



STRENGTHENING THE INCLUSIVE ROLE OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL SPACE: PREACHING STRATEGIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY IN THE 5.0 ERA

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Abstract:

Digital religious communication increasingly occurs through social media platforms, requiring new strategies to foster inclusive engagement and critical participation. This study aims to examine how inclusive preaching practices, media literacy, and algorithm awareness contribute to strengthening the inclusive role of Muslim communities in digital spaces. The research employed a qualitative approach involving interviews with preachers and community members, observations of digital preaching interactions, and documentation of digital literacy activities. Data were analyzed through thematic interpretation to identify patterns of engagement and critical awareness. The findings show that inclusive dialogic preaching encourages participatory engagement through interactive discussions and direct responses to audience questions. Observations also reveal that media literacy practices such as verifying information sources, comparing scholarly opinions, and delaying content sharing until confirmation enhance critical awareness in online discussions. In addition, documentation of educational activities indicates that algorithm-awareness programs encourage users to diversify their information sources and reduce echo-chamber effects. This study contributes a conceptual integration of dialogic preaching, media literacy, and algorithm awareness as strategies for inclusive digital religious engagement and recommends strengthening community-based digital literacy initiatives.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how religious knowledge is produced, disseminated, and consumed in contemporary society. In the era of Society 5.0, where human-centered innovation integrates cyberspace and physical space, Muslim communities are increasingly active in digital environments as both content creators and audiences (Mohiuddin, 2023; Varanda, 2021; Yilmaz, 2025). This transformation is important because digital platforms not only amplify religious messages but also shape public perceptions of Islam. Studies from global institutions such as the Pew Research Center show that social media significantly influences religious understanding and identity formation. However, without inclusive and responsible engagement, digital preaching can also reinforce polarization (Asrori et al., 2025; Raya, 2024). Therefore, strengthening the inclusive role of Muslim communities in the digital space is essential to promote tolerance, counter misinformation, and ensure that religious discourse contributes positively to social cohesion.

Despite the opportunities offered by digital platforms, Muslim communities face significant challenges in maintaining inclusivity in online preaching practices. In many

cases, religious narratives circulating on social media are fragmented, emotionally charged, and sometimes exclusionary (Amin, 2025; Anam, 2025). The phenomenon of algorithm-driven echo chambers intensifies selective exposure, limiting constructive dialogue among diverse groups. Field observations reveal that some online sermons prioritize sensationalism over substance, attracting attention but weakening critical engagement. Furthermore, digital literacy levels among community members vary widely, making audiences vulnerable to misinformation, hate speech, and radical interpretations (Miller, 2023; Nikitina, 2021). This situation creates a gap between the ethical ideals of Islamic preaching, which emphasize compassion, wisdom, and moderation, and actual digital practices. Consequently, there is a pressing need to develop strategic preaching approaches supported by strong social media literacy within Muslim communities.

Previous studies have examined digital da'wah and online religious engagement from various perspectives. Azisi et al. (2023) and Jannah (2025) argued that digital preaching expands outreach but requires ethical guidance to prevent misinterpretation. Azizah et al. (2023), Huda (2024), and Umur et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of media literacy in strengthening religious moderation. Meanwhile, research by Tuala et al. (2024) and Zulkifli et al. (2023) highlighted how networked communication reshapes power relations in digital societies, and Badria et al. (2024), Rustandi (2023), and Gani et al. (2024) underscored the role of participatory culture in online communities. Although these scholars provide valuable insights, most studies focus either on technological aspects or on religious communication separately. Few integrate inclusive Islamic values, structured preaching strategies, and measurable dimensions of social media literacy within the conceptual framework of Society 5.0 (Badawi, 2024; Mukhlis et al., 2025; Nazilah et al., 2024). This gap indicates the need for a more integrative and community-based analytical model.

This study offers a state-of-the-art approach by positioning Muslim communities not merely as passive recipients of technology but as proactive agents shaping inclusive digital ecosystems. Unlike previous research that tends to emphasize risks or opportunities in isolation, this study synthesizes preaching strategies with social media literacy competencies within a single analytical framework (Chapman et al., 2020; Miller, 2023). The novelty lies in linking inclusive theological principles with digital engagement practices tailored to the Society 5.0 paradigm. By integrating ethical communication, algorithm awareness, critical content evaluation, and participatory dialogue, this research proposes a holistic model for strengthening. Addressing this issue is urgent because digital religious discourse increasingly influences youth identity, interfaith relations, and public opinion (Dwi et al., 2025; Manca et al., 2021). Without systematic intervention, digital spaces risk becoming arenas of division rather than platforms for constructive engagement.

