



## Spreading Islamic Messages: Transition from Traditional to Digital Media in Contemporary Da'wah

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### ABSTRACT

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contemporary  
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*This study discusses the transformation of Islamic da'wah from traditional media to digital media and its impact on the spread of Islamic messages in the contemporary era. With the development of information and communication technology, da'wah is no longer limited to conventional methods such as direct lectures or book publishing, but has involved digital media, such as social media, instant messaging applications, and video streaming platforms. This study uses literature studies and comparative analysis to evaluate the differences in message dissemination through traditional and digital media, with a focus on audience reach, interaction, and message quality and effectiveness. This study is based on the theory of mass communication and diffusion of innovation, with the novelty lying in an in-depth analysis of the interaction of digital media in contemporary Islamic da'wah. The results of the study indicate that the use of digital media significantly expands the reach of da'wah, allowing for faster and wider dissemination of messages to a more diverse audience. Digital media also enhances two-way interaction between preachers and audiences through comment features, live streaming, and question and answer sessions. However, this study highlights challenges such as the potential for message distortion and the importance of digital literacy for preachers to maintain the authenticity and accuracy of the message. By combining traditional and digital media approaches holistically, da'wah can become more relevant, inclusive, and adaptive to the challenges and spiritual needs of modern society.*

### Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has had a very significant impact on various aspects of human life, including in terms of spreading Islamic teachings. In the past, Islamic da'wah was mostly carried out through traditional media, such as the use of pulpits in mosques, publishing books and brochures, and face-to-face lectures held in assemblies or in religious study forums. These conventional methods do have historical value and have proven effective in the context of local communities. Digital technology now opens up new opportunities for the spread of Islamic messages, utilizing various existing

platforms such as social media, instant messaging applications, and video streaming platforms (Kharim, 2020).

The transformation that occurs in the practice of da'wah not only changes the way Islamic messages are conveyed, but also expands the reach of da'wah geographically and demographically. By using digital media, religious messages can now reach a much wider audience, not limited to one particular community or region (Saifuddin et al., 2023). Several studies have examined the effectiveness of da'wah through digital media, highlighting the various benefits offered by this technology. Rustandi (2020), for example, found that digital media not only expands the reach of da'wah, but also allows greater accessibility to audiences who may have previously been marginalized or less accessible by traditional da'wah methods. Ahmad's research findings are in line with the findings of Ummah (2020), who showed that social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, are very effective tools in spreading Islamic values, especially among the younger generation who are more familiar with technology and use these platforms more often in their daily lives. In addition, a study by Abdullah & Prasetya (2023) emphasized that digital media allows for two-way interactions that were previously difficult to achieve through traditional media. This interaction opens up a more open and dynamic dialogue between the preacher and the audience, which can increase the understanding and acceptance of religious messages.

However, the great potential of digital media in this da'wah is also accompanied by challenges that need to be anticipated. Muhyiddin (2019) reminds us that although digital media offers many advantages, there are challenges in ensuring that the messages conveyed remain authentic and undistorted. Information distortion can occur due to misinterpretation, the spread of inaccurate information, or manipulation of content by irresponsible parties. Therefore, preachers and managers of da'wah content need to have adequate digital literacy and expertise in managing information, in order to ensure that the messages conveyed remain in accordance with the true teachings and values of Islam.

From a religious perspective, da'wah is an important duty for every Muslim, as it is commanded in both the Al-Qur'an and the Hadith. In Surah Al-Imran (3:104), Allah says, "Let there be among you a group that invites to goodness, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the successful ones." This verse emphasizes the duty of Muslims to actively engage in da'wah by spreading goodness and guiding people to the right path. Similarly, in a hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Convey from me, even if it is a single verse." This hadith encourages Muslims to spread the teachings of Islam to others, even in small ways, as part of their responsibility to share the message of Islam.

Although many studies have discussed the use of digital media in da'wah, the novelty of this study lies in the comparative analysis between the effectiveness of spreading the message of Islam through traditional media and digital media. This study seeks to dig deeper into how the shift from traditional media to digital media affects the quality and effectiveness of da'wah in the contemporary era (Rif'at, 2023). The purpose of this study is to understand more deeply the process of da'wah transformation from traditional media to digital media and to evaluate its impact on the reach, interaction, and effectiveness of spreading the message of Islam. In addition, this study also aims to provide recommendations for effective da'wah strategies in utilizing digital media without ignoring the values and essence of Islamic da'wah.

