



MEDIATIZATION OF ISLAMIC DA'WAH ON SOCIAL MEDIA: THE AUTHORITY OF ULAMA AND AUDIENCE LEGITIMATION IN DIGITAL SPACES

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the mediatization of Islamic da'wah on social media, with a particular focus on the transformation of ulama authority and audience legitimation in digital spaces. This research employs a literature review method with a qualitative-descriptive approach to studies on digital religion, the mediatization of religion, da'wah communication, religious authority, digital ulama, religious influencers, and social media audience reception. The findings indicate that social media does not merely function as a channel for disseminating da'wah messages, but also reshapes the ways in which Islamic da'wah is produced, packaged, distributed, and legitimized. The authority of ulama no longer rests solely on chains of scholarly transmission, religious institutions, organizational hierarchies, or recognition from traditional communities. It is also shaped by digital visibility, communicative performativity, visual aesthetics, platform interactivity, and audience engagement. In digital spaces, audiences play an active role in shaping the legitimacy of da'wah through following, liking, commenting, sharing, criticizing, and constructing the public image of ulama. These findings affirm that the mediatization of Islamic da'wah gives rise to religious authority that is relational, participatory, and digitalized. This article concludes that the transformation of Islamic da'wah on social media is not merely a shift of medium from the physical pulpit to digital platforms, but a process of reconfiguring religious communication involving ulama, the logic of social media, algorithms, and audiences as actors of legitimation.

Keywords: Mediatization of da'wah; Ulama authority; Social media; Audience legitimation; Digital religion.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of religious authority in the digital era has become one of the major changes in the landscape of contemporary Islamic da'wah. The production, distribution, and consumption of religious knowledge are no longer fully under the control of traditional religious institutions, as the internet and social media have opened spaces for non-institutional actors to convey interpretations, advice, fatwas, and religious views to broad audiences.¹ In Islam, this shift has given rise to figures described as "new translators of Islam": actors who gain influence not primarily through chains of scholarly transmission, institutional positions, or recognition from senior ulama (Muslim religious scholars), but through digital visibility, communicative appeal, and audience acceptance.² Religious authority is no longer understood only as a formal position within a hierarchical structure, but also as a social relationship negotiated through trust, connectedness, and communicative interaction in digital spaces.³ Social media accelerates the fragmentation of religious authority because it enables many actors to speak in the name of religion with diverse styles, follower bases, and claims to legitimacy.⁴

In urban Muslim societies, access to sermons, study circles, religious question-and-answer forums, and religious motivational content increasingly takes place through digital platforms, so that the

¹ Aldin, dkk. (2024). Digital Media and Islamic Jurisprudence: Exploring Legal Adaptations and Challenges. *PJC*, (16.2)

² Mokk, dkk (2023). Issues of an Ageing Population: A Comparative Study in Malaysia, Singapore, Maldives, and Pakistan. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (Mjssh)*, 8(9).

³ Ashari, dkk (2023). Religious Digital Literacy of Students in Indonesia and Malaysia. *Tadris Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 18(1), 189–210

⁴ Solahudin, dkk, (2019). Internet and Islamic Learning Practices in Indonesia: Social Media, Religious Populism, and Religious Authority. *Religions*, 11(1), 19.

experience of learning religion is intensely mediated by technology.⁵ This condition shows that digitalization does not merely provide a new channel for da'wah, but transforms the ecology of religious authority through platform logic, algorithms, popularity, interactivity, and the attention economy.⁶ Theoretically, the transformation of digital religious authority can be understood through the development of digital religion studies, which has moved from descriptive approaches toward categorical, theoretical, and integrative approaches.⁷ The Religious-Social Shaping of Technology framework explains that religious communities are not only shaped by technology, but also negotiate the use of technology based on their respective histories, traditions, core beliefs, and communal framings.⁸ This framework is important because it prevents analysis from falling into technological determinism, which assumes that digital media automatically weakens traditional authority, even though some religious communities use technology precisely to strengthen their identity and communal boundaries.⁹ The mediatization of religion perspective also shows that media are not simply neutral channels for transmitting religious messages, but social institutions with logics, formats, rhythms, and selection mechanisms that influence how religion is presented and practiced.¹⁰ When religion is mediated by digital technology, religious

⁵Ali, dkk. (2021). Factors Influencing Islamic Financial Inclusion in Indonesia: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach. *Icr Journal*, 12(2), 249–274.

⁶Ul-Haq, dkk. (2024). *Encountering "The Other" in Religious Social Media: A Cross-Cultural Analysis*. *Social Media + Society*, 10(4).

⁷ERGEN, Y. (2023). Framing the Study of Digital Religion: Waves of Academic Research, Theoretical Approaches and Themes. *Medya Ve Din Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(2), 137–166.

⁸Campbell, H. A. (2016). Surveying Theoretical Approaches Within Digital Religion Studies. *New Media & Society*, 19(1), 15–24.

⁹Zhang, Y. (2017). Digital Religion in China: A Comparative Perspective on Buddhism and Christianity's Online Publics in Sina Weibo. *Journal of Religion Media and Digital Culture*, 6(1), 44–67.

¹⁰Guzek, D. (2019). *Mediatizing Secular State*.

authority embedded in the sociocultural sphere also changes because religious practices, communication patterns, and audience reception undergo transformation.¹¹ Therefore, digital religion does not only refer to the availability of religious content on the internet, but also to religious practices that take place through digital interaction and hybrid spaces between online and offline settings.¹²

In the Indonesian context, social media has become an important arena for religious populism, da'wah contestation, and shifts in the legitimacy of ulama. Islamic learning practices across various digital platforms show that religious authority is increasingly negotiated through new public spaces that allow users to disseminate religious messages independently.¹³ Mainstream authorities such as the MUI, pesantren, and major Islamic organizations have not lost their relevance, but they face challenges from preachers who gain popularity through YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and similar platforms.¹⁴ The phenomenon of the "New Ustaz" reveals the emergence of religious figures who quickly acquire the status of ulama without always undergoing the long religious education associated with traditional ulama.¹⁵ On the one hand, this phenomenon expands public access to religious knowledge because audiences can obtain religious answers quickly and according to their personal needs.¹⁶

¹¹Cloete, A. (2016). Mediated Religion: Implications for Religious Authority. *Verbum Et Ecclesia*, 37(1).

¹²Evolvi, G. (2021). Religion and the Internet: Digital Religion, (Hyper)mediated Spaces, and Materiality. *Zeitschrift Für Religion Gesellschaft Und Politik*, 6(1), 9–25.

¹³Sueca, dkk. (2023). Implementation of "Catur Guru" as the Basis of Character Education in Elementary School. *Ijils*, 1(1), 1–12.

¹⁴Rosidi, dkk. (2021). The Fragmentation of Religious Authority in Provincial Towns in Indonesia: The Case of the Mui (Indonesian Muslim Scholar Council) in Pekanbaru and Pontianak. *Manusya Journal of Humanities*, 24(2), 185–203.

¹⁵Afandi, dkk. (2021). The New Ustad in Religious Authority: Challenge and Dynamic of Fatwa in the New Media Era. 20-10-2020.

¹⁶Adel, dkk. (2023). Online Fatwas in Pakistan Using Social Networking Platforms. *Ulumuna*, 27(1), 201–226.

On the other hand, this phenomenon raises concerns about scholarly quality, the authenticity of references, and the potential confusion of the public due to the spread of unverified religious views.¹⁷ However, digitalization does not always erase traditional authority, as platforms such as Cariustadz.id show that traditional religious authorities can also enter digital spaces to offer moderate Islamic discourse and compete in the field of cyber fatwa. Pesantren also remain a basis for reproducing kiai authority because the habitus of santri, the concept of barakah, and charismatic relations continue to shape social recognition of the kiai.¹⁸

The strategies of religious actors in building authority on social media show that digital legitimacy is determined not only by the depth of religious knowledge, but also by the ability to manage identity, networks, visibility, and audience interaction. Islamic preachers on YouTube use strategies of identity commodification, network collaboration, and interactive communication to build religious authority on the digital pulpit.¹⁹ Identity commodification enables preachers to present their background, life experiences, communication style, or personal uniqueness as symbolic resources for attracting digital audiences.²⁰ Network collaboration expands legitimacy because preachers can connect themselves with figures, communities, platforms, or da'wah networks that already have social

¹⁷Ningsih, dkk. (2023). Analysis of Habib Jafar's Da'wah Message in Login Program at Youtube Chanel Deddy Corbuzier. *Journal Transnational Universal Studies*, 1(3), 133–140.

¹⁸Harnadi, D., Siahaan, H., & Hilmy, M. (2021). Pesantren and the Preservation of Traditional Religious Authority in the Digital Age. *Masyarakat Kebudayaan Dan Politik*, 34(3), 272.

¹⁹Pranoto, S. S. (2023). Strategy for Constructing Religious Authority in the Digital Pulpit: Study of Three Indonesian Preachers on YouTube. *Al Hikmah International Journal of Islamic Studies and Human Sciences*, 6(1), 29–52.

²⁰Lyansari, K. N. (2022). Celebrification and Branding New Female Religious Authority in Indonesia. *Dialog*, 45(1), 99–110.

influence.²¹ Interactive communication becomes important because comments, live broadcasts, direct messages, and audience responses create personal closeness between preachers and their followers. In addition, visual authority becomes an important mechanism because religious influencers construct an impression of being friendly, close, informal, yet still authoritative through strategies of appearance, setting, visual focus, and text-image combinations.²² Strategies of self-presentation, code-switching, and textual reference also strengthen the legitimacy of religious narratives because audiences perceive religious identity, communicative flexibility, and a scriptural basis in the content they consume.

Audience legitimation is a central dimension in the transformation of religious authority because authority is not automatically attached to an actor; it must be recognized, followed, and trusted by the receiving community. Islamic authority is relational because religious education, scriptural proficiency, and institutional position are not always sufficient to produce an authoritative position without audience recognition.²³ Audiences do not merely receive messages passively; they interpret, approve, reject, compare, and share religious content based on their knowledge backgrounds, social experiences, and platform preferences. On social media, audience support appears through the number of followers, likes, comments, reshares, testimonials, community participation, and defense of particular figures

²¹Pranoto, S. S. (2023). Strategy for Constructing Religious Authority in the Digital Pulpit: Study of Three Indonesian Preachers on YouTube. *Al Hikmah International Journal of Islamic Studies and Human Sciences*, 6(1), 29–52.

²²Febrian, H. (2024). Visualizing Authority: Rise of the Religious Influencers on the Instagram. *Social Media + Society*, 10(4).

²³Sunier, T. (2023). The Politics of Imam Training: The Domestication of Islam in Europe. 73–102.

in public debates.²⁴ Muslim youth also play a role in strengthening the popularity of traditional ulama by repackaging the image of ulama so that it aligns with the visual culture, language, and lifestyle of urban Muslims.²⁵ However, digital audiences are also vulnerable to echo chambers, selective exposure, and filter bubbles that reinforce certain religious preferences and limit encounters with different perspectives.

The transformation of digital religious authority has implications for literacy, moderation, gender, politics, and media regulation. Religious digital literacy has become an urgent need because society must not only access religious content, but also validate sources, distinguish credible authorities, and assess whether information corresponds with sound references.²⁶ Religious institutions, governments, and educational institutions play an important role in building a society capable of navigating digital religious information responsibly and critically. Digital media can also be used for counter-radicalism, the promotion of moderation, and harmony, but at the same time it can facilitate disinformation, the politicization of fatwas, and conflict mobilization. In electoral politics, ulama symbols and religious rituals can be commodified to build leadership images and mobilize public support.²⁷ On the other hand, new media open space for female ulama, although audience acceptance is still influenced by gender norms, da'wah approaches, and recognition from male authority structures. Thus, the transformation of digital religious authority is not

²⁴ Kurniasih, dkk. (2022). DIGITALIZING DA'WAH AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIA: After the Fall of Religious Leader. *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies*, 6(1).

²⁵ Yazid, dkk. (2023). Reclaiming Traditional Religious Authority in the Contemporary Era. *Jurnal Dakwah Risalah*, 34(1), 01.

²⁶ Hippe, R. (2020). Human Capital in European Regions Since the French Revolution: Lessons for Economic and Education Policies. *Revue D Économie Politique*, Vol. 130(1), 27–50.

²⁷ Lubis, dkk. (2024). The Commodification of Religious Rituals: Representations of Political Actors in Indonesian Elections. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, (105(2)).

merely a shift in the medium of da'wah, but concerns questions of power, gender, regulation, literacy, identity politics, and the ethics of public communication.

Although the existing literature has made significant contributions, a research gap remains concerning the relationship between ulama, social media, and audience legitimation. Many studies have discussed changes in religious authority caused by digital media, but some still focus on actors or platforms without adequately integrating how audiences grant, negotiate, or withdraw legitimacy from such authority.²⁸ Studies on the mediatization of religion emphasize structural changes resulting from media logic, but a sharper reading is still needed of how these changes take place in everyday practices of legitimation on social media. Studies on religious populism have also explained the emergence of new actors, but they do not always conceptually distinguish between popularity, credibility, legitimacy, and authority. Therefore, this study aims to critically examine the transformation of religious authority in the digital era through a literature review on ulama, social media, and audience legitimation. The novelty of this study lies in its effort to synthesize three areas of inquiry that are often discussed separately: ulama authority, the logic of social media, and audience legitimation. The research question is: how is the transformation of religious authority in the digital era constructed in the literature on ulama, social media, and audience legitimation? This question is important for understanding the shift of religious authority from hierarchical structures toward a more relational, participatory, and digitalized configuration.

²⁸Müller, J., & Friemel, T. N. (2024). Dynamics of Digital Media Use in Religious Communities—A Theoretical Model. *Religions*, 15(7), 762.

METHOD

This study uses a literature review design with a qualitative-descriptive approach to examine the mediatization of Islamic da'wah on social media, particularly in relation to ulama authority and audience legitimation in digital spaces. This design was chosen because the study does not seek to test relationships between variables statistically, but to map, interpret, and synthesize conceptual and empirical findings from the literature on digital religion, the mediatization of religion, religious authority, social media da'wah, and audience reception. The literature review is directed at explaining how religious authority, which previously rested on hierarchy, institutions, chains of scholarly transmission, and recognition from traditional communities, is renegotiated through digital platforms. The conceptual framework of this study is based on the idea of Religious-Social Shaping of Technology.²⁹ This study also uses the perspective of the mediatization of religion.³⁰ In addition, this study positions digital religious authority as a relational phenomenon because the influence of ulama or preachers does not automatically arise from religious education and institutional position, but also requires audience recognition.³¹

The research data consist of journal articles, academic books, and scholarly publications that directly discuss religious authority, social media, ulama, digital da'wah, cyber fatwas, digital religion, religious populism, audience legitimation, and the mediatization of religion. The literature reviewed includes conceptual and empirical studies in

²⁹ Campbell, H. A. (2016). Surveying Theoretical Approaches Within Digital Religion Studies. *New Media & Society*, 19(1), 15–24.

³⁰ Guzek, D. (2019). *Mediatizing Secular State*.

³¹ Sunier, T. (2023). *The Politics of Imam Training: The Domestication of Islam in Europe*. 73–102.

Indonesian and cross-national contexts, such as studies on the "New Ustaz," Cariustadz.id, the MUI, pesantren, female ulama, religious influencers, cyberwarriors, online fatwas, and audience reception of religious symbols on social media. The inclusion criteria cover literature that explicitly discusses the relationship between religion and digital media, changes in religious authority, strategies for constructing the legitimacy of ulama or preachers, and the role of audiences in accepting, negotiating, or rejecting such authority. The exclusion criteria include normative da'wah studies unrelated to digital media, popular non-academic writings, and publications not directly relevant to issues of authority, legitimacy, or audiences. The research instrument is a literature extraction sheet containing publication identity, study focus, research context, key concepts, methods, findings, and contributions to the theme of religious authority transformation.

Data collection was carried out through systematic reading of the literature established as the corpus of the study. The first stage was the identification of literature based on three main keywords: religious authority, social media, and audience legitimation. The second stage was literature screening by assessing the suitability of the content to the research focus. The third stage was data extraction by recording the main arguments, theoretical concepts, empirical contexts, and important findings of each source. The fourth stage was the grouping of literature into analytical themes, including digital religion and mediatization, fragmentation of ulama authority, preachers' legitimation strategies, audience reception, and religious digital literacy. The analysis was conducted using thematic synthesis, namely comparing, connecting, and organizing findings to produce a coherent conceptual map. The validity of the study was maintained through consistent use of relevant literature, source traceability for

each claim, and a limitation against adding references outside the corpus used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ulama Authority on Social Media

The main findings of this study show that religious authority in the digital era can no longer be understood only as authority derived from institutions, chains of scholarly transmission, organizational hierarchies, or recognition from traditional communities. Social media has created a new space that allows various actors to produce, disseminate, and negotiate religious knowledge more openly. This shift shows that digital media transform the structure of the production and consumption of religious knowledge by opening opportunities for figures who are not always located within formal structures of ulama authority, but who are able to reach broad audiences through digital platforms.³² In Islamic da'wah, social media is not merely a channel for delivering messages, but an arena where religious authority is constructed, contested, and publicly legitimized.

One important symptom of this transformation is the emergence of the "New Ustaz." Such figures gain influence through media visibility, popular communication styles, the ability to build closeness with audiences, and the capacity to adapt religious messages to digital culture.³³ This condition indicates a shift in the basis of legitimacy from authority grounded in the depth of scholarly transmission toward authority that is also determined by the ability to appear, network, and create emotional resonance with digital publics. However, this shift

³² Aldin, dkk. (2024). Digital Media and Islamic Jurisprudence: Exploring Legal Adaptations and Challenges. *PJC*, (16.2), 1031–1046.

³³ Afandi, dkk. (2021). *The New Ustad in Religious Authority: Challenge and Dynamic of Fatwa in the New Media Era*.

does not mean that traditional authority has been entirely weakened. Pesantren, kiai, the MUI, and major Islamic organizations continue to hold important positions because they still possess symbolic capital in the form of knowledge, historical legitimacy, and community recognition.³⁴

The relationship between traditional authority and new digital authority is better understood as both contestative and adaptive. The Cariustadz.id platform shows that traditional religious actors are not merely objects of digital disruption, but also seek to enter digital spaces to offer moderate Islamic discourse and challenge the dominance of new da'wah groups on social media.³⁵ Thus, digitalization does not produce a linear replacement of old authority by new authority. What occurs is the formation of a more plural configuration of authority, in which traditional ulama, popular preachers, religious influencers, fatwa institutions, digital communities, and ordinary audiences are all involved in the production of religious meaning.

This finding is consistent with the Religious-Social Shaping of Technology perspective, which emphasizes that religious communities are not merely influenced by technology, but also negotiate its use according to their respective traditions, values, and communal boundaries. Ulama, pesantren, and Islamic organizations do not always reject social media, but adopt it for da'wah, the protection of authority, and the framing of religious identity. A study of ulama in Ogan Ilir shows that social media has become part of the new identity of ulama, although most have not yet produced original da'wah messages on

³⁴ Mustofa, I. (2023). TEXT AUTHORIZATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHARIA ECONOMIC LAW IN INDONESIA: Study of the Fatwa of the National Sharia Council of the Indonesian Ulama Council. *Jurisdictie Jurnal Hukum Dan Syariah*, 13(2), 210–236.

³⁵ Zamhari, A., Han, M. I., & Zulkifli, Z. (2021). Traditional Religious Authorities in New Media: Cariustadz.id Platform as an Alternative Cyber Fatwa and Da'wah Media Among the Middle-Class Urban Muslims. *Ahkam Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, 21(1).

the platform.³⁶ This indicates that traditional actors can integrate technology into religious practice without fully abandoning older bases of legitimacy. Within the framework of the mediatization of religion, this change shows that media do not merely transfer da'wah from the physical pulpit to digital spaces. Media reshape the ways religion is communicated, packaged, consumed, and perceived by the public. When social media logic emphasizes speed, visuality, interactivity, personalization, and audience engagement, religious actors are encouraged to adjust their communication formats. The strategies of identity commodification, network collaboration, and interactive communication used by YouTube preachers show that digital authority is built through a combination of religious competence and media competence.³⁷ In other words, religious authority is not only determined by who is most knowledgeable, but also by who is able to make that knowledge appear relevant, accessible, and trustworthy to digital audiences.

Visual strategy is also an important part of the formation of religious authority on social media. Religious influencers use visual approaches that are friendly, informal, and close to audiences, while still maintaining symbolic distance so as not to lose authority. Clothing, setting, facial expression, camera style, accompanying text, and content aesthetics all play a role in shaping audience perceptions of a person's religious credibility. Thus, visuality is not an additional element, but part of the production of authority. Social media creates a form of authority that is performative, visual, and affective.

³⁶ Yanti, M., & Yusnaini, Y. (2021). Social Media Acceptability Among Ulama in Ogan Ilir District, South Sumatra, Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Indonesia*, 5(2), 170–185.

³⁷ Pranoto, S. S. (2023). Strategy for Constructing Religious Authority in the Digital Pulpit: Study of Three Indonesian Preachers on YouTube. *Al Hikmah International Journal of Islamic Studies and Human Sciences*, 6(1), 29–52.

Nevertheless, this transformation also raises issues of authenticity, scholarly depth, and accountability. When anyone can speak in the name of religion, the boundaries between ulama, preachers, religious motivators, hijrah celebrities, and content creators become increasingly blurred. Concern over the delivery of fatwas or religious advice by figures who lack adequate scholarly capacity is relevant because it can generate confusion and social friction. In this context, traditional authority remains important as a counterbalance to the current of digital religious populism. The MUI, pesantren, and ulama with strong scholarly foundations can function as guardians of the quality of religious discourse, although they also need to develop communication patterns that are more relevant to digital audiences.

