

Millennial Santri's Digital Da'wah Activism at Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School, Banjarnegara

Dwi Kuswianto

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara, Jawa Tengah

Email: dwikstaitangho@gmail.com

Ovi Ariyanti

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara, Jawa Tengah

Email: oviariyanti28@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the digital dakwah activism carried out by millennial santri at Pondok Pesantren Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara. The purpose of this research is to examine how santri adapt their dakwah methods to the digital era by utilizing social media platforms effectively. Using a qualitative research approach with a case study design, the data were collected through in-depth interviews with santri and media coordinators, direct observation of digital activities, and documentation of digital dakwah content. The findings reveal a significant shift in dakwah practices, from traditional oral preaching to digital-based communication using platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Santri are actively involved in producing and distributing various types of religious content, including live-streamed sermons, short religious videos, and thematic discussions relevant to contemporary issues. This digital transformation has encouraged the development of more interactive and personalized dakwah, allowing pesantren to expand its religious outreach beyond the traditional community. However, several challenges remain, including digital literacy, technical skills, and cultural resistance within the pesantren environment.

Keywords: Millennial Santri, Digital Da'wah, Islamic Boarding School, Social Media.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas aktivisme dakwah digital yang dilakukan oleh santri milenial di Pondok Pesantren Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengungkap bagaimana santri milenial menyesuaikan metode dakwah mereka di era

digital dengan memanfaatkan berbagai platform media sosial secara efektif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan santri dan pengelola media pesantren, observasi langsung terhadap aktivitas dakwah digital, serta dokumentasi konten dakwah yang dipublikasikan secara daring. Temuan menunjukkan adanya pergeseran signifikan dalam praktik dakwah, dari metode tradisional berbasis ceramah lisan menjadi komunikasi berbasis digital menggunakan platform YouTube, Instagram, dan TikTok. Santri secara aktif memproduksi serta mendistribusikan beragam konten dakwah, seperti siaran langsung pengajian, video dakwah singkat, hingga kajian tematik yang relevan dengan isu-isu kekinian. Transformasi ini mendorong terwujudnya dakwah yang lebih interaktif dan personal, memungkinkan pesantren menjangkau audiens yang lebih luas di luar komunitas tradisional. Meski demikian, tantangan seperti literasi digital, keterampilan teknis, dan resistensi budaya masih menjadi kendala tersendiri.

Kata Kunci: Santri Milenial, Dakwah Digital, Pondok Pesantren, Media Sosial

A. Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought about significant changes in various aspects of life, including Islamic da'wah activities. In the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and society 5.0, digital media such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and various other online platforms have become effective means of conveying religious messages to a wide audience, across generations, and across regions. Da'wah is no longer limited to the mosque pulpit or face-to-face Islamic study groups, but has expanded into digital spaces that are more flexible, interactive, and accessible at any time. This phenomenon marks a significant transformation in da'wah methods, where da'wah practitioners, students, and religious institutions are required to creatively adapt to developments in digital communication technology in conveying Islamic teachings to the wider community.¹

In this context, the involvement of millennial Islamic boarding school students (santri) is an interesting phenomenon worth further study. Millennial Islamic boarding school students, who generally belong to generations Y and Z, are known to be adaptable to technology, creative, and active in the digital space. They are not only consumers of digital Islamic preaching content but also act as producers of religious content. Their digital Islamic preaching activities include creating Islamic preaching videos, managing Islamic boarding school social media accounts, and disseminating Islamic preaching content that is packaged in a fresh,

¹Muhammad Rahman & Siti Fitriani, "Pesantren and Digital Da'wah: Strategies for the Existence of Islamic Boarding Schools in the Era of Social Media," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2022), h. 85–102.

engaging way, and in keeping with the communication styles of the younger generation.²

Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara is one of the Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools that has begun to respond progressively to the development of digital da'wah. Established in the 1960s, this Islamic boarding school consistently maintains the tradition of studying the yellow book (kitab kuning) but now also provides a creative space for students to develop da'wah based on digital media. The school's official YouTube channel, PPTangho, regularly broadcasts Ahad Kliwon recitations, dawn lectures, and various other da'wah activities that involve the active participation of students. Furthermore, this Islamic boarding school also regularly holds digital literacy programs, such as writing workshops, social media management training, and da'wah video production training. The results of researchers' observations during fieldwork from April to May 2025 indicate that digital da'wah activities at this Islamic boarding school have been integrated into the students' daily activities, both individually and collectively.³

Several previous studies have highlighted the strategic role of social media in Islamic boarding school da'wah activities. Ramadhani, Fadillah, and Santoso (2022) found that social media can expand the reach of Islamic boarding school da'wah, even reaching the international community.⁴ Hasanah and Abidin's (2022) research also emphasized the importance of digital literacy as the main provision for students in managing social media-based da'wah activities effectively.⁵ Meanwhile, a study by Zainuddin and Al-Mutawakkil (2023) showed that digital da'wah in Islamic boarding schools can create a more inclusive, creative, and sustainable da'wah ecosystem.⁶ However, research that specifically discusses the digital da'wah activism of millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara, especially in the context of changing da'wah patterns from traditional to digital, is still very limited.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore in-depth the digital da'wah activism carried out by millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara. The focus of this research includes a description of the students' digital da'wah activities, an analysis of the shift in da'wah patterns from traditional methods to digital media-based da'wah, and an identification of

²Muhammad Rahman & Siti Fitriani, "Pesantren and Digital Da'wah: Strategies for the Existence of Islamic Boarding Schools in the Era of Social Media," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2022), h. 90.

