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Reconfiguring the Digital Media Ecosystem in Da'wah: Media Convergence and the Transformation of Public Information Consumption Patterns

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Abstract

Purpose: *This study aims to examine the reconfiguration of the digital media ecosystem in Islamic da'wah, particularly how media convergence and changing patterns of public information consumption reshape the production, distribution, reception, and legitimation of religious messages in digital environments.*
Research Approach and Method: *This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach through conceptual library research. Data were collected from scholarly articles, academic books, and institutional reports retrieved through Google Scholar, Garuda, and academic publisher repositories. Relevant literature, primarily published between 2018 and 2026, was examined using descriptive-interpretive content analysis to synthesize the relationships among digital media characteristics, media convergence, information consumption patterns, and changing relations between da'i (preachers) and mad'u (audiences).*
Findings: *The findings reveal that digitization, interactivity, networked connectivity, and virtuality have transformed digital media from conventional communication channels into participatory spaces for religious engagement. Media convergence facilitates integrated, cross-platform production and distribution of da'wah content, while religious information consumption has become increasingly algorithm-driven, on-demand, visual, personalized, and interactive. Consequently, audiences have evolved from passive recipients into active participants in producing, interpreting, and disseminating religious messages. These developments have reshaped preacher–audience relationships through interactive communication and parasocial intimacy while contributing to the fragmentation of religious authority. Although digital convergence expands the accessibility and reach of da'wah, it also intensifies challenges associated with religious disinformation, algorithmic echo chambers, and digital radicalization.*
Research Limitations and Implications: *As a conceptual literature-based study, this research does not incorporate primary empirical evidence from interviews, surveys, field observations, or platform analytics. Its findings are therefore interpretive rather than statistically generalizable. Nevertheless, the study advances Islamic communication and da'wah management scholarship by conceptualizing digital da'wah as a dynamic, convergent, and participatory communication ecosystem.*
Practical Implications: The findings offer a conceptual foundation for Islamic preachers, religious institutions, and digital content managers to develop integrated cross-platform communication strategies that prioritize audience engagement,

message credibility, algorithmic awareness, and the sustainability of religious communication.
Social Implications*: This study highlights the importance of critical digital literacy in strengthening responsible religious participation, improving information verification, countering religious disinformation, and fostering constructive interactions within algorithmically mediated religious public spheres*.
Originality/Value: *This study proposes an integrated conceptual framework encompassing four interconnected dimensions: digital media characteristics, media convergence, transformations in information consumption patterns, and changing preacher–audience relationships. Its originality lies in reframing digital da'wah transformation not merely as the migration of religious communication to online platforms but as a comprehensive reconfiguration of the processes through which religious messages are produced, distributed, consumed, interpreted, and legitimized.*
Keywords: digital media, media convergence, digital da'wah, information consumption, religious authority.

Tujuan Penelitian: *Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis rekonfigurasi ekosistem media digital dalam dakwah Islam, khususnya bagaimana konvergensi media dan perubahan pola konsumsi informasi masyarakat membentuk kembali proses produksi, distribusi, penerimaan, dan legitimasi pesan keagamaan dalam lingkungan digital.*
Pendekatan dan Metode Penelitian: *Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui studi kepustakaan konseptual (conceptual library research). Data dikumpulkan dari artikel jurnal ilmiah, buku akademik, dan laporan institusi yang ditelusuri melalui Google Scholar, Garuda, serta repositori penerbit akademik. Literatur yang relevan, terutama yang diterbitkan pada periode 2018–2026, dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis isi deskriptif-interpretatif untuk menyintesiskan hubungan antara karakteristik media digital, konvergensi media, pola konsumsi informasi, dan perubahan relasi antara dai dan mad'u.*
Temuan Penelitian: *Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa digitalisasi, interaktivitas, konektivitas jejaring, dan virtualitas telah mentransformasi media digital dari saluran komunikasi konvensional menjadi ruang partisipatif bagi interaksi keagamaan. Konvergensi media memungkinkan produksi dan distribusi konten dakwah berlangsung secara terintegrasi melalui berbagai platform, sementara pola konsumsi informasi keagamaan semakin dipengaruhi algoritma, bersifat sesuai permintaan (on-demand), visual, personal, dan interaktif. Akibatnya, posisi mad'u mengalami pergeseran dari penerima pesan yang pasif menjadi partisipan aktif dalam memproduksi, menafsirkan, dan menyebarluaskan pesan keagamaan. Perkembangan tersebut turut mengubah relasi dai dan mad'u melalui komunikasi interaktif dan kedekatan parasosial, sekaligus berkontribusi terhadap fragmentasi otoritas keagamaan. Meskipun konvergensi digital memperluas aksesibilitas dan jangkauan dakwah, transformasi ini juga meningkatkan tantangan berupa disinformasi keagamaan, ruang gema algoritmik (echo chambers), dan radikalisasi digital.*
Keterbatasan dan Implikasi Penelitian: *Sebagai penelitian berbasis kajian kepustakaan konseptual, penelitian ini tidak melibatkan data empiris primer yang*

