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## A Digital Eco-Theological Da'wah Model for Raising Ecological Awareness Among Generation Z Toward Achieving the SDGs

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### Abstract

**Objective:** This study aims to formulate a model of digital eco-theological da'wah to enhance the ecological awareness of Generation Z in Palembang City toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly regarding environmental sustainability. This study also analyzes the construction of the narrative of tawhid, the concept of khalifah, and environmental responsibility in social media as a contemporary space for da'wah. **Theoretical framework:** This study is grounded in Islamic eco-theology, environmental communication theory, social learning theory, and the cultural da'wah paradigm to explain the process of internalizing theological values through digital interactions within an urban societal context. **Literature review:** Previous studies indicate the effectiveness of digital da'wah in enhancing the religiosity of the younger generation as well as the normative contributions of eco-theology to environmental ethics. However, the integration of eco-theology-based digital da'wah models with the formation of ecological awareness among Generation Z in the context of Indonesian cities remains limited. **Methods:** This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design in Palembang City. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with da'is, Muslim environmental activists, da'wah content creators, and Generation Z; observation of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube content; and Focus Group Discussions. Analysis was conducted using thematic reflection. **Results:** Findings indicate that digital eco-theological da'wah builds ecological awareness through narratives of ecological tawhid, the personalization of messages based on urban experiences, and digital role modeling, thereby fostering a transformation from cognitive awareness toward pro-environmental behavioral commitments aligned with the SDGs. **Implications:** The findings offer practical insights for developing digital da'wah strategies that foster environmental responsibility and support the SDGs among Muslim youth. **Novelty:** This study proposes a contextual digital eco-theological da'wah model that integrates Islamic environmental values, digital communication, and ecological awareness among Generation Z.

**Keywords:** digital da'wah, ecological awareness, ecotheology, generation z, sdgs.

### INTRODUCTION

The global environmental crisis over the past decade has increasingly demonstrated its intensity and complexity [1]. The *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* report emphasizes that issues such as climate change (SDG 13), water pollution (SDG 6), degradation of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15), and urban waste management (SDG 11 and SDG 12) are major challenges to global sustainability. The phenomena of climate change, the degradation of water and air quality, deforestation, and the increase in urban waste production are no longer understood merely as ecological issues, but also as ethical and

cultural issues [2]. The environmental crisis also reflects a crisis in the development paradigm that is not yet fully aligned with the principles of sustainability. Various international reports affirm that the root of the environmental crisis is closely linked to an anthropocentric paradigm that places humans at the center of unlimited exploitation of nature [3]. In this context, religion holds a strategic position as a source of values that shape human perspectives and behaviors toward the environment. Islam, as a religion with a comprehensive system of teachings, offers relevant theological principles to address the ecological crisis, particularly through the concepts of *tawhid*, *khalifah*, and the trust (*amanah*) to maintain balance (*mīzān*) on Earth [4]. These values have a strong correspondence with the principles of sustainability in the SDGs, which emphasize a balance between environmental, social, and spiritual aspects.

Islamic eco-theology has emerged as an intellectual response to the need to reinterpret theological teachings in the face of environmental challenges. This perspective places the relationship between humanity and nature within the framework of a cosmic unity rooted in the oneness of God [5],[6]. Nature is understood not merely as an object of exploitation, but as part of the signs (*āyāt*) of Divine majesty that must be preserved and respected. Thus, environmental ethics in Islam is not only moral in nature, but also spiritual. Ecological awareness becomes part of the expression of faith [7]. In the context of the SDGs, this eco-theological approach has the potential to serve as an ethical spiritual foundation for driving behavioral change toward a sustainable lifestyle. This approach opens up space for Islamic da'wah to extend beyond issues of ritual and personal morality to address broader socio-ecological dimensions.

At the same time, the landscape of Islamic preaching is undergoing a significant transformation alongside the development of digital technology. Social media has become a new public space enabling the rapid, widespread, and interactive dissemination of religious messages [8],[9]. Digital preaching presents a different communication pattern compared to conventional models. Interactivity, visuality, and platform algorithms shape new dynamics in the production and consumption of religious messages [10]. Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is the generation most exposed to digital technology from an early age [11]. Their characteristics being tech-adaptive, responsive to social issues, and critical of formal authority demand a dialogic and contextual approach to da'wah [12]. Within the framework of the SDGs, Generation Z is positioned as key agents of change in driving the transformation toward a sustainable society.

In the Indonesian context, the younger generation plays a crucial role in social dynamics and sustainable development [13]. As the country with the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia holds significant potential for integrating religious values with the global SDG agenda; however, various ecological issues remain serious challenges, particularly in urban areas [14]. The city of Palembang, as one of the urban centers in South Sumatra, faces complex environmental problems, including waste management, river pollution, and the reduction of green open spaces. These conditions highlight a gap between normative commitments to the SDGs and socio-ecological practices at the local level. This situation demands the active involvement of the community, especially the younger generation, in fostering awareness and sustainable ecological actions.

