

Community Empowerment Da'wah Strategies in the Digital Age: A Literature Review of Community Service

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: <i>Received: 20 June 2026</i> <i>Revised: 15 July 2026</i> <i>Accepted: 30 July 2026</i> <i>Available online:</i>	Da'wah in the digital era can no longer rely solely on conventional, pulpit-based delivery, since digital platforms have reshaped how religious messages reach and empower communities. This article aims to examine strategies of da'wah for community empowerment in the digital era through a review of recent literature on community service (pengabdian masyarakat) practices. A library research (kajian kepustakaan) method was employed, synthesizing peer-reviewed articles published between 2021 and 2024 that address digital da'wah, religious moderation, and community welfare enhancement. The review indicates that effective digital da'wah strategies combine the personal branding of da'i, participatory content creation, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and capacity-building programs for community groups, particularly women, youth, and santri, to sustain religious and social transformation. These strategies extend da'wah beyond verbal transmission into a transformative process that strengthens community resilience and welfare. The study concludes that integrating digital literacy training with community empowerment programs offers a more adaptive and participatory model of da'wah, and recommends that da'wah institutions design structured, collaborative, and continuously mentored digital empowerment programs.
Keywords: <i>Digital Da'wah,</i> <i>Community</i> <i>Empowerment,</i> <i>Digital Literacy,</i> <i>Community Service,</i> <i>Religious</i> <i>Moderation</i>	
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INTRODUCTION

Advances in information and communication technology have transformed the way religious values are disseminated within society. Da'wah, which originally relied on sermons from the pulpit and face-to-face meetings, is now increasingly shifting to digital spaces, such as social media, messaging apps, and video-sharing platforms. This shift requires preachers and da'wah institutions to manage religious messages in a more strategic manner to ensure they remain relevant and impactful (Aziz Mayardi Basoeky & Suryandari, 2023). Various studies also indicate that digital da'wah has become one of the primary channels for disseminating Islamic messages to modern society, where the majority of activities have shifted to the online realm (Ibnu Kasir & Awali, 2024).

On the other hand, da'wah is no longer understood merely as a one-way communication of a message, but also as a means of social empowerment. The use of digital media in da'wah has been shown to contribute to strengthening the understanding of religious moderation among young people, while also opening up broader opportunities for youth participation in religious life (Iqbal & Asman, 2021). In line with this, digital da'wah is also positioned as an instrument for improving social welfare, as it is capable of reaching segments of society that have long been difficult to access through

conventional da'wah approaches (Purwatiningsih et al., 2024). The transformation of Generation Z's religious practices in the era of new media further underscores the urgency of this topic, given that young people's consumption of religious information now relies heavily on digital platforms (Pabbajah, 2024).

Nevertheless, most previous research has focused on the technical aspects of using social media and digital platforms to convey da'wah messages, such as content strategies, technological challenges, and the use of specific applications (Faridah et al., 2022; Fauzi, 2023). Studies that specifically link digital da'wah strategies to community empowerment practices through community service initiatives remain limited. In fact, da'wah-based community service programs—such as multimedia training for Islamic boarding school students to strengthen digital da'wah—demonstrate that the empowerment of digital skills can serve as a da'wah strategy in its own right, rather than merely a tool (Khotdriyah & Astuti, 2024). It is at this point that a gap exists between the literature on digital da'wah—which is communicative and technical in nature—and the literature on community empowerment—which is participatory and transformative in nature.

Theoretically, a da'wah approach that combines rational, emotional, and practical dimensions is considered capable of addressing the intellectual, spiritual, and practical aspects of society, so that da'wah does not stop at verbal activities but becomes a transformative process with concrete impacts (Asbi et al., 2025). This framework is particularly relevant for analyzing community empowerment da'wah strategies in the digital age, as it facilitates the integration of conveying religious messages with the practical capacity-building of the target community. This article contributes methodologically by synthesizing scattered findings from various literatures on digital da'wah and community service into a more comprehensive strategic framework. Based on the above discussion, this article aims to: (1) identify da'wah strategies used in community empowerment programs in the digital era based on literature from the past five years; and (2) analyze how these strategies contribute to strengthening community capacity and well-being through da'wah-based community service activities.

