

# Branding Piety and the Mediatization of Da'wah through Digital Content

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

Social Media Content; Mediatization;  
Branding Piety; Digital Da'wah

The rapid development of digital media has significantly reshaped the landscape of Islamic da'wah, leading to a redefinition of piety and religious expressions within contemporary Muslim societies. This research explores how mediatization and branding strategies reframe Islamic da'wah through the production of digital content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Spotify. The study aims to critically analyze how elements of media logic speed, aesthetics, emotionality, and interactivity influence the presentation and perception of piety in the digital public sphere. Employing a qualitative descriptive method with an exploratory content analysis approach. Results reveal that piety is not merely internalized but also constructed, commodified, and algorithmically mediated through strategic branding techniques, such as visual identity formation, emotional storytelling, positioning, and audience loyalty cultivation. While digital media expands the reach of da'wah, it also risks reducing spiritual values into performative symbols shaped by market attention and algorithmic virality. This study underscores the need for critical awareness of mediatization effects and offers new insights into how Islamic da'wah must adapt without losing its transformative spiritual essence in an era of digital hyperconnectivity.

## 1. Introduction

The advancement of digital media has brought about a major shift in the dynamics of social life, including the way individuals and communities express their religious beliefs. Along with the current flow of globalization of information, religious practices no longer take place in physical spaces such as mosques, Islamic boarding schools, or religious study groups, but have also spread to digital spaces that are open and interactive. Social media such as Instagram, TikTok, Spotify and YouTube have become new means for spreading spiritual values, while also forming a new style in the representation of piety. This transformation shows that religious expression is no longer limited to religious rituals alone, but also appears in the form of symbols, lifestyles, and digital narratives that are consumed massively by the public. This condition marks how important religion, especially Islamic preaching, is experiencing adjustments in form or method of delivery in the current scope of communication.

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that are consumed massively by the public. This condition marks how important religion, especially Islamic preaching, is experiencing adjustments in form or method of delivery in the current scope of communication. Slama (112:2017) explains that piety in modern urban Muslim society does not only arise from spiritual appreciation, but also from the way of dressing, consumption choices, and the use of religious symbols in everyday life. Not infrequently, piety comes in the form of a social representation attached to a lifestyle, which is then presented in images to the public via various digital platforms. This understanding is important in reading the dynamics of religious digital content on social media, where piety is not only lived, but also communicated through appearance and exposure.

The depiction of piety in the digital space then not only shapes individual perceptions of religiosity, but also influences the way the Muslim community, especially in Indonesia, lives and expresses its religious identity in daily life. The practice of piety among Indonesian Muslim communities is not limited to individual worship, but also reflects social dynamics manifested in collective activities and popular culture. The urban Muslim community, especially the younger generation, is increasingly actively adopting an Islamic lifestyle that is influenced by digital preaching content. Studies presented by preachers such as Hanan Attaki, for example, succeeded in attracting the attention of young people through a contextual approach to everyday issues such as mental health and the search for identity (Haq, 2024:25). This situation indicates that piety has developed into a form of social identity shaped by the interaction between religious values, lifestyle and media dynamics.

This transformation of the image of piety on social media cannot be separated from the influence of the social environment, but is part of a broader process in preaching and its dissemination. To understand this dynamic in its entirety, it is important to look at how da'wah was carried out before the digital era took over various forms of social and religious communication. Before the digital era developed rapidly, the spread of Islamic messages in Indonesia took place through traditional media such as mosque pulpits, *taklim* councils, Islamic boarding schools, and print media. Conventional da'wah at this time was face-to-face and one-way, relying on the symbolic authority of the preacher conveyed through lectures and direct recitations. Religious validity is built through the power of knowledge passed down from generation to generation through the *sanad* and yellow book curriculum taught in Islamic boarding schools (Hamidah & Chasannudin, 2021:274). This scientific tradition makes ulama the main guardians of da'wah teachings, but the method of delivery is often exclusive and can only be understood by certain groups. Reconveying a religious message is not an easy thing, because the message often relies heavily on the physical presence of the preacher and the direct relationship he builds with his congregation. Da'wah as a communication practice at that time was more tied to certain space, time and social structures. Adjustments occurred when da'wah entered the digital era, which brought a much more open, fast, and image-based or media-based logic of information distribution. However, with the development of information technology and the widespread use of social media, this traditional da'wah model has begun to undergo significant transformation. The emergence of the digital era not only presents a new medium, but also changes the way da'wah is produced, distributed and consumed by the community.