### **Research Methods and Theoretical Approaches**

This study uses methods that include literature study and comparative analysis. Literature study was conducted to collect and analyze theories, concepts, and previous research results that are relevant to the transformation of da'wah from traditional media to digital media. The purpose of this literature study is to understand the existing theoretical foundations and identify gaps or needs for further research in the context of contemporary da'wah.

Comparative analysis is used to evaluate the differences and similarities between the dissemination of Islamic messages through traditional media and digital media. This approach allows researchers to compare the two media in terms of audience reach, interaction between the message deliverer (dai) and the audience, and the quality and effectiveness of the message delivered. Data collected through literature study were critically analyzed to identify key themes and relevant trends, which were then used as a basis for comparison.

The theoretical approach in this study is based on mass communication theory and diffusion of innovation theory. Mass communication theory provides a framework for understanding how traditional and digital media function as channels for disseminating Islamic messages. Traditional media, such as lectures and books, have long been used in da'wah, while digital media, such as social media and instant messaging applications, offer new ways to reach a wider and more diverse audience. The diffusion of innovation theory, developed by Everett Rogers, is used to explore how the transition from traditional media to digital media occurs in the context of da'wah. This theory explains the process of innovation adoption in society and the factors that influence this adoption, such as the characteristics of the innovation, communication channels, time, and social systems. In this study, the diffusion of innovation theory helps to understand how digital media is adopted as a new tool in da'wah and how this transformation impacts the way Islamic messages are delivered and received.

The indicators used in this comparative analysis include audience reach, interaction between da'wah and audience, and the effectiveness of message dissemination. Through a solid and argumentative theoretical approach, this study aims to provide in-depth insights into the transition from traditional media to digital media in da'wah, as well as its implications for future da'wah strategies.

### **Effectiveness of Da'wah through Traditional Media: Challenges and Advantages**

Traditional media, such as face-to-face lectures, books, and radio broadcasts, have long served as the primary means of conveying Islamic religious messages to the wider community. In their use, these media are considered to have their own advantages, especially in terms of creating direct interaction between the preacher, or preacher, and his audience. This kind of interaction allows for lively dialogue and real-time Q&A sessions, where the audience can ask direct questions and get immediate clarification from the preacher. This ability to interact directly is crucial because it strengthens the personal and emotional connection between the sender and the recipient. This emotional involvement and personal closeness are often key factors in facilitating deeper acceptance and understanding of the religious messages being conveyed (Aditia, 2021).

An interview with Ustaz Ahmad, a preacher with more than two decades of experience in da'wah, revealed that face-to-face lectures not only allow preachers to convey religious messages, but also to directly read and understand the responses of their audiences. By monitoring the direct reactions of the audience, a preacher can assess whether the material being delivered is well received or needs to be adjusted. The ability to adapt the da'wah

material is very important in ensuring that the message delivered is relevant and appropriate to the needs and context of the audience at that time (Ahmad, personal communication, August 15, 2024). In this case, face-to-face lectures offer great flexibility, allowing the da'wah to respond to evolving situations and answer questions that may arise in the minds of the audience.

Traditional media such as books also play an important role in spreading Islamic teachings. Religious books provide an opportunity for Muslims to study their religious teachings in greater depth and continuously. These books, which are generally written by prominent Islamic scholars and scholars, provide an authoritative and reliable source of information (Rifdillah et al., 2024). The existence of religious books allows readers to study Islamic concepts systematically, in depth, and at a pace that suits their needs. In this context, books are considered a medium that not only conveys information, but also provides a means for personal reflection and the development of broader spiritual understanding.

Radio broadcasts, as one form of traditional media, also play an important role in spreading da'wah. Radio has the advantage of being able to reach listeners in remote locations that may be difficult to access by other media. Da'wah broadcast programs on the radio are often broadcast in local languages, making them easier for local people to understand. The use of local languages helps to convey religious messages in a more direct and digestible way for the audience, while strengthening a sense of cultural closeness and community identity.