LITERATUR REVIEW

A review of ten articles discussing digital da'wah and community empowerment from 2021 to 2025 reveals that the existing literature can be grouped into four complementary research streams: the management and adaptation of technology in da'wah, strengthening religious moderation and social welfare through digital media, the transformation of religious practice among the digital native generation, and the empowerment of digital skills as a da'wah strategy in its own right.

Managerial Strategies and Technological Adaptation in Da'wah

A number of studies highlight the managerial and technical aspects of the shift of da'wah to the digital space. Aziz Mayardi Basoeky and Suryandari (2023) emphasize the importance of planning and managing religious messages to ensure they remain relevant amid changes in delivery channels. Faridah et al. (2022) and Fauzi (2023) map out the information and communication technology challenges faced by da'is, along with adaptive, content-based solutions. Ibnu Kasir and Awali (2024) assert that social media and video-sharing platforms have now become the primary channels for disseminating Islamic messages to modern society. These four studies are consistently technical and

communicative in nature, focusing on how da'wah messages are conveyed, rather than on how da'wah empowers the target audience.

Digital Da'wah as a Means of Religious Moderation and Social Welfare

The second trend expands the function of digital da'wah from merely conveying messages to serving as a social instrument. Iqbal and Asman (2021) demonstrate that digital da'wah contributes to strengthening the understanding of religious moderation among youth while also opening up broader opportunities for participation. Purwatiningsih et al. (2024) position digital da'wah as a tool for enhancing social welfare because it is capable of reaching groups that are difficult for conventional da'wah to access. Rani (2023) adds that the transformation of da'wah communication in the digital age presents both opportunities and challenges for contemporary Islamic education, particularly in shaping moderate religious mindsets and attitudes. These three studies affirm that digital da'wah does not stop at an informative function but has shifted toward a transformative-social function.

The Transformation of Religious Practice Among the Digital Native Generation

Pabbajah (2024) provides important demographic context by showing that Generation Z's patterns of religious information consumption are heavily reliant on digital platforms, meaning that the transformation of religious practice among the younger generation cannot be separated from the new media ecosystem. This finding reinforces the urgency of designing da'wah strategies that target the characteristics of the digital native generation, rather than simply transferring the format of conventional sermons to online channels. Empowering Digital Skills as a Participatory Da'wah Strategy. The fourth trend—most relevant to the focus of this article—views digital skills training as a da'wah strategy in its own right. Khotdriyah and Astuti (2024) document multimedia training for Islamic boarding school students as an effort to strengthen digital-based da'wah, demonstrating that the empowerment of technical capacity can go hand in hand with the reinforcement of religious values. This study bridges the technical-communicative literature on digital da'wah with the participatory-transformative literature on community empowerment, and serves as a primary reference for identifying da'wah-based community service themes in the results section.

Beyond the four thematic clusters identified above, a broader survey of the past decade's literature reveals two additional lines of inquiry that deepen the theoretical grounding of this review. Nurhadi (2020) examines how digital da'wah negotiates religious values within the contested terrain of online public space, arguing that social media does not merely transmit da'wah messages but actively reshapes the boundaries between private religious authority and public discourse. This finding complements the personal branding theme discussed above by showing that a da'i's digital presence is not simply a communication strategy but also a negotiation over religious legitimacy in an open, contestable space. Relatedly, Millie, Syarif, and Fakhruroji (2023) trace how dakwah has become institutionalized as a formal discipline within Indonesia's state education system, indicating that the digitalization of da'wah is occurring alongside, rather than separately from, its increasing professionalization and curricular standardization.

The theoretical grounding for linking da'wah with community empowerment is further reinforced by Ibrahim and Riyadi (2023), who identify *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), justice, participation, and equality as the core principles underlying da'wah-based community development. These principles align closely with

the multi-stakeholder collaboration and participatory content production themes identified in Table 1, suggesting that the four empirical themes distilled from the community service literature are not ad hoc practices but instantiations of long-standing normative principles within Islamic community development discourse. In this sense, digital da'wah strategies for empowerment can be read as a contemporary, technologically mediated expression of classical da'wah ethics rather than a wholly new paradigm.