The shift from traditional da'wah to digital da'wah reflects major changes in the religious communication ecosystem. Platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, TikTok and Instagram open new spaces for various forms of religious expression that are more interactive, audio, visual and can be accessed at any time. Not only conventional ulama or ustadz are involved in producing da'wah content, but also public figures, hijrah artists, and non-religious content creators also convey moral and spiritual messages through digital media (Muthohirin, 2021: 7). This condition also breaks down the boundaries between conventional formal religious scholarly structures and media popularity, where credibility is not solely determined by depth of knowledge, but also by the number of followers, engagement, and the ability to package messages in an attractive format (Al Kahfi et al., 2024: 13). Da'wah is no longer delivered exclusively by religious leaders in formal structures, but is spread horizontally through digital networks that enable participation from various backgrounds.

Mediatization is the key point of this transformation, when religious practices are not only spread through the media, but are also shaped by the logic of the media itself such as demands for visuality, speed and audience involvement (Rohmawati et al., 2025: 138). This transition not only affects who preaches, but also how da'wah is delivered. The format and style of preaching has also transformed following the tastes and media consumption habits of today's digital society.

The structure of digital preaching today is no longer limited to long lectures or tafsir texts, but rather comes in various forms that are more interesting, easy to understand, and adapted to social media algorithms. Piety is presented through hijrah-themed Instagram reels, reflective TikTok videos about death, or a series of images containing hadith quotes packaged in a minimalist and poetic way. Even spiritual podcasts with the theme of self-healing with an Islamic perspective are starting to become a new alternative in conveying religious values. Azmi and Fajriana (2023) show that Islamic preaching content on TikTok Indonesia tends to combine religious narratives with popular values and cinematic elements such as dramatic back sound and dynamic editing. Meanwhile, Campbell (2012) in his study of religion and digital media emphasized that religious mediatization encourages the adaptation of spiritual messages into the logic of digital distribution and consumption. This means that preaching messages must now meet the requirements of being "worthy of broadcast" in the feed or FYP: concise, emotional, aesthetic, and easy to share. This marked the emergence of a new form of piety that was not only spiritually oriented, but also aesthetic and performative. This expression of religious processes reflects a transformation in the way religion is represented in digital spaces. One approach to understand this symptom is through the concept of branding piety.

