Digital Da'Wah to Muallaf in Social Media: Ethical Issues, Challenges, and a Maqasid-Based Framework

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ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as a dominant platform for disseminating Islamic teachings, particularly to Muallaf who require accessible, flexible, and continuous religious guidance. While this digital transformation presents significant opportunities for da'wah, it also raises complex ethical challenges that demand critical examination. This study aims to analyse the ethical considerations and challenges of digital da'wah to Muallaf on social media, using Maqasid al-Shariah as the primary guiding framework. Employing a narrative literature review of both local and international studies, the research identifies key issues including content authenticity, privacy protection, identity security, digital literacy gaps, algorithmic bias, etiquette in dialogue, and legal compliance. The findings highlight the need for structured ethical guidelines to ensure both effectiveness and integrity in digital religious outreach. In response, the article proposes the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model as a practical framework for preachers, institutions, and social media practitioners to uphold ethical and purposeful engagement with Muallaf. The study recommends further empirical research to validate the model in real-world digital da'wah contexts and to explore its adaptability across diverse cultural and technological environments.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah, Muallaf, Maqasid al-Shariah, Social Media's Ethic, Amanah-Hikmah Model

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of communication technology and the widespread adoption of social media have revolutionised the way people interact, exchange information, and access knowledge. In the realm of da'wah, these developments have created unprecedented opportunities to convey Islamic messages more broadly, rapidly, and interactively. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become primary channels for da'wah activities, especially among Muallaf, who often face constraints in terms of time, geographical distance, and access to reliable learning resources. For Muallaf, social media offers distinct advantages, including the flexibility of learning at any time and place, access to diverse and multimedia-based educational content, and the opportunity to engage with the global Muslim community. These affordances are particularly valuable during the early stages of religious integration, where consistent guidance and community support are crucial for spiritual growth and identity formation.

However, the use of social media as a medium for da'wah is not without significant ethical concerns. Key challenges include the risk of privacy violations, the dissemination of inaccurate or unverified information, the

exploitation of personal stories for publicity, and the misuse of platforms for agendas contrary to Islamic principles. Such issues not only undermine the credibility of da'wah efforts but may also harm the spiritual well-being and trust of Muallaf. Given these dynamics, there is a pressing need to critically examine the ethical dimensions and challenges of digital da'wah to Muallaf in the social media context. This study aims to address this gap by proposing a set of ethical guidelines grounded in the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah. By doing so, it seeks to ensure that digital da'wah remains effective, trustworthy, and sustainable in the contemporary digital landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The expansion of digital da'wah in recent years has attracted growing academic attention, particularly in relation to its role in engaging Muallaf through social media platforms. As digital communication becomes increasingly central to religious outreach, scholarly works have examined various dimensions of da'wah; from methodological adaptation and audience engagement to the ethical, pedagogical, and technological factors influencing its effectiveness. However, existing studies often focus on general Muslim audiences, with comparatively limited attention given to the unique needs and challenges faced by Muallaf, especially in the context of sustained guidance and identity formation in the digital sphere.

Given the multifaceted nature of digital da'wah, this literature review is organised into three main thematic areas. The first examines da'wah approaches in multicultural contexts and their relevance to Muallaf, highlighting strategies that are culturally sensitive and pedagogically sound. The second addresses ethical challenges and social issues that arise in the digital da'wah environment, particularly those affecting Muallaf's privacy, security, and trust. The third explores the integration of technological innovations into Islamic education, focusing on their potential to enhance accessibility, engagement, and personalisation for Muallaf. Together, these themes provide a conceptual foundation for analysing the ethical dimensions and challenges of digital da'wah to Muallaf, and for developing a practical, Maqasid al-Shariah-based framework for its implementation.