diperoleh melalui wawancara, survei, observasi lapangan, maupun analitik platform digital. Oleh karena itu, temuan penelitian bersifat interpretatif dan tidak dimaksudkan untuk digeneralisasikan secara statistik. Meskipun demikian, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan kajian komunikasi Islam dan manajemen dakwah dengan mengonseptualisasikan dakwah digital sebagai ekosistem komunikasi yang dinamis, konvergen, dan partisipatif.
Implikasi Praktis: *Temuan penelitian ini memberikan landasan konseptual bagi dai, lembaga keagamaan, dan pengelola konten digital dalam mengembangkan strategi komunikasi dakwah lintas platform yang terintegrasi. Strategi tersebut perlu memprioritaskan keterlibatan audiens, kredibilitas pesan, pemahaman terhadap mekanisme algoritma, serta keberlanjutan komunikasi keagamaan.*
Implikasi Sosial: *Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya penguatan literasi digital kritis untuk membangun partisipasi keagamaan yang bertanggung jawab, meningkatkan kemampuan verifikasi informasi, menangkal disinformasi keagamaan, serta mendorong interaksi yang konstruktif dalam ruang publik keagamaan yang semakin dimediasi oleh algoritma digital.*
Orisinalitas/Nilai Kebaruan: Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pengembangan kerangka konseptual terintegrasi yang mencakup empat dimensi yang saling berkaitan, yaitu karakteristik media digital, konvergensi media, transformasi pola konsumsi informasi, dan perubahan relasi dai dengan mad'u. Kontribusi orisinal penelitian ini adalah menempatkan transformasi dakwah digital bukan sekadar sebagai perpindahan komunikasi keagamaan menuju platform daring, melainkan sebagai proses rekonfigurasi ekosistem secara menyeluruh yang mengubah mekanisme produksi, distribusi, konsumsi, interpretasi, dan legitimasi pesan keagamaan.
Keywords: digital media, media convergence, digital da'wah, information consumption, religious authority.

Introduction

Da'wah has a close relationship with media; da'wah has never stood alone without media. Da'wah must be continually updated to keep pace with the times, since the tide of globalization could otherwise push da'wah aside for failing to keep up with contemporary developments. Since the earliest period of its spread, da'wah has always run alongside whatever communication channels were available in its time, whether through the mosque pulpit, handwritten and printed texts, or later radio and television. As communication technology has continued to advance, da'wah has likewise adapted itself, much like water that always finds a new channel to flow through whenever its course changes.

Indonesia, as the country with the world's largest Muslim population as well as a continually growing base of active internet users, is a highly relevant context for examining the phenomenon of religious communication in the digital era. Data released by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2023 recorded that internet penetration in Indonesia had reached more than 78 percent of the total population, with the majority of access taking place through smartphones.

This condition directly affects the public's consumption of religious content, which is increasingly shifting from conventional formats toward digital formats that are more flexible, interactive, and easier to access.

On the other hand, media that once stood apart from one another are now merging. A da'wah message originally recorded for a television broadcast can now easily be cut into a short video, uploaded to social media, turned into a podcast episode, or rewritten as an article on a da'wah institution's website. This process of merging is what communication studies refers to as media convergence, an ongoing process that unites content, technology, and audiences across platforms. Media can reshape the fabric of social life quickly and easily. This phenomenon, commonly referred to as media convergence, has brought about several important advances. Media convergence refers to the various forms of communication media television, radio, the internet, social media, and mobile applications that allow information and content to be accessed across multiple platforms. Media convergence does not merely refer to the integration of technology; it also encompasses cultural convergence, industry convergence, and participatory convergence, which together enable content to flow across platforms with the active participation of audiences. In the context of religious communication, media convergence opens opportunities for organizations to reach wider audiences with da'wah messages that are more personal and contextual.

Indeed, the emergence of the internet as a new medium has opened up opportunities in the process of transforming Islamic da'wah. The internet is regarded as a mass medium capable of delivering da'wah messages across a wide reach and an unbounded space. The use of the internet as a new medium has been accompanied by the creativity and innovation of da'i in harnessing digital spaces for the continuity of Islamic da'wah. This can be seen in the emergence of the discourse on cyber-da'wah, which reflects the use of the internet for the activity of enjoining good and forbidding wrong (amar ma'ruf nahi munkar). Beyond that, there is also the use of social media features and applications for the interests of Islamic da'wah. The existence of social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, MySpace, and YouTube channels whether representing individual da'i or institutional groups of da'i is regarded as evidence of renewal in the practice of Islamic da'wah. Every form of using internet media for the continuity of Islamic da'wah falls within the study of cyber-da'wah, namely the use of internet networks as a system of Islamic da'wah communication that runs alongside the conventional system.

