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The Role of Digital Technology in Supporting Campus Dawah and Shaping the Steadfast Character of Students as Empowered, Characterful, and Beneficial Dawah Agents in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

Background: The rapid growth of digital technology in the modern era offers strategic opportunities alongside new challenges for da'wah activities within higher education environments. **Objective:** This study aims to analyze the utilization of digital technology in supporting campus da'wah and evaluate its contribution to shaping the steadfast character (istikamah) of students as empowered, characterful, and beneficial da'wah agents. **Method:** Employing a qualitative approach with a library research method, secondary data collection was conducted through literature searches across credible platforms such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and the Garuda portal. **Main Findings:** The primary results indicate that high internet penetration and the utilization of social media platforms creatively expand the reach of campus da'wah while demanding robust digital literacy to filter disinformation. Furthermore, students' active involvement in producing religious content proves effective in training personal consistency and serves as an independent medium for forging steadfast character. **Conclusion:** The conclusion of this study asserts that digital technology is not merely a communication tool, but rather a character-building medium that requires structured guidance to ensure Islamic values remain safeguarded in cyberspace. **Contribution:** The contribution of this research lies in enriching the discourse on integrating technology with character education while providing operational guidelines for campus da'wah institutions to build a resilient and moderate generation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary era exists within a fully digitalized environment where nearly every individual uses smart devices and connects to internet networks in daily activities (Putra & Isabella, 2026). In the realm of modern communication, social media has become the fastest and most effective means to disseminate various forms of information to a broad audience (Andzani & Irwansyah, 2023). This rapid technological transformation inherently opens up golden opportunities for Islamic propagation (*syiar*), particularly in optimizing the implementation of dawah conducted by students within higher education environments. However, amidst the heavy flow of digital information, social media dawah also faces challenges in the form of rampant content that contradicts Islamic values; thus, wise understanding and utilization are required to ensure that dawah runs effectively and responsibly (Ummah, 2023).

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Current students represent a generation that grows and develops rapidly in the digital era while possessing extremely high levels of media literacy (Rumata et al., 2021). They are thoroughly familiar with utilizing various social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and diverse digital media. This technical capability can ideally be directed productively to produce and disseminate Islamic educational content that enriches religious insights and encourages the creation of good deeds within the academic community. Nevertheless, realities on the ground indicate that the intensity of social media use among students is not yet fully accompanied by the awareness to utilize it as a medium for dawah, as the majority of their digital activities remain dominated by entertainment consumption and purely social interactions (Peni & Mundzir, 2024).

However, empirical facts show that not all students are capable of utilizing digital platforms for beneficial matters. Realities on the ground reveal that many students instead use social media exclusively for entertainment content consumption rather than utilizing it to strengthen religious values. This is precisely where the real problem lies, as Campus Dawah Institutions and various student Islamic organizations face massive challenges and shoulder the moral responsibility to fill digital spaces through positive, constructive, and Islamic content presentation (Azizah et al., 2025; Mustopa, 2026). Therefore, the discussion in this paper is directed toward examining the potential and challenges of Islamic dawah in the digital era, particularly through social media, as an effort to understand how Islamic values can be fully integrated into students' digital lives (Hadi, 2025; Rahmadhani et al., 2024).

A review of previous studies indicates that the phenomenon of digital dawah content consumption among students has actually been researched quite extensively by experts (Afifah & Monica, 2025; Kholid et al., 2026; Sari & Surawan, 2025). Various prior literature studies have widely reviewed social media effectiveness as a medium for religious communication, dawah message dissemination patterns, and the level of Islamic information acceptance by the younger generation. These studies provide a strong theoretical foundation regarding the importance of technological adaptation in modern dawah delivery media within higher education environments. However, such studies generally still focus on communication and technological aspects; consequently, the relationship between the intensity of exposure to Islamic content on social media and students' religiosity dimensions, including attitudes, practices, and moral understanding, has not been extensively explored in depth (Afifah & Monica, 2025).

Although studies on digital dawah are abundant, a significant research gap still exists within the existing literature. Research specifically connecting the utilization of digital technology with the formation of steadfast character (*istikamah*), namely the firmness and consistency of student attitudes in carrying out and championing values of goodness amidst the temptations and challenges of the digital era within the context of campus dawah, remains underexplored. This exact gap is what this research article attempts to fill.