Several studies have shown that digital da'wah is effective in reaching the younger generation and shaping religious opinions in virtual spaces. These studies highlight the role of da'wah content creators in building emotional connections with their audiences, the use of popular language, and the utilization of interactive social media features [15]. Research on Islamic eco-theology emphasizes the importance of internalizing the values of *tawhid* and ecological responsibility in shaping environmental ethics [16]. There is a tendency for these two fields of study, digital da'wah and eco-theology, to remain separate [17]. Research on digital da'wah generally focuses on communication strategies and media effectiveness, while eco-theology studies emphasize normative and conceptual aspects.

However, from an SDGs perspective, the integration of values, media, and social action is a key prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

This gap serves as the starting point for this research. To date, studies that integrally formulate an eco-theology-based digital da'wah model to foster ecological awareness among the younger generation remain relatively limited, particularly within the context of urban Indonesia. Furthermore, few studies have explicitly linked eco-theological da'wah to the SDGs framework as a global orientation for sustainable development. Few studies have sought to explain how theological narratives regarding tawhid, khalifah, and environmental responsibility are constructed within digital content, nor how this process systematically influences the formation of ecological awareness among Generation Z. Understanding the process of consciousness transformation from knowledge and attitudes to behavioral commitment is crucial for formulating more effective and sustainable da'wah strategies.

Theoretically, the integration of Islamic eco-theology and digital communication theory enables the formulation of a more comprehensive da'wah approach. Eco-theology provides a normative foundation and values, while communication theory helps explain the mechanisms of message delivery and the formation of audience perceptions [18]. In reinforcing this perspective, the SDGs serve as a global framework that provides direction, indicators, and measurable sustainability guidelines. In the context of the digital generation, the process of internalizing values does not occur solely through one-way lectures, but through interaction, visualization, and active participation on social media [19]. Therefore, a da'wah model is needed that does not merely convey ecological messages but also fosters emotional engagement and practical commitment.

This study views the city of Palembang as providing a relevant empirical context for examining these dynamics. As a city with a long history of Islamic civilization that also faces urban ecological challenges, Palembang serves as a representative setting for examining how digital eco-theological outreach can function in fostering ecological awareness among the younger generation. The focus on Generation Z is also based on the consideration that this group consists of active social media users and potential actors in community-based environmental movements. In this context, the study also positions the younger generation as strategic agents in achieving local-level SDG targets.

Based on the above, this article aims to formulate a model of digital eco-theological da'wah in shaping the ecological awareness of Generation Z in the city of Palembang. This research is grounded in the assumption that the systematic integration of Islamic theological values and digital communication strategies can yield a deeper and more sustainable transformation of consciousness. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of three main domains, namely: (1) Islamic eco-theology as a normative basis; (2) digital communication as a medium of transformation; and (3) the SDGs as a global framework for sustainable development. This study not only offers a conceptual model but also empirically explains the mechanisms of ecological consciousness transformation within the context of urban Indonesia. Thus, this study is expected to broaden the horizons of contemporary da'wah studies while contributing to the strengthening of religion-based environmental ethics in the digital public sphere.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Developments in the study of da'wah over the past two decades have shown a significant shift in tandem with the transformation of the digital public sphere. Social media is no longer merely a means of distributing information, but has become an arena for the formation of authority, identity, and religious discourse [20]. Recent studies underscore that digital da'wah is capable of reaching a wider audience, particularly the younger generation, through visual, concise, and interactive communication formats. Religious authority in this context does not rely solely on institutional legitimacy but is also built through personal credibility, message consistency, and the ability to foster emotional connection with

followers [21]. Generation Z, as digital natives, tends to seek religious references from social media, making adaptive da'wah strategies tailored to platform characteristics increasingly crucial. From an SDGs perspective, this transformation of digital da'wah holds strategic relevance as a medium for public education (SDG 4: Quality Education) as well as a tool for strengthening value-based social awareness (SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Nevertheless, most studies on digital da'wah still focus on the aspects of communication effectiveness and content popularity, without delving deeply into specific thematic substance, including environmental issues [22].

On the other hand, the discourse on Islamic eco-theology has emerged as a response to the global ecological crisis, which demands a reinterpretation of religious teachings within a framework of sustainability. Ecotheology asserts that the relationship between humans and nature in Islam is grounded in the principle of tawhid, which views all creation as a unified whole within Divine will [23]. The concept of khalifah positions humans as stewards entrusted to manage the earth justly and responsibly, while the principles of balance (*mīzān*) and the prohibition against causing harm (*fasād*) form the normative foundation of environmental ethics [24]. These values have a direct connection to the goals of the SDGs, particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), which emphasize the importance of ecological sustainability grounded in collective responsibility. Several studies indicate that these theological values hold significant potential for fostering ecological awareness rooted in spirituality. However, the literature on eco-theology tends to be conceptual and normative, with a focus on theological arguments, and relatively few works connect these concepts to the dynamics of digital communication and behavioral changes among the younger generation.

