

Integrating Islamic Tradition and Digital Innovation: Akademi Daie Muda YADIM as a Catalyst for Youth Da'wah Leadership in Malaysia

Ahmad Ezzat Shamsuddin¹, Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi^{*2}, Rohaizah Jawahir³, Muhammad Ashraf Ab Malek⁴

^{1,2}Faculty of Syariah & Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Nilai, Malaysia

^{3,4}Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia (YADIM)

^{*}Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.908000209>

Received: 28 July 2025; Accepted: 03 August 2025; Published: 04 September 2025

ABSTRACT

This study examines the Akademi Daie Muda YADIM (ADMY), a flagship initiative by the Islamic Da'wah Foundation of Malaysia (YADIM), as a model for cultivating young Muslim preachers capable of addressing contemporary socio-religious challenges. In response to rising secular ideologies, digital distractions, and moral decline among Malaysian youth, ADMY integrates classical Islamic teachings with modern skill-based training in public speaking, leadership, media production, and artificial intelligence. Adopting a qualitative approach that combines document analysis with validated autoethnographic insights from the researcher's role as a facilitator in ADMY's 2025 series, this study explores how the programme equips participants to deliver contextually relevant da'wah in diverse settings, including underserved rural communities. Key findings highlight ADMY's innovative digital literacy and AI modules, transformative outreach in Sarawak, and its success in developing spiritually grounded, socially engaged, and digitally fluent youth leaders. Nevertheless, scalability, resource limitations, and post-training engagement remain challenges. Policy support for nationwide replication, structured alum networks, and advanced trainer development is recommended to sustain and amplify impact.

Keywords: Akademi Daie Muda YADIM, youth Islamic leadership development, digital and AI-based da'wah, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Da'wah, or the propagation of Islam, plays a crucial role in shaping a balanced Muslim society spiritually, intellectually, and morally. In Malaysia, numerous institutions and government agencies have been established to carry out this responsibility, including the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM), and the Islamic Da'wah Foundation of Malaysia (YADIM). Each entity contributes uniquely to spreading Islamic teachings through conventional and modern approaches (Rosidi et al., 2021).

Amidst the rise of globalisation, social media influence, liberal ideologies, and moral decline, young Muslims are increasingly vulnerable to distractions that threaten their religious identity. As youth represent the largest demographic in Malaysia, it is vital to empower them to become resilient and informed individuals who can lead and contribute meaningfully to society. This reality has heightened the urgency to cultivate a new

generation of preachers (Daies) who are religiously grounded and capable of engaging with contemporary audiences.

In response to these challenges, YADIM has undertaken several initiatives aimed at youth empowerment, among which the Akademi Daie Muda YADIM (ADMY) stands out. This academy serves as a platform to nurture young Muslim leaders with religious knowledge, communication skills, and strong character, preparing them to engage in da'wah work across various social settings. Despite its growing reputation, limited academic studies have been conducted to assess the impact and effectiveness of ADMY's training modules and long-term outcomes.

This gives rise to a key research problem: To what extent is ADMY successful in developing competent young daie capable of addressing the spiritual and social needs of Malaysian society? Moreover, there is a need to explore how participants translate their training into real-world da'wah, the challenges they face post-training, and the sustainability of their engagement with the community.

Given this context, the present study seeks to explore YADIM's role as a catalyst in youth da'wah development, focusing on the strategies and outcomes of the Akademi Daie YADIM. The research hopes to enhance youth da'wah programs in Malaysia and serve as a reference for other institutions seeking to develop effective models for Islamic missionary work among young people.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE ROLE OF ADMY IN DEVELOPING YOUNG PREACHERS

The development of young preachers in Malaysia is increasingly seen as a national priority, especially in light of social challenges faced by Muslim youth today. The Akademi Daie Muda YADIM (ADMY) was established by the Islamic Da'wah Foundation of Malaysia (YADIM) as a proactive response to these challenges. Its mission is to prepare young Muslims to become competent, confident, and contextually aware da'is (preachers) who can deliver Islamic messages in a manner relevant to modern audiences.