Departing from this complexity, this article forms part of a larger body of work on the reconfiguration of the digital media ecosystem in da'wah. As a whole, the discussion in this article is organized along a single, continuous line of argument. The discussion begins by mapping

digital media as the foundation of the da'wah ecosystem, before moving on to media convergence, which drives the transformation of how da'wah is produced and disseminated. From there, the discussion turns to changes in the public's information consumption patterns as a direct consequence of that convergence, then to its implications for the relationship and communication between da'i and mad'u, before finally arriving at a formulation of the reconfiguration of the da'wah media ecosystem as a whole. These five stages do not stand in isolation from one another; rather, they are interlinked as a single, unified line of thought. Any change at the level of media will always affect how the public consumes information, which in turn reshapes patterns of communication and the very face of the da'wah ecosystem itself.

This study is intended to fill a gap in the literature by comprehensively examining the role of digital media as a medium of religious communication within the digital media convergence ecosystem. This research enriches the theoretical understanding of how media convergence is applied in religious communication against a specific socio-cultural background. In addition to serving as a strategic reference for other religious institutions undergoing digital transformation, the findings of this research broadly contribute to Islamic studies as well as to the optimization of digital media for amplifying the values of peace and tolerance in countering the spread of digital radicalism.

Research Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a conceptual-analytical library research method. This approach was chosen because the aim of the research is not to measure a phenomenon statistically, but rather to trace, map, and synthesize various findings and concepts from prior studies in order to build a new framework of understanding regarding the reconfiguration of the digital media ecosystem in da'wah, particularly the relationship between media convergence and the transformation of public information-consumption patterns.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data drawn from accredited or internationally indexed scholarly journal articles, reference books, and official reports of relevant institutions, such as survey data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII). Sources were determined using inclusion criteria based on thematic relevance to digital media, media convergence, information-consumption patterns, religious authority, and digital da'wah, prioritizing works published between 2018 and 2026 to preserve the currency of the data, while a number of older, classic conceptual references were still included insofar as they remained relevant as a theoretical foundation. Exclusion criteria, meanwhile, covered sources lacking methodological clarity, sources not published through credible academic journals or publishers, and sources with no direct relevance to the focus of the study.

Data collection was carried out through document tracing (documentation) using academic databases, including Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, and the official repositories of journal publishers, using keywords such as digital media, media convergence, digital da'wah, information consumption, and digital religious authority, in both Indonesian and English. The tracing process was conducted in stages, beginning with a broad literature search, followed by screening based on titles and abstracts, and culminating in an in depth reading of the literature judged relevant and meeting the inclusion criteria.

The collected data were then analyzed using a descriptive-interpretive content-analysis technique. The analysis was carried out in four stages: data reduction, by screening the literature for thematic relevance; data categorization into the main themes covering the characteristics of digital media, media convergence, the transformation of information-consumption patterns, and their implications for da'i-mad'u relations and religious authority; thematic synthesis, to identify the interrelationships among themes; and the drawing of conclusions, formulated as a conceptual model of the reconfiguration of the digital da'wah media ecosystem as presented in the results and discussion section.

Results and Discussion

1. Digital Media in the Da'wah Ecosystem

Digital media is a combination of various types of media text, images (both vector and bitmap), graphics, sound, animation, video, and other interactive elements that have been converted into digital format. Digital media refers to any form of media encoded in machine-readable formats, operating through computing devices, and connected within the internet network. In mass communication studies, digital media is commonly placed within the broader category of new media, characterized by being digital, networked, and open to two-way interaction. In other words, digital media does not stand as a category entirely separate from new media, but rather serves as the technical foundation that makes all of the characteristics of new media possible.

In the context of da'wah, the notion of digital media can be narrowed to any internet-based device or platform used to convey, discuss, or disseminate Islamic messages, ranging from messaging applications and social media to da'wah institutions' websites and audio and video platforms. In addition, digital media is viewed not merely as a technical tool but as an extension of the instruments of religious propagation that allows Islamic ideology, ethics, and teachings to be transmitted across borders. The use of digital media in da'wah marks a transitional phase from traditional mass communication toward networked communication, in which religious messages can be produced and accessed flexibly.