Meanwhile, studies on Generation Z's ecological awareness show that this group exhibits a fairly high level of concern regarding sustainability, climate change, and eco-friendly lifestyles [25]. This phenomenon aligns with the SDGs agenda, which positions young people as key actors in driving social transformation toward sustainability (*cross-cutting goals*). However, there is a gap between cognitive awareness and the consistent implementation of eco-friendly behaviors. Factors such as media, community, and moral narratives play a crucial role in bridging this gap. In the context of Muslim society, integrating ecological messages with theological legitimacy has the potential to strengthen the internalization of values because environmental issues are no longer understood merely as a social responsibility, but as part of the consequences of faith [26].

Although there are several studies discussing digital da'wah and research highlighting Islamic eco-theology, the integration of both within a systematic conceptual model remains limited. Digital da'wah studies generally focus on media and strategies, while eco-theology studies center on normative substance. Furthermore, research explicitly linking this integration to the SDGs framework as a global orientation for sustainable development is also very limited. There is a scarcity of research explaining how eco-theological narratives are constructed within digital content, how they are distributed through social media's algorithmic mechanisms, and how these processes gradually influence the formation of Generation Z's ecological consciousness from knowledge and attitudes to a commitment to action. It is this gap that creates an opportunity for formulating a model of digital eco-theological da'wah that is not only normative but also communicative and contextual.

Within the framework of Islam and the SDGs, an integrative approach is needed that can connect three main dimensions: theological values (Islam), communication mediums (digital), and global sustainability orientation (SDGs). This integration is crucial because achieving the SDGs depends not only on structural policies but also on the transformation of societal values and behaviors. Dakwah, as a cultural instrument, has great potential to bridge the gap between the global commitment to the SDGs and the local practices of Muslim communities.

In the context of urban Indonesia, particularly the city of Palembang, which faces unique urban ecological challenges, the need for a model of da'wah that is responsive to environmental issues has become increasingly relevant. This city exemplifies the challenges of implementing the SDGs at the local level, particularly regarding urban environmental management (SDG 11) and ecosystem sustainability (SDG 13 and SDG 15). Thus, this study positions itself at the intersection of digital da'wah studies, Islamic eco-theology, and the cultivation of ecological awareness among the younger generation. This literature review indicates a conceptual need to integrate theological values with digital communication strategies within a constructive and practical framework, thereby making a tangible contribution to the development of contemporary da'wah studies grounded in environmental sustainability issues.

Building on this literature review, this study offers an innovative contribution in the form of a digital eco-theological da'wah model explicitly oriented toward achieving the SDGs not merely as a normative framework but also as a practical guide for fostering ecological awareness among the younger generation. Thus, this study not only fills a gap in the literature but also strengthens the relevance of da'wah studies in addressing global sustainability challenges.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design [27]. This approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the process of constructing and internalizing eco-theological values in digital da'wah practices, as well as their impact on the formation of ecological awareness among Generation Z. The case study allows for a comprehensive contextual exploration of the phenomenon of digital eco-theological da'wah in Palembang City, South Sumatra, Indonesia, as a social space with distinct urban characteristics and religious dynamics. This approach is relevant for examining the relationship between local da'wah practices and the global agenda of *the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, particularly in the context of environmental sustainability.

The research subjects consist of three main groups: (1) da'i and da'wah content creators who actively produce environmental-themed content on social media; (2) Muslim activists or communities engaged in environmental advocacy; and (3) Generation Z as the primary audience for digital da'wah. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, taking into account their active involvement in both the production and consumption of digital da'wah content focused on environmental issues. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of *data saturation*, namely, when the information obtained has shown recurring and consistent patterns [28]. The selection of these groups was also based on their relevance to key actors in achieving the SDGs, namely, discourse producers (preachers/creators), social agents (communities), and the next generation (Generation Z) as subjects of sustainable transformation.

Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, digital observation, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) [29]. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach to explore informants' understanding of the construction of eco-theological messages, digital communication strategies, and their experiences in fostering or receiving ecological awareness. Digital observation was conducted by tracking and documenting da'wah content on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, including analysis of narratives, visualizations, audience interactions, and user responses. Meanwhile, FGDs were conducted to gain a collective understanding of Generation Z's perceptions regarding the effectiveness of eco-theological da'wah messages in shaping environmental attitudes and behaviors. In the context of the SDGs, this technique enables the identification of correlations between exposure to digital messages and dimensions of ecological awareness that support sustainability goals (e.g., consumption behavior, environmental concern, and social participation).