Based on the background above, the research problem can be formulated as follows: How can Muslim communities strengthen their inclusive role in the digital space through effective preaching strategies and enhanced social media literacy in the Society 5.0 era? Specifically, this study seeks to identify the characteristics of inclusive digital preaching, analyze the level of social media literacy among community members, and examine the relationship between preaching strategies and inclusive online engagement. By articulating these questions, the research aims to move beyond descriptive

observations toward a structured explanation of how digital religious communication can foster moderation and social harmony in complex online environments.

This study argues that inclusive preaching strategies combined with comprehensive social media literacy can significantly enhance the constructive participation of Muslim communities in digital spaces. The proposed provisional answer is that when preaching emphasizes dialogic communication, contextual interpretation, and ethical digital behavior, and when community members possess critical evaluation skills and algorithm awareness, online engagement becomes more inclusive and more resilient to misinformation. The originality of this contribution lies in its integrative framework that bridges theology, communication studies, and digital literacy within the context of Society 5.0. By offering both conceptual synthesis and strategic recommendations, this research contributes to strengthening religious moderation and promoting a more harmonious digital public sphere.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach (Sarfo et al., 2021). The case study design was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of social phenomena in real-world contexts, particularly the inclusive role of Muslim communities in digital spaces. Qualitative inquiry is appropriate for understanding meanings, strategies, and lived experiences related to preaching practices and social media literacy in the era of Society 5.0. The approach allows researchers to capture complex interactions between religious values, digital behavior, and community dynamics. By focusing on interpretation rather than measurement, this design provides a rich and contextualized understanding of how inclusive preaching strategies are constructed and practiced in online environments.

The research was conducted in an urban Muslim community actively engaged in digital preaching activities through platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp groups. The location was selected because it represents a digitally connected Muslim community with diverse demographic backgrounds and active online religious engagement. The study involved 15 informants: 5 religious leaders (ustadz/da'i), 5 youth activists managing digital content, and 5 community members active on social media. Religious leaders were chosen for their role in designing preaching strategies, youth activists for their digital management expertise, and community members for their experiences as audiences. This variation ensured diverse perspectives and deepened analysis of inclusive engagement and media literacy practices.

Data were collected through multiple techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding (White et al., 2022). First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' perspectives on digital preaching strategies, inclusivity, and social media literacy competencies. Second, participant observation was conducted by examining online preaching content, comment interactions, and digital engagement patterns across community-managed accounts. Third, document analysis was used to review digital posts, video transcripts, captions, and community guidelines related to online preaching activities. These techniques enabled triangulation of data sources and allowed the researcher to compare verbal narratives with observable digital practices.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Halisoh et al., 2024). In the data condensation stage, interview

transcripts and digital documents were coded and categorized into themes, including inclusive communication, dialogic preaching, algorithm awareness, and critical media evaluation. Data reduction was conducted by selecting relevant information aligned with the research focus. The data were then organized in matrices and thematic charts (data display) to identify patterns and relationships between preaching strategies and literacy practices. Finally, data verification involved continuous comparison between findings and theoretical frameworks to ensure consistency and credibility.

To ensure data validity, this study employed several strategies to assess data trustworthiness. Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation (religious leaders, youth activists, and community members) and method triangulation (interviews, observation, documentation). Member checking was conducted by returning summarized findings to selected informants for confirmation. The provision of thick descriptions of the research context supported Transferability. Dependability was ensured through an audit trail documenting the research process, while confirmability was maintained by reflexive notes to minimize researcher bias. Through these procedures, the study ensured that its findings are trustworthy, transparent, and academically rigorous.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the main findings of the study on strengthening inclusive roles within Muslim digital communities. The results highlight three key aspects: inclusive dialogic preaching, media literacy development, and algorithm awareness. Each finding illustrates how digital religious engagement can foster participation, critical awareness, and balanced interaction within online environments in the Society 5.0 era.

Inclusive dialogic preaching strengthens engagement

Inclusive dialogic preaching in this study is operationally defined as a digital preaching practice that provides space for audience participation through open question–answer sessions, active responses to comments, the use of egalitarian language, and recognition of diverse perspectives. In practice, this approach is reflected in interactive discussions during live streaming sessions, opinion polling before the lecture begins, and the preacher mentioning audience members when responding to their questions. Engagement is identified through increased participation in comment sections, longer viewing durations, and the emergence of follow-up discussions after the preaching session ends. In this approach, the preacher no longer functions solely as the central authority delivering religious messages but also acts as a facilitator who guides discussions in an inclusive and balanced manner. Therefore, engagement is not only measured quantitatively but also qualitatively, as participants feel acknowledged and involved in interpreting religious teachings. This participatory communication environment strengthens the relationship between preachers and audiences in digital religious interactions.