Several main characteristics of digital media referred to in mass communication studies include its being digital, interactive, hypertextual,

virtual, networked, and simulative. There are several key characteristics of digital media that fundamentally distinguish it from conventional media in the process of delivering da'wah.

a. Digitability, namely the conversion of text, sound, images, and video into binary-based digital data, facilitates the storage, processing, and dissemination of religious content on a large scale.
b. Interactivity, namely digital media that facilitates two-way communication. Unlike a one-way televised or radio sermon, digital media allows the mad'u (the recipient of the message) to respond, ask questions, or engage in direct discussion with the da'i.
c. Networked connectivity (Hypertextuality & Networked), namely religious information that is interconnected through links and social networks, allowing audiences to explore da'wah material independently and non-linearly.
d. Virtuality, namely digital media that provides a new public space (virtual public sphere) that allows cyber religious communities to form without the need for physical face-to-face contact.

It is precisely these interactive and networked characteristics that have most transformed the face of digital da'wah. To use an analogy, conventional media resembles a raised pulpit in a single room, where the da'i's voice flows one way down to the congregation, whereas digital media more closely resembles a circular seating area with no partitions, where the congregation can respond directly, ask questions, and even share what they have heard with others outside that room. Together, these characteristics make digital media a far more fluid space than earlier media. Da'wah content is no longer locked into a single form or a single broadcast time; instead, it can keep living on, be accessed repeatedly, and be modified by users themselves a condition that, in turn, provides the backdrop for the growth of various kinds of digital da'wah platforms.

The development of digital platforms for da'wah has taken place gradually, following broader technology trends. In the early era of the internet, websites and news portals served as a database of literature, articles, fatwas, and religious document archives, while social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok became the most common gateway because of how easy they are to access, allowing institutions and individuals alike to share clips of sermons, infographics, and even live broadcasts of regular study sessions. Podcasts, in particular, have become one of the fastest-growing developments in recent years because of their flexibility, since they can be listened to while doing other activities without demanding the full visual attention that watching a video requires. In essence, the da'wah podcast is a transmission of the function of the oral sermon or study session, transformed into an *on-demand* audio format. This flexibility of access allows listeners to enjoy religious material as

needed, much like a regular study session that can be “taken home” to be listened to again at leisure. Meanwhile, video platforms and streaming services, YouTube in particular, have become one of the digital da'wah channels with the widest reach. YouTube allows complete sermons to be stored and accessed again at any time, while also opening a space for interaction between da'i and mad'u through the comments column.

This growth of various platforms is also evident among da'wah institutions that once relied on only a single type of medium. A da'wah television station, for example, that once broadcast its programs only through conventional channels has now also expanded into websites, digital applications, and social media in order to reach a public that is no longer bound to a television broadcast schedule. This condition shows that the growth of platforms is not merely an increase in the number of channels, but part of a more fundamental shift in how da'wah institutions view the function of media itself.

Historically, conventional mass media functioned merely as an intermediary channel tasked with passing religious messages one way from the da'i to a passive audience. In today's digital ecosystem, however, media has transformed into a space of interaction, or a virtual religious public sphere. Within this scope, the boundary between the sender and the receiver of the message becomes increasingly blurred. Comment columns, live chat features, discussion forums, and response buttons (like/share) create an ecosystem in which religious authority is tested, discussed, and jointly shaped through the active participation of the digital public.

In line with this, studies on convergence culture likewise affirm that new media opens up what is referred to as participatory culture, namely a condition in which audiences are no longer passive recipients but also take part in producing and disseminating content. If conventional media can be likened to a tall pulpit with sound flowing in only one direction, digital media more closely resembles a mosque with many interconnected doors and corridors, where the congregation can enter from various directions, greet one another, and help bring that space to life. This shift in function then becomes an important foundation for understanding how media convergence drives a broader transformation in da'wah communication.

2. Media Convergence and the Transformation of Da'wah

Media convergence is not merely a phenomenon of merging communication technologies, but a transformation that changes the way information is produced, distributed, and consumed. From the perspective of modern mass communication, convergence blurs the boundaries between print media, conventional broadcasting, and digital networks, thereby allowing content to flow flexibly across a variety of platforms.

This phenomenon, often referred to as media convergence, has given rise to several important advances. One of the tangible benefits of

the emergence of this era of media convergence is online journalism. In a broader context, media convergence does not merely reflect rapid technological development. It has played a major role in reshaping the relationship between technology and industry, and, further still, it has steered lifestyles toward becoming more practical and instant. Moreover, media convergence should not be understood solely as a technical matter of merging tools or platforms. It also involves cultural change namely, how the boundary between one type of medium and another becomes blurred, and how audiences once separated by medium type now move and mingle, following the flow of content itself. This kind of audience movement also applies in the context of da'wah, where people who once came to know a da'i through television broadcasts can now also follow him through social media, podcasts, and video channels.

Applied within the religious domain, the concept of convergence becomes important because media convergence facilitates the reconstruction of how Islamic messages are transmitted. Da'wah no longer operates in isolation on a single medium; instead, it is present within an integrated digital ecosystem that allows religious messages to be accessed anytime, anywhere, without geographic limitation. An effective da'wah message today can, in fact, be determined by its capacity to flow across platforms, adapting its form to each digital channel without losing the core of its message.

