

The Role of Digital Culture in Transforming Da'wa and Counseling Practices

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Abstract: Digital technology has transformed the way humans interact, including in the field of counseling. In Indonesia, with internet penetration exceeding 78%, the digital space offers vast opportunities for the development of Islamic counseling that supports the well-being of Muslim families. This study used a qualitative approach based on literature review (2019–2025) to explore the ethical opportunities and challenges of digital Islamic counseling. The results indicate that digital counseling can expand access, provide flexible methods, protect client privacy, and support family programs such as Islamic parenting and conflict management. However, ethical challenges remain, including data security, limitations of non-verbal communication, counselor legitimacy, and compliance with Islamic principles. This study suggests that digital Islamic counseling can strengthen family communication, address modern parenting issues, and reinforce moral-spiritual values. Therefore, digital Islamic counseling has the potential to become an effective, ethical, and sharia-compliant family counseling model in the digital era.

Keywords: Islamic Counseling; Digital Counseling; Family Well-being

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology and information has given rise to a digital culture that has fundamentally changed patterns of interaction, communication, and the way individuals obtain information. On the other hand, this dynamic has also given rise to a variety of new problems that require appropriate solutions so as not to cause wider negative impacts. In the context of Muslim society, the problems of modernity that come with digital culture pose complex social challenges, including for the world of da'wah and counseling practices (Rozikan, 2017).

The *We Are Social* report notes that in January 2023, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 212.9 million, or around 77% of the total population. This figure increased by 3.85% compared to the previous year, which was 205 million in January 2022. This data shows that the number of internet users in Indonesia continues to grow every year, with a significant increase occurring in 2017. On average, Indonesians use the internet for 7 hours and 42 minutes per day, with 98.3% of them accessing it via mobile devices. This phenomenon presents both opportunities and challenges in the context of Islamic preaching and counseling. The development of digital technology requires a new approach that is more relevant to the dynamics of society in the digital

age, so that preaching messages and counseling services can more effectively reach various levels of society (Uyuni, 2023).

The advancement of the digital era requires da'wah and counseling to undergo a transformation in order to remain relevant to the times. The essence of da'wah lies in inviting, encouraging, motivating, stimulating, and guiding others to accept religious teachings with full awareness for their own good, not for the benefit of the da'i. In this context, the application of Islamic counseling methods can be an alternative for preachers in carrying out da'wah in society. Islamic counseling itself is a guidance process oriented towards Islamic educational values and aims to build a *sakinah* life, which is a life that not only focuses on achieving material prosperity but also brings spiritual peace.

Effective da'wah is not limited to the delivery of religious teachings, but also needs to touch on the psychological and spiritual dimensions of individuals. In this case, Islamic counseling has an important role as a bridge that connects a person's psychological needs with Islamic values. The two can go hand in hand so that they are able to shape individuals with noble character (Gusdur & Diana, 2024). The collaboration between Islamic counseling and preaching, with the support of Islamic guidance and counseling, opens up opportunities for religious leaders such as *kiai*, *da'i*, and *muballigh* to work professionally in developing science and theory, both in the fields of preaching and Islamic counseling. Religious leaders can also be encouraged and actively involved in providing professional Islamic counseling services. With the advancement of the digital era, these efforts are becoming more widespread and easier to realize (Adiansyah, 2023).

Along with the development of technology and information, Islamic da'wah activities have shifted from direct activities to the digital realm, leaving conventional media for online platforms. Therefore, it is natural that social media is now seen as a more practical and communicative means of da'wah that reaches a wider audience. Various channels such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram are used to spread Islamic messages. (Ridho & Sabil, 2023).

Technological developments have also had a rapid impact on the field of counseling. Initially, the counseling process required face-to-face meetings between the counselor and the client, but now these services can be provided *online* using various media that enable long-distance counseling, commonly referred to as *Cyber Counseling* (Saphira, 2022, p. 48). These services can be accessed through various applications and digital platforms, such as WhatsApp, email, Zoom, Google Meet, and special counseling applications such as Riliv. In fact, a number of counseling websites not only provide online counseling services but also offer simple psychological assessment facilities, such as MBTI personality tests and other similar instruments. This shows that digital transformation has opened up new opportunities in the practice of preaching and counseling, in terms of reach, methods, and service innovation.

