Digital Da'wah (Preachers) and Hegemony in Digital Age: A study of Muslim Generations' Political Preferences by Social Media

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Abstract

This study explores how digital da'wah influences the political preferences of Indonesia's Muslim digital generation. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with Muslim university students aged 18–25 who actively consume religious content on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. The findings reveal that digital preachers function as ideological agents who frame political choices as part of religious and moral obligations. The use of social media algorithms intensifies exposure to specific narratives, resulting in echo chambers that narrow perspectives and increase polarization. Using Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, the study highlights how ideological power is constructed and sustained through cultural consent and religious authority. However, the study also identifies critical audience responses that challenge dominant narratives, demonstrating that digital da'wah is not hegemonically total. This research underscores the importance of digital literacy and a more dialogical approach to online religious preaching as a way to foster healthy and inclusive political participation in the digital age.

Keywords : digital da'wah (preachers), hegemony, social media, political preference, digital generation

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought major changes in the way people access information, including in religious and political aspects. Social media is now the main platform for many preachers to disseminate religious lectures. This phenomenon not only affects individuals' understanding of religion, but also has the potential to shape their political preferences. In Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, the role of religion in politics is significant. Elections and public policies are often linked to Islamic values, and many religious figures are active in political discussions, both in person and through social media. The digital Muslim generation, active in cyberspace, is a key audience for online da'wah. Therefore, an important question arises: to what extent does digital da'wah content contribute to shaping the political preferences of the digital Muslim generation in Indonesia?

A number of previous studies have highlighted various aspects of digital da'wah and its role in building the understanding of Islam among the younger generation. (Wina Sumiati & Nawawi 2025) show that communities such as NU Garis Lucu, AISNU, and Pondok Sanad have successfully adapted modern technology to deliver religious messages. With the al-mauizah hasanah and al-hikmah approach, these communities are able to attract the attention of young audiences and make da'wah more interesting and effective without losing its essence (Aditoni and Rohmah 2022) examined the preferences of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya students towards Islamic learning in the digital era. They found that students prefer learning through platforms such as YouTube and social media, although there is a gap between their preferences and teachers' strategies in utilizing digital technology for religious education. This research emphasizes the need for collaboration between preachers and digital media to increase the effectiveness of da'wah.

On the other hand, (Muvid, Arnandy, and Arrosyidi 2024) highlighted the effectiveness of TikTok as a moderate da'wah platform. Preachers such as Gus Iqdam, Gus Kautsar, and Neng Umi Laila use humanity-based approaches, humor, and friendly communication to attract young audiences. This strategy not only increases the appeal of da'wah but also contributes to the formation of a more peaceful and inclusive understanding of Islam. (Ibtida Saumi, Surawan, and Widiastuty 2024) examined the use of memes as a modern dawah tool, highlighting characters such as Patrick Star used in dawah content. They found that this approach can reach generation Z Muslims in a creative way, but also warned of the risk of message distortion and

degradation of religious values. Therefore, meme-based da'wah strategies should keep in mind the balance between entertainment and message depth. In addition, (Estuningtyas et al. 2023) discussed the role of the millennial generation in digital da'wah journalism. They emphasize that this generation has great potential in spreading Islamic messages through social media innovatively, while adhering to the principles of journalistic ethics. Digital da'wah, in this context, is not only an invitation to understand religion, but also plays a role in finding solutions to various social problems.

This research offers novelty by analyzing how preachers' lectures on social media affect the political attitudes of the digital Muslim generation in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that focus more on the effectiveness of digital da'wah methods, this study highlights how religious messages delivered through social media contribute to the formation of political preferences. In addition, it explores how religious narratives are constructed in digital spaces and how audiences respond to them. By understanding the interaction between digital proselytizing and politics, this research is expected to provide new insights into the relationship between social media, religion and politics in the Indonesian context. The findings of this research are not only relevant for academics in understanding the social dynamics of religion in the digital era, but can also provide recommendations for policy makers and preachers in designing more effective and inclusive da'wah strategies in the social media era. This study is framed within Antonio Gramsci's hegemony theory, which explains how dominant ideologies are maintained not only through coercion but also through cultural and ideological consent. In the context of digital da'wah, religious narratives in social media function as a form of ideological hegemony that shapes political consciousness. Preachers act as "organic intellectuals", producing and disseminating religious-political discourses that influence how audiences perceive leadership, governance, and morality in politics. Through "common sense", digital da'wah helps normalize certain political preferences by embedding them within religious teachings, making them appear natural and unquestionable. (Briandana et al. 2020)