This transformation has driven the adoption of cross-media communication strategies by da'i and da'wah institutions alike. A lengthy sermon recorded in audio-visual format is no longer simply uploaded to a primary platform such as YouTube; it is also cut up, or re-purposed, into bite-sized content tailored to the technical and psychographic characteristics of users on other platforms. Short video clips are published on TikTok and Instagram Reels to attract the interest of young people, the main points of a sermon are turned into infographics or carousels on Instagram, while deeper theological discussions are shifted into on demand audio formats such as Spotify. This integration ensures that the essence of the da'wah message remains consistent, even as it is packaged into various visual, audio, and textual forms suited to the affordances of each platform. This very ability to adapt a single core message into multiple forms is what lies at the heart of the strategy for disseminating da'wah across platforms in the era of media convergence.

3. Changes in the Patterns of Production and Distribution of Da'wah Messages

In terms of production patterns, digital da'wah has shifted from the spontaneous rhetoric of the pulpit toward professional and planned *content creation* management. This process now involves algorithm analysis, the use of *Search Engine Optimization* (SEO) techniques, lighting management, and precise video editing. As a result, da'wah actors no

longer stand alone, but are supported by creative teams such as videographers, graphic designers, and social media specialists.

In terms of distribution patterns, the spread of religious messages has transformed from linear, scheduled distribution (such as televised sermon broadcasts or periodic study sessions) into *networked distribution* that runs continuously, twenty-four hours a day. Content distribution is now heavily influenced by the recommendation algorithms of digital platforms, which map users' preferences and search behavior.

These changes in production and distribution patterns also open up space for creativity in packaging da'wah messages. The same sermon material can be repackaged into various formats without having to be produced again from scratch, making the production process more efficient while also allowing the message to reach groups of mad'u with differing media preferences, whether they prefer to read, listen, or watch.

Reliance on a single medium such as printed books, Friday bulletins, or in-person study sessions at the mosque is now considered no longer sufficient to respond to the dynamics of modern information society. The digital da'wah ecosystem requires *interconnectedness* among platforms in order to form a solid da'wah network. Modern da'wah institutions operate social media not merely as a promotional tool, but as an *entry point* to direct audiences into a more comprehensive space of interaction, such as virtual study classes, official websites, or listener-community databases. This shift toward a multiplatform ecosystem ultimately expands the reach of da'wah, reaching heterogeneous segments of society and strengthening the presence of religious messages in the cyber public sphere.

This shift toward a multiplatform ecosystem carries consequences for management as well. New media presents both opportunities, in the form of a wider reach and relatively affordable costs, and challenges, in the form of more complex content-management needs and the demand for message consistency across channels. Da'wah institutions that fail to prepare integrated cross-platform management risk losing momentum and message consistency amid the fast-flowing current of digital content.

4. Changes in Public Information-Consumption Patterns

The transformation of the digital media ecosystem described in the two preceding sections ultimately converges on a single point whose impact is most keenly felt by the wider public: the change in how people consume information, including religious information. If the discussion of media convergence has highlighted the upstream side how da'wah messages are produced and distributed across platforms this section moves to the downstream side by examining how mad'u, as recipients of the message, experience a fairly fundamental shift in consumption patterns. The latest data released by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) shows that in 2025 Indonesia's internet-penetration

rate had reached 80.66 percent, equivalent to 229.4 million people out of the total population, up from 79.5 percent, or 221.5 million people, in the previous year. This increase is dominated by Generation Z and millennials, who access the internet mainly through smartphones, with the penetration rate among highly educated users reaching more than 91 percent. These figures confirm that Indonesian society's consumption of religious information now takes place within a fully networked ecosystem, no longer merely a supplement to conventional media as it was in previous decades.

This shift in consumption patterns does not stop at the number of users, but extends to the way people interact with content itself. Information consumption in the digital era is characterized by what can be called algorithm-driven consumption, a condition in which the reading material, viewing content, or religious guidance a person receives is no longer determined entirely by active searching, but by a platform's recommendation system, which learns from habits, viewing duration, and user interaction. Recent research on the behavior of TikTok users in Indonesia, for example, found that the perceived personalization score of the algorithm was relatively high and that reliance on the For You Page reached more than seventy percent of use, a condition indicating that content consumption has shifted from active searching toward passive, algorithm-recommendation-based consumption. The same pattern also applies to the consumption of religious content: a person who has once watched a short sermon will continue to be served similar content by the algorithm, so that their religious preferences come to be shaped, indirectly, by platform logic rather than solely by the religious authority they themselves have chosen.