One preacher explained, “I can no longer rely on one-way preaching. The audience wants to be heard, so I always open a question session and respond to their comments.” Another informant who manages digital preaching content stated, “When the preacher responds directly to our questions, followers become more active and are not afraid to ask.” These statements indicate that the transition from monologic to

dialogic communication increases audience participation in digital preaching spaces. The researcher interprets engagement as not emerging automatically but as being stimulated by communication strategies that create a sense of shared ownership in the discussion space. When audiences feel that they have direct access to the preacher, the interaction becomes more personal and participatory. As a result, the relationship between preacher and audience becomes more dynamic and responsive. This pattern suggests that dialogic preaching encourages audiences to contribute ideas and questions, thereby enhancing the vitality of digital religious engagement.

A young community member stated, "I feel more comfortable when I can discuss issues rather than just listening to a long lecture without any chance to ask questions." Another participant added, "Through discussion, I feel respected even when my opinion is different." These interview statements reveal that inclusive preaching provides a safe environment for audiences to express their perspectives. The researcher interprets that the feeling of being respected becomes a key factor in strengthening engagement. When discussion spaces are open, audiences are not merely consumers of religious content but active participants in the interpretative process. This indicates that engagement in digital preaching involves reciprocal communication rather than passive listening. Inclusive dialogic preaching, therefore, transforms the relationship between preacher and audience into a collaborative interaction. In this environment, religious messages are not only delivered but also collectively explored and understood through dialogue.

Observations of several live preaching sessions show that the number of audience comments significantly increases when the preacher opens an interactive discussion, compared with a purely lecture format. The comments are not limited to simple reactions or emojis but often include questions, reflections, and follow-up arguments. This observation indicates that dialogic communication encourages deeper engagement among participants. Restating the data, the findings demonstrate that providing opportunities for dialogue stimulates audience involvement both quantitatively and qualitatively. Participants not only respond more frequently but also contribute more meaningful comments. The pattern emerging from these observations suggests that inclusive communication styles create a participatory digital environment in which audiences feel invited to interact. Consequently, dialogic preaching strengthens engagement by transforming digital preaching spaces into collaborative discussion forums where religious understanding is developed collectively.

Media literacy improves critical awareness

Media literacy in this study refers to the ability of community members to evaluate, verify, and respond critically to religious content circulating on social media platforms before sharing it with others. Operationally, this literacy is reflected in behaviors such as checking the credibility of information sources, comparing different references, avoiding the spread of provocative or misleading content, and presenting arguments based on evidence in online discussions. Critical awareness is evident in patterns of digital interaction, where participants question the authenticity of information, seek contextual clarification, and respond to content with thoughtful reasoning rather than emotional reactions. Observations were conducted by examining comment sections, content-sharing patterns, and discussions within online community groups. These activities demonstrate that media literacy involves not only the technical ability to use digital platforms but also cognitive and ethical awareness when engaging with religious information online.

Table 2. Observation of Media literacy improves critical awareness

Observation	Indicator
Community members ask for sources of religious quotations in posts	Information verification
Participants compare different scholarly opinions in discussions	Comparative analysis
Administrators label misleading content and provide clarification	Misinformation identification
Members delay sharing content until its validity is confirmed	Responsible digital behavior

Table 1 indicates that media literacy practices manifest as observable behaviors in the community's digital interactions. The act of requesting sources for religious quotations demonstrates an effort to verify information before accepting it as valid. Discussions that compare different scholarly opinions illustrate analytical thinking and openness to multiple perspectives. Administrators' clarification of misleading content reflects collective awareness of the risks of misinformation, while the decision to delay sharing content until verification is complete demonstrates responsible digital conduct. Restating these findings, the observed behaviors show that community members increasingly approach religious content with caution and reflection rather than immediate acceptance. This shift suggests that media literacy contributes to the development of critical awareness among participants. Through these practices, digital discussions become more thoughtful and structured, as individuals prioritize accuracy and contextual understanding in their responses.

The observed data reveal a consistent pattern in which higher levels of media literacy correspond with more constructive and rational online discussions. Emotional reactions and impulsive sharing behaviors appear less dominant, while analytical and reflective responses become more visible in comment interactions. Participants tend to question information sources and seek clarification before forming conclusions. This pattern indicates that the community gradually develops a culture of responsible digital engagement. Discussions become more focused on exchanging ideas and evaluating information rather than simply reacting to viral content. Over time, these practices shape a digital environment in which critical awareness becomes a shared norm among members. The development of this collective awareness strengthens the quality of online discourse and encourages participants to engage with religious content more thoughtfully and responsibly.