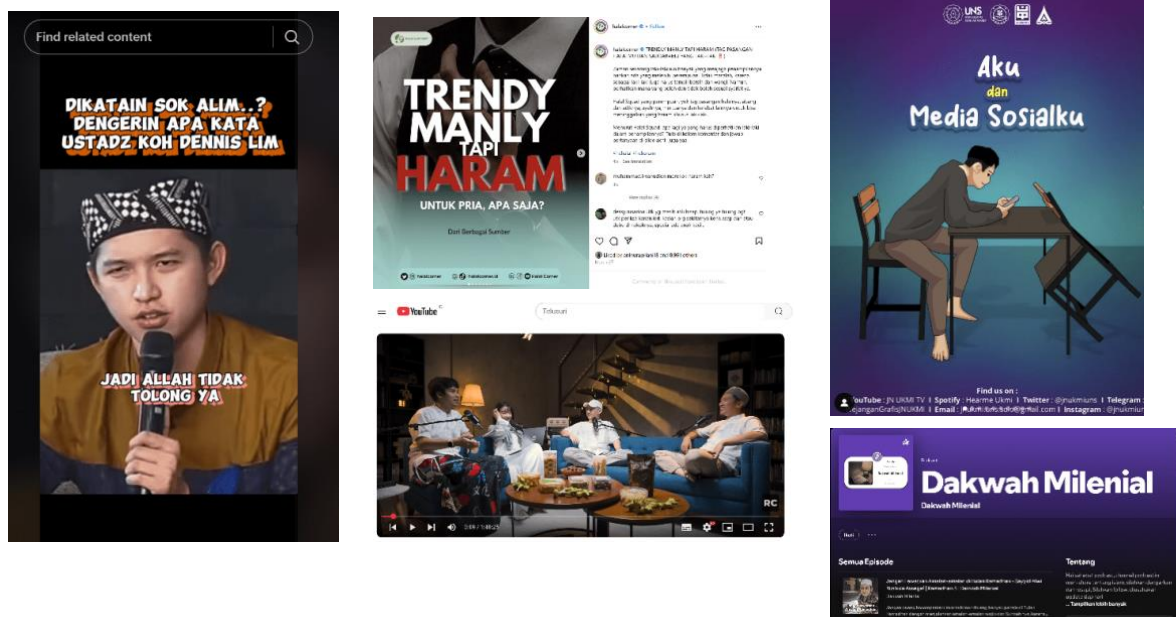


Figure 1. Da'wah Content on Various Digital Platforms

Branding piety is a process where religious values are packaged in an attractive and easy to understand way, to suit the way social media is applied. Piety is packaged not only as a spiritual value, but also as a digital identity that can build interest, and can be consumed and shared. Visualization of Islamic lifestyles, such as morning routines with dhikr, OOTD wearing the hijab, and cinematic footage of Ramadan moments, are part of the strategy to build an aesthetically pious image (Nisa, 79:2018). The use of calm color tones, soft typography, indicates that piety is not just a moral call, but an emotional experience conveyed communicatively. This branding is not only carried out by Muslim celebrities, but also by young female content creators who combine religious identity with a modern lifestyle through digital storytelling (Nisa, 85:2018). This process shows that piety branding is a conscious effort to frame piety as a relevant, relatable, and algorithmic image. So, piety branding is not just a way of communicating about religion, but is also a practice that adapts

itself to the tastes of algorithms, trends and aesthetic preferences of today's social media audiences. So, this certainly cannot be separated from mediatization, where the media is no longer just a communication channel, but also shapes the logic of thinking and behavior in society.

Mediatization is not just a digitalization process, but rather a structural transformation in which media logic begins to regulate the way society carries out its social and spiritual life. Based on the context of da'wah, mediatization means that religious messages are no longer conveyed purely based on textual or traditional references, but begin to be packaged according to the format, rhythm and aesthetics of popular media (Hjarvard, 2011: 121). Media not only functions as a channel of information, but also as an agent that shapes meaning through image selection, delivery method, content duration, and how to interact with the audience. Campbell (2021:8) emphasizes that digitalized religion is not only experiencing developments in terms of how it is spread, but is also experiencing negotiations of meaning due to algorithmic demands and dynamics of audience attention. The picture in Indonesia shows that preaching messages are now packaged more concisely, cinematically, and according to the tastes of the digital generation who prioritize speed and convenience (Naamy, 2022:15).

As preaching content develops on various social media platforms, this content not only aims to convey spiritual messages but also functions as a communication medium that is aesthetic and easily digested by the audience. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Spotify are now the dominant spaces of expression for the young Muslim generation, presenting da'wah in the format of short videos, sequential image displays, reflective captions, and spiritual podcasts. Along with the rapid flow of content and competition of social media algorithms, digital da'wah is transforming into a form of religious expression that is aesthetic, emotional, and easy to share. This encourages the expansion of studies to see how elements such as color, symbols, clothing, word choice, language style, and storytelling are used to form an image of piety that is easily recognized and understood by the public.

Table 1. Da'wah Content on Various Digital Platforms

No.	Figure/ Phenomenon	Description	Platform/Program
1	Ustadz Felix Siau	Known for his firm approach to preaching, he is now softer and more reflective through the podcast "Escape" ".	"Escape" Podcast with Raymond Chin
2	Habib Husein Ja'far	Once associated with Shia issues, but actively spreading moderate da'wah through the "Login" podcast with Onadio Leonardo.	Podcast "Login" with Onadio Leonardo
3	Ustadz Hanan Attaki	Known for his relaxed and humorous lecture style, as well as funny interactions with study participants.	"Sharing Time" in various cities
4	Ustadz Dennis Lim	Content creator known for his attractive appearance and inspiring preaching style.	Various social media platforms and speaking engagements
5	Dondy Tan	The well-known preacher and content creator is known for his involvement in religious discussions and debates, which demonstrates his deep knowledge in the field of theology.	YouTube and social media