Beyond being algorithm-based, the digital public's consumption of information also displays tendencies that are on-demand, concise, visual, interactive, and personal. The on-demand quality is evident in the public's preference for accessing content whenever needed, as already touched on in the discussion of podcasts and video platforms in the first section. The concise quality is seen in the strengthening culture of short-form video content lasting three minutes or less, which allows users to consume entertainment, education, and religious messages quickly and continuously, with no clear pause between one piece of content and the next. The visual quality is evident in young audiences' preference for image- and video-based material over lengthy text, while the interactive and personal qualities are seen in the growing weight given to comment features, live broadcasts, and recommendations tailored to each user's interaction history. The combination of these five tendencies, on one hand, makes it easier for da'wah messages to reach young audiences accustomed to this kind of digital rhythm; on the other hand, it carries the risk of shallowing the depth of religious understanding when complex material is forced into a format that is all too brief and fleeting.

An equally important change in consumption patterns is the shift in the public's position from mere passive consumer to active participant in the information ecosystem. The concept of participatory culture mentioned earlier (Jenkins, 2006) finds its concrete form in what Bruns (2008) calls produsage the merging of the roles of producer and user, giving rise to an audience with a dual character: consuming while also helping to produce and redistribute content. In the context of da'wah, this phenomenon is clearly visible when mad'u no longer merely watch sermons but also cut, re-upload, add captions to, and even create reaction content out of the religious material they receive. Studies on the parasocial communication of millennial da'i on Instagram and TikTok have even found that audiences actively build closeness with the figure of the da'i through comments, direct messages, and reposts, so that the boundary between the recipient and the disseminator of the da'wah message becomes increasingly fluid.

These five characteristics of the change in consumption patterns the shift toward digital, algorithm-based consumption, the on-demand-concise-visual-interactive-personal tendency, and the transformation from consumer to participant ultimately do not remain mere technical phenomena. This change directly reshapes the communicative relationship between da'i and mad'u, while also demanding a new understanding of how da'wah messages are received, interpreted, and even have their legitimacy negotiated in digital space, as will be elaborated in the following section.

5. The Implications of Media Convergence for Da'wah Communication

Media convergence and the change in information-consumption patterns described in the two preceding sections carry unavoidable consequences for the very core of da'wah activity, namely the communicative relationship between da'i and mad'u. Whereas in the era of conventional media this relationship was relatively fixed and hierarchical, with the da'i as the sole source of the message and the mad'u as a passive recipient, in today's convergent, participation-based digital media ecosystem this relationship undergoes a fundamental reconstruction at the level of intimacy, direction of communication, and the interpretation of meaning.

One of the most tangible forms of this changing relationship is the growth of parasocial relationships between da'i and their audiences a one-way emotional bond felt by the mad'u toward the figure of the da'i, even though the interaction that occurs is in fact mediated by a screen. Studies of millennial da'i on Instagram and TikTok have found that they deliberately build digital intimacy strategies, such as using personal, conversational language, being open about their private lives, and

responding directly to comments, in order to strengthen emotional closeness with their audience while also reinforcing their religious legitimacy in digital space. A similar phenomenon is also found on institutional da'wah channels: an analysis of NU Online's YouTube content shows that visual strategies such as stable lighting, close-up shots, a language style that addresses viewers personally, and the emotional responses of the audience in the comments column together form what is called hyper-personalization in digital da'wah, which in turn helps build religious authority through the interplay of algorithms and emotional appeal. At the psychological level, this kind of quasi-closeness has even been shown to correlate positively with the psychological well-being of Generation Z audiences who follow digital da'wah content, since it provides a sense of companionship, emotional support, and religious motivation. Nevertheless, this digital intimacy also carries risks, namely excessive emotional dependence and the potential commodification of religious relationships, when closeness to the figure of the da'i is prioritized over the depth of the message's content itself.

This changing relationship is in line with the shift in the direction of communication, from what was once one-way to interactive and participatory. As already touched on in the first section, digital media positions the mad'u no longer as a passive recipient, but as a party who can ask questions, raise objections, and even help steer the topic of discussion through comment columns and live Q&A features. This shift compels da'i and da'wah institutions to adopt a responsive two-way pattern of communication, since digital audiences tend to demand engagement rather than merely listening one way, as with a conventional pulpit sermon. As a consequence, the success of a da'wah message is now also determined by how far the da'i is able to build dialogue, not solely by how eloquently he delivers the material.

Another, more fundamental implication is the change in how da'wah messages are received and interpreted, which is closely intertwined with the question of religious authority. Several recent studies consistently show that digital media drives the fragmentation of religious authority a shift in legitimacy from a chain-of-transmission, knowledge-based authority toward an authority based on popularity and the level of interaction on social media (attention-based authority), a condition that can potentially trigger an epistemological crisis among audiences in sorting out sound sources of religious reference.

