Basic Concepts of Digital Da'wah and Digital Counseling: Technological and Spiritual Integrity

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Abstract: The development of information and communication technology (ICT) in the modern era has significantly influenced various aspects of life, including religious practices and counseling services. The high penetration of the internet in Indonesia positions the digital space as a strategic medium for delivering Islamic messages and providing online counseling services. Digital da'wah emerges as a transformation of conventional preaching methods into virtual spaces by utilizing social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. These platforms are able to reach audiences across generations, particularly the younger generation, although they also face challenges such as the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and the low level of digital literacy among preachers. Meanwhile, digital counseling has become an innovative form of psychological assistance that offers flexible access, time efficiency, and inclusivity. However, this service also raises issues related to ethics, privacy, and the limitation of human touch, which has traditionally characterized face-to-face counseling. This article aims to describe the basic concepts of digital da'wah and digital counseling by emphasizing the importance of integrating technology with spirituality. The research method employed is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach, analyzing various recent academic sources. The findings indicate that digital da'wah and digital counseling can function effectively when supported by adequate digital literacy, professional competence, and clear ethical regulations. Thus, the integration of technology and spirituality is not merely a trend, but rather a long-term strategy to build a Muslim society that is religious, adaptive, and ready to face the challenges of the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah, Digital Counseling, Digital Literacy, Spirituality, Digital Era.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) in the last two decades has brought fundamental changes in various aspects of human life, including in the fields of education, social, economic, and especially religious practices. The presence of the internet and social media has not only accelerated the flow of information but also changed the way humans interact, learn, and express their identities in public and private spaces. According to the 2025 Indonesian Internet Profile survey, the national internet penetration rate has reached 80.66%, or around 229.4 million active users. This figure shows that more than eight out of ten Indonesians now actively use the internet in their daily lives. This high internet penetration creates both opportunities and challenges for the spread of Islamic preaching and digital-based counseling services.

The phenomenon of digital da'wah was born as a form of transformation from conventional da'wah to the virtual space. Previously, da'wah was limited to majelis taklim (religious gatherings), Friday sermons, or print media such as mosque bulletins, but now da'wah has expanded to various digital platforms, from YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, to TikTok. According to (Friyansyah, n.d.) , social media is a strategic space for spreading da'wah because it is able to reach audiences across generations, provide two-way interaction, and offer flexibility in choosing the form of message delivery. By utilizing digital platforms, da'i can deliver religious material more creatively, for example through short videos, podcasts, infographics, and live streaming, which enable direct dialogue between da'i and congregations (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

However, the great opportunities offered by digital da'wah are not without a number of serious challenges. (Friyansyah, n.d..) identifies obstacles in the form of rampant misinformation, religious hoaxes, hate speech, and low digital literacy among some da'i. Fauzan (2023) even emphasizes that a da'i's scientific competence alone is not enough; it must be accompanied by digital literacy so that the message of da'wah remains relevant amid the rapid flow of global information (Bramantyo et al., 2024) . Meanwhile, Mansur (2023) highlights the shift in religious authority from individual figures to virtual communities, as well as from physical spaces to digital spaces. This condition requires a more adaptive da'wah communication strategy so that the messages conveyed do not lose their authenticity and remain legitimate (Nur Rahmat, 2025) .

In line with da'wah, a similar phenomenon is also seen in the development of digital counseling services. Counseling, which was previously mostly done face-to-face, can now be accessed through instant messaging applications, video calls, and online counseling platforms. (Amriana et al.,2023) . explain that one form of innovation in digital counseling services is the use of virtual tours in school counseling orientation programs, which have proven to help students understand new environments without having to be physically present. The presence of digital counseling provides many benefits, such as ease of access, flexibility of time and place, and inclusiveness for those who previously had difficulty accessing counseling services. However, as stated by (Nur Rahmat, 2025) , this service still presents new challenges related to privacy, limitations of human touch, and issues of professional ethics for counselors.

Thus, both digital da'wah and counseling are significant phenomena marking the integration of technology with spirituality. Both open up great opportunities to strengthen Islamic values in the digital age, but at the same time demand serious attention to ethics, authority, and the authenticity of the messages conveyed. Therefore, this article aims to outline the basic concepts of digital da'wah and digital counseling, as well as explain how the integration of technology with spirituality can be effectively realized in contemporary religious practice.