There are several previous studies relevant to this study, particularly those discussing the role of digital culture in bringing about changes in preaching and counseling, such as the study by Novi Anggraeni et al., which reveals that digital preaching has proven to be an effective means of promoting social change in modern society. Through social media, video platforms, and other digital applications, Islamic messages can be disseminated widely, quickly, and interactively, especially in reaching the younger generation. With a creative and adaptive approach, digital da'wah not only conveys religious values but also builds social awareness and positive behavioral change (Anggraeni, Hidayat, Fitriyani, & Qomariyah, 2025).

Additionally, Rega Saphira's journal (Saphira, 2022) "The Riliv Application Based on *Synchronous* as a Service in *Cyber Counseling* in the Digital Era," as well as the journal by Ball Qiss

Ayuni et al. "Cybercounseling as an Innovation for Counselors Facing Disruption Challenges in the Society 5.0 Era" (Ayuni, Umara, & Putri, 2021) both highlight the significant benefits of digital-based counseling services or Cyber Counseling. Both show that Cyber Counseling can be a practical solution for individuals in need, as it is not limited by differences in place or time. This is possible because online counseling can be accessed by counselors and clients anytime and anywhere, according to the agreement that has been made.

The research by Faizah Noer Laela and Rizqi Amaliatul Izzah, with their journal entitled "Utilization of Zoom Cloud Meeting Application as a Medium of Da'wah and Spiritual Guidance in Hospital Settings," emphasizes the significant benefits of using the Zoom Cloud Meeting application as a medium for da'wah and spiritual guidance in hospital settings. This application facilitates patients who cannot visit to communicate with their families. This virtual communication, when combined with spiritual guidance, not only supports the emotional well-being of patients but also contributes to their psychological and spiritual recovery (Laela & Izzah, 2025).

The topic "The Role of Digital Culture in Transforming Da'wa and Counseling Practices" was chosen because digital culture has fundamentally changed the way people communicate, obtain information, and access services. In da'wa, digitization allows Islamic messages to be disseminated more widely, quickly, and interactively, while in counseling, cyber counseling, which is a representation of digital counseling, provides practical, flexible, and easily accessible services across space and time. However, these changes also pose challenges in the form of the risk of spreading misinformation, religious misguidance, limitations in non-verbal communication, as well as issues of privacy and digital ethics. Therefore, this research is important to examine the role of digital culture in transforming da'wah and counseling, as well as to identify the positive and negative impacts of digital culture on the fields of da'wah and counseling.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to collect and analyze various literature related to effective digital strategies. Literature review is a research method used to compile, evaluate, and synthesize literature relevant to a specific research topic. This approach allows researchers to understand and present the latest developments in a particular field, as well as identify knowledge gaps that need further research (Sasikirana, 2024).

According to Zed, literature research involves a series of activities, ranging from collecting library data, reading, taking notes, to managing critically selected collection materials. This method does not require direct data collection in the field, as the main source of information comes from written materials. Thus, the focus of literature research is to explore, understand, and synthesize relevant information from various references to produce in-depth and comprehensive analysis (Anam, 2022).

In this study, the literature review was conducted using data obtained from books, national journals, and international journals published between 2015 and 2025. Data collection was carried out through literature searches using databases such as Google Scholar and Publish or Perish, using keywords including "digital culture," "digital da'wah," "digital counseling," and "cyber counseling."

