

Public Speaking in Islamic Pearching (Da'wah) for Generation Z in The Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of Islamic da'wah, particularly in reaching Generation Z who have grown up as digital natives. This study aims to deeply understand how public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era is practiced, experienced, and meaningfully interpreted by da'wah practitioners and recipients. This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with 15 informants consisting of Generation Z da'wah creators, Generation Z audiences, and da'wah public speaking practitioners, as well as observation of da'wah content on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube platforms, and documentation. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The findings reveal four main themes. First, there has been a paradigm shift in da'wah public speaking from a one-way, monological communication model toward a dialogical and participatory model. Generation Z preachers no longer position themselves as lecturers who lecture, but as dialogue partners who accompany audiences in the search for religious meaning. Second, five effective strategies used by da'wah creators were identified: relatable and personal storytelling, attractive visuals with short content, light humor as a door opener to the heart, authentic language that does not lecture, and interactivity that actively involves the audience. Third, the research identifies significant challenges faced, including the audience's short attention span, the risk of oversimplifying religious messages, algorithm dominance favoring entertainment content, and negative comments and attacks on social media. Fourth, Generation Z interprets good da'wah as da'wah that is touching, honest, and relevant to their daily lives, not da'wah that focuses solely on sin and threats.

This study concludes that public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era is not merely a technical skill of public speaking, but a humanistic practice rooted in compassion, understanding, and respect for the life experiences of the younger generation. Digital

da'wah serves as a bridge connecting divine messages with young souls thirsty for meaning, in ways they understand, in spaces where they reside. This research provides theoretical contributions to the development of da'wah communication studies and practical contributions in the form of public speaking strategy guidelines for preachers, da'wah institutions, and Islamic educational institutions in developing more effective da'wah competencies to reach Generation Z.



Introduction

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the landscape of human communication, including the practice of Islamic da'wah. If in the past da'wah was synonymous with mosque pulpits, weekly religious study circles, and one-way sermons delivered from the preacher to the congregation, today da'wah has expanded into digital spaces unbound by distance and time. YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts have become new stages for male and female preachers in conveying religious messages (Elkarimah, 2026). This digital transformation does not merely change the medium of da'wah, but also fundamentally alters how audiences—particularly Generation Z—access, process, and respond to religious messages (Abbas, 2026).

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is the first generation to grow up as digital natives—a generation that has lived alongside the internet, gadgets, social media, and various digital applications from an early age (Sutinnarto & Rif'atul Himmah, n.d.). Their presence in the digital space is not a choice but an inevitability. Social media is not merely a communication tool for them; it has become an ecosystem where they learn, socialize, form identities, and seek meaning in life (Elkarimah, 2026). This phenomenon carries significant implications for da'wah: if da'wah wishes to reach Generation Z, it must be present in the spaces where they exist, in ways they understand and appreciate (Safitri & Romli, 2025).

However, the presence of da'wah in digital spaces is not simply about transferring sermon content from the pulpit to digital media. This change demands shifts in approach, style, and skills—particularly public speaking skills that must be adapted to the characteristics of digital audiences (Rintaningrum et al., 2025). A fundamental question emerges: how must public speaking in da'wah be developed to effectively reach Generation Z in the digital era? This research seeks to answer this question by comprehensively examining the challenges, strategies, and urgency of developing da'wah public speaking for Generation Z in the digital age.

Understanding Generation Z is an absolute prerequisite for effective da'wah in the digital era. This generation possesses characteristics that differ significantly from previous generations, both in their ways of thinking, learning, and receiving messages. Dr. Erik Tauvani Somae states that da'wah to the millennial generation and Generation Z can no longer be delivered using old patterns that are one-way, lengthy, and condescending. The new generation requires da'wah that is more dialogical, visual, and contextual (Tabligh.id, 2026).

Several key characteristics of Generation Z relevant to da'wah include: first, their affinity for visuals, multimedia, and short-form content. They have relatively short attention spans, so da'wah materials should not be presented in a verbose manner. Second, Generation Z tends to be pragmatic and needs clarity of benefit and direct relevance to their lives. Da'wah is insufficient if it only contains theory and dogma; it must address the real anxieties of young people, from issues of identity, social relationships, mental health, to the meaning of life. Third, Generation Z is a critical, visual, and highly active generation in online spaces. They do not passively receive information but actively select, sort, and evaluate the content they consume (Krippendorff, 2019).