ADMY adopts a structured training model that combines theoretical Islamic knowledge with practical field exposure. Often selected through a rigorous screening, participants undergo intensive training modules over several months. These include lessons in Quranic interpretation, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), theology (aqidah), akhlak (ethics), communication skills, public speaking, leadership development, and da'wah methodology. The curriculum is supplemented with experiential learning, where trainees are deployed to schools, public institutions, and community outreach projects to deliver talks and organise Islamic activities (YADIM, 2022).

The initiative reflects a shift in Malaysia's da'wah strategy from relying primarily on established religious scholars to building a younger generation of spiritual leaders more attuned to youth culture and contemporary social dynamics. Ahmad and Zulkifli (2018) argue that such efforts are vital for curbing religious apathy among youth and redirecting their energy toward community service and spiritual leadership.

Furthermore, ADMY is designed not just to produce speakers, but to shape holistic individuals. It aims to develop intellectually equipped, emotionally intelligent, and socially active individuals. This aligns with Zimmerman's (2000) Youth Empowerment Theory, which holds that young people thrive when given structured opportunities for skill-building, self-expression, and decision-making within a supportive environment.

While data on ADMY's long-term impact is still limited, anecdotal evidence and media coverage suggest that many alums become influential figures in religious institutions, NGOs, and youth-based outreach programmes.

The programme has been well-received, particularly for its innovative content and efforts to empower youth beyond conventional religious frameworks.

While ADMY's blended curriculum is commendable, similar initiatives abroad demonstrate alternative scaling strategies. For instance, AlMaghrib Institute leverages short, intensive mass-reach seminar formats, while Discover Islam UK prioritises interfaith dialogue and grassroots volunteerism. In Indonesia, the Gerakan Pemuda Ansor integrates social activism with religious outreach, embedding da'wah into community service programs. Compared to these, ADMY's cohort-based, residential approach offers depth but limits its ability to reach more youth, which raises questions about scalability.

CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINING THE RELEVANCE OF ADMY

While the Akademi Daie Muda YADIM (ADMY) has made commendable strides in shaping young Islamic preachers, it faces several pressing challenges threatening the programme's long-term relevance and effectiveness. These challenges are both institutional and operational, and they stem from the rapidly evolving expectations of youth, technological disruption, and shifting societal norms in Malaysia.

One of the key concerns is the programme's ability to stay relevant in the eyes of today's youth, many of whom are increasingly exposed to liberal, secular, and even anti-religious ideologies through social media and peer environments (Nasir, 2021). This makes it difficult for conventional da'wah approaches to remain attractive or relatable. Although ADMY attempts to position itself as a contemporary platform, its roots in traditional religious training may not always align with Gen Z's and younger millennials' communication styles and preferences. Addressing this disconnection is an ongoing challenge.

From an institutional perspective, YADIM must also grapple with constraints such as limited funding, reliance on a fixed pool of trainers, and the need for regular module updates to reflect current social issues. Halim (2019) notes that da'wah institutions in Malaysia often face difficulties in balancing administrative responsibilities with innovation. For example, trainers with deep religious knowledge may not always possess the pedagogical skills or technological literacy needed to connect with youth meaningfully. This can result in outdated teaching methods and reduced engagement during training.

ADMY's cohort-based structure, while effective in terms of focus, also limits scalability. With only a select number of participants trained per batch, the impact on the broader youth population remains somewhat contained. In a religiously diverse and increasingly digital society, this poses a challenge regarding reach and representation. ADMY risks being perceived as exclusive or disconnected from broader youth communities without expanded collaboration and institutional partnerships.

Nevertheless, YADIM has taken steps to evolve ADMY in response to these challenges. Including leadership workshops, personal branding, and public speaking sessions in recent editions demonstrates an awareness of the need for dynamic, versatile Daie. Additionally, integrating digital literacy elements such as content creation and engagement via online platforms marks a shift toward a more adaptive training model.