A further dimension concerns gender and religious authority in digital spaces. Subchi, Kusmana, Zulkifli, Khairani, and Latifah (2022) show that cyber fatwa practices and da'wah acceptance in new media are shaped by how technology mediates the reception of religious messages delivered by female ulama, revealing that digital platforms can both expand and complicate women's religious authority. This finding nuances the capacity-building theme discussed earlier: while women are frequently positioned as a target group of digital literacy programs, Subchi et al. (2022) indicate that women can also occupy the role of message-givers and religious authorities within digital da'wah ecosystems, not solely as beneficiaries of empowerment programs.

Recent literature also extends digital da'wah into the domain of economic empowerment, a dimension not fully captured in the four themes summarized in Table 1. Fauziyah, Nuha, Mehnaz, and Darmaningrum (2025) document how da'wah-based innovation supports the economic empowerment of traditional market traders navigating digital disruption, positioning da'wah as a vehicle for strengthening competitiveness and trader-buyer relationships rather than purely religious instruction. At a broader scale, Setiawati, Firsada, Bahrudin, Saif, and Dwianto (2025) analyze the synergy between da'wah and Islamic economics across Indonesia and Yemen, demonstrating that da'wah-driven community development can operate as a cross-national strategy for building economic resilience within Muslim communities.

Taken together, these six additional sources indicate that the community empowerment da'wah literature is expanding along at least two further trajectories beyond the four themes identified in this review: (1) the negotiation of religious authority and legitimacy within digital public space, particularly across institutional and gender lines, and (2) the extension of da'wah-based empowerment from social and religious welfare toward tangible economic outcomes. Incorporating this literature suggests that a fifth potential theme—da'wah-based economic empowerment—may warrant explicit attention in future community empowerment da'wah research, complementing the personal branding, multi-stakeholder collaboration, participatory content production, and capacity-building themes already established. This expanded reading strengthens the argument that digital da'wah for community empowerment is best understood as a multidimensional strategy spanning communicative, institutional, participatory, pedagogical, and now economic dimensions.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research, a method that examines theories and findings from sources such as journal articles to understand and synthesize specific phenomena. The data sources consist of indexed scientific journal articles discussing digital da'wah, community empowerment, and religion-based community service, published between 2021 and 2024. The research instruments consist

of a search guide and a thematic coding framework, which were used to identify articles based on keywords such as “digital da’wah,” “community empowerment,” “da’wah-based community service,” and “digital da’wah literacy” through the Google Scholar database and the Sinta-accredited national journal portal. Inclusion criteria included articles discussing da’wah strategies in a digital context and/or community empowerment, published within the last five years, and available in full text. Articles irrelevant to the theme of empowerment or failing to meet the criteria for digital da’wah were excluded from the study. Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, with the following stages: (1) identification of relevant articles; (2) extraction of key findings from each article; (3) grouping the findings into themes related to da’wah strategies and empowerment; and (4) synthesizing across themes to formulate a comprehensive pattern of community empowerment da’wah strategies in the digital age.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

A thematic content analysis of ten articles identified four recurring themes of community empowerment da’wah strategies in da’wah-based community service programs, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes of Community Empowerment Da’wah Strategies in Digital-Based Community Service

No	Theme	Description	Key Supporting Literature
1	Personal branding of digital da’i	Da’i and da’wah institutions build credibility and expand audience reach through consistent identity management and communication style on social media.	Aziz Mayardi Basoeky & Suryandari (2023); Ibnu Kasir & Awali (2024)
2	Multi-stakeholder collaboration	Effective da’wah-based empowerment programs are built on cooperation among da’wah institutions, universities, village governments, and civil society communities.	Khotdriyah & Astuti (2024); Purwatiningsih et al. (2024)
3	Participatory content production	Target communities are positioned as active co-producers of da’wah content, such as video and digital material training, rather than passive recipients of messages.	Khotdriyah & Astuti (2024); Faridah et al. (2022); Fauzi (2023)
4	Capacity-building programs for	Structured digital literacy training designed for women, youth, and	Iqbal & Asman (2021); Khotdriyah & Astuti