6	Ustadzah Oki Setiana Dewi	An entrepreneur and doctor who provides parenting education, his son is known to be fluent in Arabic	TikTok, Instagram and parenting talks
7	Ustadz Derry Sulaiman	Accompanying influencer Bobon Santoso's conversion process, Dr Richard, demonstrated a personal and touching approach to da'wah.	YouTube and social media
8	Gus Miftah	The controversy over the joke with the iced tea seller which was considered derogatory, drew criticism from the public and political figures.	Lectures in various areas
9	Ustadz Adi Hidayat	Conveying a message about the importance of spiritual and mental preparation in facing the challenges of 2025; and received an invitation from President Prabowo.	Launching event of the Indonesian Planting Movement Program (Gerina)
10	'War Takjil' Ramadhan 2024–2025	The viral phenomenon where non-Muslims join in hunting for takjil has led to discussions about tolerance between religious communities.	TikTok, Instagram, and Social Media
11	Podcast Da'wah Sunnah	Presenting studies and da'wah in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.	Spotify
12	Berceloteh Dakwah	A collection of da'wah and murotal from various famous clerics, including KH. Zainuddin MZ and Ustadz Hanan Attaki.	Spotify
13	Podcast Ramah	Discusses social and religious issues with a friendly approach, including the topic of unregistered marriage and the role of women in Islam.	Spotify
14	Islamic Religious Talk Group	A collection of lectures, studies, and sermons from the best Indonesian preachers and teachers.	Spotify
15	@kontendakwahtiktok	An Instagram account that shares a collection of preaching content from TikTok, including snippets of lectures and reminders of faith.	Instagram

16	Islamic Content Ideas On TikTok	Various inspirational Islamic content ideas that can increase creativity in creating Islamic preaching content.	TikTok
17	Islamic Da'wah posts on TikTok	How to share Islamic da'wah posts that are useful and inspiring for the people.	TikTok
18	2025 Muslim Caption di TikTok	A collection of inspirational Muslim captions for 2025, featuring Islamic wisdom, prayers, and meaningful life goals.	TikTok
19	Quotes for Gratitude in Every Situation di TikTok	Islamic reminder video about the importance of being grateful in all situations, featuring heart-touching quotes.	TikTok
20	Alhamdulillah Untuk 2024, Bismillah Untuk 2025 di TikTok	A video expressing gratitude for 2024 and hopes to welcome 2025 with blessings has gone viral on TikTok.	TikTok

This research aims to map how pious values are represented through digital preaching content which is growing rapidly on social media platforms. Popular and viral da'wah content on various platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, Spotify, and YouTube, plays an important role in the process of da'wah transformation in the context of Islamic mediatization. In this research, the aesthetic patterns and stories used in these contents will be analyzed, as well as how these elements contribute to forming an image of piety that is not only accepted as doctrine, but also constructed digitally by taking into account aesthetics, algorithms and social media trends. Therefore, this research not only examines preacher figures, but also explores how the preaching content itself creates new social spaces, shapes a culture of faith, and introduces a modern branding model of religious piety that is relevant to the dynamics of today's social media.

## 2. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an explorative-descriptive content analysis method to examine how piety is represented in digital preaching content through branding strategies in the current of Islamic mediatization. This approach is suitable for exploring the meaning, narrative and image symbols that appear in digital content in depth, as explained by Denzin and Lincoln that qualitative research aims to understand phenomena in a particular socio-cultural context by prioritizing meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018: 5).

The unit of analysis in this study is digital da'wah content on social media, especially from the TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Spotify platforms, which display pious values in the form of videos, captions, image carousels, and podcasts. The selection of content was carried out purposively based on the following criteria: (1) containing explicit or implicit da'wah messages; (2) prioritizing aspects of appearance and exposure of religious elements; (3) produced by public figures or creators of ustadz/ustadzah or non-ustadz/ustadzah; and (4) having a high level of interaction on social media such as likes, shares, and comments (Kriyantono, 2020:45).

Methodologically, this study uses qualitative content analysis based on Harold D. Lasswell's approach, namely: Who says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect (Lasswell, 1948:37). Even though it was developed for the mass media context, this approach is still relevant for reading da'wah communications circulating in digital media because it is able to trace how messages are designed and received by the audience simultaneously. Data were collected through digital content tracking techniques by exploring certain hashtags such as #visualdakwah, #muslimcontent, and #hijrahstory on TikTok and Instagram. Researchers observed content

production patterns from popular accounts and archived content that met the criteria for the unit of analysis. Each content was downloaded, documented, and then analyzed manually using digital field notes and an open coding system. In order to maintain data accuracy, cross-platform data checking was carried out (Instagram and TikTok compared to YouTube and Spotify), as well as triangulation of theories between the concepts of branding, mediatization, and religious representation.

In order to maintain digital ethics, researchers only analyze content that is public (not private) without explicitly mentioning the name of the account or creator's identity, unless the account is a public account belonging to a well-known figure. Researchers position themselves as observers who do not participate in the production or interaction of content. Apart from that, it is important to maintain an objective distance and avoid any attachments that influence the assessment.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 Transformation of Da'wah into Social Media Feeds

Islamic da'wah is experiencing a fundamental transformation, moving from conventional face-to-face forms in physical spaces such as mosques, taklim councils and Islamic boarding schools to fluid, interactive and hyper-reality digital spaces, especially social media. In the context of social changes resulting from the digital revolution, Islamic da'wah has experienced a very significant shift in form. From what was originally face-to-face in physical spaces such as mosques, religious study groups, and Islamic boarding schools, preaching has now migrated to fluid and interactive digital spaces, especially social media. This transformation not only touches on communication channels, but also the logic and meaning structure of the da'wah itself.