In today's increasingly digital era, although the use of traditional media in da'wah may seem to be declining compared to digital media, its value and effectiveness in creating emotional and personal bonds between preachers and audiences cannot be ignored. Traditional media offers a more personal and in-depth approach, capable of reaching the hearts and minds of audiences through time-tested methods. Therefore, even though technology continues to develop, traditional media still plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of the spread of Islamic messages, considering the depth of interaction and authenticity of relationships that can be built through this media (Muslim, 2019).

However, da'wah through traditional media faces significant challenges in this sophisticated digital era. Along with the increasing use of the internet and digital technology, people's preferences for sources of information have also changed. According to Fitria & Aditia (2019), one of the main weaknesses of traditional media is the limited reach it has. For example, face-to-face lectures can only reach audiences who are physically present at the location, such as a mosque, hall, or meeting room. This limits the potential for spreading religious messages to only certain groups who can attend in person. Likewise, religious books and radio broadcasts have limited reach due to geographic and demographic factors, such as limited book distribution in remote areas or limited radio signals in areas far from city centers. These factors make traditional media less effective in reaching a wider and more diverse audience.

In addition to limited reach, traditional media is also often less interactive, which is a major weakness when compared to digital platforms. For example, in face-to-face lectures, the opportunity to ask questions or ask for clarification instantly is often limited to a certain session at the end of the lecture. This is in contrast to digital media, where two-way discussions can take place in real-time through comments, direct messages, or online forums, allowing the audience to interact directly with the preacher or speaker at any time. This lack of interactivity can make the audience feel less engaged and may find it difficult to get answers to questions that arise while listening to lectures or reading religious materials.

Despite these challenges, this study found that traditional media still has an important place in da'wah practices, especially among older audiences or those who prefer a personal and direct approach to religious learning. This group tends to be more comfortable with familiar da'wah formats, such as face-to-face lectures or reading religious books, which give them a sense of connection and closeness to long-standing religious traditions. In addition, traditional media is often considered more authentic and trustworthy by most people, because the material presented has usually gone through a strict curatorial process by prominent scholars or recognized religious institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools or other official religious institutions. This gives the audience a sense of trust that the information they receive is valid and authentic in accordance with the true teachings of the religion (Aulia & Amalia, 2024).

Although digital media offers various conveniences and wider access, the presence of traditional media remains relevant in certain contexts. For example, in some rural communities where internet access is still limited or unstable, local radio broadcasts remain the main means of obtaining information, including da'wah messages. Likewise, religious books are still considered a valuable source of knowledge and can be studied in depth at any time without relying on the availability of technology. In addition, face-to-face lectures at mosques or religious study groups provide opportunities for community members to gather, socialize, and build strong social relationships, which in turn strengthen social cohesion and a sense of solidarity within the community (Azlan et al., 2020).

Therefore, despite the challenges faced, traditional media still plays a significant role in da'wah, especially in maintaining the depth of the material and the authority of the message conveyed. With a holistic and complementary approach, where traditional and digital media are used together, the effectiveness of da'wah can be increased by reaching a wider and more diverse audience while maintaining the authenticity and depth of the message conveyed. Thus, the role of traditional media in da'wah cannot be ignored and must be wisely integrated into a broader and more inclusive da'wah strategy.

### **Transformation of Da'wah to Digital Media: Opportunities and Adaptation**

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the way Islamic Da'wah has undergone a major change with more and more preachers turning to the use of digital media as the primary means of spreading religious messages. Platforms such as social media, instant messaging applications, and video streaming sites, including YouTube and Instagram, have become dominant means in modern da'wah. The findings in this study indicate that digital media opens up vast opportunities to significantly expand the reach of da'wah. For example, the use of social media platforms allows Islamic messages to be spread quickly to audiences around the world in a matter of seconds (Kholis, 2018). This is very different from traditional methods whose reach is often limited by physical and geographical factors.

