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# The Understanding Of Islamic Law Through Media Digital Among Muslim Youths In Aceh

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**Abstract**

This preliminary research investigates about understanding digital da'wah (Islamic propagation) on the understanding of Sharia among muslim youths in Aceh, where Islamic law is formally implemented under Qanun regulations. Using Quantitative Descriptive research, the aim of this study is to measure a phenomenon quantitatively using numerical and statistical data. Survey data from 27 respondents (students aged 16-23) reveal that TikTok (48.1%) and short video sermons (63%) dominate digital consumption, with most accessing content 1-2 times weekly (70.4%). High reliance on preacher credibility (mean 4.52/5) aligns with information forefending step in communicative action in problem solving model, but moderate multi-source referencing (3.96) and pre-sharing verification (3.78) indicate vulnerabilities to misinformation, potentially distorting Sharia compliance. This finding highlights the dual role of digital media in both increasing access to Islamic teachings and posing risks to legal and religious literacy. Integrating communication and legal perspectives, this research highlights the need for digital literacy campaigns aligned with Qanun to combat disinformation and strengthen compliance with Sharia. Although the small sample size limits generalisability, the findings of this study offer exploratory insights, with recommendations for broader surveys and mixed-methods research to inform policy and improve digital da'wah strategies in Aceh, Indonesia.

Keywords : digital da'wah, islamic law, religious literacy, communicative action, muslim youths in Aceh.

**Abstrak**

This preliminary research investigates the understanding of digital da'wah (the spread of Islam) against the understanding of sharia among young people in Aceh, where Islamic law is formally applied based on the rules of Qanun. Using Quantitative Descriptive, the purpose of this study is to measure a phenomenon quantitatively using numerical and statistical data. Survey data from 27 respondents (college students aged 16-23) showed that TikTok (48.1%) and short video sermons (63%) were the most popular digital content, with most accessing content 1-2 times a week (70.4%). High reliance on the credibility of the speaker (average 4.52/5) is in line with the concept of communicative action in problem solving in the *information forefending* step, but moderate multi-source referencing (3.96) and

verification before sharing (3.78) indicate vulnerability to misinformation, which has the potential to distort sharia compliance. These findings highlight the dual role of digital media in increasing access to Islamic teachings while posing a risk to legal and religious literacy. Integrating communication and legal perspectives, the study highlights the need for digital literacy campaigns aligned with Qanun to combat disinformation and strengthen Sharia compliance. Although the small sample size limits generalization, the results of this study offer exploratory insights, with recommendations for broader surveys and mixed-methods research to inform policies and improve digital da'wah strategies in Aceh.

Keywords: digital da'wah, Islamic law, religious literacy, communication behavior, the young generation in Aceh.

## Introduction

In the digital era, media platforms have transformed the dissemination of religious knowledge, particularly in regions like Aceh, where Islamic law (Sharia) is formally implemented as part of Indonesia's legal framework. Aceh's special autonomy allows for the application of Sharia in matters of family, criminal, and public morality, making accurate understanding of Islamic principles crucial for societal compliance and harmony. However, the proliferation of digital da'wah—Islamic propagation through online channels—presents both opportunities and challenges for muslim youths, who form a significant demographic in engaging with such content in Social media (Bustamam-ahmad, 2007). Social media is basically for sharing information and public channels to express the account owners (Siregar & Puspasari, 2023). One of the main challenges in maintaining the existence of religion in the digital era is the increasing phenomenon of "religious dissonance",where the younger generation often faces conflicts between religious values and a more secular digital culture (Puspasari, 2025).

In implementing Qanun Number 6 of 2014, the main task for the Department of Islamic Law as a communicator is crucial to ensure the effective delivery of thoughts to its audience (Armanda et al., 2021). The process of conveying the communicator's thoughts or feelings to the recipient through digital media can facilitate the rapid and interactive dissemination of religious messages (Natasya, Irwan & Nasution, 2024), aligning with information forefending step in communication active in problem solving model (Yeo et al., 2025), where influencers (e.g., ustaz or lecturers) convey information to the audience. Therefore, in Aceh, this is a legal requirement based on Qanun (Sharia regional regulations), as incorrect information can undermine public compliance with laws regarding issues such as dress codes or moral behaviour. This article explores survey data from several muslim youths in Aceh, revealing patterns in platform usage, content preferences, and trust mechanisms. Although digital media democratises access to Islamic teachings, inadequate verification can lead to superficial or distorted understanding, potentially contradicting the enforcement of Sharia in Aceh.

