

The Influence of Da'wah Content on Social Media on Generation Z's Religious Understanding at STAI Balikpapan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the influence of da'wah content on social media on the religious understanding of generation Z, with the research subject of students of the Islamic Religious College (STAI) Balikpapan. The background of this research is based on the increasing use of social media as a medium for spreading da'wah among the younger generation. The method used is a quantitative method with a survey approach. The sample in this study amounted to 30 students who were selected purposively, with active criteria using social media and included in the age category of Generation Z. Data collection techniques used questionnaires, and data analysis was carried out by simple linear regression test. The results of the study showed that there was no significant influence between da'wah content on social media on students' religious understanding. These findings indicate that exposure to da'wah content on social media has not been effective enough in increasing religious understanding among the younger generation. Therefore, it is recommended that da'wah content be packaged in a more attractive, interactive, and tailored to the characteristics of Generation Z to increase the effectiveness of the religious message conveyed.

Keywords: da'wah content, social media, religious understanding, generation z

INTRODUCTION

Participants significantly affect the dissemination of several aspects of human existence, especially regarding access to religious knowledge. Social media, a product of the digital revolution, has become the main medium of communication, social interaction, and the dissemination of information, including Islamic da'wah. This transformation affects religious learning patterns and understanding, especially among Generation Z, which is defined by (Center., 2019) as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, who are the first generation to be immersed in digital technology from a young age.

Generation Z has unique characteristics, such as proficiency in digital multitasking, rapid information retrieval, and significant reliance on the internet and social media. This situation offers significant potential for the rapid and participatory spread of Islamic da'wah. A variety of da'wah information, including lecture videos, hadith quotes, Islamic infographics, and entertainment-oriented da'wah, is widely consumed by young people through platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and podcasts. Instead, issues arise about the authenticity of the information, the depth of the material, and the proper understanding of the teachings of Islam in the content that is ingested.

A number of studies show that da'wah information on social media has a positive impact on young people's religious understanding. Nabila et al., (2023) emphasizing that

da'wah content presented in an engaging and relevant format can increase the desire and drive of Generation Z to explore the teachings of Islam, as well as broaden their understanding of Islamic principles. Rejeki et al., (2024) It also shows that digital da'wah, especially through short videos, is positively correlated with the understanding of Islamic values in this era. The findings mentioned above underscore the importance of adaptive da'wah strategies in relation to the contemporary digital society.

However, obstacles in the implementation of digital da'wah must be ignored. A study published in the *Ummat Journal* (2024) shows that although social media increases access to religious content, social media also poses a risk of spreading unreliable information and fostering inadequate digital and religious literacy among adolescents. As a result, the existence of aesthetically and theologically pleasing da'wah content, derived from an accurate understanding of Islam, is essential.

With the increasing consumption of religious content in the digital realm, Generation Z increasingly relies on social media as the main source for understanding religious teachings, replacing the traditional role of educational institutions and religious leaders. This signifies a transformation in the dynamics of religious authority that affects the cognitive framework and religious practice, as well as the assimilation of spiritual and moral values in daily life. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the impact of da'wah content on social media on religious perception and understanding is essential for scientific investigation, which aims to identify the opportunities and threats associated with changes in da'wah in the digital ecosystem.

This study seeks to examine the impact of da'wah information on social media on the religious understanding of Generation Z. The correlation between digital da'wah exposure and the level of religious understanding is anticipated to be a guide for preachers, educators, and da'wah media administrators in formulating joint communication strategies that are more effective, relevant, and educational, in line with the nature and spiritual requirements of the digital generation in the contemporary digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Da'wah Content*

Advances in communication technology have changed the method of spreading da'wah. Da'wah has evolved from a one-way format, similar to a sermon or lecture, to a two-way and interactive approach, facilitated by the advent of social media. Stuart O'Neill (1994) emphasized that da'wah must consider the environment and the circumstances of the people, especially the communication methods used. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok allow you to engage with your audience in a more intimate and relevant way. Da'wah is no longer limited by spatial or temporal limitations; it is accessible at any time by everyone, especially Generation Z, who are proficient digital media consumers.