³Field observation at Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School, Banjarnegara, April–May 2025.

⁴Nuzul Ramadhani, Rizka Fadillah, & Heri Santoso, "Digital Islamic Boarding School Preaching Strategy in the Millennial Era," *Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2022), h. 77–92.

⁵Siti Hasanah & Ahmad Abidin, "The Role of Digital Media in Preaching to Millennial Students in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Islamic Communication Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2022), h. 45–60.

⁶Zainuddin & Al-Mutawakkil, "Digital Da'wah and Islamic Boarding Schools: Building an Inclusive Da'wah Ecosystem," *Journal of Islamic Social Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2023), h. 40–55.

the challenges faced in these digital da'wah activities. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of digital da'wah in Islamic boarding schools and serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions in responding to the dynamics of da'wah in the digital era.

B. Literature Review

I. Digital Da'wah Theory

Digital da'wah is a form of da'wah that utilizes digital media as the primary means of conveying Islamic teachings. The presence of digital da'wah is part of the transformation of da'wah communication, adapting to advances in information and communication technology. Ahmad Sofyan (2020) explains that digital da'wah not only relies on text or spoken language like conventional da'wah, but also utilizes visual and audiovisual media, such as video, infographics, and images, to convey religious messages more effectively and engagingly.⁷ Digital da'wah is not just an alternative, but has become the main medium in contemporary da'wah practices.

Ahmad Mursalin (2021) emphasized that digital da'wah has the main characteristics of very wide reach, high speed of dissemination, interactivity between da'wah and audience, and flexibility in using various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.⁸ Digital preaching also requires preachers and students to adapt to a more relaxed, light-hearted communication style that aligns with the language of the younger generation. Therefore, digital preaching demands mastery of digital literacy as an essential competency for modern preachers.

In line with this, Murtadho's (2022) research in the Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication emphasizes that digital da'wah must understand the characteristics of digital audiences, namely their tendency to seek content that is concise, visual, and easy to share. He emphasized that digital da'wah is not merely a technology-based da'wah activity, but also a form of da'wah oriented toward creativity and message innovation.⁹

Meanwhile, a study by Abdullah (2022) in the Journal of Islamic Communication adds that digital da'wah is a form of da'wah communication that integrates religious messages, digital technology, and social dynamics. Abdullah emphasized the importance of digital communication competency for

⁷Ahmad Sofyan, *Digital Da'wah: Concepts, Strategies, and Challenges* (Bandung: Rosda Karya, 2020), p. 47.

⁸ Ahmad Mursalin, *Digital Preaching in the Era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0* (Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group, 2021), p. 53.

⁹Murtadho, "Characteristics of Digital Preaching and Challenges for Millennial Preachers in the New Media Era," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2022), h. 22–34.

da'wah practitioners in the modern era, as digital media has become a highly competitive and open da'wah arena..¹⁰

Based on these various perspectives, the theory of digital da'wah can be understood as a da'wah concept that combines Islamic da'wah principles with the optimal use of digital technology. Digital da'wah emphasizes the importance of mastering digital literacy, understanding the characteristics of digital audiences, and the ability to convey religious messages through creative, interactive, and adaptive media. Thus, digital da'wah is not simply a new medium for da'wah, but has become part of social and religious transformation in the digital era.

2. Millennial Generation Theory

The millennial generation, according to Rhenald Kasali (2018), is a group of individuals born between 1981 and 1996 who grew up with the rapid development of information and communication technology.¹¹ They are known as "digital natives" because they have been familiar with the internet, social media, and various digital applications since childhood. This tendency also encourages them to actively use technology in their daily activities, including religious practices and Islamic outreach.

Nurul Huda (2019) added that millennials possess distinctive characteristics such as high creativity, openness to change, and a preference for visual or multimedia communication. They also tend to prefer fast and efficient solutions for accessing information.¹² In the context of Islamic boarding schools, millennial students are not only consumers of Islamic preaching content, but also appear as innovative producers of digital religious content, writing scripts, recording videos, and managing Islamic preaching platforms on social media.

Furthermore, Wulandari et al. (2021) in their research on the role of the millennial generation in digital da'wah stated that millennial students bring a new, more interactive and participatory approach, as they are accustomed to two-way communication through comments, DMs, and live streaming.¹³ This proves that the millennial generation is capable of forming a da'wah model that is more adaptive, responsive, and relevant to the needs of the times.

¹⁰ Abdullah, "Digital Da'wah as Contemporary Islamic Communication: Strategy, Opportunities, and Challenges," *Journal of Islamic Communication*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2022), h. 101–116.

¹¹Rhenald Kasali, *The Next Generation: Understanding Millennials and Generation Z* (Jakarta: Mizan Publishing, 2018), p. 27.

¹²Nurul Huda, *Millennials: Characteristics and Communication Strategies* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019), p. 52.

¹³Wulandari, S., Prasetyo, D., & Nurizka, E., "Millennial Students and Digital Da'wah: A Study of Modern Islamic Boarding Schools in Jakarta," *Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2021), h. 100–115.