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process involved the stages of data reduction, categorization, coding, and reflective conclusion-drawing [30]. The analysis focused on identifying patterns in the construction of eco-theological narratives, digital communication strategies, and the dynamics of ecological consciousness transformation. The analysis also aimed to map the relationship between empirical findings and relevant SDG indicators, such as awareness of climate change (SDG 13), sustainable consumption behavior (SDG 12), and community participation in environmental issues (SDG 11). The research results are not only descriptive-conceptual but also oriented toward the framework of sustainable development. [31],[32].

Ethically, this study upholds the principles of confidentiality and participant consent. Each informant was provided with an explanation of the research objectives and voluntarily expressed their willingness to participate. This ethical approach aligns with the principles of inclusivity and participation in the SDGs (leave no one behind), which emphasize the importance of fair and responsible engagement of research subjects.

Overall, the methodological design of this study aims not only to produce a digital eco-theological da'wah model based on empirical findings but also to ensure that the model is relevant to the global SDGs framework as a guide for socio-ecological transformation. Thus, this methodology reinforces the study's position as an integrative examination of Islam, digital communication, and sustainable development.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Construction of Ecological Tawhid Narratives in Digital Da'wah

The research findings indicate that the effectiveness of environmental-themed da'wah messages in the digital space is significantly influenced by the construction of contextual theological narratives that resonate with the religious experiences of the audience. Based on observations of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube content produced by da'i and da'wah creators in Palembang, a consistent pattern was found in the use of the concepts of tauhid, *khalifah*, *fasād*, and *amanah* as the foundation of ecological arguments. These four concepts do not appear in isolation but form a mutually reinforcing theological structure in framing environmental issues as an integral part of religious responsibility.

Empirically, the distribution of themes indicates that narratives of tauhid and *khalifah* have a high frequency of occurrence and serve as the primary foundation in message construction, while *fasād* functions as normative legitimization for social criticism, and *amanah* appears as a reinforcement of a profound ethical-spiritual dimension.

**Table 1. Distribution of Ecotheological Themes in Digital Da'wah Content**

Ecotheological Narrative Themes	Frequency of Occurrence	Dominant Form of Presentation	Relevance to the SDGs
Tawhid and the Unity of Creation	High	Scriptural quotations and visual reflections	SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land)
The Caliph and Responsibility	High	Short narrative video	SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption)
Prohibition of <i>Fasād</i>	Medium	Infographics and moral appeals	SDG 16 (Ethical awareness & social responsibility)
Trust and Spiritual Responsibility	High	Storytelling and reflection	Strengthening sustainability ethics (cross-cutting SDGs)

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Concrete Environmental Action	High	Participatory documentation	SDG 11 (Sustainable Communities), SDG 13
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**Source:** *Results of social media content analysis (Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube) produced by da'i and da'wah creators in Palembang City, research observation period (processed by the researcher, 2025).*

The narrative of tawhid is constructed as a cosmic awareness of *the unity of creation*. Environmental degradation is understood not merely as a technical issue of governance, but as a form of disruption to divine harmony. In the analyzed content, verses regarding creation and the balance of nature are interwoven with visuals of the Musi River, peatland fires, and air pollution issues in Palembang. This contextualization demonstrates that tauhid is reinterpreted as an ecological consciousness that binds the relationship between humans and nature within a single spiritual system of meaning. From an SDGs perspective, this narrative construction indicates that the value of tauhid serves as an ontological foundation for achieving SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), as it positions the balance of nature as part of a religious duty, not merely an ecological obligation.

This finding affirms that Islamic eco-theology is not merely a normative doctrinal discourse, but a practical framework capable of transforming ecological consciousness and behavior when operationalized through appropriate da'wah media. Tawhid, khalifah, and amanah function as three theological pillars that form the ethical and motivational foundation for ecological action rooted in spiritual conviction, not merely extrinsic normative compliance [33]. Thus, the separation between theological consciousness and ecological responsibility can no longer be sustained within a holistic Islamic framework.

The concept of khalifah in this study has undergone a significant expansion of meaning. Whereas it was previously understood primarily in the context of socio-political leadership, in eco-theological digital da'wah, it is interpreted as a cosmological mandate that encompasses concrete responsibilities toward the preservation of ecosystems. Humans are positioned not as exploitative rulers, but as stewards entrusted with the duty to maintain the balance and sustainability of nature for future generations [34]. This expanded meaning has far-reaching implications for the development of curricula and da'wah strategies that are more responsive to contemporary ecological crises. This interpretation aligns with SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), in which humans are positioned as agents responsible for managing resources sustainably.

Meanwhile, the principle of amanah emerges as a conceptual framework possessing strong theological power. In the narrative of digital da'wah, every instance of environmental damage is positioned as a form of betrayal of Allah's trust in humanity as stewards of the earth [35]. This approach transforms the relationship between humanity and nature from a utilitarian one into an ethical-spiritual one. Analytically, this "amanah" framing contributes to strengthening the moral dimension within the SDGs, particularly in fostering a sustainability ethic grounded in religious values, an aspect largely overlooked in the technocratic approach of the SDGs.