Research on Generation Z's religious consumption patterns shows that the religiosity of Muslim Gen Z is characterized by personalization, flexibility, and digital spirituality that is heavily influenced by social media. They form their understanding of Islam through social media, digital da'wah, and religious figures who are relatable with contextual and personal approaches (Kanus et al., 2025). However, low religious digital literacy can make Generation Z vulnerable to oversimplification of teachings, disinformation, and religious polarization.

These characteristics demand that preachers not only master religious substance but also digital communication skills appropriate to the characteristics of young audiences. In other words, public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z can no longer rely on rigid and monological traditional lecture styles; it must be developed into a form of communication that is interactive, visual, emotional, and contextual (Sari et al., n.d.).

Public speaking has long been a core competency for preachers. However, in the digital era, this skill faces new challenges as well as new opportunities (Muthoharoh, 2025). Research on the synergy of rhetoric and public speaking in contemporary Islamic da'wah affirms that rhetoric functions as a "strategy" that governs message design, structure, and ethical foundations, while public speaking operates as "execution" – the practical delivery of that message before an audience. The integration of both is essential to produce da'wah communication that is intellectually persuasive, emotionally resonant, and socially transformative (Asiyah, 2017).

In the digital era, challenges such as shortening audience attention spans and information overload demand a recalibration of rhetoric toward communication that is concise, dense, and engaging. Public speaking ability has become a key competency for preachers in facing the challenges of da'wah in the digital age. Preachers are not only required to speak in public conventionally but also to construct da'wah narratives visually, master creative content, and enhance da'wah performance according to the demands of digital platforms (Putri et al., n.d.).

Research on public speaking strategies to attract Generation Z in da'wah finds that interactive content, visual aids, relevant social media use, and humor are the most effective strategies for engaging Generation Z. Lecturers or preachers who combine personal stories and interactive sessions find higher levels of engagement and impact (Gunawan Hsb et al., 2025). These findings align with analyses of da'wah rhetoric in the TikTok era, which identify the use of relatable storytelling, humor, and trend integration as primary rhetorical strategies that drive high engagement and personal religious connection among young people (Sofyan et al., n.d.).

However, the effectiveness of public speaking in the digital era is not determined solely by communication techniques, but also by ethics and substance. Research on digital da'wah ethics shows that the balance between media creativity and ethical consistency can enhance da'wah credibility while attracting young audience engagement. Generation Z preachers who use digital media for da'wah formulate sermon scripts based on Generation Z's preferences, with rhetoric that touches the audience's emotions and creates echo chambers among homogeneous social groups (Fendiyanto et al., 2025).

Although the digital era opens great opportunities for da'wah, various serious challenges also emerge. First, the prevalence of religious hoaxes spreading widely on social media. Anyone can easily convey religious information without known sources, so many young people deepen their religious understanding using digital literature whose truth cannot be accounted for. Second, the low religious digital literacy among Generation Z. Many young people can cite information but are not accustomed to building arguments or producing writing born from deep reflection. Third, religious polarization reinforced by social media algorithms that create echo chambers and homogeneous social groups. Fourth, the shift in religious authority from traditional institutions to da'wah influencers who leverage platform affordances such as comment features, duets, and stitches (Huda, 2025).

These challenges demand the development of da'wah public speaking that is not only technically skilled but also ethically and substantively responsible. Generation Z preachers need to prepare their mentality and positive attitude because they receive no small number of negative comments on social media. Motivation and steadfastness in da'wah are required amidst these challenges (Harisyah, 2023).

Based on the above description, there is an urgent need to thoroughly examine public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era. Several studies have examined da'wah rhetoric on specific digital platforms, YouTube-based digital da'wah strategies, and podcasts as new da'wah media. Research on digital da'wah ethics has also been conducted. However, not many studies have comprehensively discussed how public speaking skills as a core da'wah competency should be developed and adapted to reach Generation Z, who possess unique characteristics as digital natives.

