

Creative content production strategies for religious outreach materials on social media

 **Abdullah Khusairi**

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol, Indonesia

Email: abdullahkhusairi@uinib.ac.id

Article Information:

Received:

20 July 2025

Revised:

10 November 2025

Accepted:

9 December 2025

Keywords:

Production strategies,
religious outreach,
media literacy,
content creative.

Abstract

Purpose – This study formulates a strategic framework for religious counselors in producing creative and effective da'wah content on social media. It responds to the urgent need for transitioning from conventional sermon-based communication to multiplatform strategies that align with digital audience behavior and algorithmic engagement.

Method – An exploratory, qualitative design was employed, utilizing van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The dataset comprises 50 short videos purposively collected from TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels (January–June 2025), selected based on their thematic relevance and audience engagement (more than 10,000 views or 100 likes). Each video was examined at macro (theme), mezzo (narrative), and micro (language) levels to identify meaning construction and ideological framing.

Result – The findings reveal that audience engagement in digital da'wah is primarily driven by brevity, emotional proximity, and contextual themes rather than clerical authority. Religious messages that employ informal storytelling, humor, and local language tend to achieve a stronger connection with the audience. These dynamics reflect a transformation of religious authority from institutional to participatory and algorithmic forms.

Implication – The study provides a practical model for religious counselors to enhance digital literacy, narrative creativity, and ethical awareness in content production. It encourages the institutionalization of digital training within religious outreach programs under the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Originality/Value – This research fills a conceptual gap in the existing literature by integrating critical discourse analysis with creative media production. It contributes to the emerging scholarship on digital religion through a model that bridges theological communication, media literacy, and participatory culture.

JID | 341

 JID



Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah
Vol. 45 No. 2 (2025)
1693-8054 (p)
2581-236X (e)
341-356
<https://doi.org/10.2158/jid.45.2.28022>

For citation: Khusairi, A. (2025). Creative content production strategies for religious outreach materials on social media. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*. 45(2). 341-356. <https://doi.org/10.2158/jid.45.2.28022>.

***Corresponding author:** Abdullah Khusairi, abdullahkhusairi@uinib.ac.id, Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol, Prof. Mahmud Yunus Lubuk Lintah Street, Padang City, West Sumatera, Indonesia 25153

This is an
open access article
under the
CC BY-NC-SA
license



Kata kunci:

Strategi produksi,
kegiatan keagamaan,
literasi media,
kreativitas konten.

JID | 342

Abstrak

Tujuan – Studi ini merumuskan kerangka kerja strategis bagi konselor agama dalam menghasilkan konten da'wah yang kreatif dan efektif di media sosial. Studi ini menanggapi kebutuhan mendesak untuk beralih dari komunikasi berbasis khotbah konvensional ke strategi multiplatform yang selaras dengan perilaku audiens digital dan keterlibatan algoritmik.

Metode – Desain eksploratif kualitatif digunakan, dengan memanfaatkan Analisis Diskursus Kritis (CDA) van Dijk. Data set terdiri dari 50 video pendek yang dikumpulkan secara purposif dari TikTok, YouTube Shorts, dan Instagram Reels (Januari–Juni 2025), dipilih berdasarkan relevansi tematik dan keterlibatan audiens (lebih dari 10.000 tayangan atau 100 suka). Setiap video dianalisis pada tingkat makro (tema), mezzo (narasi), dan mikro (bahasa) untuk mengidentifikasi konstruksi makna dan bingkai ideologis.

Hasil – Temuan menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan audiens dalam da'wah digital terutama dipengaruhi oleh kesederhanaan, kedekatan emosional, dan tema kontekstual, bukan otoritas keagamaan. Pesan keagamaan yang menggunakan cerita informal, humor, dan bahasa lokal cenderung membangun koneksi yang lebih kuat dengan audiens. Dinamika ini mencerminkan transformasi otoritas keagamaan dari bentuk institusional menjadi partisipatif dan algoritmik.

Implikasi – Studi ini menyediakan model praktis bagi konselor agama untuk meningkatkan literasi digital, kreativitas naratif, dan kesadaran etis dalam produksi konten. Hal ini mendorong institusionalisasi pelatihan digital dalam program penyebaran agama di bawah Kementerian Agama.

Orisinalitas/Nilai – Penelitian ini mengisi celah konseptual dalam literatur yang ada dengan mengintegrasikan analisis wacana kritis dengan produksi media kreatif. Hal ini berkontribusi pada perkembangan kajian tentang agama digital melalui model yang menghubungkan komunikasi teologis, literasi media, dan budaya partisipatif.