The effectiveness of this narrative depends heavily on the preacher's ability to translate abstract theological principles into concrete ecological experiences at the local level. In the context of Palembang, issues such as the Musi River, peatland fires, and air pollution serve as entry points for contextualizing the concepts of tawhid and khalifah. This approach aligns with cultural da'wah, which emphasizes the importance of local context in conveying religious messages [36]. Local contextualization is not merely a rhetorical strategy but a form of operationalizing theology to ensure it remains relevant and communicative. From an SDGs perspective, this contextual approach highlights the importance of localizing the global sustainability agenda (localizing SDGs), where universal values are translated into the specific socio-ecological realities of a community.

From the perspective of social change theory, these findings also reveal a synergistic relationship between Islamic eco-theology and the dynamics of value transformation among young Muslims. Religious values have proven capable of serving as a driver of social change when framed within narratives that resonate with collective identity [37]. In this context, religion does not act as a barrier to ecological modernity but rather as a catalyst for behavioral change toward a more sustainable lifestyle. This reinforces the argument that cultural and spiritual dimensions play a significant role in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, which have so far tended to be dominated by technocratic approaches and structural policies.

Another key finding is the identification of the integration between ritual worship and ecological actions within the studied da'wah practices. Worship is no longer understood merely as a vertical ritual but encompasses horizontal actions that impact the social and natural environment. Documentation of river cleanup initiatives, plastic waste reduction efforts, and campaigns promoting an eco-friendly lifestyle are positioned as concrete manifestations of worship in a broader sense. Thus, digital eco-theological da'wah presents a comprehensive understanding of worship as the realization of God's trust on Earth [38]. This integration has direct relevance to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), as it promotes ecological behavioral change rooted in religious values.

Compared to previous research on digital da'wah, which has largely emphasized content popularity and algorithmic strategies, this study demonstrates that theological substance remains the primary determinant of a message's effectiveness when presented in an adaptive manner. Meanwhile, eco-theological studies, which have traditionally been dominated by normative literature, are finding practical application within the realm of social media. This study brings together these two domains: theological doctrine and digital communication strategies. Furthermore, this integration is expanded by incorporating the SDGs framework as a global orientation, resulting in a da'wah approach that is not only communicative but also transformative and sustainability-oriented.

The overall findings yield the main proposition that Islamic eco-theology possesses an inherent capacity as a comprehensive framework for ecological transformation when operationalized through da'wah that is contextual, communicative, and theologically consistent. Ecological responsibility, from this perspective, is not merely an individual moral choice but a religious imperative that must be translated into concrete practice through appropriate media and social contexts. Within the SDGs framework, this proposition affirms that religion can serve as a *driving force* in accelerating behavioral transformation toward sustainable development. This proposition simultaneously serves as a theoretical foundation for formulating a more systematic digital eco-theological da'wah strategy in the following section.

## **Digital Communication Strategies and the Internalization of Ecological Awareness Among Generation Z**

The digital eco-theological da'wah communication strategy in Palembang demonstrates a configuration that is not only technically adaptive but also conceptually and strategically mature. These findings were obtained through in-depth interviews with 10 informants (preachers, content creators, and community activists), participatory observation of social media content over four months, and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Generation Z. The analysis was conducted through data reduction, thematic categorization, and interpretive meaning extraction. The coding results indicate that the emerging strategic patterns do not stand alone but form an integrated communication ecosystem. The following qualitative data visualization illustrates the frequency of occurrence and characteristics of each strategy:

**Table 2. Intensity of Digital Ecotheology Da’wah Strategy Patterns**

Strategy Pattern	Intensity of Findings	Dominant Qualitative Indicators	Contribution to the SDGs
Theological Narrative	Very High	Integration of verses/hadiths in nearly all environmental-themed content	SDG 4 (Quality Education): Islamic-values-based ecological literacy
Emotional Visuals	High	Reflective videos, footage of the Musi River, and infographics on ecological principles	SDG 13 (Climate Action): raising public awareness through emotional framing
Participatory Community	High	Call to action, online challenges, live discussions, participant testimonials	SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities): community participation in environmental action
Digital Role Modeling	Moderate–High	Documentation of personal eco-friendly practices by religious leaders	SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption): fostering sustainable behavior
Contextually Responsive	Moderate	Content responsive to current issues of haze and pollution	SDG 13 (Climate Action): Response to current environmental issues

**Source:** Results of thematic analysis of interviews, FGDs, and social media content observation (Field Data, 2025).

The data indicate that the theological narrative strategy exhibits the most dominant intensity. Nearly all analyzed content includes normative references as an interpretive framework for environmental issues. Theoretically, this finding aligns with the Uses and Gratifications theory, which asserts that audiences are active in selecting content based on their cognitive needs and identity [39]. Muslim Generation Z in Palembang are not only seeking religious content but also content capable of explaining socio-ecological problems from a faith-based perspective. Thus, the integration of Quranic verses and hadiths into issues regarding the Musi River or peatland fires fulfills both a need for meaning and a need for collective identity. Within the SDGs framework, this strategy contributes to strengthening values literacy and ecological awareness (SDG 4: Quality Education) through a contextual, religiously grounded approach.

