

Muhammadiyah's Da'wa and Communication Strategies in the Digital Era: Institutional Adaptation, Platform Logic, and Progressive Islamic Authority

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Abstract

Digital media have transformed Islamic preaching from a predominantly organizational and face-to-face activity into a competitive, platform-dependent communication environment. This article examines how Muhammadiyah adapts its da'wa and communication strategies to that environment while attempting to preserve the institutional authority and reformist orientation of Islam Berkemajuan. The study employs qualitative document analysis within an IMRAD design. It analyzes Muhammadiyah's official statements, organizational publications, digital-da'wa agendas, and selected institutional communication practices published between 2020 and 2023, supported by scholarship on mediatization, religious authority, and digital religion. The findings identify five interconnected strategies: institutional media convergence, ideological framing through Islam Berkemajuan, audience segmentation, networked communication across autonomous organizations and charitable enterprises, and issue-based public da'wa during social crises. These strategies expand Muhammadiyah's reach and enable rapid public intervention, but their effectiveness is constrained by fragmented coordination, formal and elite-centered language, uneven digital capacity, dependence on commercial platforms, and limited dialogical engagement. The article argues that Muhammadiyah's central challenge is not technological adoption but the conversion of dispersed institutional resources into a coherent, audience-sensitive, and ethically accountable digital communication system. Digital da'wa becomes sustainable when institutional credibility is combined with platform literacy, participatory communication, and measurable public relevance.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah; digital da'wa; strategic communication; Islam Berkemajuan; religious authority.

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of digital media has altered the conditions under which religious messages are produced, distributed, evaluated, and contested. Islamic da'wa is no longer organized only through mosques, schools, printed magazines, sermons, and face-to-face associations. It now circulates through websites, streaming services, social media feeds, messaging applications, podcasts, short-form videos, and algorithmically curated recommendation systems. This transformation does not simply provide religious organizations with additional channels. It changes the relationship among preachers, institutions, audiences, and technological intermediaries. Digital platforms reward immediacy, personalization, emotional salience, visual simplicity, and continuous interaction, whereas established religious organizations tend to rely on deliberation, formal authority, institutional hierarchy, and carefully controlled messages (Campbell, 2013; Hjarvard, 2011; Hoover, 2016).

For Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's largest and most influential Islamic movements,

digitalization poses both an opportunity and an institutional problem. The movement possesses extensive social infrastructure, including schools, universities, hospitals, philanthropic bodies, mosques, youth and women's organizations, publishing institutions, and official media. This infrastructure gives Muhammadiyah a substantial reservoir of knowledge, legitimacy, professional expertise, and public-service experience. Yet institutional scale does not automatically produce digital visibility or persuasive communication. A decentralized organization can generate abundant content while still lacking a unified editorial direction, audience differentiation, platform-specific formats, and reliable mechanisms for evaluating public engagement.

Muhammadiyah's own organizational discussions in 2022 and 2023 recognized that the shift from physical to digital communication was not marginal but structural. Official discussions preceding and following the Forty-Eighth Muktamar emphasized media, digital society, technological change, and the acceleration of digital da'wa. In 2023, Muhammadiyah leaders explicitly argued that digital preaching required clearer market segmentation and issue prioritization, particularly because less moderate religious actors had successfully occupied digital spaces (Muhammadiyah, 2022a, 2023a, 2023b). These statements reveal an important institutional self-critique: organizational authority accumulated through more than a century of social service does not necessarily translate into attention within platformized public spheres.

Existing studies of digital da'wa frequently concentrate on individual preachers, particular social media accounts, or the general utility of digital platforms. Such studies help explain the appeal of visual storytelling, interactive content, and charismatic religious personalities, but they often treat an organization merely as a content producer. Muhammadiyah requires a different analytical scale. It is simultaneously a religious movement, a bureaucracy, a public-service network, a media actor, an educational system, and a producer of authoritative Islamic knowledge. Its digital communication must therefore coordinate theological identity, institutional reputation, public advocacy, crisis communication, cadre development, and the everyday needs of diverse audiences.

This article asks three questions. First, how did Muhammadiyah frame and organize digital da'wa between 2020 and 2023? Second, what communication strategies can be identified across its institutional statements and practices? Third, what structural limitations prevented its large organizational resources from being converted into a coherent digital presence? The study argues that Muhammadiyah's digital strategy is best understood as an unfinished process of institutional adaptation. It has successfully expanded media channels and connected da'wa with public issues, science, philanthropy, and civic service. However, it remains constrained by fragmented communication structures, inconsistent audience segmentation, formalistic language, unequal digital competence, and limited institutional learning from platform analytics.