METHOD

This article uses the library research method with a descriptive qualitative approach. This method was chosen based on the focus of the research, which emphasizes the review of relevant scientific literature on digital da'wah, digital counseling, and the integration of technology with spirituality, without involving direct field data collection. Thus, this study attempts to present a conceptual overview and critical analysis based on credible academic sources.

According to Zed (2014), library research is a series of activities that include collecting library data, reading, taking notes, and processing research materials. This definition shows that library studies are not merely quoting or recompiling information, but also conducting analysis and synthesis processes to produce new findings that have scientific value.

This is reinforced by (Indiastuti, 2020) , which explains that literature research includes three important stages, namely: (1) collecting literature, in the form of books, journal articles, and relevant research reports; (2) organizing literature, which involves classifying sources based on theme or focus of study; and (3) content analysis, which involves examining the collected literature to find patterns, relationships, and meanings that are relevant to the research objectives.

In addition, (Abdurrahman, 2024) emphasizes that literature research has descriptive-qualitative characteristics, as it is more oriented towards developing a comprehensive theoretical framework than testing hypotheses. This type of research is useful for identifying knowledge gaps (research gaps) and providing a strong conceptual foundation for further research. In other words, the results of a literature study can be used to expand academic discourse and formulate practical recommendations in the fields of digital da'wah and counseling.

The analysis technique used in this study is content analysis. This analysis was conducted by reading the literature in depth, grouping findings based on specific themes, comparing studies, and interpreting the results of the study in the context of digital da'wah, digital counseling, and the integration of technology and spirituality. With this method, the study not only describes the phenomenon but also attempts to critique and find common threads from various existing sources.

Through this method, the study is expected to produce a complete conceptual picture of how digital da'wah and counseling are practiced, what challenges are faced, and how technology can be harmoniously integrated with spirituality in modern religious life.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Digital Da'wah through Social Media

The phenomenon of digital da'wah through social media is a contemporary reality that cannot be ignored. Social media such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become the main means of delivering religious messages to a wide audience. Research shows that da'wah through these platforms is able to reach young audiences more effectively than conventional methods.

Research by Pasundan University, for example, states that dakwah content on TikTok is able to increase understanding of Islamic values among Gen Z, even though it is often packaged in a light and popular style. Other studies also mention that social media allows da'i to interact with their congregation in a two-way manner, which was previously rare in face-to-face dakwah.

However, there are major challenges such as the spread of unverified information, the tendency to chase popularity through viral content, and the risk of superficial religious understanding. Therefore, digital da'wah strategies require a balance between creativity in content presentation and the depth of Islamic values conveyed.

Analytically, digital da'wah can be seen as a transformation of the role of da'i from mere monological conveyors to dialogical facilitators. Da'i are required to understand social media algorithms, online community management, and maintain scientific authority so that the messages conveyed remain religiously legitimate. As a result, digital literacy training for da'i has become an urgent need.

Social media is one of the most dominant mediums for spreading Islamic da'wah in the digital era. The study " shows that TikTok has proven effective in increasing the Islamic understanding of students at UIN SMH Banten. The determining factors include attractive visuals, short video duration, simple language, and the credibility of content creators. With a light format that suits Gen-Z characteristics, religious messages are more easily accepted by students. However, this study also highlights challenges such as diverse interpretations of content and a lack of source

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verification. This has the potential to cause misinterpretation if not balanced with good digital literacy.

A similar study was conducted among students at UPI Tasikmalaya (Syarip Hidayat, Fadila Pebrian Pratama, Farhan Ali Maulana, 2021) , which showed that da'wah through TikTok is able to attract the attention of the younger generation because its presentation is in line with the characteristics of Gen-Z: light, creative, and in tune with digital culture. However, the effectiveness of da'wah on this platform heavily depends on the quality of the content, the credibility of the da'wah practitioner, and the consistency of the delivery. Content that is superficial, provocative, or not grounded in strong religious knowledge can actually diminish the value of the da'wah itself.

