

DIGITAL DA'WAH COMMUNICATION AND DESTINATION IMAGE CONSTRUCTION IN RELIGIOUS TOURISM: A DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF LEMUKUTAN ISLAND

Fajar Abdurrahman¹, Bob Andrian², Muhammad Khalil Gunawan³, Heriyanto⁴, Riduan⁵
^{1,2,3,5}IAIN Pontianak, Indonesia

⁴ Faculty Education, Language, and Communication, UNIMAS

*Email correspondence: fajar.abdurrahman475@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze digital da'wah communication and destination image construction in religious tourism on Lemukutan Island, West Kalimantan, through a digital ethnographic perspective. This research is motivated by the limited studies that connect digital da'wah, User Generated Content (UGC), and the construction of the image of religious tourism destinations in the context of new media culture. The research uses a qualitative approach with digital ethnographic methods through observation of social media TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. The results of the study show that tourists no longer only play the role of tourism consumers, but also as digital da'wah communication actors who actively produce and disseminate religious narratives, spiritual experiences, and destination images through social media. The practice of digital da'wah on Lemukutan Island develops in a participatory manner through the involvement of tourists, religious leaders, and local communities in forming representations of religious tourist destinations on social media. This study also found that social media has a strategic role in strengthening the image of Lemukutan Island as a natural, religious, and authentic tourist destination, but at the same time has the potential to encourage the commodification of religious and cultural symbols due to the logic of digital media virality. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of a conceptual model of digital da'wah communication actors in the study of tourism communication and digital culture. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference for local governments and tourism managers in designing religious tourism communication strategies that are adaptive to the dynamics of social media. This research is limited to the scope of location and number of informants, so further research is needed with a cross-platform approach and comparison between digital religious tourism destinations at the global level.

Keywords: *Communication Actors, Digital Da'wah, Image, Tourist Destinations*

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This research is important because it shows that social media is not only used for tourism promotion, but also becomes a digital da'wah communication space that shapes the image of religious tourism destinations through the experiences of tourists, local communities, and religious leaders. This study fills the research gap regarding the relationship between User Generated Content (UGC), digital da'wah, and destination image construction in the context of

digital religious tourism. The findings of the study provide a new understanding that tourists have a strategic role as digital communication actors who are able to influence public perception of tourist destinations through social media in a participatory, interactive, and experience-based manner of local cultural experience.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has changed the pattern of da'wah communication and tourism promotion to be more interactive, visual, and participatory through social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube (Olğun & Akarsu, 2026). In the context of digital tourism, tourists no longer only function as consumers of information, but also as producers of messages through User Generated Content (UGC) in the form of photos, videos, reviews, and spiritual experiences shared online (Zhang et al., 2026). Various studies show that social media plays an important role in building the image of religious tourism destinations through digital storytelling, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and visual representation of users' religious experiences (Bonilla-Quijada et al., 2026). At the same time, da'wah in the new media era has undergone a transformation from conventional communication to digital communication that is more flexible and based on audience participation. This condition shows that social media is not only a space for the dissemination of religious messages, but also an arena for the construction of tourist destination identities through cultural symbols, spiritual experiences, and digital interactions of contemporary society (Eviyanti, 2024).

Although research on digital da'wah, social media, and faith-based tourism has increased in the past decade, international literature sources still show some limitations in terms of concept. The majority of existing research focuses on the role of digital media in promoting tourist sites, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), digital storytelling, and the role of religious institutions in spreading religious messages (Bonilla-Quijada et al., 2026; Zhang et al., 2026). Other studies highlight changes in religious practices through digital platforms in the context of digital religion and mediatization of religion, but focus more on changes in religious authority, online ritual practices, and consumption of religion-related content (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020; Hjarvard, 2016). On the other hand, studies on participatory culture see media users as content creators who actively shape meaning through User Generated Content (Jenkins, 2023), but have not detailed in depth how tourists create and disseminate da'wah narratives in tourist sites with religious value. As a result, the relationship between digital da'wah communication, tourist involvement, and the formation of tourist destination images is usually studied separately. This gap indicates that the international literature has not succeeded in fully explaining how tourists have gone from mere spectators to actors in digital da'wah communication that help build the image of tourist destinations through participatory practices on social media platforms. Furthermore, the integration of the theory of mediatization of religion, digital religion, and participatory culture is still running separately, so it has not yet produced a conceptual framework that can provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these three aspects.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to explain how digital da'wah communication plays a role in shaping the perception of tourist attractions from the participation of social media users on Lemukutan Island, Bengkayang, West Kalimantan. In particular, this study identifies how the form and characteristics of digital da'wah communication are seen on social media related to tourism on Lemukutan Island. Then, how the involvement of tourists, locals, and religious bodies