Algorithm awareness reduces digital polarization

Algorithm awareness in this study refers to community members' understanding that social media platforms filter and recommend content based on users' preferences and interaction histories. Operationally, this awareness is reflected in community initiatives that educate members about algorithmic systems, echo chambers, and the potential consequences of consuming homogeneous information streams. In practice, this awareness is promoted through digital literacy workshops, educational presentations explaining how algorithms shape online experiences, and campaigns encouraging users to diversify the accounts they follow. Documentation of these activities includes photographs of workshops, screenshots of educational slides explaining filter bubbles, and posters promoting responsible digital consumption. These materials demonstrate that algorithm awareness is actively cultivated within the community as part of broader efforts to foster inclusive digital engagement and reduce the risk of ideological polarization in online religious discourse.

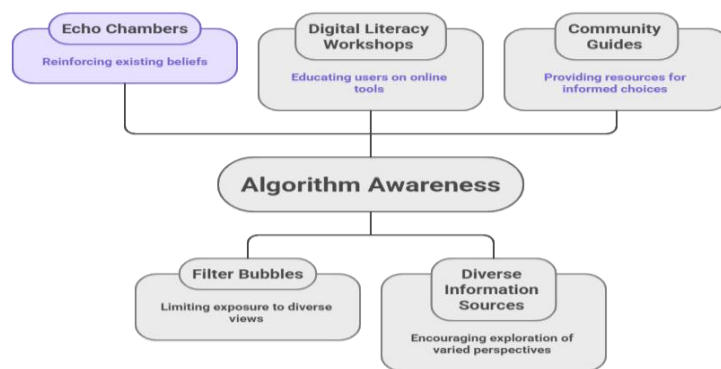


Figure 1. Enhancing Digital Understanding

Based on the available documentation, the observations in Figure 1 indicate that community members actively attended educational activities on algorithm awareness. Participants were seen taking notes during presentations and engaging in group discussions about their experiences encountering repetitive or biased content in their social media feeds. These observations suggest that learning about algorithmic systems encourages participants to reflect on how digital platforms shape their perspectives. The researcher interprets awareness of algorithmic filtering as motivating individuals to explore alternative information sources and question the uniformity of their online content exposure. The documentation also reveals that community campaigns explicitly encourage members to follow accounts with different viewpoints to broaden their understanding. This indicates that algorithm awareness initiatives are designed not only to inform but also to change digital consumption habits.

Restating the findings, the documentation confirms that algorithm-awareness programs have been implemented through structured educational activities in the community. These activities include workshops, presentations, and digital campaigns that explain how algorithms shape the information users encounter online. The evidence suggests that the community recognizes the potential dangers of algorithm-driven echo chambers and actively seeks to counteract them. Participants are encouraged to diversify their information sources and to engage with content from multiple perspectives. By emphasizing awareness of digital filtering mechanisms, the community attempts to create a more balanced and reflective online environment. These documented initiatives demonstrate that efforts to reduce digital polarization are not merely conceptual but have been translated into practical educational programs.

The overall pattern emerging from the documentation indicates that greater awareness of algorithmic systems leads to more open, diverse digital interactions among community members. Participants gradually move away from consuming homogeneous content and begin exploring information from various perspectives. This shift helps reduce the likelihood of ideological polarization within the digital community. The documented activities also show that discussions about algorithms stimulate critical reflection on digital habits and encourage members to reconsider their online engagement strategies. As these practices become more widespread, the community's digital environment becomes more inclusive and dialogic. Instead of reinforcing narrow viewpoints, the platform becomes a space for balanced discussion and mutual learning. Consequently, algorithm awareness plays a significant role in fostering a healthier and less polarized digital communication culture.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that inclusive dialogic preaching significantly strengthens audience engagement in digital religious spaces. The transition from monologic preaching to dialogic interaction allows audiences to participate actively in the interpretative process of religious messages. This finding aligns with communication perspectives emphasizing participatory interaction in digital religious engagement. Scholars such as Manuel Castells explain that digital communication environments enable more horizontal forms of interaction, in which authority figures must adapt to participatory cultures. Similarly, research by Yasmadi et al. (2024) and Siregar et al. (2020) suggests that online religious communication becomes more effective when religious leaders adopt interactive approaches rather than purely authoritative models. The present findings reinforce these perspectives by demonstrating that dialogic preaching creates a sense of inclusion and recognition among audiences. When participants feel acknowledged through responses to their questions and comments, they develop stronger emotional and cognitive engagement with religious content. (Fawaid et al., 2025; Jali, 2025; Sain, 2025). This suggests that participatory communication plays a critical role in shaping meaningful digital religious interactions.