The Role of Digital Audiences

The next finding shows that audiences can no longer be positioned as passive recipients of da'wah messages. In the social media ecosystem, audiences play an active role in shaping, strengthening, disseminating, and even challenging religious authority. Islamic authority is relational because an authoritative position is determined not only by education, mastery of texts, or institutional status, but also by recognition from others. Thus, audience legitimation is an important element in understanding the transformation of digital religious authority. An ulama figure may have a strong chain of scholarly transmission, but will not automatically become authoritative in digital spaces if they do not gain audience attention, trust, and acceptance.

Social media makes audience legitimation appear in concrete and observable forms, such as follower counts, views, comments, likes, reshares, testimonials, and the intensity of community engagement.

These measures do not always reflect scholarly depth, but in the digital ecology they are often perceived as signs of influence and credibility. This is where a shift in religious power relations occurs: authority is no longer only granted from above by institutions, but is also built from below through audience participation. A study of Aa Gym shows that the electability of religious figures in the digital public sphere is closely related to legitimacy and popularity formed through social media. This affirms that public recognition has become one important form of capital in the formation of contemporary religious authority.

The role of audiences also appears in the repackaging of the image of traditional ulama. The support of Muslim youth for the popularity of Ustaz Abdul Somad and Ustaz Hanan Attaki shows that audiences do not merely consume da'wah, but also help shape the format, style, and image of ulama so that they align with urban Muslim culture. Audiences can act as image editors, content disseminators, narrative amplifiers, and reputation guardians. Thus, digital authority is collaborative because it is formed through interaction between religious figures and their networks of followers. The phenomenon of cyberwarriors further clarifies the role of audiences in producing ulama legitimation. Through memes, hashtags, comics, and videos, kiai or ulama are constructed as savior figures, sources of true authority, and symbols of resistance against the threat of radicalism or social disintegration.³⁸ In this context, audiences do not only affirm ulama authority, but also create heroic narratives that expand ulama influence in the digital public sphere. However, this process is also ambivalent because the strengthening of certain authorities can

³⁸ Schmidt, L. (2018). Cyberwarriors and Counterstars: Contesting Religious Radicalism and Violence on Indonesian Social Media. *Asiascape Digital Asia*, 5(1–2), 32–67.

deepen fragmentation when different audience groups construct their own authoritative figures.

Audience legitimation is also closely related to the logic of affect. Digital audiences often assess preachers not only on the basis of rational arguments or textual depth, but also through emotional closeness, language style, comfort, humor, personal experience, and the fit between values and their identity. The concept of "God's Influencers" shows that religious authority on social media is built through trust, respect, belief, and connectedness. This means that digital authority has a strong emotional dimension. Preachers who make audiences feel understood, represented, and personally addressed often gain considerable legitimacy, even when they do not always hold formal positions within religious structures.

However, audience-based legitimation also creates risks. Popularity can be mistaken for authority, virality can be perceived as truth, and emotional closeness can replace scholarly verification. The phenomena of filter bubbles and echo chambers intensify these risks because audiences tend to be exposed to content that aligns with their own preferences, identities, and social networks.³⁹ When audiences only follow figures who reinforce their prior beliefs, the space for critical dialogue narrows. As a result, polarization can increase, cross-group authority can weaken, and standards of religious truth can become increasingly fragmented.

On the other hand, digital audiences can also play a critical role. Reception analysis shows that audiences have the ability to interpret, approve, reject, or negotiate the meaning of media content based on their own knowledge and experience. A study of feminist da'wah on

³⁹ Andok, M. (2023). Religious Filter Bubbles on Digital Public Sphere. *Religions*, 14(11), 1359.

YouTube shows that some audiences do not always accept religious legitimation that strengthens masculine domination in the family, because they assess such messages based on their experiences of justice and personal rights.⁴⁰ Thus, audiences are not a homogeneous mass that can easily be controlled, but active subjects who can produce alternative readings of religious messages.

Implications and Limitations

The main significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding digital religious authority as a phenomenon that is neither singular, static, nor entirely institutional. This study shows that religious authority on social media is formed through interactions among scholarly capital, institutional capital, performative capital, visual capital, network capital, and audience legitimation. Therefore, religious authority cannot be sufficiently analyzed through dichotomies such as traditional versus modern, offline versus online, or ulama versus influencer. The reality is more complex because traditional ulama can become digital actors, influencers can use textual references to build legitimacy, and audiences can become producers of authority through digital participation.

This study also strengthens the study of the mediatization of religion. The findings reviewed show that social media does not only mediate religious messages, but also reshapes the structure of religious relations. When da'wah is delivered through YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, or WhatsApp, the form of the message, its duration, language style, visuality, and audience responses help determine how the message is received. This strengthens the argument that the mediatization of religion affects the transformation of authority,

⁴⁰ Syam, dkk. (2022). Gender Construction in Feminist Da'wah by Women Preachers on Youtube. *Jurnal Dakwah Risalah*, 32(2).

identity, devotional practices, and religious communication.⁴¹ Therefore, studies of contemporary Islamic da'wah need to pay attention to platform logic, not only to the substance of religious messages.

The theoretical implication of this study is the need for an analytical model of digital religious authority that combines theories of digital religion, mediatization, and audience legitimation. The RSST framework is useful for explaining how religious communities negotiate technology based on values and traditions. Mediatization theory helps explain how media logic transforms communication structures and authority. The perspective of audience legitimation is needed to understand how public recognition shapes the authoritative status of a religious figure. These three approaches need to be read integratively so that analysis does not become trapped either in technological determinism or in the romanticization of traditional authority.

The practical implication of this study is the importance of religious digital literacy. When religious content circulates widely and does not always pass through adequate verification, audiences need to be able to evaluate source credibility, understand the context of religious texts, distinguish personal opinion from scholarly authority, and recognize emotional manipulation or the politicization of religion. Religious digital literacy can help society not only access information, but also validate information by referring to appropriate sources. In this context, educational institutions, religious organizations, governments, and digital communities need to collaborate to build a healthier digital religious ecosystem.

Another implication concerns the role of traditional religious institutions. The MUI, pesantren, Islamic organizations, and traditional

⁴¹ Guzek, D. (2019). *Mediatizing Secular State*.

ulama cannot rely solely on historical authority to maintain relevance in digital spaces. They need to develop communication strategies that are responsive to the characteristics of digital audiences without sacrificing scholarly depth and religious ethics. Platforms such as Cariustadz.id show that traditional authority can use new media to offer moderate counter-narratives and expand the reach of da'wah.⁴² This strategy needs to be strengthened through dialogical communication, attractive visuals, and rapid responses to public issues.

This study also has implications for religious moderation and gender. Social media can become a space for the spread of extremism, religious hoaxes, and identity polarization, but it can also be used to build counter-narratives, interfaith dialogue, and social solidarity. Digital platforms such as Sanadmedia.com show that narratives of patriotism based on Islamic principles can be used to promote harmony and counter radicalism. In terms of gender, digital media open space for female ulama to deliver da'wah and build authority, but audience acceptance remains influenced by social norms, da'wah style, and male authority structures. Therefore, digitalization opens opportunities, but does not automatically produce equality of authority.

The limitation of this study lies in its nature as a literature review that depends on the available corpus of literature. Because it does not conduct direct field data collection, this analysis cannot yet capture in depth the empirical experiences of audiences in choosing, trusting, or rejecting particular religious authorities. The literature used also covers diverse contexts, such as Indonesia, Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Russia, and Kenya, so the resulting synthesis is conceptual and is not

⁴² Zamhari, dkk. (2021). Traditional Religious Authorities in New Media: Cariustadz.id Platform as an Alternative Cyber Fatwa and Da'wah Media Among the Middle-Class Urban Muslims. *Ahkam Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, 21(1).

intended as a final empirical generalization. In addition, digital platforms continue to change through algorithms, new features, content moderation policies, and user consumption patterns. The way authority is built on YouTube is not necessarily the same as on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, or Telegram. Therefore, future research needs to empirically examine how the characteristics of specific platforms shape particular types of religious authority.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the mediatization of Islamic da'wah on social media has reconfigured religious authority through complex relations among ulama, digital platforms, and audiences. Ulama authority no longer rests solely on formal institutions, chains of scholarly transmission, organizational hierarchies, or recognition from traditional communities, but is also shaped by digital visibility, communicative performativity, visual aesthetics, platform interactivity, and audience acceptance. Social media transforms the ways religious knowledge is produced, disseminated, and consumed, thereby opening space for popular preachers, religious influencers, da'wah content creators, and digital communities that support ulama.

The main findings show that digital religious authority is relational because an ulama figure or preacher must obtain audience recognition, trust, and engagement. Audiences play an active role in shaping legitimation through following, liking, commenting, sharing, defending, criticizing, and repackaging the image of religious figures. Thus, social media is not merely a channel for da'wah, but an arena of symbolic contestation where religious authority is negotiated. This study affirms that traditional authority and new authority do not always negate one another, but can compete, adapt, and reinforce each

other. Future research needs to examine audience behavior, the role of algorithms, the attention economy, gender, and religious digital literacy in the formation of ulama authority.

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REREADING PETER L. BERGER'S SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION IN THE FRAGMENTATION OF DIGITAL RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

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Abstract

This paper reviews Peter L. Berger's social construction in the context of the fragmentation of religious authority in the digital era. Berger emphasizes that social reality is the result of human construction through the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Externalization refers to the process through which human beings express themselves and create a social world through everyday activities. Objectivation is the process by which human social products become objective realities recognized by members of society, such as norms, laws, and religion. Meanwhile, internalization is the process through which objective reality is reabsorbed into consciousness, so that it is regarded as natural and taken for granted. In the digital era, however, this process is disrupted because religious authority is no longer singular and stable, but fragmented through discursive competition among traditional clerics, the state, academics, and digital actors. This fragmentation shows that the legitimacy of authority is not determined solely by religious institutions, but also by media logic, symbolic capital, and virtual interaction. This paper offers a critique that the social construction of religious authority in Indonesia cannot be adequately understood within a classical framework that presupposes the stability of meaning. Rather, it needs to be approached through the dynamics of digital contestation and identity politics. This article emphasizes the importance of reconstructing Berger's theory so that it remains relevant for explaining changes in religious authority in an increasingly plural and digitalized society.

Keywords: Social Construction, Fragmentation of Authority, Digital Era

INTRODUCTION

Traditional religious authorities, such as pesantren, established Islamic organizations, and charismatic ulama, are increasingly facing challenges to their legitimacy as new forms of authority emerge in digital spaces. This occurs because the religious social field has shifted into digital spaces, producing fragmented and even competing forms of authority. This situation raises the author's concern about whether Berger's theory, which emerged in the context of Western modernity, remains relevant for rereading religious phenomena in Indonesia, which are shaped by tradition, local culture, and global influences at the same time.¹

Berger's theory of social construction argues that society is a human product and that individuals construct their realities through shared beliefs and symbols. In the Indonesian context, where authority is deeply rooted in cultural traditions and history, Berger's theory can provide valuable insight into how structures of power are created and maintained. Religious authority in Indonesia involves a complex interaction between traditional beliefs and modern influences. The role of Islam, in particular, has become a central focus of this study, since Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population.²

Scholars have examined how Islamic teachings and practices intersect with political power, social norms, and cultural traditions in shaping the country's religious landscape. In addition, the rise of religious extremism and the government's responses to it have also

¹ R. Wuthnow, "Cultural Analysis: The Work of Peter L. Berger, Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault, and Jürgen Habermas," *Cultural Analysis the Work of Peter L. Berger Mary Douglas Michel Foucault and Jurgen Habermas*, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203092774>.

² F. Lombardo, "Dark and the Social Construction of Knowledge," in *Societes*, vol. 154, no. 4, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.3917/soc.154.0021>.

become an area of research. On the other hand, the changing socio-religious landscape in the digital era presents a new problem in understanding authority. Whereas in traditional societies religious authority tended to be centered on formal institutions such as ulama, pesantren, or state religious bodies, religious legitimacy is now increasingly fragmented by the emergence of alternative authorities in digital spaces, such as social media ustaz, celebrity preachers, and even algorithms that determine the flow of religious discourse. This phenomenon shows that religious authority is no longer singular, but is the result of symbolic contestation that is continuously negotiated.³

It is in this context that Peter L. Berger's idea of social construction becomes relevant to reread and even to critique. Berger emphasizes that social reality is the result of a dialectic of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. However, this framework emerged from a relatively stable modern society. The digital world, by contrast, displays instability, acceleration, and the fragmentation of meaning. Religious authority, which was once regarded as taken for granted, is now reproduced in virtual spaces saturated with market logic, symbolic capital, and the democratization of access to information. Therefore, rereading Berger critically means placing social construction no longer within a framework of stable meaning, but within the dynamics of digital disruption that challenge traditional claims to authority. This article argues that the fragmentation of digital religious authority is a symptom of a new social construction that requires an interdisciplinary

³ M. Heide, "On Berger: If Peter Berger Was Doing Public Relations - A Social Constructionist Perspective on Crisis Communication," *Public Relations and Social Theory Key Figures Concepts and Developments*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315271231>.

understanding involving the sociology of knowledge, digital anthropology, and theories of religious authority.⁴

The main issue that emerges in the fragmentation of digital religious authority is the disappearance of a single center of legitimacy. In the tradition of Indonesian Islam, for example, religious authority has long been held by ulama, pesantren, and major organizations such as NU or Muhammadiyah. However, the digital era has produced a new reality: anyone with access to technology, communication skills, and a large number of followers can appear as a religious authority without passing through traditional channels. This phenomenon not only shifts the distribution of authority, but also creates an epistemological crisis.⁵

Peter L. Berger's framework, particularly in *The Social Construction of Reality*, helps explain how religious authority is formed, legitimized, and internalized in society. The problem arises, however, when Berger's theory is applied to the digital context, where the externalization of religious teachings is no longer linear, the objectivation of religious reality takes place in an algorithmic space determined by machines, and internalization occurs not merely through tradition but through brief interactions on social media. In other words, digitalization has radicalized the process of social construction, so that religious authority is not only distributed but also fragmented in an extreme way.⁶

From the discussion above, this problematization becomes clearer when we observe how digital authority often collides with institutional authority. For example, an official MUI fatwa may be questioned or

⁴ B. Barnes, "On The Social Construction of Reality: Reflections on a Missed Opportunity," in *Human Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-016-9389-1>.

⁵ M. Endre, "On the Very Idea of Social Construction: Deconstructing Searle's and Hacking's Critical Reflections," *Human Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-016-9395-3>.

⁶ R. Bickel, "Peter Berger on Modernization and Modernity: An Unvarnished Overview," *Peter Berger on Modernization and Modernity an Unvarnished Overview*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315111391>.

even ignored by digital publics when a religious influencer with millions of followers offers a different interpretation. The authority of traditional ulama, which rests on chains of scholarly transmission and the legitimacy of pesantren communities, must confront instant authority formed by virality. As a result, the fragmentation of religious authority is not only a sociological issue, but also contains political, economic, and technological dimensions. From this point, rereading Berger's social construction demands a more critical approach. A classical theory of the stability of meaning must be expanded to address the context of digital disruption. The fragmentation of digital religious authority is not merely a shift in sources of legitimacy, but also touches on the fundamental question of how religion is constructed, disseminated, and lived in an increasingly plural, digitalized, and algorithmic society.

METHOD

This article uses an interpretive-critical method to examine texts related to Berger's works. The author's discussion focuses on two of Berger's works: *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, written with Thomas Luckmann in 1971, and, as an additional text, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, published in 1966. The interpretive method is used because the social reality of religious authority is understood as a construction born from symbolic interaction, in line with Peter L. Berger's framework of externalization, objectivation, and internalization.

The method is also critical because this article does not merely describe the fragmentation of authority, but also questions power relations, algorithmic domination, and the politics of legitimacy in digital spaces. This interpretive-critical method toward Berger's texts is used to understand the text not only literally, but also to uncover hidden

meanings, power relations, ideology, and the socio-historical context behind the text. A text contains a surplus of meaning that remains open to various interpretations.⁷ To simplify the method used by the author, the following presents its logical structure.

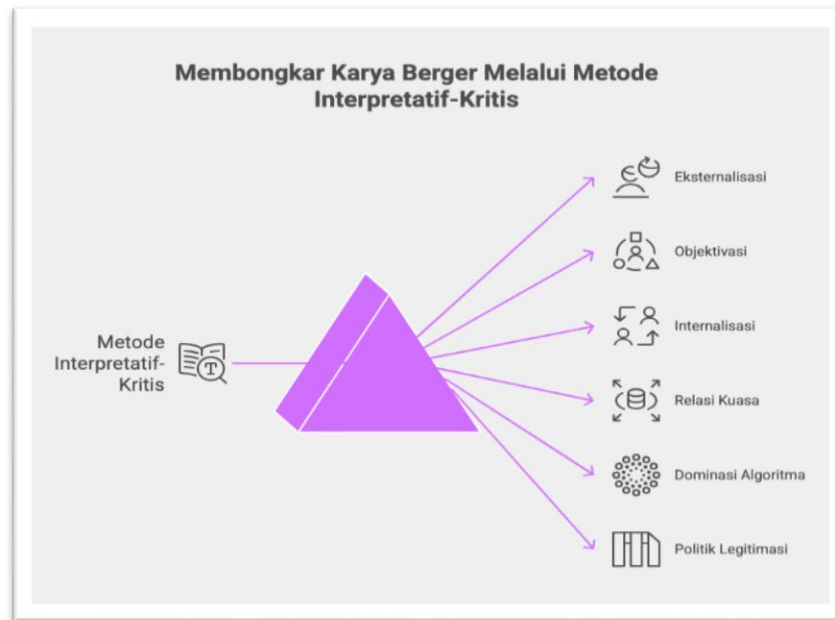


Figure 1: Interpretive-Critical Framework for Rereading Berger's Social Construction Theory

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Berger's Triadic Social Construction

Berger's social construction is essentially a critique that attempts to bridge the approaches offered by Durkheim⁸, Weber⁹, Marx¹⁰, and subsequently extends Karl Mannheim's way of thinking.¹¹ Berger seeks

⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, Texas: Christian University Press, 1976, h. 70-80.

⁸ Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, New York: The Free Press, 1982.

⁹ Christopher Adair-Totef, *Marx Weber's Sociology of Religion*, Germany: Tußingen, 2016.

¹⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital Volume II The Process of Circulation of Capital*, Translated by I. Lasker; Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1956.

¹¹ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1929.

to bridge Durkheim's emphasis on objective social facts, Weber's emphasis on subjective understanding (*verstehen*)¹² in social action, and Marx's emphasis on economic structure as the basis of social reality. To bridge these predecessors, Berger shows that social reality is neither entirely objective nor entirely subjective, but rather the result of a dialectic among them.

From this dialectic, Berger and Thomas Luckmann wrote *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. It is from this work that the author grounds the discussion of social construction, not merely by restating Berger's ideas, but by criticizing and testing them against contemporary realities. In his thesis, Berger states that social reality is created, institutionalized, and inherited through human interaction; that is, social reality is created, institutionalized, and transmitted through interaction among human beings. Because social reality is a human production, as Berger writes: reality and knowledge are products of social interaction, not absolute givens. Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product. In other words, reality does not simply appear by itself, but is formed through human interaction. What we regard as real is the result of a social agreement, or is socially constructed.¹³

In simple terms, Berger's thinking, which the author refers to as the triadic process of social construction, consists of the dialectical movement of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. At the stage of externalization, human beings express themselves and create

¹² Max Weber introduced the term *verstehen* as a method in the social sciences, especially sociology, for understanding human social action. Unlike the natural sciences, which explain phenomena through causal laws (*erklären*), the social sciences must understand the subjective meanings underlying human action. Human action is not understood only from the outside as objective behaviour, but also from the inner world, motives, and meanings that accompany it.

¹³ Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Published in Penguin University Books 1971, h. 61.

a social world, such as law, custom, and religion. Objectivation then turns these creations into institutions that appear objective and coercive. At the stage of internalization, individuals receive, interpret, and make these social rules part of themselves. It is at this stage that repeated human actions form habitus. These habits are then institutionalized into institutions and passed down to the next generation as something regarded as natural.¹⁴

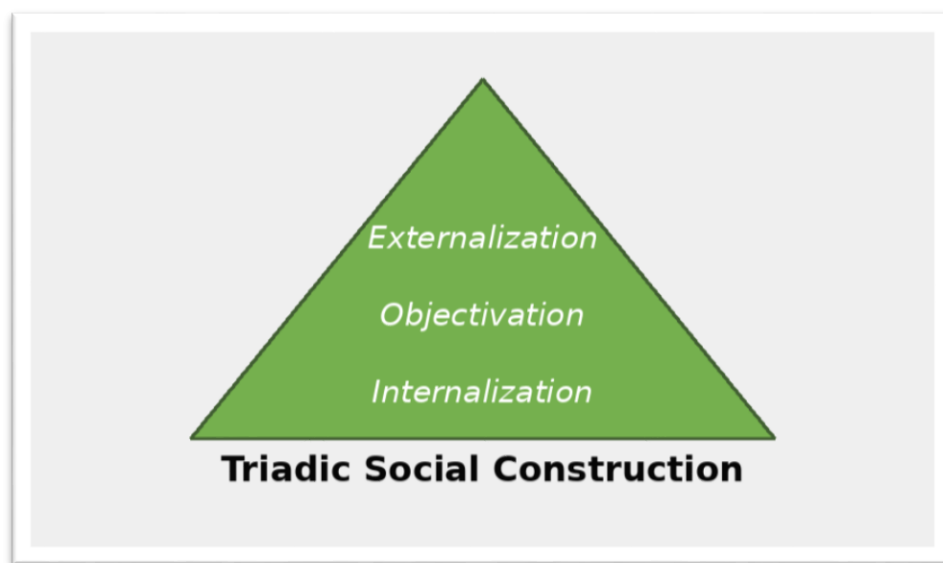


Figure 2: Triadic Social Construction

From this dialectical process, human beings ultimately require social legitimation so that institutions can endure.¹⁵ In this regard, religion is the highest form of legitimation because it provides transcendent meaning for the social order. Berger even refers to "Religion as a Sacred Canopy," meaning that religion provides a sacred canopy over society, giving ultimate meaning and order to human existence. To maintain such legitimacy, human beings also

¹⁴ Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality...*, h. 70–75.