Emotionally charged visual strategies with high intensity indicate that the communication format is a critical factor in fostering affective resonance. Content featuring visuals of local environmental conditions linked to religious principles tends to trigger deeper reflective responses compared to text-based normative content. From an agenda-setting perspective, the consistent visualization of ecological issues within a theological framework contributes to shaping the perception that such issues are moral priorities [40]. Unlike environmental communication research focused on mainstream media, these findings indicate that da’wah-based social media possesses strong framing capacity within religious communities. These findings are relevant to efforts to raise public awareness regarding climate change and environmental issues (SDG 13) through an emotion and value-based communication approach.

The high-intensity participatory community strategies that have emerged demonstrate that digital da’wah functions as a space for the formation of collective norms. FGD data indicates a shift from symbolic participation (commenting or sharing content) toward tangible participation (joining environmental cleanup initiatives). In mass communication theory, media not only convey messages but also shape social norms through interaction and the repetition of values [41]. This process demonstrates that the internalization of ecological awareness occurs socially, not merely individually. This directly supports SDG

11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), particularly regarding community participation in preserving the urban environment.

The digital role-modeling strategy has moderate to high intensity but exerts a significant persuasive impact. Documentation of the da'i's personal ecological practices demonstrates consistency between message and behavior. From the perspective of Social Learning Theory, observed behavior from credible figures serves as a model to be emulated [42]. Previous research on conventional da'wah emphasized scholarly authority and rhetoric; whereas in the digital context, credibility is reinforced by visual authenticity and tangible practices. Generation Z, which is critical of empty symbolism, is more receptive to messages when accompanied by concrete examples. This strategy contributes to the formation of sustainable consumption behaviors and lifestyles (SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production).

Contextual responsive strategies, though of moderate intensity due to their dependence on issue dynamics, play a crucial role in maintaining the relevance of da'wah in the public sphere. When haze or viral pollution issues arise, da'wah content promptly responds within an ecological-theological framework. In environmental communication framing theory, how an issue is framed determines the direction of audience interpretation [43]. A quick and relevant response ensures that da'wah remains a moral voice in public discourse. This responsiveness strengthens da'wah's function as a social advocacy agent that supports collective awareness of the global environmental crisis (SDG 13).

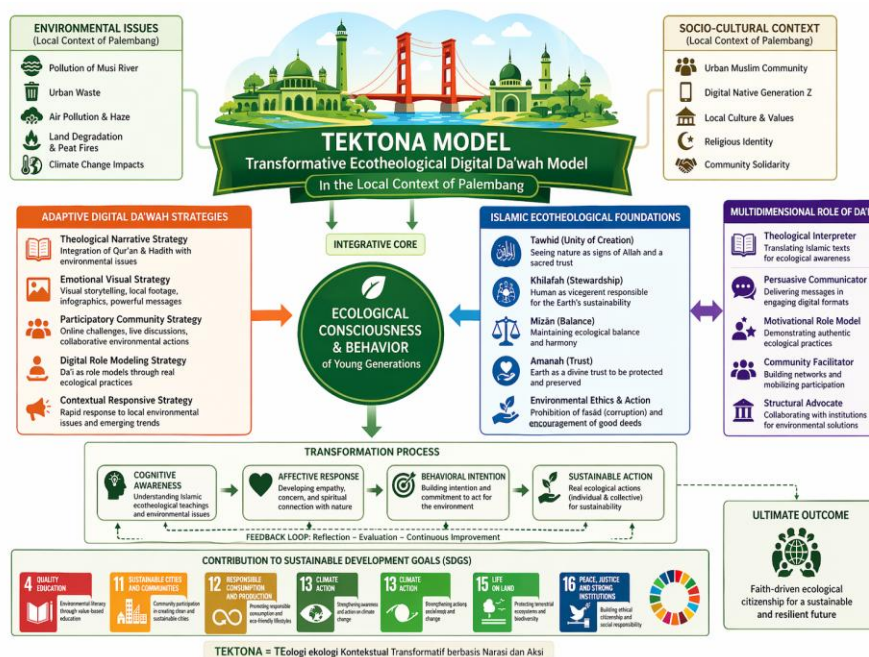
Compared to previous research on digital da'wah, which generally focuses on content popularity and the enhancement of normative religiosity, this study demonstrates a shift in orientation toward the transformation of ecological consciousness. While previous studies in eco-theology have largely remained at the conceptual and normative levels, this research presents empirical evidence of how the values of tawhid, khalifah, and amanah are internalized through adaptive digital communication strategies. The integration of theological narratives, emotional visualization, community participation, authentic role modeling, and contextual responsiveness forms a communication ecosystem that goes beyond the mere digitization of sermons. This integration demonstrates that digital da'wah can function as a cultural instrument in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs through a values-based religious approach.