Data collection in this study was carried out in several stages, namely: first, searching for journals using relevant keywords; second, comparing findings from various previous journals as a reference in compiling the writing framework; and third, summarizing the results of the comparison by adjusting them to the objectives of the literature review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Culture from a Da'wah Perspective

Digital culture is a term that refers to patterns of behavior, values, norms, and social practices that develop as a result of human interaction with digital technology (Suhud et al., 2025, p. 37). Meanwhile, according to Sugiharto in Bobby Daniel Nalle's research, digital culture refers to contemporary socio-cultural conditions in which various human actions and interactions are highly dependent on digital technology. The rapid and exponential development of digital technology is the result of collaboration between the mind-computer interface, particularly through deep learning programs, and advances in nanotechnology and genetic engineering. In this development, data occupies a central position, and cognitive science plays a major role in researching it, while digital devices function as progressive products that support human interaction, often referred to as digital prosthetic technology (Nalle, 2021, p. 274).

The presence of digital culture certainly brings significant changes to the way Muslims deliver and receive da'wah. These significant changes in society need to be balanced with changes in the way da'wah is carried out by *da'i*. Da'wah should not be too conventional (lectures) and ignore the developments of the times. Da'wah must be dynamic, progressive, and full of innovation. Preachers need to come up with new creations that are more relevant and adaptive so that they can benefit the people (Basit, 2013).

Dakwah in the digital era is no longer limited to mosque pulpits or traditional religious study forums, physical books, magazines, or newspapers. Digital da'wah can be accessed through various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Tik'Tok, and Twitter, which allow da'wah to be carried out more widely and quickly. Therefore, da'is or preachers are now not limited by time and space, because da'wah messages can be delivered worldwide in seconds (Nasution & Hasibuan, 2024).

Through the use of digital media, preachers can convey religious messages in various innovative formats, such as short videos, podcasts, preaching websites, e-books, and creative visual content in the form of motivational quotes that are widely distributed on Instagram and WhatsApp communities. In addition, the use of online conferencing applications such as Zoom and Google Meet has opened up opportunities for cross-border Islamic studies without the need for physical meetings. This phenomenon shows that digital da'wah is capable of expanding the scope of da'wah, accelerating the dissemination of messages, and facilitating access to da'wah.

Digital Culture Counseling Perspective

According to William P. (2016), cyber counseling is a strategy or virtual counseling conducted with the help of an internet connection. In this case, the counseling process takes place via the internet in the form of websites, email, Facebook, video conferencing (Yahoo Messenger), and other innovative ideas. The counseling process using cyber counseling or virtual counseling means that the counselor and client are not physically present in the same time and space (Budianto, Hidayah, & Aziz, 2019).

In the field of counseling, services that were previously limited to face-to-face interactions have now shifted towards the use of digital media. The presence of the internet allows the counseling communication process to no longer depend on face-to-face meetings, but can be done online through a network, so that counselors can still provide services to clients without having to meet face to face (Fadhilah, Aminah, & Marda, 2022). Online counseling services through WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, counseling websites, or other counseling applications provide

flexibility and convenience for clients, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic or for clients who are in areas with limited face-to-face services.

Counselors can now interact with clients or counselees through the use of digital technology. The purpose of this approach is to make it easier for counselors to provide assistance and create a comfortable atmosphere for clients when discussing their problems, without having to meet face-to-face. According to Ifdil (2013), there are several media that can be used in online-based counseling, including (Adela, N, & Nirwana, 2025):

1. Counseling Website

In cyber counseling, counselors can provide a special website as a service platform. Through this site, clients can access and start counseling sessions online. Creating this site usually requires collaboration with professional web developers and can be designed using various platforms such as HTML, PHP, or *Content Management System* (CMS). However, developing a special site requires a relatively large budget. Examples of online counseling websites that can be accessed freely are: Bicarakan.id, Satu Porsen, Ibunda.id, etc.

2. Telephone

Online counseling can also be conducted via telephone, which allows for direct communication between the counselor and the client. Through this device, counselors can clearly hear the client's feelings and respond immediately.

3. Email

Email is a text-based means of communication sent digitally via a computer or smartphone. In addition to text messages, email also allows the sending of various types of files, such as documents, images, audio, and video, either through a local network (intranet) or the internet. The main advantage of email is that it is easily accessible for free through various service providers, such as Gmail, Yahoo, or Hotmail.