Introduction

Digital transformation has revolutionized patterns of religious interaction across various segments of society (Ichwan et al., 2024). Social media platforms have become new public spheres where da'wah practices occur massively, spontaneously, and often without rigorous scholarly oversight (Faltese et al., 2023; Taufikin et al., 2025). Religious counselors under the Ministry of Religious Affairs face various real challenges within their communities. They must reach young people who are more active on social media, compete with fast-moving and sometimes misleading viral information, and adapt their preaching methods to the limited digital resources available to them. In addition, they often encounter resistance to modern religious messages and must balance traditional religious practices with communication approaches that remain relevant to both urban and rural communities. Congregants now have new idols on social media, becoming followers and actively engaging in religious content based on notifications from TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube (Dewi, 2020; Cikka et al., 2024). This phenomenon reveals a gap between the rapid adaptability of religious content creators and the sluggish transformation of communication strategies among official religious counselors. As a result, congregants, especially Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha, consume more religious narratives from viral content than from state-sanctioned religious counseling (Dauda, 2023; Halwati, 2023; Forgione et al., 2025).

JID | 343

Previous studies (Ichwan et al., 2024; Dewi, 2020; Karim et al., 2024; Dauda, 2023) emphasize the growing shift of da'wah into social media spaces. Ichwan underscores the transformation of authority from the pulpit to the platform, while Dewi and Dauda highlight the rise of new audiences shaped by algorithmic visibility. However, these works mainly explore content circulation and audience reception, not the strategic and creative process behind message production. This gap reveals a missing analytical layer between message planning and audience engagement, which this study seeks to address through critical discourse analysis.

In contrast, this study formulates a model of creative content production for religious outreach that is contextual and easily adoptable by religious counselors. It aims to fill the gap left by previous research by addressing how content production strategies for religious outreach need to be reformulated within the digital ecosystem. Previous studies have focused more on content circulation and audience reception. However, they have rarely examined the creative process and production strategies of religious outreach messages systematically within the modern digital context. Specifically, this paper will discuss: (1) how format and style determine engagement; (2) how light but contextually relevant themes dominate; (3) how da'wah authority is shaped by followers and viewers; and (4) how to design a strategic model for creative content production in religious outreach based on the findings of this study.

This paper is based on the hypothesis that the low engagement (Son, 2024; Khusairi & Nurhayati, 2025) of conventional da'wah in digital spaces is not due to weak content, but rather to a mismatch between the delivery format and the characteristics of new media (McMullan, 2020a). When content production strategies are not aligned with the visual, participatory, and fast-paced logic of digital platforms, da'wah messages lose their appeal and legitimacy. In contrast, content creators who understand algorithm structures and audience preferences have successfully gained religious social authority, even though they often lack proper methodological and ethical

frameworks (Midani, 2022). Therefore, reformulating content production strategies for religious outreach has become an urgent necessity in response to this disruption.

Research Methods

JID | 344

The unit of analysis (Hendriyani, 2017) in this study includes religious digital content on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube platforms from creator accounts that actively deliver religious messages (Nurrohman & Mujahidin, 2022). This unit was chosen because it is representative in capturing the dynamics of contemporary da'wah in digital spaces, which has transformed into a creative, algorithm-driven practice (Arifin & Nugraha, 2022). It also allows for the identification of content in terms of both audiovisual elements and religious messages. The unit of analysis was determined based on the following criteria: it contains elements of religious counseling, has a short to medium duration (<5 minutes), and receives high engagement (>1,8K views or >500 likes). Secondly, the accounts were selected based on content performance and narrative structure. Thirdly, the content is analyzed as a form of digital discourse containing messages, symbols, and communication strategies. These statistics were obtained through direct observation of content posted by prominent religious influencers on social media, serving as a descriptive benchmark for identifying videos with significant audience engagement.

This study employs an exploratory qualitative design using the critical discourse analysis approach (van Dijk, 2021). This approach is capable of capturing the construction of meaning, power relations, and ideologies hidden behind the representation (Fairclough, 2000; Dijk, 2021) of digital da'wah, and allows for an in-depth exploration of the shifting nature of religious authority in the era of social media. First, the structure of digital texts is analyzed on three levels: macro (themes), mezzo (narrative strategies), and micro (language choices) (van Dijk, 1982). Second, the socio-political, religious, and cultural contexts of each narrative are examined to understand how meaning is formed and contested. Third, the analysis results are connected to existing literature on da'wah and digital media.

The primary data source of this study consists of religious digital content, including short videos, captions, audience comments, and narratives, created and shared by content creators on social media platforms (Hepp et al., 2010). The use of online data is based on the fact that digital content has become a new arena for public discourse, alongside traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers. Academically, such data is considered naturalistic, contextual, and reflective of actual social interactions between message senders and their audiences (Couldry & Hepp, 2018; Hepp et al., 2015). Data collection was carried out as follows: First, data were gathered from TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts using keywords and hashtags such as #ceramah, #tausiyah, #dakwah, and #ustadzviral. This result was obtained based on an analysis of data from *We Are Social*, which shows that the production and consumption of short videos on these three platforms are significantly higher compared to other social media (www.wearesocial.com, 2025). Second, data selection was conducted systematically through purposive observation of 50 popular content items. The 50 videos were selected based on three criteria: (1) high engagement (top 10% in views and likes) within the last six months, (2) relevance to religious content, and (3) language—only videos in Bahasa Indonesia were included. Videos were identified using platform search features and relevant hashtags, then manually screened to ensure relevance to digital da'wah activities. While this sampling method ensures relevance and engagement, it does not capture all videos on the

platform, which should be considered when interpreting the findings. Third, the data collection process was conducted longitudinally over five months (January–June 2025) by monitoring the social media accounts of digital preachers and their followers. This digital observation involves documenting both video and text content, as well as analyzing user comments and responses to the content (Chatra et al., 2023; Kozinets, 2006; Bartl et al., 2016).