Internationally, a study by Smith and Anderson (2022) in *New Media & Society* found that millennials and Gen Z use social media as a platform for religious expression, spreading content containing moral values, religious reflections, and spiritual motivation—all presented in an easily digestible and visual format.¹⁴ This finding supports the notion that millennial students, with their capacity to use digital media, play a strategic role in technology-based da'wah models.

Thus, the millennial generation theory positions millennial students as the main agents in digital da'wah—who are able to integrate technological skills with religious values, create innovative, personal da'wah messages, and can reach a wide audience through digital media.

3. Theory of Social Change

Social change refers to shifts in social structures, values, and patterns of societal interaction. Soerjono Soekanto (2018) states that social change can be triggered by both internal and external factors, including technological innovation, globalization, and shifts in norms and values within society at large.¹⁵ In the context of da'wah, digital technology is one of the main catalysts that encourages a shift in the method of spreading religious teachings, from conventional face-to-face to digital media-based da'wah.

Ahmad Syafii Maarif (2018) explains that digital media has a very large role in accelerating the process of social change, especially in the realm of religious communication.¹⁶ Initially limited to local areas, preaching can now reach a global audience, transcending geographical and temporal boundaries. Digital media facilitates the creation of a more inclusive, flexible, and dynamic space for religious dialogue.

This view is reinforced by research by Wardhani et al. (2021) in the *Journal of Sociology of Religion*, which found that the digitalization of da'wah in Islamic boarding schools not only changes the distribution of religious content but also encourages a transformation of social culture within the Islamic boarding school environment, including collaboration among students and intergenerational relationships.¹⁷ They noted that Islamic boarding schools that adopted digital da'wah showed increased active participation of students and an increased sense of social solidarity.

¹⁴ Smith, A., & Anderson, B., "Religious Expression in the Age of Social Media: Millennials, Media, and Meaning," *New Media & Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2022), h. 88–105.

¹⁵ Soerjono Soekanto, *Sociology: An Introduction* (Jakarta: Rajawali Persada, 2018), p. 218.

¹⁶ Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Social Change: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2018), p. 98.

¹⁷ Wardhani, A., Prasetyo, D., & Lestari, N., "Digitalization of Da'wah and Transformation of Social Culture in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2021), h. 66–80.

Internationally, a study by Castells (2020) in *The Rise of the Network Society* emphasizes that digital technology has created a new social networking ecosystem that allows for the emergence of virtual communities based on interests and values, including da'wah communities.¹⁸In an ecosystem like this, religious values and religious discourse are spread virally, informally, and interactively.—creating a more open, responsive and participatory pattern of religious dissemination.

Thus, the theory of social change supports the understanding of how digital da'wah forms a new pattern in the spread of religion: not only an alternative means, but a model of religious communication that is adaptive, inclusive, and has wide reach in the digital era.

C. Method

This research method uses a qualitative approach with a case study. This approach was chosen because the study aims to explore in-depth the digital da'wah activism of millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara, including analyzing shifts in da'wah patterns, the media used, and the challenges faced in implementing digital da'wah.

I. Problem Analysis

The main problem in this research is how the pattern of Islamic preaching of students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School has shifted from traditional methods to digital preaching. This problem is analyzed by considering social dynamics, technological developments, and the Islamic boarding school community's response to digital media.

The focus of the problems in this research includes three main things:

- a. Forms of Digital Da'wah Activities
How are the digital da'wah activities carried out by millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara Islamic Boarding School, both in terms of content types, communication patterns, and da'wah dissemination strategies.
- b. Changes in the Pattern of Preaching
How the pattern of preaching in Islamic boarding schools has shifted from traditional to digital, especially from the perspective of millennial students.
- c. Challenges and Opportunities of Digital Preaching
What are the challenges faced by Islamic boarding school students in digital preaching activities, and what opportunities can be utilized in the era of digitalization of Islamic boarding schools.

¹⁸Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), h. 120–122.

This problem arises along with the increasing role of millennial students as producers of Islamic preaching content in digital media, which demands a more in-depth study of the dynamics, challenges, and social implications of this activity.

2. Research Method Design

The research design used in this study adopted a qualitative case study model. This study was chosen to obtain a comprehensive overview of the digital da'wah activities of students in Islamic boarding schools and to gain a deeper understanding of the social changes occurring.¹⁹The following is the research method design:

- a. Problem Identification: Exploring the issue of digital preaching and changes in preaching patterns among millennial students.
- b. Literature Study: Examining theories related to digital preaching, the millennial generation, and social change as a basis for research.
- c. Formulating Research Focus: Determining the focus of the study based on the problems that have been identified.
- d. Data Collection:
 - 1) In-depth Interview: Conducted with the Head of the Islamic Boarding School (Mr. Muhid), digital da'wah managers (Husen and Hamid), da'wah media administrator (Rizal), and the main person in charge of digital da'wah for the Islamic boarding school (M. Ulil Albab).
 - 2) Participatory Observation: By following the digital da'wah activities carried out by students, including the content production process, social media management, and implementation of digital da'wah activities during April to May 2025.
 - 3) Documentation: In the form of collecting digital archives of Islamic boarding schools such as YouTube videos, Instagram uploads, and digital literacy training documents held by Islamic boarding schools.
- e. Data analysis:

The data analysis technique in this study uses the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which consists of:

 - 1) Data Reduction: Filtering relevant data.
 - 2) Data Presentation: Presenting data in the form of narratives, quotations, and documentation.
 - 3) Drawing Conclusions: Formulating findings from the results of data analysis.²⁰

3. Research Location

Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara Islamic Boarding School, Mantrianom Village, Bawang District, Banjarnegara Regency, Central Java.