This research aims to bridge the fields of law and communication science by analysing how digital consumption influences legal awareness and religious literacy among youth. Communication behaviour changes over time and manifests in various combinations. Therefore, aware publics in the digital age are not merely passive; rather, they engage in communication activities similar to active publics. Communicative actions in the problemsolving model can also serve as a valuable framework for examining communication

behaviour in the digital age (Yeo et al., 2025). This model for public relations research and enhances its applicability in the digital era (Grunig, 2023). Meanwhile, Sharia law is the sacred law of Islam that provides a religious and moral code of life for fundamentalist Muslims. These laws govern all aspects of a Muslim's life. It is based on the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Hadith. Sharia law is believed to have come directly from Allah (Communale, 2025).

Existing literature on digital media's role in religious propagation emphasizes its dual potential for empowerment and risk, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts like Indonesia. Studies on digital da'wah highlight how platforms enable widespread access to Islamic teachings, fostering greater religious engagement among youth. For instance, research on online Islamic learning in Indonesia notes that incomplete or fragmented content can lead to confusion and a sense of religious emptiness among youths, underscoring the need for structured digital education. In Aceh specifically, YouTube-based da'wah has been shown to evolve traditional propagation, contributing to the continuity of Islamic principles in a region with strong religious heritage (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024). Digital media has redefined religious authority in Islamic societies, democratizing access to religious knowledge through platforms like online fatwa websites and social media influencers (Campbell, 2016). It fosters dynamic religious discourse and community engagement, enabling the exchange of theological perspectives and the formation of virtual communities ((Bunt, 2003) dalam (Alhoul et al., 2024) . However, it also poses challenges to authentic religious expression and raises

From a communication studies lens, theories such as agenda-setting and framing illustrate how digital algorithms shape religious narratives, often prioritizing sensational content over doctrinal accuracy (Fadilla & Idriyani, 2025). This is evident in the capitalist transformation of da'wah, where social media influences message delivery and audience reception. In Aceh's digital public sphere, social media serves as an alternative space for pious expression, but it also amplifies mediated representations of Sharia, blending issue-specific and generic frames in coverage. Integrating law study, the implementation of Sharia in Aceh involves social engineering through laws that regulate behavior, with media playing a pivotal role in public perceptions (Alhoul et al., 2024). However, misinformation in digital Islamic content poses legal implications, such as non-compliance or societal discord, as false narratives can distort jurisprudence. Studies on fake news from an Islamic perspective advocate for critical epistemology, drawing on Quranic principles to combat disinformation (Othman et al., 2020). Digital literacy emerges as a key factor, linking Sharia values to prevention of online harms like misinformation, especially among Acehnese students. Overall, the literature suggests that while digital media enhances da'wah's reach, it requires regulatory and communicative safeguards to ensure alignment with Aceh's Sharia framework.

**Methodology**

This article employs a quantitative approach as explorative research based on survey data collected via a Google Form, targeting muslim youths in Aceh. The sample consists of 27 respondents, primarily aged 16-23 years (93%), with 78% being female and 78% undergraduate students (Mahasiswa D3-S1). Respondents were from various Aceh districts, including Banda Aceh (33%), Aceh Tamiang (11%), and others, ensuring regional representation within the

province. The questionnaire included demographic questions (gender, age, education, domicile) and items on digital da'wah engagement: frequently used platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram), weekly access frequency (e.g., 1-2 times), preferred content types (e.g., short video sermons), and four Likert-scale items (1-5, where 5 indicates strong agreement) assessing trust in sources, selection based on preacher credibility, use of multiple references, and verification before sharing.

This preliminary research involved 27 respondents. This number was influenced by limited field access and practical conditions during data collection. Nevertheless, the data obtained still provided relevant information for the research focus. This limitation in the number of respondents is an important note and opens the door for further research with a larger sample. To relate findings to law and communication study interpretations draw on how consumption patterns influence Sharia comprehension (legal accuracy) and message dissemination (communication efficacy). Limitations include the small sample size reported data, which may not generalize broadly, but provide exploratory insights into youth behaviors in Aceh's Sharia context.

**Result**

The results below are presented in three table format SPSS output, with brief interpretations for each section. The small sample size (N=27) limits generalisability but provides exploratory insights.

1. Frequency analysis shows the distribution of respondents. The dominance of women in muslim youths reflects the student sample in Aceh.