4. Chat, Instant Messaging, and Social Media

Chat or instant messaging refers to short text communications typed through digital devices. This form of communication can take place in text, voice, or video format. Some applications that support this service include Skype, Messenger, Google Talk, Windows Live Messenger, mIRC, and popular social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace.

5. Video Conferencing

Video conferencing is a form of two-way communication that allows counselors and clients to interact directly even though they are in different locations. This technology utilizes data networks, both the internet and telephone networks, to support smooth communication. Examples of the use of video conferencing for online counseling include utilizing the video call feature of WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, or Skype.

6. Counseling Applications

In addition to general media, there are now special counseling applications designed to facilitate online psychological services, such as Riliv, HaloDoc, and e Curhat. These applications provide text chat, voice call, and video conference features, which are tailored to the needs of counselors and clients.

With the support of digital media, counseling is no longer limited by space and time, but can reach clients more widely, effectively, and in line with the demands of the modern era.

The Impact of Digital Culture on Da'wah

Da'wah, as a communication process aimed at spreading Islamic values, plays an important role in social transformation in society. Dakwah essentially aims to foster religious insight for *Mad'u*, whether in the form of Islamic teachings, advice, or messages of piety to bring them closer to Allah SWT. A *Da'i* acts as a spiritual guide for the community to realize a life in harmony with Islamic values. The delivery of this insight is tailored to the characteristics of *Mad'u* as the target of dakwah.

The characteristics of *Mad'u*, who are a modern society with various technological and internet conveniences, where most of them seek and produce information and knowledge in digital form, will certainly bring changes to the way the message of dakwah is conveyed. Thus, in line with technological advances, dakwah through social media is growing rapidly. Social media has now become a broad platform for conveying da'wah messages in a more interactive and interesting way (Nurrahmi & Farabuana, 2020). The necessity of digitizing information is an effort to adapt to social changes. This adaptation is important so that the messages conveyed are not alienated or even ignored by modern society (Astuti & RPS, 2018).

In practice, the dynamics of digital da'wah involve Muslims who are active in various social media user circles and utilize various digital platforms without restrictions. With the widespread use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter, these tools are not only a means of accessing information but are also used for entertainment, education, and religious purposes. Therefore, *da'i* (preachers) can utilize these platforms to convey their messages more effectively (Cholil, Putri, Kusumaningtias, & Nasrulloh, 2025).

Amidst these changes, various *preachers* have emerged who utilize social media as their main means of preaching. One prominent figure is Ustadz Hanan Attaki, founder of the Shift Pemuda Hijrah community. He is widely known for his contextual approach to preaching, focusing on urban youth, using a light style of language accompanied by aesthetic visuals. The media used by Ustadz Hanan Attaki for his preaching are Instagram and YouTube. Through these two media, Ustadz Hanan Attaki preaches in a subtle and interesting or modern way that attracts the attention of the current generation (Chandra, Rahmiati, Abdurrahman, Mutawakkil, & Al-Barqi, 2025).

Another figure, Ustadz Felix Siauw, preaches digitally through Instagram by building his brand as a convert who motivates his followers to change, become better people, and draw closer to Allah's pleasure. In practice, (Anshari, Syafrin, & Rosmawati, 2025) classify da'wah topics into nine main themes that are often raised on digital platforms, namely da'wah of thought, Islamic morals, worship, youth da'wah, hijrah, Islamic history, marriage da'wah, political da'wah, and motivational da'wah of faith. These nine main themes are packaged using four methods, namely through images or videos with captions containing da'wah messages, illustrative videos accompanied by audio da'wah messages, animated videos with audio da'wah, and recordings of lectures or da'wah messages that are packaged concisely in accordance with the Instagram video format duration.

Other preachers such as Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar also use social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube as a medium for their preaching. Unlike Ustadz Felix Siauw's branding, Habib Husain is better known as someone who reintroduces the concept of tolerance among religious communities. Habib Husain often makes collaborative videos with sources from different backgrounds. Although he conveys material about Islam, Habib Husein often invites non-Muslim speakers to join the discussion. Habib Husein wants to spread the message that Islam is a religion of peace, love, and compassion (Masfupah, 2019).