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	specific target groups	santri (Islamic boarding school students) serves as a key pathway to sustainable empowerment.	(2024); Pabbajah (2024); Rani (2023)
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Theme 1: Personal branding of digital da'i. As presented in Table 1, the first and most foundational theme concerns how individual da'i and da'wah institutions construct a consistent digital identity—encompassing tone of voice, visual style, and recurring thematic focus—across social media platforms in order to build audience trust and credibility. Aziz Mayardi Basoeky and Suryandari (2023) emphasize that this identity management cannot be left to spontaneity; it requires deliberate planning of religious messages so that they remain relevant amid rapidly changing delivery channels. Ibnu Kasir and Awali (2024) reinforce this point by showing that social media and video-sharing platforms have effectively replaced the pulpit as the primary arena in which modern audiences encounter Islamic messages, which means that the perceived authenticity and consistency of a da'i's digital persona directly shapes how far and how deeply religious messages are able to travel. In the context of community empowerment, personal branding functions as the entry point of the entire strategy: it is what first attracts a community's attention and opens a communication channel before any empowerment activity can begin, positioning the da'i not merely as a preacher but as a recognizable and trusted digital figure capable of mobilizing an audience toward participation.

Theme 2: Multi-stakeholder collaboration. The second theme identified in Table 1 highlights that successful da'wah-based empowerment programs are rarely the work of a single actor; instead, they emerge from structured cooperation among da'wah institutions, universities, village governments, and civil society organizations. This pattern is clearly evident in the multimedia training program for santri documented by Khotdriyah and Astuti (2024), in which technical training, religious mentoring, and institutional support were combined to strengthen digital-based da'wah capacity among Islamic boarding school students. A similar logic underlies the social welfare improvement initiatives described by Purwatiningsih et al. (2024), where digital da'wah was deliberately positioned as an instrument for reaching community segments that conventional, single-actor da'wah approaches had long struggled to access. Multi-stakeholder collaboration matters because it supplies the resources—funding, technical expertise, institutional legitimacy, and access to target communities—that personal branding alone cannot provide; without such collaboration, digital da'wah risks remaining at the level of message dissemination rather than translating into concrete empowerment outcomes.

Theme 3: Participatory content production. The third theme departs from a communication model in which the target audience is treated merely as a passive recipient of da'wah messages, and instead positions community members as active co-producers of digital da'wah content. Khotdriyah and Astuti (2024) document this shift concretely through video production and digital material training delivered to santri, in which participants were taught not only to consume da'wah content but to create it themselves. This finding is consistent with the adaptive content strategies identified by Faridah et al. (2022) and Fauzi (2023), who map the technological and communicative

challenges faced by da'i and argue that content solutions must be responsive to the platforms and habits of contemporary audiences. When a community is involved in producing rather than merely receiving da'wah content, the empowerment effect is twofold: participants acquire transferable digital production skills, and the resulting content tends to carry greater authenticity and relevance because it is created by and for the community itself, rather than being imposed from outside.

Theme 4: Capacity-building programs for specific target groups. The fourth theme in Table 1 concerns digital literacy training that is deliberately tailored to specific target groups—particularly women, youth, and santri—rather than delivered as a generic, one-size-fits-all program. Iqbal and Asman (2021) show that digital da'wah initiatives aimed at youth contribute simultaneously to strengthening religious moderation and to opening broader avenues for youth participation in religious life, while Khotdriyah and Astuti (2024) demonstrate a parallel pattern among santri, whose multimedia training strengthens both technical capacity and religious commitment at once. This targeted approach is further supported by Pabbajah's (2024) analysis of Generation Z as a "digital native" cohort whose religious information consumption is inseparable from digital platforms, and by Rani's (2023) review of how digital communication reshapes opportunities and challenges within contemporary Islamic education. Taken together, these studies indicate that capacity-building programs succeed to the extent that they are designed around the specific digital habits, needs, and social position of each target group, rather than assuming that a single training format will serve women, youth, and santri equally well.