The urgency and novelty of this research lie in the effort to integrate the realm of digital technology with the inner character formation of campus dawah initiators on a sustainable basis. To ensure that digital propagation delivery runs effectively and endures, students involved as dawah cadres are required to possess a robust steadfast character (*istikamah*). The novelty of this study emerges through offering the perspective that digital technology functions not only as a tool for delivering external messages, but also as a medium for shaping and testing the consistency of dawah cadres' character within higher education environments.

The significance of this research provides a fundamental contribution both theoretically and practically to the development of character education and campus dawah management. This research employs a literature study method considering the limited completion timeframe of approximately five days, thereby utilizing relevant and published scientific literature sources as the primary material in conducting conceptual analysis. The results of this analysis are expected to serve as a scientific reference and guide for academics and Islamic education practitioners.

The objectives of this research are: first, to describe how digital technology is utilized in campus dawah activities; second, to analyze the relationship between the implementation of digital dawah and the formation of students' steadfast character (*istikamah*) as dawah agents; and third, to provide practical and strategic recommendations for campus dawah institution managers in building an empowered, characterful, and beneficial generation in the digital era.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach utilizing a library research design. Library research is a research method focused on the collection, examination, evaluation, and synthesis of secondary literature without involving direct field data collection. This approach was chosen to allow for deep exploration, critical evaluation, and conceptual mapping of the developing academic discourse regarding digital dawah, Islamic educational technology, and

student character formation. This design provides a solid methodological framework to unravel theoretical thought processes and construct comprehensive scientific arguments.

2.2 Research Object and Scope

The object of this research focuses on conceptual scientific works and empirical research results that discuss the interrelation between digital media, Islamic pedagogical practices, and student character building strategies. Literature searches were conducted online by accessing trusted national and international academic databases and indexing portals, such as Google Scholar, the Science and Technology Index (SINTA), and the Garuda portal, alongside other reputable journal manuscripts. The literature search process focused on relevant publications up to 2026 to ensure that the analyzed data reflects recent developments in the fields of Islamic educational technology and digital communication.

2.3 Data Sources and Selection Criteria

The data utilized in this research entirely consist of secondary data. The data sources were categorized into primary literature, specifically empirical research articles from scholarly journals, and supporting literature encompassing academic textbooks, conference proceedings, and theoretical essays relevant to the research theme. To maintain academic validity and quality, source selection applied strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria required literature to explicitly discuss pedagogical strategies, technology integration in Islamic education, or character formation mechanisms. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria eliminated non-peer-reviewed popular writings, opinion articles without clear academic identities, and publications lacking strong theoretical frameworks.

2.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of content analysis and critical descriptive analysis techniques. The data analysis stages followed the flow of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the initial stage, all literature was read in depth to extract key concepts, main findings, and theoretical frameworks. Subsequently, data were organized into thematic matrices covering digital dawah trends, Islamic educational technology instruments, and their implications for character formation. In the final stage, critical synthesis was performed to connect concepts, identify theoretical gaps, and formulate coherent arguments.

2.6 Procedures

The execution of this library research was undertaken through five systematic stages, beginning with problem identification and focus formulation to determine topic boundaries, formulate research questions, and establish the direction of discussion regarding digital dawah and student character formation. In the second stage, the researchers conducted structured literature searches and collections across academic databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and the Garuda portal using specific and relevant keywords. The third stage involved screening and deep reading processes, where documents were selected based on strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, followed by critical reading and recording of important theoretical points from each source. Furthermore, in the fourth stage, the researchers executed thematic analysis and data synthesis to analyze interrelationships among the literature, map expert viewpoints, and synthesize findings into a coherent academic narrative unit. This series of activities concluded in the fifth stage with conclusion drawing and recommendation formulation, wherein the researchers formulated final conclusions based on synthesized data while constructing practical recommendations for future learning developments and subsequent research.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Based on an in-depth review of relevant literature, several key findings were identified regarding the relationship between digital technology utilization, campus dawah effectiveness, and the formation of students' steadfast character (*istikamah*). All of these conceptual findings were grouped into four main subthemes to provide a systematic overview.