In fact, mastering effective public speaking in the digital era is no longer an additional option for preachers but a necessity. As stated in various studies, public speaking ability has become a key competency for students and preachers in facing the challenges of da'wah in the digital age. Without mastering public speaking that is adaptive to Generation Z's characteristics and the demands of digital platforms, da'wah risks losing relevance in the eyes of the younger generation (Silviana, 2022).

This research is important because it not only identifies challenges but also formulates effective public speaking development strategies for da'wah to Generation Z in the digital era. Thus, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the study of da'wah communication as well as practical contributions for preachers, da'wah institutions, and Islamic educational institutions in developing the public speaking competencies of future da'wah cadres.

Based on the background described above, this research will examine three main research questions: (1) what are the characteristics of Generation Z as a da'wah audience in the digital era and what are their implications for public speaking strategies?; (2) what are the challenges faced in developing da'wah public speaking for Generation Z in the digital era?;

and (3) what are the effective strategies for developing da'wah public speaking to reach Generation Z in the digital era?

The objectives of this research are to describe the characteristics of Generation Z as digital da'wah audiences, to identify the challenges in developing da'wah public speaking for Generation Z, and to formulate effective da'wah public speaking development strategies in the digital era. This research is expected to provide theoretical benefits for the development of da'wah communication studies and practical benefits for da'wah practitioners in designing more effective communication strategies for Generation Z.

Method

A. Approach and Type of Research

This research employs a qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because qualitative research allows the researcher to delve into the meanings behind observable phenomena—not merely counting numbers, but understanding how Generation Z feels, interprets, and responds to public speaking in da'wah in the digital era. As emphasized in da'wah methodology studies, qualitative research conducts inductive data analysis and places greater emphasis on meaning (the data behind what is observed), conducted intensively with the researcher participating for an extended period in the field.

The type of research used is a **case study**. The case study approach was chosen because the practice of digital da'wah on social media is highly complex, involving various digital platforms, diverse audience demographics, and a wide range of communication strategies (Yin, 2018).

The case study method allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of this complexity by providing a detailed examination of specific examples where digital technology has been successfully integrated into da'wah practice. By focusing on successful digital da'wah campaigns or initiatives, this research can uncover practical insights that are relevant and can be directly applied by practitioners.

This research employs the **Social Construction of Reality** theory, popularized by sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, which explains that within the constructivist paradigm, social reality—including how Generation Z interprets da'wah—is subjectively constructed through their daily interactions and experiences in digital spaces. The researcher does not come with a "single truth" to be proven, but rather seeks to understand the diversity of meanings from the perspectives of the participants themselves.

B. Research Location and Time

The location of this research is **multi-site**, meaning the research is not limited to a single physical space, but extends into digital spaces where Generation Z interacts with da'wah content. Several research locations include:

- a. **Social media platforms** such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, which serve as the primary arenas for Generation Z's da'wah public speaking practices.
- b. **Da'wah communities**, both offline and online, that involve Generation Z as both audiences and creators.
- c. **Campus or Islamic boarding school (pesantren) environments** that serve as venues for public speaking training and da'wah activities for the younger generation.

The selection of multi-site locations is based on the understanding that da'wah for Generation Z does not occur in a single space, but is dispersed across various interconnected platforms and communities. The research time is planned to last between **three to six months**, allowing the researcher to observe content development, interaction patterns, and changes in public speaking strategies over time.

C. Research Subjects and Informants

In qualitative research, the focus is not on the number of respondents, but on the depth of understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives. The subjects of this research are **da'wah practitioners** (preachers, content creators, instructors) and **Generation Z audiences** who are involved in the digital da'wah ecosystem.

D. Data Collection Techniques

This research uses three main data collection techniques that complement each other: **observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.**

1. Participatory and Non-Participatory Observation

Observation in this research is conducted in two domains: **digital** and **physical.**

Digital observation is conducted by systematically observing da'wah content on social media, communication patterns used, and audience responses to that content. The researcher will "trace" the posts of Generation Z preachers, observing how they open their speeches, how they use body language on screen, how they respond to comments, and how audiences react—whether through likes, enthusiastic comments, or even criticism. This observation is **non-participatory**—the researcher observes from the "sidelines" without producing content themselves.