Transformative da'wah is a model of da'wah, which does not only rely on verbal (conventional) da'wah as a means of providing religious materials to the community by placing da'i as disseminators of religious messages, but internalizes religious messages into the real life of the community by providing direct community assistance. So in this case, da'wah is not only to strengthen the religiosity aspect of the community, but also to strengthen the social basis to realize social transformation (Fahrurrozi, 2017). Transformative da'wah has five important aspects that are its core values. First, from the aspect of da'wah material, in the da'wah material section there is a significant change from Ubudiyah material to social material. Second, changes in the methodological aspect from monologue to dialogue. Third, transformative da'wah involves a lot of cooperation in its actions. Fourth, there is a form of siding with the weak (mustad'afin). Fifth, the preachers advocate and organize the community regarding a case that occurs in their area so that the fate of farmers, fishermen, laborers, and other oppressed people are accompanied. The final result of transformative preaching is to produce preachers who are able to provide assistance to the social problems faced by the community.

Da'wah activities essentially cover all aspects of human life. The principle of preaching *Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* covers all aspects of human life. *Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* also covers all aspects of human life, both in cultural, political, economic, social activities and all things can be used as preaching activities. Preaching has an idea about the principle of progress, continuing to innovate and progressiveness which is interpreted as a continuous and repetitive process for good things so that preaching is always with a dynamic idea content. Dynamic is interpreted as something that continues to grow and develop according to the demands of space and time.

In addition, Nurcholish Madjid stated that sociologically-empirically, da'wah develops in the direction of *nahi munkar*, namely towards a reactive struggle and lacking in *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* which invites a proactive attitude is still a big challenge for Muslims. In the sociological perspective, *al maruf* and *al munkar* refer to the bad and good that exist in society (Safei, 2016). Muslims are always asked to be able to recognize the bad and good that exist in society, then encourage and foster and dare to do good deeds and at the same time prevent, hinder and inhibit bad actions.

In another sense, Islamic da'wah also means an effort that is carried out repeatedly and continuously to achieve better changes in accordance with the intentions of the Islamic religion. There are three aspects of change that can occur through continuous delivery of da'wah. These changes occur in humans in various aspects, namely *syu'ur* (feeling aspect), *al-fikr* (thought aspect), *akhlak-shuluk* (behavior) to become a person with a more Islamic personality or *khairu ummah*. So from some of these understandings and changes, when you want to reach the Muslim community,

there are phases of change. These two changes are individual change (Taghyir al Afrad) and system change (Taghyir al Nidam).

Thus, mediatization shifts preaching from a process of transmitting values to a communication practice that is subject to media logic: interesting, relevant, and viral. This process not only influences the way da'wah is packaged but also changes the meaning and orientation of da'wah itself in the digital space.

The dominance of media logic in the digital da'wah process causes a shift in the function of da'wah from spiritual practice to a form of performativity that is curated aesthetically and strategically. The audience not only assesses the content of the message, but also how the message is displayed: whether it is interesting enough, cinematic, and shareable. Piety is not only felt privately but also shown to the public to see and understand (Evolvi, 2019: 134). Digital preachers also tend to compose content by considering branding elements, upload timing, engagement rate, and algorithm trends, so that da'wah messages can become a product that competes for attention in market attention. Even in some cases, da'wah content is used as part of monetization through sponsorship, AdSense, and even halal product endorsements (Nisa, 2024:105). As a result, da'wah practices are no longer only oriented towards conveying values, but also adapting to the rapidly changing tastes of the digital market. Mediatization, at this point, challenges spiritual authenticity and opens up debate about the boundaries between the sincerity of da'wah and the commodification of religion. This reality shows how mediatization not only influences the way da'wah is delivered but also reshapes the way piety is displayed and perceived in the digital space.