The article contributes to the study of religion and communication in three ways. It shifts attention from individual digital preachers to the organizational production of religious authority. It distinguishes technological presence from strategic communication capacity. Finally, it conceptualizes Muhammadiyah's digital da'wa as a negotiation between institutional authority and platform logic. This negotiation determines whether Islam

Berkemajuan functions merely as a repeated slogan or becomes a recognizable communication framework capable of addressing the moral, social, and intellectual concerns of digital publics.

Digital religion refers not merely to religious content placed online but to the mutual shaping of religious practice and digital media. Campbell (2013) emphasizes that online and offline religion are interconnected rather than separate domains. Religious communities negotiate new media according to their histories, values, authority structures, and perceptions of legitimacy. This negotiated approach is useful for analyzing Muhammadiyah because the movement does not enter digital space without institutional memory. Its adoption of technology is filtered through *tajdid*, organizational discipline, educational rationality, and commitments to social service.

Mediatization theory further explains how media become independent institutions whose formats and routines affect other social institutions. Religious organizations that use digital media must adapt to media logic, including brevity, visibility, personalization, repetition, and audience metrics (Hjarvard, 2011). In the platform era, this process intensifies. Platforms do not neutrally transmit messages. Their algorithms privilege certain formats and patterns of engagement, while monetization systems and recommendation mechanisms influence what becomes visible (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018). Consequently, a lengthy institutional statement may have theological precision but little circulation, whereas a short emotional video may gain extensive reach while reducing doctrinal complexity.

This produces a strategic dilemma. Religious institutions need visibility to communicate, but adaptation to platform logic may encourage oversimplification, personalization, sensationalism, or dependency on commercial infrastructures. The problem is particularly acute for Muhammadiyah because its authority is collective and organizational. Digital culture often rewards individual figures whose communication styles are intimate, rapid, and emotionally resonant. Muhammadiyah must therefore make institutional knowledge communicatively accessible without allowing charismatic personality to replace accountable religious authority.

Strategic communication concerns the deliberate use of communication to fulfill an organization's mission. It requires more than publishing content. It involves environmental analysis, goal definition, audience identification, message design, channel selection, coordination, feedback, and evaluation (Hallahan et al., 2007). For a religious organization, strategic communication also includes the ethical question of whether communicative means are consistent with religious purposes. High reach alone is insufficient when content is inaccurate, polarizing, manipulative, or disconnected from public needs.

Muhammadiyah's organizational complexity makes coherence central. The central board, regional and local branches, autonomous organizations, councils, universities, hospitals, schools, *Lazismu*, disaster-management bodies, and official media can each communicate independently. Decentralization encourages innovation and local relevance, but it can also create duplication, contradictory styles, inactive accounts, fragmented branding, and

weak crisis coordination. Strategic coherence does not require absolute centralization. It requires shared principles, interoperable systems, editorial standards, escalation procedures, and clarity about which institutional unit speaks authoritatively on particular issues.

Communication strategy must also distinguish distribution from engagement. Distribution is the circulation of messages; engagement involves attention, interpretation, dialogue, trust, and action. Religious organizations often measure success through follower counts or publication frequency, although these indicators say little about comprehension or behavioral consequences. For Muhammadiyah, meaningful evaluation should include whether audiences understand Islam Berkemajuan, trust institutional guidance, participate in programs, access services, donate, volunteer, or revise harmful beliefs.

Digital media destabilize the monopoly of established religious authorities. Audiences can compare interpretations, follow transnational preachers, circulate fragments of sermons, and construct personalized religious repertoires. Authority increasingly depends on visibility, accessibility, perceived authenticity, and network endorsement in addition to formal learning or organizational position (Bunt, 2018; Eickelman & Anderson, 2003). Nevertheless, new media do not necessarily eliminate institutional authority. They can strengthen it when institutions translate expertise into recognizable, timely, and trustworthy communication.

Muhammadiyah's principal ideological resource is Islam Berkemajuan, reaffirmed at the Forty-Eighth Muktamar in 2022. The concept presents Islam as a source of progress, enlightenment, justice, peace, knowledge, and constructive engagement with modern civilization (Nashir, 2022; Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 2022). As a communication framework, it can differentiate Muhammadiyah from literalist, sectarian, and purely motivational forms of online preaching. Yet differentiation requires operational consistency. Audiences must be able to recognize how Islam Berkemajuan shapes responses to education, health, gender justice, environmental problems, economic inequality, science, democracy, and humanitarian crises.