in digital da'wah communication shapes and spreads stories about tourist locations. Also, how digital interaction contributes to the formation of the image of tourist destinations through the construction of cultural symbols, spiritual experiences, and visual representations circulating on social media. To answer these questions, this study uses a digital ethnography approach in order to understand the process of forming meaning, how to communicate, and the interaction patterns of actors in the digital realm. Thus, this study not only outlines the way digital da'wah is carried out, but also shows the ways in which the image of tourist attractions emerge from the combination of religion, media, and participatory culture.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of the concept of "tourists as actors of digital da'wah communication" in the construction of the image of religious tourism destinations on social media. This study views that tourists are no longer just consumers of travel experiences, but also producers of meaning who actively disseminate religious narratives, cultural symbols, and spiritual experiences through participatory digital communication practices. Theoretically, this study develops an integration between the theory of religious mediatization, digital religion, and participatory culture to explain the relationship between social media, digital da'wah, and the formation of tourist destination identity. Empirically, this research contributes through a digital ethnographic study in the context of local community-based religious tourism on Lemukutan Island which is still rarely discussed in previous research. In addition, this study has global relevance because it shows how local digital da'wah communication practices are related to the transformation of digital religious tourism, visual culture of social media, and the construction of tourist destination identities in a contemporary digital society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of digital media has changed the pattern of religious communication and tourism to be more participatory, interactive, and social media-based (Tasya, Andhika, Helmi, Wafiq, Dede, 2025). This study uses the theory of mediatization and participatory culture as a conceptual foundation to explain the relationship between digital da'wah communication and the construction of the image of religious tourism destinations. The mediatization theory explains that digital media is not only a channel of communication, but also shapes social, cultural, and religious practices in a digital society (Sito & Hakiem, 2025). Meanwhile, participatory culture places social media users as producers of meaning through the practice of User Generated Content (UGC) (Tomaž & Walanchalee, 2020). In this context, tourists are positioned as digital da'wah communication actors who produce visual narratives and spiritual experiences in the formation of tourist destination identities on social media.

Various previous studies have shown that social media functions as a mechanism for the construction of destination images through visual and participatory communication practices of digital users. The study on digital religion also explains that the practice of da'wah has undergone a transformation from conventional communication to a more flexible and interactive digital communication (Rizfi Fauzi, Farhan Fadilah, Fifi Fauzia Rohmah, 2026). However, most of the previous research still separated the study of digital da'wah and tourism communication, so the role of tourists as actors of digital da'wah communication has not been discussed conceptually. In addition, previous research placed religious institutions and the government as the main actors in shaping the image of tourist destinations (Zhu, 2025). Therefore, this study develops the proposition that tourists, local communities, and social media users have a strategic position in

building the image of religious tourism destinations through participatory digital communication practices.

This study develops a conceptual model of Digital Da'wah Communication Actors that explains the relationship between social media, participatory communication practices, and the construction of images of religious tourism destinations. In this model, tourists, local communities, and digital communities are positioned as the main actors that produce religious narratives and cultural symbols through various forms of User Generated Content (UGC). The practice of communication then shapes public perception of the identity of Lemukutan Island as a religious tourism destination in the digital space. This model also shows that the image of tourist destinations is not only shaped by formal promotion, but develops through symbolic interaction and participatory culture on social media. Thus, this research makes a theoretical contribution through the development of a digital da'wah communication model in the context of digital religious tourism in the new media era.

METHOD

.This study uses a qualitative approach with digital ethnographic design with a case study on Lemukutan Island, Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan. This approach is used to understand how tourism experiences, da'wah messages, local cultural symbols, and visual representations are produced, disseminated, and interpreted through digital spaces and social interactions in the field. Digital ethnography allows research into the relationship between online activities and offline experiences, especially when social media is not only a means of documenting travel travel, but also shaping public perceptions of religiosity, community friendliness, and destination character. This approach is considered appropriate because it is able to explain the relationship between religious practices, participatory culture, and digital communication that develops in the lives of contemporary society. The case study was used to analyze Lemukutan Island as an archipelago destination that shows the meeting between da'wah activities, community-based tourism, and the use of digital media.

The data sources are arranged into three groups that complement each other in order to provide an overview of the phenomenon being studied. First, seven digital content obtained from Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, online news, and documentation of religious activities containing da'wah safaris, Friday sermons, imam and khatib training, community service, and tourism activities. Second, interviews with eight informants consisting of four tourists, three local residents or tourism actors, and a volunteer involved in socio-religious activities on Lemukutan Island. Third, field observations that document the conditions of destinations, tourist activities, community interaction with visitors, homestay services, and social dynamics that are not all recorded in digital media. All of these sources produced sixteen main data units that were purposively selected based on the relationship of informants and content with digital da'wah communication practices, tourism experiences, and destination image formation.