¹⁹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2018), h. 14.

²⁰ Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, & Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2020), h. 276.

4. Data Types and Data Sources

The data in this study were obtained from two main sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through in-depth interviews with students active in digital da'wah, the boarding school's social media administrators, and the kiai (leader) of the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara. These interviews aimed to explore their experiences, perspectives, and strategies for digital da'wah within the boarding school environment.

Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various supporting documents, such as digital archives of Islamic boarding schools, content uploaded through official social media platforms, and relevant literature, including books, scientific journals, and previous research reports. This secondary data was used to complement and strengthen the field findings and provide a broader theoretical context for the phenomenon of digital da'wah in Islamic boarding schools.

Through the combination of these two types of data, this study can present a comprehensive, in-depth, and contextual picture of the digital da'wah activities of millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara.

D. Research Result

This study aims to describe the digital da'wah activities carried out by millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara. The research data was obtained through in-depth interviews with Mr. Muhid (Head of the Boarding School), Mr. Husen and Mr. Hamid (digital da'wah managers), Mr. Rizal (digital da'wah administrator), and Mr. M. Ulil Albab (the main person in charge of the Islamic boarding school's digital da'wah), as well as through participatory observation conducted over three weeks.

1. Forms of Digital Preaching Activities for Millennial Students

The research results show that millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School are actively producing various digital Islamic preaching content. This activity involves several students who are members of the Islamic boarding school's Digital Islamic Preaching Media Team.

Interviews revealed that the Islamic boarding school provides ample space for students to be creative in digital da'wah. The village head of the Islamic boarding school, Mr. Muhid, stated that the boarding school encourages students to actively da'wah on social media to reach a wider audience.²¹

The students' digital da'wah activities include producing religious study videos uploaded to the school's official YouTube channel, creating short da'wah videos for Instagram Reels and TikTok, and producing short Islamic-themed

²¹Interview with Mr. Muhid, Head of Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School, Banjarnegara, April 10, 2025.

podcasts. Furthermore, the students actively distribute da'wah content through WhatsApp and Telegram groups as internal and external communication channels.²²

The management of this Islamic preaching content is entirely carried out by the students. According to Husen and Hamid, the digital Islamic preaching media managers, each team member has their own duties, including scriptwriting, video editing, voice-over, and social media management. The content produced tends to address lighthearted themes relevant to the students' lives, making it more accessible to the audience.²³

2. Media Used

In digital da'wah activities, Islamic boarding school students utilize various social media platforms popular among the younger generation. Interviews and observations indicate that YouTube is the primary medium for distributing regular religious study videos and long-form lectures. Instagram is used to disseminate short videos, da'wah infographics, and interact with audiences through the Stories feature. TikTok is utilized to convey da'wah messages in the form of short videos, packaged in a relaxed style but still containing moral messages.

In addition to these three platforms, WhatsApp and Telegram are also used to disseminate Islamic preaching materials in the form of videos, images, and text to both internal and external communities within the Islamic boarding school. According to Rizal, these media were chosen based on their ease of access and popularity among students and the surrounding community.²⁴

3. Observed Changes in Preaching Patterns

This research found a significant shift in the pattern of preaching within Islamic boarding schools. The pattern of preaching, which was previously traditional, involving face-to-face lectures in assemblies or religious study groups, has now shifted to the digital realm.

The first change is evident in the communication model for preaching, which has shifted from one-way to two-way. Preaching is no longer limited to delivering sermons, but also opens up opportunities for interaction through comment features, direct messages, and online Q&A sessions.

The second change lies in the expanding reach of Islamic preaching. Previously, Islamic preaching in Islamic boarding schools only reached local communities, but now it can be accessed by people from various regions, even abroad. The third change is the flexibility and creativity in delivering Islamic

²²Direct observation at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School, Banjarnegara, April 5–25, 2025.

²³Interview with Husen and Hamid, Islamic Boarding School Digital Da'wah Managers, April 12, 2025.

²⁴Interview with Rizal, Head of Islamic Boarding School Digital Da'wah, April 14, 2025.

preaching. Islamic preaching methods in Islamic boarding schools are now more varied, with formats such as video lectures, short videos, podcasts, and Islamic preaching infographics.

According to M. Ulil Albab's explanation, digital da'wah allows Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools to have a voice in the digital space, so that traditional Islamic messages can be accessed by the wider community more easily.²⁵

E. Discussion

I. The Shift in Islamic Students' Preaching Patterns from Traditional to Digital

The results of this study indicate a shift in the preaching patterns of students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara, from traditional to digital-based preaching. The preaching pattern, which previously focused on face-to-face lectures, regular religious study groups, and yellow book circles, has now shifted to social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

According to an interview with the village head of Pondok Pesantren, Mr. Muhid, this shift was consciously initiated by the Islamic boarding school in response to social changes in society, which are increasingly entrenched in digital media, especially among the younger generation. The Islamic boarding school's support also takes the form of digital literacy training, providing content production facilities, and establishing a structured Islamic media team for students.