The analytical framework used in this article therefore examines five dimensions: media infrastructure, ideological framing, audience strategy, organizational networking, and public-issue orientation. These dimensions allow digital da'wa to be assessed not as isolated content but as an institutional communication system.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative interpretive design organized according to the IMRAD structure. It is not a systematic literature review. The primary data consist of purposively selected institutional documents and public communications produced or officially circulated by Muhammadiyah between January 2020 and December 2023. The period captures the acceleration of digital communication during the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizational reflection preceding the Forty-Eighth Muktamar in 2022, and the explicit consolidation of digital-da'wa agendas in 2023.

The document corpus includes official Muhammadiyah website articles concerning media, digital society, technological transformation, audience segmentation, the Library and Information Council, women's digital preaching, millennial and Generation Z audiences, and Islam Berkemajuan. It also includes selected public communications associated with Muhammadiyah's crisis and philanthropic activities, particularly communications that demonstrate the integration of religious messaging with health information, social assistance, and civic responsibility. Academic studies published no later than 2023 are used to contextualize these materials, not to create an exhaustive review.

Documents were selected using four criteria: institutional authorship or official circulation; direct relevance to digital da'wa or organizational communication; representation of strategic objectives, practices, or self-evaluation; and publication within the defined period. Analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the documents were read to identify explicit strategic vocabulary, including acceleration, segmentation, literacy, moderation, collaboration, community da'wa, technological adaptation, and progressive Islam. Second, statements and practices were coded under the five analytical dimensions identified above. Third, the coded material was compared to identify consistencies, tensions, and gaps between organizational aspirations and communicative implementation.

The study does not claim to measure the total performance of all Muhammadiyah digital accounts. Nor does it infer audience effects directly from institutional documents. Its purpose is to reconstruct the strategic logic expressed through official narratives and observable institutional practices. This distinction is important because organizational statements may describe intended strategy rather than fully implemented capacity. The analysis therefore treats official discourse as evidence of priorities, problem definitions, and institutional self-understanding, while critically examining the implementation problems acknowledged within those same communications.

Trustworthiness was strengthened through source triangulation across official organizational publications, academic studies of Muhammadiyah's digital activity, and broader scholarship on digital religion and communication. Interpretive claims were retained only when supported by recurring patterns or by a clear relationship between institutional statements and documented communication practices.

Table 1. Analytical dimensions and guiding questions

Dimension	Primary concern	Guiding question
Media infrastructure	Channel convergence and content formats	How are websites, television, social media, messaging platforms, and institutional networks connected?
Ideological framing	Translation of Islam Berkemajuan	How is organizational identity converted into recognizable public messages?
Audience strategy	Segmentation and participation	Which publics are addressed, and how are messages adapted to their needs and media habits?
Organizational networking	Coordination across units	How are councils, autonomous organizations,

		universities, institutions, and branches mobilized?
Public-issue orientation	Issue-based and service-linked da'wa	How does digital communication connect religious values with public problems and practical intervention?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Institutional media convergence: from channel expansion to ecosystem building

The first strategy is the construction of a multi-channel communication infrastructure. Muhammadiyah's digital presence is not confined to a single official account. It includes the central website, Suara Muhammadiyah's print and digital operations, TVMu, YouTube channels, social media accounts, messaging groups, university media, autonomous-organization accounts, and the digital platforms of charitable enterprises. During the pandemic, online meetings, streaming, digital teaching, telecommunication, and social-media campaigns became routine. This accelerated a transformation that Muhammadiyah leaders later described as a radical movement from physical to digital life (Muhammadiyah, 2023c).

The strategic value of this infrastructure lies in its capacity for convergence. A sermon can be streamed, excerpted into short videos, summarized as an infographic, discussed through messaging applications, and linked to institutional programs. A fatwa or organizational instruction can be supported by medical experts from Muhammadiyah hospitals and universities. A philanthropic campaign can combine theological motivation, verified beneficiary information, payment facilities, and real-time reporting. Such convergence allows da'wa to operate as an integrated chain of interpretation, information, service, and mobilization.

