Ministry of Culture, 2025). However, there has also been positive progress, such as the "Halal Tourism Initiative" program launched by the government in 2023, which has increased the number of halal restaurants from 200 to more than 500 in the last two years (National Assembly Research Service, 2025).

2. Efforts to Respond to Challenges

The starting point for the spread of modern Islamic da'wah in South Korea is thought to have occurred in the 1950s in Seoul, where Sabir Suh Jung Kil founded a South Korean Muslim organization. Furthermore 1980, an Islamic educational institution was established in Yang In. The institution offers many subjects, including Sharia Economics, Arabic, Comparative Religion, Islamic History, and Islamic Education. On May 5, 1976, the first mosque in South Korea, the Seoul Central Mosque, was established. This mosque has become a symbol of halal tourism in South Korea and is one of the top destinations for Muslim tourists (Alhuzaini et al., 2024).

To form South Korean Muslim youth cadres who are ready to contribute to Islamic da'wah in the future, the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) sends its members to study and deepen Islamic teachings in various countries that provide Islamic study programs with scholarship support from the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) and recipient countries. The recipient countries include the Middle East region, such as Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, as well as the neighboring countries of South Korea, such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Through the collaboration of the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) with countries where the majority of the population is Muslim, until 2023, as many as 87 young South Korean Muslims have had the opportunity to study Islam in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya, and Morocco. They all returned to South Korea and have been the country's central pillar in Islamic da'wah activities since 1980 (Ik et al., 2025).

According to Umayyatun (2017), in the context of contemporary Islamic da'wah, the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) has adopted several approaches to face the challenges of modernization, as follows:

1. Publication: The attack on the World Trade Center in the United States on September 11, 2001, had a significant impact on the perception of Islam in the global community, including in South Korea. To improve this image, the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) actively publishes books, DVDs, and pamphlets that are free of charge to non-Muslims in South Korea, emphasizing that Islam is a religion of peace.
2. Mass Media: Since 2001, the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) has been cooperating with international broadcasters to document and broadcast various activities and lives of Muslims in South Korea. This includes promoting halal tourist attractions, restaurants, and religious activities such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr.
3. Education: The high interest in learning among the South Korean people is used by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) to publish books on Islam and organize seminars open to the public.
4. Mosques: In efforts to promote Islam in mosques, Muslim workers in South Korea who have a membership card with the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) often invite their superiors and co-workers to visit or rest at mosques.
5. Internet: The Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) has also developed websites that the public can access to learn about the teachings of Islam, such as <http://www.koreaislam.com> and <http://blog.daum.net/islamkorea> sites.
6. Establishment of Islamic Cultural Institutes: The Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) has established four Islamic cultural centers in South Korea, including the Korea Institute of Islamic Culture (KIIC) located in Seoul, the Jeju Islamic Cultural Center located on Jeju Island, the Pochon Islamic Center in Poch'on Kyongi-Do, and the Kwangju Islamic Center in Kwangju.

The development of Islamic da'wah in South Korea experienced significant progress in the 1970s, triggered by the initiative of the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF). Since the 1970s, the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) has used education as a tool to spread Islamic da'wah by utilizing the mass media as well as relevant social issues. Entering the 21st century, South Korea has transformed into an Asian country that enjoys economic prosperity and advancements in technology, fashion, and entertainment industries, such as K-pop and K-drama. By 2025, it is estimated that there will be around 200,000 Muslims in South Korea, of whom 75,000 are indigenous South Koreans from various professional backgrounds, including scientists, teachers, economists, soldiers, students, and farmers (Sakinah & Kurniawati, 2025).

To obtain halal certification for restaurants in South Korea, the entire process must follow the policies set by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF). The Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) collaborates with the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) to develop halal products. The enthusiasm of Muslim tourists has prompted the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) to release a travel guide aimed at them, namely "Muslim-Friendly Restaurants in South Korea," as well as an app that shows the direction of the qibla and prayer times, to make the experience of Muslim tourists in South Korea easier. The growth of the halal tourism market has also prompted the South Korean government to cooperate with the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) since March 5, 2015, in the development of halal products such as halal-certified food, beverages, and cosmetics that can be exported or sold in supermarkets in areas frequented by Muslim tourists in South Korea (Aginutami, 2024). Although the acceptance of Islam in South Korea is still slow among indigenous

South Koreans, the indigenous people of South Korea have not been able to integrate Islamic values into their traditions fully. Therefore, da'is need to make great efforts to spread the teachings of Islam in South Korea (Ulumudin et al., 2024). Based on the latest report, the number of mosques has increased from 15 in 2000 to 43 by 2024, with an average growth of 2-3 new mosques every year since 2015. The main da'wah centres are concentrated in metropolitan areas such as Seoul (15 mosques), Busan (7 mosques), and Gwangju (5 mosques), reflecting the migration pattern of foreign Muslims as well as the growth of local converts (Ministry of Justice, 2024).