Table 1. Frequencies of Categorical Variables

| *Variabel* | *Kategori* | *Frekuensi* | *Persentase (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Gender* | Female | 21 | 77.8 |
| | Male | 6 | 22.2 |
| *Age* | 16-20 | 15 | 55.6 |
| | 21-23 | 10 | 37.0 |
| | 27-30 | 1 | 3.7 |
| | 15-17 | 1 | 3.7 |
| *Education* | Student of Diploma and Bachelor | 21 | 77.8 |
| | SMA/SMK | 5 | 18.5 |
| | Student of magister | 1 | 3.7 |
| *Platform Da'wah Digital* | TikTok | 13 | 48.1 |
| | Instagram | 6 | 22.2 |
| | YouTube | 5 | 18.5 |
| | Podcast | 2 | 7.4 |
| *Frekuensi Accesibility / Week* | 1-2 times | 19 | 70.4 |
| | 3-4 times | 5 | 18.5 |
| | >5 | 2 | 7.4 |
| | Tidak pernah | 1 | 3.7 |
| *Favorite Content Digital* | Short video | 17 | 63.0 |
| | Podcast Da'wah | 7 | 25.9 |
| | Infografis Islami | 3 | 11.1 |
| *Domicile* | Banda Aceh | 10 | 37.0 |
| | Aceh Tamiang | 3 | 11.1 |
| | Aceh Besar | 3 | 11.1 |
| | Exc.(Lhokseumawe,Langsa, dll.) | 11 | 40.7 |

Source: Respondent distribution based on demographics and preferences

2. Descriptives (Descriptive Statistics for Likert Scale Items) Likert items are measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The average shows a moderate to high level of agreement, with low variation (SD <1.2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic

| *Statistical* | *Digital Source Trust (Q1)* | *Selection Based on Ustad's Credibility (Q2)* | *Multi-Source Reference Search (Q3)* | *Pre-Sharing Inspection (Q4)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *N (Valid)* | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| *Mean* | 3.52 | 4.52 | 3.96 | 3.78 |
| *Std. Deviation* | 0.98 | 0.75 | 0.85 | 1.19 |
| *Minimum* | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| *Maximum* | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| *25th Percentile* | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| *50th Percentile (Median)* | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| *75th Percentile* | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

Note: Kurtosis is approaching normal. Item 2 has the highest mean, indicating a strong reliance on personal credibility.

3. The correlation shows the relationship between verification attitudes.Table 3. Correlation.

| *Item* | *Q1 (Digital Source Trust)* | *Q2 (Selection Based on Ustad's Credibility)* | *Q3 (Multi-Source Reference Search)* | *Q4 (Pre-Sharing Inspection)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Q1* | 1.00 | -0.02 | 0.06 | -0.03 |
| *Q2* | -0.02 | 1.00 | 0.14 | 0.21 |
| *Q3* | 0.06 | 0.14 | 1.00 | 0.65** |
| *Q4* | -0.03 | 0.21 | 0.65** | 1.00 |

*Result Data Analysis and Interpretation*

The data indicates a strong preference for fast visual platforms like TikTok (48.1%) and short video lecture content (63.0%), which aligns with the digital communication style of the younger generation. The low access frequency (70.4% only 1-2 times/week) indicates sporadic consumption, possibly due to students' time constraints. Demographically, the sample is dominated by women (77.8%) aged 16-23 years (92.6%) in Banda Aceh (37%), reflecting an urban-student sample in the Sharia region of Aceh. Attitude towards Trust and Verification, the highest average Likert score for Item 2 (4.52) indicates a high reliance on the credibility of the ustad/influencer, consistent with information forefending step in communication active in problem solving model where opinion leaders mediate religious messages. However, general trust in digital sources is lower (3.52), and verification (Item 3: 3.96; Item 4: 3.78) is moderate, with a high SD on Item 4 (1.19) indicating behavioural variation—some respondents rarely check (min=1). The strong correlation between Items 3 and 4 (0.65) suggests that multi-source practice encourages verification, but the low correlation with other items indicates a lack of holistic integration in content assessment. Statistical Implications: With a small N, inferential tests are limited, but this pattern is descriptively significant (chi-square for platform-content

association: $\chi^2 \approx 12.5$, $p<0.05$, TikTok is dominant for short videos). The risk of self-report bias is high, but the data is consistent with digital trends in Aceh.

**Discussion**

This article employs quantitative approach with a survey of 27 young respondents in Aceh (the majority aged 16-23 students), which, despite its small sample size, provides exploratory insights into digital da'wah consumption patterns and their impact on understanding Sharia.

The discussion of the results focused on analysing consumption patterns, attitudes, beliefs, and verification, and their implications for religious and legal literacy in the context of Aceh, which implements Qanun (Sharia regulations). Exploratively, these findings are linked to communication theories such as information forefending step in communication active in problem solving model (where opinion leaders like religious teachers act as message intermediaries), as well as legal perspectives that emphasise the importance of information accuracy for Sharia compliance. Here's an in-depth analysis based on the data presented:

1. Digital Da'wah Consumption Patterns

From access platforms and frequency, the majority of respondents (48.1%) use TikTok as their primary platform for consuming da'wah content, followed by Instagram (22.2%) and YouTube (18.5%). This reflects the preference of the younger generation for fast, visually-driven platforms and algorithms, which aligns with digital trends in Indonesia where social media like TikTok dominates due to ease of access and short-form content. The relative access frequency is low, with 70.4% of respondents accessing it only 1-2 times a week, likely due to time constraints as students. Exploratively, this suggests that digital da'wah is not a routine daily activity, but rather sporadic, which could lead to a fragmented or superficial understanding of Islamic teachings—especially in Aceh, where sharia is formally implemented through Qanun, such as dress codes or public morals.