However, the evidence also indicates that channel expansion has often preceded ecosystem coordination. Different organizational units maintain separate editorial calendars, visual identities, technological capacities, and levels of activity. Content is frequently reproduced across accounts without adapting it to platform characteristics. Websites privilege complete institutional reports, whereas Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube require strong openings, concise narratives, visual clarity, and repeated audience interaction. Merely placing the same message on multiple platforms produces distribution but not convergence.

Muhammadiyah's digital strategy therefore developed through a dual movement: rapid proliferation from below and attempts at coordination from above. The Library and Information Council was repeatedly positioned as a central driver of digital acceleration, but its effectiveness depended on cooperation from councils, autonomous organizations, and regional structures. The resulting ecosystem is institutionally rich but operationally uneven. Its greatest resource is the volume of expert knowledge available across the movement; its greatest weakness is the absence of a fully integrated content and data architecture capable of converting that knowledge into coordinated public communication.

2. Islam Berkemajuan as ideological framing and communication differentiation

The second strategy is ideological framing through Islam Berkemajuan. Muhammadiyah's digital communication consistently seeks to present Islam as compatible with science, education, social welfare, gender equality, civic responsibility, and national progress. This framing differentiates the movement from online religious communication based primarily on fear, sectarian hostility, conspiracy, or identity confrontation. It also allows Muhammadiyah to connect doctrinal language with its institutional practices in health, education, philanthropy, and disaster response.

The 2022 Risalah Islam Berkemajuan provided a renewed ideological vocabulary for this purpose. Its themes of progress, enlightenment, human dignity, justice, peace, and constructive engagement with civilization offer a broad narrative architecture. In digital communication, these principles appear through issue-based messages: encouragement of vaccination and health discipline, promotion of educational continuity, support for vulnerable communities, religious moderation, women's empowerment, and evidence-based public guidance. This is a significant strength because it grounds communication in an institutional identity rather than in temporary trends.

Yet the analysis reveals a translation problem. Islam Berkemajuan is conceptually expansive but often communicated through abstract, formal, and repetitive formulations. Digital audiences encounter messages in highly competitive environments and rarely possess the contextual knowledge assumed by organizational texts. Terms such as *tajdid*, *wasathiyah*, *dakwah pencerahan*, and Islam Berkemajuan require narrative illustration. Without concrete stories, recognizable dilemmas, and practical consequences, ideological language can circulate mainly among existing members rather than reaching wider publics.

Effective framing therefore depends on demonstrating what progressive Islam does. A hospital's inclusive service, a university's scientific contribution, an Aisyiyah program for women and children, a Lazismu intervention, or a disaster volunteer's work can function as narrative evidence. These stories make organizational theology visible. The most persuasive digital communication identified in the corpus does not separate preaching from action; it presents public service itself as *da'wa*. Muhammadiyah's distinctive communicative asset is thus not only doctrinal explanation but the capacity to show an institutionalized Islam working within society.

3. Audience segmentation and the turn toward platform-sensitive da'wa

The third strategy is the growing recognition of audience segmentation. In September 2023, Muhammadiyah's official communication explicitly stated that digital *da'wa* should determine market segments and concentrate on selected issues. This language marked an important departure from the assumption that one authoritative message can address all audiences equally. Digital publics differ by age, education, geography, occupation, religious literacy, political orientation, media habits, and preferred communicative style.

The attention given to millennials and Generation Z illustrates this shift. Aisyiyah and other Muhammadiyah bodies promoted training in digital skills for preachers and encouraged the use of social-media features to extend religious study and discussion (Muhammadiyah, 2023d, 2023e). Younger audiences were understood not merely as recipients but as publics

whose religious knowledge is substantially shaped by mobile devices, creators, peer networks, and recommendation algorithms. Reaching them requires short visual formats, conversational language, credible personalities, issue relevance, and opportunities for response.

Segmentation also enables issue specialization. Rather than every account speaking generally about Islam, specific units can develop authority in health, family life, education, economics, environment, disability, youth culture, or women's rights. Muhammadiyah already has the institutional expertise necessary for this model. Doctors, lecturers, legal scholars, psychologists, economists, environmental activists, and religious scholars can collaborate in content production. Such specialization reduces generic preaching and builds durable audience trust around recurring needs.