Other studies affirm that religious authority in digital space is now moving from a hierarchical model toward a relational, networked form, in which legitimacy is no longer conferred through formal-institutional means but is dynamically negotiated through communicative competence, closeness to the audience, and the ability to make use of a platform's algorithm. This shift also gives rise to what is referred to as online authority, which grows alongside while also intersecting with the

traditional religious authority that has long been held by ulama and formal religious institutions. For mad'u, this condition means that a da'wah message is no longer simply accepted on the basis of the institutional credibility of its messenger, but is filtered, compared, and even tested for its truth through interaction with a range of other sources competing on the same timeline.

This series of changes brings digital da'wah to an intersection of opportunity and challenge that are closely intertwined. On one hand, a convergent media ecosystem opens up opportunities in the form of a far wider reach for da'wah, relatively affordable distribution costs, the ability to target audience segments more personally and contextually, and a space for participation that strengthens the congregation's emotional attachment to religious messages. On the other hand, that same ecosystem also opens gaps for the spread of religious disinformation, hate speech dressed up with religious argument, and narratives of extremism and radicalism packaged so convincingly that they are difficult for ordinary members of the public to filter out.

The fast-flowing current of unverified content further heightens the risk of polarization between religious groups, while algorithmic logic, which tends to prioritize content with high engagement, risks creating an echo chamber that confines audiences to one particular religious point of view. It is this condition that calls for strengthening digital-based religious moderation as an inseparable part of the contemporary da'wah strategy, rather than merely a reactive response to problems that arise afterward.

6. Reconfiguration of the Da'wah Media Ecosystem

The four preceding discussions digital media as the foundation of the da'wah ecosystem, media convergence driving the transformation of message production and distribution, changes in the public's information-consumption patterns, and their implications for da'wah relations and communication do not, in essence, stand as a linear, sequential series of stages. Rather, they are interlinked as a single whole that reshapes the face of the da'wah ecosystem in its entirety.

Digital media provides the technical foundation, media convergence becomes the driving engine that integrates these various platforms, changes in the public's consumption patterns become the demand-side force that determines the direction of adaptation, and changes in da'i-mad'u relations become the social consequence whose impact is most keenly felt. These four elements influence one another in a circular rather than merely one-way fashion: changes in the public's consumption patterns, for instance, also drive the emergence of new forms of convergence, just as demand for short, personal content forces da'wah institutions to continually adjust their production strategies.

Table 1. Critical Analysis of the Reconfiguration of the Digital Media Ecosystem in Da'wah

Dimension/ Aspect	Changes Occurring	Opportunities for Da'wah	Challenges/ Risks	Reference Sources
Digital Media (characteristics)	Media transforms from a mere channel into a living, networked space of da'wah interaction.	Wider reach, high accessibility; da'wah can be accessed across space and time.	Religious material risks losing meaning if forced into an overly condensed format.	Fuchs (2021); Campbel l (2022)
Media Convergence	Production and distribution of da'wah content are integrated across platforms; a single piece of material is repurposed into various formats.	Production efficiency, message consistency across channels, and personalizatio n of format according to each platform's character.	Requires technical skills and creative human resources; risk of message inconsistency without an integrated cross-media strategy.	Jenkins (2006); McQuail & Deuze (2020); Rubawati (2018)
Information Consumption Patterns	Consumption shifts toward algorithm-based, on-demand, concise, visual, and personal patterns; mad'u become active participants (“producers”) .	High engagement, self-driven distribution by the congregation (organic reach); messages reach more personal segments.	Passive, algorithm-recommendation -based consumption; potential shallowing of religious understanding due to overly instant formats.	Putri & Prakoso (2025); Bruns (2008); APJII (2025)
Da'i-Mad'u Relations and Religious Authority	Hierarchical relations shift toward interactive and parasocial	Emotional closeness strengthens the congregation's attachment;	Fragmentation of authority, religious disinformation, echo chambers, digital	Famuji dkk. (2025); Al-Aqsha dkk. (2025); Yuliani (2025);

	ones; religious authority becomes fragmented between a knowledge base and an algorithmic-popularity base.	audience participation enriches the interpretation of da'wah messages.	radicalism, and the commodificatio n of religious relationships.	Mandala dkk. (2024)

Source: Data compiled from various sources

Building on this synthesis, the digital da'wah media ecosystem can be understood as a layered, continually self-adjusting model an adaptive ecosystem rather than a static structure. At the most basic layer lie the infrastructure and characteristics of digital media digitability, interactivity, networked connectivity, and virtuality which enable religious messages to be produced and accessed across space and time. At the second layer lies the process of convergence, which integrates various platforms, actors, and content formats into a single, consistent flow of messages despite their differing packaging. At the third layer lies a digital audience that is no longer passive, but also helps produce, filter, and redistribute messages according to its own algorithmic preferences. At the topmost layer, meanwhile, lies the relationship of authority and religious intimacy, which is continually negotiated dynamically among da'i, da'wah institutions, platform algorithms, and the mad'u community. These four layers work reciprocally: a change at one layer the introduction of a new feature on a platform, for instance propagates to the other layers and ultimately reshapes the entire ecosystem.