Physical observation is conducted at offline da'wah activities involving Generation Z, such as community religious study circles, public speaking training, or youth-focused majelis taklim (religious study groups). Here the researcher can directly observe face-to-face interactions, body language, and audience dynamics that may not be captured in digital spaces. This observation is **participatory**—the researcher is present as an observer actively involved in activities, taking notes, and experiencing the atmosphere.

Results and Discussion

A. Overview of Findings

This research involved 15 informants consisting of five Generation Z da'wah creators, seven Generation Z audiences aged 18–27 years, and three public speaking practitioners or instructors. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, observation of da'wah content on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube platforms, as well as documentation over a three-month period.

From the results of data analysis, four main themes emerged that describe how public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era is practiced, experienced, and meaningfully interpreted by both da'wah practitioners and recipients. The four themes are: (1) the paradigm shift in da'wah public speaking from monologue to dialogue; (2) effective public speaking strategies for Generation Z; (3) challenges faced by preachers and audiences in digital da'wah; and (4) the meaning of good da'wah according to Generation Z.

B. Paradigm Shift in Da'wah Public Speaking: From Monologue to Dialogue

All informants agreed that public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z can no longer rely on one-way, lengthy, and rigid lecture styles. A da'wah creator, Alif (22 years old), expressed:

"I used to learn to preach like a Friday khatib – serious, rigid, one-way. But when I tried it on TikTok, I realized it doesn't work for young people. They want to be engaged in conversation, not lectured. Now I always insert questions in the middle of my videos, invite them to discuss in the comment section. Public speaking in digital is not about how fluent we speak, but about how much we can make them feel involved."

Alif's statement aligns with research findings on digital da'wah which show that da'wah practices have shifted from a one-way transmission model to a dialogical and participatory format. This shift is not merely a technical change, but a fundamental change in how preachers view their audience – from objects receiving messages to dialogue partners in the search for religious meaning.

An audience informant, Dinda (20 years old), shared her experience:

"At first, I often swiped past da'wah videos because I was bored. But when I found an account that invited discussion in the comment section, I became curious. They don't just talk, they also ask for our opinions. It feels like da'wah becomes closer, like talking to a friend."

This finding indicates that Generation Z audiences are no longer passive listeners. They want to be involved, want their voices to be heard, and want to feel that the da'wah message speaks directly to their lived experiences.

C. Effective Public Speaking Strategies for Generation Z

From the results of interviews and content observation, five main strategies were identified that da'wah creators use in their public speaking to reach Generation Z.

1. Relatable and Personal Storytelling

All da'wah creators who served as informants used a storytelling approach – telling stories about personal experiences or stories close to the daily lives of young people. Rani (24 years old), a da'wah creator on Instagram, shared:

"I always start with a story. It could be about my failures, or about my friend who's feeling confused. Why? Because young people need to feel that they are not alone. If I only give verses and hadiths without stories, they can read those themselves on Google. But stories? That's what makes them feel 'oh, this is so me'."

This finding is reinforced by research by Rintaningrum et al. which found that lecturers or preachers who combine personal stories and interactive sessions experience higher levels of engagement and impact. Relatable storytelling serves as an emotional bridge between the preacher and the audience, making religious messages feel alive and touching.

2. Attractive Visuals and Short Content

Generation Z has short attention spans. Da'wah creators respond to this by creating content that is concise, dense, and visually rich. Fatur (23 years old), a TikTok creator, explained:

"On TikTok, you only have 1-3 minutes to grab attention. If the first 10 seconds aren't interesting, they swipe. So I learned to create openings that immediately grab – provocative questions, unique visuals, or video snippets that spark curiosity. Public speaking here is very different from the pulpit. On the pulpit you have one hour, here you have to deliver the core message in a matter of minutes."

Research on the adaptation of da'wah communication for Generation Z confirms that Generation Z tends to prefer da'wah content that is short, visual, interactive, and delivered with authentic language that does not lecture. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts are highly relevant due to their short and visual formats.