In addition to TikTok, Instagram has also become a strategic space for strengthening digital da'wah. According to da'wah through Instagram can strengthen students' understanding of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. Instagram encourages the creation of virtual dialogue spaces that emphasize tolerance and mutual respect, especially when content is presented consistently and the audience is actively engaged. This proves that social media is not only a form of entertainment but also a means of character education.

Furthermore, Nurul Hidayatul Ummah (2023) emphasizes that social media plays an important role in expanding the reach of da'wah quickly and effectively. However, the use of this media requires great caution. The information disseminated must be accurate, credible, and well-verified. Otherwise, it can have negative effects in the form of misinformation, hoaxes, and even hate speech. Therefore, digital literacy is a must for da'i so that the message of da'wah remains relevant, valid, and does not cause misunderstandings.

The phenomenon of Gen-Z's preference for video content further strengthens this argument. Reyhan Qatrunada Usulu et al. (2025) show that this generation prefers da'wah in the form of short videos rather than long articles or offline lectures. Videos are considered more practical, interesting, and have direct benefits in everyday life (Hidayat et al., 2022) . This change signifies a shift in religious learning styles, where visual aspects, interactivity, and speed of access are key factors in the successful delivery of messages.

Thus, these research findings confirm that social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram have significant potential in expanding the reach of religious outreach and bringing Islamic messages closer to the younger generation. However, this potential can only be optimized if accompanied by adequate digital literacy, the credibility of the preacher, and the consistent and ethical preparation of content. Otherwise, digital da'wah risks becoming superficial or even misleading.

Digital Counseling: Professionalism and Ethics

Digital counseling is an innovative form of psychological assistance that is increasingly being used in the information technology era. Online counseling services allow wider access for individuals in need, especially those who are constrained by distance and time. From a professionalism perspective, counselors are required to not only master classic counseling skills, but also technological literacy. This includes mastery of online platforms, the ability to read limited non-verbal expressions, and the adjustment of more explicit communication techniques.

Meanwhile, ethics is a central issue in digital counseling practice. The principles of confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent must still be upheld, even in the face of greater risks than face-to-face counseling. Leaks of personal data, unverified client identities, and the inability to handle emergencies directly are serious challenges.

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The analysis shows that counselor professionalism in the digital context can only be guaranteed if there are specific regulations, updated codes of ethics, and ongoing training. In addition, the effectiveness of services needs to be evaluated comprehensively, not only based on client satisfaction, but also on the long-term impact on clients' psychological and social well-being.

Digital counseling has developed in response to the community's need for more flexible, fast, and inclusive guidance services. Research by Diana Syamila and Happy Karlina Marjo (2022) emphasizes that confidentiality is a key principle in online group counseling. This ethical practice includes the application of informed consent, assessment of group composition, and the signing of privacy agreements by all participants. Confidentiality is the foundation of trust; without it, digital counseling will not be effective (Research et al., 2022).

Research by (Zahidah et al., 2023) also emphasizes the importance of maintaining confidentiality in digital counseling. They found that although technology facilitates access to services, breaches of confidentiality often occur when counselors do not understand data security techniques or when clients are unaware of privacy risks. Thus, the success of digital counseling is highly dependent on the counselor's technological competence and professional awareness in protecting clients' personal information.

Another challenge in digital counseling is the ethics of text-based communication. The study " found that communication via text messages often causes problems, such as the misuse of emojis, delayed responses, and inappropriate language. This situation can lead to misunderstandings between counselors and clients, which ultimately disrupts the effectiveness of counseling. Therefore, counselors need to master online communication skills that are empathetic, clear, and adaptive to the digital context.

However, digital counseling also has a number of significant advantages. First, accessibility: digital counseling allows people from remote areas to still receive services. Second, flexibility: schedules and locations can be more easily adjusted to the needs of the counselee. Third, inclusivity: digital counseling can reach individuals who are reluctant to attend in person due to social stigma.

When compared to face-to-face counseling, digital counseling does have limitations in terms of human touch or direct emotional closeness. However, its advantage in reaching more clients makes this service relevant. In the context of Islamic education , digital counseling can be combined with Islamic values, for example through a virtual approach to tausiyah, muhasabah, or tadabbur. That way, digital counseling does not lose its spiritual spirit even though it takes place in cyberspace. Thus, digital counseling offers a new paradigm that is very promising, as long as the professionalism of counselors, ethical regulations, and data security can be properly maintained.