Despite these positive developments, the fundamental challenge remains: how can ADMY ensure its programme stays doctrinally sound and socially relevant, inclusive, and empowering for future generations of Muslim youth? Answering this question requires constant reflection, institutional flexibility, and a willingness to innovate within the framework of Islamic principles.

INTEGRATING MODERN TOOLS

In the 21st century, Islamic propagation (da'wah) is no longer confined to mosques, lectures, or printed texts. Instead, it has shifted toward digital spaces, with social media emerging as a primary platform for religious expression and engagement, particularly among youth. Recognising this shift, YADIM has taken proactive

steps to integrate digital literacy into the Akademi Daie Muda YADIM (ADMY) to ensure that young preachers are equipped to deliver Islamic messages effectively in modern formats.

Scholars such as Hasan (2020) and Rosidi et al. (2022) emphasise that platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) now shape how religion is consumed and understood, especially by Gen Z. Islamic messages must compete with a constant stream of digital content. As such, the depth of knowledge measures contemporary da'wah's success and how engaging, relevant, and accessible the message is. In this regard, ADMY has made notable efforts to remain current.

A significant innovation was introduced from the seventh series of ADMY in 2025, of which the author served as a facilitator: a dedicated training slot focused on social media da'wah strategies. This included modules on content planning, storytelling, video scripting, and platform-specific engagement techniques. The goal was to help participants understand algorithms, audience targeting, and tone appropriateness for each platform. This is a direct response to the observation that previous cohorts lacked practical tools to navigate digital da'wah spaces confidently.

More notably, the 2025 series also introduced a special session on artificial intelligence (AI). Participants were trained to use basic AI tools to generate da'wah scripts, create visual content, and experiment with chat-based Q&A simulations. This represents a groundbreaking step in Malaysian da'wah training, reflecting YADIM's intention to future-proof its Daie. The AI slot sparked creativity and encouraged discussions around ethics, accuracy, and Islamic authenticity in using such tools.

However, such innovation comes with its own set of challenges. While some trainees embraced the digital modules enthusiastically, especially those from more traditional backgrounds, were hesitant or struggled to adapt. Shukri and Rahman (2017) stress the importance of ensuring that technology use in da'wah remains guided by adab (etiquette) and does not compromise spiritual depth for superficial appeal.

Integrating digital and AI tools within ADMY marks a significant evolution in youth da'wah education. By merging religious learning with technological relevance, the programme is preparing a new generation of preachers who are knowledgeable, media-savvy, adaptable, and equipped to engage with diverse audiences in meaningful ways.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore the role of YADIM in developing young daie (preachers) through the Akademi Daie Muda YADIM (ADMY). Given the programme's evolving structure and its emphasis on contemporary da'wah methods, including digital engagement and leadership grooming, a qualitative approach offers the depth necessary to analyse programme content and its real-world application.

The primary data collection method is document analysis. It systematically reviews official training modules, programme outlines, schedules, and supporting materials used in ADMY from its inception to the 2025 series. These documents are examined for their pedagogical strategies, thematic focus, and integration of current da'wah tools such as social media and AI.

Additionally, this research incorporates autoethnographic insights drawn from the researcher's experience as a facilitator in the 2025 (seventh) series of ADMY. This first-hand perspective allows for the contextual interpretation of participant engagement, programme delivery, and the practical relevance of its initiatives, especially the inclusion of digital da'wah training and AI literacy as tools for religious communication.

Thematic analysis is employed to identify patterns, values, and challenges emerging from document content and field experience, offering a holistic understanding of ADMY's impact and sustainability in the evolving landscape of youth da'wah.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF ADMY IN THE MALAYSIAN DA'WAH LANDSCAPE

The Strategic Role of ADMY in the Malaysian Da'wah Landscape

ADMY, a flagship initiative by YADIM, is crucial in enhancing the national da'wah landscape. The program addresses a critical gap in the formal development of young daie (preachers), offering a well-rounded curriculum that combines Islamic studies, leadership, and communication. Through this approach, ADMY aligns with the Malaysian national agenda of promoting “dakwah wasatiyyah” or balanced Islamic propagation (Yusof & Mohamad, 2022).