The transition in the way of preaching in the digital era has also triggered a shift in the control of religious discourse. If in the past a cleric was recognized because of his knowledge, education, or position in a religious organization, now popularity on social media has become a new measure of influence in providing religious knowledge. Digital preachers who do not have a formal religious education background can also gain public trust through the number of followers, communication skills that emphasize aesthetics, and the ability to form relatable narratives (Cheong, 2016:81). The power of this algorithm-based influence marks the birth of new religious influencers who are closer to the lifestyle of the younger generation and have a more personal approach than structural. This dynamic reflects that in the digital space, trust in religious figures is built through media logic, no longer solely based on the authority of texts or institutions. As a result, preaching becomes more fluid, democratic, but also at risk of experiencing a lack of substance/shallowness because it is determined by market preferences and not depth of understanding. This condition opens up space for popular figures to become the main reference, regardless of the depth of their knowledge, because of their closeness to the community.

Even though studies on digital da'wah are growing, most studies still focus on figures or influencers as the main subject. Previous studies highlighted popular preachers such as Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Felix Siauw, or Oki Setiana Dewi, emphasizing their influence on the hijrah phenomenon and the religious behavior of the younger generation (Fahira, 2024). However, this approach often ignores content as something that stands alone, even though in the world of social media, content has an important role in shaping stories, building perceptions, and depicting piety values in an easy-to-understand and interesting way. Very few studies have specifically examined how the elements of appearance and flow in da'wah content are constructed to form an aesthetic and communicative image of piety. In fact, da'wah content on Instagram, TikTok, Spotify, and YouTube has its own structure and logic that is different from conventional lectures. Therefore, it is important to see piety branding not only from the perspective of the figures who carry it, but also as a practice of meaning production that takes place through digital content itself.

The emergence of new media which brings the principles of digitality, interactivity, hypertextual, virtuality and dispersal makes new media a medium that makes it easier to exchange information. Optimization of da'wah is increasingly sharp with the use of social media by facilitating the exchange of information. In addition, on social media, da'wah is presented in an attractive form and the packaging is presented in the form of film, video, writing, images and others. In addition, on social media, da'i and mad'u can share about the given theme. In addition, the nature of the internet and social media which are not based on region, place and time make it easy to access. Then accessibility to information can be felt directly because on social media questions can be asked directly by its users.



Through the perspective of mediatization theory (Hjarvard, 2011; Campbell, 2021), it can be explained that the media not only mediates da'wah, but also reshapes the format, aesthetics, and orientation of da'wah according to media logic: fast, visual, emotional, and viral. This marks a fundamental shift from the traditional communication model (based on authority and text) to the mediatized communication model (based on public attention and aesthetics).

A comparison of traditional da'wah perspective models through several things which constitute the concept of mediation includes several aspects:

Table 3.1 Compares Traditional and Digital Da'wah

Aspect	Traditional Da'wah	Digital Da'wah
Channel	Pulpit, Assembly, face-to-face activities	Media Social
Media	Long Talk, Heavy Text	Reels, Podcast, figure
Authority	Science, Sanad, Tafsir	Popularity (Followers, Likes, Share)
Style	Formal	Estetik, personal, follow the times
Interaction	Oneway	Ekklusif, two ways

### 3.2 Changes in Social Media Da'wah Interaction

Mediatization of da'wah, on the one hand, opens great opportunities to expand the reach of da'wah and build social piety based on digital communities. Da'wah can now be presented in multimedia formats short films, infographics, microblogging, and even live streaming which make religious messages more easily accepted by the digital native generation. On the other hand, mediatization carries the risk of religious banality: da'wah messages are reduced to mere trends, popularity competitions, or viral content without spiritual depth and authentic social commitment.

The phenomenon of mediatization of Islamic preaching on social media can be observed in various digital formats, such as Instagram reels, short storytelling on TikTok, carousel posts on Instagram, to live streaming of preaching on YouTube and Facebook. Preaching now no longer only relies on long lectures on the podium or heavy writings, but is packaged into visual, short, emotional content that is easy for the digital public to consume in seconds. Social media is not only a neutral channel for preaching, but also an "autonomous environment" that shapes the way preaching is structured, delivered, and received. Within this framework, there are three main aspects of mediatization of da'wah that appear on social media:



Figure 2. Reels @hanan\_attaki

Many young preachers now create 30–90 second Instagram reels containing excerpts from Al-Quran verses or hadiths accompanied by aesthetic visualizations natural scenes, emotional background music, and running text. For example, accounts such as @ustadzabdulsomad\_real and @hanan\_attaki often use this format. From a mediatization perspective, this shows that da'wah is now subject to media logic: content must be visual, concise and emotional to suit the social media audience's attention which tends to be short (attention economy). The demand to attract attention (attention capture) means that religious messages must be packaged using cinematic techniques, not just the content of the text.