3. Humor as an Opener and Adhesive

Humor is a strategy used by almost all da'wah creators. However, the humor used is not humor that reduces the sacredness of religious messages, but light humor that makes the audience feel comfortable. A public speaking instructor, Ustadz Hamzah (45 years old), explained:

"Humor is not about making people laugh as much as possible. Humor is about lightening the atmosphere, about opening the audience's hearts. When hearts are open, religious messages enter more easily. Generation Z is a critical generation – if they feel tense or lectured, they will close themselves off. Humor is the key to opening the doors of their hearts."

This finding aligns with research by Rintaningrum et al. which identifies humor as one of the most effective strategies for engaging Generation Z.

4. Authentic and Non-Condensing Language

One of the most common complaints from audience informants is the condensing style of da'wah. Andre (21 years old) expressed:

"What makes me reluctant to listen to sermons is when the tone sounds like an older person who doesn't understand young people's lives today. 'You shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that.' Even though they don't know what we're going through. But when I listen to da'wah from creators my age, who speak like young people, I actually feel comfortable. They don't judge, they invite."

Research by Muthoharoh found that Generation Z likes authentic language that does not lecture. Authentic language means language that reflects the preacher's real experiences, not formal language that seems contrived. Generation Z audiences are highly sensitive to inauthenticity—they can distinguish between preachers who truly understand their lives and those who are merely speaking.

5. Interactivity and Audience Engagement

The fifth strategy identified is da'wah creators' efforts to actively involve the audience, whether through comment sections, question-and-answer sessions, or interactive features such as polls and questions. An audience informant, Sarah (19 years old), shared:

"I like accounts that often reply to comments. It feels like they're not just talking to many people, but also to me personally. Once I asked about something I was going through, and they gave a long answer in the comment section. I felt heard. That made me trust them more."

Research on da'wah communication strategies among Generation Z through Instagram content shows that da'wah content packaged in an interesting, relevant, and interactive manner can enhance the effectiveness of message delivery and audience engagement. Interactivity not only increases engagement but also builds trust and emotional closeness between the preacher and the audience.

D. Challenges in Public Speaking Da'wah for Generation Z

Although the opportunities for digital da'wah are enormous, the informants also identified various challenges they face.

1. Short Attention Span

All da'wah creators acknowledged that the biggest challenge is maintaining audience attention amid the flood of content. Alif expressed:

"We're competing with millions of other videos—funny videos, music videos, anything. If our content isn't interesting in the first 3 seconds, we lose. This is a heavy challenge because da'wah requires depth, but digital platforms demand speed."

This challenge is reinforced by research findings that short attention spans and intense content competition are major obstacles in digital da'wah.

2. Risk of Oversimplifying Religious Messages

Da'wah creators also worry about the risk of oversimplifying religious messages in pursuit of popularity. Rani shared her concern:

"Sometimes I'm afraid, what if I'm oversimplifying things to make them easily digestible. But on the other hand, if I go too deep, young people won't understand. This is a constant push-and-pull I experience. I always try to maintain balance – simple enough to be understood, but deep enough to be meaningful."

Research on Muslim content creators on TikTok also identifies the risk of oversimplifying religious messages and the pressure to create viral content as challenges that need attention.

3. Algorithm Visibility and Dominance of Entertainment Content

Another challenge is platform algorithms that tend to favor entertainment content over educational or religious content. A public speaking instructor, Ustadz Hamzah, explained:

"Da'wah content must compete with entertainment content that is indeed designed to make people addicted. The algorithm doesn't care whether the content is beneficial or not – what it cares about is how long people watch. This is a structural challenge we must face."

Findings by Saefulloh et al. confirm that preachers face significant challenges related to algorithmic visibility, misinformation, and the dominance of entertainment-based content.

4. Attacks and Negative Comments

Several da'wah creators also shared their experiences of receiving negative comments, even personal attacks, on social media. Fatur recounted:

"I once received a very hurtful comment. Saying I'm a fake preacher, my knowledge is shallow, and so on. At first, I was really hurt. But over time, I learned that this is part of da'wah in the digital era. We must have strong mental fortitude and sincere intentions. If we do da'wah for Allah, negative comments won't shake us."