From the three figures above, it can be seen that digital culture has a significant positive impact on the development of da'wah. The presence of social media as part of digital culture has opened up new opportunities for da'i to reach mad'u more widely, quickly, and effectively. Ustadz Hanan Attaki has been able to attract the urban youth generation with his modern contextual da'wah, Ustadz Felix Siau has successfully built a digital da'wah brand with various themes that are creatively packaged according to the characteristics of social media, while Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar emphasizes messages of tolerance, love, and peace through interfaith collaboration.

With different strategies, all three show that digital culture influences da'wah to be more interactive, relevant, and accessible to modern society. This not only strengthens the dissemination of Islamic values, but also presents a fresher, more adaptive face of da'wah that is able to respond to spiritual and social needs in the digital age.

Although digital da'wah plays an important role in driving social change, its implementation is not without challenges, including (Muhsinah, 2024):

1. Social and Cultural Diversity

A heterogeneous society with diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds requires preachers to be able to adapt the messages they convey. Dakwah that is not contextual risks causing resistance and misunderstanding.

2. The Influence of Globalization and Mass Media

The strong currents of globalization and foreign cultures, especially through mass media, often conflict with the Islamic values that are being disseminated. This makes the message of dakwah more difficult to accept, especially by the younger generation who tend to be open to outside influences.

3. Technological Change and Digital Media

Technological advances have changed communication patterns, but not all preachers are able to adapt well. Limitations in the use of social media and digital platforms can hinder the dissemination and effectiveness of preaching.

4. Lack of Understanding of the Local Context

Dakwah that does not pay attention to local conditions, needs, and social issues will lose its relevance. Preachers who are insensitive to the local context often fail to convey their message accurately.

5. Resistance to Change

Social transformation through preaching often faces resistance from individuals or groups who are comfortable with the existing conditions. This resistance is a major obstacle to the success of preaching as an instrument of social change.

To address these challenges, preachers need to continuously evaluate and develop their preaching strategies (Istikomah, Romadlon, & Hariyanto, 2020). Overall, the challenges and communication strategies in da'wah are greatly influenced by the social and cultural context and technological developments. Therefore, da'i are required to continue to innovate and adapt to changes in society so that da'wah can be an effective means of overcoming various social problems while encouraging positive change (Chandra et al., 2025).

The Impact of Digital Culture in Counseling

Islamic counseling is an assistance-oriented effort based on the belief that every counselee needs to live their life according to Allah's guidance in order to achieve happiness in this world and

the hereafter. Conceptually, Islamic counseling is understood as a guidance process involving direct interaction between the counselor and the counselee who is facing problems.

The purpose of this process is to help the counselee find solutions to their problems, recognize and develop their potential, and guide them towards better self-actualization, while remaining grounded in Islamic values and principles (Inayah & Azmi, 2025).

In this era of digital cultural advancement, communication patterns in Islamic counseling have shifted. The change from face-to-face interaction to the use of digital platforms reflects an adaptation to technological developments as well as the needs of modern society. Preliminary findings show that cyber counseling or digital-based counseling not only expands access to services but is also as effective as face-to-face counseling in helping clients deal with psychological issues. This is possible due to the flexibility of time and place, more economical costs, and the ability to reach individuals who live in remote areas or have limited mobility (Obianto, 2024).

The use of various digital media such as WhatsApp, video conferencing, and special counseling applications can be effective alternatives, as long as they are supported by the application of appropriate communication protocols and the improvement of counselors' digital competencies. The success of this transformation is ultimately determined by the extent to which digital counseling is able to integrate the advantages of technology without neglecting the essence of the therapeutic relationship, which is the main foundation of effective counseling.

In today's digital era, counseling is no longer limited to face-to-face sessions but can be accessed more widely through the utilization of digital culture.

As stated in a journal article (Erwahyudin, 2024), the influence of digital culture on counseling is the increasingly prominent role of technology through the presence of telecounseling, online counseling applications, and digital discussion platforms. Telecounseling allows individuals to interact with counselors without being bound by geographical boundaries. Online counseling applications provide spiritual and psychological guidance with communication flexibility while reducing stigma.