Field data collection was carried out on January 21–24, 2026 through semi-structured interviews and direct observation on Lemukutan Island, while digital observation and virtual documentation were carried out on May 9–17, 2026. Social media content searches were carried out using the keywords Lemukutan Island, da'wah, da'wah safari, sermons, imams and khatib, tourism, and various hashtags related to religious locations and activities. Each upload is documented in a data information sheet regarding the platform, publication date, media type,

uploader account, message theme, religious symbols, visual elements of the destination, the form of audience interaction, and its relevance to the focus of the research. The interviews were directed to explore the experiences of tourists, the views of the local community, the role of managers and tour guides, as well as their perceptions of the suitability of the image of Lemukutan Island on social media with real conditions in the field).

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) which included data selection, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis stage begins with reading all interview results, observation notes, and digital documentation to gain an understanding of digital da'wah communication practices on Lemukutan Island. Furthermore, data relevant to the focus of the research are selected, while information that is not related to the purpose of the research is set aside so that representative data is obtained for analysis. The data is then grouped into three main themes, namely digital da'wah communication actors, da'wah in the digital era, and the formation of tourist destination images, then presented in the form of narratives, tables, documentation, and excerpts from interviews. The next stage is carried out by linking the findings on each theme with the theory of religious mediatization, digital religion, participatory culture, and symbolic interactionism to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The credibility of the findings is strengthened through triangulation of sources by comparing the results of observations, interviews, digital documentation, and relevant literature so that the resulting interpretations are consistent and can be scientifically accounted for.

RESULTS

On the island of Lemukutan, da'wah activities combined with tourism experiences are then represented through uploads of photos, videos, captions, and digital documentation shared by social media users. The content not only displays the beauty of tourist destinations, but also presents religious symbols, social interactions, and spiritual experiences that shape people's perception of the identity of Lemukutan Island. Through the practice of User Generated Content (UGC), tourists play the role of digital da'wah communication actors who actively produce meaning and build the image of tourist destinations in virtual spaces. Based on the results of digital observations on various social media uploads, this study found several forms of representation of digital da'wah communication that contribute to the formation of the image of Lemukutan Island as a tourist destination based on local religiosity and culture.

Tourists as Da'wah Communication Actors

Da'wah communication activities in the digital era show that tourists no longer only play the role of visitors to tourist destinations, but also become active communication actors in producing and disseminating religious messages through social media. In the context of Lemukutan Island, this practice can be seen from various digital uploads featuring da'wah trips, religious guidance, and socio-religious activities combined with tourism activities in the archipelago. The concept of digital da'wah communication actors refers to individuals or groups who use digital media to build, convey, and disseminate religious messages to the wider community through participatory and interactive forms of communication. This phenomenon is like, The phenomenon can be seen in Instagram uploads [@muhajirinyanis](#) which shows the journey of da'wah on Lemukutan Island. In the post, there is a caption titled "*Penetrating the*

Boundaries of the Sea, Spreading the Light of Da'wah on Lemukutan Island" which shows the journey of da'wah as well as a representation of religious tourism in the Bengkayang archipelago area. KH safari da'wah. M. Suyuthi Ilyas' TikTok Content on Lemukutan Island regarding the Da'wah Safari activities and commemorating the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW on Lemukutan Island also showed how social media is used as a space for spreading da'wah messages combined with tourist travel experiences and social interaction of the island community. In the study of digital communication, the practice shows that social media has changed the pattern of da'wah from one-way communication to participatory communication that allows tourists, religious leaders, and digital communities to play a role as a generator of meaning in virtual space. Therefore, tourists in the new media era can be understood as digital da'wah communication actors who not only document tourists' travels, but also build religious representations and tourist destination identities through *User Generated Content* (UGC) published online.

The characteristics of digital da'wah communication actors in this study can be seen through content production activities, dissemination of religious symbols, and the involvement of social media users in building the image of Lemukutan Island as a tourist destination based on local religiosity and culture. This form of communication appears through photo uploads, short videos, da'wah safari documentation, inspirational captions, and publications of imam and khatib coaching activities that are disseminated through Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, such as, DWP Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Kalimantan Helps Strengthen Da'wah in the Islands, Hj. Salbia Appreciates the Development of Imams and Khatib. One of the Facebook uploads from the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Kalimantan shows that religious development activities on Lemukutan Island are positioned as a form of *strengthening da'wah in the archipelago* which emphasizes the value of togetherness, community service, and the development of religious communities in the outermost regions. Community service activities carried out by the Faculty of Da'wah and Islamic Communication (FDKI) IAIN Pontianak in Lemukutan Island This activity shows the integration between da'wah activities, education, social communication, and tourism in the Lemukutan Islands.