Da'wah activities are one of the collective obligations of Muslims as stated in surah Al-Qur'an Ali Imran verse 104:

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

"There should be among you a group of people who call for virtue, enjoin (do) what is righteous, and prevent from doing evil. They are the lucky ones." This verse shows the urgency of the existence of a group of people who are actively involved in efforts to convey Islamic values and encourage the formation of a goodness-oriented society. In the current context, da'wah is no longer limited to physical spaces such as mosque pulpits or taklim assemblies, but has developed through digital mediums, especially social media.

Interactive elements on social media, including comment sections, direct messages, poll stories, and live streams, enhance the da'wah process by facilitating audience reactions, questions, and potential criticism. This changes the nature of da'wah from a monological interaction to a dialogical one. This method encourages the emergence of an environment of religious dialogue that is more adaptable and informal, but rich in educational and spiritual meaning. Due to its accessibility and adaptable delivery methods, da'wah content on social media functions not only as a source of religious information but also as a platform for the development of digital religious identity.

In addition, social media offers a way for the younger generation to act as agents of da'wah by reposting Islamic information, sharing quotes from verses or hadiths, or making short films that convey religious ideas. The da'wah process is not solely the responsibility of the ustadz or religious leaders; It is also a collaborative social practice that is rooted in online communities. This shift shows that social media is not only a medium for disseminating da'wah, but has developed into a new arena to foster a contextual and inclusive Islamic culture.

Da'wah communication techniques for Generation Z must be carefully crafted, taking into account their social, psychological, and digital communication preferences. Generation Z is characterized by being raised in a digital environment, showing a strong familiarity with fast, graphic, and interactive information. As a result, the da'wah delivered to them must be adapted to interactive, individual, and contextual communication modalities.

The main strategy in digital da'wah communication is visual storytelling, which involves transmitting religious messages through concise narratives presented in films, infographics, or images. This method facilitates the communication of the Islamic message in a way that is more poignant, non-degrading, and easily assimilated. Research Naufaldhi, (2024) shows that communication styles integrated with users' daily lives facilitate the reception and retention of religious messages among Generation Z. Effective Da'wah typically uses informal language, everyday storytelling, and light yet significant communication styles, enabling the reception of da'wah messages and preventing them from appearing rigid. Abdusshomad, (2024) shows that the effectiveness of ustadz influencers such as Habib Husein Ja'far and ustadz Felix Siau in engaging Gen Z significantly depends on their capacity to communicate religious themes within the psychological framework of young audiences.

In addition, content relevance is an important component of da'wah communication strategies. Religious teachings that address the challenges faced by Generation Z, including mental health, identity exploration, moral dilemmas, and social interactions in the digital environment, will resonate more with them. Ika et al., (2025) found in their study of Kadam Sidik's TikTok account that da'wah that addressed adolescent reality, personal anxiety, or relevant Islamic ideals was significantly liked and reshared by the audience.

The efficacy of da'wah communication to Generation Z significantly depends on the capacity of preachers to understand the psychosocial dynamics of their audiences. Da'wah that offers only evidence without contextual significance is sometimes less appealing to this generation. In contrast, programming that explores the complexities of adolescents' existence, identity-forming struggles, and ethical dilemmas in the digital age is more effective at fostering emotional and intellectual engagement with them. As a result, a deep understanding of Generation Z's lifestyles, habits, and psychological problems is essential for the creation of effective and impactful da'wah materials. According to Sumardianto, (2025) Generation Z's da'wah approach requires a plan that prioritizes discussion, thematic relevance, and awareness of the rapid and visual characteristics of digital visuals.