The analytical method used is applied to understand the deeper meaning of both narrative and visual data, as well as to map the discourse structures and power relations (Dijk, 2008) embedded within digital da'wah content. This analysis is capable of revealing the subjective interpretations and symbolic meanings hidden behind narratives, formats, and communication styles, thereby supporting a complex, contextual, and structural understanding. The analysis was conducted in three stages: First, visual data and narrative texts were systematically summarized to extract the literal meanings and core messages of each content piece. Second, patterns, themes, and structural relations were identified through coding, narrative grouping, and thematic analysis. Third, interpretation was carried out by linking these thematic results to socio-cultural contexts and by interpreting the ideologies underlying the practice of creative religious content production in the digital era (Cresswell, 2013; van Dijk, 2011).

Results and Discussion

The data analysis results indicate a clear trend in audience engagement with short video content on digital platforms. Descriptive statistics, such as the number of views and likes, provide an initial overview of the level of public interaction with the produced content. This study not only presents these descriptive data but also offers an analytical interpretation to understand audience behavior and message delivery. For instance, higher engagement on videos with interactive captions suggests that audiences prefer content that invites participation. In contrast, shorter videos achieve more consistent completion rates, indicating a preference for concise messaging.

The presentation of the following data and facts can be further analyzed to examine netizens' tendencies to share, like, or comment on content, serving as indicators that the produced videos are both appealing and relevant to the audience. Consequently, these interaction patterns not only reflect popularity but also provide insights into effective message delivery strategies in the context of digital da'wah.

Format and Style as Key Determinants of Engagement

Format and communication style are primary determinants in the success of digital da'wah in the social media era. Short videos on social media have now become the new television, operating with a logic that is visual, fast-paced, and participatory, making religious content that is static, lengthy, and one-directional less likely to reach a wide audience (Faltese et al., 2023; McMullan, 2020b). Jenkins (2006) notes that today's digital audience is not merely a receiver of messages, but also an active producer of meaning (Rodrigues et al., 2025). Gillespie (2014) notes that platform algorithms tend to prioritize interactive and visual content over content that is merely narratively substantive. This means that conventional sermons, when simply transferred to social media without adapting to the characteristics of digital platforms, are a primary cause of low engagement. This is evident in the Table 1 of research findings below.

Table 1. Engagement of Digital Da'wah Content

JID 346	No	Nama Tokoh	Platform	Handle / Channel	Link Konten	Catatan Engagement
	1	Ustadz Abdul Somad	TikTok / YouTube/Instagram	@sahabatuaschannel / UAS Channel	https://www.tiktok.com/@sahabatuaschannel/video/7525331841465814290	Duration 34 seconds, View >1.8M Likes >21,9K
	2	Ustadz Adi Hidayat	TikTok/Instagram / YouTube	@adihidayatofficial / Adi Hidayat Official	https://www.youtube.com/shorts/DI7Uo_hw44c	Duration 51 seconds, View >1.9 M Likes >19K
	3	Ustadz Hanan Attaki	TikTok / Instagram	@hanan_attaki_	https://www.tiktok.com/@hanan_attaki_/video/7351340941833178373	Duration 53 seconds, View >8.1M, Likes >20K,
	4	Ustadz Das'ad Latif	TikTok/Instagram/YouTube	@dasadlatifofficial	https://www.tiktok.com/@dasadlatifofficial	Duration 1,14 seconds, View >1.1M, Likes >53K
	5	Gus Baha	TikTok/Instagram/YouTube	@gusbahaindonesian	https://www.tiktok.com/@gusbahaindonesian/video/7466982244960177416	Duration 1,8 sekond, View >1.1M, Likes >53K

Observations of five short-form content pieces from digital preachers show that the video durations range from 30 to 60 seconds, with high view counts and varying numbers of likes. Ustadz Hanan Attaki's video, which lasts 53 seconds, has been recorded over 8.1 million views and 20,000 likes, making it the most prominent in this dataset. Ustadz Abdul Somad's 34-second video and Ustadz Adi Hidayat's 51-second video each garnered over 1.8 million and 1.9 million views, with 21,900 and 19,000 likes, respectively. Meanwhile, videos around one minute long from Ustadz Das'ad Latif and Gus Baha both exceeded 1.1 million views, with Gus Baha's content outperforming others in terms of likes, reaching 53,000.

The main platforms used for content distribution were TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels, all of which support fast and instant formats. This data is continually evolving, as reposts by their followers often surpass the engagement of the original uploads. It is important to note that this does not include other content on their accounts, nor the steadily growing audience-generated content influenced by social media algorithms (Edmonds, 2024). In some cases, reposts have even outperformed the original uploads.