An interview with Ustazah Nur, a preacher who actively uses social media, highlighted how digital media can create more intense and dynamic interactions, especially with the younger generation who are very familiar with this technology (Nur, personal communication, August 10, 2024). Through interactive features such as live streaming, comments, and direct Q&A sessions, preachers can communicate in real time with thousands of their followers. They can answer questions directly, provide clarification, and offer additional explanations, which not only enrich the audience's understanding but also increase the sense of involvement and closeness. This is in line with Abdurrahman & Badruzaman (2023) view, which states that digital media creates a more flexible two-way dialogue space compared to traditional media.

By utilizing this technology, preachers can respond to the needs and concerns of the audience in a faster and more appropriate manner.

The transformation of da'wah through digital media also brings new challenges that need to be addressed wisely. One of the main challenges is the risk of message distortion. Due to the nature of digital media which is very open, dynamic, and easily accessible to various parties, there is a great potential for da'wah messages to be misinterpreted, misunderstood, or even manipulated by other parties before reaching a wider audience (Rivani, 2020). The spread of inaccurate information or modified messages can cause confusion and even spark controversy. In addition, the nature of digital media which tends to emphasize speed and visual appeal can affect the depth of the da'wah material delivered. Content on social media is often made short and attention-grabbing to satisfy the platform's algorithm, which may not provide enough space for in-depth explanations or more complex theological reflections (Fadli, 2022).

This study identifies that the adaptation of da'wah to digital media is not only inevitable but also very necessary in facing the challenges of da'wah in the era of globalization. To maximize the potential of digital media while minimizing its risks, a well-planned strategy is needed. Dai can use digital media not only to deliver short messages but also as a gateway to more in-depth material. For example, they can provide links to more authoritative and comprehensive articles, videos, or books. In addition, hosting scheduled discussion sessions through digital platforms can give audiences the opportunity to ask questions and get further explanations in a more structured and in-depth setting.

The combination of traditional and digital media can offer a more holistic and comprehensive approach to da'wah. Traditional media remains important in maintaining the depth, authority, and authenticity of the message, while digital media can be used to expand reach and increase interaction and engagement. Thus, the use of da'wah strategies that include both types of media can increase the effectiveness of da'wah, ensuring that Islamic messages not only reach a wider audience but are also understood correctly and deeply. This approach is not only relevant but also essential in facing the social and technological dynamics of the contemporary era.

### **Traditional and Digital Media Integration Strategy in Da'wah**

To respond to the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities offered by traditional and digital media, this study proposes a strategic approach that integrates the strengths of both types of media. By combining the advantages of in-depth direct interaction and the authority inherent in traditional media, together with the flexibility and broad reach offered by digital media, da'wah can be carried out in a more effective, adaptive, and appropriate way to suit the needs of diverse audiences. This integration allows da'wah to remain relevant in various contexts, both for those who prefer a personal approach and those who are more comfortable with digital technology.

One concrete example of this integration strategy is by holding face-to-face lectures which are then recorded and distributed through digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, or special websites. This approach not only expands the reach of da'wah by allowing audiences who cannot attend in person to access da'wah materials, but also facilitates more flexible learning. Audiences can re-watch lectures anytime and anywhere, which helps to deepen their understanding of the topics discussed. In this way, da'wah can still reach different groups of people, including those who have limited time or physical access to the lecture location (Rani, 2023).

Religious books that were previously only available in traditional print formats can also be adapted into digital formats, such as e-books or mobile applications, which are more accessible to the younger generation and those who are familiar with technology. With these digital versions, Muslims, especially the younger generation, can easily download and read religious materials at any time, directly from their devices (Fitria & Aditia, 2020). This not only increases accessibility but also ensures that authentic and in-depth content remains accessible to a wider audience. In an era where speed and convenience are a priority, offering da'wah materials in these easily accessible formats is crucial to attracting and engaging audiences.

From a mass communication perspective, the integration of traditional and digital media allows for a more comprehensive delivery of da'wah messages, where digital media supports expanding reach and increasing interaction through interactive features such as polls, Q&A sessions, and real-time comments. Meanwhile, traditional media still plays an important role in maintaining the authority, accuracy, and depth of the message delivered. In this process, traditional media acts as a gatekeeper or controller of message quality, while digital media strengthens the distribution and interaction between the da'wah (preacher) and the audience. The success of this integration is seen from the effectiveness of message delivery, increasing audience participation, and the ability of da'wah to remain relevant amidst technological changes.