3.1.1 Digital Technology Development and Its Potential for Dawah

Indonesia is recorded as one of the countries with the largest internet user populations in the world, where data indicates that over 200 million citizens are connected to the internet, with the majority consisting of productive-age youth and university students. This demographic condition opens up vast strategic opportunities for disseminating

religious messages digitally. The utilization of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter (now X) has transformed into a new public space for Muslims to share knowledge, advice, and inspiration. Various studies show that dawah content packaged creatively and relevantly to youth lifestyles possesses a far wider reach compared to conventional dawah methods. Nonetheless, this transformation of religious communication also presents distinct challenges in the form of the massive spread of misinformation, hoaxes, and invalid religious content in cyberspace, thereby requiring digital dawah practitioners to possess adequate digital literacy and religious understanding.

3.1.2 Campus Dawah in the Digital Era

Campus Dawah Institutions (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus or LDK) have long existed as forums for Muslim student movements and advocacy within higher education. The strategic role of LDK in instilling Islamic values is extremely crucial, especially within secular-leaning general universities. The presence of digital technology today has successfully expanded the reach and variety of dawah methods that LDK can explore. Dawah activities are no longer limited to physical spaces such as campus mosques or classrooms alone, but extend into the virtual realm through the production of dawah videos, Islamic podcasts, and motivational infographics. The phenomenon of religious content consumption among students reveals an interesting tendency where Generation Z prefers accessing religious information via digital platforms over attending offline study sessions, indicating that digital technology has shifted into a primary medium for fulfilling students' spiritual needs.

3.1.3 Steadfast Character (Istikamah) and Its Relation to Digital Dawah

Etymologically, *istikamah* means standing straight or being consistent in practicing goodness while remaining upon the path of truth despite facing various obstacles and temptations. This character serves as an essential pillar for every individual dedicated to dawah activities, including digital dawah initiators. The formation of Islamic morality within students does not occur instantly; rather, it requires a long process supported by a conducive environment and continuous positive habituation. Interestingly, students' active involvement in producing digital dawah can function as an instrument of character formation itself, because the necessity to keep learning, deepen knowledge, and maintain consistency in creative works indirectly forges students' souls to possess a robust steadfast character (*istikamah*).

3.1.4 Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Technology for Campus Dawah Agents

The utilization of digital technology offers various major opportunities for student dawah agents, encompassing high accessibility via personal devices, global audience reach within a short span, and the flexibility of creative content formats appealing to the younger generation (Khasanah, 2024). Nevertheless, the complexity of challenges in the digital space demands that students possess sharp information verification skills before disseminating religious content to the public. Internal challenges, such as the inconsistency of dawah account managers, are also frequently encountered when initial enthusiasm wanes over time. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy and proactive attitudes is strongly emphasized so that campus dawah activists do not merely react to the flow of information, but instead become intelligent agents of religious moderation on social media.

The following is a summary of the literature review findings presented in a table for ease of comprehensive reading:

Table 1. Summary of Main Findings on the Relationship Between Digital Technology, Campus Dawah, and Steadfast Character

Research Dimension	Main Finding Focus	Literature Implications and Contributions	Literature Sources
Digital Technology Potential	High internet penetration in Indonesia opens new digital public spaces for the massive and creative dissemination of dawah among youth.	Requires robust digital literacy to filter religious disinformation and hoaxes.	Wibowo (2019); Dhora et al. (2023); Nurziah & Mustopa (2025)
Campus Dawah Adaptation	Campus Dawah Institutions expand virtual dawah methods (videos, podcasts, infographics) to reach Generation Z preferences relying on digital media.	Digital media serves as the primary medium for fulfilling university students' religious intake.	Alam (2016); Barri et al. (2025)

Research Dimension	Main Finding Focus	Literature Implications and Contributions	Literature Sources
Steadfast Character Formation	The internalization process of morals requires a conducive environment; producing dawah content trains student consistency and depth of knowledge.	Involvement in digital dawah functions as an independent medium for shaping steadfast character.	Anugrah et al. (2022)
Opportunities and Challenges	Broad accessibility and reach are accompanied by challenges in information verification and maintaining content production consistency.	Campus dawah activists are required to be digitally savvy and proactive in safeguarding religious moderation on social media.	Khasanah (2024); Azisi et al. (2022)