Table 1.
Digital Platform Information and Research Data Sources

Yes	Platform Media	Account/Data Source	Content Type	Forms of Representation	Research Relevance
1	Instagram	<u>@muhajirinyanis</u>	Travel photos, reflective captions, travel documentation	Tourists' spiritual experiences and visualizations of local culture	Showing tourists as actors of digital da'wah communication through the practice of <i>User Generated Content</i> (UGC)
2	Facebook	<u>Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of West Kalimantan</u>	Documentation of da'wah safari activities and	Representation of digital da'wah and the legitimacy of religious institutions	Showing the integration of digital da'wah on Lemukutan Island

			socio-religious activities		
3	TikTok	<u>Safari Da'wah KH. Mr. Suyuthi Ilyas</u>	Short video of da'wah, sea trip, community interaction	Visual da'wah based on social media and participatory culture	Showing the role of TikTok's algorithm in expanding the visibility of digital religious tourism
4	Website	<u>Indonesian Islands Da'wah Forum (FDKI)</u>	Activity articles, documentation of the archipelago da'wah program	Formal narrative of da'wah and strengthening the religious identity of the destination	Becoming a supporting source in the construction of the image of Lemukutan Island as a digital religious tourism

Source: Results of researchers' digital observations, 2026.

Figure 1
Digital Da'wah Communication Actor Post



Source: Instagram posts @muhajirinyanis, Tiktok @iielintar, Indonesian Islands da'wah forum website, Facebook @kanwil Ministry of Religion of West Kalimantan

The involvement of digital da'wah communication actors can be seen from the intensity of religious content publications, the use of spiritual symbols in social media uploads, the involvement of religious communities, and the ability of digital content in building a positive perception of Lemukutan Island as a religious tourism destination. In the context of digital tourism communication, these activities have developed into a form of *electronic word of mouth* (e-WOM) that affects the way people understand the identity of a tourist destination through digital

experiences and narratives of social media users (Harrigan et al., 2021). Thus, digital da'wah communication actors in this study not only function as conveyors of religious messages, but also as producers of tourist destination images that build religious meaning, spiritual experiences, and cultural identity of Lemukutan Island in the digital media space.

Da'wah in the Digital Era

The practice of digital da'wah on the island of Lemukutan can be seen through various Instagram uploads and digital documentation featuring da'wah safari activities, Friday sermons, and religious coaching in the Bengkayang archipelago, such as: Upload of Ustadz Hatolo Da'wah Safari to Lemukutan Island

The upload was published through social media as a form of spreading religious messages as well as a representation of da'wah travel in the archipelago's tourist area. Instagram post of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Kalimantan Friday sermon at the Baitul Hikmah Mosque on Lemukutan Island. The post raised the theme of maintaining piety after Ramadan and strengthening the ukhuwah of the people through social togetherness. Friday sermons, imam and khatib training, and da'wah safari activities from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Kalimantan The activity showed the integration between da'wah and religious worship in the life of the people of Lemukutan Island.

Digital da'wah on Lemukutan Island develops through the use of social media as a means of religious communication and the formation of the social image of the archipelago. Da'wah activities no longer only take place in mosques or face-to-face spaces, but are also published through Instagram and other digital platforms so that they are able to reach a wider audience. In addition to conveying religious values, digital content also builds narratives about togetherness, community development, and the social life of religious coastal communities. Thus, digital da'wah in this study is understood as a religious communication practice that utilizes digital media to build social interactions, spiritual experiences, and religious identity of a tourist destination. The presence of this content shows that social media has become a new space for the spread of da'wah that not only serves to convey religious messages, but also builds a religious representation of Lemukutan Island in the digital era.

Table 2
Findings of Da'wah Content on Lemukutan Island

Yes	Platform	Content Form	Key Findings	Digital Da'wah Representation
1	YouTube	<u>Ust Da'wah Safari Video. Hatoli to Lemukutan Island</u>	The content features da'wah trips to the archipelago combined with the social interaction of coastal communities. The video shows da'wah as a religious activity as well as a socio-cultural journey in the archipelago's tourist area.	Da'wah is represented as participatory communication that expands the reach of religious messages through digital audiovisual media.
2	Instagram	<u>Friday Sermon at Baitul Hikmah Mosque Pulau Lemukutan</u>	The upload featured sermons about maintaining piety after Ramadan, strengthening the ukhuwah of the people, and training activities for	Digital da'wah functions as a medium for spreading religious messages as well as strengthening the socio-

imams and khatib throughout Bengkayang Regency. The content shows the involvement of religious institutions in building the religious identity of the archipelago.