Digital Da'wah Approaches in Multicultural Contexts and Muallaf Engagement

Ahmad Faqih et al. (2022) emphasise the diversity of da'wah approaches tailored to the backgrounds of the recipients, particularly in multicultural societies where cultural sensitivity and contextual understanding are crucial. This approach is especially relevant for Muallaf, who come from diverse religious and social backgrounds. Badrah Uyuni et al. (2024) demonstrate how the transformation of da'wah media can inspire Muslim women through creative and motivational digital content, a strategy that holds potential for female Muallaf. In the field of education, Fatima and Tasgheer (2022) and Nasir Hassan et al. (2023) explore the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) interactive and audience-friendly teaching methods, which can be effectively adapted to social media platforms. Mustafa Kamal et al. (2019) identify challenges in applying the *mau'izah hasanah* methodology in modern media, particularly due to the influence of algorithms and popular culture, which often divert the focus from authentic da'wah messages. Noraini et al. (2018) focus on da'wah approaches to Muallaf in both formal and non-formal education contexts, while Nur Shafiqah et al. (2023) highlight the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in guiding Muallaf children, particularly in strengthening their aqidah.

Ethical Challenges and Social Issues in Digital Da'wah

From an ethical perspective, Nur Syahirah and Khazri Osman (2022) highlight the challenges of using social media in da'wah, including issues of privacy, negative comments, and the need for high levels of digital literacy to prevent misunderstandings and information manipulation. Risqiatul Hasanah (2025) discusses the concept of multimedia da'wah, which offers creative opportunities but still requires clear ethical safeguards. Siti Rohmatul (2018) elaborates on ethical principles in da'wah, which can serve as the foundation for developing digital da'wah guidelines that protect the dignity of recipients, including muallaf. Collectively, these studies indicate that ethical challenges are not limited to da'wah content alone but also encompass identity protection, the management of online interactions, and ensuring that messages are free from algorithmic bias or manipulation by third parties.

Technological Innovation and Islamic Education Integration for Muallaf

Lubis et al. (2024) emphasise the need for integrating digital innovation into Islamic education as a strategic measure to address the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, particularly for muallaf who require adaptive and responsive learning approaches. Nazihah Rusli et al. (2024) develop a Maqasid al-Shariah-based learning module specifically for Muallaf in Malaysia's East Coast region, focusing on preserving aqidah and building a strong Muslim identity. Musolin et al. (2024) introduce the concept of personalised Islamic learning through the integration of pedagogy and technology in open learning resources, underscoring the importance of flexible and user-friendly digital curricula for Muallaf. From the perspective of advanced technology, Basiron and Zulkifli (2023) discuss the use of Virtual Reality (VR)-based teaching aids in Islamic education, while Aryati et al. (2024) and Hamzah et al. (2024) evaluate the effectiveness of VR learning models based on Hadith using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

Readi (2023) finds that the use of VR in Islamic education significantly increases student interest and engagement. Additionally, Wina Asry and Suprapto (2025) demonstrate the effectiveness of Islamic mobile applications in fostering religious awareness and understanding among muallaf, enabling continuous guidance without time and location constraints. Collectively, these studies reinforce the view that the transformation of digital da'wah for muallaf requires an integrated approach that combines religious principles, pedagogical strategies, and technological innovation to ensure the delivery of effective, ethical, and contextually relevant messages.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a narrative literature review approach focusing on research related to digital da'wah, Muallaf, Islamic education, and social media ethics. Relevant literature was sourced from multiple academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and selected local institutional repositories. The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, institutional reports, and scholarly books published between 2018 and 2025. Keyword searches were conducted using terms such as 'Digital Da'wah', 'Muallaf', social media', 'Maqasid Shariah', and "Media's Ethic'. Exclusion criteria were applied to non-peer-reviewed materials and popular media content lacking academic support. The review process followed three main stages:

1. Data Collection – Gathering relevant literature based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria.

2. Information Extraction – Identifying and extracting key insights related to ethical issues and challenges in digital da'wah for muallaf.

3. Thematic Synthesis – Organising the extracted data into thematic categories, which were subsequently mapped against the Maqasid al-Shariah framework to provide a normative basis for ethical digital engagement.