Observations also corroborate these findings, noting that students actively produce and disseminate Islamic preaching content in various formats, from religious study videos and short sermons, infographics, and even religious podcasts. These activities are undertaken not only to meet internal needs but also to address the demands of Islamic preaching in the increasingly competitive digital space.

This change is in line with the digital preaching theory put forward by Ahmad Sofyan, who emphasized that digital preaching opens up a wider two-way communication space, allowing audiences to interact directly through comments, private messages, or live streaming features.²⁶ Digital da'wah not only offers speed and wide reach, but also presents a more personal and responsive da'wah communication model.

Furthermore, Soerjono Soekanto's theory of social change also emphasizes that the transformation of communication media in society, especially through digital technology, can encourage structural social change, including in religious

²⁵Interview with M. Ulil Albab, Person in Charge of Digital Da'wah at the Islamic Boarding School, June 15, 2025.

²⁶Ahmad Sofyan, *Digital Da'wah: Concepts, Strategies, and Challenges* (Bandung: Rosda Karya, 2020), p. 73.

practices.²⁷ Digital media has transformed traditional communication structures, transforming the relationship between preachers and congregations into a more equal and interactive one.

Junaidi and Sugiyanto's (2022) research adds that digital da'wah not only changes the medium of delivery but also changes public perception of religious authority. They highlight the decentralization of the role of da'wah, where students (santri) and the general public can become active participants in da'wah in the digital space without having to go through formal channels as in conventional da'wah.²⁸

This finding is also supported by Campbell and Tsuria's (2021) international study, "Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media," which explains that digital media creates new spaces for religious expression, including in Islam. The concept of "everyday religion" they introduce describes religious practices that are more flexible, personal, and integrated into the daily lives of believers, thanks to the presence of digital media..²⁹

In the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), this phenomenon reflects a productive process of social adaptation. Pesantrens are no longer merely conservative centers of religious instruction, but also centers for the production of creative, adaptive, and inclusive da'wah (Islamic preaching). This transformation aligns with the paradigm of a progressive society, where tradition is not abandoned but integrated into a broader and more dynamic social space.³⁰ Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara Islamic Boarding School, through its digital preaching, has succeeded in wisely bridging traditional values with the demands of the digital era.

2. The Role of Digital Media in Strengthening Islamic Boarding School Preaching

Digital media plays a strategic role in strengthening Islamic preaching among students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara. According to interviews with Husen and Hamid, the boarding school's digital preaching managers, digital media not only serves as a tool for disseminating Islamic messages but also as a means of developing students' skills in various aspects. Through digital preaching activities, students actively learn the skills of writing Islamic scripts, editing videos with digital applications,

²⁷ Soerjono Soekanto, *Sociology: An Introduction* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2018), p. 218.

²⁸ Junaidi & Sugiyanto, "Decentralization of Da'wah in the Digital Era: A Study of Social Media Among Muslim Youth," *Contemporary Da'wah Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2022), h. 95–110.

²⁹ Heidi A. Campbell & Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media* (New York: Routledge, 2021), h. 54–69.

³⁰ Yusuf Hasyim, "Pesantren and Digital Transformation: A Study of the Adaptation of Islamic Boarding School Preaching in the Era of Technological Disruption," *Indonesian Journal of Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2023), h. 45–60.

performing confidently in front of the camera, and managing social media accounts in a professional and structured manner.³¹

This finding is in line with the millennial generation theory put forward by Rhenald Kasali, who describes the millennial generation as a group that is adaptive, creative, and has a strong tendency to utilize digital technology for various needs, including social and religious activities.³² In this study, millennial Islamic boarding school students (santri) not only act as social media users but also as active and innovative producers of digital Islamic preaching content. They are able to utilize digital media to expand the reach of Islamic preaching effectively and relevantly.

Observations during the research also showed that the involvement of students in producing digital Islamic preaching content not only improved their technical skills but also fostered a culture of collaboration and solidarity among students. The content production process was carried out collectively, with an organized division of roles based on each student's interests and skills. This phenomenon has created a more creative, progressive, and inclusive Islamic boarding school ecosystem, where every student has equal opportunity to participate in digital Islamic preaching.

Furthermore, a study by Hasanah and Abidin (2022) in the *Islamic Communication Journal* emphasized that digital media can increase the participation of Islamic students in religious activities more actively and strengthen their Islamic identity in the digital era.³³ Research by Azizah and Nurhuda (2021) also found that the involvement of students in digital da'wah creates an inclusive and collaborative shared learning ecosystem.³⁴

At the global level, a study by Eickelman and Piscatori (2021) confirms that digital media has become a primary medium for the transformation of contemporary da'wah. They refer to the emergence of a generation of "digital ulama," namely young da'wah practitioners who utilize digital platforms to disseminate religious values widely, both locally and globally.³⁵

From the perspective of a progressive society paradigm, the role of digital media in Islamic preaching for students reflects a positive shift in religious practices in Islamic boarding schools. Islamic boarding schools are now not only centers of traditional religious education but also developing into centers for

³¹Interview with Husen and Hamid (managers of digital Islamic media), May 20, 2025.