The content shows the implementation of Friday prayers, religious guidance, and gathering activities between the Ministry of Religion and the local community. Publications are carried out through social media to expand access to religious information to the wider community.

religious image of Lemukutan Island in the digital space.

Social media is used as a space for da'wah communication that brings together religious activities, community services, and religious cultural representations of coastal communities.

3 Instagram Construction of Imam and Khatib in Lemukutan Island

Source: Researcher's analysis of YouTube and Instagram content, 2026

Figure 2
Digital Da'wah Documentation



Source: Ustadz Hatoli Official Youtube Post, Instagram @Kemenag.kalbar, Instagram @Kemenagbengkayang_

Based on the results of digital observations, there are several patterns found in the practice of da'wah in the digital era on Lemukutan Island. First, social media is the main means of spreading da'wah messages and religious activities to the wider community quickly and interactively. Second, digital da'wah content tends to display religious symbols, pious values, and the message of togetherness as the main identity of the people of Lemukutan Island. Third, the practice of digital da'wah not only functions as a medium for the dissemination of religious

teachings, but also forms the image of Lemukutan Island as a tourist destination based on local religion and culture. Fourth, the involvement of religious leaders, religious institutions, and local communities in social media publications shows that digital da'wah has developed into a form of participatory communication that strengthens the relationship between religion, digital media, and tourism in the contemporary era

Image of Tourist Destinations

Lemukutan Island is one of the tourist destinations that has the 2nd highest visitor attraction after the beautiful sea beaches in Bengkayang Regency, West Kalimantan from January to December 2025, the data is as follows:

Table 3
Bengkayang Regency Tourism Visit Data Year 2025

Iya	ODTW	JUMLAH KUNJUNGAN
1	Pantai Laut yang Indah	96,096 Wisatawan
2	Pulau Lemukutan	51,684 Wisatawan
3	Setanga Berkelanjutan	49,821 Wisatawan
4	Resor Kahyangan	40.286 Wisatawan
5	Cemara Beach Batu Payung	23,529 Wisatawan
6	Batu Timah Riam Madi	11,268 Wisatawan
7	Riam Merampak	9,956 Wisatawan
8	Mimiland	9,643 Wisatawan
9	Riam Perangek	7,486 Wisatawan
10	Riam Jugan	7,166 Wisatawan
11	Hotel Reppo	5,614 Wisatawan
12	Pantai Kura-kura	5,300 Wisatawan
13	Bukit Sepadang Ciptakan Karya	5,247 Wisatawan
14	Hotel Lala Golden	5.100 Wisatawan
15	Riam Pangar Sungai Tanggi	4,355 Wisatawan
16	Riam Berawan	4,199 Wisatawan
17	Rina Hotel	3,761 Wisatawan
18	Riam Kalayo Menciptakan Karya	3,680 Wisatawan
19	Bukit Jamur	2.227 Wisatawan
20	Pulau Randayan	1.208 Wisatawan
JUMLAH		347.635 Kunjungan

Source: Data of 20 ODTW Bengkayang Regency

The results of the study show that the image of Lemukutan Island as a tourist destination is not only formed by promotions carried out by the government and tourism managers, but also through the active participation of tourists in producing and disseminating their experiences on social media. Tourists act as communication actors who construct public perception through uploading photos, videos, and travel narratives that feature panoramic views of the blue sea, pristine beaches, coconut trees, bamboo piers, and a calm island atmosphere. These uploads are generally accompanied by hashtags #pulaulemukutan and captions that describe tourist activities so that they function as a form of indirect promotion to other social media users. Through this practice, tourists are no longer only visitors to destinations, but also digital communicators who

build the image of Lemukutan Island as a beautiful, comfortable, and worth visiting tourist destinations.

The findings were strengthened by the results of interviews that showed that social media is the starting door to the formation of the image of the destination as well as a means for tourists to share their experiences with the wider community. As stated by Novi:

"After visiting, I was encouraged to share my experience through Instagram and TikTok because I wanted to introduce the atmosphere of Lemukutan Island to the wider community." (Novi, traveler, interview, January 22, 2026).

The statement shows that tourists do not stop as recipients of information, but act as disseminators of information who voluntarily build a positive image of Lemukutan Island through social media. Similar findings were also conveyed by Indah who explained that the images obtained through social media were in accordance with the experience felt directly.

"I know Lemukutan Island through TikTok. After arriving, it turned out that the conditions were suitable, even better than what was shown on social media, especially because the people were friendly and the service was very good." (Beautiful, tourist, interview, January 22, 2026).

The information shows that the compatibility between digital representation and real experience strengthens tourists' trust in the image of the destination. The positive experience then encourages tourists to share stories and recommendations with other social media users so that the image of Lemukutan Island continues to develop in a participatory manner.