This methodological approach enabled the integration of findings from diverse sources to formulate a practical and contextually relevant guideline. The outcomes of this process are intended to be applicable for preachers, institutions, and practitioners involved in the religious guidance and support of Muallaf in digital spaces.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah as the ethical foundation for digital da'wah, encompassing five core objectives: the preservation of religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), lineage (ḥifẓ al-nasl), and property (ḥifẓ al-māl). These principles are integrated with da'wah methodologies such as ḥikmah (wisdom), maw'iẓah ḥasanah (good counsel), and mujādalah bi-llatī hiya aḥsan (debating in the best manner). In addition, the framework incorporates media ethics theories; including utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics, to ensure that digital da'wah is not only effective but also ethically compliant.

Ethical Issues	Explanation
Content Authenticity	The necessity of ensuring all religious information is based on authentic evidence to prevent deviations in faith (Ahmad Faqih Ibrahim et al., 2022).
Informed Consent	Stories or testimonials of new Muslims must obtain written consent before being published (O'Donnell et al., 2020).
Identity Protection	Safeguarding the identity of new Muslims from security threats or discrimination (Wina Asry & Suprapto, 2025).
Digital Literacy Gap	Differences in ICT skills affect the effectiveness of digital da'wah reception (Musolin et al., 2024).
Algorithmic Bias	Social media platform algorithms tend to promote sensational content over educational material (Tufekci, 2015).
Etiquette in Dialogue	Online interactions must be guided by wisdom (*hikmah*) and the ethics of disagreement (*adab al-ikhtilaf*) (Mustafa Kamal et al., 2019).
Legal Compliance	Adherence to copyright laws, data protection regulations, and platform content codes (Rahim & Hashim, 2021).

Table 1: Ethical Issues of Social Media

This approach enables ethical challenges to be directly mapped to the objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah. For example, issues of content authenticity are linked to *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, while privacy and identity security concerns relate to *ḥifẓ al-nafs* and *ḥifẓ al-'irḍ* (protection of dignity). Using this framework, a comprehensive analysis can be undertaken to identify weaknesses, risks, and opportunities in delivering digital da'wah to new Muslims. The literature analysis reveals seven key ethical issues in implementing digital da'wah for new Muslims on social media. These issues are not only related to the effectiveness of message delivery but also to safeguarding the fundamental principles of Islam within an increasingly complex digital environment.

Based on the study's findings, the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model is proposed as an ethical guideline for digital da'wah aimed at new Muslims. This model integrates the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah with core values of ethical digital communication.

Principle	Description
Authenticity	Ensure that content is grounded in authentic sources and reliable evidence.
Maslahah–Mafsadah	Weigh the benefits and potential harms before publishing content.
Data Trustworthiness	Safeguard the personal data and private information of new Muslims.
Non-Coercion	Avoid coercion in the delivery of messages.
Inclusive Access	Provide user-friendly and easily accessible content for all.
Protection of Family/Community	Preserve the harmony of the convert's family and community.
Wisdom (Hikmah)	Use language and approaches appropriate to the context.
Inclusivity & Compassion (Ihsan)	Respect diversity and demonstrate empathy.
Regulation & Transparency	Disclose funding sources and sponsorships for content.
Ethical Moderation	Apply moderation strategies to safeguard discussions.
Accountability	Take responsibility for the content disseminated.