The findings of this research are not only relevant for academics in understanding the social dynamics of religion in the digital era but can also provide recommendations for policymakers and preachers in designing more effective and inclusive da'wah strategies in the social media era. Based on the above background, this research formulates several main questions. First, how do preachers on social media compose and deliver religious narratives related to politics? Second, to what extent does digital preaching content influence the political

attitudes of the digital Muslim generation in Indonesia? Third, how do audiences respond to religious lectures containing political messages on social media? To answer these questions, this study aims to analyze the strategies of preachers in composing and delivering religious lectures containing political messages on social media, identify the influence of digital da'wah on the formation of political preferences of the digital Muslim generation in Indonesia, and explore audience responses to digital da'wah related to political issues. Thus, this research aims to fill the gap in digital da'wah studies by exploring how religious lectures on social media can shape the political attitudes of the digital Muslim generation. Given the increasing use of social media as a primary source of religious and political information, a deeper understanding of this dynamic is all the more important, especially in the context of a religious and democratic society like Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The main focus of the research is to understand the experiences and perspectives of the digital Muslim generation who actively consume digital da'wah related to politics. The research subjects were Muslim students aged 18-25 who regularly access religious lectures on social media such as TikTok and Instagram. The selection of respondents was conducted using purposive sampling technique, i.e. selecting individuals who fit the research criteria. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 10 respondents to understand how they interpret religious lectures related to politics, social media observation by analyzing several popular ustaz accounts and how they convey political issues in their lectures, and documentation in the form of screenshots or transcripts of lectures that are considered influential to the audience's political preferences.

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis method, which identifies patterns or themes that emerge from interviews and observations. The analysis process is carried out with steps such as transcription of interviews and initial coding to find the main themes, discourse analysis of the content of social media preachers' lectures related to politics, and interpretation of data to see the relationship between digital da'wah consumption and political preferences of the digital Muslim generation. This research is based on Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which explains how dominant groups maintain power not only through coercion but also through ideological means, including religion and media. Digital da'wah, as a form of religious discourse on social media, can function as a hegemonic tool that shapes political consciousness by reinforcing certain narratives about leadership, morality, and public policy.

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The concept of "consent manufacturing" in Gramsci's hegemony theory is relevant in analyzing how religious messages in digital spaces gain legitimacy and influence political attitudes. This research is expected to contribute to the study of political sociology, especially in understanding the role of social media in shaping people's political attitudes through religious narratives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research reveals that digital da'wah has a very significant influence on the formation of political preferences among the digital Muslim generation in Indonesia. Through in-depth interviews with respondents and analysis of digital da'wah content circulating on various social media platforms, several main themes were found that illustrate how religious narratives in the digital space play a role in shaping individual and collective political awareness. In this research, Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony is used as the main analytical framework to understand how digital da'wah not only functions as a means of disseminating religious teachings, but also as a tool that plays an important role in the process of ideological domination. Hegemony in this context refers to how a group or individual with intellectual and moral authority is able to instil certain values and perspectives in people's minds, so that these values are accepted voluntarily without any real coercion. As such, digital da'wah acts as a mechanism that structurally and culturally shapes ways of thinking, ways of understanding social reality, as well as how individuals make their political decisions. In this process, religion not only serves as a spiritual foundation for people, but also becomes an instrument used to direct their political preferences, either consciously or unconsciously.