From the perspective of social change theory, this strategic configuration illustrates a process of structuration, where religious values and social practices dynamically shape one another within the digital space [44]. Digital eco-theological da'wah in Palembang not only constructs an ecological discourse but also produces a new habitus among Generation Z, where environmental concern is understood as a concrete and sustainable expression of faith. By maintaining a strong theological foundation while optimally leveraging the characteristics of social media, this strategy demonstrates that religion can function as a catalyst for ecological transformation in contemporary urban society. Within the framework of the SDGs, these findings affirm that transformation rooted in religious values holds significant potential for accelerating behavioral change toward inclusive and contextually relevant sustainable development.

### **Formulation of the Digital Eco-Theological Da'wah Model and Its Implications**

Based on the empirical findings, communication strategy patterns, and the da'i role model identified in this study, a Digital Eco-Theological Da'wah Model has been formulated, representing the integration of theological foundations, adaptive communication strategies, and an orientation toward ecological behavioral transformation among the younger generation. This model was not conceived as an abstract normative construct but was developed through an in-depth analysis of digital da'wah practices in Palembang, as illustrated in the model visualization. It is positioned as a conceptual

framework linking Islamic values with the global *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, particularly in the dimensions of sustainability awareness and behavior.



**Figure 1. The TEKTONA Model: Digital Eco-Theological Da'wah in the Local Context of Palembang City and Its Contribution to the SDGs**

As shown in the figure, environmental issues and the socio-cultural context form the macro backdrop framing the entire da'wah process. This aligns with the finding that digital eco-theological da'wah strategies in Palembang have developed organically as a response to the character of a young audience living within a digital culture while possessing a strong Islamic identity. Thus, this model is not generic but contextual, rooted in Palembang's ecological realities such as pollution of the Musi River, urban waste issues, and the dynamics of land fires. This contextual approach aligns with the principle of *localizing the SDGs*, where the global agenda is translated into the local realities of the community.

At the center of the model, "Social Media-Based Eco-Theological Da'wah in the Local Context of Palembang" serves as an integrative space between two main dimensions: normative and strategic. On the right side, Islamic eco-theological values tauhid, khalifah, mīzān, amanah, and environmental ethics serve as the theological foundation. Conceptual findings affirm that tauhid is no longer understood merely as a theological affirmation, but rather as a cosmic consciousness that binds the relationship between humanity and nature within a single unity of creation. The concept of khalifah has expanded in meaning from socio-political leadership toward a cosmological mandate to safeguard ecosystem sustainability. Meanwhile, the principle of amanah transforms the human-nature relationship from a utilitarian one into an ethical-spiritual relationship steeped in responsibility. This theological foundation has a direct correspondence with SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption), which emphasize ecological balance and human responsibility toward the environment.

Field findings indicate that the narratives of tauhid and khalifah resonate more strongly when directly linked to local realities. One da'i informant stated that "the verse prohibiting *fasād* feels tangible when linked to the condition of a polluted river." This demonstrates that the theological foundation works effectively when translated through a concrete context. In other words, this model affirms that the power of the text alone is insufficient; it must be contextualized to possess transformative power.

On the left side of the model, adaptive digital communication strategies—including social media content, narrative visual communication techniques, audience interaction, and issue responsiveness—represent the methodological dimension. The identified strategic patterns (theological narrative, emotional visuals, participatory community, digital exemplarity, and contextual responsiveness) are integrated into this model as operational mechanisms. From a Uses and Gratifications perspective, young audiences actively select content that fulfills their needs for identity and social integration [45],[46]. Therefore, a successful da'wah strategy can address these needs without sacrificing theological substance. Within the SDGs framework, this strategy functions as a medium for social education and value transformation (SDG 4: Quality Education), as well as a means of mobilizing public awareness regarding sustainability issues.

Emotional visual strategies, for example, serve to reinforce the framing of environmental issues as moral-spiritual concerns, not merely technical ones. This aligns with agenda-setting theory, which emphasizes that the media have the capacity to shape public priorities [47]. When environmental issues are consistently framed within narratives of tawhid and amanah, ecological awareness is formed as part of religious identity. This process contributes to increasing collective awareness of climate change (SDG 13) through a values- and emotion-based approach.