¹⁵ Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality...*, h. 92–104.

need language as an important means of sustaining social construction because it enables the creation, dissemination, and maintenance of meaning. Therefore, social mechanisms such as ideology, religion, education, and media are needed to continuously affirm that reality is legitimate and true.¹⁶

2. Vis-à-Vis Fragmentation of Traditional and Digital Religious Authority

Religious authority has long served as a pillar for maintaining the continuity of tradition, legitimacy, and the religious practices of the community. In traditional societies, authority is usually centered on ulama, kiai, or formal religious institutions that are recognized socially and culturally. However, the arrival of the digital era has introduced the phenomenon of authority disruption, in which religious interpretations can now be produced, disseminated, and consumed through virtual spaces without passing through traditional mechanisms of legitimation. This vis-à-vis encounter between traditional and digital authority has produced complex dynamics of fragmentation: contestation over spaces of authority, changes in patterns of legitimation, and shifts in the way society practices religion.¹⁷

Traditional authority emphasizes sanad, scriptural interpretation, and institutionality, whereas digital authority emphasizes performativity, popular rhetoric, visualization, and closeness to audiences. The author views this vis-à-vis relation between traditional and digital authority as a tension in public debates on social media, for example over halal-haram fatwas, identity politics, and Islamic lifestyles. Here,

¹⁶ Peter L Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Openroad Integrated Media, 1966, h. 25–29.

¹⁷ J. Dreher, "Peter L. Berger's the Social Construction of Reality," in *Anthem Companion to Peter Berger*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.168327.12>.

fragmentation not only creates plurality, but also has the potential to generate polarization.¹⁸

Berger argues that modernity gives rise to pluralism, which leads to the delegitimation of single authority. This pluralism ultimately triggers the fragmentation of religious authority: authority is no longer centralized, but competes in a marketplace of meaning, or a religious marketplace. Traditional authority still claims legitimacy through continuity, namely tradition, sanad, and institutions. Digital authority appears through novelty, namely communicative style, popular narratives, and rapid accessibility.

Both stand in a vis-à-vis position, not merely facing each other, but also negating and sometimes making use of each other. For example, traditional kiai have begun to use digital platforms to maintain their authority, while religious influencers make use of traditional imagery to gain legitimacy. Within Berger's framework, this phenomenon shows that digital religious reality is a new social construction that shifts older mechanisms of authority. Consequently, the sacred canopy weakens because religious authority is now contested rather than monopolized. Religious authority turns into a competitive arena resembling a free market, where the faithful act as religious consumers. Authority becomes fragmented, but also more democratic because many voices become accessible. However, the risks of misinformation and banality also increase.

3. Rereading Berger's Social Construction in the Digital Era

If used as it is, Berger's framework of thought no longer has sufficient space in the digital context because the context and the era

¹⁸ P. A. Mellor, "Modernity, Self-Identity and the Sequestration of Death," in *Sociology*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1993, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038593027003005>.

are different. Therefore, a critical rereading is needed to find its relevance in the digital world. This rereading is the author's construction and is presented as a point of discussion in this article, so that the discussion does not appear normative or merely repeat Berger's thought. For this reason, a rereading is needed so that the theory becomes fresher and its relevance can be found.

In the classical context, this idea affirms that society and individuals mutually create and influence each other, with institutions, symbols, and language serving as media for the consolidation of reality. However, upon entering the digital era, especially amid the flows of social media, artificial intelligence, and platform algorithms, Berger's framework needs to be reread. Digitalization presents new forms of reality construction that are more fluid, rapid, and even destabilizing for traditional authority.

The rereading intended by the author is to bring Berger's thought into the digital habitus. The following is Berger's triadic social construction in digital space. Externalization: the expression of authority is no longer limited to direct sermons, but also takes the form of digital content, such as videos, memes, short da'wah clips, and podcasts. Objectivation: authority is no longer institutionalized only through formal institutions, but also through digital metrics such as the number of likes, shares, and followers. Internalization: audiences internalize authority through fast, instant, and emotional patterns of digital content consumption, which differ from traditional internalization based on long-term education in pesantren.

For the author, Berger's theory of social construction did not anticipate how digital technology and algorithms could become dominant actors in shaping social reality. Berger speaks extensively about traditional social institutions, but today epistemic power has shifted toward global digital corporations. Google, Meta, or X function as authorities of reality, replacing some of the functions once performed by the state or religion. Berger emphasizes gradual processes, whereas the digital era demonstrates the massive and viral acceleration of reality construction. Facts can be formed and destroyed within hours.

As a result of this rereading, Berger's social construction needs to be expanded into the realm of digital social construction, in which externalization is no longer neutral but is mediated by technological infrastructure, big data, and algorithms. If in the classical framework social reality tends to be singular and stable, today we live in echo chambers that produce parallel realities. Thus, social construction in the digital era is a fragmented construction. Rereading Berger means recognizing that the authority of reality is held not only by religion, the state, or the family, but also by digital platforms that act as gatekeepers of knowledge and meaning.

CONCLUSION

Rereading Peter L. Berger's social construction in the context of the fragmentation of digital religious authority affirms that the classical theory of externalization, objectivation, and internalization requires a critical and in-depth reading because the regime of truth and habitus are different. If Berger emphasizes traditional social institutions such as religion, family, and the state as pillars of the legitimation of reality, the digital era instead reveals a fragmentation of authority in which religious meaning is no longer monopolized by ulama, formal institutions, or mass organizations, but is also produced by influencers, content creators, and platform algorithms.

This fragmentation produces two critical consequences. First, religious authority becomes increasingly fluid and distributed, so religious communities live amid a diversity of interpretations that are not always bound to traditional authority. Second, the mechanism for constructing religious reality in digital spaces is determined more by the logic of popularity and virality than by epistemic authenticity or scholarly authority. Within Berger's framework, this means that the objectivation of religious reality is now under the hegemony of platform technology and the attention economy, not merely under established social legitimation. Therefore, the critique of Berger's thought in this context does not stop at adaptation, but moves toward paradigmatic expansion. Social construction in the digital era is not only a relation

between human beings, but also a relation between humans and machines, algorithms, and global technological infrastructure. This is both a challenge and an opportunity: how social theory can continue to live when religious authority, meaning, and truth are now constructed within networks that are fragmented, instant, and no longer linear.

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BASIC CONCEPTS OF INTEGRATIVE DA'WAH AND DA'WAH PARADIGMS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the basic concepts of integrative da'wah and da'wah paradigms from classical and contemporary perspectives. As a fundamental activity in Islam, da'wah is understood not only as the process of conveying religious messages, but also as an effort toward social change that touches all aspects of human life. The development of contemporary society, marked by globalization, digitalization, and various social problems, requires a reconfiguration of the da'wah paradigm so that it becomes more adaptive, contextual, and multidisciplinary. This study employs a literature review method by analyzing various sources related to the basic concepts of da'wah, the idea of integrative da'wah, and da'wah paradigms. The findings indicate that integrative da'wah is a da'wah paradigm that comprehensively combines normative-theological dimensions with social reality. Integrative da'wah emphasizes holistic, contextual, and collaborative characteristics. In addition, the da'wah paradigm has developed from the classical era, which was dominated by the methods of da'wah bi al-lisan and da'wah bi al-hal, toward the current paradigm that utilizes digital technology as a medium of contemporary da'wah. In practice, contemporary da'wah can use microblogging so that da'wah messages remain relevant to the social needs of contemporary society. This shift shows that da'wah is dynamic and must continue to adapt to the changing times without abandoning the basic principles of Islamic teachings. Thus, integrative da'wah serves as a relevant model for responding to the challenges of contemporary society while building a religious and civilized society.

Keywords: Integrative Da'wah, Da'wah Paradigm, Classical Da'wah, Contemporary Da'wah

INTRODUCTION

Da'wah is an activity of inviting or calling fellow human beings to uphold the values of goodness and piety toward Allah SWT. Conceptually, da'wah is not only understood as the process of conveying religious messages (tabligh), but also as an effort focused on the comprehensive transformation of individuals and society. Da'wah has undergone paradigmatic development in line with social, cultural, political, and scientific dynamics.¹ Therefore, the study of the basic concepts of da'wah and the paradigms that influence it is important to ensure the role of da'wah in responding to the challenges of the times.²

The development of contemporary society, marked by rapid technological advancement, digitalization, cultural diversity, and various social problems, requires a da'wah approach that no longer focuses on a single approach alone, but must also use other approaches, such as social, educational, economic, cultural, and other fields.³ Da'wah does not only focus on sermons, but needs to integrate various scientific approaches, such as education, communication, culture, social sciences, and economics. In this context, the idea of integrative da'wah emerges, namely a da'wah model that combines Islamic teachings with the socio-cultural realities or culture of society.⁴

The basic concept of integrative da'wah begins from the understanding that Islamic teachings are comprehensive and cover all aspects of human life. Therefore, the implementation of da'wah should

¹ Rudi Trianto, "Implementasi Metode Dakwah Bil-Hal Di Majelis Dakwah Bil-Hal Miftahul Jannah Bogor dan Kampak Trenggalek," *An-Nida' : Jurnal Prodi Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 2022, 88–116.

² Intihaul Khiiyarah and Razif Baharuddin, "Paradigma Manhajul Fikr Wal Harokah Sebagai Landasan Komunikasi Dakwah: Analisis Kritis Model Dakwah Kontemporer," *Al-Jamahiria : Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Dakwah Islam*, 2025, 32–44.

³ Nur Sokhi Huda, Santi Vidiani, Aisyah Anandari, Nadya Izza Nurrahma et al., "Digitalisasi Konten Dakwah Berbasis Media Sosial," *Penerbit Global Aksara Pers*, no. 1 (2025).

⁴ D. M. (Dini) Maulina, "Dakwah Sebagai Media Integrasi Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan," *Jurnal Peurawi* 4, no. 1 (2021): 100–113, <https://www.neliti.com/publications/481473/>.

not be separated from the social realities that occur in society.⁵ Integrative da'wah views the success of da'wah as being measured not only by the delivery of religious messages, but also by the realization of better social change, the improvement of moral quality, and the sustainable empowerment of society. Thus, integrative da'wah emphasizes the integration of Islamic values with scientific approaches in formulating contextual da'wah strategies.⁶

The da'wah paradigm itself refers to the perspective that serves as the basis for understanding, designing, and implementing da'wah activities. So far, the da'wah paradigm has tended to be dominated by the lecture-based or *bi al-lisan* approach, which focuses on the one-way delivery of teachings. Although this approach has often been practiced, it is frequently less influential in generating social change. Therefore, evaluation or reconstruction is needed so that da'wah can play a greater role in social life.⁷

The integrative da'wah paradigm offers a more holistic approach by emphasizing synergy between text and context. The text (*nash*) is understood as the source of values and basic principles, while the social context becomes the space in which those values are actualized. Through this paradigm, da'wah does not only focus on spiritual aspects, but also on social, economic, educational, environmental, health, and cultural aspects. Da'wah is positioned as a movement for change that involves

⁵ Al Kahfi, Derysmono, and Mohamed Esse Mohamoud, "Strategi Manajemen Dakwah KH. Ahmad Dahlan: Integrasi Prinsip Islam Dan Modern Dalam Revitalisasi Pendidikan Islam," *El-Suffah: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 1 (2025): 83–105, <https://doi.org/10.70742/suffah.v2i1.143>.

⁶ Iskandar et al., "Integrasi Dakwah Dan Pendidikan Pada Gerakan Wahdah Islamiyah : Perspektif Dakwah Islam," *AL-QIBLAH: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Bahasa Arab* 5, no. 1 (2026): 28–41, <https://doi.org/10.36701/qiblah.v5i1.2886>.

⁷ Yenanda Putri Zanuba, "REVITALISASI NILAI-NILAI HADIS DALAM DAKWAH DIGITAL: STUDI INTEGRATIF TENTANG TRAUMA RELIGIUS DAN PODCAST ISLAMI," *Amsal Al-Qur'an: Jurnal Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 2, no. 3 (2025): 344–68.

various elements of society and uses various media and technologies as means of disseminating Islamic values.⁸

Integrative da'wah requires openness to dialogue across disciplines and cultures. The integration of religious sciences and the social-humanities serves as an important foundation for formulating effective da'wah strategies. This approach also encourages innovation in da'wah methods and media, including the use of digital technology as a space for contemporary da'wah. Thus, da'wah does not remain focused on conventional patterns, but develops dynamically according to the needs of society.⁹

In addition, integrative da'wah is also a response to the social problems of Generation Z in the digital era. These problems include a crisis of moral identity, the dominance of negative digital culture, changes in patterns of religiosity, and the declining authority of religious figures.¹⁰ Thus, integrative da'wah becomes an approach needed to restrain moral decline and rebuild spiritual values in digital spaces.¹¹

Unlike the previous study by Hasyim Syamhudi (2015), which examined integration and da'wah paradigms partially, this study proposes a da'wah paradigm integrated with digital advancement.¹² In addition, the previous study by Faiz Ichwanul Rizky (2025) positioned the preacher

⁸ Dewi Masyitoh et al., "AMIN ABDULLAH Dan PARADIGMA INTEGRASI-INTERKONEKSI," *JSSH (Jurnal Sains Sosial Dan Humaniora)* 4, no. 1 (2020): 81–88, <https://doi.org/10.30595/jssh.v4i1.5973>.

⁹ Muhammad Irfan Riyadi, "Dakwah Integratif Raden Jayengrono di Kabupaten Pedanten Ponorogo Abad Ke-18 M." *Jurnal: "Proceeding of The 1," The 1st Conference on Strengthening Islamic Studies in the Digital Era (FICOSIS)* 1, no. 1 (2021): 344.

¹⁰ Devi Indah Sari, Solihah Titin Sumanti, and Muhammad Riduan Harahap, "Mengatasi Krisis Moralitas Remaja Dengan Paradigma Pendekatan Transdisipliner Pada Era Digital," *Mudabbir: Journal Research and Education Studies* 5, no. 3 (2025): 27–35, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.56832/mudabbir.v5i2.1903>.

¹¹ Hijrayanti Sari, Mahmuddin, and Firdaus Muhammad, "Transformasi Dakwah Di Era Digital: Tantangan Dan Pendekatan Efektif Bagi Generasi Z Indonesia," *Cendekia: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengkajian Ilmiah* 3, no. 1 (2025): 305–16, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62335/cendekia.v3i1.2194>.

¹² Hasyim Syahbudi, "Paradigma Dakwah dalam Perspektif Islam dan Filsafat", *Jurnal: At-Turas (jurnal studi keislaman)*, 2(2), (2015), 163-255

as a single actor (human-centric) in digital spaces. By contrast, this study proposes that algorithms and digital structures function as non-human actors (non-human agency) that actively construct the production and consumption of da'wah. Thus, this study reconstructs the understanding of who actually carries the da'wah message in the digital era.¹³

The novelty of this study lies in its theoretical reconstruction, which integrates da'wah with culture, education, social life, health, the environment, and the economy into a single digital ontological framework. By conducting a comparative analysis of contemporary da'wah discourse, this study offers a new framework that positions technology as an ecosystem that changes the way Islamic values are produced and applied.¹⁴

Based on the discussion above, the study of the basic concepts of integrative da'wah and da'wah paradigms is highly relevant in the contemporary context. A comprehensive understanding of these concepts and paradigms is expected to provide a strong theoretical foundation for the development of da'wah studies, while also serving as a practical guide in formulating da'wah strategies that are adaptive, contextual, and oriented toward social change.¹⁵ Therefore, through an integrative approach, the researchers hope that this study of da'wah can make a real contribution to building a more religious, civilized, and progressive framework of social thought.¹⁶

¹³ Faiz Ichwanul Rizky et al., *Transformasi Metodologi Dakwah Dalam Era Teknologi Informasi*, *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara*, vol. 1, 2025, <https://padangjurnal.web.id/index.php/menulis/article/view/401>.

¹⁴ Ahmad Sofyan et al., "Rekonstruksi Epistemologi Dakwah Berbasis Sosiologi Di Era Kontemporer," *Menulis: Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara* 1 (2025): 172–77.

¹⁵ Muhammad Alif Ramadhan, "Filsafat Ilmu Sebagai Landasan Pengembangan Dakwah Islam," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 3, no. 6 (2026): 383–89.

¹⁶ Adelia Mustika, Putri Suwarno, and Ali Hasan Siswanto, "Mengintegrasikan Dakwah Budaya Dan Struktural Dalam Pengembangan Masyarakat : Kerangka Transdisipliner Untuk Transformasi Sosial Islam Integrating Cultural and Structural Da ' Wah in Community Development : A Transdisciplinary Framework for Islamic Social," *Dirasah: Jurnal Kajian Islam* 2, no. 4 (2025): 504–21.

METHOD

This study uses a library research approach, namely research conducted by examining and analyzing various relevant written sources without collecting data directly in the field. The data sources in this study include books, scholarly journal articles, and other academic documents related to the basic concepts of integrative da'wah and da'wah paradigms. These sources were obtained through various academic databases, such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and DOAJ, by considering relevance, credibility, and recency, with priority given to sources from the last seven years.¹⁷

Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely by reading, taking notes, and classifying relevant information from the selected sources. Data analysis was carried out thematically through four stages: first, comprehensively reading all collected sources; second, identifying and grouping data based on the main themes of the study; third, interpreting and synthesizing the grouped data; and fourth, drawing conclusions systematically in order to build a complete and comprehensive understanding of the basic concepts of integrative da'wah and da'wah paradigms.¹⁸

Data validity in this study was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing and confirming findings from different sources to ensure the consistency and validity of the data used.¹⁹

¹⁷ Andre Febrianto, Rusdy A Siroj, and Hartatiana, "Studi Literatur: Landasan Dalam Memilih Metode Penelitian Yang Tepat," *Journal Educational Research and Development* | E-ISSN: 3063-9158 1, no. 2 (2024): 259–63, <https://doi.org/10.62379/jerd.v1i2.142>.

¹⁸ Undari Sulung and Mohamad Muspawi, "MEMAHAMI SUMBER DATA PENELITIAN: PRIMER, SEKUNDER, DAN TERSIER," *Jurnal Edu Research: Indonesian Institute For Corporate Learning And Studies (IICLS)* 5, no. 2 (2024): 28–33, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47827/jer.v5i3.238>.

¹⁹ M. Husnulloil et al., "TEKNIK PEMERIKSAAN KEABSAHAN DATA DALAM RISET ILMIAH," *Journal Genta Mulia* 15, no. 2 (2024): 70–78, <https://doi.org/https://ejournal.stkipbbm.ac.id/index.php/gm>.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Da'wah

Linguistically, da'wah comes from the Arabic words da'a-yad'u-da'watan, which mean to call or to invite. According to Toha Yahya Umarak, da'wah is inviting human beings wisely to the right path in accordance with the command of Allah SWT for their welfare and happiness in this world and the hereafter.²⁰

The Legal Basis of Da'wah

One of the legal bases for the obligation of da'wah is mentioned in Q.S. Ali Imran verse 104, namely:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Translation: "Let there be among you a group of people who call to goodness, enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong. They are the successful ones." (Q.S. Ali Imran: 104).

In Abdul Karim Zaidan's interpretation of Surah Ali Imran verse 104, the word min contained in the verse has the meaning of li at-tabyin (to provide clarification), not li at-tab'idh (to indicate a part). Thus, da'wah is fard 'ayn for Muslims who are already mukallaf. However, its delivery depends on the capacity of knowledge possessed by each person. If a person feels that they possess sufficient knowledge, then they may carry out da'wah to others. However, if their knowledge is still limited, then it is sufficient to conduct da'wah toward themselves and their closest relatives.²¹ This differs from Imam al-Ghazali's interpretation, which explains that the word min contained in the verse has the meaning of li al-tab'id (to indicate a part), not li at-tabyin (to provide clarification). Therefore,

²⁰ Maulina, "Dakwah Sebagai Media Integrasi Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan."

²¹ Muhammad Abu Al-Fath Al-Bayanuni, *Pengantar Studi Ilmu Dakwah* (Jakarta: Dar Ar Risalah Al 'Alamiyah, 2021).

Imam al-Ghazali issued the view that the legal status of da'wah is fard kifayah, meaning that da'wah is specifically assigned to those who have adequate knowledge in the field of Islamic religion.²²

Thus, it can be concluded that the legal status of carrying out da'wah is conditional. If in a particular place there is no individual at all who carries out da'wah, then da'wah becomes fard 'ayn. However, if in that place there is one individual who conducts da'wah, then the legal status of da'wah becomes fard kifayah. Similarly, da'wah becomes fard 'ayn even when there are individuals already conducting da'wah if wrongdoing is widespread in a particular place. However, if the number of da'i in that place is still limited so that the da'wah activities carried out by those individuals are ineffective, then in this case the legal status of da'wah becomes fard 'ayn for every individual according to the capacity of knowledge they possess.²³

The Objectives of Da'wah

In essence, da'wah aims to convey the truth, enable people to understand the teachings of truth contained in the Qur'an, and invite human beings to practice Islamic teachings.²⁴ Amin and Mashur divide the objectives of da'wah into two parts. The general objective of da'wah is to achieve human happiness in this world and the hereafter. The specific objectives of da'wah can be seen from the perspective of the object and the material of da'wah being conveyed. From the perspective of the object of da'wah, the implementation of da'wah aims to form Muslim individuals who obey Allah SWT and possess noble character, to form sakinah families, to create a prosperous, peaceful, and Islamic society,

²² Ach Rifai, "Hukum Berdakwah Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Surah Ali Imran Ayat 104," *AL-QOLAMUNA: Journal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 2024, 16–24.