Almost the same view was also conveyed by Mutiahdi who interpreted Lemukutan Island as a destination that presents tranquility with a panoramic view of the sea as its main attraction.

"In my opinion, Lemukutan Island provides tranquility. The sea is beautiful and the atmosphere makes people want to come back again." (Mutiahdi, tourist, interview, January 22, 2026).

The statement shows that the image of the destination is not only built by visual elements, but also by the emotional experience felt by tourists during their visit. The experience was then translated into various digital uploads that strengthened the identity of Lemukutan Island as a tourist destination based on nature, culture, and religiosity. In addition to shaping the perception of tourists, the development of the image of Lemukutan Island on social media is also felt by the local community. This was revealed by Mr. Doni who stated:

"Since Lemukutan has become increasingly known, many tourists have come to help the community's economy, ranging from homestays, MSMEs, to seafood sold to visitors." (Mr. Doni, local community, interview, January 23, 2026).

The statement shows that the construction of the destination image not only results in an increase in the visibility of Lemukutan Island in the digital space, but also has a real impact on

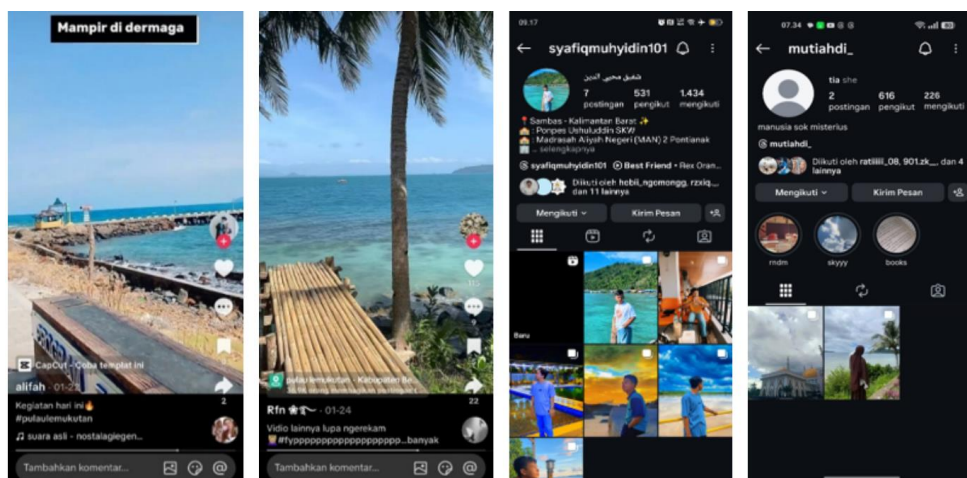
the economic activities of the local community through the development of community-based tourism.

Figure 3
Field Interview Documentation



Source: Field interview documentation

Figure 4
Tourist Destination Image Post



Source: Tiktok posts @alifah, @Rfn and Instagram @syafiqmuhyidin101, @mutiahd_

Based on the overall findings, there are several patterns that form the construction of the image of the Lemukutan Island destination. First, tourists consistently represent natural beauty as the main identity of the destination through visuals of the sea, beaches, piers, and coastal

landscapes. Second, social media, especially TikTok and Instagram, are communication spaces that accelerate the spread of travel experiences through user-produced content. Third, the image of the destination is not only built by visual representation, but also by tourists' direct experience of community friendliness, environmental comfort, and socio-religious activities that they experience while on Lemukutan Island. Thus, the construction of destination images in this study is the result of an interaction between the empirical experience of tourists, local community participation, and digital communication which together form a positive perception of Lemukutan Island as a tourist destination based on nature, culture, and religiosity.

DISCUSS

The development of social media has changed the pattern of da'wah communication and the formation of the image of tourist destinations to be more participatory, interactive, and based on user digital experience (Judge, 2025). In the context of Lemukutan Island, tourists, religious leaders, local communities, and religious institutions no longer only play the role of recipients of information, but also become digital da'wah communication actors who actively produce and disseminate meaning through various forms of social media content. This communication practice shows that digital da'wah not only functions as a delivery of religious messages, but also contributes to building identities, cultural symbols, and images of religiosity-based tourist destinations in the digital space (Ramadhani et al., 2025). Therefore, this discussion section will analyze more deeply the role of tourists as actors of da'wah communication, the transformation of da'wah in the digital era, and the process of forming the image of Lemukutan Island tourist destinations through social media based on the research findings that have been obtained.