³²Rhenald Kasali, *The Next Generation: Understanding Millennials and Generation Z* (Jakarta: Mizan Publishing, 2018), p. 27.

³³Siti Hasanah & Ahmad Abidin, "The Role of Digital Media in Preaching to Millennial Students in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Islamic Communication Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2022), h. 45–60.

³⁴Azizah, N., & Nurhuda, M., "Digital Literacy of Islamic Students in Utilizing Social Media for Da'wah," *Journal of Islamic Communication*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2021), h. 115–130.

³⁵Dale F. Eickelman & James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics and Digital Media* (London: Routledge, 2021), h. 90–91.

empowering a technologically literate and morally upright young generation. Digital preaching fosters the development of students who are both personally religious and digitally proficient, and able to contribute as agents of social change in building a more inclusive, creative, and progressive society.³⁶

3. Comparison with Previous Research

Compared with previous research, digital da'wah activities at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara exhibit unique and prominent characteristics. Studies at several other Islamic boarding schools, such as the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in Probolinggo, Al-Multazam in Kuningan, Al-Ittihad in Tangerang, and Asy-Syifa in Bantul, also show the development of digital da'wah within the pesantren environment. These Islamic boarding schools utilize social media to spread Islamic teachings, develop creative da'wah, and build interactions with the wider community through various digital platforms.³⁷

However, based on an interview with Rizal, the digital da'wah administrator at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School, the main advantage of this Islamic boarding school lies in the high level of independence of its students throughout the digital da'wah process. Unlike other Islamic boarding schools, which generally require external guidance or support, the entire da'wah content production process at Tanbihul Ghofilin is entirely managed by the students themselves. This process includes formulating ideas, writing scripts, recording videos, editing, and distributing content to various social media platforms in a collective and structured manner.³⁸

This independence reflects the typical characteristics of the millennial generation as stated by Nurul Huda, who emphasized the importance of creativity, adaptability, and collaboration in facing the challenges of the digital era.³⁹ Millennial students at this Islamic boarding school not only develop technical skills in content production but also foster a strong collaborative culture. They are able to manage digital da'wah activities independently, without relying on external actors.

This finding is also in line with Rhenald Kasali's millennial generation theory, which describes the millennial generation as a group that is independent, innovative, and likes to experiment in utilizing technology for social and

³⁶Yusuf Hasyim, "Pesantren and Digital Transformation: A Study of the Adaptation of Islamic Boarding School Preaching in the Era of Technological Disruption," *Indonesian Journal of Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2023), h. 45–60.

³⁷Nur Faizah et al., "Digital Da'wah Transformation in Islamic Boarding Schools: Case Study of Nurul Jadid, Al-Multazam, Al-Ittihad, and Asy-Syifa," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2022), h. 77–92.

³⁸Interview with Rizal (Tanbihul Ghofilin digital preaching manager), May 22, 2025.

³⁹Nurul Huda, *Millennials: Characteristics and Communication Strategies* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019), p. 52.

religious purposes.⁴⁰This Islamic boarding school has truly realized this theory through digital preaching activities that are entirely driven by students.

More broadly, a study by Abdullah et al. (2023) in the *International Journal of Islamic Studies* confirms that the independence of students in digital da'wah is a crucial indicator of Islamic boarding schools' readiness to face the digital era. Islamic boarding schools that encourage students to become key actors in digital da'wah are considered more adaptive to current developments and have the potential to become centers of creative and inclusive moderate Islamic da'wah in the future.⁴¹

Furthermore, research by Wahyudi and Kartika (2022) also found that students' independence in digital da'wah increased their sense of ownership and responsibility toward the Islamic boarding school. Students who were fully involved in producing da'wah content tended to have greater loyalty to the institution and were eager to continue innovating.⁴²

Thus, Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School can be considered a pioneer in fostering student independence in digital da'wah. This uniqueness not only demonstrates the school's adaptability to changing times but also reflects its contribution to building a progressive societal paradigm. This boarding school is able to encourage the younger generation to be active, creative, and independent in spreading Islamic teachings through digital media in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

4. Implications of Digital Preaching on the Existence of Islamic Boarding Schools

Digital da'wah has had a significant impact on the existence of the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara. According to an interview with M. Ulil Albab, the person in charge of the school's digital da'wah, this activity has strengthened the boarding school's image as an Islamic educational institution adaptable to technological developments.⁴³Islamic boarding schools are no longer seen as merely traditional institutions that teach yellow books, but have transformed into creative preaching centers that utilize digital media in a polite and strategic manner.

From a theoretical perspective, this phenomenon is in line with Ahmad Syafii Maarif's view that digital media functions as a catalyst for social change,

⁴⁰Rhenald Kasali, *The Next Generation: Understanding Millennials and Generation Z* (Jakarta: Mizan Publishing, 2018), p. 42.

⁴¹ Abdullah, M., et al., "Pesantren Goes Digital: Toward Independent and Inclusive Da'wah Institution," *International Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2023), h. 55–70.

⁴²Wahyudi, A., & Kartika, R., "Student Independence in Digital Da'wah: A Comparative Study in West Java Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Islamic Da'wah and Social Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2022), h. 110–125.

