



Integrating Da'wah into Islamic Counseling Practices on Social Media Platforms

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores how da'wah can be positioned as an Islamic counseling approach within social media environments. The growing use of digital platforms has not only changed communication patterns but also intensified psychological and emotional challenges such as anxiety, stress, and identity confusion. These conditions call for counseling approaches that are both accessible and spiritually grounded. This study employs a qualitative descriptive design using a library research method, drawing on recent scholarly works related to da'wah, Islamic counseling, and digital media. The findings show that integrating da'wah into counseling practices supports the development of self-awareness (muhasabah), encourages personal transformation (hijrah), and strengthens spiritual resilience (taqwa). In this context, social media functions not merely as a communication tool but as a space for ongoing guidance and interaction. This study suggests that da'wah can play a more integrative role as a counseling approach in addressing contemporary psychological and spiritual needs in the digital era.

Keywords: *Da'wah, Digital Counseling, Islamic Counseling, Social Media, Spiritual Guidance*

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of social media has significantly transformed not only communication patterns but also the way individuals experience and express psychological conditions. Recent empirical studies indicate that excessive engagement with social media is associated with various mental health challenges, including anxiety, emotional distress, and identity confusion, particularly among young users (Keles et al., 2020; Naslund et al., 2020). Similar findings have also been reported in other recent studies (Twenge et al., 2022).

In addition, social media environments often intensify social comparison, fear of missing out (FoMO), and low self-esteem, which contribute to emotional instability and psychological vulnerability (Best et al., 2021; Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020). These conditions indicate that social media is not merely a communication platform, but also a complex psychological space where

emotional struggles are continuously negotiated. In this context, da'wah needs to be repositioned not only as the delivery of religious messages but also as a form of guidance that is responsive to users' emotional and psychological needs.

The rise of social media platforms has reshaped how individuals communicate, construct identity, and seek information. These platforms are no longer used solely for social interaction but have become spaces where emotional expression and personal struggles are often displayed and negotiated. Recent studies highlight that social media functions as a dynamic environment where users actively construct self-identity while simultaneously experiencing psychological pressures (Naslund et al., 2020; Best et al., 2021). While social media offers accessibility and openness, it also contributes to various psychological challenges, including anxiety, stress, and emotional instability (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020; Twenge et al., 2022).

Recent studies have shown that digital da'wah has developed into an effective medium for disseminating Islamic values and increasing religious awareness among diverse audiences (Hidayat & Nuri, 2024; Agustiani, 2025). Through creative and interactive content, da'wah is able to reach wider communities. However, many of these practices remain focused on message delivery and often overlook the deeper psychological needs of individuals, particularly those experiencing emotional distress in digital environments.

In parallel, Islamic counseling has emerged as an important approach in addressing the psychological, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human life. It emphasizes self-understanding, emotional balance, and inner peace (sakinah) grounded in Qur'anic and Sunnah principles (Faqih, 2001; Hallen, 2002). Several recent studies suggest that Islamic counseling applied in digital contexts can enhance resilience, self-control, and moral awareness among users (Sabrina, 2025; Ayuna et al., 2025). Despite these developments, existing research tends to position da'wah and Islamic counseling as two separate domains.

This separation reveals a conceptual gap. Studies on digital da'wah generally emphasize communication strategies and media transformation (Baidowi & Salehudin, 2021), while research on Islamic counseling focuses more on therapeutic and educational processes without explicitly integrating da'wah as a counseling framework (Siregar & Pulungan, 2024). As a result, the potential of da'wah as an Islamic counseling approach within social media environments remains underexplored.

