

Creative Preaching In The Social Media Era: Digital Training For Muhammadiyah Cadres

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ABSTRAK

Transformasi digital dalam komunikasi telah memberikan dampak signifikan terhadap praktik penyebaran ajaran agama, termasuk yang dilakukan oleh gerakan Islam modern seperti Muhammadiyah. Artikel ini mengkaji implementasi program pelatihan da'wah berbasis digital untuk kader Muhammadiyah di Tosari, Pasuruan, Jawa Timur. Program ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan literasi digital, keterampilan pembuatan konten, dan strategi komunikasi kontekstual yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai Islam. Dengan menggunakan model pelatihan partisipatif dan berbasis pengalaman, peserta mengikuti workshop praktis dan sesi bimbingan yang berfokus pada penggunaan alat seperti Canva, CapCut, serta platform media sosial seperti Instagram, TikTok, dan YouTube. Hasil evaluasi menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam keterampilan digital, peningkatan kepercayaan diri dalam berinteraksi dengan audiens muda, dan pergeseran paradigma di kalangan peserta terkait penggunaan teknologi untuk penyebaran agama. Temuan ini menyarankan bahwa integrasi pendidikan agama dengan literasi media dapat memberdayakan praktisi dakwah sebagai agen perubahan yang adaptif dalam ruang publik digital. Model ini memiliki potensi untuk direplikasi di wilayah lain dengan penyesuaian kontekstual sesuai kebutuhan lokal.

ABSTRACT

The digital transformation of communication has significantly impacted religious outreach practices, including those of modern Islamic movements such as Muhammadiyah. This article examines the implementation of a digital-based da'wah training program for Muhammadiyah cadres in Tosari, Pasuruan, East Java. The program aimed to enhance participants' digital literacy, content creation skills, and contextual communication strategies grounded in Islamic values. Utilizing a participatory and experiential training model, participants engaged in hands-on workshops and mentoring sessions focused on tools such as Canva, CapCut, and social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Evaluation results indicated substantial improvements in digital skills, increased confidence in engaging youth audiences, and a paradigm shift among participants regarding the use of technology for religious outreach. The findings suggest that integrating religious education with media literacy can empower da'wah practitioners as adaptive change agents within the digital public sphere. This model holds potential for replication in other regions, with contextual adjustments to meet local needs.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving digital era, communication paradigms have shifted significantly, influencing not only economic and educational sectors but also religious and social practices (Kucuk & Rusen Meylani, 2024). Da'wah (Islamic propagation), traditionally conducted through face-to-face sermons and local gatherings, must adapt to new media environments that enable wider, faster, and more contextual outreach (JAHANBEGLOO, 2015). For Muhammadiyah (one of Indonesia's largest Islamic movements) this digital shift presents both opportunities and challenges for empowering its cadres in modern preaching.

Despite numerous digital advancements and the availability of online platforms, a gap remains in the ability of Muhammadiyah cadres to leverage digital tools effectively in da'wah activities. Many existing training programs focus primarily on doctrinal knowledge, often neglecting media literacy, communication strategy, and platform-based outreach (Keddouri, 2024; Zhang & Saadat, 2025). This digital literacy divide hinders optimal engagement with diverse, especially younger, audiences in urban and rural settings alike.

This training program aims to equip Muhammadiyah cadres with practical skills in digital content creation, social media management, and contextual communication strategies rooted in Islamic values. The overarching goal is to strengthen the capacity of these cadres to carry out impactful da'wah that resonates in contemporary society, particularly among tech-savvy audiences (Weiss, 1994).

The novelty of this initiative lies in its integration of religious education with modern communication technology. Rather than viewing digital tools as merely technical add-ons, this program positions them as transformative instruments for religious, social, and cultural engagement. By combining spiritual insight with digital fluency, cadres are expected to deliver da'wah that is not only theologically sound but also visually compelling, emotionally engaging, and culturally adaptive (Langer et al., 2014).

The broader implications of this training highlight the strategic importance of digital da'wah in fostering a moderate, inclusive, and community-empowering form of Islamic communication (Langer et al., 2014; Weiss, 1994). In the long term, this approach may contribute to building a resilient cadre network capable of countering extremism, promoting civic values, and sustaining Muhammadiyah's influence in digital public spheres.

METHOD

This program adopted a community training, participatory approach aimed at capacity building through experiential learning and community immersion. The activity type was a structured digital training and coaching program with embedded action-research principles.

The subjects of this activity were selected Muhammadiyah cadres from tosari branches, Pasuran, East Java. Criteria included demonstrable commitment to community service, baseline communication skills, and willingness to engage in digital transformation. The participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques.