Table 2. The Growth of Mosques in South Korea

Year	Number of Mosques	Annual Growth
2000	15	-
2010	25	+1.0 Mosques/year
2020	35	+2.0 Mosques/year
2024	43	+2.5 Mosques/year

Source: (Ministry of Justice, 2024)

Contemporary Islamic Da'wah in Taiwan

1. Da'wah Challenge

There are a number of challenges in implementing Islamic da'wah in Taiwan, where each ethnic group tends to focus its da'wah efforts on its respective communities. This obstacle arises due to language differences, so da'is in Taiwan try to overcome this problem by organizing various meetings, both in person and through visual media, involving Muslims of different ethnicities in Taiwan (Gusman et al., 2024). Another challenge da'is face in Taiwan is the view of the Taiwanese people, who consider religion part of the culture, so no religious celebrations are held. The Taiwanese government states that religion is a private affair and that people can practice religion (Ferenczy, 2024). Another challenge is the difficulty of the older generation in passing on Islamic religious knowledge to the younger generation, who tend to have a secular view of their lives. In 2021, the Muslim community in Taiwan appears to be a less visible group, as they and their descendants are more involved in mixed marriages compared to marriages within the Muslim community (Jung, 2021).

According to recent reports, only 22% of da'i in Taiwan can communicate well in local Chinese and Hokkien, which creates significant barriers in the delivery of religious messages (Hariyadi et al., 2024). This situation is exacerbated by the ethnic diversity in Taiwan's Muslim society consisting of: (1) 40% Hui Muslims (of Chinese descent); (2) 35% of migrant workers (mainly from Indonesia), as well as; (3) 25% are local converts (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2025). Cultural challenges arise from Taiwan's strong traditional belief system. The survey shows: (1) 68% of Taiwanese people adhere to Buddhist-Taoist syncretism; (2) only 12% are interested in learning the Abrahamic religion, and (3) 72% consider religion to be a private affair (Wu, 2025).

2. Efforts to Respond to Challenges

Bai Chongxi was essential in developing Taiwan's Muslim community after World War II. Bai Chongxi established a Muslim place of worship in 1950, which also served as a temporary residence for Muslim migrants in Taiwan until they obtained permanent residence. In 1957, two other Taiwanese Muslim houses of worship were established in the Da'an and Guting areas. Both

locations attracted the attention of many Taiwanese Muslims who later built settlements around them. By 2025, it is estimated that there will be around 50,000 to 60,000 Taiwanese Muslims and about 200,000 foreign Muslims working and studying in Taiwan, with the majority coming from Southeast Asia (Royanow et al., 2025).

The Chinese Muslim Association (CMA), which was established in 1953, is a forum for the Muslim community in Taiwan that has a crucial role in the management of Islamic religious activities in the region. The Chinese Muslim Association (CMA) is in charge of various aspects, including managing Muslim cemeteries in Taiwan, registering and arranging hajj trips, certifying halal food and restaurants in Taiwan, and organizing Islamic religious lectures in Taiwan. In 2023, seven mosques serve as centres of religious activities for Muslims in Taiwan. One of the famous mosques is the Taipei Old Grand Mosque, which was built in 1960 by Bai Chongxi. Through this mosque, the Taiwanese government has established strong ties with Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, where many Islamic leaders, including King Hussein of Jordan and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, have once performed prayers at the Taipei Old Grand Mosque (Khofshowati, 2023).

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In the context of Islamic da'wah, the Muslim community in Taiwan shows a more passive tendency in spreading Islamic teachings. On the contrary, Islamic da'wah activities are mainly carried out by migrant Muslims living and working in Taiwan. They generally come from Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, India, and Gambia. Immigrant Muslims usually lead Islamic da'wah activities, Islamic worship, and celebrations of Islamic holidays in large mosques in major cities in Taiwan, such as Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung, and Tainan (Muttaqin et al., 2024). Islamic organizations established by the Indonesian people in Taiwan also have a significant role in the development of Islamic da'wah in the Taiwan region, such as: (1) Taipei Yasin Taklim Council located in Taipei City with Surah Yaseen reading activities every Thursday night; (2) Taiwanese Indonesian Muslim Association based in Taichung City with weekly and monthly recitation programs; (3) Indonesian Muslim Gathering Forum in Chungli City with monthly recitation activities, and; (4) The Indonesian Muslim Association of Taiwan based in Kaohsiung City with weekly recitation activities as well as monthly discussions and recitations (Winiarti et al., 2024).