The part of favourite content, short video sermons are the top choice (63%), followed by dawah podcasts (25.9%) and Islamic infographics (11.1%). This indicates a preference for concise and entertaining formats, which aligns with the digital communication style of young generation. From an exploratory perspective, this pattern could enhance the accessibility of Islamic teachings, but it also carries risks because short content often simplifies complex doctrines, potentially leading to "religious dissonance" (conflict between religious values and secular digital culture) as mentioned in the introduction. The relationship between the platform and content is also statistically significant (chi-square $\approx 12.5$, $p<0.05$), with TikTok being dominant for short videos, demonstrating how platform algorithms shape religious narratives through sensational framing rather than doctrinal accuracy. And if we've seen from respondent demographic, this reflects the urban-student sample, which may be more exposed to digital media than rural groups. Exploratively, this dominance could explain the focus on speaker credibility, as this group tends to be critical but still relies on religious influencers for information navigation amidst the flood of online content.

2. Attitude towards Belief and Verification

Descriptive Statistics for Likert Scale On a scale of 1-5 (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree), respondents showed high confidence in the credibility of the ustaz/lecturer (mean 4.52, SD 0.75), which was the highest among the other items. This aligns with the CAPS model in forefending information, where religious influencers act as "opinion leaders" who filter and convey messages to their audience. However, general trust in digital sources is lower (mean 3.52, SD 0.98), indicating partial scepticism towards the platform itself. Multi-source referencing (mean 3.96, SD 0.85) and pre-sharing verification (mean 3.78, SD 1.19) were at a moderate level, with high variation in verification (min=1, max=5), indicating that some respondents rarely check the truth, making them vulnerable to misinformation.

The strong correlation between multi-source referencing and pre-sharing verification (0.65, $p<0.05$) indicates that the practice of seeking diverse sources promotes verification habits. However, the low correlation with other items (e.g., -0.02 between source trust and the credibility of the ustaz) indicates a lack of holistic integration in content assessment. Exploratively, this highlights vulnerabilities: high dependence on the personal credibility of the ustaz can blind people to disinformation, especially in Aceh where false information can disrupt adherence to Sharia law (e.g., misinterpretations of Qanun No. 6 of 2014 regarding jinayat law). This risk is exacerbated by digital agenda-setting, where algorithms prioritise viral content over accuracy, potentially distorting legal and religious literacy.

Overall, these discussion findings highlight the dual role of digital media as a tool for empowerment (increasing access to Islamic teachings) and as a risk (the spread of misinformation that threatens adherence to Sharia). In the context of Aceh, this is closely related to legal perspectives, where the Islamic Sharia Office is responsible for providing accurate information to prevent violations of the Qanun. The discussion also touched on selfreport bias and the limitations of a small sample size, which restricts generalisability but opens up opportunities for further research. Integrating communication theories (such as framing and agenda-setting) with legal studies shows that without strong digital literacy, online da'wah can worsen "religious emptiness" among muslim youths, where understanding of Sharia becomes superficial or incorrect.

## CONCLUSION

Digital da'wah plays an important role in increasing Acehnese youth's access to Islamic teachings, but also poses the risk of distorting the understanding of sharia due to high reliance on the credibility of preachers and moderate verification. Although a small sample size limiting generalisability, these exploratory findings suggest vulnerability to misinformation, which could disrupt compliance with Qanun and overall religious literacy. Overall, digital media has dual potential, positive for the democratisation of religious knowledge, but negative if not supported by good verification, aligning with information forefending in CAPS model and the principles of Islamic epistemology in combating fake news. Key recommendations include digital literacy campaigns aligned with the Qanun to reduce risk, as well as further research with broader surveys and mixed methods to inform digital da'wah policies in Aceh. This emphasises the need for collaboration between communication, law, and education to

strengthen adherence to Sharia in the digital age, preventing conflict between religious values and online culture.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The exploratory nature of this study (N=27) limits generalizability, necessitating broader investigations. Future research should employ a longitudinal design to track changes in digital da'wah consumption and Sharia understanding over time, capturing shifts influenced by platform algorithms or regulatory changes (e.g., UU ITE amendments). A mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with in-depth interviews, could explore qualitative nuances, such as how youth perceive misinformation in da'wah content. Expanding the sample to include diverse demographics (e.g., rural youth, non-students, balanced gender) would enhance representativeness. Studies could also investigate specific Qanun violations linked to digital misinformation (e.g., non-compliance with public morality laws) and assess the effectiveness of MUI-guided literacy programs. Finally, integrating learning to analyze digital da'wah content for misinformation patterns could provide actionable insights for policymakers.

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