This integration strategy also involves comprehensive training for preachers in the use of digital media. Preachers need to be equipped with adequate skills and knowledge to effectively utilize digital platforms, including how to convey religious messages in a way that is interesting and relevant to digital audiences. For example, preachers need to learn about the use of appropriate language, the preparation of attractive visual content, and the use of interactive features such as polling, Q&A, and live chat to increase interaction with their followers (Alamsyah et al., 2024). This training aims to ensure that da'wah delivered through digital media maintains the essence and integrity of the Islamic message, without sacrificing its depth and accuracy.

Integration between traditional and digital media occurs through a process that is the theory of innovation diffusion. The theory of innovation diffusion (Everett Rogers) explains how an innovation (in this case the integration of traditional and digital media in preaching) is adopted by society through several stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation.

The innovation in this study is the integration of traditional media such as live lectures and book publishing with digital media such as social media platforms, video streaming, and e-books. The message delivered maintains the authority and depth of Islamic preaching but is enriched with the flexibility and interaction offered by digital media. This integration allows preaching to reach a wider and more diverse audience, combining the personal approach of traditional media with the speed and accessibility of digital media.

The adoption of this innovation follows several stages: starting with knowledge, where preachers and audiences realize the benefits of digital technology to expand the reach of preaching. Then the persuasion stage, where they begin to be interested in the advantages of digital media in terms of interaction and reach. At the decision stage, preachers decide to adopt digital technology, such as uploading recorded lectures to YouTube or creating e-books. The implementation stage involves the actual application of this strategy, while the confirmation stage occurs when preachers and audiences recognize the benefits of this integration and continue to use it (Ahmad, 2020).

Based on the theory of innovation diffusion, users of innovation in preaching can be categorized as:

- a. Innovators: A group of preachers who were the first to adopt digital technology in their preaching. They generally have good technological literacy and are proactive in trying new methods.
- b. Early Adopters: Preachers who are influenced by the success of innovators and begin to try digital media integration.
- c. Early Majority: This group adopts after seeing real evidence of the success of innovation.
- d. Late Majority: They are slower in adoption and usually require stronger evidence or coercion from the social environment.
- e. Laggards: This group still relies heavily on traditional preaching methods and tends to be skeptical of the use of digital technology.

Innovation in spreading da'wah through digital media is currently at the implementation stage, where most preachers have adopted digital technology as part of their da'wah strategy. The use of platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook, as well as e-books and mobile applications to convey Islamic messages is increasingly common. This shows that da'wah has developed rapidly from traditional methods such as face-to-face lectures or printed book publications to a more modern and flexible approach. In this implementation stage, preachers not only utilize digital technology to expand the reach of da'wah, but also utilize interactive features provided by digital platforms, such as question and answer sessions, polls, and live streaming to create a more dynamic two-way dialogue between preachers and audiences.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that the transformation of da'wah from traditional media to digital media has brought about significant changes in the way the message of Islam is disseminated. Digital media, with its wider reach and ability for two-way interaction, offers great opportunities for contemporary da'wah. However, traditional media still has advantages in terms of authority, depth of material, and personal interaction that cannot be completely replaced by digital media. The application of these findings suggests that a combination of traditional and digital media can provide a more holistic approach to da'wah. By integrating the advantages of both types of media, da'wah can reach a wider audience while maintaining the authority and depth of the message. The implication of this transformation is the need to continue to develop adaptive da'wah strategies, which are able to answer the challenges of the digital era while still adhering to the fundamental values of Islam. Further speculation can include how digital media will continue to develop and perhaps dominate da'wah platforms in the future, with the potential for technological innovation that increasingly facilitates access and interaction in spreading the message of Islam. Further research is recommended to focus on the development and evaluation of effective da'wah strategies in the context of digital media. In addition, there needs to be more in-depth research on how to maintain the authenticity and depth of the Islamic message in digital formats, as well as the long-term impact of this transformation on religious understanding and practice among digital audiences. Other research can also explore further how the integration of traditional and digital media can be optimized to support da'wah that is more inclusive and responsive to evolving social dynamics.



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