Meanwhile, digital discussion platforms facilitate communities to share experiences and views, thereby helping to overcome social isolation. The use of this technology also gives individuals more time and control in the counseling process. Overall, technology opens up more inclusive and effective access to support spiritual and psychological well-being amid modern routines.

Research written by (Dami & Waluwandja, 2019) also shows further analysis results that cyber counseling is more effective than face-to-face counseling, especially for victims of cyber bullying. Counselees feel more satisfied because they can share their feelings without fear, get faster responses, and feel a therapeutic environment through digital media. Cyber-counseling also improves access to mental health services, helping to overcome social isolation, anxiety, and depression through online communication such as chat or email. In addition, this service provides time flexibility, can reach shy clients who are reluctant to come in person, and allows counselors to provide services more widely, even 24 hours a day. Thus, cyber-counseling offers more inclusive, faster, and more convenient access, making it a strategic alternative in supporting psychological well-being in the digital age.

Further research by (Halqim & Rukiyati, 2024) explains that advances in digital culture facilitate collaboration between various related parties, such as parents, teachers, and mental health service providers. Through digital platforms, communication and coordination between

stakeholders can be carried out more efficiently, so that the services provided are more comprehensive and integrated

However, a number of challenges and weaknesses will certainly remain, including (Jannah & Marjo, 2022):

1. Limited behavioral instructions and a lack of nonverbal information can lead to inaccurate diagnoses and ineffective treatment.
2. Client confidentiality and privacy cannot be fully guaranteed.
3. The therapist's duty to warn or protect others is limited.
4. Clients with serious conditions, such as suicidal ideation, extreme anxiety or depression, or those in dangerous situations, are at risk of not receiving adequate immediate attention.
5. Anonymity allows for abuse, for example, children pretending to be adults who need services.
6. Counselors face difficulties in assessing issues related to *metastasis* and countertransference.
7. It is difficult to predict the development of an effective therapeutic alliance when interactions do not take place in the context of traditional face-to-face counseling.
8. Complex and long-term psychological problems tend to be difficult to handle optimally through online counseling.

In addition, (Sari & Herdi, 2021) in their research explain that cyber counseling still has a number of weaknesses. One of them is the counselor's hesitation in utilizing technological advances as a medium for counseling services, which is generally caused by limited digital capabilities and skills.

Moreover, the implementation of online counseling also changes the dynamics of the service, particularly in relation to the need for nonverbal data, such as body language and visual and verbal cues shown by the client. According to Pasmawati (2016), although cyber counseling has various limitations, this service can still be used as an alternative counseling medium, especially when the counselor and client are in different locations, making face-to-face meetings impossible.

However, its implementation requires adequate support in terms of facilities and infrastructure, such as a stable internet connection, supporting devices, and the counselor's ability to utilize technology (Adela et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Digital culture has transformed Islamic preaching and counseling by providing broader, faster, and more interactive access. Digital da'wah enables the dissemination of Islamic values that are accessible, contextual, and creative, while cyber counseling provides flexible, inclusive, and effective services. However, the challenges of digital da'wah and counseling, such as the limitations of nonverbal communication, ethical issues, the threat of fake news, and misunderstandings, still need to be overcome. Overall, the integration of digital culture provides strategic opportunities to strengthen the role of Islamic preaching and counseling in responding to the spiritual and psychological needs of modern society.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All authors contributed equally to the writing of this article. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript. All authors contributed to the writing of this article and played a role in the research plan, data collection, and refinement.

Salsabilla Marliana Azzahra played a role in conceptualizing the research, writing the manuscript, and reviewing and editing the final draft. Bella Mutiaratanti played a role in

conceptualizing the research, curating data, and writing the manuscript. Syafah Auroka Khasanah played a role in designing the methodology and writing the manuscript. Muhammad Syakir Aiman B. W. Khairuzaman played a role in providing guidance regarding the impact of da'wah in the digital era. All authors contributed to the writing of this article and played a role in the research plan, data collection, and refinement.

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