Based on the research findings, it can be seen that digital da'wah becomes part of a hegemonic process that works through various mechanisms, ranging from the role of digital preachers as ideological agents, the influence of social media algorithms in creating echo chambers that narrow individuals' political perspectives, to the framing of politics in morality narratives that shape people's mindsets towards leaders and public policies. The young Muslim generation follows the accounts of several religious influencers or preachers such as Kadam Sidiq, Habib Jafar, Hanan Attaki, and so on. In this context, digital da'wah not only functions as a medium of religious communication, but also as an ideological battlefield where the dominance of a particular political thought can be strengthened, reproduced, and normalised in the collective consciousness of the digital Muslim community in Indonesia.

The Role of Preachers as Ideological Agents

In the digital public sphere, preachers no longer function solely as conveyors of religious doctrine, where they have become central actors in shaping political perception, constructing ideological narratives, and normalizing particular values. This research found that many digital preachers do not isolate politics from religion; instead, they embed political messaging within religious discourse, presenting political preferences as religious obligations. This strategy makes political alignment appear not only acceptable but religiously commendable.

One respondent, Alisha (21), shared: "I trust the ustaz I follow on Instagram more than the news on TV. They explain politics from a religious perspective, and it makes more sense to me." This illustrates the central role digital religious figures play in displacing traditional sources of political knowledge and legitimacy. Their ability to interpret political events through Islamic teachings builds deep trust with followers, particularly among young Muslims who feel alienated from mainstream political discourse.

(Hamidah, 2023) explains that this phenomenon occurs because digital preachers construct a worldview in which political engagement is seen as part of fulfilling Islamic responsibility. In many online sermons, choices around elections, party support, and national leadership are framed as extensions of religious identity and moral duty. Some preachers openly endorse political figures, while others draw on Qur'anic verses or hadith to frame leadership traits that subtly guide followers toward certain candidates. This indirect style is no less effective in shaping perception and building ideological alignment.

From the perspective of Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, these digital preachers can be understood as organic intellectuals, which is a figure who emerge from within the social structure of the ummah and articulate its political and moral direction. Unlike traditional elites, organic intellectuals speak in the language of the people, embodying the values and anxieties of their community. Their legitimacy is built not on institutional authority, but on proximity, piety, and cultural resonance.

As Gramsci (1971) argues, hegemony is maintained not just through coercive institutions, but by securing consent through cultural leadership. In this case, digital preachers are not only disseminating religious knowledge but also performing ideological labor by linking Islamic morality to political interpretation. Their content redefines "common sense" by

aligning political virtue with Islamic virtue, constructing a shared moral-political framework that feels natural and self-evident to their audience. (Saleh et al. 2022)

This was affirmed by Ikhsan (23), who said: "I remember an ustaz on TikTok saying that leaders should be like Prophet Yusuf, smart and trustworthy. So, I prefer leaders who look religious because that is more in line with Islam." Such statements reflect how deeply intertwined religious imagination and political preference have become in the minds of young digital Muslims. Through symbolic association, the figure of the religious leader becomes the archetype for evaluating political figures.

Siagian et al., (2024) further support this observation by noting that society increasingly expects religious leaders to play a moral and political role that guiding the ummah not only in personal conduct but also in civic decision-making. This expectation enhances the authority of digital preachers, turning their da'wah into a potent site of ideological production. Moreover, (Childers & Boatwright 2021) argue that in the age of digital micro-influence, religious figures on platforms like TikTok and Instagram are trusted precisely because they feel more authentic, accessible, and emotionally relatable than institutional political actors or academics.

(Saleh et al. 2022) underline that digital da'wah has entered a new phase where content creators must blend traditional Islamic values with contemporary communicative strategies. The success of preachers in this space is not just about theological knowledge but also about emotional performance, consistency of values, and ability to respond to political crises in a way that aligns with followers' religious expectations.