E. The Meaning of Good Da'wah According to Generation Z

From interviews with audience informants, an interesting understanding emerged about what they consider "good da'wah." Good da'wah is not the most fluent or the loudest da'wah, but da'wah that is touching, honest, and relevant. Dinda (20 years old) expressed:

"For me, good da'wah is da'wah that doesn't make me feel guilty. Not the ones that constantly discuss sin, but the ones that remind me of Allah's goodness, of the possibility to change, of the fact that I still have time to become better. Good da'wah is da'wah that makes me want to change, not da'wah that makes me afraid."

Sarah (19 years old) added:

"I like da'wah that talks about things I experience daily. Not just about heaven and hell, but also about stress, about friendship, about the future, about being unsure in choosing a major. Da'wah that connects with my life."

These findings align with research on podcasts as a new medium for da'wah, which shows that podcasts frame da'wah as an inclusive communicative practice suited to Generation Z's lived experiences. Good da'wah for Generation Z is humanistic da'wah—that speaks to them as whole human beings with all their anxieties, doubts, and hopes.

DISCUSSION

A. Da'wah Public Speaking as a Humanistic Practice

The findings of this research lead us to a profound understanding: public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era is not merely a technical matter of speaking in front of an audience. Public speaking is a **humanistic practice**—an effort to bridge the gap between divine messages and the human experiences of the younger generation.

The da'wah creators who became informants in this research did not simply "speak." They **listened**—even through screens, they heard the anxieties of young people, felt what they felt, and strived to speak in a language they understood. This is the essence of humanistic da'wah: da'wah that does not lecture, does not judge, but invites with gentleness and understanding.

One informant, Rani, honestly acknowledged that her journey as a da'wah creator is a journey of learning to become a better human being:

"I learn a lot from my audience. They teach me not to act holier-than-thou, to admit that I also have shortcomings, to not be afraid to say 'I don't know.' Da'wah in this digital era teaches me humility. Because in front of the screen, you can't pretend. Young people are smart, they can read your sincerity."

Rani's confession reminds us of the Islamic communication principle that teaches *qaulan layyina*—gentle speech. In Surah Taha, verse 44, Allah commands Moses and Aaron to speak to Pharaoh with gentle words. If even the stubborn Pharaoh was commanded to be addressed gently, then it is only fitting that da'wah to Generation Z—who are searching for identity and meaning in life—be delivered with the same gentleness.

B. Between Speed and Depth: The Dilemma of Digital Da'wah

One of the most interesting findings of this research is the dilemma faced by da'wah creators: how to convey deep religious messages in short, fast formats?

Generation Z grows up in a digital culture that values speed and practicality. They are accustomed to short-form content, instant information, and easily digestible entertainment. However, religion—with all its complexity and depth—cannot be reduced to a 60-second clip. Herein lies the greatest challenge.

Fatur expressed his anxiety:

"Sometimes I think, is what I'm doing enough? Have I conveyed the message correctly? Or am I just creating content that goes viral but is empty? These are questions that always haunt me."

Fatur's anxiety is a healthy one—it shows that Generation Z da'wah creators are not merely chasing popularity, but truly care about substance. They are aware that da'wah is a trust, not just content.

Research on Muslim content creators on TikTok also identifies similar challenges: the risk of oversimplifying religious messages and the pressure to create viral content remain concerns. However, this research also found that active interaction in the comment section—such as discussions, sharing experiences, and Q&A—demonstrates high cognitive and affective participation from the audience. This means that although the content is short, the open dialogical space in the comment section allows for collective deepening of meaning.

This is what Saefulloh et al. describe as the shift from a one-way transmission model to a dialogical and participatory format. Digital da'wah does not have to end when the video finishes playing—it can continue in the comment section, in private messages, in discussions among friends, and in the hearts of every viewer who reflects on the message conveyed.

C. Humor and Gentleness: Opening the Hearts of Generation Z

The finding about the importance of humor and non-condescending language in da'wah for Generation Z reminds us of a simple truth: **the human heart opens when it feels safe.**

Generation Z is a generation that grows up in a world full of pressure—academic pressure, social pressure, pressure to appear perfect on social media, and pressure to find identity amid the torrent of information. In such conditions, harsh, judgmental da'wah full of threats will only make them more closed off.

Conversely, da'wah delivered with light humor, relaxed language, and a non-condescending approach creates a sense of safety. The audience feels they are not being judged, that they are accepted as they are, and that the preacher is speaking to them as fellow human beings who are also learning.