²³ Ach Rifai et al., "Hukum Berdakwah Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an Surah Ali Imran Ayat 104," *AL-QOLAMUNA: Journal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 2025, 16–24.

²⁴ Nihayatul Husna, "Metode Dakwah Islam Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Selasar KPI: Referensi Media Komunikasi Dan Dakwah* 1, no. 1 (2021): 97–105.

and to build a world community filled with peace, tranquility, and justice without discrimination or exploitation.²⁵

Elements of Da'wah

The elements of da'wah are important components that must be present in the process of conveying Islamic teachings so that da'wah runs effectively and in accordance with its objectives. In general, the elements of da'wah include, first, the Da'i, namely the person who carries out da'wah orally, in writing, or through actions, either individually or collectively. In general, a da'i is also referred to as a mubaligh (a person who conveys Islamic teachings).²⁶ Second, Mad'u refers to those who become the target of da'wah, or those who receive da'wah, whether as individuals or groups, whether Muslims, non-Muslims, or humanity as a whole.²⁷ Third, Maddah refers to the content or material delivered by the da'i to the mad'u, covering the entirety of Islamic teachings found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. According to Endang Saifudding Anshari, the main teachings of Islam are divided into aqidah or faith in Allah SWT, sharia or Islamic law, and akhlak or the formation of religious character.²⁸

Fourth, Thariqah refers to the da'wah method used by the da'i so that the da'wah message can be delivered and properly received by the mad'u.²⁹ Several da'wah methods include al-hikmah, mau'idzhatul hasanah, and al-mujadalah.³⁰ Fifth, Wasilah refers to the media for

²⁵ H Misbahuddin Amin, "DAKWAH KULTURAL MENURUT PERSPEKTIF PENDIDIKAN ISLAM," *Atta'dib Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2020, 71–84.

²⁶ Purwo Prilatomoko, "Unsur-Unsur Dakwah Nabi Muhammad Pada Keluarganya Bani Hasyim," *INTELEKSIA: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah* 04, no. 02 (2022): 313–36, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55372/inteleksiapjpid.v4i2.215>.

²⁷ Purwo Prilatomoko.

²⁸ Berlian Rahmansyah, Nurseri H Nasution, and Emi Puspita Dewi, "Analisis Pesan Dakwah Dalam Buku Muhammad Al-Fatih," *Social Science and Contemporary Issues Journal*, 2023, 197–208.

²⁹ Rosyi Ibnu Hidayat and Nawawi, "THARIQOH SEBAGAI PESAN DAKWAH MENUJU KEBAHAGIAN HIDUP," *Al-Munqidz: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 1, no. 1 (2021): 15–25.

³⁰ Muhammad Diak Udin, "METODE DAKWAH PERSPEKTIF HADIST," *Jurnal Kopis* 1, no. 2 (2019): 94–110.

delivering da'wah messages to the mad'u in order to facilitate the process of conveying da'wah messages, so that they are easier for the mad'u to understand and comprehend. Da'wah media can take the form of oral media, written media, audio media, visual media, and social media.³¹ Sixth, Atsar refers to the impact or result that appears in the mad'u after receiving the da'wah message. Atsar becomes an indicator of the success of da'wah because it shows the extent to which the message delivered is able to influence the thoughts, attitudes, and behavior of the mad'u, or can be understood as feedback from reactions to the da'wah process.³²

Basic Concepts of Integrative Da'wah

Definition of Integrative Da'wah

Integrative da'wah is a da'wah model that combines Islamic values with various aspects of social life as a whole, such as education, the economy, health, culture, the environment, and social affairs. This form of da'wah does not only focus on delivering sermons (da'wah bi al-lisan), but also provides real solutions (da'wah bi al-hal) to the life problems of society.³³

In Gus Dur's concept, integrative da'wah can be equated with grounding Islam through acculturation. It uses cultural symbols and local traditions as media of da'wah. This da'wah strategy has proven effective

³¹Muhammad Lukman Hakim, "Analisis Isi Pesan Dakwah Tentang Wasilah Menurut K.H. Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim Di Instagram," *PROGRESIF: Jurnal Dakwah, Sosial, Dan Komunikasi* 2, no. 1 (2025): 15–29, <https://doi.org/10.63199/progresif.v2i1.30>.

³²Purwo Prilatomoko, "Unsur-Unsur Dakwah Nabi Muhammad Pada Keluarganya Bani Hasyim."

³³Asyrotul Ridho and Azzah Kurniawati, "Mengintegrasikan Dakwah Dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat: Membangun Generasi Islami Yang Mandiri," *AKSIOLOGI: Journal of Community Development* 1, no. 1 (2024): 19–25, <https://doi.org/10.63199/aksiologi.v1i1.16>.

and achieved significant results in the Islamization of Java during the Walisongo era and even afterward, and it remains relevant today.³⁴

Characteristics of Integrative Da'wah

1. Da'wah is Holistic

Integrative da'wah has a holistic character (*syumuliyah*), meaning that it views human beings as multidimensional beings with spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional dimensions. Therefore, da'wah does not only emphasize the ritual aspects of worship, but also pays attention to issues of social justice, education, the economy, health, culture, and the environment.³⁵ The values of *aqidah*, *sharia*, and *akhlak* are positioned as an integrated unity in building individual piety and social piety. Through this approach, da'wah becomes a means of developing the *ummah* comprehensively and sustainably.³⁶

A concrete example of the holistic character of da'wah is the da'wah carried out by Sunan Kalijaga, who used shadow puppetry (*wayang kulit*) to spread Islam. In its application, *wayang* stories derived from Hindu epics such as the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* were not discarded, but their content was transformed by inserting the values of *tawhid*, noble character, and Islamic expressions such as the *shahada*.³⁷

2. Da'wah is Contextual

³⁴ Riyadi, "DAKWAH INTEGRATIF RADEN JAYENGRONO DI KABUPATEN PEDANTEN PONOROGO ABAD KE-18 M."

³⁵ Teguh Ansori, "Dakwah Sebagai Pendorong Pembangunan Ekonomi Berkelanjutan Di Masyarakat," *AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora (E-ISSN 2745-4584)* 5, no. 01 (2024): 1179–86, <https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v5i01.6232>.

³⁶ Tasman Hamami and Zalik Nuryana, "A Holistic – Integrative Approach of the Muhammadiyah Education System in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 2019, 1–10.

³⁷ M. Nur Rofiq Addiansyah et al., "Cultural Da'wah and Political Communication in Colonial Java: A Study of Traditional Islamic Discourse and Social Resistance," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 20, no. 1 (2025): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v20i1.15279>.

In addition to being holistic, integrative da'wah is also contextual and dynamic in accordance with the changing times. Technological development, globalization, and social dynamics require an adaptive da'wah approach without losing the substance of the teachings. In this framework, contextual thought such as that developed by Fazlur Rahman becomes relevant, especially in emphasizing the importance of understanding religious texts through historical and social approaches.³⁸

In real life, the application of this da'wah characteristic can take the form of microblogging that combines attractive visual design with content that responds to issues of mental health, self-love, or stress management from a spiritual perspective.³⁹

3. Da'wah is Collaborative

Da'wah is not rigid and literalistic, but seeks to present Islamic messages that are relevant to the actual problems of society, such as moral crises, digital disruption, social inequality, and the degradation of human values. Therefore, integrative da'wah is collaborative and multidisciplinary. The complexity of contemporary social problems cannot be resolved through a single approach alone.⁴⁰ Da'wah needs to synergize with various disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, education, and communication, and to involve various elements of society, including ulama, academics, government, and civil communities. This collaboration strengthens the position of da'wah as a

³⁸ Surya Arfan, Edi Yusrianto, and Arbi Yasin, "Konsep Pendidikan Integrasi Fazlur Rahman Dan Sayyid Hossein : Kajian Teori Dan Praktik," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan* 3, no. 4 (2025): 662–71.

³⁹ Sutar Oktaviana Tampubolon, Anca Olani Hasibuan, and Dwi Fauza Salsabila, "PENGARUH MEDIA SOSIAL TERHADAP KESEHATAN MENTAL," *Jurnal Imiah Pendidikan Dasar (JIPDAS)* 4, no. 4 (2024): 290–95.

⁴⁰ Sokhi Huda et al., *ISU DAN SOLUSI DAKWAH KONTEMPORER* (Banyumas: CV. CAKRAWALA SATRIA MANDIRI, 2025).

civilizational movement that is not exclusive, but inclusive and constructive.⁴¹

A practical example of the collaborative character of da'wah is the establishment of a mental health task-force community. Its application can take the form of cooperation between religious figures and psychologists. Religious figures provide a spiritual foundation for inner peace, while psychologists provide professional assistance in dealing with trauma or anxiety.⁴²

Thus, integrative da'wah can be understood as a da'wah paradigm that is holistic, contextual, dialogical, humanistic, transformative, and collaborative. This paradigm is relevant for addressing the challenges of contemporary society because it is able to bridge text and context, normative values and empirical reality, as well as spirituality and social transformation.⁴³

Implementation of Integrative Da'wah

1. Integrative Da'wah in the Field of Culture

Integrative da'wah in the field of culture is a da'wah approach that combines Islamic values with the local culture of society.⁴⁴ It can be realized through traditional arts, as exemplified by Sunan Kalijaga, who used traditional arts such as wayang, tembang, and gamelan as media of da'wah. Through these media, Islamic values were inserted into stories, symbols, and moral messages, so that society could accept

⁴¹ Syiraz Rozaky Bimagfiranda and Sedyas Santosa, "Pemikiran Fazlur Rahman Dalam Pendidikan Islam Dengan Dunia Modern" 9, no. 3 (2023): 1397–1405.

⁴² Reizki Maharani and Yasril Yazid, "Dakwah and Counseling in Dealing with Mental Health Issues in Indonesia," *Jurnal Kajian Manajemen Dakwah* 4, no. April (2022): 4, <https://doi.org/10.24014/idarotuna.v4i1.Dakwah>.

⁴³ Rizki Restu Afandi, "Reaktualisasi Pembelajaran Hadis : Integrasi Pendekatan Dakwah Di Era Kontemporer" 10, no. 2 (2025): 1–28.

⁴⁴ Bridav Hayati S et al., "Dakwah Inklusif Berbasis Budaya Lokal Di Masyarakat Pedesaan," *Menulis : Jurnal Penelitian Nusantara* 1, no. 2 (2025): 688–93.

Islamic teachings more easily without feeling alienated from its own culture.⁴⁵

2. Integrative Da'wah in the Field of Health

Integrative da'wah in the field of health is a da'wah approach that combines Islamic values with efforts to maintain and improve the physical, mental, and social health of society. It can be realized through mental and spiritual health assistance, namely efforts to provide guidance, psychological support, and the strengthening of religious values to society so that people have mental resilience and inner peace. Through spiritual guidance, Islamic counseling, and spiritual strengthening, individuals experiencing life pressure, stress, anxiety, or social problems can obtain calmness, hope, and motivation to recover.⁴⁶

3. Integrative Da'wah in the Field of the Environment

Integrative da'wah in the field of the environment is a da'wah approach that connects Islamic teachings with efforts to preserve the natural environment.⁴⁷ It can be realized through greening movements as a form of concern for environmental sustainability. Greening movements become one form of integrative da'wah because they combine Islamic values with concrete action in protecting the environment. Planting trees, caring for plants, and maintaining green spaces are implementations of Islamic teachings on environmental preservation and the prohibition of causing damage on earth.⁴⁸

4. Integrative Da'wah in the Field of the Economy

⁴⁵ Naufaldi Alif, Laily Matthukhatul, and Majidatun Ahmala, "AKULTURASI BUDAYA JAWA DAN ISLAM," *Al'Adalah* 2, no. 2 (2020): 143–262.

⁴⁶ Reza Ahmadiansah, "Model Dalam Pelayanan Pasien," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Psychology* 1, no. 2 (2019): 215–42.

⁴⁷ Sri Ramadani et al., "Pendekatan Komunikasi Persuasif Sebagai Strategi Dakwah Lingkungan Pada Program Citarum Harum Sektor 9," *Ulumul Syar'i: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 11, no. 2 (2022).

⁴⁸ Lidra Agustina Tanjung et al., "Upaya Penghijauan Melalui Dakwah Peduli Lingkungan Hidup Di Desa Sambirejo," *Mestaka: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (2025): 75–81, <https://doi.org/10.58184/mestaka.v4i1.603>.

Integrative da'wah in the field of the economy is a da'wah approach that combines Islamic values with economic activities to realize social welfare fairly and in accordance with sharia.⁴⁹ One form of implementing integrative da'wah in the economic field is through sharia cooperatives and Islamic-based MSMEs. Sharia cooperatives become a means of economic empowerment for the ummah by applying Islamic principles such as honesty, justice, mutual assistance (ta'awun), and the prohibition of usury (riba). Through sharia cooperatives, society can gain access to halal, safe, and sharia-compliant financing to develop their businesses. In addition, Islamic-based MSMEs also become a form of economic da'wah because they educate entrepreneurs to conduct business in accordance with Islamic law, such as being honest in trade, maintaining product quality, and prioritizing blessing in seeking profit.⁵⁰

5. Integrative Da'wah in the Field of Education

Integrative da'wah in the field of education is the process of combining Islamic values with educational activities to form students who not only possess intellectual intelligence, but also noble character.⁵¹ It can be realized through character and moral development, namely the process of instilling Islamic moral and ethical values in students so that they not only excel in knowledge, but also have good personalities. Through the habituation of values such as

⁴⁹ Amelia Nurseha et al., "Dakwah Dan Bisnis Menggabungkan Nilai-Nilai Islam Dengan Tujuan Bisnis" 5 (2025): 1154–66.

⁵⁰ Anggi Fitrianiingsih et al., "PEMBERDAYAAN UMKM MELALUI PENGUATAN KOPERASI SYARIAH SEBAGAI UPAYA MENINGKATKAN EKONOMI MASYARAKAT DESA MANDALASARI," *Istimā -Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat: Inklusi Sosial Dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat* 2 (2025): 140–53.

⁵¹ Syarip Hidayat, "Integrasi Nilai Islam Dalam Pendidikan: Pembelajaran Integratif Di SMA Islam Al-Muttaqin Kota Tasikmalaya," *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (2021): 141–56, <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v16i1.4665>.

honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, and social care, da'wah can be concretely integrated into students' daily lives.⁵²

6. Integrative Da'wah in the Social Field

Integrative da'wah in the social field is a form of da'wah that combines the delivery of Islamic values with concrete action to solve social problems in society.⁵³ It can be realized through assistance to the dhuafa and orphans. Through this activity, a da'i or da'wah institution provides assistance in the form of basic food packages, educational costs, clothing, cash donations, and other daily needs. In addition to helping meet their basic needs, charitable assistance also has da'wah value because it can foster a sense of brotherhood (*ukhuwah islamiyah*), strengthen relations between the wealthy and the poor, and provide moral and spiritual support to recipients.⁵⁴

Table 1.
Implementation of Integrative Da'wah

No.	Field	Form of Implementation	Example of Application
1.	Culture	Use of traditional arts as media of da'wah	Sunan Kalijaga used wayang, tembang, and gamelan to insert the values of tawhid, akhlak, and Islamic teachings.
2.	Health	Mental and spiritual health assistance	Spiritual guidance, Islamic counseling, and spiritual strengthening for people experiencing stress, anxiety, and life pressures.
3.	Environment	Greening movements and environmental preservation	Planting trees, caring for plants, and maintaining green spaces as a form of safeguarding Allah's trust over nature.

⁵² Dedek Syahputra, "Metode Dakwah Pendidikan Dalam Membentuk Akhlak Dan Karakter Peserta Didik," *JRISS: Journal Review of Islamic and Social Studies* 1, no. 2 (2025): 91–103.

⁵³ Muhsinah, "ANALISIS PERAN DAKWAH SEBAGAI ALAT TRANSFORMASI SOSIAL: TANTANGAN DAN STRATEGI KOMUNIKASI DALAM KONTEKS MASYARAKAT MODERN," *Ittishal Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Media* 2, no. 1 (2024): 58.

⁵⁴ Aldi Surizkika, "Dakwah Sosial Dan Filantropi Islam: Transformasi, Kesejahteraan Dan Keadilan Bagi Masyarakat," *Jurnal Sahid Da'Watii* 3, no. 01 (2024): 28–39, <https://doi.org/10.56406/jurnalsahiddawatii.v3i01.459>.

4.	Economy	Economic empowerment through sharia cooperatives and Islamic MSMEs	Development of sharia-based businesses, halal financing, the application of honesty, and the prohibition of riba.
5.	Education	Character and moral development	Instilling the values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, and social care in the learning process.
6.	Social	Assistance to the dhuafa and orphans	Assistance to the dhuafa and orphans in the form of basic food packages, educational costs, clothing, and other needs.

Da'wah Paradigms in the Classical and Contemporary Eras

1. Da'wah Paradigm in the Classical Era

Understanding the classical da'wah paradigm means recognizing that classical da'wah includes da'wah bi al-lisan, a form of da'wah carried out through oral media or verbal communication. This method is conducted by delivering religious messages directly to audiences through sermons, khutbah, discussions, tausiyah, advice, and other forms of oral communication. In practice, da'wah bi al-lisan has become the most commonly used method by da'i, both in formal and non-formal forums, such as study circles, Friday sermons in mosques, routine religious gatherings, Islamic seminars, and religious dialogues.⁵⁵

The strength of da'wah bi al-lisan lies in its ability to build direct communication between da'i and mad'u. This interaction allows for explanation, emphasis, and spontaneous responses to audience questions or needs. In addition, the rhetorical skill, intonation, expression, and mastery of the material by a da'i greatly influence the effectiveness of message delivery. Therefore, da'wah bi al-lisan requires good communication competence so that the message conveyed is not only informative, but also persuasive and able to touch the affective dimension of listeners.

⁵⁵ Abdul Rohman and Abdul Rahman, "Ragam Komunikasi Dakwah Bi Al-Lisan Dalam Perspektif," *Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (2023): 151–66.

Meanwhile, da'wah bi al-hal is a form of da'wah manifested through concrete action and exemplary conduct (*uswatun hasanah*). This form of da'wah does not rely solely on verbal delivery, but places greater emphasis on the application of Islamic teachings in everyday life. Da'wah bi al-hal can take the form of activities that reflect the values of honesty, justice, social care, and various concrete charitable activities whose benefits can be directly felt by society.

Concrete examples of da'wah bi al-hal include economic empowerment of the ummah, social services, the development of educational facilities, assistance to the poor and orphans, and active involvement in community activities. Through these actions, society not only hears da'wah messages, but also directly experiences Islamic values embodied in social reality. In this context, exemplary conduct becomes a highly effective medium of da'wah, because concrete behavior often has a stronger influence than words alone.

Thus, da'wah bi al-lisan and da'wah bi al-hal are two complementary methods. Da'wah bi al-lisan functions to provide understanding through spoken words, while da'wah bi al-hal provides practical evidence of the values being conveyed. The relationship between the two produces da'wah that is not only communicative, but also plays an active role in community empowerment.⁵⁶

2. Da'wah Paradigm in the Contemporary Era

Contemporary da'wah is a form of da'wah that utilizes the development of digitalization as the main medium for conveying religious messages. In the context of a society marked by advances in information, digitalization, and globalization, da'wah is no longer carried out only from mosque pulpits or study circles, but has developed through various digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook,

⁵⁶ Rusdi and Masykurotus Syarifah, "IMPLEMENTASI DA'WAH BI AL LISAN DAN DA'WAH BI AL HAL," *Ulûmuna: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 2, no. 1 (2024): 27–45.

Instagram, TikTok, webinars, and live streaming. Thus, contemporary da'wah emerges as a response to changes in communication patterns and the lifestyle of contemporary society.⁵⁷

The characteristics of contemporary da'wah lie in its adjustment to technological advancement by using the internet, social media, and digital communication strategies to reach a wider and more diverse mad'u. This approach is highly effective in today's society because people are already active users of social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, and other platforms.⁵⁸

Methodologically, contemporary da'wah differs from classical da'wah. Classical da'wah emphasizes an adaptive approach to traditions, customs, and the local values of society. This approach seeks to harmonize Islamic teachings with local culture without eliminating that local culture itself. Meanwhile, contemporary da'wah focuses more on adapting methods to technological development and digitalization. If classical da'wah focuses on cultural contexts, then contemporary da'wah is oriented toward technological and media contexts.

Nevertheless, this difference should not be used as a reason to negate one method of da'wah in favor of another. In practice, contemporary da'wah can still support cultural values, while classical da'wah can also use digital media as a means of disseminating messages. Therefore, contemporary da'wah is essentially an innovation in the use of technology to convey Islamic teachings so that they remain relevant to the development of the times, without abandoning the basic principles of religious teachings.

⁵⁷ Abdullah Khusairi, "Creative Content Production Strategies for Religious Outreach Materials on Social Media," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 45, no. 2 (2025): 341–56, <https://doi.org/10.2158/jid.45.2.28022>.