Nevertheless, audience segmentation remained more strongly articulated as an aspiration than embedded as a consistent organizational practice. Many institutional messages continued to use ceremonial openings, bureaucratic titles, long quotations from leaders, and internally oriented terminology. These conventions affirm hierarchy but can weaken relevance for audiences outside the organization. Furthermore, segmentation was sometimes interpreted narrowly as the selection of platforms for age groups rather than a deeper process of audience research. Strategic segmentation requires knowledge of audience questions, anxieties, misconceptions, language, consumption patterns, and barriers to participation. Without that research, adaptation risks becoming cosmetic.

The result is a persistent tension between institutional completeness and communicative economy. Muhammadiyah tends to value contextual and doctrinal completeness; platform communication demands selection and compression. The solution is not to abandon complexity but to design layered communication. Short content can open attention, medium-length content can provide explanation, and complete materials can remain available through websites, podcasts, books, or online courses. A layered architecture preserves intellectual seriousness while respecting digital patterns of access.

4. Networked communication across organizational units

The fourth strategy is networked communication. Muhammadiyah's organizational structure provides multiple nodes through which messages can be adapted and circulated. Central institutions establish broad ideological and policy positions; regional and local branches connect these positions with local contexts; autonomous organizations communicate with women, youth, students, and professional groups; charitable enterprises provide issue expertise and concrete service narratives. This structure enables what may be called distributed da'wa: religious communication produced through a coordinated social network rather than exclusively by professional preachers.

The COVID-19 period demonstrated the potential of this model. Health guidance and calls for social responsibility could draw on religious authorities, the Muhammadiyah COVID-19 Command Center, hospitals, universities, volunteers, and philanthropic bodies. Communication linked normative Islamic arguments with epidemiological knowledge and operational programs. Studies of Muhammadiyah's pandemic-related social media indicate that its digital messages combined religious exhortation with philanthropic mobilization and

public-health information (Rahmat, 2021; Susanti, 2022). The network thus increased credibility because audiences could observe institutional capacity behind the message.

Networked communication also strengthens local relevance. A national campaign can be translated into regional languages, connected with local religious practices, and implemented through nearby institutions. Yet decentralization creates risks. Messages can diverge in tone and quality; unofficial interpretations may be mistaken for central positions; local accounts may lack verification procedures; and controversies can escalate before coordination occurs. The same network that expands reach can fragment authority.

The documents suggest that Muhammadiyah's response has been to promote capacity building, collaboration, and digital literacy. However, training is often episodic and focused on production skills. Sustainable networked communication requires institutional protocols: verified account directories, editorial responsibilities, shared repositories, source standards, crisis-response procedures, accessibility rules, and mechanisms for correcting misinformation. It also requires mutual recognition. Central bodies should not treat local units only as distribution channels, while local units should not ignore common institutional standards.

5. Issue-based public da'wa and communication through service

The fifth strategy is issue-based public da'wa. Muhammadiyah's strongest digital communication frequently emerges when religious language is connected to a concrete public problem. During the pandemic, communication addressed worship, vaccination, health protocols, education, charity, grief, and community resilience. In disaster response, messages link solidarity with verified institutional action. In education and health, communication presents professional service as part of Islamic responsibility. This orientation corresponds with Muhammadiyah's historical emphasis on transformative and socially embedded preaching.

Issue-based communication broadens the meaning of da'wa. It is not limited to transmitting ritual instruction or moral advice; it frames public problems, offers knowledge, mobilizes resources, and coordinates action. Digital media increase the speed and scale of this process. A public statement can be immediately supported by fundraising links, service directories, educational videos, expert discussions, and field reports. Communication becomes credible when audiences can move from message exposure to practical participation.

This strategy also protects Muhammadiyah from a purely reactive digital agenda. Platform environments reward controversy, and religious organizations can easily become trapped in continuous responses to provocative content. An issue-based strategy allows Muhammadiyah to set agendas based on public need rather than algorithmic conflict. Themes such as climate ethics, mental health, family resilience, disability inclusion, digital literacy, consumer protection, and economic justice can be addressed through combinations of Islamic scholarship and professional expertise.

However, issue-based communication requires speed, editorial autonomy, and interdisciplinary preparation. Institutional procedures may delay responses until public attention has moved elsewhere. Experts may communicate in technical language, while media teams lack authority to simplify messages. Successful public da'wa therefore depends

on advance preparation: issue maps, expert rosters, approved explanatory frameworks, and communication templates that can be activated without sacrificing accuracy.