Taken together, these findings reveal how digital preachers function not merely as conveyors of spiritual wisdom but as hegemonic actors engaged in the construction of political meaning. Through religious rhetoric, symbolic authority, and algorithmic amplification, they normalize specific political attitudes as expressions of Islamic authenticity. In doing so, they shape the political consciousness of their followers, often unconsciously by embedding ideological messages within frameworks of faith, virtue, and identity. (Falach, 2025)

Algorithmic Amplification and the Formation of Echo Chambers

While preachers serve as ideological agents, the structure of the digital platforms they inhabit also plays a significant role in shaping how political-religious content is consumed and internalized. This research finds that algorithmic systems on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube act as invisible ideological amplifiers, reinforcing certain messages while

marginalizing others. Once users engage with da'wah content containing political narratives, their feeds become saturated with similar content, leading to a narrowing of perspectives and increased polarization. (Bossetta & Schmøkel 2022)

This aligns with (Ohme, 2021) concept of reinforcing spirals, where users are repeatedly exposed to congruent messages that strengthen their prior attitudes and decrease openness to dissenting views. In this process, the algorithm functions not just as a content curator, but as a structural enabler of ideological reproduction. The repetition of politically charged religious content in a closed loop creates a digital environment where ideological homogeneity feels natural and unproblematic.

Respondents frequently described this experience. Kanza (19) shared: "At first, I only watched one da'wah video about politics on TikTok. But over time, the videos that appeared on my FYP were almost all about politics from an Islamic perspective." Her account illustrates how algorithmic personalization can create what is often referred to as an echo chamber, which is a space where only similar voices are heard, and other perspectives are systematically filtered out. (Ohme, 2021)

Usman et al., (2024) underscore this mechanism, explaining how the algorithm amplifies dominant narratives while suppressing alternative ones, especially in religious-political discourse. In the context of digital da'wah, this means that once a user interacts with content emphasizing moral-religious views on leadership, their subsequent exposure is skewed toward similar viewpoints, reinforcing ideological certainty.

From the perspective of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, the algorithm acts as a contemporary ideological apparatus that supports the construction and maintenance of dominant cultural narratives. It enables the continuous circulation of specific political values dressed in religious language, thereby naturalizing them. This contributes to the formation of hegemonic common sense, a worldview that appears neutral or "Islamic," but is actually the result of curated exposure and digital design. (Romadlany & Effendi 2025)

Riyan (22) expressed how this affected his media environment: "I rarely see other points of view on Instagram or TikTok, because that's all that appears on my timeline. If something is different, it's usually deleted or reported by those who disagree." This statement points to not only the absence of alternative narratives but also the social policing of ideological boundaries. Content that challenges dominant political-religious views may be dismissed,

reported, or algorithmically buried, contributing to an ecosystem that discourages pluralism and debate.

(Nuriana & Salwa 2024) warn that unchecked algorithmic systems can create ideological rigidity among young users, especially when combined with religious legitimacy. In such an environment, da'wah loses its dialogic nature and becomes a one-directional assertion of moral-political truth. Instead of fostering civic engagement and critical thinking, the repetition of morally charged messages can cultivate passive ideological conformity.

These findings indicate that digital hegemony is not only produced through the preacher's rhetoric but also through the platform's architecture. The ideological power of digital da'wah is amplified not only by who speaks and what is said, but also by how algorithms circulate and prioritize particular messages. The result is a layered system of influence—part preacher, part platform that shapes political consciousness through repetition, resonance, and restricted exposure. (Muyassaroh et al., 2023)

Religious Narratives and Political Morality

This study reveals that political preference among young Muslims is not merely driven by policy analysis or rational civic evaluation, but is deeply influenced by religious narratives that emphasize morality and piety as criteria for political leadership. Digital preachers often frame political discourse in moral-religious terms, presenting political leaders as either morally upright or un-Islamic, depending on their alignment with Islamic values. (Khotimah et al. 2024)

A subject, Kinan (20), expressed: "I prefer leaders whose religion is strong. Regarding policies, I can learn later, the important thing is that his heart is clean and he fears God." This statement exemplifies the shift from policy-based evaluation to morality-based judgment, which reflects the influence of digital religious figures in shaping political sentiments.

Badrah Uyuni et al., (2023) describe how religious da'wah on social media often replaces rational political deliberation with symbolic moral alignment, constructing leadership as a matter of personal virtue. This redefinition of political legitimacy is not neutral; it represents a hegemonic project that embeds political ideology in religious language.