Based on this gap, this study argues that da'wah should not be viewed merely as a means of delivering religious messages, but also as a form of guidance that is closely aligned with counseling practices. By integrating da'wah into Islamic counseling, it becomes possible to develop an approach that is both communicative and therapeutic, particularly in responding to the complex challenges of the digital era. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how da'wah can be conceptualized and applied as an Islamic counseling approach through social media platforms. It seeks to contribute to the development of a more integrative framework that addresses not only spiritual needs but also the psychological and emotional conditions of contemporary Muslim society.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a library research design to examine how da'wah can be understood as an Islamic counseling approach in the context of social media. This approach is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore ideas, concepts, and theoretical discussions related to da'wah, Islamic counseling, and digital communication (Creswell, 2014)

The data were gathered through a literature search using reputable academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, DOAJ, and SINTA-indexed journals, in addition to Google Scholar. The search was conducted using keywords such as da'wah, Islamic counseling, and social media. To ensure relevance and quality, several inclusion criteria were applied: the sources had to be directly related to the topic, published in peer-reviewed academic journals or scholarly books, accessible in full text, and predominantly published within the last six years. However, several earlier works were still included as they provide essential theoretical foundations. This approach ensures that the selected sources meet international academic standards and contribute to the credibility of the analysis.

The data consist of primary sources, including journal articles and academic publications that directly discuss the main topic, as well as secondary sources that support the analysis, particularly those related to social media and digital communication. All selected materials were then organized and grouped based on their thematic relevance.

The analysis was conducted using content analysis, focusing on identifying recurring themes, patterns, and relationships between da'wah practices and Islamic counseling in digital settings (Elo & Kyngäs, 2020). To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the researcher carefully reviewed and interpreted the selected sources through a process of classification and critical reading.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the integration of three interconnected domains: da'wah, Islamic counseling, and digital interaction within social media environments. In contemporary contexts, da'wah is no longer limited to the transmission of religious messages but has evolved into a more dialogical and interactive process that responds to the everyday experiences of individuals. Recent studies show that digital da'wah has shifted toward more participatory and user-centered communication patterns, where audiences actively engage, interpret, and respond to religious content (Hidayat & Nuri, 2024; Agustiani, 2025).

At the same time, Islamic counseling emphasizes a holistic helping process that integrates psychological and spiritual dimensions. It aims to foster self-awareness, emotional balance, and inner resilience through values derived from Islamic teachings. In digital contexts, this approach becomes increasingly relevant, as users often experience psychological pressures such as anxiety, identity confusion, and emotional instability due to intensive social media use (Naslund et al., 2020; Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020).

Social media, therefore, can be understood not only as a communication platform but also as a dynamic space for psychological expression and interaction. Users actively construct identities, seek validation, and share personal struggles within these environments. This creates new opportunities for informal counseling practices that are embedded in everyday digital interactions (Best et al., 2021).

Based on this perspective, this study proposes that da'wah can be positioned as an Islamic counseling approach within social media environments. In this model, da'wah functions not only as message delivery but also as a form of guidance that is responsive, empathetic, and context-sensitive to users' psychological and spiritual needs. This conceptual integration allows da'wah to contribute more effectively to addressing contemporary challenges in the digital era, particularly in supporting emotional well-being and spiritual development.

This framework serves as the analytical foundation for examining how da'wah practices can be integrated into Islamic counseling within social media contexts.

Integration of Da'wah and Islamic Counseling in Social Media

The findings indicate that da'wah is no longer limited to the delivery of religious messages, but can also be understood as a form of guidance that closely relates to counseling practices. In social media contexts, this shift becomes more visible, as users are actively involved in interpreting, responding to, and even seeking religious guidance through digital interactions.

This perspective slightly differs from earlier studies, which mainly frame digital da'wah as a communication strategy (Hidayat & Nuri, 2024; Agustiani, 2025). While those studies emphasize outreach and message effectiveness, the present study highlights the psychological dimension of users, particularly those experiencing emotional pressure, confusion, or moral uncertainty in online spaces. In this sense, da'wah becomes more than informative; it becomes responsive and supportive.

Core Dimensions of Da'wah as an Islamic Counseling Approach

From the analysis, three main dimensions can be identified as the foundation of da'wah when understood as an Islamic counseling approach.