The second finding indicates that media literacy within Muslim digital communities contributes to the development of critical awareness in responding to religious information online. Observations revealed that community members increasingly verify sources, compare scholarly opinions, and delay sharing information until it has been validated. These behaviors are consistent with the concept of critical media literacy discussed by scholars such as Dalimunthe et al. (2023), Aydemir (2022), and Nahar et al. (2022) who argues that digital participation requires the ability to evaluate information critically in networked environments. Similarly, studies on digital literacy highlight the importance of analytical thinking in navigating the vast flow of online information. The current study supports these theoretical insights by showing that community-based media literacy practices foster responsible digital engagement (Herlina, 2024; Muhsarrof et al., 2025; Widiyasari et al., 2024). However, the findings also extend previous discussions by demonstrating that media literacy in religious communities is not limited to technical competence but also includes ethical responsibility in the sharing of religious interpretations. This suggests that digital religious literacy must integrate both cognitive and moral dimensions in order to sustain constructive online discourse.

Another important finding of this research shows that algorithm awareness can reduce digital polarization within online religious communities. Participants who understood how social media algorithms shape content exposure were more willing to explore diverse perspectives and follow accounts with different viewpoints. This finding resonates with discussions about algorithmic influence in digital communication environments (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Hödl, 2024; Rodgers et al., 2023). Scholars such as Eli Pariser have argued that algorithmic filtering systems often create “filter bubbles,” where users are repeatedly exposed to similar perspectives that reinforce their existing beliefs. The present findings confirm this theoretical concern and demonstrate that educational interventions can mitigate its impact. By introducing algorithm-awareness programs through workshops and digital campaigns, the community encouraged members to diversify their information sources (Alarda et al., 2025; Kaur et al., 2024). This suggests

that awareness of algorithmic mechanisms can function as a preventive strategy against the formation of echo chambers and ideological polarization.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to the growing discourse on digital religion and participatory communication in the era of Society 5.0. The integration of dialogic preaching, media literacy, and algorithm awareness demonstrates that digital religious engagement cannot be understood solely as a process of message transmission. Instead, it involves a complex interaction between communication strategies, technological systems, and audience agency. The study extends theoretical discussions by proposing that inclusive digital preaching practices function as a bridge between religious authority and participatory digital culture. This perspective suggests that religious communication in digital environments requires adaptive strategies that combine traditional religious authority with interactive digital engagement. In this sense, the study contributes to theoretical developments in digital communication by emphasizing the role of inclusive participation and critical awareness in shaping sustainable online religious communities.

In terms of practical implications, the findings highlight several strategies that Muslim communities and digital preachers can implement to strengthen inclusive engagement in online religious spaces. First, religious communicators should adopt dialogic preaching models that prioritize interaction and audience participation during digital sermons or live sessions. Second, community organizations should promote media literacy programs that train members to critically evaluate religious information before sharing it online. Third, digital literacy initiatives should incorporate education on algorithms to help users understand how social media platforms influence the information they consume. By combining these strategies, Muslim communities can cultivate healthier digital ecosystems characterized by constructive dialogue, critical awareness, and reduced polarization. These practical insights are particularly relevant in the Society 5.0 era, where digital platforms increasingly shape religious communication and public discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that strengthening the inclusive role of Muslim communities in digital spaces depends on the integration of three interconnected elements: inclusive dialogic preaching, social media literacy, and algorithm awareness. The most important lesson is that dialogic preaching encourages participatory engagement by allowing audiences to actively contribute to religious discussions, while media literacy enables community members to critically verify information, evaluate diverse perspectives, and reduce the spread of misleading religious content; algorithm awareness further supports these practices by helping individuals understand how digital platforms shape information exposure and encouraging them to seek broader viewpoints. Scientifically, this research contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship on digital religion by connecting Islamic preaching studies, digital communication, and media literacy into a holistic conceptual framework that highlights the relationship between ethical communication, critical digital competencies, and inclusive religious engagement in the Society 5.0 era. However, this study has several limitations, including its focus on a single community context, the relatively limited number of informants, and its emphasis on observable interactions within particular digital platforms, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings and leave opportunities for future studies to conduct cross-community

comparisons, incorporate quantitative engagement measures, and examine the long-term impact of digital literacy programs on reducing polarization in online religious discourse.

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