The data above reveals several important trends. First, short durations (around 30–60 seconds) have become the ideal format for capturing audience attention on short video platforms. Second, a high number of likes does not necessarily correlate with the preacher's popularity, but is more influenced by an expressive delivery style that is light and contextually relevant. Third, distribution platforms such as TikTok have proven effective in boosting the reach of da'wah content, thanks to algorithms that favor concise and message-dense content. Fourth, the appeal of digital da'wah content is largely determined by the combination of engaging visual formats, fast-paced delivery, and messages that resonate emotionally or address the audience's current spiritual needs. In other

words, high engagement is more influenced by presentation techniques than by scholarly reputation alone.

Light but Contextual Themes

The findings of this study also indicate that light yet contextually relevant da'wah content dominates the landscape of religious communication on social media. This is evident in the units of analysis, which consist of short videos under two minutes in duration, with high interaction rates (over 10,000 views or over 100 likes). Based on critical discourse analysis (Dijk, 1982) of content from digital preachers such as Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS), Ustadz Das'ad Latif, and Gus Baha, their communication strategies have shifted from conventional da'wah formats to simpler, emotionally resonant narratives that effectively reach digital audiences. UAS's visual at a waterfall, accompanied by a call to worship, Ustadz Das'ad's light-hearted sermon on household themes, and Gus Baha's use of Javanese language to discuss happiness are all examples of how da'wah now embraces an everyday aesthetic—non-preachy yet rich in meaning. These contents embed da'wah messages (e.g., Q.S. 104) through popular narrative strategies such as voice-overs, humor, and symbolic closeness to the audience's everyday realities. The macro-micro text structure analysis (Dijk, 1982) reveals that everyday spiritual themes are framed in humorous, contemplative, or familiar tones, reflecting the creators' efforts to reach a broader audience with a friendly and relatable storytelling style. Thus, the lighter the packaging of da'wah, the deeper its outreach impact—an important finding that highlights an epistemic shift in the construction of contemporary religious discourse.

JID | 347

Table 2. Light but Contextual Content

No	Ustadz Name	Account	Title / Theme	Link Video
1	Ustadz Abdul Somad	@sahabatuaschannel	Call to Worship / Voice-over Video / Visual of UAS Bathing under a Waterfall	https://www.tiktok.com/@sahabatuaschannel/video/7376433808335310086
2	Ustadz Adi Hidayat	@adihidayatofficial	Key to Life, Sustained Livelihood / Simple Visuals but Deep and Convincing	https://www.tiktok.com/@sahabatuaschannel/video/7376433808335310086
3	Ustadz Hanan Attaki	https://www.tiktok.com/@hanan_attaki_	About Sacrifice / Lessons from the Muhajirin / Voice-over	https://www.tiktok.com/@hanan_attaki_/video/7282952088731094278
4	Ustadz Das'ad Latif	@dasadlatifofficial	About Husbands / Light and Humorous Sermon for Men	https://www.tiktok.com/@dasadlatifofficial/video/7452531957860273426
5	Gus Baha	https://www.tiktok.com/@gusbahaindonesian	About Happiness / Javanese Language / Voice-over	https://www.tiktok.com/@gusbahaindonesian/video/7458477807660764433

Table 2 presents five examples of da'wah content from popular ustadz figures on TikTok that highlight light yet contextual themes. Ustadz Abdul Somad features a voice-over inviting viewers to worship, paired with a visual of himself bathing under a waterfall—a refreshing and emotionally stirring combination. Ustadz Adi Hidayat addresses the theme of “the simple key to life and flowing sustenance” through a calm-toned sermon with simple yet serious and profound visuals. Meanwhile, Ustadz Hanan Attaki conveys the value of sacrifice through the story of the Muhajirin, delivered in a reflective voice-over style. Ustadz Das'ad Latif employs light humor to discuss domestic issues, particularly aimed at male audiences. Gus Baha, with his signature use of the Javanese language and relaxed storytelling, speaks about the meaning of happiness.

All of these contents successfully present Islamic values in a format that is non-preachy, yet meaningful and easy to absorb. The data suggest that digital preachers are no longer bound to heavy, formal sermon formats. They now prefer lighter, more casual, and familiar approaches in terms of theme selection, speaking style, and visual presentation. The phenomenon of light yet engaging da'wah themes cannot be separated from the digital authority of preachers, which is constructed through their number of followers and distinctive visual branding strategies.