Interactivity is an important element of digital da'wah communication. Elements such as online Q&A sessions, polls, and direct replies to audience comments foster a participatory and dialogical environment for da'wah. Generation Z values an environment that facilitates the expression of questions, concerns, or criticism about religious issues. According to the findings Shawn (2025) social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter contribute significantly to the dissemination of interactive and accessible da'wah content for the current generation; However, considerable challenges have arisen, including distortion of religious information and the lack of literacy needed to filter da'wah content.

However, it is undeniable that not all digital da'wah information is useful. Certain information can fuel polarization, spread exclusive religious ideologies, or reinforce non-moderate religious narratives. This situation requires increasing religious digital literacy for both the dai and the audience. This literacy includes the capacity to validate sources, evaluate the credibility of content, and understand the diversity of perspectives in Islam. As a result, social media can function as a constructive, inclusive, and educational platform for da'wah.

Digital da'wah strategies for Generation Z should focus on not only delivering compelling messages but also increasing substance, maintaining consistency in example, and ensuring continuous communication. Da'wah methods that consider psychological demands, societal realities, and the characteristics of contemporary digital communication will produce a more contextual, grounded, and transformative type of da'wah. As a result, da'wah in the digital era can serve as an effective and relevant medium for spiritual fortresses.

B. Religious Understanding

Digital da'wah content has a positive impact on increasing religious understanding among Generation Z. Nurdin, (2003) defines understanding as the capacity to translate, interpret, extrapolate (uncover the underlying meaning of language), and relate to facts or concepts. Religious understanding can be seen as a cognitive and emotional process in which humans comprehensively understand, interpret, and internalize religious teachings, including theological, religious, moral, and social components. Therefore, an individual with a comprehensive understanding of religion understands not only the "what" conveyed in Islam but also the "why" and "how" of the teachings are implemented contextually.

Da'wah information on social media has many advantages, including universal accessibility and attractive presentations. Nonetheless, most digital da'wah information only surrounds the surface of Islam, lacking comprehensive theological insights. Frequently consumed content usually includes moral reminders or the essence of hijrah, although it rarely delves into comprehensive subjects such as ushul fiqh, tafsir, or madhhab variations. This is intensified by social media algorithms that exclusively present content according to the user's preferences, thus limiting the opportunity to investigate religious science. Zikrillah & Mutaqin, (2024) asserting that this can create information bias and alienate consumers from the diversity of Islamic philosophy.

Da'wah knowledge disseminated through social media has several benefits, including global accessibility and attractive presentations. However, a large amount of digital da'wah content only scratches the surface of Islam, lacking a deep theological understanding. The content that is often encountered generally includes moral warnings or the concept of hijrah, although it rarely explores in-depth topics such as ushul fiqh, tafsir, or differences in sects. This is exacerbated by social media algorithms that primarily curate content based on user preferences, thus limiting prospects for exploring religious studies. Zikrillah & Mutaqin, (2024) asserting that this can create information bias and alienate consumers from the diversity of Islamic philosophy.

As a result, while digital da'wah content has increased Generation Z's religious understanding, its impact remains limited to the easily assimilated moral and spiritual dimensions. To foster a comprehensive understanding of religion, a more in-depth educational strategy is essential, with increased digital religious literacy, allowing the younger generation to evaluate the material authoritatively and responsibly.

Generation Z's religious understanding must be developed through enlightening and transforming methods. This generation needs not only direction regarding right and wrong but also an understanding of the reason, context, and intent behind each instruction. As a result, da'wah content is optimally crafted to provoke critical thinking, promote contemplation, and allow for deep introspection.

In addition, Generation Z is very much in tune with authentic examples of behavior. Religious understanding will be facilitated if individuals observe the practical implementation of Islamic ideals in daily life by parents, educators, community leaders, and admired public figures. When religious teachings are presented solely as motivational lectures or phrases, without concrete examples, the likelihood of diminishing their religious significance increases substantially. As a result, digital da'wah that includes inspirational narratives, personal testimonials, or authentic diversity demonstrations will be more relevant and influential to them.