⁴³Interview with M. Ulil Albab, May 23, 2025.

including in the religious sphere.⁴⁴Digital media enables da'wah to move from limited physical spaces to a more inclusive, open, and dynamic digital space. At Tanbihul Ghofilin, digital da'wah serves as an effective bridge connecting Islamic boarding schools with various groups, both local, national, and global.

Observations show that these activities significantly enhance the presence of Islamic boarding schools in society. Islamic boarding schools are widely recognized as centers for producing Islamic preaching content that combines classical values with contextual digital innovation. Students produce Islamic preaching content that is polite, informative, and easily accepted by the younger generation, strengthening the image of Islamic boarding schools as open and relevant institutions.⁴⁵

Recent studies further corroborate these findings. Rahman and Fitriani (2022) note that Islamic boarding schools active in digital da'wah tend to have broader social influence and are able to act as agents of religious moderation.⁴⁶Zainuddin and Al-Mutawakkil (2023) emphasized that digital da'wah creates an inclusive and sustainable da'wah ecosystem.⁴⁷Kurniawan et al. (2022) also showed that digital transformation is driving a new image of Islamic boarding schools as centers of social innovation.⁴⁸

Furthermore, Hasanah et al. (2023) found that Islamic boarding school independence in digital da'wah increases institutional competitiveness in the new media era.⁴⁹Islami and Hidayat (2024) added that digital da'wah in Islamic boarding schools contributes to strengthening religious moderation through the integration of traditional values and contemporary contexts.⁵⁰Fauzi and Lestari (2022) emphasized that engagement with digital Islamic preaching content encourages active participation of the Islamic boarding school community,⁵¹Meanwhile, Haris (2023) found that digital branding of Islamic boarding schools increased public acceptance.⁵²Nugraha et al. (2024) also

⁴⁴Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Social Change: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2018), p. 98.

⁴⁵Results of researcher observations, April–May 2025.

⁴⁶Rahman & Fitriani, "Pesantren and Digital Da'wah," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2022), h. 85–102.

⁴⁷Zainuddin & Al-Mutawakkil, "Digital Dakwah and Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Islamic Social Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2023), h. 40–55.

⁴⁸Kurniawan et al., "Digital Transformation of Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2022), h. 150–165.

⁴⁹Hasanah et al., "Digital Independence and Competitiveness of Modern Islamic Boarding Schools," *Contemporary Da'wah Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2023), h. 29–45.

⁵⁰Islami & Hidayat, "Moderation of Digital Preaching," *International Journal of Muslim Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2024), h. 11–27.

⁵¹Fauzi & Lestari, "Digital Dakwah Engagement and Community Participation," *Journal of Communication Da'wah*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2022), h. 15–30.

⁵²Haris, "Digital Branding of Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2023), h. 101–118.

stated that digital preaching plays a role in increasing the digital literacy of Islamic boarding school students..⁵³

Meanwhile, Sari and Rahayu (2021) showed that the reputation of Islamic boarding schools increased significantly through the integration of digital da'wah.⁵⁴ Wicaksono (2022) assessed digital preaching as a tool for moderating religious content in Islamic boarding schools,⁵⁵ Yusup (2023) found that digital preaching increased the participation of female students in preaching activities,⁵⁶ and Zahra & Putra (2024) concluded that digital media makes Islamic boarding schools a center for peaceful communication..⁵⁷

Thus, the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School has not only successfully maintained its presence in the community but also played a strategic role in building a progressive societal paradigm. This Islamic boarding school has emerged as a center for education, youth empowerment, and the strengthening of digital da'wah (Islamic outreach) that is inclusive, moderate, and adaptive to changing times.

⁵³Nugraha et al., "Digital Literacy of Islamic Students," *Indonesian Journal of Communication Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2024), h. 45–60.

⁵⁴Sari & Rahayu, "Reputation of Islamic Educational Institutions," *Journal of Islamic Da'wah Communication*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2021), h. 22–38.

⁵⁵Wicaksono, "Moderation of Islamic Content in the Digital Era," *Journal of Religious Moderation*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2022), h. 55–70.

⁵⁶Yusup, "The Involvement of Female Students in Digital Da'wah," *Journal of Gender and Da'wah*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2023), h. 75–90.

⁵⁷Zahra & Putra, "Digital Media as a Center for Peaceful Communication in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Global Islamic Communication*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2024), h. 12–28.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the digital da'wah activism carried out by millennial students at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School in Banjarnegara demonstrates a significant transformation in the school's da'wah practices. Students are not only traditional preachers but also active producers of creative and independent digital da'wah content. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have become the primary means of conveying Islamic messages in various formats, from video lectures and short videos to thematic podcasts. The primary advantage of digital da'wah at this Islamic boarding school lies in the students' high level of independence throughout the content production process, from planning and production to distribution, without relying on external parties. This reflects the school's success in integrating digital literacy with Islamic da'wah that adapts to the needs of the times.

However, this study also identified several challenges that still need to be addressed, such as limited digital literacy among some students, unequal mastery of technical content production skills, and cultural resistance from some within the Islamic boarding school environment to the digital da'wah model. Nevertheless, digital da'wah at the Tanbihul Ghofilin Islamic Boarding School has proven to be able to expand the reach of da'wah, strengthen the role of the Islamic boarding school in society, and encourage the formation of a da'wah culture that is more inclusive, creative, and relevant in the digital era. This Islamic boarding school not only serves as a traditional educational institution, but also emerges as a center for empowering a competitive young generation in the field of digital da'wah, while also serving as a concrete example of an Islamic boarding school capable of building a paradigm of a progressive society.