In Gramsci's terms, this process constitutes the production of "common sense", wherein religious piety becomes the naturalized foundation for political decision-making. Political attitudes shaped through religious sermons are not perceived as ideological but as

truthful, divinely sanctioned positions. As Gramsci (1971) argues, hegemonic ideas dominate not by force but by making certain worldviews appear natural, acceptable, and morally indisputable.

This is further reinforced by the emotional and cultural resonance of religious preaching. According to (Childers & Boatwright 2021), digital natives place high trust in micro-influencers, a figure who are not celebrities but feel relatable and authentic. This trust dynamic allows preachers to build symbolic authority that surpasses that of formal political figures or civic educators.

Furthermore, the findings of (Usman and Siagian 2024) highlight that many ulama on social media are expected to act as public moral guides, whose political statements are considered reminders of Islamic ethics rather than partisan declarations. Their messages are often well received by youth audiences, especially when those messages are framed as aligning with Islamic principles such as justice, amanah (trust), and taqwa (God-consciousness).

Nevertheless, not all respondents accepted these narratives uncritically. Abel (24) stated: "I understand that religion is important, but I think leaders should have experience and a clear vision, not just because they look religious." This reflects the presence of counter-hegemonic awareness, a form of resistance where individuals begin to question dominant moral-political narratives, even when those are endorsed by religious authorities.

This duality, between ideological conformity and resistance shows that digital da'wah is a contested space, where hegemonic narratives are both reproduced and challenged. As (Ohme, 2021) points out, algorithmic personalization often reinforces moral-political messages users agree with, further cementing their beliefs and potentially reducing openness to alternatives. But this can also lead to what Ohme terms "selective political fatigue", it means a condition where users cease engaging critically due to overexposure.

In sum, the religious moralization of political narratives found in digital da'wah contributes significantly to the formation of political preferences among young Muslims. It reflects a hegemonic process wherein moral-religious discourse normalizes specific ideological positions. While this can enhance political participation by connecting faith to civic life, it also risks narrowing the political imagination, excluding non-religious criteria of leadership and undermining pluralism in democratic discourse. To ensure balanced political engagement, it is

crucial that both religious leaders and audiences develop critical digital literacy and are encouraged to reflect beyond the surface of moral messaging.

Preachers as Political Mobilizers and Public Policy Advocates

Digital preachers in Indonesia increasingly function not only as spiritual guides but also as political mobilizers and advocates of public policy, using their platforms to influence both voting behavior and public opinion on state affairs. Respondents in this study consistently acknowledged the role of religious figures in shaping their understanding of economic issues, legal reforms, and governance practices through Islamic interpretations. (Dean, 2024)

Aulia (19) admitted: "If my ustaz supports a candidate, I will consider my choice. I believe he understands better what is best for the ummah." This indicates how religious legitimacy is transferred to political endorsement, turning digital da'wah into a form of political communication that resonates with moral authority. (Seyfi et al. 2025)

As Gramsci's theory of hegemony would argue, this is not a neutral act. Preachers, as organic intellectuals, mediate between dominant ideologies and the everyday lives of their followers, embedding political values within religious messages to produce consent. According to (Briandana et al. 2020), this merging of faith and political alignment allows preachers to become pivotal players in ideological contests, especially during electoral cycles.

Evidence from (Usman & Siagian 2024) supports this claim, revealing that youth audiences positively perceive ulama's political engagement on social media. Far from being seen as inappropriate, their interventions are framed as a necessary part of da'wah, aligned with prophetic traditions of advising rulers and protecting the people from tyranny. These political sermons are considered a spiritual continuation of Islamic values that upholding justice (adl), accountability (amanah), and anti-corruption (istiqamah).