Amid the rapid influx of digital information, Generation Z faces significant barriers in distinguishing and understanding prevalent religious materials. In the absence of adequate digital and religious literacy, they are particularly vulnerable to incomplete, misleading, and potentially inflammatory information. In this environment, educational support from qualified individuals, such as instructors, ustadz, or the digital Islamic community, is essential. This support can be provided through familiar venues, such as webinars, online discussion forums, or interactive social media.

In addition, technology must be used to build an inclusive, dialogical, and practical religious learning environment. Da'wah content should evolve from a one-way approach to one that encourages audience engagement, incorporating reflective questions,

religious case studies, and contextual scenarios related to everyday issues. This method can increase the absorption of knowledge while strengthening the cognitive and affective dimensions of religious understanding.

As a result, fostering religious understanding in Generation Z is a multifaceted endeavor that cannot be achieved instantly. This effort requires collaboration between digital media, formal education, family support, and a favorable social context. Social media can serve as an initial platform for spreading Islamic ideas; However, improving understanding requires a thorough exploration of the material, the formation of habitual worship routines, and the strengthening of character through exemplary behavior. If digital da'wah focuses on improving the quality of content and contextual delivery methods, then Generation Z has significant potential to develop into a generation that is not only symbolically religious but also astute in understanding and applying Islamic teachings wisely in practical life.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research study uses a quantitative methodology using surveys to investigate the impact of da'wah content on social media on the religious understanding of Generation Z. Quantitative techniques are used because of their capacity to provide an objective and measurable representation of the relationship between the variables studied. The research population consisted of students from Islamic Religious Colleges (STAI) who belonged to Generation Z, specifically individuals aged 18 to 24 years, and who were actively engaged with social media.

The variables of this study include independent variables, especially the frequency and intensity of access to da'wah content on social media, and dependent variables, which include the level of religious understanding, including the components of faith, worship, and morality. The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire using a Likert scale with four response options, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire consists of two main parts: the first assesses the frequency and intensity of engagement with da'wah content, while the second evaluates the respondents' religious understanding.

RESULTS AND RESEARCH

According to the findings of the research conducted by the researcher using the questionnaire method, many conclusions can be described as follows:

1. Reliability Test
 - a. Cronbach's Alpha Variable X Value (Influence of Da'wah Content)

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.783	8

The results table shows that there are N items (number of items or questionnaire questions), with 8 items showing an Alpha Cronbach value of 0.783.

Given that Cronbach's Alpha score is $0.783 > 0.60$, as the basis for decision-making in the reliability test above, it can be concluded that the 8 questionnaire questions for the variable "Influence of Da'wah Content" are reliable or consistent.

b. Cronbach's Alpha Variable Y Value (Generation Z's Religious Understanding)

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.855	8

From the output table above, it is known that there are N of Items (the number of items or questionnaire questions) there are 8 items with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.855. Because Cronbach's Alpha value is $0.855 > 0.60$, as the basis for decision-making in the reliability test above, it can be concluded that the 8 questionnaire questions for the variable "Religious Understanding of Generation Z" are reliable or consistent.

Based on the results of the reliability test, the variable Influence of Da'wah Content obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.783, which indicates that the instrument has a good level of reliability. The Generation Z Religious Comprehension variable showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.855, which indicates a very high reliability of the instrument. Thus, all items in both variables were declared reliable and suitable for use as a measuring tool in this study.

2. Normality Test

After the reliability test, the next procedure is to conduct a normality test, which seeks to ascertain whether the data collected from respondents has a normal distribution. This test is essential to identify the appropriate statistical analysis for use afterwards. The assessment of normality is carried out through the One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, a method often used in quantitative research.

Based on the output table, it is known that the value of Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of $0.118 > 0.05$. Therefore, following the decision-making in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test above, it can be concluded that the data is distributed normally.