Tourists as Digital Da'wah Communication Actors

The findings of the study show that tourists in the digital media era no longer only play the role of consumers of tourist information, but also as digital da'wah communication actors who actively produce, represent, and disseminate religious messages through social media (Rizal et al., 2024). This practice can be seen through TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube uploads that display religious tourism experiences, da'wah safari activities, social interaction of coastal communities, and religious symbols attached to Lemukutan Island (Siregar et al., 2025). This phenomenon is in line with the concept of participatory culture from Jenkins which explains that digital media allows users to become producers as well as distributors of meaning in virtual spaces (Hidayanto & Constance, 2019). In the context of this research, tourists build a representation of Lemukutan Island through User Generated Content (UGC) that integrates spiritual experiences, marine tourism, and local culture into a digital narrative that is widely accessible to the public. The findings show that digital da'wah develops through a pattern of collaborative interaction between social media users.

The results of this study also reinforce the findings of international studies on digital religious tourism which show that social media has an important role in shaping spiritual tourism experiences and the identity of religious tourism destinations. A recent study in reputable international journals explains that digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have changed travel communication patterns to be more emotional, visual, and based on audience engagement through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Agarwal et al., 2021). In the case of Lemukutan Island, the digitally published tourist experience shapes the public perception of a

tourist destination that is religious, calm, natural, and local community-based.

However, this study also found ambivalent implications of digital da'wah communication practices on social media. On the one hand, social media expands the spread of religious messages and increases the visibility of local tourist destinations globally (Koufodontis & Gaki, 2022). However, on the other hand, the logic of social media algorithms encourages the production of content that emphasizes the visual aspects, virality, and engagement more than the substance of da'wah itself (Zaenuri, 2024). These findings are in line with the mediatization theory of religion which explains that religious practices in the digital era have undergone a transformation following the logic of the media industry, platform algorithms, and digital popular culture (Kurniawati et al., 2024). In the context of Lemukutan Island, religious symbols such as da'wah safaris, Friday sermons, and religious social activities are often published in aesthetically pleasing visual forms to attract the attention of digital audiences. As a result, digital da'wah has the potential to experience the commodification of religious symbols because spiritual values not only function as a medium of religious education, but also as a visual attraction in the social media attention economy.

Based on these findings, this study offers a conceptual model of "Digital Da'wah Communication Actors" that explains the relationship between tourists, social media, spiritual experiences, and the construction of tourist destination images. This model shows that tourists serve as the main actors who produce tourist experiences and religious symbols through digital media, then distributed through the platform's algorithms to a wider audience. These interactions form the process of constructing the identity of tourist destinations that are no longer fully controlled by formal tourism institutions, but develop participatory through contemporary digital culture. This research expands the study of digital da'wah communication by placing tourists as producers of religious meaning on social media.

Da'wah in the Digital Era

The findings of the study show that the development of communication technology has changed the pattern of da'wah from face-to-face communication to digital communication that is more open, flexible, and visual media-based (Eviyanti, 2024). In the context of Lemukutan Island, digital da'wah practices emerged through the publication of da'wah safaris, Friday sermons, imam and khatib training, as well as documentation of socio-religious activities disseminated through Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. This transformation shows that social media not only functions as a means of spreading religious messages, but also as a space for the formation of religious identities of tourist destinations (Rizal et al., 2024). These findings support the theory of digital religion which explains that digital spaces have become new arenas for religious practices, social interactions, and representations of spiritual symbols in contemporary societies (Izza & Mansyur, 2026). In this study, digital da'wah is not only interpreted as an activity to spread Islamic values, but also as a cultural communication practice that builds the social image of Lemukutan Island in virtual space.

This study also shows that digital da'wah on Lemukutan Island develops through the integration of tourism activities, local culture, and religious symbols of coastal communities. The presence of da'wah content that displays community togetherness, local community friendliness, and worship activities in the archipelago strengthens the representation of Lemukutan Island as a community-based religious tourism destination. The findings are in line

with global research on social media that is able to create virtual spiritual experiences through the visualization of religious symbols and users' emotional narratives (Tran & Davies, 2025). Thus, the case of Lemukutan Island shows that local digital da'wah practices are related to the global transformation of digital religious tourism in the new media era.

On the other hand, this study found that digital da'wah also faces challenges in the form of simplifying religious messages due to the dominance of instant communication culture on social media. The character of digital platforms that prioritize short, visual, and fast-viral content makes it easier for da'wah messages to be directed to aspects of entertainment, visual aesthetics, and digital popularity than to deepen religious values substantively. This finding strengthens the view of media logic theory which explains that digital media has a tendency to change the form of social communication according to the needs of algorithms and audience attention. In the context of this study, the practice of digital da'wah on Lemukutan Island shows the relationship between digital religion, visual culture, and the commercialization of social media that form the pattern of contemporary da'wah communication. Therefore, digital da'wah has a complex character because in addition to being able to expand the reach of Islamic messages, it also has the potential to create a reduction in religious meaning due to the pressure of viral culture and algorithmic logic of digital media.