Integration of Technology and Spirituality: A Holistic Approach

The integration of technology and spirituality is an important issue in efforts to build a holistic approach to modern human development. Technology has become an integral part of everyday life, while spirituality remains a fundamental human need. A number of studies show that a holistic approach that combines spiritual and psychological aspects can have a positive impact on mental health and individual well-being. For example, research on the integration of theology and religious psychology found that the combination of the two strengthens spiritual identity while increasing resilience to life stress.

However, challenges arise when technology is viewed only as a tool for consuming spiritual content without internalizing its values. The risk of commercializing spirituality should also be

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watched out for, as it can reduce the authenticity of religious experiences. Therefore, religious leaders and spiritual counselors are required to guide the wise use of technology.

Analysis confirms that this integration needs to be carried out with consideration for the local context, culture, and community needs. Successful implementation will give rise to a more comprehensive approach to education and counseling, involving spiritual, psychological, social, and ecological aspects.

The phenomenon of digital preaching and counseling marks the integration of technology and spirituality in contemporary religious life. One form of this integration is the use of Islamic applications that provide features such as worship reminders, virtual community forums, and religious counseling services. International research (ArXiv, 2024) shows that these applications not only facilitate worship but also strengthen the religious motivation of Muslims amid the busyness of the modern world.

In addition, the idea of religious digital literacy has also emerged, which is the ability to select, understand, and reflect on religious content circulating in the digital space. With this literacy, people are no longer passive consumers, but are also able to assess the validity, authority, and theological impact of the content they consume. This concept is in line with the approach of digital theology , which encourages religious communities to think critically about how technology shapes religious practices and authority.

This integration also emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach that combines spiritual, emotional, and psychological aspects. Digital da'wah that is rich in moral values and digital counseling that maintains professional ethics can complement each other to create a healthy, educational, and supportive virtual space. The religious messages conveyed not only strengthen faith but also build emotional support and mental health for the faithful.

When linked to maqashid sharia, the use of technology in digital da'wah and counseling can be seen as an effort to preserve religion (*hifdz al-din*), preserve reason (*hifdz al-'aql*), and preserve the soul (*hifdz al-nafs*). Digital da'wah helps preserve religion through the wider dissemination of knowledge, while digital counseling helps preserve reason and the soul by providing psychological and spiritual support.

Thus, the integration of technology and spirituality is not just a passing trend, but also a long-term strategy in building a Muslim society that is both religious and adaptive to the developments of the times. However, its success is still determined by the quality of content, consistency of delivery, active user engagement, and clear ethical regulations. Without these, this integration has the potential to lose its substance and become nothing more than a digital formality.

CONCLUSION

The development of information and communication technology has brought major changes in the fields of da'wah and counseling. Digital da'wah is an innovation of conventional da'wah, which is now able to reach audiences across generations through platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. The presence of social media provides a great opportunity for preachers to convey Islamic messages in a more creative, interactive, and youth-friendly manner. However, the effectiveness of digital da'wah is still influenced by factors such as digital literacy, the credibility of the preacher, and consistency in delivering messages so as not to get caught up in superficial or even misleading content.

Meanwhile, digital counseling is the answer to the community's need for more flexible, fast, and inclusive guidance services. Through online media, counseling can reach individuals in remote

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locations or those who are reluctant to attend face-to-face counseling for certain reasons. However, serious challenges remain, particularly regarding ethics, privacy, and the limitations of human touch in the counseling process. Therefore, counselor professionalism, technological mastery, and awareness of counseling ethics are absolute requirements for this service to run effectively and reliably.

The integration of technology and spirituality is ultimately an urgent need in contemporary religious practice. Digital da'wah broadens understanding and strengthens faith, while digital counseling provides emotional support and mental health for the community. Both, if managed well, can create a healthy, educational, and spiritually rich virtual space. With a foundation of ethics, strong digital literacy, and the development of quality content, digital da'wah and counseling can function as a long-term strategy in building a Muslim community that is religious, adaptive, and ready to face the challenges of the digital age.

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