Apart from that, the mediatization of da'wah can have an impact on the reconstruction from sanad to popularity. The convenience provided by social media makes popularity sharper. A preacher on TikTok can go viral and have millions of followers even though he doesn't necessarily have a formal religious educational background. On the other hand, clerics with high scientific authority and knowledge may have little digital influence because they do not follow digital communication styles. Mediatization causes a shifting of authority: the legitimacy of da'wah shifts from the sanad basis (traditional scientific transmission) to the popularity metrics basis (number of followers, likes, shares). This implies that the success of preaching on social media is measured more based on emotional resonance and engagement, not depth of knowledge.

Emotional logic in posts related to preaching is one of the attractions for packaging content. Many viral reels or posts on the theme of preaching are content that touches on emotional aspects stories of migration, touching stories of charity, or stories of death that bring reflection. Accounts like @dawahvisual use dramatic visuals set against sad music to amplify emotions.



Figure 3. Instagram @dawahvisual.id

Mediatization makes the media push for more "emotional" formats in order to go viral. As a consequence, da'wah narratives are often structured to arouse emotions (fear, hope, sadness) rather than merely educating rationally. This opens up a great opportunity to expand the reach of da'wah but also risks reducing intellectual depth and replacing it with momentary sentiment.

The principle of piety in the era of mediatized preaching must be understood more critically. Piety must not only be judged from visual appearances or social recognition in the media but must be reflected in an active attitude towards social change, siding with the weak, and internalizing Islamic values in real life. In this framework, ideal digital da'wah is not only aimed at collecting clicks and views but rather directing Muslims towards personality change (Taghyir al-Afrad) and social system change (Taghyir al-Nidam) that is more Islamic and just.

The transformation of da'wah to social media feeds shows that da'wah now operates under the logic of mediatization: fast, emotional, visual and viral. This opens up great opportunities to expand the reach of da'wah, but also brings challenges in maintaining depth, scientific authority, and authenticity of piety. Therefore, preachers and digital da'wah activists need to design communication strategies that do not only follow the logic of the media but remain rooted in the transformative principles of Islam: building people and society who are faithful, critical and have noble character.

### 3.3. Branding Piety on Digital Market

The concept of piety has not only become a personal spiritual practice but has also undergone a transformation into a symbolic commodity in the digital market space. This phenomenon can be explained through the application of branding principles to piety, where religious identity is constructed, marketed, and capitalized in the form of social media content. This process creates a

new dynamic which combines spiritual ideals with digital commercial logic. Branding, in this context, refers to a series of communication strategies that aim to build perceptions, shape emotions, and create attachments between audiences and certain images (Keller, 2013). In the digital market, piety branding is realized through visual, verbal, and emotional elements that are presented systematically to strengthen the religious identity of a person or a community. Analysis of the practice of piety branding on social media shows the application of several main elements of branding, namely:



Figure 4. Instagram Post @MuslimahDaily.com

Piety is constructed as a consistent visual identity: the use of Islamic symbols (such as the shar'i hijab, robes, digital prayer beads), the choice of neutral and pastel colors (white, cream, emerald green) for the Instagram feed, as well as the account bio which includes quotes from verses or hadiths. For example, Instagram accounts such as @muslimahdaily show how Islamic visual aesthetics are chosen to form a strong Islamic image. In addition, digital da'wah practitioners position themselves in certain market niches, for example as "Millennial Ustadz", "Hijab Influencer", or "Muslimah Motivator". This positioning aims to differentiate themselves from other competitors in the digital da'wah market and create certain emotional associations with the target audience. Effective positioning allows the audience to associate a certain type of piety with their own lifestyle.

Through reels, Instagram stories, preaching podcasts, and live streaming, piety branding practitioners intensively build personal narratives: hijrah stories, spiritual experiences, Umrah trips, or alms activities. This communication is designed to create emotional and relatable storytelling, strengthening the emotional connection between the "pious brand" and the audience (Escalas, 2004). Continuous interaction with followers through Islamic-themed giveaways (such as mushaf prizes, mukena, umrah tickets), online discussions, and exclusive programs (such as paid online tafsir classes) aim to build audience loyalty to a particular pious brand. This turns followers into loyal consumers of digital da'wah content. The transformation of piety into a branding object has significant theological and sociological consequences. On the one hand, pious branding can expand da'wah to a wider audience, introducing Islamic values in an attractive, contemporary, and relatable format. This is in line with the principle of amar ma'ruf da'wah in the context of changing times.