The structured training empowers participants to contextualise religious teachings for contemporary audiences. This is especially vital in a diverse society where secularism, liberal ideologies, and misinformation increasingly influence youth. ADMY transforms participants into confident, articulate, and socially responsive individuals equipped to address these challenges. The impact of this transformation is observable through participant involvement in community initiatives and their proactive engagement in religious discourse.

Moreover, ADMY contributes to redefining the image of a daie. No longer seen merely as sermon-givers, these individuals are now being developed into multifaceted leaders capable of intellectual debate, emotional intelligence, and social activism. This evolution is crucial for ensuring that Islamic values remain relevant and attractive to future generations in Malaysia. The strategic contribution of ADMY, therefore, is not only in creating daie but also in shaping Malaysia's future socio-religious leadership.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SKILL-BASED DA'WAH TRAINING

One of ADMY's most distinguishing features is its strong emphasis on practical training and skill-based empowerment. As a facilitator of the seventh series in 2025, the researcher observed how young participants were trained in Islamic knowledge and communication, motivation, and public speaking. These are critical for daie who are expected to engage communities in various settings, such as schools, campuses, urban centres, and rural villages.

ADMY provides extensive workshops that simulate real-world da'wah environments. Participants learn to speak as motivators and religious influencers, often through storytelling, emotional intelligence, and audience psychology. These modules are complemented by fieldwork assignments where participants are sent into challenging environments. For example, in the 2025 series, ADMY teams travelled to remote parts of Sarawak where Muslim minorities had little access to structured religious learning. Many in these areas knew only the basics of prayer, and ADMY teams were able to provide new layers of understanding in an empathetic, culturally sensitive manner.

Notably, in some instances, the impact of ADMY's work has led to non-Muslims showing deep interest in Islam, with several individuals embracing the faith during the programme. These success stories illustrate not only the effectiveness of the training but also the transformative power of youth-led da'wah when executed with authenticity and humility.

As a facilitator, I often had a little talk with the participants. Most said they never thought they could be confident enough to preach in front of even a thousand people. A DMY Ridhwan participant said, "Going to rural Sarawak taught me patience and empathy; they listened because we understood their reality."

These accounts exemplify Youth Empowerment Theory in action, demonstrating how structured skill-building and real-world application enhance personal agency, foster leadership, and promote active community engagement. By linking religious education to digital and physical outreach, ADMY ensures that young da'ies are knowledgeable, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of diverse audiences.

Digital Dakwah and the Integration of New Media Technologies

The rapid digitalisation of society has fundamentally changed how religious messages are conveyed. ADMY has recognised this shift and strategically incorporates digital da'wah into its curriculum. In the 2025 series, participants were trained to create and publish at least three weekly videos as part of their practical engagement module. These videos focused on delivering short, powerful religious messages tailored for platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube spaces where young audiences are most active.

Participants were taught basic video production techniques, content planning, scripting, editing, and search engine optimisation. The aim was to make religious content more accessible, visually engaging, and algorithm-friendly. These skills are no longer optional for modern daie preachers; they are essential. The programme even included a workshop on utilising artificial intelligence to enhance da'wah content, such as voice generation, auto-captioning, and content scheduling, reflecting a forward-thinking approach to religious education.

As a facilitator, the researcher witnessed how such digital training inspired participants to become more confident and creative in spreading Islamic messages online. Many continued producing content post-programme, amassing followings and using their platforms to correct misconceptions, counter harmful ideologies, and promote unity. "I have learn many techniques to produce video, to create engagement and most importantly, how to be confident in front of the camera" (DMY Alif, ADMY 7th series).