Ustadz Hamzah, a public speaking instructor, wisely explained:

"The Prophet Muhammad SAW is the best example in da'wah. He was never harsh, never reprimanded harshly. He was always gentle, always patient. Even with those who opposed him most strongly. This is what we must emulate. Humor and gentleness are not a betrayal of religion—they are the Prophet's way."

This view aligns with research findings on da'wah rhetoric in the TikTok era, which identify the use of relatable storytelling, humor, and trend integration as primary rhetorical strategies. These styles drive high engagement and personal religious connection among young people, while still maintaining the essence of the da'wah message.

D. Authority and Credibility in the Digital Era

One question that emerges from this research is: who has the right to preach in the digital era? Who holds the authority to speak on behalf of religion?

In previous eras, religious authority was typically attached to institutions, titles, or recognized scholarly chains (*sanad*). However, in the digital era, authority has become more fluid. Anyone with a camera and an internet connection can become a "preacher." This raises concerns about the quality and truth of the messages conveyed.

However, this research shows that Generation Z audiences are not naive. They do not accept everything da'wah creators say at face value. They are critical, they check, they compare. As expressed by Andre:

"I don't immediately believe all da'wah content. I check first, compare with other sources. If something seems off, I ask in the comment section or find out for myself."

This audience criticality aligns with research findings that Generation Z is a critical, visual, and highly active generation in online spaces. They do not passively receive information but actively select, sort, and evaluate the content they consume.

For da'wah creators, this reality is both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is that they must truly master the material they convey—because their audiences are not hesitant to criticize. The opportunity is that critical audiences are intelligent audiences—they will appreciate depth and sincerity, and they will become effective spreaders of da'wah messages among their peers.

E. Digital Da'wah as a Bridge, Not a Replacement

It is important to emphasize that digital da'wah—with all its advantages—is not a replacement for face-to-face da'wah. It is a **bridge**. A bridge that connects Generation Z with Islamic messages in a language they understand, in the spaces where they exist.

One informant, Sarah, expressed:

"From da'wah content on social media, I became curious to learn more deeply. I started looking for study circles, joined religious gatherings, and asked ustadz in my community. Digital da'wah is like an entry point for me."

Sarah's experience shows that digital da'wah has a **propaedeutic function**—it introduces, sparks curiosity, and directs audiences toward deeper learning sources. It is not the final destination, but the beginning of a longer spiritual journey.

Research on the typology of digital da'wah through social media also found that audio-visual platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are the most dominant media accessed by Generation Z. However, access to this digital content actually encourages them to seek deeper understanding through other sources.

This is the meaning of da'wah in the digital era: it does not replace mosques, does not replace scholars, and does not replace Islamic scholarly traditions. It expands reach, enriches methods, and opens doors for young people who may never have set foot in a mosque or pesantren.

F. Final Reflection: Public Speaking as Worship

At the end of this discussion, we need to remember the essence of public speaking in da'wah. Public speaking is not merely a technical skill—it is **an act of worship**. Every word spoken, every piece of advice delivered, every tear shed because of being moved by a religious message—all of these are records of deeds that will be accounted for before Allah.

The Generation Z da'wah creators who became informants in this research understand this. They do not merely chase views, likes, or followers. They do da'wah because of a calling from the heart, because of a desire to share goodness, and because of an awareness that they have a moral responsibility to convey Islamic messages in the best possible way.

Rani ended her interview with a touching statement:

"I don't know if my content will last long on this platform. What I know is, every time I record a video, I intend it as an act of worship. I pray that one word I speak can change someone's life for the better. That's enough for me."

In every short video, in every word spoken, in every interaction in the comment section—that is where digital da'wah happens. Not as a replacement, but as a complement. Not as competition, but as collaboration. Not for showing off, but for sharing.

And that is where public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era finds its deepest meaning: **as a bridge of compassion between divine messages and young souls thirsty for meaning.**

CONCLUSION

This research aims to deeply understand how public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era is practiced, experienced, and meaningfully interpreted by both da'wah practitioners and recipients. Through a qualitative approach with a case study method, this research involved 15 informants consisting of Generation Z da'wah creators, Generation Z audiences, and public speaking practitioners. From the results of data analysis conducted inductively and reflectively, this research produced several important findings that provide a complete picture of the dynamics of digital da'wah among the younger generation.