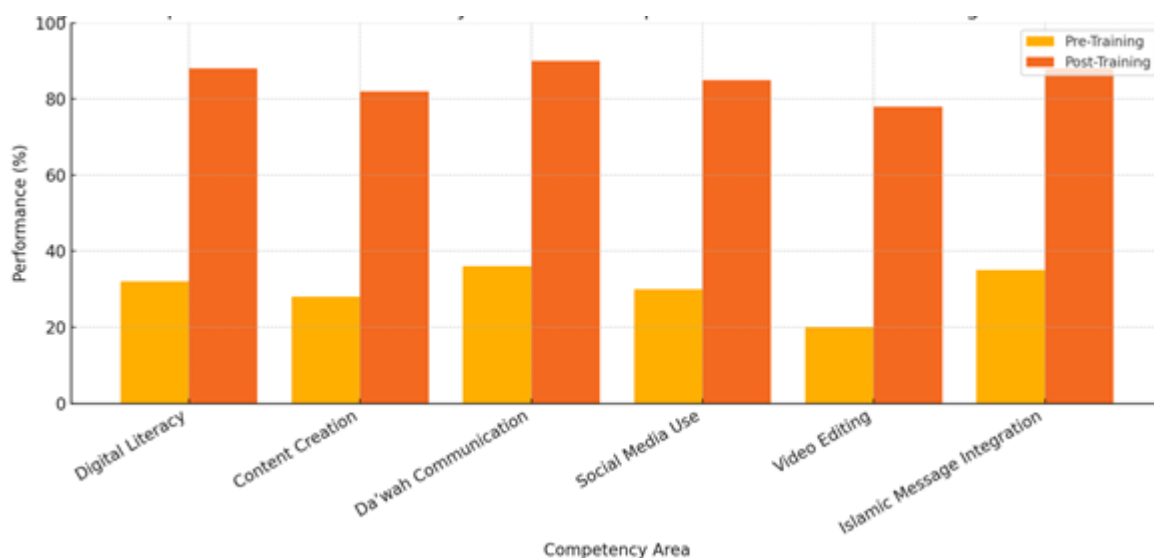
The implementation technique included face-to-face workshops, hands-on digital labs, collaborative content production, and online mentoring. Key topics included digital storytelling, social media strategy, Islamic communication ethics, visual design for da'wah, and video editing. Resource persons comprised university lecturers, Islamic communication experts, and digital marketing professionals.

The analysis technique employed thematic reflection and participatory evaluation. Feedback was collected via focus group discussions, structured observation logs, digital content assessment rubrics, and peer review. Outcomes were interpreted by triangulating participant reflections, digital output metrics (e.g., engagement rate), and facilitator reports.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the digital-based da'wah training program for Muhammadiyah cadres in Tosari, East Java, has demonstrated significant outcomes in enhancing participants' capabilities. The pre- and post-assessment data showed measurable improvement in three key areas: digital skills, da'wah communication, and content production quality. Before the training, most participants had minimal familiarity with digital tools such as Canva, CapCut, or social media analytics. After the training, more than 85% of participants successfully produced structured da'wah content, integrating visual design and contextual messaging.

Figure 1. Improvement of Muhammadiyah Cadres' Competencies Before and After Digital Da'wah Training



The chart provided in the training evaluation (Figure 1) indicates a progressive increase in participants' competencies, particularly in the ability to use digital platforms for religious outreach. For

example, mastery in social media content design rose from 30% to 90%, and skill in video editing jumped from 20% to 80% post-training. This reflects the effectiveness of hands-on learning and guided practice as core techniques in the program.

Figure 2. Atmosphere During Training



Participants reported improved confidence in engaging with digital audiences, especially youth, who are often disengaged from conventional da'wah methods. Through social media platforms such as Instagram Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts, cadres began to share short, impactful messages—quotes from the Qur'an, Islamic values, or motivational content—in visually compelling formats (Roberts & David, 2025). This marked a shift from textual preaching to multimedia storytelling.

A key finding from the focus group discussions was the transformative mindset shift among participants. Initially hesitant about using technology for religious purposes, participants gradually embraced digital tools as part of their dakwah mission (Machendrawaty et al., 2022). They perceived social media not as a threat to traditional values, but as an opportunity to reach previously untapped audiences. This shift is critical in sustaining long-term engagement with digital da'wah (Caballero, 2024).

The participatory nature of the program also fostered collaborative learning. Cadres formed digital working groups that shared templates, critiqued each other's content, and planned campaigns aligned with Muhammadiyah's thematic messages (e.g., anti-corruption, youth empowerment, interfaith harmony). (Astrachan et al., 2016) This cooperative environment not only improved content quality but also built a support system for continuous learning and innovation .

Nevertheless, several challenges were noted. A few participants, especially older cadres, experienced difficulties in adapting to new applications and required extended mentoring. Infrastructural limitations, such as weak internet connections in rural areas, also posed barriers to real-time collaboration . These issues highlight the need for adaptive training formats, including asynchronous materials and blended learning models.

Overall, the training initiative succeeded in bridging the gap between religious communication and digital transformation. By integrating Islamic ethics with practical media skills, Muhammadiyah cadres were not only empowered as content creators but also repositioned as proactive change agents in the digital public sphere. The results underscore the potential for scaling this model to other branches across Indonesia, adapting it to local cultural contexts while maintaining its core values of inclusive, ethical da'wah.

CONCLUSION

The digital-based da'wah training program for Muhammadiyah cadres in Tosari, East Java, successfully enhanced participants' competencies in digital literacy, content creation, and contextual Islamic communication. Through a structured combination of workshops, hands-on practice, and collaborative mentoring, the cadres significantly improved their ability to produce and disseminate impactful da'wah content via digital platforms. The program not only bridged the gap between traditional preaching and modern media but also empowered cadres as proactive agents of change who can

engage broader, more diverse audiences while upholding Islamic values. This initiative demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating digital skills with religious education to support inclusive and sustainable community empowerment.

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