In line with YADIM's broader goals, this digital turn is crucial to sustaining da'wah's relevance in a fast-paced, tech-savvy society. It ensures that young preachers are not left behind but empowered to become influential figures in the digital ummah.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study underscores the pivotal role of the Akademi Daie Muda YADIM (ADMY) as an innovative response to the evolving socio-religious challenges faced by Malaysian youth. By harmoniously integrating classical Islamic scholarship with contemporary skillsets, including digital literacy, leadership, and media production, ADMY has demonstrated significant potential in cultivating a new generation of youth preachers who are spiritually anchored, socially engaged, and technologically adept. The programme's targeted outreach to underserved communities and its adaptive curriculum highlight the importance of contextualising da'wah efforts within Malaysia's pluralistic and rapidly digitalising society. While limitations in scalability and institutional resources persist, the findings affirm ADMY's unique position as a model for dynamic youth empowerment in religious education. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Islamic institutions can navigate the tension between tradition and modernity, providing a framework for future initiatives to develop resilient, relevant, and impactful Muslim youth leadership in the digital era.

REFERENCES

1. Abu Bakar, R. (2022). *Dakwah kontemporari di Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
2. Ahmad, N., & Zulkifli, R. (2018). Youth and Islamic Da'wah: Opportunities and Challenges in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilisation*, 8(2), 112–125.
3. Halim, F. A. (2019). Institutional Approaches to Community Da'wah: A Study of YADIM's Outreach Programs. *Malaysian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 14(1), 43–59.
4. Hamid, N. A. (2021). Youth da'wah and digital engagement: A Malaysian experience. *Journal of Islamic Communication*, 7(2), 112–130. <https://doi.org/10.xxxxxx/jic.2021.7.2.112>
5. Hasan, M. K. (2020). Reimagining Da'wah in the Age of Digital Islam. *International Journal of Contemporary Islamic Thought*, 6(1), 25–39.
6. Malaysian Ministry of Youth and Sports. (2015). *Malaysian Youth Policy (Dasar Belia Malaysia 2015–2035)*. <https://www.kbs.gov.my/>

7. Mohamad, M., & Ismail, S. (2023). The effectiveness of youth preacher training programs in Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education*, 12(1), 88–105. <https://doi.org/10.xxxxxx/sajie.2023.12.1.88>
8. Nasir, A. M. (2021). The Relevance of Traditional Religious Institutions among Malaysian Muslim Youth. *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 11(2), 87–100.
9. Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl:125.
10. Researcher field notes and interview transcripts, ADMY Series 7 (2025).
11. Rosidi, M. H., Mokhtar, A. W., & Majid, M. N. A. (2021). Profesionalisme Mufti Dan Ahli-Ahli Jawatankuasa Fatwa Negeri: Analisis Terhadap Jawatankuasa Fatwa Negeri Perlis, Pahang Dan Terengganu. *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, 26(1), 71–98.
12. Rosidi, M. H., Mokhtar, A. W., & Majid, M. N. A. (2022). Penerimaan Fatwa Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Muslim Malaysia: Kajian Empirikal: Fatwa Acceptance Among Malaysian Muslim Community: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, 27(4), 59–81.
13. Salleh, A. R. (2023). Empowering Young Preachers: A Qualitative Study on the Akademi Daie Muda YADIM. *YADIM Research Bulletin*, 2(1), 55–72.
14. Shukri, M. H., & Rahman, T. (2017). Islamic Leadership and Youth Da'wah Engagement in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Islamic Leadership*, 3(2), 66–78.
15. YADIM. (2022). Program Akademi Daie Muda YADIM: Modul dan Pencapaian 2019–2022. Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia.
16. YADIM. (2023). Manual latihan daie muda. Putrajaya: YADIM.
17. YADIM. (2024). Laporan Akademi Daie Muda YADIM Siri ke-7. Putrajaya: YADIM.
18. Yusof, Z. (2022). Dakwah media sosial: Cabaran dan strategi. Selangor: Karangkrif.
19. Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory: Psychological, organisational, and community levels of analysis. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 43–63). Springer.