This model also positions the da'i as a multidimensional agent of ecological transformation. The five identified roles, theological interpretation, communication persuasion, motivational role modeling, community facilitation, and structural advocacy, serve as the dynamic driving elements of the model. Within the framework of social learning theory, the da'i's digital role modeling plays a central role in triggering processes of imitation and the internalization of values [48],[49]. Documentation of real-world ecological practices strengthens the credibility of the message and accelerates the transformation from awareness to action. This role reinforces the position of religious actors as strategic partners in the implementation of the SDGs at the community level.

The ultimate orientation of this model is the gradual transformation of the younger generation's ecological awareness: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. FGD data indicate that Generation Z first experiences cognitive awareness, understanding that protecting the environment is part of Islamic teachings. The next stage is an affective response characterized by empathy and a sense of responsibility. The final stage is behavioral commitment manifested in concrete actions, both on an individual scale (reducing plastic use) and a collective scale (participating in environmental cleanup activities). Thus, this model is oriented toward tangible behavioral change, not merely an increase in normative literacy. This gradual transformation aligns with the SDGs' approach, which emphasizes behavioral change as the key to the success of sustainable development.

From the perspective of social change theory, this model illustrates a process of structuration in which religious values and social practices mutually shape one another simultaneously within the digital space [50],[51]. Social media is no longer merely a channel for message distribution but an arena for the construction of meaning and the reproduction of ecological norms. The integration of theological foundations, adaptive communication strategies, community ecosystems, the exemplary role of da'i, and collective action renders this model both integrative and transformative.

Theoretically, the Digital Eco-Theological Da'wah Model, formulated as the TEKTONA Model (Transformative Contextual Ecological Theology Based on Narrative and Action), expands the paradigm of da'wah from a ritual-oriented approach toward da'wah grounded in ecological sustainability. It affirms that religion is not merely a source of moral legitimacy but can serve as a catalyst for socio-ecological change in contemporary urban societies. The novelty of this model lies in the systematic integration of Islamic eco-theology, digital communication, and the SDGs framework into a single operational conceptual framework.

This model can serve as a reference for da'i, Muslim communities, religious institutions, and policymakers in designing da'wah programs responsive to the environmental crisis. In the context of Palembang City, this model offers an approach that connects the values of tawhid and khalifah with participatory digital communication strategies, thereby fostering a contextual, reflective, and sustainable ecological awareness among the younger generation. Thus, this model is not only relevant for the development of da'wah studies but also directly contributes to efforts to achieve the SDGs through a religion-based approach at the local level.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital eco-theological da'wah holds transformative potential in shaping the ecological awareness of Generation Z when implemented through the integration of Islamic theological foundations, adaptive digital communication strategies, and a gradual behavioral change orientation. The findings indicate that the construction of narratives on tawhid, khalifah, and mīzān, contextualized with local environmental issues, can offer new interpretations of religious teachings as an ethical responsibility toward nature. Strategies involving symbolic visualization, message personalization, and participatory interactivity have proven to strengthen the process of value internalization, ensuring that social media serves not merely as a medium for spreading religious outreach but as a space for fostering ecological awareness and practice among the younger generation. Within the framework of *the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, these findings affirm that religious preaching grounded in religious values can function as a cultural instrument in fostering sustainable ecological awareness and behavioral change, particularly regarding SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Theoretically, this study expands the field of da'wah research by shifting the orientation from a normative-ritual approach toward transformative da'wah grounded in sustainability. The formulated Digital Ecotheological Da'wah Model demonstrates that the integration of ecotheology and participatory digital communication can serve as a relevant conceptual framework for addressing contemporary ecological challenges. The novelty of this research lies in the formulation of the TEKTONA Model (Contextual Transformative Ecological Theology Based on Narrative and Action), which explicitly integrates Islamic theological values, digital communication strategies, and SDG orientations into a single operational and contextual conceptual framework. This model can serve as a reference for da'i, Muslim communities, and religious institutions in designing da'wah programs that are contextual, adaptable to digital culture, and encourage concrete action in the social sphere. This model also opens up opportunities for collaboration between religious actors and policymakers in mainstreaming religion-based sustainability values as part of strategies to achieve the SDGs at the local level. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The focus on the context of Palembang limits the generalizability of the findings, given the differences in sociocultural characteristics across regions. Furthermore, the qualitative approach used does not allow for quantitative measurement of the extent of changes in ecological behavior over the long term. The dynamics of social media algorithms and their impact on the reach and sustainability of da'wah messages have also not been analyzed in depth. Therefore, future research is recommended to develop cross-regional comparative studies, using a mixed-methods approach, and integrating digital data analysis to strengthen the validity and sustainability of the eco-theological da'wah model in the new media era. Further research is also crucial to explore the contribution of eco-theological da'wah toward achieving SDG indicators more measurably, so that the relationship between religious values and sustainable development can be empirically and comprehensively demonstrated.

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## Author Contribution

All authors contributed to the study conception, research design, data collection, analysis, manuscript preparation, revision, and final approval.

## Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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