3. Correlation

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	22.414	4.513		<.001
	Konten Dakwah	.185	.177	.194	.305

a. Dependent Variable: Pemahaman Agama

a = a constant number of unstandardized coefficients. In this case the value is 22,414. This number is a constant number which means that if there is no Da'wah Content (X) then the consistent value of Religious Understanding (Y) is 22,414.

b = the number of regression coefficients. The value is 0.185. This figure means that for every 1% increase in the level of Da'wah Content (X), then Religious Understanding (Y) will increase by 0.185.

Because the value of the regression coefficient is plus (+), it can therefore be said that the Da'wah Content (X) has a positive effect on Religious Understanding (Y). So the regression equation is $Y=22.414+0.185 X$

The hypothesis that the authors propose in this simple linear regression analysis is:

H_0 = No influence of Da'wah Content (X) on Religious Understanding (Y)

H_a = There is an influence of Da'wah Content (X) on Religious Understanding (Y)

Based on the above output, it is known that the significance value (Sig) of 0.305 is greater than > probability of 0.05, so it can be concluded that H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected, which means that "there is no influence of Da'wah Content (X) on Religious Understanding (Y)"

Based on the above output, it is known that the t-value is calculated as 1.045. Since the calculated t value has been found, the next step we will look for the t value of the table. The formula for finding t table is:

$$\text{Value } \alpha/2 = 0.05/2 = 0.025$$

$$\text{Degree of freedom (df)} = n-2 = 30-2 = 28$$

Value 0.025; 28 Then we look at the distribution of the value t of the table, then we get the value of the t table of 2.048

Because the calculated t-value of 1.045 is smaller than < 2.048, it can be concluded that H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected which means that "there is no influence of Da'wah Content (X) on Religious Understanding (Y)".

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.194 ^a	.038	.003	2.79151

a. Predictors: (Constant), Konten Dakwah

From the output above, it is known that the R square value is 0.038. This value means that the influence of Da'wah Content (X) on Religious Understanding (Y) is 3.8% while 96.2% of Religious Understanding is influenced by other variables that have not been studied.

Referring to the discussion above, we can conclude that "The content of Da'wah (X) does not have a significant effect on Religious Understanding (Y) with a total influence of 3.8%. This influence means that the content of da'wah does not have a significant effect on religious understanding, either partially or based on the value of its very small contribution.

4. Description of variable data X and Y

a. The influence of da'wah content on social media

Based on the results of the research conducted, it was obtained that the influence of da'wah content on social media among students was in the good category. This can be seen from the indicator of the influence of da'wah content on social media, a percentage result of 60.7%

b. Understanding Religion of Generation Z

Based on the results of the research conducted, the results were obtained that the understanding of Religion of generation z among students is in the good category. This can be seen from the indicator of religious understanding of generation z obtained a percentage result of 40.3%

CONCLUSION

Advances in digital technology have changed the delivery of Islamic da'wah from a one-sided approach to a more collaborative and participatory format through social media. Digital da'wah has emerged as a contemporary platform that allows the younger generation, especially Generation Z, to be actively involved in the dissemination and reception of religious messages in a contextual and relevant way. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok not only expand the scope of da'wah but also offer more individualized and visual methodologies that align with Generation Z's digital communication preferences.

However, digital da'wah content has its limitations. The content is superficial and fails to explore the theological dimension of Islam thoroughly. This results from social media algorithms that favor material that aligns with user preferences and the prevalence of lighter, emotional, and viral content. Therefore, it is crucial to improve digital religious literacy to enable the younger generation to more effectively filter and understand religious content more responsibly.

Thus, Da'wah information on social media has a sizable impact overall, it has not shown a statistically significant effect on the depth of religious understanding among Generation Z. As a result, digital da'wah strategies should focus not only on visual aesthetics and communication styles, but also on the substance and depth of Islamic content. and adequate digital literacy support.

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