Table 2: Ethical Guidelines for Digital Da'wah

Figure 1 illustrates the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model in a visual format, linking ethical digital da'wah principles with the objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah.
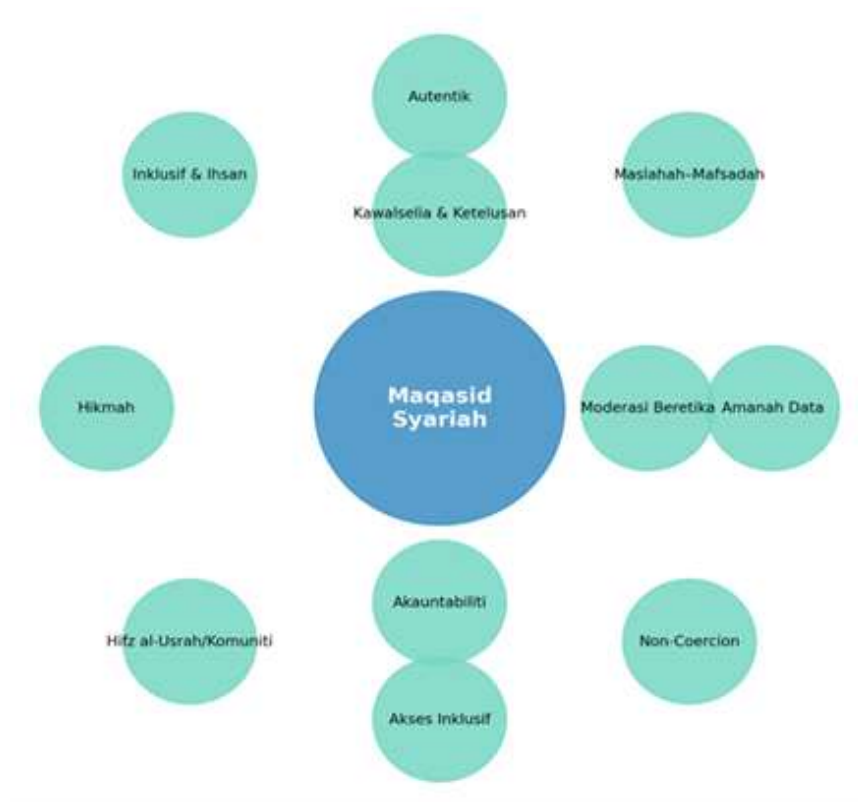

Figure 1: The AMANAH-HIKMAH Model

This AMANAH-HIKMAH Model is visually represented as an interconnected framework that aligns each ethical principle with the five core objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah:

1. Protection of Religion (Hifz al-Din): Principles such as Authenticity, Wisdom, and Non-Coercion ensure that digital da'wah preserves the integrity of Islamic teachings and avoids misrepresentation of the faith.

2. Protection of Life (Hifz al-Nafs): Elements like Maslahah–Mafsadah and Ethical Moderation safeguard individuals; particularly Muallaf, from harm, harassment, or psychological distress in online interactions.

3. Protection of Intellect (Hifz al-'Aql): By prioritising Authenticity and Inclusive Access, the model promotes sound understanding, combats misinformation, and supports intellectual growth.

4. Protection of Lineage (Hifz al-Nasl): The Protection of Family/Community principle helps ensure that da'wah activities do not cause familial rifts or community tensions, fostering harmony in personal relationships.

5. Protection of Property (Hifz al-Mal): Principles such as Data Trustworthiness and Transparency protect personal information, prevent financial exploitation, and ensure ethical use of resources in da'wah initiatives.

The figure illustrates a dual-layer structure:

1. Inner Layer – The five Maqasid al-Shariah objectives form the core foundation.
2. Outer Layer – The eleven AMANAH-HIKMAH principles encircle the objectives, showing their role in operationalising Maqasid within the digital da'wah context.

This layered representation emphasises that ethical digital engagement is not merely about content accuracy but also about preserving human dignity, safeguarding trust, and fostering harmonious relationships in the online space.

To strengthen the applicability of the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model, this study draws upon qualitative insights highlighted in prior research with Muallaf and daʿwah practitioners. Their experiences reveal how ethical issues manifest in practice; such as Muallaf feeling exposed when their conversion stories are shared without consent, or preachers struggling to balance motivational content with the risk of sensationalism. These lived experiences demonstrate the urgency of operationalising ethics beyond abstract principles. For example, under the principle of Authenticity, daʿwah institutions could implement a verification checklist for every post to ensure that only content supported by authoritative sources is disseminated. The principle of Data Trustworthiness can be operationalised by using encrypted communication channels and anonymising sensitive personal data, while Ethical Moderation could be assessed through the proportion of moderated versus unmoderated discussions in online forums. Such measurable indicators provide a tangible means for institutions to evaluate compliance with ethical standards.