⁵⁸ Akmal Rizki et al., "Analysis of Digital Technology on Da ' Wah," *AL-Balagh* 10, no. 1 (2025): 33–64, <https://ejournal.uinsaid.ac.id/al-balagh/article/view/9963/3458>.

Thus, contemporary da'wah can be understood as an adaptive, innovative, and technology-based da'wah strategy that aims to expand reach and increase the effectiveness of Islamic message delivery in contemporary society.⁵⁹

Table 2.
Comparison of Da'wah Paradigms in the Classical and Contemporary Eras

No.	Aspect	Classical Era	Contemporary Era
1.	Main Media	Oral delivery (bi al-lisan) and concrete action (bi al-hal)	Digitalization and cyber media (Internet)
2.	Delivery Method	Sermons, khutbah, discussions, advice, and direct exemplary conduct	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, webinars, and live streaming
3.	Focus of Approach	Cultural: adaptive to traditions, customs, and local community values	Technological: adjustment of methods to developments in information technology
4.	Form of Interaction	Direct communication (face-to-face) between da'i and mad'u	Digital platform-based communication (virtual/remote)
5.	Main Characteristics	Emphasizes rhetoric, intonation, and proof through concrete charitable action (uswatun hasanah)	Emphasizes innovation, speed of information, and broad/global audience reach
6.	Scope	Physical formal/non-formal forums (mosques, study circles, seminars)	Social media and digital ecosystems that touch modern lifestyles

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that integrative da'wah is a da'wah paradigm that is holistic, contextual, and collaborative, combining the normative and theological values of Islamic teachings with social reality. This approach goes beyond conventional methods that focus only on the verbal delivery of religious messages (da'wah bi al-lisan), by providing real solutions to various problems in social life through concrete action

⁵⁹ Khusairi, "Creative Content Production Strategies for Religious Outreach Materials on Social Media."

(bi al-hal) in various fields, such as education, the economy, health, social affairs, the environment, and culture.

In its development, there has been a paradigmatic shift from the classical era, which was dominated by lecture methods and adaptation to local culture, toward the contemporary era, which uses digital technology as a highly relevant medium of da'wah in today's digital age. Contemporary da'wah is now required to be more adaptive to the challenges of modern society, such as digital disruption, moral crises, and shifts in the religiosity patterns of Generation Z, by using social media and multidisciplinary approaches. Through theoretical reconstruction that integrates religious sciences with social sciences and technology, integrative da'wah emerges as a dynamic and inclusive strategy for building a religious, civilized, and progressive civilization amid the rapid flow of globalization.

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SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT FOR ISLAMIC DA'WAH: A STUDY OF HABIB JA'FAR'S SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT USING AN INCLUSIVE DA'WAH APPROACH

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital media has transformed the ways religious messages are produced, circulated, and received, creating both opportunities and challenges for religious communicators. This study examines the social media management strategy implemented by Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, one of the most influential millennial preachers in Indonesia, through the theoretical framework of inclusive da'wah. Using a qualitative descriptive approach combined with content analysis and framing analysis, this study systematically analyzes Habib Ja'far's digital content on Instagram (@husein_hadar), TikTok (@huseinjafar), YouTube (Jeda Nulis and Log In by Deddy Corbuzier), as well as various cross-platform collaborations. The findings reveal a multilayered and sophisticated model of social media management based on five main pillars: (1) content adaptation according to platform characteristics, (2) algorithmic optimization through audience engagement engineering, (3) the construction of inclusive interreligious narratives, (4) audience co-creation and participatory communication, and (5) brand identity consistency within digital flexibility. Habib Ja'far's approach demonstrates that inclusive da'wah is not merely a theological orientation, but a strategic communication framework that integrates Islamic values of *rahmah*, *tawassuth*, and *hikmah* with the principles of contemporary digital marketing.

Keywords: Social Media Management, Digital Da'wah, Inclusive Da'wah, Islamic Communication



INTRODUCTION

The massive digital transformation that has taken place since the second decade of the twenty-first century has revolutionized nearly every aspect of human life, including religious practices and the ways religion is communicated to the public.¹ In Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, this phenomenon presents highly complex and academically significant dynamics.² Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter/X have become new public spaces in which religious discourse, spiritual values, and da'wah messages are produced, distributed, consumed, and debated every day by millions of users.³

It is within this context that the emergence of Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar deserves serious academic attention. Habib Ja'far is not merely a preacher who uses social media as an auxiliary tool for spreading religious messages; he has built a structured and carefully planned digital communication ecosystem that consistently presents inclusive da'wah values beyond narrow boundaries of religious identity.⁴ His millions of followers across various platforms, the active participation of non-Muslims in his religious discussions, and his documented interfaith collaborations make him a unique model that has not yet been widely examined from the perspective of strategic communication management.

¹ Lailatul Maflucha, "Etika Jurnalistik Dalam Era Digital: Menghadapi Tantangan Dengan Kode Etik Pers," *JMA: Jurnal Media Akademik* 2, no. 1 (2024): II, 109-24.

² Fahmi Sidiq, "The Role and Challenges of Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) in Facing the Digitalization Era of Broadcasting Media in Indonesia," *International Journal of Linguistics, Communication, and Broadcasting* 1, no. 1 (2023): I, 15-19.

³ Diana Dobrin, "The Hashtag in Digital Activism: A Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change* 5, no. 1 (2020), doi:10.20897/jcasc/8298.

⁴ R Fadilah, "Dakwah Digital Dan Interaksi Lintas Iman: Studi Kasus Habib Husein Ja'far," *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 10, no. 2 (2024): X, 99-112, doi:10.29240/jdk.v10i2.9876.

Studies on digital da'wah in Indonesia have developed rapidly in recent years.⁵ Several scholars have examined the use of social media by Indonesian preachers from various perspectives, including the effectiveness of message communication, the construction of online religious identity, platform-based social mobilization, and framing analysis of da'wah content. However, very few studies have examined in depth the aspect of social media management as a distinct field of inquiry integrated with the values of inclusive da'wah.

A review of the literature shows that Alvian Ramadhan's study, entitled "Strategi Dakwah Habib Ja'far dalam Membangun Toleransi Beragama dalam Konten Log In," emphasizes inclusive da'wah strategies through framing analysis focused on the values of tolerance and interreligious dialogue, but it does not systematically examine media management and content distribution strategies.⁶ Furthermore, Muhammad Ariful Hakim's study, entitled "Komunikasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Moderat dalam Podcast Log In Season 2 oleh Habib Ja'far," examines educational communication patterns based on religious moderation through a social construction approach, but remains limited to the analysis of instructional communication without exploring digital platform optimization and strategic audience engagement.⁷ In addition, the study by Aulia Syakinah Maulani et al., entitled "Pengaruh Podcast Habib Ja'far dalam Dakwah Islam di Era Digital untuk Membentuk Karakter Gen Z yang Bertaqwa," focuses on

⁵ D Irawan and H Naskah, "Strategi Komunikasi Dakwah: Studi Analisis Dakwah Tradisional Dengan Inovasi Digital," *Sy'ar: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 8, no. 1 (2025): VIII, 1-16, doi:10.37567/syiar.v8i1.3011.

⁶ Alvian Ramadhan, "Strategi Dakwah Habib Ja'far Dalam Membangun Toleransi Beragama Dalam Konten Log In," *Jurnal Budi Pekerti Agama Islam* 3, no. 3 (June 9, 2025): III, 193-99, doi:10.61132/jbpai.v3i3.1223.

⁷ Muhammad Ariful Hakim and Saeful Anam, "Komunikasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Moderat Dalam Podcast 'Log In Season 2' Oleh Habib Ja'far," *AL-MIKRAJ Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora (E-ISSN 2745-4584)* 5, no. 2 (May 25, 2025): V, 1703-19, doi:10.37680/almikraj.v5i2.7233.

the quantitative influence of podcasts on Gen Z character formation, but does not discuss in depth how content strategy and social media management shape that effectiveness.⁸

Based on this gap, this article offers novelty in the form of a comprehensive analysis of inclusive da'wah social media management. It does not only examine messages or effects, but also integrates platform strategy, algorithmic optimization, the construction of interreligious narratives, and audience participation as a systematic and replicable model of digital da'wah communication.

The scope of this study includes an analysis of Habib Ja'far's digital content during the period 2021-2025, with a focus on four main platforms: Instagram (@husein_hadar), TikTok (@huseinjafar), the YouTube channel Jeda Nulis, and the program Log In by Deddy Corbuzier on YouTube. This time frame was selected because it covers the mature phase of Habib Ja'far's digital strategy, during which his inclusive approach gained broad recognition from various communities, including non-Muslim audiences.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design, combined with content analysis and framing analysis. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study seeks to understand in depth the meanings, strategies, and values underlying Habib Ja'far's social media management practices, which cannot be reduced merely to numerical data. The unit of analysis consists of digital content published by Habib Ja'far on four major platforms: Instagram

⁸ Aulia Syakinah Maulani et al., "Pengaruh Podcast Habib Ja'far Dalam Dakwah Islam Di Era Digital Untuk Membentuk Karakter Gen Z Yang Bertaqwa," *Mu'ashir: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam* 3, no. 1 (May 31, 2025): III, 57-76, doi:10.35878/muashir.v3i1.1444.

(@husein_hadar), TikTok (@huseinjafar), YouTube Jeda Nulis, and the program Log In by Deddy Corbuzier from January 2021 to December 2024. Content samples were selected purposively based on the following criteria: content that features interfaith dialogue, content that reaches an above-average engagement rate, content that responds to contemporary issues, and content that represents various platform formats. Data were collected through systematic digital observation, documentation through screenshots and downloaded content, analysis of comments and audience interaction, and a literature review on Habib Ja'far's digital strategies.

Data analysis was carried out through three complementary stages. First, qualitative content analysis was used to categorize content according to themes, formats, language styles, rhetorical strategies, and the values communicated. Second, framing analysis was used to identify the dominant frames employed in constructing inclusive narratives, referring to Entman's (1993) framing model, which includes problem definition, causal diagnosis, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. Third, strategic analysis was conducted to connect content and communication choices with the managerial and platform logics underlying them. Data validation was carried out through source triangulation (primary content, audience responses, and academic literature), methodological triangulation (content analysis, framing analysis, and strategic analysis), and peer debriefing with other scholars of Islamic communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Habib Ja'far's Digital Da'wah Ecosystem

Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar was born in Bondowoso, East Java, on June 21, 1988. He was educated in the pesantren tradition at

Pondok Pesantren Bangil, East Java, then completed his undergraduate degree in Islamic Philosophy at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and his master's degree in Qur'anic Exegesis and Hadith at the same university in 2020. The combination of traditional pesantren education and modern philosophical training has produced a distinctive synthesis: a preacher with strong religious authority, reinforced by his prophetic lineage as recognized within the *habib* community, as well as critical thinking skills and flexible communication abilities.

Habib Ja'far's digital presence developed organically from around 2018, but reached a critical point in 2020-2021 when his collaboration with Deddy Corbuzier in the program Log In began to go massively viral. This phenomenon confirms the findings of several scholars that, in the digital era, cross-audience collaboration often becomes the most effective catalyst for expanding a content creator's reach exponentially.

Instagram @husein_hadar is the platform with Habib Ja'far's largest follower base, reaching millions of followers with consistent growth. Content analysis of this platform reveals a sophisticated and structured content management strategy, despite its casual and authentic appearance. In his study of Habib Ja'far's da'wah rhetoric, Mukti (2023) identifies performed authenticity as a key element of his communication strategy: the ability to appear natural and sincere while carefully selecting the moments and messages to be shared with the public.⁹

Habib Ja'far's presence on TikTok (@huseinjafar) represents one of the most interesting strategic adaptations within his digital ecosystem.

⁹ M Mukti, "Retorika Dakwah Habib Husein Ja'far Dalam Program Log In," *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi Islam* 5, no. 1 (2023): V, 55-66, doi:10.18592/jski.v5i1.4102.

TikTok, with its algorithm that distributes content based on users' interests and engagement rather than pre-existing social networks, offers both unique opportunities and challenges for da'wah. The opportunity lies in its potential to reach millions of users who may never actively seek religious content. The challenge lies in how to package complex and nuanced messages into a format that, on average, lasts only 15-60 seconds.

Content analysis of Habib Ja'far's TikTok reveals a distinctive "hook-bridge-value-call" strategy: each video begins with a hook that captures attention within the first three seconds, often in the form of a provocative statement or a surprising question; it then moves to a bridge that connects the hook to a broader context; proceeds to value, namely the core message or insight being offered; and ends with a call that invites the audience to think further, respond, or share. This format closely corresponds to the psychology of TikTok users, who are accustomed to deciding within seconds whether a piece of content is worth continuing to watch or should be skipped.

The YouTube channel Jeda Nulis is the digital space in which Habib Ja'far develops religious and humanistic discourse in its most in-depth and comprehensive format. Unlike Instagram and TikTok, which are dominated by short and visual content, Jeda Nulis presents long-form video formats that allow for the exploration of nuance, complexity, and discursive depth that cannot be achieved in shorter formats.

Content analysis of Jeda Nulis reveals several major sub-formats that are managed differently. First is the deep-dive format, in which Habib Ja'far discusses theological, philosophical, or socio-religious topics comprehensively. Second is the open conversation format, which presents dialogue with thinkers, activists, artists, and public figures from various backgrounds. Third is the community question-and-

answer format, which responds to questions submitted by followers. Fourth is the format of travel and experience documentation, which connects personal reflection with spiritual insight.

From the perspective of content management, Jeda Nulis applies an editorial strategy based on depth and connectedness. Each video does not stand alone, but becomes part of a larger narrative about Islam as a religion that is compatible with modernity, inclusive of diversity, and relevant to contemporary life. The tagging, description, and thumbnail strategies used reflect an understanding of YouTube SEO, although they are not always maximally optimized. This pattern is also identified by Hafidz (2024) in his study of the strengths and weaknesses of Habib Ja'far's algorithmic strategy.¹⁰

2. The Construction of Inclusive Da'wah Narratives and Interfaith Communication

The program Log In by Deddy Corbuzier on YouTube represents one of the most productive and impactful collaborations in Habib Ja'far's digital career. Presented as an open conversation between Habib Ja'far, a Muslim, and Onadio Leonardo (Onad), a Christian, along with various guest stars from different religious and professional backgrounds, this program effectively creates a laboratory of inclusive da'wah performed before millions of viewers. Adirais (2024) notes that the success of Log In lies in its ability to present interfaith dialogue that is sincere, unforced, and full of humor—an achievement that may appear simple but is very difficult to replicate because it requires genuine relational maturity among its participants.¹¹

¹⁰ Hafidz, "Strategi Dakwah Digital Habib Jafar Di YouTube Bertema Log In."

¹¹ N Adirais, "Model AIDDA Dalam Komunikasi Dakwah Inklusif Program Log In," *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam* 12, no. 2 (2024): XII, 99-114, doi:10.15642/jki.v12i2.3102.

An in-depth analysis of Log In episodes featuring Habib Ja'far reveals several mechanisms of inclusive da'wah operating simultaneously. First, normalizing religious diversity: the program consistently presents religious difference as something natural, interesting to discuss, and not threatening to anyone's identity. Second, humanizing religious figures: Habib Ja'far is presented not only as a religious authority but also as a human being with humor, limitations, and sincere curiosity—qualities that make him accessible to audiences who may otherwise feel psychological distance from religious figures. Third, modeling productive disagreement: when differences of opinion arise between Habib Ja'far and non-Muslim guests, the way they handle such differences with respect, curiosity, and humor becomes a direct demonstration of how healthy interreligious dialogue should take place.

From the perspective of production management, Log In applies high standards of professionalism: strong audio-visual production quality, dynamic editing to maintain the pace of conversation, attractive thumbnails, and a distribution strategy that leverages Deddy Corbuzier's audience network, which is much larger than Habib Ja'far's own audience base. This collaboration is a classic example of audience arbitrage, namely using the difference between an existing audience (Habib Ja'far's) and the audience that can be reached through a collaborator (Deddy Corbuzier) to create exponential growth that could not be achieved organically.

3. Engagement Strategy, Analytics, and Audience Response

The analysis of Habib Ja'far's strategy shows an intelligent navigation of this dilemma. On the one hand, there is clear evidence that his digital team pays attention to analytics: content that receives

a strong response tends to be repeated or developed further, formats that fail to generate engagement are rarely repeated, and posting times are adjusted to audience activity patterns. On the other hand, there is a consistent commitment to maintaining content considered important for da'wah even when it does not always generate maximum engagement, especially content that addresses social issues requiring the courage to speak out.

The balance between data optimization and value integrity reflects what Wahid (2019) calls "principled pragmatism" in digital da'wah: an approach that uses all available tools and techniques as long as they do not compromise the core values that form the foundation of the da'wah itself.¹² In Habib Ja'far's practice, this principle appears in editorial decisions that seem to follow a mixed logic: partly driven by data, and partly driven by theological and social considerations.

Understanding the performance and engagement of Habib Ja'far's da'wah content provides important insight into the mechanisms that explain the effectiveness of his inclusive approach. The analysis of engagement patterns reveals several findings that are both interesting and theoretically significant.

First, content featuring interfaith dialogue consistently generates higher engagement rates than monological da'wah content. This confirms that the dialogical format, which lies at the heart of Habib Ja'far's inclusive da'wah, is intrinsically more attractive and more likely to invite participation than one-way lecture formats. Second, content that displays vulnerability and imperfection generates more personal and meaningful comments than content that emphasizes expertise

¹² Y Wahid, "Strategi Dakwah Islam Moderat Di Era Digital," *Jurnal Dakwah Digital* 3, no. 1 (2019): III, 45-60, doi:10.22515/jdd.v3i1.1932.

and authority. This reflects a paradox known in communication psychology as the pratfall effect, in which the sincere acknowledgment of weakness actually increases perceptions of credibility and warmth.

Third, and perhaps most significant from the perspective of da'wah, the proportion of comments from non-Muslim users and users who identify themselves as agnostic or atheist in Habib Ja'far's content is consistently higher than the average for Indonesian da'wah content. This fact is not merely an indicator of reach; it is empirical evidence that the inclusive narrative constructed by Habib Ja'far successfully crosses the communal boundaries that usually separate the production and consumption of religious content. Audiences who would normally never encounter Islamic da'wah content not only consume Habib Ja'far's content, but also actively participate in the conversations it generates.

This finding has important implications for the theory of inclusive da'wah. It confirms that authentic and high-quality inclusive da'wah is not only ethically preferable, but also strategically more effective. A wider audience, higher engagement, and more measurable impact are natural consequences of an approach that sincerely respects the humanity of all audiences regardless of their religious identity. This is in line with the argument of Teras et al. (2023), who found that the effectiveness of da'wah message reception is strongly influenced by the degree of openness and inclusivity shown by communicators in treating their audiences.¹³

4. Image Management, Criticism, and Personal Branding

¹³ J Teras, "Efektivitas Penerimaan Pesan Dakwah Konvensional Dan Dakwah Online," *Hikmah: Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 17, no. 11 (2023): XVII, 3146-60, doi:10.31332/am.v8i2.741.

No significant digital presence exists without facing criticism, controversy, and even organized attacks from various groups. Habib Ja'far, with his inclusive approach and openness to interfaith dialogue, is particularly vulnerable to criticism from two opposing directions: from conservative Muslim groups who judge his approach to be too accommodating toward non-Muslims, and from non-Muslim or secular groups who suspect that a hidden conversion agenda lies behind his narrative of inclusivity.

The analysis of Habib Ja'far's responses to criticism reveals a consistent and strategic pattern. First, he rarely responds to criticism defensively or confrontationally, a choice that reflects an understanding that reactive defense often amplifies criticism and gives it more attention than it deserves. Second, when he chooses to respond, he tends to use a format that transforms criticism into an opportunity for clarification and deeper discourse, a technique that Kurniawan (2021) calls "reframing controversy as learning opportunity."¹⁴ Third, he consistently maintains a respectful tone even when responding to disrespectful criticism, a decision that strengthens his image as a living model of the values he teaches.

¹⁴ A Kurniawan, "Moderasi Beragama Di Era Digital: Peluang Dan Tantangan," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 42, no. 1 (2021): XLII, 25-34, doi:10.21580/jid.v42i1.8811.

5. A Social Media Management Model for Inclusive Da'wah: Theoretical Synthesis

Based on the comprehensive analysis of Habib Ja'far's digital practices presented in the previous subsections, this study constructs a social media management model for inclusive da'wah consisting of five interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions.

The first dimension is value foundation. All managerial decisions in managing inclusive da'wah social media must rest on values that are clear, consistent, and authentic. In Habib Ja'far's case, these values include *rahmah* (compassion), *tawassuth* (moderation), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *musawah* (human equality). A strong value foundation prevents opportunistic drift, in which content decisions are driven solely by viral or commercial logic without considering their implications for the values that define the identity of da'wah.

The second dimension is platform architecture. Effective social media management for inclusive da'wah requires a differentiated presence across various platforms, with each platform playing a distinct role within an integrated communication ecosystem. Rather than replicating the same content across all platforms, an effective strategy adapts format, style, and message depth according to the logic and audience of each platform while maintaining value consistency as the thread connecting the entire ecosystem.

The third dimension is engagement engineering. Building and sustaining meaningful audience engagement is a core competency of effective social media management. In the context of inclusive da'wah, this means designing content that not only captures attention but also invites reflection, encourages dialogue, and inspires positive action. Engagement is not understood merely as a quantitative metric,

but as a measure of the quality of the relationship built between the preacher and the community.