Da'i Authority Based on Followers and Visual Branding

The rise of social media (Luttrell, 2025; Zhang & Firdaus, 2024) has shifted religious authority from conventional offline communities to online platforms. Each platform demands a specific style of content presentation; YouTube favors long-form, educational formats, while TikTok, Instagram, and short videos are geared toward fast-paced, emotional, and visually driven storytelling. Table 3 illustrates how preachers in the digital sphere construct religious authority through a combination of distinctive visual branding (Turner, 2018) and follower-based influence on social media platforms. These preachers' strategies do not operate in isolation, but function within a digital communication field shaped by algorithms, visual performance, and audience engagement intensity (Couldry & Hepp, 2018). Hanan Attaki adopts an inclusive and humanist style, fostering a sense of symbolic closeness with urban audiences (Zarifah & Negoro, 2023). Adi Hidayat affirms his academic position through hoax clarifications and knowledge-based narratives rooted in Islamic organizations (Anwar, 2021). Felix Siauww employs a visually contrasting style and strong ideological rhetoric, targeting conservative Muslim groups (Alfiansyah & Fajriyah, 2023). Setiana Dewi combines her personal branding as a Muslim public figure with a modern Islamic style. Meanwhile, Habib Ja'far takes a humorous, inclusive, and dialogic approach—marking an effort to build Islamic moderation through digital mediation (Hepp et al., 2015).

Four main tendencies can be drawn from these findings: First, digital da'wah authority is now shaped through social mechanisms based on followers and visual performativity, not merely through institutional legitimacy or formal scholarly credentials (Hepp et al., 2015; Couldry & Hepp, 2018). Second, visual strategies—whether inclusive, academic, ideological, or popular—have become primary tools in building trust and audience segmentation in digital da'i (Dijk, 2021; Couldry & Hepp, 2018). Third, the diversity of communication approaches enables preachers to reach a broad audience, from conservative groups to moderate urban communities, reinforcing the idea that digital da'wah is particular, contextual, and deeply influenced by socio-cultural settings (Van Dijk, 2009). Fourth, the visual narratives and religious messages in da'wah content represent power relations, ideologies, and the ongoing negotiation of religious identity within the digital

public sphere (Ronaldi et al., 2024). Thus, it can be said that in the digital era, da'wah is about how the message is packaged and who delivers it (Lasswell, 2017). These findings should be taken into consideration when planning creative content production for digital media by religious counselors across Indonesia.

Table 3. Digital Da'i Authority Based on Followers and Visual Branding

No	Figure/ Account	Approach & Visual Branding	Authority, Followers, Netizen	Impactful Social Variations
1	Hanan Attaki	Inclusive visuals, close-ups of interactions with ordinary people	community organization network; large YouTube following	Storytelling, humanistic, educational
2	Adi Hidayat	Academic Narrative and Hoax Clarification	Mass Organizations; Official Educators	Academic Focus, Educational, Anti-Hoax
3	Felix Siau	Contrasting visuals with a strong ideological message	conservative Islamic base	Ideological content, political rhetoric
4	Oki Setiana Dewi	Personal-family stylish visuals, popular Islamic tone	Film actress; Instagram-based	Modern Islamic style, inspirational content
5	Habib Ja'far	Humorous, dialogic, inclusive, light, and friendly style	Scholarly legitimacy/moderate approach	Islamic moderation, diversity literacy
6	Abdul Somad	Religious voice-over with natural cinematic visuals (waterfalls, nature)	Traditional scholarly legitimacy via YouTube/Facebook	Visual appeal of da'wah, reinforcing everyday spiritual narratives
7	Das'ad Latif	Humorous sermons, full of direct interaction with congregants	Traditional oratorical approach	Revitalizing da'wah forums through humor, expanding outreach.
8	Gus Baha	Simple storytelling style, local language (Javanese), unedited content	Symbolic influence within cultural networks	Strengthening traditional authority based on locality and organic content.

JID | 349

Analysis of Creative Content Production Strategy Planning

Based on the previously described facts and data, a model for a creative content production strategy can be designed for religious counselors in various regions, either targeting a specific scale for their local congregations or aiming for broader engagement. This presentation can be understood through [Figure 1](#):