The model can also be illustrated through case scenarios. A Muallaf who shares her hijrah story online, for instance, may inspire others but also face online harassment. The AMANAH-HIKMAH Model resolves this dilemma by applying Maslahah-Mafsadah (weighing benefit versus harm), ensuring informed consent is obtained, and moderating comments to protect dignity. Another scenario may involve online debates where Muallaf encounter harsh criticisms of their new faith. In this context, the principles of Wisdom (Hikmah) and Adab al-Ikhtilaf guide preachers to engage constructively and de-escalate hostility, safeguarding emotional well-being. These scenarios help demonstrate the model's preventive and corrective capacity in real-life settings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study underscores the imperative of embedding ethical considerations in digital daʿwah initiatives for muallaf, ensuring both the effectiveness of the message and the preservation of Islamic principles. The proposed AMANAH-HIKMAH Model offers a structured, actionable framework that integrates the values of Maqasid al-Shariah with the ethical demands of contemporary digital communication. In practical terms, the model serves as a reference point for preachers, religious educators, and Islamic institutions to design, implement, and evaluate digital daʿwah content that is authentic, inclusive, and socially responsible. Beyond individual practice, the framework also highlights the importance of institutional oversight and the cultivation of a digitally literate daʿwah ecosystem. From a policy perspective, the following recommendations are proposed:

Development of Maqasid-Based Digital Literacy Modules: Training modules should be developed to equip daʿwah practitioners and content creators with the knowledge and skills to apply Maqasid principles in digital contexts, particularly in addressing the unique needs and sensitivities of muallaf audiences.

Implementation of Informed Consent Protocols: A standardised protocol should be adopted to ensure the privacy, dignity, and agency of muallaf, especially when their stories, images, or testimonies are shared online.

Collaborative Content Monitoring with Digital Platforms: Partnerships should be established between Islamic institutions and social media platforms to monitor, moderate, and flag content that breaches ethical standards, while promoting verified, high-quality daʿwah materials.

Institutional Adoption and Integration: Islamic authorities, NGOs, and training centres should integrate the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model into their official guidelines and capacity-building programmes, ensuring consistency across different daʿwah efforts.

In conclusion, by aligning ethical daʿwah practices with the strategic objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah, the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model not only enhances the credibility and impact of digital outreach but also safeguards the spiritual, emotional, and social well-being of muallaf in the digital age.

The study recommends a phased adoption strategy for the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model to accommodate different institutional scales and cultural contexts. At the individual level, da'i may begin with simple authenticity and consent checklists. Small organisations such as local NGOs can integrate basic digital literacy training for their volunteers, while larger institutions and national bodies can formalise the model into policy frameworks and collaborate with social media platforms for content monitoring. To support this adoption, structured digital-ethical training modules should be developed, covering topics such as privacy protection, source verification, ethical storytelling, and conflict management in online dialogue. At the same time, potential obstacles must be acknowledged, including resource constraints among smaller organisations, cultural differences in defining ethical boundaries, and the challenge of algorithmic pressures that prioritise sensational content. Conversely, facilitators such as institutional commitment, youth digital skills, and partnerships with technology providers can accelerate the model's implementation.

Finally, the study highlights the need for empirical validation of the AMANAH-HIKMAH Model. Pilot projects with Islamic NGOs and educational institutions could test its practical relevance, while surveys with Muallaf audiences may measure its impact on trust and engagement. Comparative research across cultural contexts will also be necessary to refine its universal applicability. Such future studies will not only validate the model but also advance a multidisciplinary discourse on digital religious outreach ethics.

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