The fourth dimension is collaboration management. A healthy digital da'wah ecosystem cannot be built in isolation. Strategic collaboration with creators from different backgrounds, communities, and perspectives is a critical element in the scalability and sustainability of inclusive da'wah in the digital era. Effective collaboration management includes selecting collaborators who align with core values, designing collaboration formats that maximize value for all parties, and evaluating the impact of collaboration on the overall da'wah ecosystem.

The fifth dimension is adaptive learning. Effective social media management is a continuous process of learning and adaptation. Analytical data, audience feedback, changes in platform algorithms, and shifts in cultural trends must be systematically integrated into the cycle of content planning and execution. However, adaptive learning in the context of da'wah must always remain within the boundaries set by the value foundation. Adaptation that compromises core values is not learning, but deviation.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the success of Islamic da'wah social media management by Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar is not merely the product of technical sophistication or a viral strategy that happened to work. Rather, it is an organic expression of a deep integration between the values of inclusive Islamic da'wah—namely *rahmah*, *tawassuth*, *hikmah*, and *musawah*—and a mature understanding of the logic, psychology, and algorithms of contemporary digital platforms. The identified social media management model for inclusive da'wah,

with its five dimensions—value foundation, multichannel platform architecture, meaningful engagement engineering, cross-community collaboration management, and adaptive learning with integrity—offers a framework that can be replicated by preachers, da'wah institutions, and Islamic educational institutions seeking to develop a digital presence that is not only wide in reach but also deep in impact, and that can make a real contribution to strengthening tolerance, harmony, and social cohesion in Indonesia's plural and increasingly digitally connected society.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOR AMONG MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN MEDAN

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between religious understanding and waste management behavior among Muslim communities in Medan City. Using a qualitative case study in Medan Tembung District, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving religious leaders, academics, government officials, waste-bank managers, and residents. The findings show that the community generally understands environmental care as part of Islamic teaching: cleanliness is associated with faith, environmental protection with religious obligation, and humans with khalifah fil ardh entrusted to maintain ecological balance. However, this understanding has not been fully reflected in daily practice. Waste segregation remains limited, improper disposal persists, and participation in community-based waste management is weak. This gap is shaped by entrenched habits, limited facilities, weak institutional support, and insufficient internalization of ecological values. Strengthening eco-religious literacy and collaboration among religious institutions, government, and local communities is therefore essential.

Keywords: Religious understanding, Waste management behavior, Muslim communities, Environmental ethics, Eco-religious literacy

INTRODUCTION

The waste problem is one of the most complex environmental challenges in urban areas of Indonesia. Population growth, urbanization, changes in consumption patterns, and the increasing use of single-use products have contributed to a significant rise in waste volume over the past few decades. Data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's National Waste Management Information System (SIPSN) indicates that national waste generation in 2024 reached approximately 33.79 million tons, with the household sector as the largest contributor.¹ This situation has led to various environmental problems, such as soil and water pollution, clogged drainage systems, deteriorating environmental health, and an increased risk of urban flooding. Various studies indicate that suboptimal waste management is not only caused by limited infrastructure and policies but also by low public participation in sustainable waste management^{2,3}. In an urban context, the complexity of waste issues escalates alongside population growth and economic activities that generate massive amounts of waste.

As one of Indonesia's largest metropolitan cities, Medan faces similar challenges. The expansion of residential areas, commercial activities, and high population mobility result in a steadily increasing volume of waste each year. Data from the Environmental Agency indicates that by 2025, Medan will generate approximately 1,700 tons

¹Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, *Sistem Informasi Pengelolaan Sampah Nasional (SIPSN): Data timbunan sampah nasional tahun 2024*, (Jakarta: Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, 2024)

²Haryanti, S., et al., *The Social Capital and Impact in Waste Management of the Waste Bank System in Yogyakarta Indonesia*, (Jurnal Teknologi Lingkungan, Vol. 24 No.2 Juli 2023), hlm. 190-199.

³Salsabila, N., et al., *Public Engagement Impact on Sustainable Waste Management in Indonesia: Examining Public Behavior*, (Jurnal Administrasi Publik, 13 (2) December 2023), hlm 158-178, <https://ojs.uma.ac.id/index.php/jap>

of waste per day, making it one of the regions with the highest waste generation in North Sumatra. This massive volume of waste poses a serious challenge for local governments in establishing an effective and sustainable waste management system. Although various waste management programs have been implemented through the provision of sanitation facilities, transportation systems, and public awareness campaigns, the practice of indiscriminate waste disposal is still found in various residential areas, riverbanks, drainage channels, and public spaces. This situation indicates that the waste problem in the City of Medan is not only related to technical and institutional aspects but is also closely linked to public behavior and participation in managing their environment.^{4,5}

Various recent studies indicate that public behavior is a critical factor in determining the success of waste management. Knowledge of the negative environmental impacts of waste does not always translate into responsible actions regarding waste management. Many individuals understand the importance of maintaining a clean environment but have not yet developed the habit of sorting waste, recycling, or disposing of waste in designated areas. This situation indicates a gap between environmental knowledge and environmental behavior, which is influenced by various social, cultural, and psychological factors.

From an environmental behavior perspective, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that an individual's behavior is influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms,

⁴Jacob, J., & Dwipayanti, N. M. U., *Planned Behavior Theory Approach to Waste Management Behavior in South Denpasar District*, (Jurnal Promkes: The Indonesian Journal of Health Promotion and Health Education Vol. 10 No. 2, 2022) hlm. 118-129

⁵Haryanti, S., et al., *The Social Capital and Impact in Waste Management of the Waste Bank System in Yogyakarta Indonesia*, (Jurnal Teknologi Lingkungan, Vol. 24 No.2 Juli 2023), hlm. 190-199

perceived behavioral control, and intention to act.⁶ This theory is widely used to explain pro-environmental behavior, including waste management behavior. Research by Jacob and Dwipayanti⁷ indicates that knowledge, attitudes, and perceived behavioral control significantly influence community waste management behavior. These findings are supported by Yandri et al.⁸, who found that subjective norms, behavioral intentions, and perceived behavioral control have a strong influence on household waste management practices.

In addition to psychological factors, various studies indicate that religious values play a crucial role in shaping environmental behavior. In religiously oriented societies such as Indonesia, religion functions not only as a system of beliefs but also as a source of values, norms, and moral guidelines that direct everyday conduct. Therefore, environmental issues, including waste management, cannot be separated from ethical dimensions and religious responsibilities.

Research by Karimi et al.⁹ indicates that religiosity influences pro-environmental behavior both directly and through the formation of environmental attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of religiosity tend to demonstrate greater environmental concern. The

⁶Ajzen, I., *The theory of planned behavior*, (*Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50 (2), 1991), 179–211 [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)

⁷Jacob, J., & Dwipayanti, N. M. U., *Planned Behavior Theory Approach to Waste Management Behavior in South Denpasar District*, (*Jurnal Promkes: The Indonesian Journal of Health Promotion and Health Education* Vol. 10 No. 2, 2022) hlm. 118-129

⁸Yandri, P., et al., *Subjective norms, behavioral intention, and household waste management behavior: An application of the theory of planned behavior*, (*Jurnal Pengelolaan Sumberdaya dan Lingkungan* Vol 15 No. 5), <https://journal.ipb.ac.id/jpsl/index>

⁹Karimi, S., Liobikiene, G., & Alitavakoli, M., *The effect of religiosity on pro-environmental behavior based on the theory of planned behavior*. *Sustainability*, 14 (6), 1–18, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.745019>

results of the study by Begum et al.¹⁰ also indicate that Islamic religiosity strengthens the influence of environmental moral education on pro-environmental behavior. Thus, religious values have the potential to serve as an effective source of motivation in fostering responsible environmental awareness and behavior.

From an Islamic perspective, protecting the environment is an integral part of religious teachings. Islam not only governs the relationship between humans and Allah SWT and among fellow humans but also governs the relationship between humans and the universe. The Qur'an explicitly prohibits *fasad fi al-ardh* (corruption on earth) and commands humans to maintain the balance of life. Various hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also emphasize the importance of cleanliness, environmental conservation, and the wise use of natural resources.

Contemporary Islamic thought on the environment positions humans as *khalifah* who bear a moral responsibility for the sustainability of life. According to Shihab¹¹, the concept of *khalifah* cannot be understood as a justification for domination and exploitation of nature, but rather as a trust to preserve, manage, and maintain the balance of the environment. From this perspective, humans are obligated to maintain harmony between the utilization of natural resources and the preservation of ecosystems as part of their religious responsibility.

This stewardship of *khalifah* entails a moral obligation to ensure that all human activities do not cause harm to the environment. This view aligns with the principles of Islamic environmental ethics, which are grounded in the concepts of *khalifah*, *amanah*, and ecological

¹⁰Begum, H., Alam, A. S. A. F., Awang, A. H., Ghani, A. B. A., & Siddiqui, B. A., *Religiosity and environmental responsibility: The role of Islamic values in pro-environmental behavior. Sustainability*, 13(3), 2021), hlm. 1456. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031456>

¹¹Shihab, M. Q., *Khilafah: Peran manusia di bumi*. (Ciputat: Lentera Hati, 2022)

justice. Haideri¹² states that Islamic environmental ethics is rooted in the principles of tawhid, khalifah, mizan, and hikmah, which position humans as guardians of the natural balance. Thus, environmental conservation in Islam is viewed not only as a social necessity but also as a spiritual responsibility.

Studies on Islamic eco-theology in recent years have further strengthened this argument. Khasani¹³ demonstrates that the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) contain various ecological principles emphasizing the importance of cleanliness, conservation of natural resources, environmental protection, and the prohibition against causing harm to the earth. In line with this, Sya'roni et al.¹⁴ explain that the concepts of khalifah, amanah, mizan, and tanzif (cleanliness) are core values that can serve as a foundation for developing an Islamic environmental ethics relevant to contemporary ecological challenges.

The implementation of these values in societal life is fostered through the concept of fiqh al-bi'ah, which positions environmental conservation as part of Muslims' religious responsibilities. Widigdo and Azhar¹⁵ explain that fiqh al-bi'ah provides a normative framework that can be used to encourage community participation in community-based environmental and waste management. This perspective is

¹²Haideri, A., *An Analytical Study of Islamic Faith and Ethics in the Context of Environmental Sustainability*. (Riphah Journal of Islamic Thought & Civilization, RJITC, Vol: 3, Issue: 01, 2025), <https://journals.riphah.edu.pk/index.php/jitc>

¹³Khasani, F., *Khilāfah, Taskhīr, and Sustainability: Reconstructing Islamic Eco-Theology through Al-Qurṭubī's Tafsīr*. (Journal Of Islamic Studies, 3 (2), 145-156, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.71039/istifham.v3i2.111>

¹⁴Sya'roni, M., et al., *Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs*, (Pharos Journal of Theology ISSN 2414-3324 online Volume 106 (5) Regular Issue, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.51>

¹⁵Widigdo, A., & Azhar, M., *Fiqh al-Bi'ah: The Application of Islamic Environmental Ethics in the Community-Based Waste Management in Yogyakarta*, (Proceeding International Conference of Community Service, Vol. 3 No. 2, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.18196/iccs.v3i2>

reinforced by Eriza et al.¹⁶, who note that the Indonesian Ulema Council Fatwa No. 41 of 2014 on Waste Management to Prevent Environmental Damage affirms that maintaining environmental cleanliness and properly managing waste are part of the moral and religious responsibilities of Muslims.

Nevertheless, high levels of religiosity in society do not always correlate directly with the environmental behaviors exhibited in daily life. Karimi et al.¹⁷ found that the influence of religiosity on environmental behavior is often mediated by other factors such as attitudes, social norms, and perceptions of behavioral control. These findings indicate that sound religious understanding does not automatically lead to environmentally responsible behavior unless accompanied by the internalization of values and adequate social support.

This phenomenon is also evident within the Muslim community in Medan. Initial observations indicate that most community members understand that cleanliness is part of Islamic teachings and that environmental stewardship constitutes a religious responsibility. This understanding is acquired through family education, educational institutions, religious study groups, sermons, and various other religious activities. However, at the same time, there are still instances of indiscriminate waste disposal, a low culture of household waste sorting, minimal participation in community-based waste management activities, and a lack of concern for the cleanliness of public spaces. These conditions reveal a paradox between relatively strong religious

¹⁶Eriza, A., et al. (2024). Islamic Ethics in Waste Management to Prevent Environmental Damage: A Fatwa perspective of the Indonesian Ulema Council. [ISVS e-journal, Vol. 11, Issue 1]. <https://doi.org/10.61275/ISVSej-2024-11-01-10>

¹⁷Karimi, S., Liobikiene, G., & Alitavakoli, M., *The effect of religiosity on pro-environmental behavior based on the theory of planned behavior*, (Sustainability, 14(6), 2022), hlm. 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.745019>

understanding and waste management behavior that does not yet fully reflect Islamic ecological values.

Research on waste management has generally focused on technical aspects, institutional frameworks, government policies, environmental behavior, and community participation. Meanwhile, studies on Islamic environmental ethics have primarily highlighted normative, theological, and philosophical aspects regarding the relationship between humans and nature.^{18,19} Research specifically examining the relationship between religious understanding and waste management behavior among urban Muslim communities remains relatively limited. Yet, religious aspects play a crucial role in shaping the value orientations, norms, and social behaviors of Indonesian society.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the religious understanding of Muslim communities regarding waste management and to examine how this understanding is manifested in waste management behaviors in daily life. This study also seeks to explain the factors influencing the emergence of a gap between the religious values held and the waste management practices carried out by the community. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of research on Islamic environmental ethics, environmental communication, environmental da'wah, and religious-values-based waste management among urban Muslim communities.

METHOD

¹⁸Haideri, A., *An Analytical Study of Islamic Faith and Ethics in the Context of Environmental Sustainability*. (Riphah Journal of Islamic Thought & Civilization, RJITC, Vol: 3, Issue: 01, 2025), <https://journals.riphah.edu.pk/index.php/jitc>

¹⁹Khasani, F., *Khilāfah, Taskhīr, and Sustainability: Reconstructing Islamic Eco-Theology through Al-Qurṭubī's Tafsīr*. (Journal Of Islamic Studies, 3 (2), 145-156, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.71039/istifham.v3i2.111>

This study employs a qualitative descriptive case-study approach to examine the relationship between religious understanding and waste management behavior among Muslim communities in Medan City. This approach was chosen because the study seeks to understand in depth the meanings, perceptions, experiences, and social constructions of the community regarding Islamic teachings on cleanliness, environmental conservation, and waste management, as well as how these understandings are manifested in everyday ecological practices.²⁰

The research was conducted in Medan Tembung Subdistrict, Medan City, North Sumatra Province. The location was selected through purposive sampling, considering that Medan Tembung is a densely populated residential area facing various waste management issues while also being predominantly Muslim. In addition, the area has relatively active religious activities through mosques, religious study groups (*majelis taklim*), religious gatherings (*pengajian*), and various community organizations, enabling the researcher to examine the connection between religious understanding and community waste management behavior.

The research data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through field observations and in-depth interviews with informants selected based on their relevance to the research focus. Secondary data, meanwhile, was obtained through documentary studies encompassing government reports, waste management documents, environmental regulations, scientific

²⁰Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N., *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.), (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018)

articles, and various literature relevant to the research theme. The use of secondary data is intended to strengthen interpretations and support findings obtained from the field.

The research informants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account their knowledge, experience, and involvement in religious issues and waste management. They consisted of the Chairperson of the Baitussujud Mosque Welfare Board (BKM), representing religious leaders; a professor of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting who is also a preacher, representing Muslim scholars; the Head of the Government Affairs Section of Tembung Subdistrict, representing the government; the Chairperson of the Ndeso Waste Bank Community, representing community-based waste managers; and Muslim residents of Bandar Selamat, Bantan, and Tembung. This diversity of informants was intended to provide a comprehensive perspective on the relationship between religious understanding and waste management practices in community life.

Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out in residential areas, public facilities, mosque surroundings, and locations where community waste management activities take place. The observations aimed to identify environmental cleanliness conditions, community behavior regarding waste disposal and management, and forms of social participation related to environmental management. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach based on an interview guide designed according to the research focus, enabling the researcher to obtain broader and deeper information from the informants.

Generally, the interviews focused on several key aspects, namely: (1) informants' understanding of the concepts of cleanliness, the

environment, and ecological responsibility within Islamic teachings; (2) informants' views on the relationship between environmental conservation and religious practices; (3) community behavior regarding household waste management; (4) the level of community concern regarding environmental cleanliness; (5) factors influencing the low level of awareness regarding waste management; and (6) the role of religious leaders, religious institutions, environmental communities, and the government in fostering ecological awareness among the community.

All interview results were transcribed and classified based on themes relevant to the research objectives. The transcription process was conducted to preserve data integrity while facilitating the researcher's identification of patterns, categories, and meanings emerging from the informants' statements. Subsequently, the transcribed data was organized into a thematic matrix to facilitate the processes of data reduction, categorization, and interpretation.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña,²¹ which comprises three main stages: data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. In the data condensation stage, the researcher selected, simplified, and grouped the data based on themes related to religious understanding, Islamic environmental ethics, and waste management behavior. The next stage involved presenting the data in the form of a narrative description accompanied by informant quotes to strengthen the interpretation. The final stage involved drawing conclusions gradually through a process of repeated verification of all data collected in the field.

²¹Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014)

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from religious figures, government officials, waste management communities, and the general public. Meanwhile, methodological triangulation was performed by comparing results from interviews, observations, and documentation. The use of this triangulation aims to enhance the credibility of the research findings so that the resulting interpretations possess a stronger level of validity.²²

This study employs the perspective of Islamic environmental ethics as an analytical framework to understand the relationship between religious understanding and waste management behavior among Muslim communities. Research findings are analyzed based on the concepts of khalifah, amanah, mizan, and ecological responsibility as explained in the Qur'an, hadith, and contemporary studies of Islamic environmental ethics. With this approach, this study is expected to provide a deep understanding of how the religious understanding of Muslim communities relates to waste management behavior, while also explaining the various factors causing the gap between the religious values they hold and the ecological practices carried out in daily life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Muslim Communities' Understanding of Waste Management

The research findings indicate that the Muslim community in Medan possesses a relatively strong religious understanding regarding the importance of maintaining cleanliness and preserving the environment. This understanding is rooted in Islamic teachings that view

²²Moleong, L. J, *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif* (Edisi revisi), (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021), hlm. 330

cleanliness as an integral part of faith, while also positioning humanity as stewards responsible for maintaining and preserving the balance of nature. This understanding was consistently found among informants from religious leaders, academics, government officials, and the general public. These findings indicate that Islamic ecological values have become part of the community's normative consciousness, although the level of their implementation in daily life remains varied.

The interview results indicate that the environment is understood not merely as the physical space where humans live, but as a trust that must be safeguarded as an act of obedience to Allah SWT. This understanding is evident in the explanation given by the Chairperson of the Baitussujud Mosque Welfare Board (BKM), who stated:

"Preserving the environment is humanity's responsibility as Allah's creations. Nature must be protected and cared for because a clean and healthy environment benefits human life. Damaging the environment, such as littering, is considered an improper act in Islam" (Elyas, Chairperson of the Baitussujud Mosque Welfare Board, interview, 2026).

This statement shows that the community's religious understanding of waste management is not limited to physical cleanliness but is also connected to humanity's moral responsibility toward God's creation. From an Islamic perspective, humans are positioned as *khalifah fil ardh*, entrusted with the responsibility to manage the earth accountably. This concept of stewardship does not grant humans the right to exploit nature freely, but rather entails the obligation to maintain the sustainability of life and prevent environmental damage. Shihab explains that stewardship is a divine mandate requiring humans to maintain a balanced relationship between themselves, fellow humans, and the universe.²³ Therefore, actions that cause environmental

²³Shihab, M. Q., *Khilafah: Peran manusia di bumi*. (Ciputat: Lentera Hati, 2022)

pollution or damage, including littering, can be understood as a form of neglect of the stewardship mandate granted by Allah SWT.

This finding is also consistent with the perspective of contemporary Islamic environmental ethics, which positions humanity as the steward of life's sustainability. Islamic environmental ethics is built upon the principles of khalifah, amanah, and ecological justice, which require humanity to utilize natural resources responsibly. Meanwhile, Haideri asserts that the principles of tawhid, khalifah, mizan, hikmah, and 'adalah constitute the primary foundations of Islamic environmental ethics, guiding humanity to maintain ecological balance.²⁴ Thus, the public's understanding of waste management as a religious responsibility indicates the internalization of Islamic environmental ethical values within their consciousness.

This study also found that the public's understanding of cleanliness is largely shaped by the concept of thaharah, which is taught from an early age. For the majority of informants, cleanliness is understood as a primary prerequisite for performing worship and drawing closer to Allah SWT. This is reflected in the perspective of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Habibi Siregar, M.A., who explains:

"The concept of cleanliness in Islam, normatively speaking, has two aspects: external and internal cleanliness. Before prayer, we are commanded to perform thaharah. Personal cleanliness, the cleanliness of the home, and the environment are essential components in drawing closer to Allah" (Muhammad Habibi Siregar, interview, 2026).

This data indicates that the public's understanding of cleanliness is shaped through ritual practices that occur continuously in daily life. The habits of performing wudu, maintaining the purity of clothing, cleaning

²⁴Haideri, A., *An Analytical Study of Islamic Faith and Ethics in the Context of Environmental Sustainability*. (Riphah Journal of Islamic Thought & Civilization, RJITC, Vol: 3, Issue: 01, 2025), <https://journals.riphah.edu.pk/index.php/jitc>

the home, and preserving the surrounding environment serve as vehicles for internalizing values of cleanliness, which in turn foster the public's ecological awareness. This finding indicates that religious experiences and worship practices play a significant role in shaping the community's perspective on the environment.