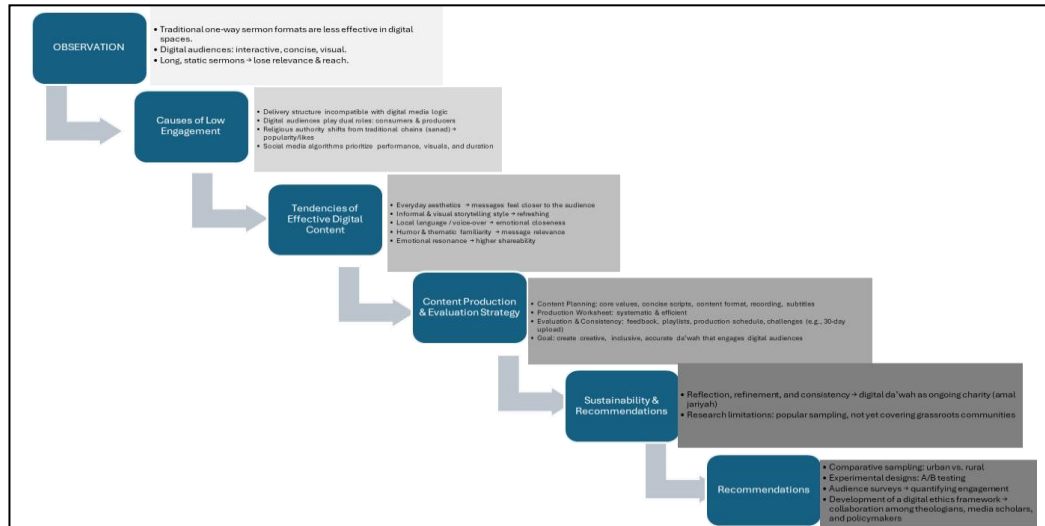


Figure 1. Diagram of the Digital Da'wah Content Production Strategy Model

The first important result of analysis is that religious counselors must recognize that the one-way sermon format, long considered effective in offline settings, often loses its function within the complex digital space. This aligns with McLuhan's (2017) message that "the medium is the message," meaning that the platform fundamentally shapes how the message is received. Social media platforms require messages that are interactive, concise, straightforward, and visually appealing. As a result, sermons delivered in static and lengthy formats automatically lose their reach and relevance (Couldry & Hepp, 2018; Hepp et al., 2015). Consequently, sermons in their conventional form generally fail to serve as references, particularly among younger audiences who are more attuned to concise and responsive formats.

Second, the primary cause of low engagement does not lie solely in the content of the da'wah message, but rather in its delivery structure, which often fails to align with the logic of digital media that prioritizes messages that quickly go viral, even if they lack substance (Kostarella & Palla, 2024; Evolvi, 2021). Traditionally, sermons have been constructed on the assumption of a passive and obedient audience, whereas social media demands dialogical, participatory communication that adapts to visual dynamics. Digital media users now act in dual roles—as both consumers and producers—who can respond through comments, likes, reposts, and forwards (Son, 2024). Religious sermons that fail to activate this kind of participation automatically lose their connection with the audience. Low retention, lack of comments, and the absence of shares in traditional da'wah content indicate a lack of interactive space within the content structure itself.

Third, the popularity of digital preachers, now shaped by platform algorithms, signifies a shift in the function of religious sermons—from institutional to personal, from dogmatic to emotional, and from hierarchical to participatory. This development opens up new opportunities for producing religious knowledge that is more inclusive and dialogical. However, it also triggers a dysfunction of religious authority. Consequently, the legitimacy of religious scholars is no longer associated with

their scholarly lineage (sanad), but with the number of followers and likes they have. Social media algorithms operate on the logic of attention distribution, rather than content validity. This system prioritizes performance, visuals, and duration as the main criteria for content distribution (Gillespie, 2014). It is widely acknowledged that the presence of social media has marginalized traditional scholars—those rooted in classical methods and scholarly authority—because their approaches are incompatible with the digital rhythm. The unpreparedness of religious institutions to adapt to the logic of virality is a key reason why conventional dakwah has lost its reach (Hepp et al., 2015).

Fourth, four main tendencies in the pattern of content successfully captures the attention of audiences in digital spaces: (1) Everyday aesthetics have become a new way to bring religious messages closer to digital audiences; (2) An informal and visually refreshing storytelling style increases the appeal of dakwah; (3) The use of local languages or narrative voice-overs strengthens the emotional closeness between preacher and audience; (4) Humor and thematic intimacy make religious messages more relevant. Substantively, these are not new when we reflect on the deeper meaning of the dakwah command in Surah An-Nahl: 125, as well as other dakwah principles outlined in scholarly studies (Aziz, 2024). However, today they are empowered by the broader and greater opportunities made possible by social media algorithms. When the audience feels emotionally and personally connected, they are more likely to share the content. This is why, going forward, the effectiveness of religious sermons can no longer be measured solely by their content, but by their resonance in the digital world (Arifin & Nugraha, 2022) —especially among the youth, who are often referred to as digital natives (Prensky, 2001).

Building on the discussion above, this article presents a model for designing, evaluating, and maintaining the consistency of sermon content production on social media as an initial step for religious counselors to engage in the digital space. There is no need to hesitate or reject the digital realm; what is required is simply a willingness to start learning from scratch. Effective digital da'wah requires concise, creative, and well-planned content. By using a production worksheet, content creators can systematically and efficiently develop key messages, content formats, editing strategies, and publication timelines. A simple guide, which enables anyone to identify a core Islamic value, write a brief script, choose a content format, record a video, and add subtitles using widely available apps, allows for the initiation of digital da'wah without expensive equipment or specialized training. This simple production strategy makes digital da'wah inclusive and accessible, opening up broad opportunities for religious counselors to creatively and accurately spread Islamic values. Keberlanjutan dakwah digital sangat bergantung pada evaluasi berkala dan konsistensi produksi konten.

This study is limited by the purposive sampling of popular short-form content and does not include systematic sampling of grassroots or marginal da'wah actors; future studies should employ comparative sampling across rural and urban contexts. In addition, experimental designs (such as A/B testing of format variations) and audience surveys would help quantify the causal effects of format on engagement and attitude change. Finally, ethical frameworks for digital da'wah (digital theology) warrant multi-disciplinary development involving theologians, media scholars, and platform policymakers.