A model of this kind confirms that the term reconfiguration is more appropriate than merely transformation or modernization, since what is taking place is not simply the replacement of an old medium with a new one, but a reordering of the entire arrangement from who is entitled to produce religious messages, to how those messages circulate, who determines their validity, and how emotional closeness is built between the sender and the receiver of the message. The digital da'wah ecosystem, therefore, is no longer a collection of channels standing independently of one another, but a single, mutually supporting network, in which a weakness at one point such as a da'i's limited digital literacy or weak content verification can spread into a problem for the system as a whole, including a general decline in the mad'u's trust in religious authority.

This reconfiguration framework carries a number of practical implications for the future management of da'wah communication and dissemination. First, da'wah institutions need to manage their presence

through integrated cross-media management, rather than simply adding more social media accounts without a consistent content strategy, given that digital audiences move freely across platforms, following the flow of content that interests them. Second, strengthening the capacity of da'i and content managers in algorithm literacy and digital communication ethics is an urgent necessity, so that the digital intimacy that is built remains grounded in scholarly responsibility and does not slip into a mere popularity strategy. Third, the strengthening of digital-based religious moderation needs to be mainstreamed as part of content strategy, rather than remaining merely an incidental response to cases of disinformation or radicalism that have already gone viral. Fourth, da'wah institutions need to build mechanisms for verification and collaboration across religious authorities in order to respond to the fragmentation of legitimacy occurring in digital space, so that the diversity of religious voices can still be managed without giving rise to excessive polarization

Ultimately, the reconfiguration of the digital media ecosystem in da'wah needs to be understood not as a threat to be avoided, nor merely as an opportunity that automatically brings good, but as a new terrain that demands critical awareness among da'wah practitioners. Success in da'wah in the era of media convergence is no longer determined by the ability to master a single type of medium in depth, but by the agility to manage a complex media network, together with the earnestness to ensure that the substance and ethics of religious messages are not dissolved by the logic of algorithms, popularity, or the speed of information flow that has become the defining feature of today's digital ecosystem.

Conclusion

This study confirms that da'wah and media can no longer be understood as two separate entities, since the two now merge within a single digital ecosystem that mutually shapes one another. Digital media, with its characteristics of digitability, interactivity, networked connectivity, and virtuality, has changed the function of media from a mere channel for delivering messages into a living space of da'wah interaction, where da'i and mad'u can meet, engage in dialogue, and even jointly shape the meaning of religious messages together.

Media convergence has become the driving engine that pushes da'wah institutions away from dependence on a single type of medium toward integrated, cross-platform content management. This change demands adjustments to patterns of production, distribution, and message delivery strategy so as to remain relevant to the characteristics of each channel without losing the core substance of da'wah itself. At the same time, the transformation of the public's information consumption patterns increasingly characterized by being algorithmic, on demand, concise, visual, interactive, and personal forces da'wah to adapt to the new rhythm of digital audiences, while also demanding vigilance so that the depth of religious messages is not eroded by an overly instant format.

The combination of media convergence and this change in consumption patterns, in turn, fundamentally reshapes the communicative relationship between da'i and mad'u. A relationship that was once hierarchical and one-way now shifts toward being interactive, participatory, and colored by parasocial intimacy, while religious authority, once grounded in chain of transmission scholarly legitimacy, now also competes with authority based on popularity and algorithmic interaction. This condition opens up major opportunities for expanding the reach and appeal of da'wah, but at the same time presents real challenges in the form of religious disinformation, echo chambers, and the potential for digital radicalization that must not be ignored by da'wah practitioners or religious institutions.

This series of findings ultimately converges on one central conclusion: what is currently taking place is not merely a technical transformation of da'wah media, but a thoroughgoing reconfiguration of the da'wah ecosystem itself from who is entitled to produce messages, to how those messages circulate and are interpreted, to how trust and religious authority are built in digital space. This reconfiguration is dynamic and ongoing, and therefore demands critical awareness and sustained adaptive readiness, rather than a one-off adjustment.

Based on this conclusion, this study recommends that da'wah institutions and da'i consciously build an integrated, cross platform media-management strategy, enhance digital literacy and communication ethics among da'wah practitioners, and strengthen digital-based religious moderation as an inseparable part of their everyday content strategy, rather than merely a reactive response once problems have already surfaced. Given that this study is conceptual in nature and rests on library research, further empirical research whether through surveys of mad'u perceptions, digital trace analysis on da'wah platforms, or case studies of particular da'wah institutions is greatly needed to test and enrich the model of digital da'wah media ecosystem reconfiguration proposed in this study.

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