This perspective aligns with Khasani's findings, which explain that the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) contain ecological principles that position cleanliness as an integral part of a Muslim's life.²⁵ According to Khasani, the concept of cleanliness in Islam is not limited to ritual aspects but also encompasses the responsibility to maintain environmental cleanliness and prevent various forms of ecological damage. Thus, the routine practice of *thaharah* actually possesses an ecological dimension that can serve as the foundation for fostering responsible environmental behavior.

In addition to the concept of cleanliness, this study also indicates that the community perceives the environment as part of a system of life whose balance must be maintained. This understanding aligns with the concept of *mizan* in Islam, which emphasizes the importance of preserving natural balance. Sya'roni et al. explain that *mizan* is a foundational principle in Islamic environmental ethics, requiring humans to maintain the harmonious relationship between humanity and nature.²⁶ Environmental degradation is viewed as a violation of the balance established by Allah SWT within the system of life. Therefore, maintaining environmental cleanliness and managing waste

²⁵Khasani, F., *Khilāfah, Taskhīr, and Sustainability: Reconstructing Islamic Eco-Theology through Al-Qurṭubī's Tafsīr*. (Journal Of Islamic Studies, 3 (2), 145-156, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.71039/istifham.v3i2.111>

²⁶Sya'roni, M., et al., *Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs*, (Pharos Journal of Theology ISSN 2414-3324 online Volume 106 (5) Regular Issue, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.51>

responsibly can be understood as efforts to preserve ecological balance, which is an integral part of Islamic teachings.

Research findings also indicate that religious institutions play a significant role in shaping public understanding of waste management. Mosques, religious study groups, and other religious activities serve as channels for transmitting environmental values to the community. The Chairperson of the BKM at Baitussujud Mosque explained that the themes of cleanliness and the environment are frequently addressed in sermons and religious lectures. Similar findings were reported by the Tembung Subdistrict government, which actively involves religious leaders in environmental cleanliness campaigns.

According to the Head of the Tembung Subdistrict Administration: *"During regular religious study sessions, imams and female religious instructors are asked to convey messages about the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness as part of one's faith"* (Suryati, Head of the Tembung Subdistrict Government Affairs Office, interview, 2026).

These findings indicate that religion remains a strong source of social legitimacy in fostering environmental awareness among Muslim communities. In religious societies, environmental messages conveyed by religious leaders tend to have higher acceptance rates because they are perceived as having a strong moral and spiritual foundation. From a da'wah communication perspective, this situation demonstrates that religious institutions possess strategic potential as agents of social change in building an ecological culture within the community.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the Muslim community in Medan possesses a relatively strong religious understanding regarding waste management and environmental conservation. Values such as cleanliness (tanzif), trustworthiness (amanah),

stewardship (khalifah), balance (mizan), and the prohibition against causing harm to the earth have become integral to the community's normative consciousness. These findings reinforce the view that Islamic teachings actually provide a strong theological and ethical foundation for the development of responsible environmental behavior. However, the strength of this religious understanding has not automatically resulted in waste management behaviors consistent with the values held. It is this finding that leads to the subsequent discussion regarding the gap between religious understanding and waste management behavior in daily life.

The Gap Between Religious Understanding and Waste Management Behavior

Although this study indicates that the Muslim community in Medan possesses a relatively strong religious understanding regarding the importance of maintaining cleanliness and environmental sustainability, field findings reveal a significant gap between this understanding and actual waste management practices in daily life. This gap is a key finding of the research as it demonstrates that the internalization of religious values has not yet been fully realized in the community's ecological practices.

The interview results indicate that nearly all informants understand that maintaining cleanliness is part of Islamic teachings and a form of human responsibility as stewards of the earth. However, at the same time, the waste management practices carried out by the community remain rudimentary and do not yet reflect the principles of sustainable waste management. Most community informants admitted that they do not consistently sort household waste, even though they understand the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness.

This gap is clearly reflected in the accounts of community informants. H. Rudi Hermanto stated that household waste is not separated at home but collected in one place before disposal:

"No, we don't sort our household waste. We collect it all in one place and then throw it in the trash" (H. Rudi Hermanto, interview, 2026).

Juli expressed a similar view, noting that household waste is usually placed together in a single bin:

"No, I don't sort household waste. I usually put all the waste together in one trash bin" (Juli, interview, 2026).

These findings indicate that the community's waste management behavior remains focused on final disposal rather than on reduction, reuse, or sorting waste at the source. Yet, waste sorting is a key indicator of sustainable waste management behavior. Thus, there is a clear discrepancy between normative awareness regarding the importance of maintaining cleanliness and concrete behavior in managing daily waste.

From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), an individual's behavior is not determined solely by their knowledge but is also influenced by their attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The findings of this study indicate that the community fundamentally holds positive attitudes toward environmental cleanliness rooted in religious teachings. However, these attitudes do not always translate into concrete actions in waste management due to social and structural factors that have developed within community life.

Interestingly, this gap is not only found among the general public but is also acknowledged by Prof. Muhammad Habibi Siregar, who explains that the main issue faced does not lie in the public's lack of

knowledge regarding cleanliness, but rather in the weak collective awareness of environmental preservation.

"The awareness to maintain cleanliness is not collective; it remains individual" (Muhammad Habibi Siregar, interview, 2026).

This statement indicates that environmental issues cannot be explained solely through a knowledge-based approach. People may understand a certain value, but that does not necessarily mean they will adopt it as a behavioral guideline in their daily lives. In this context, the issue of waste is more closely tied to social-cultural issues than to a lack of information or religious understanding.

The findings of this study show that the ritual piety held by the community has not yet fully transformed into ecological piety. Religious activities such as congregational prayer, religious study sessions, devotional recitations, and various other religious activities take place actively. However, these activities do not always correlate directly with concern for the surrounding environment. This situation indicates that the dimension of *hablum minallah* is practiced more dominantly compared to the dimension of human responsibility toward the environment as part of *hablum minal 'alam*.

From Shihab's perspective, environmental degradation is not caused by the absence of Islamic teachings on environmental conservation, but rather by humanity's failure to implement the trust of *khalifah* in concrete actions.²⁷ The concept of *khalifah* demands that humans not only understand religious values normatively but also translate them into behaviors that safeguard the sustainability of life and environmental balance. Thus, the gap identified in this study indicates that Islamic ecological values have been understood at the

²⁷Shihab, M. Q., *Khalifah: Peran manusia di bumi*. (Ciputat: Lentera Hati, 2022)

cognitive level but have not yet fully developed into practical ethics guiding daily waste management behavior.

In addition to internal factors, this study found that culture and social customs have a significant influence on community behavior. The Chairperson of the BKM at Baitussujud Mosque stated that the low level of public concern regarding waste management is influenced by long-standing customs.

"There are still many people who do not care about waste management due to a lack of awareness and the habit of maintaining cleanliness" (Elyas, Chairperson of the BKM at Baitussujud Mosque, interview, 2026).

This statement indicates that the behavior of littering has become a social habit that is difficult to change through the mere dissemination of information or religious advice. From a TPB perspective, this condition is related to subjective norms, which refer to individuals' perceptions of what is considered acceptable and socially approved within their social environment. When behavior that shows little concern for the environment becomes a collective habit, individuals tend to follow the patterns of behavior prevalent in society even though they understand that such actions contradict religious values.

This finding reinforces the results of Yandri et al.,²⁸ which indicate that subjective norms have a significant influence on household waste management behavior. Therefore, behavioral change cannot be achieved solely through increased religious knowledge but also requires changes in the culture and social norms that have developed within society.

²⁸Yandri, P., et al., *Subjective norms, behavioral intention, and household waste management behavior: An application of the theory of planned behavior*, (Jurnal Pengelolaan Sumberdaya dan Lingkungan Vol 15 No. 5, 2025), <https://journal.ipb.ac.id/jpsl/index>

In addition to social norms, this study also found that structural factors influence community waste management behavior. Although the government has provided a waste collection system, community participation in utilizing this service remains suboptimal. The Head of the Tembung Subdistrict Administration explained:

"Many residents want their waste collected but are reluctant to pay the monthly fee of Rp15,000" (Suryati, interview, 2026).

This finding indicates that waste management issues are not only related to environmental awareness but also to the community's social commitment to supporting the established waste management system. Within the TPB framework, this situation relates to perceived behavioral control, namely an individual's perception of their ability and opportunity to take action. Jacob and Dwipayanti explain that waste management behavior is more likely to develop if the community feels they have adequate support, access, and opportunities to do so.²⁹

The same issue is also found in the management of the Ndeso Waste Bank. The head of the waste bank community explained that the greatest challenge faced is not in the technical aspects of waste management, but in the mindset of the community, which still views waste as an unimportant issue.

"Many people still view the waste problem as not a serious matter, so they continue to dispose of waste in rivers or other inappropriate places" (Muhammad Siddiq Zaelani, interview, 2026).

This finding indicates that the public's attitude toward waste remains the primary obstacle to fostering sustainable waste

²⁹Jacob, J., & Dwipayanti, N. M. U., *Planned Behavior Theory Approach to Waste Management Behavior in South Denpasar District*, (Jurnal Promkes: The Indonesian Journal of Health Promotion and Health Education Vol. 10 No. 2, 2022) hlm. 118-129

management practices. In fact, from the perspective of Islamic environmental ethics, the act of littering not only causes ecological harm but also contradicts the principles of amanah, mizan, and the prohibition against causing corruption on Earth (fasad fi al-ardh). Khasani³⁰ and Sya'roni et al., explain that cleanliness (tanzif) and environmental conservation are integral parts of a Muslim's responsibility in maintaining the balance of life.³¹

The findings of this study are also consistent with the results of Karimi et al., which indicate that religiosity does not always directly result in pro-environmental behavior.³² The influence of religiosity on environmental behavior is generally mediated by environmental attitudes, social norms, and perceptions of behavioral control. Similar findings were presented by Begum et al., who explained that religious values require a continuous process of internalization to be manifested in concrete actions.³³ In other words, a sound religious understanding is an important factor, but it is insufficient to produce ecological behavior if not supported by a social environment and systems that enable the practice of such values.

In the context of this study, the process of internalizing environmental values through religious institutions has also not been optimal. An interesting finding was presented by Prof. Muhammad

³⁰Khasani, F., *Khilāfah, Taskhīr, and Sustainability: Reconstructing Islamic Eco-Theology through Al-Qurṭubī's Tafsir*. (Journal Of Islamic Studies, 3 (2), 145-156, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.71039/istifham.v3i2.111>

³¹Sya'roni, M., et al., *Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic Environmental Ethics Based on SDGs*, (Pharos Journal of Theology ISSN 2414-3324 online Volume 106 (5) Regular Issue, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.51>

³²Karimi, S., Liobikiene, G., & Alitavakoli, M., (The effect of religiosity on pro-environmental behavior based on the theory of planned behavior. *Sustainability*, 14 (6), 1–18, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.745019>

³³Begum, H., Alam, A. S. A. F., Awang, A. H., Ghani, A. B. A., & Siddiqui, B. A., *Religiosity and environmental responsibility: The role of Islamic values in pro-environmental behavior*. *Sustainability*, 13(3), 2021), hlm. 1456. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031456>

Habibi Siregar, who observed that environmental issues are still rarely the main theme in religious lectures and sermons.

"It is very rare for the themes of cleanliness and the environment to be specifically addressed in sermons at mosques, even though this is very important" (Muhammad Habibi Siregar, interview, 2026).

This finding indicates that there remains significant room to strengthen the role of mosques, religious study groups, and various da'wah activities in fostering a community culture of waste management. Environmental da'wah needs to be developed not merely as the delivery of normative messages, but also as an instrument of social transformation capable of fostering ecological habits through concrete, community-based programs.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the relationship between religious understanding and waste management behavior among Muslim communities in Medan is not linear. A strong religious understanding does not automatically result in good waste management behavior. This gap is influenced by cultural factors, social norms, community participation, facility support, perceptions of behavioral control, and the incomplete transformation of religious values into social-ecological practices. These findings indicate that waste management issues among urban Muslim communities cannot be adequately resolved through increased religious knowledge alone, but require a more integrative approach through synergy between environmental education, ecological da'wah, strengthening of social norms, government policy support, and the empowerment of waste management communities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the results and discussion, it can be concluded that: (1) The Muslim community in Medan generally



possesses a sound religious understanding of the importance of maintaining cleanliness and the environment. This understanding stems from Islamic teachings regarding cleanliness as part of faith, the concept of humanity as stewards of the earth, and the belief that protecting the environment is a form of worship and a responsibility to Allah SWT. This understanding was consistently found among religious leaders, government officials, waste bank managers, and the general public; (2) The community's religious understanding of waste management is acquired through various channels of socialization, particularly family, formal education, religious study groups, religious lectures, and social experiences in daily life. Additionally, religious leaders and mosques are viewed as playing a crucial role in fostering environmental awareness among the public; (3) Although the public's religious understanding is generally sound, waste management behaviors still exhibit various shortcomings. Most of the community is not yet accustomed to sorting household waste; instances of indiscriminate waste disposal are still found, compliance with sanitation fee systems remains low, and participation in community-based waste management activities is limited; and (4) Research findings indicate a gap between religious understanding and waste management behavior. This gap is influenced by low collective awareness among the community, strong social habits that are not environmentally friendly, limited waste management facilities, and the suboptimal transformation of religious values into daily ecological practices. Thus, the issue of waste management among the Muslim community in Medan City does not lie in a lack of religious understanding, but rather in the weak implementation of religious values in environmental behavior.

Based on these conclusions, environmental da'wah needs to be strengthened not only as a means of conveying normative religious values but also as an instrument for encouraging behavioral change in the community regarding waste management. Therefore, this study recommends collaboration between local governments, religious institutions, mosque administrators, environmental communities, and educational institutions in developing environmental education programs based on Islamic values. Additionally, there is a need to strengthen waste management facilities, develop community-based waste banks, and integrate environmental issues into sermons, Friday sermons, and religious activities on an ongoing basis so that Islamic values regarding cleanliness and human responsibility as stewards of the earth can be realized in daily life practices.

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THE SPIRAL OF ANXIETY IN THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DISCOURSE ON X

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Abstract

This study examines the emergence of a spiral of anxiety among social media users on X (formerly Twitter) during discourse surrounding the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. Drawing on the spiral of silence theory, this study investigates how users respond emotionally when their political opinions diverge from the perceived majority, particularly under conditions of intense polarization. Using a quantitative sentiment analysis approach, the study analyzes 1,060 tweets collected through six election-related hashtags between November 13, 2023, and February 13, 2024. The data were classified using the Naive Bayes Classifier (NBC) method and validated using accuracy testing/confusion matrix in Google Colab. The findings show that while polarized users often express strong sentiments, a significant proportion of users adopt neutral tones, which can be interpreted as strategic silence or emotional withdrawal caused by fear of backlash. This silence does not reflect indifference but socio-political anxiety, indicating a shift from a spiral of silence to a spiral of anxiety. As a result, the quality of discourse declines, moving from fact-based debate to emotionally charged exchanges of opinion. This phenomenon contributes to unproductive political engagement and increased social fragmentation. The study offers theoretical and empirical insights into how digital platforms shape political communication in highly polarized societies.

Keywords: Sentiment Analysis, Anxiety, Political Polarization, Indonesian Election



INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital communication, public opinion is increasingly formed and shaped within social media ecosystems, where individuals can selectively express their ideas, attitudes, and political sentiments. Social media has become a crucial arena for discursive engagement, where expressions of support and dissent contribute to broader patterns of political polarization. This process is shaped not only by content dissemination but also by how users perceive their social environment, particularly whether they feel confident enough to express minority perspectives without fear of social isolation. As a result, divergence in sentiment among social media users reflects broader societal cleavages between majority and minority opinion groups, especially during politically contentious periods such as national elections.

Previous research has consistently shown that individuals' willingness to express political views is mediated by whether they perceive their opinions as aligned with majority sentiment. The spiral of silence theory, first introduced by Noelle-Neumann¹, posits that people are more likely to voice opinions they perceive as socially acceptable or dominant, while dissenting views tend to be suppressed to avoid marginalization. Although this theory has traditionally been applied to mass media and broadcast communication contexts, its application to social media environments remains underexplored, particularly within the framework of political discourse in the Global South.

In Indonesia, political polarization has become increasingly visible through both elite discourse and mass-based political expression.

¹ Noelle-Neumann, "The Spiral of Silence: A Theory of Public Opinion."

Soderborg and Muhtadi identify multidimensional sources of hostility, including religious, ethnic, regional, and historical factors, in the polarization that preceded the 2019 general election². However, their study did not account for opinion dynamics on digital platforms or address how minority sentiments are articulated in online discourse. Similarly, recent studies on sentiment analysis in Indonesian media³ have largely focused on mapping affective trends or identifying influential actors, without sufficiently examining the communicative dynamics behind opinion formation or the presence of silenced voices.

Moreover, much of the existing scholarship on sentiment analysis is rooted in computational or informatics disciplines⁴, prioritizing technical metrics over theoretical grounding in communication science. Although such studies offer methodological innovation, they often overlook the discursive and ideological implications of sentiment divergence, especially in relation to the expression of unpopular or minority opinions on platforms such as Twitter, now rebranded as X. This creates a significant gap in the literature and points to the need to theorize political sentiment and opinion formation on social media through frameworks grounded in communication studies.

Indonesia presents a compelling case for this inquiry. With 212.9 million internet users and a growing social media penetration rate⁵, the country has witnessed a surge in online political expression,

² Soderborg and Muhtadi, "Resentment and Polarization in Indonesia."

³ Wiyono et al., "Online Media Trends on Political Party Sentiment Ahead of the 2024 Election in Indonesia"; Habibi and Sunjana, "Analysis of Indonesia Politics Polarization before 2019 President Election Using Sentiment Analysis and Social Network Analysis"; Jati, "Polarization of Indonesian Society during 2014-2020: Causes and Its Impacts toward Democracy."

⁴ Gupta and Sandhane, "Use of Sentiment Analysis in Social Media Campaign Design and Analysis."

⁵ Dataportal, "Digital 2023: Indonesia."

especially in the lead-up to presidential elections. X, with more than 24 million users in 2024, has emerged as a platform where users engage in polarized discourse, form clusters of pro- and anti-presidential candidates, and often circulate intense negative sentiment⁶. Despite its transformative potential as a digital public sphere⁷, digital communication platforms can also be used to generate substantial public support while reducing electoral campaign costs⁸. At the same time, X has amplified political animosity and disinformation⁹, raising concerns about whose voices dominate public debate and which voices become marginalized.

Given this context, the present study analyzes the divergence of pro and contra sentiment in public discourse on X related to the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. Specifically, it investigates how majority and minority opinion groups express themselves in digital settings and whether patterns of silence can be identified through sentiment distribution. By applying the spiral of silence theory to a corpus of tweets, this study seeks to identify how political sentiments are shaped, suppressed, or amplified within the affordances of platform-based interaction.

This research contributes to the field of communication by (1) offering a theoretically grounded sentiment analysis based on the spiral of silence framework; (2) mapping sentiment divergence as a form of political polarization; and (3) identifying patterns of minority opinion expression in digital discourse. It addresses the underrepresentation of communication theory in computational

⁶ Ali and Eriyanto, "Political Polarization and Selective Exposure of Social Media Users in Indonesia."

⁷ Fuchs, "Social Media and the Public Sphere."

⁸ Arafat and Rahmah, "MEDIA POLITIK : SARANA PENDONGKRAK ELEKTABILITAS SEBAGAI STRATEGI PEMENANGAN"; Rani, "Dinamika Komunikasi Politik Pada Pemilihan Presiden Di Indonesia Pendahuluan."

⁹ Burgess and Baym, "Twitter: A Biography."

sentiment studies and offers empirical evidence from the Indonesian context, a vibrant yet contested site of political communication.

Methods

This study uses a quantitative research method with a positivistic approach. This approach was selected because the spiral of silence is a communication theory with positivistic methodological implications¹⁰. The object of this research is public opinion sentiment on social media. Data were collected from the X platform, formerly Twitter, to examine sentiments, opinions, and emerging political trends. The study applies sentiment analysis using the Naive Bayes Classifier (NBC) method. After the data were obtained, they were processed using the NBC method, classified into sentiment categories, and validated using accuracy testing/confusion matrix in Google Colab.

Social media research has three levels of analysis: media analysis, communication analysis, and network analysis¹¹. Media analysis refers to the assessment of social media account performance, including reach, engagement, and virality. Communication analysis focuses on conversations posted on social media, including comments, responses, and other digital traces produced by users. Communication network analysis, meanwhile, examines digitally connected communities and the patterns of coordination among their members. In this study, the researcher focuses on conversation analysis related to emotional sentiment, attitudes, and public opinion about the 2024 presidential election on social media. Accordingly, this

¹⁰ West and Turner, *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*.

¹¹ Purnama, "NodeXL Dalam Penelitian Jaringan Komunikasi Berbasis Internet."

study employs a quantitative content analysis method¹² focusing on tweets, retweets, and hashtags on X.

The material objects of this research consist of official presidential candidates' X accounts and trending hashtags that gained popularity during the election campaign period. The candidate accounts were selected on the premise that presidential candidates communicate political ideas and public messages through personal accounts or official accounts managed by their social media teams. The accounts included in this study are @aniesbaswedan, @prabowo, and @ganjarpranowo.

In addition to official accounts, trending hashtags are also treated as key components because they function as aggregators of digital discourse and indicators of public sentiment. Hashtags often capture dominant narratives and political controversies circulating on social media.

This study focuses on six prominent hashtags that appeared frequently and generated substantial user engagement, namely #AminAjaDulu, #ObralJanjiPalsu, #JanganPilihPrabowoGibran, #PrabowoGibran, #GanjarMahfudSatSet, and #GanjarMahfud.