These four themes are not isolated from one another but are interconnected in a sequential and mutually reinforcing manner, as summarized in Table 1: the personal branding of da'i opens channels of communication and establishes the initial trust needed for a community to engage; multi-stakeholder collaboration then supplies the resources and institutional legitimacy required to move beyond message delivery into structured programs; participatory content production serves as the vehicle through which the community becomes an active agent rather than a passive audience; and capacity-building programs tailored to specific target groups ensure that the resulting skills and religious understanding are sustained well after the community service program formally concludes. Viewed as a whole, this four-theme pattern suggests that effective community empowerment da'wah in the digital era is best understood not as a single technique but as a layered strategy in which communicative, institutional, participatory, and pedagogical dimensions are deliberately sequenced to produce a lasting empowerment outcome.

Discussion

The above findings confirm that a da'wah framework that combines rational, emotional, and practical dimensions (Asbi et al., 2025) is not only theoretically relevant but is also reflected in the community service practices examined. The rational dimension is evident in digital literacy programs that equip the community with technical skills; the emotional dimension is present through the da'i's personal branding, which builds rapport and trust; while the practical dimension is realized in content production and multi-stakeholder collaboration that yield tangible outcomes for the target community.

The results of this study also address the gap identified in the introduction, namely the limited number of studies that explicitly link digital da'wah strategies with community

empowerment practices through community service programs. The technical-communicative literature on digital da'wah (Aziz Mayardi Basoeky & Suryandari, 2023; Faridah et al., 2022; Fauzi, 2023; Ibnu Kasir & Awali, 2024) essentially addresses the question "how messages are conveyed," while the literature on participatory-transformative community empowerment (Iqbal & Asman, 2021; Purwatiningsih et al., 2024; Khotdriyah & Astuti, 2024) addresses the question "how communities are empowered." A synthesis of these two approaches reveals that they can, in fact, be integrated into a single program series: strategically managed da'wah messages can simultaneously serve as a gateway to digital skills empowerment programs, as exemplified by multimedia training for santri (Khotdriyah & Astuti, 2024).

The context of the "digital native" generation highlighted by Pabbajah (2024) and Rani (2023) reinforces the argument that empowerment-based da'wah strategies can no longer be generic but must be tailored to the characteristics of the target group—particularly the younger generation, whose patterns of religious information consumption rely heavily on digital media. Consequently, da'wah institutions and community service program administrators need to design structured, collaborative, and continuously supported programs—rather than merely offering short, ceremonial training sessions—so that the digital capabilities developed can truly be sustained and further developed by the target community after the program ends.

This study has limitations because it is a literature review that synthesizes secondary findings; therefore, it has not yet produced empirical field data on the effectiveness of digital da'wah empowerment programs. Further research based on case studies or program evaluations at specific service locations is needed to directly test the relationship between the four identified strategic themes and indicators of community empowerment success, such as improved digital skills, active participation, and enhanced social and religious well-being among the target groups.

CONCLUSION

A literature review of ten articles discussing digital da'wah and community empowerment from 2021 to 2025 shows that community empowerment strategies in the digital age are built around four interrelated themes: personal branding of da'i, multi-stakeholder collaboration, participatory content production, and capacity-building programs for target groups such as women, youth, and santri. These four themes realize a da'wah framework that integrates rational, emotional, and practical dimensions, ensuring that da'wah is no longer limited to verbal activities but becomes an empowerment process that has a concrete impact on the capacity and well-being of the target community. These findings address the article's objectives by identifying the most widely used digital da'wah strategies in community service programs and explaining their contribution to strengthening community capacity and well-being. In practical terms, da'wah institutions and community service program managers are advised to design structured, collaborative, and continuously supported digital empowerment programs, rather than brief, ceremonial training sessions. Given that this study is a literature review, future research should follow up with field studies or program evaluations to empirically test the relationship between these four strategic themes and direct indicators of community empowerment success.

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