Table 2. Main findings: strengths and structural limitations

Strategic domain	Demonstrated strength	Structural limitation
Media convergence	Extensive institutional channels and multimedia capacity	Fragmented platforms, duplicated content, and weak data integration
Ideological framing	Distinctive progressive-Islam narrative linked to science and service	Abstract language and limited translation into audience-centered stories
Audience segmentation	Growing recognition of youth, women, and issue-based publics	Insufficient audience research and continued bureaucratic communication style
Networked communication	Large decentralized network with specialized expertise	Uneven capacity, inconsistent standards, and authority ambiguity
Public-issue da'wa	Strong connection between religious messages and concrete service	Slow response cycles and dependence on episodic crises

Discussion

1. The central problem is organizational conversion, not technological adoption

The findings indicate that Muhammadiyah has passed the stage at which digital media can be treated as optional instruments. Its institutions already use websites, social media, streaming, messaging applications, and online service systems. The central problem is whether these dispersed practices can be converted into strategic organizational capacity. Technological adoption concerns access to tools; organizational conversion concerns the alignment of authority, expertise, workflows, data, and evaluation.

This distinction explains why a large institution may be less visible than an individual preacher. Individual creators often possess a clear voice, rapid production cycle, identifiable audience, and direct feedback loop. Muhammadiyah possesses greater substantive resources but must coordinate many actors and protect institutional legitimacy. Its comparative advantage cannot be imitation of influencer culture. It lies in combining trustworthy scholarship, multidisciplinary expertise, nationwide infrastructure, and demonstrated service. The strategic task is to make these institutional assets legible within digital environments.

A coherent system would begin with shared positioning. Islam Berkemajuan should define a limited number of recognizable communication commitments: evidence-based religious reasoning, inclusion, public benefit, nonviolence, intellectual openness, and accountable action. Each institutional unit can then express these commitments through its specialized field. Coherence emerges from common principles and interoperable practices, not from identical content.

2. Negotiating institutional authority and platform logic

Muhammadiyah's digital da'wa reveals a broader transformation of religious authority. Formal organizational position remains important, but it no longer guarantees attention. Audiences evaluate religious messages through communicative accessibility, perceived

sincerity, visual quality, responsiveness, and endorsement by networks. The organization must therefore negotiate platform logic without allowing popularity to become the sole measure of authority.

This negotiation requires a division between substantive authority and communicative mediation. Religious scholars and professional experts should determine the accuracy and ethical limits of messages, while trained communicators translate them into accessible formats. The translator is not a passive technician. Communication choices shape meaning, and media teams therefore require sufficient theological and organizational literacy. Conversely, scholars require awareness of platform dynamics so that precision is not used to justify inaccessible communication.

Personalization deserves particular attention. Digital audiences respond to identifiable human voices more readily than to anonymous institutions. Muhammadiyah can authorize diverse public communicators without collapsing institutional authority into celebrity. This requires transparent affiliation, editorial accountability, correction mechanisms, and succession planning. The aim is not to eliminate personality but to embed it within collective standards.

3. From broadcasting to participatory communication

Much institutional religious communication remains broadcast-oriented: leaders speak, institutions publish, and audiences receive. Digital platforms technically permit interaction, but comment sections and live discussions do not automatically produce participation. Participatory communication means that audience questions influence content agendas, local experiences inform institutional interpretation, and publics can contribute knowledge, testimony, criticism, and action.

For Muhammadiyah, participation is compatible with its traditions of consultation and collective organization. Digital listening can be institutionalized through question mapping, moderated forums, periodic audience surveys, social-media analysis, and collaboration with youth communities. These mechanisms would help identify emerging religious anxieties before they become dominated by misinformation or extremist narratives. They would also reduce the tendency to communicate primarily around ceremonial events and elite statements.

Participation does not require theological relativism. An organization can maintain normative positions while listening seriously to how those positions are understood, contested, or ignored. Indeed, dialogical engagement may strengthen authority by demonstrating intellectual confidence and public accountability.

4. Ethical and strategic risks

Digital expansion also introduces ethical risks. Platform metrics may encourage sensational titles, conflict amplification, emotional manipulation, and the reduction of complex religious matters into binary claims. Commercial platforms collect user data and can change algorithms without institutional control. Content can be detached from its original context, edited, or circulated through hostile networks. Moreover, unequal internet access and digital literacy mean that online expansion can reproduce social exclusion.

Muhammadiyah's communication ethics should therefore extend beyond the avoidance of false information. It should include source transparency, respect for privacy, accessibility for persons with disabilities, protection of children, non-exploitative fundraising, disclosure of sponsored content, and procedures for correcting errors. Ethical communication is not a constraint on strategic effectiveness; it is a central component of institutional trust.