Influential Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, play an essential role in the development of Islamic da'wah in Taiwan. Through their branches, namely PCINU (Pengurus Cabang Istimewa Nahdlatul Ulama) and PCIM (Pengurus Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah), they carry out various work programs, including recitation held on a weekly or monthly basis. In particular, PCIM (Pengurus Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah) has a Muhammadiyah teaching and learning centre that organizes weekly learning programs and extracurricular activities, such as Tapak Suci martial arts. Meanwhile, PCINU (Pengurus Cabang Istimewa Nahdlatul Ulama) also routinely holds weekly recitations. These two organizations have obtained permission from the Taiwanese government to carry out Eid prayers and manage Zakat and Anfaqa programs. In addition, Islamic da'wah also takes place on campus in Taiwan, with Muslim groups at National Central University (NCU) and National Chiao Tung University (NCTU) who are active in discussions about Islam and monthly recitation (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

Until now, the Taiwanese government continues to develop halal tourism in Taiwan. One of the strategies implemented by the Taiwanese government is the development of Islamic tourism, which includes the Muslim place of worship facilities at airports and hotels. In addition, the Taiwanese government is cooperating with the Chinese Muslim Association (CMA) to obtain halal certification for Taiwanese food products, including certification for restaurants in Taiwan that meet halal criteria. This step is beneficial for Muslims in Taiwan as well as Muslim tourists in accessing halal food. The labelling and development of the halal product industry in Taiwan not only facilitates Muslims' access to halal food but also opens up opportunities for the development of halal food business (Anatasha & Malahayatie, 2025).

The development of Islamic da'wah in Taiwan can be observed through the growth of mosques and Muslim communities. In 1950, only one Muslim place of worship was founded by Bai Chongxi. Still, by 2025, the number of mosques in Taiwan will have increased to seven, including the Taipei Old Grand Mosque, which has become an essential symbol for Muslims in Taiwan. In addition, the number of Muslims in Taiwan is estimated to reach 50,000–60,000 native Taiwanese and around 200,000 migrant Muslims, mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Middle Eastern countries (Munandar & Fahrurrozi, 2025).

Table 3. Development of Islamic Da'wah in Taiwan

Indicator	1950	2025
Number of Mosques	1	7
Native Muslim Population	-	50.000-60.000
Migrant Muslim Population	-	200.000
Routine Da'wah Activities	Limited	Weekly Study

Source: (Munandar & Fahrurrozi, 2025)

Conclusion

Contemporary Islamic da'wah refers to an approach to spreading Islamic teachings that utilizes modern technology, which can be identified through three leading indicators: the use of the latest technology, materials relevant to the current context, and modern media. The emergence of contemporary Islamic da'wah in East Asia, including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, can be traced back to the 1950s. Contemporary Islamic da'wah activities in Japan began with the establishment of the Japan Muslim Association, followed by various other Islamic da'wah organizations, such as the Islamic Center Japan, the Islamic Culture Society-Japan, and the Japan Islamic Congress. Da'is in Japan face a number of challenges in spreading Islam, such as: (1) The World Trade Center incident in the United States on September 11, 2001 which negatively impacted the image of Islam among Japanese society; (2) Problems related to funerals; (3) Difficulty in finding a place to perform ablution, and; (4) The limited number of Muslims in Japan who are willing to become imams in certain mosques. Meanwhile, in South Korea, many contemporary Islamic da'wah activities are carried out by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF). Da'is in South Korea also face challenges, such as: (1) Difficulties in integrating Islamic values into South Korean traditions, and (2) the negative impact of the World Trade Center incident in the United States on September 11, 2001, that affected the Korean people's view of Islam. Besides that, in Taiwan, contemporary Islamic da'wah activities are managed by the Chinese Muslim Association (CMA). Da'is in Taiwan face challenges, such as:

(1) Each ethnic group in Taiwan tends to focus on Islamic da'wah in their respective ethnic communities; (2) The views of the Taiwanese people who regard religion as a private matter, so that they are free to choose whether to practice religion or not; (3) The difficulty of the older generation in passing on Islamic knowledge to the younger generation, and; (4) The gradual disappearance of the Muslim community in Taiwan due to mixed marriage.

Based on the challenges faced by da'is in spreading contemporary Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, there are several recommendations so that the da'wah can be accepted by the local community, namely: (1) Train and empower Muslim youth in the region so that they can develop a da'wah approach that integrates Islamic teachings with culture and technology, as well as have broad insights and always follow the latest developments; (2) Understand the characteristics, interests, and needs of the local community; (3) Linking Islamic teachings to relevant social issues and offering inspiring solutions, and; (4) Muslims in the region are expected to demonstrate good behaviour and be consistent with the Islamic teachings they preach. By implication, this research is expected to provide new insights into the challenges and developments of contemporary Islamic da'wah in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. However, this study has limitations, especially regarding the time available to researchers, which can affect the study results. Considering the challenges da'is face in these countries, researchers hope there will be efforts to overcome this problem, so that the people of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan can receive contemporary Islamic da'wah.

Further research can expand on this study by applying a field research approach through in-depth interviews with da'i, local Muslim communities, and policymakers in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to gain first-hand perspectives on contemporary da'wah challenges. In addition, comparative research can be conducted by analysing da'wah strategies in the three countries compared to other East Asian countries, such as China or Hong Kong, to identify broader patterns. The digital ethnographic approach is also relevant to explore the role of social media and online platforms in spreading Islamic da'wah in the region. Futuristic research can examine the impact of globalization, migration, and immigration policies on the development of Islam in East Asia. The study of Islamic philanthropy and the contribution of Muslim non-governmental organizations in strengthening da'wah can be an interesting topic to study further. Thus, future research will enrich existing findings and provide practical recommendations for developing Islamic da'wah in non-Muslim East Asian regions.

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