Table 1. Core Dimensions of Da'wah-Based Islamic Counseling

No	Dimension	Description
1	Self-awareness (<i>muhasabah</i>)	Encouraging individuals to reflect on their actions, emotions, and relationship with Allah
2	Self-transformation (<i>hijrah</i>)	Supporting gradual changes in behavior and personal values
3	Spiritual strengthening (<i>taqwa</i>)	Strengthening faith, emotional balance, and inner resilience

As shown in Table 1, these dimensions point to an inward and reflective process. The emphasis is not merely on changing outward behavior, but on nurturing awareness and meaning from within. Compared to conventional counseling approaches that often rely on structured sessions, this model appears more flexible and can be embedded in everyday digital interactions. This finding also extends previous discussions on Islamic counseling, which tend to focus on formal settings (Siregar & Pulungan, 2024).

Social Media as a Space for Counseling Practices

The study further finds that social media platforms create new possibilities for informal counseling practices. Features such as comments, direct messages, and online communities enable users to share experiences, express concerns, and receive responses in real time.

Table 2. Forms of Islamic Counseling Practices on Social Media

Platform Feature	Counseling Function
Short videos/posts	Delivery of motivational and spiritual messages
Comment sections	Space for emotional expression and clarification
Direct messages	More personal and private guidance
Online communities	Peer support and shared reflection

These forms show that counseling in digital spaces does not always take a formal structure. Instead, it often appears in simple, everyday interactions. This supports earlier findings that

digital-based Islamic counseling can strengthen emotional regulation and resilience (Ayuna et al., 2025). This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that social media environments influence emotional regulation and psychological well-being (Vannucci et al., 2020; Odgers & Jensen, 2020). However, this study also underlines that the effectiveness of such practices depends on how da'wah is delivered, whether it is empathetic, relevant, and sensitive to the user's condition. This trend is in line with the growing use of online counseling, where digital platforms provide alternative spaces for psychological support and guidance (Best et al., 2021).

Critical Reflection and Contribution

One of the key contributions of this study is its attempt to bring together two areas that are often discussed separately: da'wah and Islamic counseling. Previous studies tend to emphasize one aspect over the other, either focusing on communication strategies or on therapeutic approaches. By placing them within a single framework, this study offers a more integrated perspective.

At the same time, several challenges need to be considered. The openness of social media raises questions about the accuracy of religious messages, the credibility of those providing guidance, and issues related to privacy. These concerns are important, as they affect how far da'wah can function responsibly as a counseling approach in digital settings.

Taken together, the findings suggest that integrating da'wah and Islamic counseling not only expands the role of da'wah but also strengthens the relevance of Islamic counseling in responding to the realities of contemporary digital life. This is also in line with previous studies highlighting that digital religious practices and online environments shape how individuals construct meaning and experience psychological well-being (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020; George & Odgers, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the conceptual framework presented, it can be concluded that the integration of da'wah, Islamic counseling, and digital interaction within social media environments forms a more contextual and relevant approach to contemporary life. Da'wah is no longer limited to the one-way transmission of religious messages; rather, it has evolved into a dialogical, participatory, and responsive process that engages with individuals' psychological experiences in digital spaces.

Within this framework, Islamic counseling provides a holistic foundation that integrates both psychological and spiritual dimensions, enabling it to address various challenges arising from intensive social media use, such as anxiety, identity confusion, and emotional instability. Social media itself functions not only as a communication platform but also as a dynamic space for self-expression, meaning-making, and the emergence of informal counseling practices embedded in everyday interactions.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that da'wah can be positioned as an Islamic counseling approach in digital contexts, grounded in three core dimensions: muhasabah (self-awareness), hijrah (self-transformation), and taqwa (spiritual strengthening). These dimensions highlight that the guidance process is not merely focused on external behavioral change, but also on fostering inner awareness, emotional resilience, and spiritual growth.

In conclusion, this conceptual framework contributes to expanding the role of da'wah from a purely communicative activity into a more therapeutic and supportive practice. At the same time, it reinforces the relevance of Islamic counseling in addressing the complexities of

the digital era, particularly in promoting emotional well-being and spiritual development. However, its implementation requires careful consideration of ethical issues, credibility, and sensitivity to users' conditions to ensure that it remains effective and responsible.

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