A further risk is numerical reductionism. Reach, views, and follower counts are useful but incomplete. A highly viewed controversy may contribute less to Muhammadiyah's mission than a smaller educational series that changes practice or connects people with services. Evaluation should combine platform indicators with mission indicators such as comprehension, trust, participation, service uptake, donations, volunteer recruitment, and reduction of misinformation.

5. A proposed model for Muhammadiyah's integrated digital da'wa

Based on the findings, an integrated model can be organized around six functions. The first is listening: systematic identification of audience concerns, media habits, and emerging issues. The second is framing: translating Islam Berkemajuan into clear positions and narrative themes. The third is production: creating layered, platform-specific content through collaboration among scholars, experts, storytellers, designers, and local communities. The fourth is networking: coordinating distribution through verified institutional nodes while allowing contextual adaptation. The fifth is participation: enabling questions, feedback, community contribution, and movement from online attention to offline action. The sixth is evaluation: assessing both communication performance and public impact.

This model would transform the Library and Information Council from a primarily publishing-oriented unit into a strategic communication hub. It would not monopolize content but provide standards, infrastructure, research, training, crisis coordination, and analytics. Specialized councils and charitable enterprises would retain substantive ownership of issues. Regional units would provide local knowledge and language adaptation. Autonomous organizations would lead communication with their constituencies. The central hub would ensure that these distributed efforts remain recognizable as parts of a common Muhammadiyah public mission.

The model also requires investment in people. Digital da'wa cannot depend solely on volunteers expected to master theology, journalism, design, analytics, and community management simultaneously. Muhammadiyah's universities can develop professional pathways in religious communication, digital journalism, data analysis, animation, podcasting, and platform ethics. Cadre development should combine ideological formation with practical communication competence.

Table 3. Integrated digital da'wa model

Function	Core activity	Institutional lead	Indicative outcome
Listen	Audience research, issue monitoring, question mapping	Communication hub, universities, local branches	Relevant and timely agenda

Frame	Translate Islam Berkemajuan into issue positions and narratives	Tarjih, Tabligh, expert councils, communication teams	Clear and distinctive message
Produce	Create layered and platform-specific multimedia content	Specialized units and professional production teams	Accessible, accurate, reusable content
Network	Coordinate verified accounts and contextual adaptation	Library and Information Council, regional structures	Coherent distributed reach
Participate	Moderate dialogue and connect audiences with programs	Autonomous organizations, communities, service institutions	Trust, involvement, and collective action
Evaluate	Combine analytics with mission-related impact assessment	Communication hub and research partners	Continuous organizational learning

CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah's digital da'wa between 2020 and 2023 developed through five interconnected strategies: institutional media convergence, ideological framing through Islam Berkemajuan, audience segmentation, networked organizational communication, and issue-based public preaching. Together, these strategies demonstrate that Muhammadiyah does not understand digital communication merely as the online reproduction of sermons. It increasingly connects religious messages with science, philanthropy, education, health, women's empowerment, youth engagement, and civic responsibility.

The movement's strongest advantage is the credibility generated by its institutional infrastructure and public service. Its central weakness is the incomplete conversion of that infrastructure into a coordinated communication system. Fragmented channels, uneven digital competence, bureaucratic language, limited audience research, and dependence on platform logic reduce the public visibility of its substantive resources. Consequently, the decisive question is not whether Muhammadiyah is present online, but whether its presence is coherent, recognizable, participatory, and capable of producing measurable public value.

The article proposes an integrated model based on listening, framing, production, networking, participation, and evaluation. This model preserves decentralized initiative while establishing common standards and strategic coordination. It also treats ethical accountability as an element of effectiveness rather than as an external restriction. Muhammadiyah can compete within digital religious markets without imitating sensational or personality-centered preaching when it communicates its distinctive combination of Islamic scholarship, professional expertise, and institutional service in forms that audiences can understand and use.

The study is limited by its reliance on documents and publicly observable institutional communication. Future empirical research should compare the content and engagement patterns of Muhammadiyah accounts across organizational levels, interview communication managers and audiences, and examine how digital messages influence trust, religious understanding, donations, volunteering, and service use. Such research would move evaluation beyond visibility and clarify whether digital da'wa contributes to the wider social mission of Islam Berkemajuan.

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