However, from a critical perspective, piety branding has the potential to reduce spiritual values to mere visual symbols that are consumed superficially. As Bauman (2007) argues in the concept of liquid modernity, in a liquid society, identities including religious identities are easily formed and dissolved based on market demands, not the depth of value commitment. Thus, piety

constructed through social media risks becoming “performative piety,” where expressions of faith are more focused on viral external displays than on genuine internal transformation. Furthermore, the logic of branding demands piety to follow the principles of visual aesthetics and social media algorithms: content must be engaging, easily shared, and evoke immediate emotional reactions. This leads to what is called the commodification of religion—religion and spiritual practices are commodified into cultural products that can be exchanged in the digital marketplace (Einstein, 2008).

The piety emerging in the digital world is no longer just a personal spiritual expression, but has become a form that can be chosen, promoted, and consumed by many people. The identity of a pious Muslim is displayed through a uniform Instagram feed image, stylish sharia fashion style, to reflective captions that seem to present spiritual depth. This representation not only forms the perception of the “ideal Muslim” but also offers a model of piety that can be purchased through products, imitated through lifestyle, and measured through likes and followers (A'yunin & Triastuti, 2022: 5). This phenomenon shows how Islamic values, when entered into the logic of digital capitalism, can experience a shrinking of meaning and symbolic reduction. Da'wah content is no longer just a tool for spiritual education but also has the potential to become part of a symbolic economic ecosystem where piety is converted into an identity asset that has a selling value. Thus, piety branding becomes a cultural practice that is full of ambiguity on the one hand opening up creative space for the spread of Islamic values, but on the other hand is vulnerable to slipping into the commodification of spiritual images that lose their meaningful depth. This also reflects that the practice of branding piety cannot be separated from religious dynamics which have also shifted in the digital era.

As an illustration, the viral phenomenon of short videos about alms or hijrah stories in cinematic format is often aimed more at increasing engagement than at encouraging deep spiritual reflection. In this condition, branding piety is no longer merely an instrument of preaching, but rather part of a competitive attention economy. Branding piety in the digital market is a complex phenomenon that reflects the combination of the logic of Islamic preaching with the logic of media capitalism. The strategy of branding elements such as identity, positioning, communication, and loyalty is effectively used to shape a religious image in front of a digital audience.

#### 4. Conclusion

The transformation of Islamic preaching in the digital era shows that mediatization has reshaped not only the way preaching is delivered, but also how the meaning of piety is constructed and consumed by society. Preaching, which was previously based on the authority of texts, traditional knowledge, and one-way communication, has now shifted to a communication format based on aesthetics, emotionality, interactivity, and social media popularity. Through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Spotify, preaching content has undergone significant changes: from long lectures to short videos, from heavy texts to dramatic visuals, and from knowledge based on sanad to credibility based on the number of followers and level of engagement. In the logic of mediatization (Hjarvard, 2011; Campbell, 2021), social media is not only a channel for spreading preaching, but also an actor that reforms the logic, format, and orientation of preaching itself.

The piety branding phenomenon shows how the value of piety is not only internalized as a personal spiritual dimension but also presented as a visual identity and emotional narrative that can be marketed in the digital market. Branding strategies, such as consistent visual identity, religious positioning, personal storytelling, and building audience loyalty, are applied to build a relatable and algorithmic image of piety. This branding strengthens the position of da'wah in the social media ecosystem but also carries risks: the occurrence of performative piety piety that is oriented towards social impressions rather than true spiritual transformation and the commodification of religion where religious values become part of the attention economy and cultural consumption. Consequently, there is ambiguity in digital da'wah: on the one hand, it expands the reach of da'wah to a global audience with a more creative and adaptive format; on the other hand, it has the potential to reduce the depth of religious values to merely a viral consumer image. Therefore, the practice of da'wah in the digital era demands critical awareness of media logic, the need to maintain a balance between media adaptation and spiritual sincerity, and efforts to continue to strengthen da'wah as an

effort to change individuals (Taghyir al-Afrad) and change the social system (Taghyir al-Nidam) towards a more Islamic, just, and civilized society.

This research contributes to the development of contemporary da'wah studies by confirming that understanding mediatization and branding piety is the key to understanding the changing structure of religious communication in the digital era. Future studies are advised to further deepen the analysis on aspects of digital da'wah content production, audience dynamics, and resistance to the commodification of religiosity, so that da'wah remains an authentic transformative force amidst the rapid flow of global mediatic.

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