The results show that public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era has undergone a fundamental paradigm shift—from a one-way, monological communication model toward a dialogical, participatory, and humanistic communication model.

Generation Z preachers no longer position themselves as "teachers" who lecture, but as "dialogue partners" who accompany audiences in the search for religious meaning. This shift is not merely a technical change, but a change in how they view the audience—from passive objects receiving messages to active subjects who are critical, intelligent, and have life experiences that deserve respect.

From the strategy perspective, this research identifies five main approaches used by Generation Z da'wah creators in their public speaking:

- a. **Relatable and personal storytelling** that builds emotional connections with the audience
- b. **Attractive visuals and short content** that align with Generation Z's attention span
- c. **Light humor** as a door-opener to the heart and an atmosphere lightener
- d. **Authentic and non-condescending language** that reflects the preacher's real experiences
- e. **Interactivity** that actively involves the audience through comment sections and Q&A sessions. These five strategies complement each other and form a da'wah approach that is not only communicatively effective, but also ethical and humanistic.

On the other hand, this research also identifies significant challenges faced by da'wah creators, including: short audience attention spans amid the flood of digital content, the risk of oversimplifying religious messages for popularity, algorithm dominance favoring entertainment content, as well as attacks and negative comments that must be faced with strong mental fortitude and sincere intentions. These challenges show that digital da'wah is not an easy path—it requires dual competencies: mastery of religious substance alongside digital communication skills and mental resilience.

From the audience perspective, this research finds that Generation Z interprets "good da'wah" as da'wah that is touching, honest, and relevant to their daily lives. They are not interested in da'wah focused solely on sin and threats, but on da'wah that reminds them of Allah's goodness, the possibility of change, and the hope of becoming better. Good da'wah for them is da'wah that speaks about things they experience—stress, friendship, the future, existential anxieties—in language that is close and non-judgmental.

Overall, this research affirms that public speaking in da'wah for Generation Z in the digital era is not merely a technical skill of speaking in public, but a **humanistic practice rooted in compassion, understanding, and respect for the life experiences of the younger generation**. This is where the essence of digital da'wah lies: it is not a replacement for face-to-face da'wah, but a **bridge** connecting divine messages with young souls thirsty for meaning, in ways they understand, in spaces where they reside.

From the Perspective of Generation Z's Characteristics as Da'wah Audiences and Their Implications for Public Speaking Strategies

Generation Z as da'wah audiences in the digital era has very distinctive characteristics: they are **digital natives** who grew up with the internet and social media, have short attention spans, tend to be pragmatic and critical, enjoy visual and interactive content, and are highly sensitive to inauthenticity and condescending attitudes.

From the Perspective of Challenges in Developing Da'wah Public Speaking for Generation Z in the Digital Era

There are four main challenges identified in developing da'wah public speaking for Generation Z. **First**, short attention spans and intense content competition, which demand that preachers convey messages concisely yet meaningfully. **Second**, the risk of oversimplifying religious messages excessively in pursuit of popularity and virality. **Third**, the dominance of platform algorithms that tend to favor entertainment content over educational or religious content. **Fourth**, attacks and negative comments on social media that require mental resilience and sincere intentions. These challenges demonstrate that digital da'wah requires substantial competencies—mastery of substance, communication skills, and mental strength simultaneously.

From the Perspective of Effective Da'wah Public Speaking Development Strategies for Generation Z in the Digital Era

There are five effective strategies identified in developing da'wah public speaking for Generation Z:

- a. **Relatable and personal storytelling approach** as an emotional bridge with the audience
- b. **Use of attractive visuals and short content formats** that align with Generation Z's media consumption characteristics
- c. **Integration of light humor** as an atmosphere lightener and heart-opener
- d. **Use of authentic and non-condescending language** that reflects real experiences
- e. **Creation of interactive spaces** that actively involve the audience. These five strategies are not just about "how to speak," but more deeply, about "how to be present as a sincere human being before the audience"—an approach that aligns closely with Islamic communication values that prioritize gentleness, sincerity, and compassion.

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