Based on Table 1, this study maps the relationship between digital technology, campus dawah, and steadfast character into four mutually supporting dimensions of primary findings. First, regarding the digital technology potential dimension, high internet penetration in Indonesia opens new public spaces for the massive and creative spread of dawah among youth, which simultaneously demands strong digital literacy to filter religious disinformation and hoaxes. Second, regarding the campus dawah adaptation dimension, Campus Dawah Institutions have proven to expand various virtual dawah methods such as videos, podcasts, and infographics to accommodate Generation Z preferences who rely on digital media as their primary source of religious fulfillment in general universities. Third, regarding the steadfast character formation dimension, the moral internalization process requires a conducive environment, wherein student involvement in producing dawah content independently serves as a training ground to forge consistency and deepen knowledge. Fourth, regarding the opportunities and challenges dimension, broad accessibility is accompanied by the challenges of maintaining content consistency and information verification, thereby requiring campus dawah activists to possess digital intelligence and proactivity in guarding religious moderation on social media.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the preceding findings, the primary results of this study confirm that digital technology and campus dawah share an exceptionally close interconnection. Digital technology provides a powerful new medium for campus dawah to reach a wider audience, while campus dawah provides meaningful and valuable substance amidst a digital ecosystem frequently cluttered with trivial information. The interpretation of these findings indicates that the success of modern dawah no longer relies on conventional spaces, but rather on the capacity to utilize cyberspace productively.

A deeper analysis of internal mechanisms and driving factors reveals that the primary challenge lies in ensuring that student engagement in digital dawah genuinely shapes steadfast character (*istikamah*) rather than merely following transient trends. The mentoring role of campus dawah institutions becomes crucial in directing students' internal motivations so they do not become trapped solely in popularity (Gultom et al., 2022). Therefore, Campus Dawah Institutions need to design systematic mentoring programs that not only equip members with technical content creation skills, but also strengthen religious foundations and purify intentions (Mutmainah & Lazzavietamsi, 2026).

The effectiveness of digital dawah in enhancing students' digital-based religiosity is highly efficient in improving religious understanding when the presented material remains relevant to the daily realities of the audience (Iskandar et al., 2024). This affirms that theoretical alignment between digital communication methods and the substance of religious messages must be continuously maintained so the value internalization process proceeds optimally (Suaidi et al., 2025). Consequently, the implications of these results extend beyond the immediate context of campus institutions, suggesting that future dawah programs should be evaluated not merely by their reach or engagement metrics, but by their demonstrable contribution to sustained ethical conduct and religious commitment among students.

A comparison with previous studies examining the determinants of students' Islamic behavior (Aritonang & Is, 2025; Maharani et al., 2026; Wafir et al., 2026) demonstrates that social media dawah content, social environments, and religious literacy levels simultaneously exert a significant influence on Islamic behavior, with religiosity serving as a reinforcing variable. When compared to prior studies that viewed media partially, this research asserts that digital dawah does not stand alone; instead, it strongly intersects with the social ecosystem and everyday character formation. Such a perspective suggests that the limitations of this study, particularly its single-site focus and reliance

on self-reported data, restrict the generalizability of the findings, and future research should extend to multiple campuses and adopt longitudinal designs to capture how digital da'wah exposure shapes religious moderation over time.

This study fills an existing research gap by mapping the dual function of digital media, wherein campus dawah acts not merely to disseminate goodness, but also functions as a defensive bulwark protecting students from exposure to negative content that can damage faith and morality. A comprehensive understanding of cyberspace challenges is absolutely necessary for every campus dawah institution activist to prevent value distortion (Mukhlis & Cahyadi, 2026). The interpretation of these results must also acknowledge the limitations of the present study, particularly its reliance on a single campus context and self-reported data, which restrict the generalizability of the findings to other Islamic higher education institutions

Critical analysis and conceptual shifts reveal a paradigm shift from passive technology utilization toward active engagement rooted in theological awareness. Dawah activists are required to move beyond merely being media consumers and instead become critical producers of moral messages (Ghuni et al., 2025). This conceptual shift alters the orientation of digital dawah from a focus on view counts or virality toward the creation of sustainable substance for goodness. Such a shift also demands that campus dawah institutions evaluate their digital programs against long-term indicators of character formation, such as consistency of worship and ethical conduct over time, rather than against short-term engagement figures alone.