Conclusion

JID | 352 This study asserts that the contemporary landscape of da'wah is undergoing a significant transformation, from a rigid, conventional delivery model to a fast-paced, visually driven model of religious content influenced by platform algorithms. The key finding indicates that the engagement crisis in traditional da'wah stems from a mismatch between its delivery format and the participatory, visual, and algorithmic nature of digital communication. The creative content production strategy model proposed in this study demonstrates that effective da'wah in the platform era requires a combination of Islamic values, digital literacy, and sensitivity to audience dynamics. Three core elements are pivotal: visual format and style, light yet contextual themes, and authority built on a follower base and narrative branding. With this approach, digital da'wah can become more communicative, personal, and relevant across generations in the digital public sphere.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The analysis is confined to selected platforms and prominent figures, without comparing them to grassroots da'is or marginalized communities. Direct involvement of religious counselors as active participants in validating the proposed model is also limited. Moreover, comparative global dimensions and success indicators based on social ethics remain underexplored. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the dataset geographically and thematically, involve da'wah actors directly, and formulate success indicators based on social impact and ethical accountability. A crucial future agenda is the development of digital theology—a scholarly and ethical foundation bridging the legacy of classical da'wah with the demands of new communication landscapes—thereby contributing to the cultivation of a relevant and sustainable spiritual civilization on social media.

Specifically, this study offers in-depth and significant insights into the production and consumption patterns of digital da'wah content in Indonesia, examining how da'i, religious institutions, and content creators design religious messages that remain relevant amid the fast-paced and algorithm-driven dynamics of social media. This research not only maps the forms of da'wah narratives circulating across various digital platforms but also highlights strategic content features proven to maximize audience engagement, including the use of compelling visuals, concise yet meaningful narratives, and communicative styles that are dialogical and contextual to the daily lives of urban Muslim communities. By linking audience engagement patterns with content production strategies, this study offers practical and applicable guidance for religious communicators, counselors, and da'wah institutions to optimize their digital presence more effectively. These findings affirm that da'wah is no longer merely a one-way message delivery activity, but has transformed into an interactive process that involves the active participation of social media users in shaping religious meaning. Thus, this research reinforces da'wah as an adaptive, responsive, and ethical medium in the era of modern communication. It is adaptive because it can align with the logic of algorithms and digital culture; responsive because it is sensitive to social, moral, and spiritual issues of contemporary society; and ethical because it upholds Islamic values that guide communication practices with wisdom and responsibility.

References

- Alfiansyah, A., & Fajriyah, F. (2023). Social Media as a Public Sphere: Menguatnya Gerakan Islam Konservatif dalam Dunia Pendidikan. *Molang: Journal Islamic Education*, 1(1).

Anwar, R. (2021). *Ustadz Adi Hidayat*. Laksana.

Arifin, M. Z., & Nugraha, D. H. (2022). Efektivitas Algoritma Youtube Sebagai Kunci Keberhasilan Penyebaran Informasi dan Dakwah Islam Melalui Media Online (Studi terhadap komunitas Youtuber di Pati Jawa Tengah). *QULUBANA: Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.54396/qlb.v2i2.299>

Aziz, M. A. (2024). *Ilmu Dakwah edisi revisi*. Prenada Media.

Bartl, M., Kannan, V. K., & Stockinger, H. (2016). A review and analysis of literature on netnography research. *International Journal of Technology Marketing*, 11(2), 165–196.

Chatra, A., Komang Ayu, H. A., Ningsi, Rusliyadi, M., Zaenurrosyid, Nirwana, I., & Abadi, A. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Panduan Praktis untuk Analisis Data*. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.

JID | 353

Cikka, H., Nurafifah, N., Munif, M., Suharto, S., & Najmuddin, M. (2024). Strategi Dakwah Hanan Attaki di Youtube. *Al-Mishbah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, 20(1), 12–26.

Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2018). *The mediated construction of reality*. John Wiley & Sons.

Cresswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*.

Dauda, K. O. (2023). Social media revolution and trends of da 'wah propagation in Ijebuland, Ogun State, Nigeria: An empirical survey. *Islamic Communication Journal*, 8(2), 171–186.

Dewi, O. S. (2020). *Pengajian selebritas hijrah kelas menengah muslim (2000-2019): respons atas dakwah Salafi dan Jamaah Tabligh*.

Dijk, T. A. van. (1982). Relevance in text and context. *Text Processing*, 415–432.

Dijk, T. A. van. (2021). Ideology and Discourse. In *Literary Theory*. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474204637.0009>

Edmonds, J. (2024). *How to think about algorithms*. Cambridge University Press.

Evolvi, G. (2021). Religion, new media, and digital culture. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of religion*.

Fairclough, N. (2000). Discourse, social theory, and social research: The discourse of welfare reform. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4(2), 163–195.

Faltesek, D., Graalum, E., Breving, B., Knudsen, E., Lucas, J., Young, S., & Varas Zambrano, F. E. (2023). TikTok as television. *Social Media+ Society*, 9(3), 20563051231194576.

Forgione, B., Cheong, H. J., & Baksh, S. M. (2025). Millennials' use of social media and its impact on communication skills. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 33(2), 281–294.