Veyan (23), however, offered a dissenting view: "In my opinion, the preacher's job is to teach religion, not to support politics. I become skeptical if they talk about politics too much." This reflects the ideological tension between religious authority and political partisanship, a recurring concern in public debates. (Pérez-Escoda et al. 2021)

Importantly, digital da'wah also plays a strategic role in shaping perceptions about public policy. Preachers use their religious platforms to comment on legislative matters, investment ethics, and moral conduct of political elites. Ustaz Adi Hidayat, for instance, was

noted praising President Jokowi's revocation of alcohol investment permits, framing it as alignment with Islamic moral values. Similarly, Ustaz Abdus Somad's message "don't choose the wrong leader" embeds electoral decisions within the framework of halal-haram judgment, rather than civic evaluation. (Hansson & Weiss 2023)

Such framings redefine political participation through religious vocabulary, where voting becomes ibadah and civic responsibility becomes amanah. This is further reflected in calls against money politics and corrupt governance, which are not merely criticized but condemned as religious sins, emphasizing accountability in the afterlife. (Mohammed Bilal et al. 2024)

In the digital context, this trend is further magnified. As noted by various researchers, young Islamic preachers today utilize social media to disseminate these political-religious messages, often reaching broader audiences than conventional political actors. These preachers foster communities in online and offline platform, that not only discuss Islamic values but also engage in political mobilization, forming voting blocs or action groups around issues such as justice, poverty, and governance. (Jaili & Ningsih, 2024)

This convergence of da'wah and politics, while powerful in activating civic engagement, also presents challenges. The blurred boundary between religious authority and political activism raises ethical questions, particularly in a pluralistic society. When religious language is used to support particular candidates or delegitimize others, the space for critical, democratic debate narrows, and religious difference can be weaponized.

Yet, respondents also noted the educational value of political sermons. For instance, some appreciated being reminded of their civic duties, especially when framed as part of their religious obligations. This suggests that when done responsibly, religious discourse can enhance political literacy, providing moral frameworks to assess candidates and policies critically, as long as it avoids partisanship. (Hakim & Hakim 2024)

In summary, digital preachers in Indonesia now serve dual functions: as guides of Islamic values and as shapers of political consciousness. Their ability to influence public opinion and voter behavior is profound, particularly among the youth. Through Gramsci's lens, they represent a new kind of hegemonic force, one that combines the legitimacy of religion with the reach of digital media to construct a politically engaged, morally driven public. This

power, however, must be accompanied by reflexivity and ethical awareness to safeguard democratic pluralism. (Muyassaroh et al. 2023)

Audience Responses to Political Da'wah

Responses to political da'wah among the Muslim digital generation in Indonesia are far from monolithic. This study found a spectrum of receptions, ranging from passive acceptance to active critique. While many subjects expressed trust in preachers and adopted their political advice without question, others showed a degree of critical awareness—fact-checking the claims made by religious figures, comparing them with other sources, or consciously avoiding politically charged sermons. (Ahyar & Alfitri 2019)

As noted by Abel (24): "I understand that religion is important, but I think leaders should have experience and a clear vision, not just because they look religious." This kind of critical reflection demonstrates that although hegemonic religious narratives are powerful, they do not go uncontested. In Gramsci's terms, this reveals the dialectic between consent and resistance, where ideology is internalized unevenly across social groups.

(Usman et al. 2024) observed that audience responses to political sermons depend greatly on the preacher's credibility and the perceived balance between religious integrity and political bias. Respondents tend to embrace political da'wah when it aligns with their existing religious values and when the preacher is seen as trustworthy. However, scepticism arises when religious figures appear to promote specific political interests, raising concerns about manipulation or instrumentalization of faith. (Mohammed Bilal et al. 2024)

Several respondents also expressed discomfort with the oversimplification of complex political issues. As one student noted: "Sometimes the ustaz makes it sound like there are only two choices, Islamic or un-Islamic. I think politics is more complicated than that." This concern reflects a tension between moral absolutism in religious discourse and the pluralistic reality of democratic politics. According to (Nuriana & Salwa 2024), such binary framings may lead to exclusionary political attitudes, especially when dissenting views are dismissed as deviant or irreligious.

Furthermore, the affordances of digital media shape how political da'wah is received. Interactive features such as comment sections, Q&A sessions, and livestreams—allow users to engage, challenge, or even push back against preachers' messages. (Nuriana & Salwa 2024)

emphasize that participatory digital platforms provide space for contestation, enabling audiences to not only consume but also contribute to religious discourse.