The research significance and alternative explanations point toward the operationalization of the concept of empowered, characterful, and beneficial dawah agents. Alternative explanations indicate that without adequate inner supervision and literacy, technology has the potential to degrade the very essence of dawah itself (Setyaningsih, 2023). Therefore, the significance of this model lies in its ability to translate ideal concepts into three operational pillars: being empowered in technological mastery, being characterful in the strength of faith, and being beneficial through the positive impact of content. Consequently, these three pillars are not isolated competencies but mutually reinforcing dimensions that together define the integrated profile of a contemporary campus dawah activist.

The overall synthesis of the discussion confirms that integrating digital technology with campus dawah is an inevitability in the modern era. Through targeted mentoring, strengthening digital literacy, and purifying intentions grounded in Islamic values, students can transform into resilient dawah agents. Consequently, the utilization of digital media not only expands the reach of Islamic propagation (*syiar*), but also serves as an effective instrument in forging the steadfastness (*istikamah*) of the younger generation amid the dynamics of the digital era.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of the concept of digital dawah within the perspective of Islamic education. These findings reinforce the argument that technology is not an enemy of dawah, but rather a partner that can be optimally utilized. Practically, this study implies the necessity for campus dawah institutions to design structured digital programs. Such programs must not merely teach technical content creation skills, but must also be accompanied by spiritual strengthening and an understanding of dawah ethics in the digital world. From a managerial perspective, the leaders of Islamic student organizations need to provide greater space and support for the development of digital dawah. This can take the form of training, the provision of equipment, or even cooperation with university administration.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes to enriching the discourse on the relationship between digital technology and character education within an Islamic context. This research can also serve as a reference for Campus Dawah Institution administrators in designing more modern and effective campus dawah programs in the digital era.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 *Research Limitataions*

This study possesses several limitations. First, the methodology employed is library research; consequently, no primary data was collected directly from students or Campus Dawah Institution activists. Second, the extremely limited completion timeframe of approximately five days restricted the breadth of the literature examined. Third,

this study is descriptive in nature and has not utilized statistical analysis to quantitatively measure relationships among variables.

5.2 *Recommendation for Future Risearch*

Future research is recommended to employ survey methods or direct interviews with students active in digital dawah to obtain richer and more contextual data. Future studies could also utilize quantitative approaches to statistically measure the extent to which digital dawah contributes to the formation of students' steadfast character (*istikamah*).

6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the comprehensive literature review and critical analysis conducted in this study, it can be concluded that digital technology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of campus dawah by transcending traditional physical boundaries, enabling student activists to reach a significantly broader audience across virtual public spaces. The high penetration of internet and social media usage among university generation youths provides an unprecedented opportunity to disseminate Islamic values dynamically, provided it is accompanied by robust digital literacy to critically filter religious disinformation, hoaxes, and content contrary to authentic Islamic principles. Furthermore, students' active involvement in producing and managing digital dawah content serves as an effective, independent medium for shaping and testing steadfast character (istikamah), where the iterative process of deepening religious knowledge and maintaining content consistency directly fosters personal discipline, moral resilience, and spiritual commitment under proper institutional mentoring.

Addressing the complexities of the digital era requires student dawah agents to evolve beyond passive media consumers into critical, knowledgeable, and morally grounded content producers who embody the profile of empowered, characterful, and beneficial agents of change. While digital platforms function merely as external communication tools, sustained intentional character formation remains the core soul required to safeguard Islamic values and promote religious moderation in cyberspace. Therefore, integrating digital technology with campus dawah through structured guidance, spiritual depth, and positive social impact is an essential step for educational institutions to forge a resilient younger generation amidst modern technological dynamics.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author declares that the entire research and writing process for this article was conducted independently. The author assumes full responsibility for all data associated with this research. No other individual contributed as a co-author or made any significant contribution to the content of this work.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

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