The practical implications of these findings suggest that digital da'wah management needs to be carried out more collaboratively between local communities, religious leaders, local governments, and tourism actors. This approach is important to maintain a balance between tourism promotion, representation of local culture, and the substance of da'wah values so as not to be trapped in the exploitation of religious symbols alone. In the context of developing countries such as Indonesia, social media has great power in shaping public perceptions of regional identity and local culture. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy and da'wah communication ethics is important so that digital da'wah practices are still able to maintain educational, social, and spiritual values in the midst of the development of the global digital media industry.

Image of Tourist Destinations

The results of the study show that the image of Lemukutan Island as a tourist destination is built through the interaction between tourist experiences, visual representations of social media, and digitally produced local cultural narratives (Kharismawati & Hidayat, 2025). These findings show that the image of tourist destinations in the digital age is no longer fully controlled by the government or formal tourism institutions, but develops through User Generated Content (UGC) produced by tourists in a participatory manner. Digital content in the form of photos of the blue sea, snorkeling, sunsets, homestays of local communities, to documentation of social interactions of coastal residents forms public perception of Lemukutan Island as a natural, religious, and authentic tourist destination. The findings are in line with the theory of destination image formation which explains that tourists' perception of a destination is formed through a combination of direct experience, media representation, and digital interpersonal communication (Febriandy et al., 2025). In this study, social media is the main space for the formation of the meaning of tourist destinations through the process of visualization and symbolic interaction of users.

This research also found that tourist experiences have an important role in strengthening the social legitimacy of Lemukutan Island as a digital tourist destination. Most people get early information about Lemukutan Island through TikTok, Instagram, or other tourists' recommendations on social media. This phenomenon shows that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has a great influence on the formation of image and decisions of tourist visits. This finding also explains that social media is currently the main source of tourism information because it is able to present a visual experience that is considered more authentic than formal promotion of the tourism industry (Nurhidayanti, 2026). In the context of Lemukutan Island, tourists not only disseminate tourist information, but also build a collective narrative about the tranquility, hospitality of the local people, and the spiritual experience inherent in the destination.

However, this study also shows that the construction of tourist destination images on social media has the potential to produce pseudo-images due to the dominance of visual culture and algorithmic logic of digital platforms. This finding is in line with Baudrillard's simulacra theory which explains that digital media is able to form new symbolic realities that are sometimes more dominant than real conditions (Azizah et al., 2026). In the context of this study, the image of Lemukutan Island is built through visual construction influenced by viral culture, attention economy, and social media engagement needs. This condition shows that the image of digital tourist destinations has a dynamic, fluid character, and is greatly influenced by the relationship between media technology, platform algorithms, and users' digital cultural practices.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of the study of digital da'wah communication and religious tourism by showing that the formation of the image of tourist destinations is the result of multidimensional interaction between tourists, digital media, religious symbols, and local culture. This research expands the destination image theory approach by including the dimensions of digital religion and participatory communication as an important part of the process of constructing the image of contemporary tourist destinations. In addition, this study also shows that the practice of digital da'wah communication on Lemukutan Island is related to the global phenomenon of digital religious tourism that is developing in various countries through the integration of social media, spiritual experiences, and digital visual culture. Thus, Lemukutan Island can not only be understood as a local tourist destination, but also as part of the global transformation of tourism and religious communication in the digital media era.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that digital da'wah communication not only functions as a medium for disseminating religious messages, but also as a space for the formation of spiritual experiences and the image of tourist destinations. The process develops through the participation of tourists, local communities, and social media in building a representation of Lemukutan Island in the digital space. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of digital da'wah communication studies by offering a conceptual perspective on tourists as digital da'wah communication actors who produce User Generated Content (UGC), expanding the relationship between symbolic interaction theory, participatory culture, and destination image construction in the global phenomenon of digital religious tourism, while providing practical implications for the management of culture-based tourism and religiosity in the global phenomenon of religious tourism. New Media Era. However, this study still has limitations in the number of informants,

location coverage, and variety of social media platforms. Therefore, further research is needed with a more diverse methodological approach and cross-destination coverage of religious tourism.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, F.A. and B.A.; methodology, F.A., B.A., and M.K.G.; software, M.K.G.; validation, F.A., B.A., H., and L.H.; formal analysis, F.A. and B.A.; investigation, F.A., B.A., and M.K.G.; resources, H. and L.H.; data curation, F.A. and M.K.G.; writing—original draft preparation, F.A.; writing—review and editing, B.A., H., and L.H.; visualization, M.K.G.; supervision, H. and L.H.; project administration, F.A.; funding acquisition, Not applicable. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the authors used OpenAI ChatGPT to improve the clarity of language, grammar, and academic writing. After using this tool, the authors carefully reviewed and edited the content and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funder had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

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