Gillespie, T. (2014). The relevance of algorithms. *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*, 167(2014), 167.

Halwati, U. (2023). Pesan Dakwah dalam Media Sosial: Analisis Semiotika terhadap Akun Youtube Ustadz Abdul Somad Official. *Iqtida: Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, 3(1), 107–125.

Hendriyani, H. (2017). Analisis Isi: Pengantar Metodologi yang Mendalam dan Kaya dengan Contoh. *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia*, 2(1), 7.

Hepp, A., Hjarvard, S., & Lundby, K. (2010). *Mediatization—Empirical perspectives: An introduction to a special issue*.

Hepp, A., Hjarvard, S., & Lundby, K. (2015). Mediatization: theorizing the interplay between media, culture and society. *Media, Culture & Society*, 37(2), 314–324.

JID | 354 Ichwan, M. N., Amin, F., Khusairi, A., & Andrian, B. (2024a). Digitalization and the shifting religious literature of Indonesian Muslims in the Era of Society 5.0. *Islamic Communication Journal*, 9(2), 245–266.

Ichwan, M. N., Amin, F., Khusairi, A., & Andrian, B. (2024b). Digitalization and the shifting religious literature of Indonesian Muslims in the Era of Society 5 . o. *Islamic Communication Journal*, 9(2), 245–265.

Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence culture: Where old and new media collid. *New York, NY: New*, 1–2.

Karim, A., & Riyadi, A. (2024). Analyzing big data of da'wah manuscripts based on Dimensions: Mapping research on da'wah on social media. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 44(1), 1-14.

Khusairi, A., & Nurhayati, M. (2025). Engaging audiences: A critical reflection on the Kaba Festival art performances 2014-2024, West Sumatera. *Islamic Communication Journal*, 10(1), 145–162. <https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2025.10.1.25529>

Kostarella, I., & Palla, Z. (2024). Sensationalism versus substance: Exploring “viral” and “quality” journalism in the Greek public sphere. *Journalism and Media*, 5(3), 1173–1193.

Kozinets, R. V. (2006). Netnography 2.0. In *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Lasswell, H. D. (2017). *Power and society: A framework for political inquiry*. Routledge.

Luttrell, R. (2025). *Social media: How to engage, share, and connect*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

McLuhan, M. (2017). The medium is the message. In *Communication theory* (pp. 390–402). Routledge.

McMullan, J. (2020a). A new understanding of ‘New Media’: Online platforms as digital mediums. *Convergence*, 26(2), 287–301.

McMullan, J. (2020b). A new understanding of ‘New Media’: Online platforms as digital mediums. *Convergence*, 26(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856517738159>

Midani, A. (2022). Analisa Tindak Tutur Ceramah Adi Hidayat pada Channel Youtube Audio Dakwah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 6(1), 53–58.

Nurrohman, A. S., & Mujahidin, A. (2022). Strategi Dakwah Digital Dalam Meningkatkan. *JUSMA: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Masyarakat*, 01.

Prenksy, M. (2001). *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, Part II. Do they really think differently? OnTheHorizon* 9 (6). 1-6.

Rodrigues, F., Casillas-Martín, S., & Pocinho, R. (2025). Digital Entanglement: The Influence of Internet Addiction and Negative Affect on Memory Functions—A Structural Approach. *Digital*, 5(3), 37.

- Ronaldi, A., Saidek, A. R., & Lestari, W. (2024). New Media as an Ideological Transmission Opportunity for Religious New Media as an Ideological Transmission Opportunity for Religious Authorities in Indonesia. *Jurnal Indo-Islamika*, 13(January), 90–104. <https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v13i2.33440>
- Son, J. (2024). Religious Service Attendance and Religious and Secular Organizational Engagement in the United Kingdom. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 63(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12878>
- Taufikin, T., Nurhayati, S., & Muhajarah, K. (2025). Da'wah in the TikTok era: Analyzing Gus Miftah's rhetoric, controversy, and community character education impact. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 45(1), 87–106.
- Turner, B. S. (2018). Religion and Modern Society. *Journal of Materials Processing Technology*, 1(1), 1–8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cirp.2016.06.001><http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.powtec.2016.12.055><https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijfatigue.2019.02.006><https://doi.org/10.1016/j.matlet.2019.04.024><https://doi.org/10.1016/j.matlet.2019.127252><http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.matlet.2019.127252>
- van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and Context, A Sociocognitive Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2011). Discourse studies and hermeneutics. *Discourse Studies*, 13(5), 609–621. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445611412762>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2009). *Society and discourse: How social contexts influence text and talk*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zarifah, R., & Negoro, N. B. (2023). The Influence of Da'wah Material and Media Exposure on the Religious Attitudes of Hanan Attaki's Youtube Channel Viewers. *Jurnal Penyuluhan Agama (JPA)*, 10(2), 145–166.
- Zhang, H., & Firdaus, A. (2024). What does media say about mental health: a literature review of media coverage on mental health. *Journalism and Media*, 5(3), 967–979.