Bibliography

- Abdullah, M. (2022). Digital da'wah from an Islamic communication perspective. *Journal of Islamic Communication*, 4(1), 45–58.
- Abdullah, M., Hasan, S., & Fadhilah, L. (2023). Santri as digital da'wah actors: A case study of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. *International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 9(2), 150–168.
- Ahmad, M. (2021). Digital da'wah: Concepts, characteristics, and challenges in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0. Jakarta: Prenada Media.
- Azizah, N., & Nurhuda, M. (2021). Digital literacy of Islamic boarding school students in social media preaching. *Digital Da'wah Journal*, 5(2), 87–102.
- Campbell, H. A., & Tsuria, R. (Eds.). (2021). *Digital religion: Understanding religious practice in digital media* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Castells, M. (2020). *The rise of the network society* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Eickelman, D. F., & Piscatori, J. (2021). *Muslim politics in the digital age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fauzi, A., & Lestari, D. (2022). Digital dakwah engagement and community participation among Islamic youth organizations. *Journal of Communication Da'wah*, 11(1), 15–30.
- Haris, M. (2023). Digital branding pesantren and community acceptance: A case study. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 5(2), 101–118.
- Hasanah, I., & Abidin, S. (2022). Digital da'wah and strengthening the Islamic identity of Islamic boarding school students in the new media era. *Islamic Communication Journal*, 8(1), 20–35.
- Hasanah, I., Abidin, S., & Fikri, N. (2023). Digital Islamic boarding school resilience and competitiveness in the new media era. *Contemporary Da'wah Journal*, 5(1), 29–45.
- Islami, S., & Hidayat, T. (2024). Moderation of digital da'wah in Islamic boarding schools: A phenomenological study. *International Journal of Muslim Studies*, 2(1), 11–27.
- Junaidi, M., & Sugiyanto, S. (2022). Decentralization of da'wah authority in the digital era: A study of Islamic boarding school students' da'wah. *Digital Da'wah Journal*, 6(1), 70–85.
- Kurniawan, A., Fadilah, D., & Prasetyo, H. (2022). Digital transformation in Islamic boarding schools: Between opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, 10(2), 150–165.
- Kuswianto, Dwi. (2022). Implementation of Effective Education for Teachers of Moral Beliefs in Improving the Islamic Behavior of MA Tanbihul Ghofilin Banjarnegara Students. *Journal of Social Humanities Education*, 1(3).
- Murtadho, M. (2022). Creativity-based digital preaching on social media. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication*, 9(1), 55–70.

- Nurul Huda. (2019). Millennial generation in digital da'wah: Opportunities and challenges. Bandung: Rosdakarya Youth.
- Nugraha, H., Wulandari, A., & Pramudya, D. (2024). Digital literacy for students in Islamic boarding schools: Practices and challenges. *Indonesian Journal of Communication Studies*, 8(1), 45–60.
- Rahman, S., & Fitriani, R. (2022). The role of Islamic boarding schools in digital da'wah and religious moderation. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Communication*, 4(2), 85–102.
- Rhenald Kasali. (2018). *Disruption: Facing invisible opponents in the digital economy*. Jakarta: Mizan Publishing.
- Sari, R., & Rahayu, D. (2021). Digital reputation of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Da'wah Communication*, 4(1), 22–38.
- Smith, A., & Anderson, M. (2022). Religious socialization and digital media use among millennials and Gen Z. *New Media & Society*, 24(2), 365–382.
- Soekanto, S. (2018). *Sociology: An introduction* (Revised edition). Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
- Syafii Maarif, A. (2018). *Islam within the framework of Indonesianness and humanity*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.
- Wahyudi, A., & Kartika, S. (2022). Digital da'wah management and students' loyalty in Islamic boarding schools. *Journal of Islamic Communication*, 5(1), 35–50.
- Wardhani, T., Aziz, N., & Munir, M. (2021). Digital da'wah and social cultural transformation in Islamic boarding schools. *Journal of Sociology of Religion*, 7(2), 120–137.
- Wicaksono, D. (2022). Digital da'wah as an instrument for moderating religious content in Islamic boarding schools. *Journal of Religious Moderation*, 2(1), 55–70.
- Wulandari, D., Kurniawan, A., & Fathurrahman, F. (2021). The role of the millennial generation in the digitalization of Islamic boarding school preaching. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Da'wah*, 3(2), 88–103.
- Yusup, A. (2023). Involvement of female students in pesantren digital dakwah activities. *Journal of Gender and Da'wah*, 3(2), 75–90.
- Zahra, F., & Putra, I. (2024). Digital media and Islamic boarding schools as peace communication centers. *Journal of Global Islamic Communication*, 9(1), 12–28.
- Zainuddin, M., & Al-Mutawakkil, S. (2023). Digital dakwah and Islamic boarding schools: Creating inclusive and sustainable ecosystems. *Journal of Islamic Social Studies*, 7(1), 40–55.