However, algorithmic filtering and the architecture of social media often limit such diversity. Even when users seek out alternative views, they are constrained by platforms that prioritize content similar to what they have previously engaged with. This feedback loop diminishes exposure to pluralistic discourses. (Alwi, 2024) argue that critical digital literacy is essential, especially for young Muslims navigating a politicized religious landscape online.

In spite of these challenges, the research also found signs of digital empowerment and agency. Some respondents deliberately curated their timelines to include moderate Islamic scholars, avoided partisan sermons, or actively sought secular analyses of political events. This indicates that ideological hegemony is never total, it is always negotiated. As Gramsci reminds us, civil society is a terrain of struggle, not submission. (Bossetta & Schmøkel 2022)

One promising development is the emergence of inclusive Islamic discourses that promote democratic values, tolerance, and civic engagement without compromising religious authenticity. According to (Nuriana & Salwa 2024), moderate da'wah content tends to garner more engagement among Gen Z Muslims, especially when it uses relatable, creative formats like short videos, infographics, and humor.

This suggests that audience reception is shaped not just by message content, but also by format and tone. When political da'wah is perceived as educational rather than coercive, and when it is delivered in ways that encourage reflection rather than dogma, it is more likely to be received positively even by critical audiences. (Romadlany & Effendi 2025)

In conclusion, the response of young Muslims to political da'wah reflects both the strength of religious authority and the dynamic potential for individual agency. While social media has amplified the reach of political preaching, it has also empowered audiences to question, reinterpret, and reshape religious messages. The findings affirm Gramsci's notion that hegemony is never absolute, it must be constantly reinforced, challenged, and negotiated. For democracy to thrive in religiously infused digital spaces, both preachers and audiences must be encouraged to foster dialogical engagement, ethical persuasion, and a commitment to pluralism. (Falach 2025,Robin et al., 2022)

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that digital da'wah exerts a considerable influence on the political inclinations of the Muslim generation in Indonesia. The analysis indicates that social media preachers function as ideological agents, establishing a nexus between Islamic teachings and political discourse. This integration of religious and moral precepts with political preferences is a salient feature of the study (Usman et al. 2024) The utilisation of social media algorithms by these preachers serves to amplify individuals' exposure to specific narratives, thereby creating echo chambers that serve to narrow viewpoints and exacerbate the polarisation of faith-based politics. Furthermore, this study found that leadership narratives in digital da'wah tend to emphasise aspects of morality and personal piety over administrative competence. This tendency is further compounded by the propensity of the younger Muslim demographic to select leaders based on their religious identity rather than on their governance capabilities. Additionally, the study notes the active involvement of some preachers in political mobilisation, both explicitly and implicitly, which has implications for the formation of faith-based electoral communities. From a Gramscian perspective, this phenomenon illustrates how organic intellectuals use cultural and religious capital to construct political "common sense" that appears natural, righteous, and beyond criticism.

This research provides a novel contribution to digital da'wah studies by highlighting the overlooked role of platform algorithms in intensifying ideological exposure, as well as by documenting the presence of critical and resistant audience responses. While the findings confirm the strong persuasive power of digital proselytising, they also point to the persistent agency of individuals who interpret, negotiate, or even reject hegemonic narratives. Several respondents showed active media literacy, selectively engaging with diverse content or questioning the religious framing of political matters. This reinforces the idea that digital hegemony, while powerful, is always contested and unstable. The implications of this study suggest the urgent need for preachers to adopt a more inclusive and dialogical approach in conveying political-religious messages to avoid deepening polarisation and moral absolutism. Social media users, particularly youth, should also be equipped with critical thinking skills to navigate religious-political content without falling into ideological traps. At the same time, it is crucial for policymakers and educators to promote digital literacy as a fundamental strategy for sustaining healthy democratic engagement in plural societies. Future research should explore how digital da'wah interacts with socio-economic background, gender, and local

political culture in shaping political behaviour, as well as how preachers adapt their rhetorical strategies in response to shifting political contexts. These insights collectively underscore the need for a deeper understanding of the dynamic intersections between digital da'wah, religious authority, algorithmic power, and political socialisation in the contemporary digital era.

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