Data were collected between November 13, 2023, the date on which the General Elections Commission of the Republic of Indonesia (KPU RI) announced the final list of presidential and vice-presidential candidates, and February 13, 2024, one day before the presidential election on February 14, 2024. This timeframe was selected to capture the dynamics of public sentiment and online discourse throughout the official campaign period.

¹² Prajarto et al., *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Komunikasi*.

Results and Discussion

Sentiment analysis is the study of people's opinions, sentiments, attitudes, and emotions¹³. It is also commonly referred to as opinion mining. Sentiment analysis helps researchers understand the attitude, mood, or sentiment of a speaker or writer toward a topic, product, service, or event. It uses natural language processing and machine learning to analyze emotions and opinions expressed in textual data. This study focuses on sentiment analysis as part of natural language processing, with the aim of automatically identifying subjective information from natural-language texts¹⁴.

According to Liu, sentiment analysis is based on natural language processing and data mining, and its objective is to design effective models and algorithms for extracting and summarizing opinions from natural-language texts. In this sense, sentiment analysis may be understood as a subfield of semantic analysis¹⁵. As a powerful analytical tool, it has practical applications across various fields, including marketing, customer service, public opinion research, and political communication.

In the context of social media, sentiment analysis examines opinion patterns by classifying expressions into positive, neutral, and negative sentiments. Opinion is understood as a broad concept that includes sentiment, evaluation, judgment, attitude, the target of the opinion, and the person expressing it. In this study, the term sentiment refers specifically to the positive, neutral, or negative orientation implied by an opinion.

The Spiral of Silence Theory was proposed by the German political and communication scholar Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in

¹³ Liu, *Sentiment Analysis: Mining Opinions, Sentiments, and Emotions*.

¹⁴ Pozzi et al., "Challenges of Sentiment Analysis in Social Networks: An Overview."

¹⁵ Liu, *Sentiment Analysis: Mining Opinions, Sentiments, and Emotions*.

1974¹⁶. This theory explains how public opinion is formed and why some people are reluctant to voice opinions that differ from the perceived majority. Mass media can work together with dominant public opinion to silence minority positions on particular social and cultural issues. In this process, minority attitudes and understandings may become isolated and remain unexpressed in public communication spaces¹⁷.

In this study, the implications of popularity and polarization on X are examined through two major patterns emerging from social media discourse: the dominance of neutrality and high polarization. The first pattern is the dominance of neutrality. The hashtag #ObralJanjiPalsu reflects criticism of political promises perceived as common or normalized within electoral discussions. Users express dissatisfaction through tweets and hashtags, yet the issue remains normalized in online discourse. Despite generating a high volume of tweets, this topic does not produce significant momentum or mass mobilization. Thus, high popularity without polarization often reflects an issue that is widely recognized by the public but lacks sharply conflicting viewpoints.

This phenomenon reflects what may be termed critical apathy, a condition in which the public is aware of political inconsistencies but responds with passive disengagement. Although the issue is widely acknowledged, it lacks the symbolic or emotional force needed to generate conflict or sustain civic mobilization. As a result, the issue becomes normalized within digital discourse.

The second pattern is high polarization. This pattern indicates emotionally charged discussions in which audiences are divided into

¹⁶ Noelle-Neumann, "The Spiral of Silence: A Theory of Public Opinion."

¹⁷ West and Turner, *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*.

opposing camps, such as supporters and opponents of a particular candidate or issue. This is evident in the hashtag #PrabowoGibran, where polarization reflects an identity-based conflict between supporters and critics of this candidate pair. Such polarization may influence voter decisions and exacerbate broader social tensions.

The hashtag #PrabowoGibran illustrates a highly polarized discourse marked by sharp emotional divisions between supporters and critics of the presidential and vice-presidential candidate pair. In this case, polarization moves beyond policy disagreement and enters the domain of identity-based conflict, where political choices are deeply embedded in group loyalties and ideological commitments.

The discursive behavior observed here is consistent with Social Identity Theory¹⁸, which explains that individuals derive part of their self-concept from group affiliation, resulting in in-group favoritism and out-group antagonism. The hashtag also demonstrates features of the Spiral of Silence Theory¹⁹, whereby individuals with minority opinions may refrain from expressing dissent, allowing vocal and emotionally engaged groups to dominate the conversation.

Moreover, the algorithmic structure of platform X contributes to echo chambers and filter bubbles by reinforcing existing beliefs and intensifying polarization. This situation has tangible implications for democratic processes because it may affect voter behavior, increase political antagonism, and even translate into offline tensions.

Hashtags are keywords or phrases beginning with the # symbol that are used to group or categorize content on social media, making it easier for users to find and participate in discussions on specific topics. The hashtag as an online tool began on Twitter in 2007 and

¹⁸ Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior B."

¹⁹ Noelle-Neumann, "The Spiral of Silence: A Theory of Public Opinion."

was introduced by social media consultant Chris Messina. On August 23, 2007, he used #barcamp in a tweet to organize discussion related to an event. Although Twitter initially considered the idea unusual, it quickly became popular and is now a standard feature on various platforms, including Instagram and Facebook^{20; 21; 22}.

Hashtags have become important tools for pushing issues into viral circulation and encouraging social media users to participate in public discussion. They are often used to mobilize groups around specific goals. Among the most widely known hashtags on Twitter are #BlackLivesMatter, #Brexit, and #CupForBen²³. The #BlackLivesMatter hashtag is one of the most iconic examples. It emerged after the shooting of a 17-year-old African American teenager in Florida by a neighborhood patrol coordinator who was later acquitted. The movement demanded justice for the victim and became a global symbol of racial justice activism.

This study highlights the findings obtained from six election-related hashtags, as shown in Table 1. These hashtags were selected because they appeared frequently in public conversations on X and represented different forms of political discourse surrounding the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. Each hashtag functioned not only as a marker of online discussion but also as a discursive space in which users expressed support, criticism, doubt, or restraint toward specific candidates and political issues.

The sentiment of the 2024 presidential election on X was observed through tweets, retweets, and reposts associated with these

²⁰ Panko, "A Decade Ago, the Hashtag Reshaped the Internet | Smithsonian."

²¹ Cakebread, "A Twitter User Included the First Hashtag in a Tweet 10 Years Ago - and Changed Our Online Conversations Forever | Business Insider India."

²² SouthChinaMorningPost, "#ToldYouSo: Meet Chris Messina, the Man Who Invented the Hashtag | South China Morning Post."

²³ Pavey, "These Are the Most Iconic Hashtags on Twitter of All Time | London Evening Standard | The Standard."

hashtags. By examining these forms of interaction, the study identifies the distribution of positive, neutral, and negative sentiment across different hashtag conversations. This analysis also helps reveal how certain hashtags generated broad public attention, while others produced stronger emotional responses and more visible patterns of political polarization.

Table 1. Hashtag-Based Discourse

Hashtag	Sentiment Positive	Sentiment Neutral	Sentiment Negative	Total Tweets
#AminAjaDulu	7	124	25	156
#ObralJanjiPalsu	3	503	1	507
#PrabowoGibran	14	214	28	256
#JanganPilihPrabowoGibran	0	16	0	16
#GanjarMahfudSatSet	1	36	2	39
#GanjarMahfud	2	69	15	86
Total	27	962	71	1060

Source: Primary data processed through Google Colab.

Based on the data above, the hashtag #AminAjaDulu shows relatively strong polarization, with 25 negative tweets. #ObralJanjiPalsu recorded the highest number of tweets (507), dominated by neutral sentiment. #JanganPilihPrabowoGibran had the lowest activity, with only 16 tweets, all of which were neutral. #GanjarMahfudSatSet and #GanjarMahfud showed higher levels of negative sentiment than positive sentiment.

The findings show that hashtags associated with Anies Baswedan and Prabowo Subianto were among the more visible hashtags ahead of the 2024 presidential election. This visibility is reflected not only in the number of tweets but also in the direction of sentiment, which contributes to discursive contestation in public spaces, including social media.

Popular hashtags such as #ObralJanjiPalsu and #PrabowoGibran tend to generate more neutral discussions. #ObralJanjiPalsu reflects public attention to political promises perceived as unrealistic or unfulfilled, making it a dominant issue. Meanwhile, #PrabowoGibran

and #GanjarMahfudSatSet involve criticism of specific candidate pairs, although their relative frequency is much lower than that of #ObralJanjiPalsu.

By contrast, hashtags with lower popularity, such as #AminAjaDulu and #JanganPilihPrabowoGibran, show different patterns. #AminAjaDulu contains a noticeable proportion of positive and negative sentiment, while #JanganPilihPrabowoGibran remains entirely neutral. These findings indicate that popularity does not necessarily produce polarization. Rather, polarization emerges when positive and negative sentiments become visible and are reinforced within echo chambers.

Popularity and polarization are interrelated concepts in political discussions on social media, but they carry different implications. Popularity refers to the amount of attention or the volume of conversation around a particular topic, candidate, or issue. In this context, popularity is measured by the number of tweets using the six observed hashtags. High popularity does not necessarily indicate positive sentiment; rather, it reflects the level of public awareness or discussion surrounding an issue.

The popularity of #ObralJanjiPalsu and #PrabowoGibran is evident in the number of tweets they generated, with #ObralJanjiPalsu recording 507 tweets and #PrabowoGibran recording 256 tweets. This indicates that public attention was more focused on criticism of political promises as a substantive issue than on narratives concerning specific candidate pairs. Meanwhile, polarization was more visible under #PrabowoGibran, which recorded 28 negative tweets out of 256 total tweets.

Polarization refers to a sharp division between groups holding opposing views, which can be identified through the distribution of

positive and negative sentiment as well as lower levels of neutrality. On social media, sentiment may trigger polarization, particularly when platform algorithms reinforce fragmentation by presenting content aligned with users' preferences. This process creates echo chambers that make differences of opinion appear more extreme and may lead to verbal conflict.

Hashtags with higher polarization, such as #AminAjaDulu, therefore require careful communication strategies to address criticism and prevent issues from escalating. However, polarization does not always appear with the same intensity in offline interactions. In the case of the Ganjar-Mahfud hashtags, polarization appears lower than in the Prabowo-related hashtag, with the predominance of neutral sentiment indicating that Ganjar-Mahfud supporters were less emotionally active in digital political discussions.

Based on the Spiral of Silence Theory, individuals tend to avoid expressing opinions that differ from what they perceive as the dominant or majority view in public discourse. This tendency is rooted in fear of social isolation, criticism, or backlash, especially in politically sensitive environments. In the context of this study, such dynamics are reflected in the dominance of neutrality observed across several political discussions on X. The prevalence of neutral sentiment illustrates a cautious public stance in expressing opinions about candidates or political issues. This caution may arise from fear of being criticized or drawn into heightened polarization.

Sentiment can contribute to political polarization, particularly on social media, although its intensity is not always mirrored in offline interactions. In digital environments, platform algorithms tend to reinforce informational fragmentation by curating content aligned with users' preferences, thereby producing echo chambers that

amplify perceived differences and may intensify verbal conflict. According to the Spiral of Silence Theory, individuals often refrain from expressing opinions that deviate from the perceived majority due to fear of social isolation, criticism, or backlash. This pattern is reflected in the dominance of neutral sentiment in political discussions on X, indicating a cautious public stance amid heightened polarization.

At the same time, negative political issues such as broken promises are more readily circulated and accepted in public discourse. This is illustrated by the hashtag #ObralJanjiPalsu, which attracts broad engagement but is accompanied predominantly by neutral sentiment. Such issues appear to be framed as collective normative grievances rather than emotionally or ideologically polarizing debates. Consequently, even widely discussed topics do not necessarily generate strong polarization.

The hashtag #ObralJanjiPalsu further illustrates how users may engage with negative political issues that represent shared dissatisfaction without directly attaching the issue to a specific identity or candidate. This makes the issue easier to circulate and discuss without necessarily producing sharp affective polarization.

The researcher identifies a dynamic interplay between popularity and polarization across the observed hashtags. #ObralJanjiPalsu illustrates a pattern of high popularity but low polarization. With 503 out of 507 tweets expressing neutral sentiment, this hashtag reflects significant public engagement without emotional fragmentation. The issue of political promises appears to have been normalized in public discourse and treated as a general political problem rather than a trigger for partisan conflict. Thus, although the hashtag is widely used, it does not provoke sharp divisions or identity-based debate.

The hashtag #AminAjaDulu illustrates a more complex dynamic, combining a significant number of neutral tweets (124) with noticeable negative (25) and positive (7) sentiments. This mixed sentiment reflects a moderate to high level of polarization, suggesting that public opinion around this topic is more contested and diverse. The coexistence of positive and negative responses alongside neutrality implies that the issue remains under negotiation within the public sphere, with different interpretations competing for dominance.

A highly impactful tweet can trigger both popularity and polarization. In this context, a negative tweet connected the emergence of Dirty Vote, a documentary uploaded to YouTube, with political grievances surrounding Anies Baswedan. The tweet framed the film as a form of retribution against those who had previously slandered him: "At least dirty voter menjadi karmanya @aniesbaswedan kepada orang-orang yang fitnah beliau. Dan kalau kata orang jawa GUSTI ALLOH MBOTEN SARE!!!....." This message was strengthened through hashtags such as #dirtyvoter, #AMINAjaDulu, and #AMINKanIndonesia, as well as calls for mobilization such as "Kapan nih demo besar besaran dimulai? Dirty vote Gejayan memanggil #AMINAjaDulu." These expressions show how strong negative sentiment can amplify emotional responses and catalyze political mobilization on social media.

Another category, low popularity and low polarization, is illustrated by the hashtag #JanganPilihPrabowoGibran. With only 16 tweets in total and no positive or negative sentiment, this hashtag appears to lack both emotional appeal and broader political traction.

The findings reveal empirical indications of Spiral of Silence dynamics within hashtag-based political discourse. The following analysis offers a sharper lens on this phenomenon by examining four categories of hashtags, each reflecting different patterns of popularity and polarization.

Table 2. Description of Hashtags Based on the Spiral of Silence²⁴

Hashtag	Polarization	Spiral of Silence Dynamics
#ObralJanjiPalsu	Very low. Predominantly neutral sentiment.	- Neutrality Dominance: The hashtag is primarily used to convey facts or critiques without emotional expression. - Minimal Emotional Expression: Both positive and negative sentiments are scarce, indicating that the conversation is driven by factual or neutral discourse rather than emotionally polarized narratives.
#AminAjaDulu	Noticeable polarization. Negative sentiment (25) clearly outweighs positive (7).	- Criticism Prevails: Although a significant portion remains neutral, the dominance of critical narratives shapes the discourse. - Muted Supporters: Those expressing support (positive sentiment) may experience reluctance to speak out, fearing domination by critical voices.
#PrabowoGibran	Clear polarization. Negative sentiment (28) surpasses positive (14).	Criticism Prevails: Although a significant portion remains neutral, the dominance of critical narratives shapes the discourse. Muted Supporters: Those expressing support (positive sentiment) may experience reluctance to speak out, fearing domination by critical voices.
#JanganPilihPrabowoGibran	No polarization. Entirely neutral content.	No emotional polarity is evident. The hashtag failed to generate controversy, and no dominant narrative emerged to pressure users to conform or remain silent.

The hashtag #ObralJanjiPalsu indicates the dominance of critical discourse expressed in a neutral tone, with little strong emotional sentiment. However, the potential emergence of a spiral of silence effect remains plausible, particularly if negative sentiment begins to

²⁴ Table 2 focuses on selected representative hashtags that illustrate distinct patterns of popularity, polarization, and spiral of silence dynamics.

rise and shift the tone of the discussion. In contrast, #AminAjaDulu is characterized by higher polarization, marked by a significant imbalance between negative and positive sentiment. This analysis highlights the need to manage dominant issues more strategically in order to encourage positive engagement and improve public perception, especially because negative sentiment under this hashtag exceeds positive sentiment.

Another noteworthy case is the hashtag #PrabowoGibran, which displays a larger number of negative sentiments (28) than positive ones (14), alongside a substantial volume of neutral sentiment (214). This configuration suggests a polarized discourse. Despite the prevalence of criticism, the level of neutrality remains high, indicating a tension between active critique and passive observation. The data also suggest that supporters of this pair, represented by positive sentiment contributors, may be more reluctant to speak out due to apprehension about confronting the dominant critical narrative. As a result, minority support appears to be suppressed within the discursive space.

Polarization on social media is closely associated with the emergence of echo chambers, where users curate information sources that align with their pre-existing beliefs²⁵, ²⁶. Negative tweets, which are often sensational and emotionally charged, tend to be prioritized by platform algorithms because they generate higher engagement²⁷. This dynamic entrenches polarized viewpoints and amplifies social fragmentation.

Users tend to engage with content that reaffirms their beliefs, thereby reducing exposure to dissenting perspectives. This behavior

²⁵ Pecile et al., *Decoding Political Polarization in Social Media Interactions*.

²⁶ Levy and Razin, "Social Media and Political Polarisation."

²⁷ Berman, *Polarization on Social Media*.

fosters ideological homogeneity within user networks and limits the possibility of cross-cutting political dialogue²⁸. Fear of rejection or social exclusion further discourages individuals from expressing contrary views, contributing to patterned user behavior and reinforcing polarization.

The effects of high polarization have several significant consequences:

1. Unproductive discourse. Public dialogue often shifts from evidence-based debate to emotionally driven exchanges of opinion. The presence of both negative and positive sentiment within tweets reflects an increase in personal and affective responses to political content.
2. Social fragmentation. Polarization creates segmented public spheres in which users align themselves with ideologically similar groups, making reconciliation and consensus-building increasingly difficult.
3. Drawing on Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's Spiral of Silence Theory, individuals who perceive themselves as holding minority opinions may withhold their views to avoid criticism or social ostracism. In some cases, individuals refrain from tweeting altogether due to fear of being targeted by political opponents or "haters."

This silence often develops into a spiral of anxiety, in which fear becomes intertwined with various socio-emotional stressors. In highly polarized environments, this spiral not only fosters individual anxiety but also contributes to a socially pressurized media space. Fear of criticism, attacks from opposing groups, and pressure to support a

²⁸ Pecile et al., *Decoding Political Polarization in Social Media Interactions*.

particular political faction together constitute a web of anxiety experienced by social media users.

Analysis of X hashtags across four categories, namely high popularity and polarization, low popularity but high polarization, low popularity and low polarization, and neutral sentiment, reveals indications of Spiral of Silence dynamics in political discourse. The data suggest that polarization is most visible in issues involving specific political candidates, whereas political promises tend to attract more neutral narratives.

Understanding the interaction between popularity, polarization, and user behavior on social media is crucial for addressing ideological fragmentation. The Spiral of Silence offers a robust theoretical lens for examining how individuals navigate contentious political environments. To mitigate polarization, it is essential to foster inclusive and fact-based dialogue in order to create healthier digital public spheres.

Polarization is further reinforced by algorithms used on social media platforms such as Twitter. A study conducted by Cinelli et al.²⁹ found that these algorithms amplify echo chambers by connecting users to networks with similar viewpoints. This significantly reduces the likelihood of encountering diverse perspectives, narrows the space for dialogue, and intensifies polarization. In simple terms, echo chambers refer to the phenomenon in which content frequently liked or retweeted by users with similar beliefs continues to appear on their timelines, reinforcing pre-existing convictions.

Moreover, social media algorithms prioritize emotionally charged content, particularly content that evokes anger or fear, because it captures users' attention more effectively and sustains engagement

²⁹ Cinelli et al., "The Echo Chamber Effect on Social Media."

for longer periods. As a result, provocative content is more likely to be disseminated widely and consumed by specific groups, which can exacerbate intergroup conflict.

The polarization of these hashtags is driven by negative emotions such as fear, anger, and disappointment toward specific candidates or their policies. In this context, negative tweets associated with hashtags such as #ObralJanjiPalsu, #PrabowoGibran, and #GanjarMahfudSatSet reflect these emotional responses.

Social media algorithms contribute to the amplification of controversy, as content expressing negative or controversial sentiment, such as criticism within the hashtag #ObralJanjiPalsu, tends to receive greater visibility and engagement than neutral or positive content. Consequently, a practical approach to mitigating polarization involves strengthening positive narratives and promoting fact-based discussion. These strategies are crucial for fostering more effective and inclusive political campaigns.

Conclusion

First, sentiment analysis of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election on X, observed through tweets, retweets, and reposts, reveals significant polarization, especially under the hashtag #AminAjaDulu, which recorded a notable number of negative sentiments (25 tweets). In contrast, #JanganPilihPrabowoGibran showed the lowest activity (16 tweets), all of which were neutral. These findings suggest that public attention focused more on substantive criticism of political promises than on personal narratives concerning specific candidate pairs. Clearer polarization was evident in the hashtag #PrabowoGibran, which recorded 28 negative tweets out of 256 total tweets, indicating that popularity and polarization can coexist,

producing a climate of dominant neutrality accompanied by high polarization.

Second, individuals tend to refrain from expressing opinions they perceive as divergent from the majority. The dominance of neutral sentiment indicates a cautious attitude among users when discussing candidates or political issues, likely driven by fear of backlash and intensifying polarization. This pattern aligns with the transformation of the spiral of silence into a spiral of anxiety. Such anxiety stems from potential attacks by political opponents and social pressure to align with a particular political camp, creating a networked sense of fear among social media users. High polarization, reflected in the prevalence of neutral sentiment, leads to unproductive discourse as debates shift away from fact-based argument toward emotionally charged opinion clashes, resulting in social fragmentation. In such environments, individuals from non-dominant groups may hesitate to speak out due to fear of criticism and may suppress their intention to post on social media.

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