

HYBRID COASTAL DA'WAH MODEL: INTEGRATING DIGITAL MEDIA AND LOCAL WISDOM TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS MODERATION AMONG COASTAL MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Purpose – This study examines how the integration of digital media and local wisdom shapes hybrid da'wah practices that promote religious moderation among coastal Muslim communities in Bancar, Tuban, Indonesia. **Design/methodology/approach** – A qualitative case study was conducted between March and May 2026. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 18 informants selected through purposive and snowball sampling (religious leaders, mosque administrators, digital da'wah managers, youth, women's religious-group representatives, fishermen and coastal residents, and village stakeholders), participant observation, and the analysis of digital documents. The data were analysed through reflexive thematic analysis supported by NVivo. **Findings** – Hybrid coastal da'wah emerges from the interaction of four components: local religious authority, digital media circulation, coastal local wisdom, and the values of religious moderation. WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and short-form videos widen the reach of religious messages, whereas mosque administrators and religious leaders act as trusted gatekeepers who validate and filter content. Local wisdom, expressed in rukun, gotong royong, tepo seliro, and respect for elders, provides the cultural infrastructure through which moderation is communicated calmly and accepted socially. Uneven digital literacy and externally produced content with a harsher tone remain the main constraints. **Research limitations/implications** – The single-case design precludes statistical generalisation; the study instead offers an analytically transferable model for digital religion and community-based da'wah scholarship. **Practical implications** – Religious institutions can strengthen mosque-based gatekeeping, involve youth as digital intermediaries, and embed digital literacy and village-level deliberation in outreach strategies. **Originality/value** – The study proposes the Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model, showing that moderation is fostered through the synergy of trusted authority, responsible digital communication, and culturally rooted Islamic practice rather than by digital transformation alone.

Keywords: Hybrid coastal da'wah, digital media, local wisdom, religious moderation, coastal Muslim communities

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Digital media has transformed religious communication, yet research on digital da'wah has concentrated on urban preachers and online influencers, leaving coastal Muslim communities largely underexplored. This study addresses that gap by examining how digital media and local wisdom are combined in a Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model that promotes religious moderation in Bancar, Tuban, Indonesia. The findings show that moderation emerges from the synergy of trusted local religious authority, responsible digital communication, and

culturally rooted Islamic practice. The model offers practical guidance for community-based da'wah and a new perspective for studies of digital religion, Islamic communication, and religious moderation.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of digital communication has reshaped how religious knowledge is produced, distributed, and consumed across Muslim societies. Expanding internet connectivity and social media platforms have moved religious communication from face-to-face encounters toward hybrid practices that combine offline religious authority with online participation. In contemporary Muslim communities, da'wah is no longer confined to mosques, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), religious gatherings, or village forums; it increasingly circulates through YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok. This shift creates new opportunities for disseminating Islamic messages while generating challenges concerning religious authority, interpretation, and the circulation of competing narratives. Scholarship on digital religion has shown that online religious spaces are arenas in which identity, authority, and community engagement are continuously negotiated, and that online and offline religious life are entangled rather than separate (Campbell, 2017; Campbell & Tsuria, 2022; Evolvi, 2022; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020).

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, illustrates these dynamics clearly. Social media allows *kyai*, *ustadz*, community leaders, and emerging digital preachers to reach audiences far beyond their locality, but the same openness fosters fragmented interpretations, polarization, and contestation between established religious authorities and new online figures (Akmaliah, 2020; Aidulsyah, 2023; Lim, 2017). Studies of digital Islamic learning indicate that social media simultaneously strengthens the dissemination of religious teachings and challenges inherited forms of authority (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020), while research on Muslim social-media influencers shows how popularity-based forms of authority reimagine Islamic practice (Zaid et al., 2022). Developing contextual models of da'wah that combine digital adaptability with local cultural values is therefore increasingly important, particularly in communities with strong social and cultural identities such as coastal Muslim societies.

Coastal communities constitute distinctive socio-religious environments because their religious life is intertwined with maritime livelihoods, dense kinship and neighbourhood networks, and inherited local traditions (Abdurrahman et al., 2026). The coastal Muslim community of Bancar, Tuban, East Java, exemplifies this intersection of Islamic values and local wisdom through communal traditions, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), social solidarity, and cultural practices linked to maritime life. At the same time, the community is experiencing social change driven by technological development, migration, economic transformation, and growing exposure to digital religious content. This situation raises a pressing question: how can da'wah remain culturally relevant while responding to digital transformation and promoting religious moderation?

Existing literature approaches this question from several directions. Research on digital da'wah has examined the transformation of religious authority, online Islamic learning, and the role of social media in spreading religious messages (Eviyanti et al., 2025; Hjarvard, 2016; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020). Recent contributions in the da'wah management literature show that institutions can retain religious authenticity online by combining scholarly legitimacy with editorial control and moderation-oriented values (Al-Manduri et al., 2025), and that congregations respond to blended, online–offline da'wah programmes in organisationally

patterned ways (Heriansyah & Achmad, 2025). Work on WhatsApp-based religious movements shows how everyday messaging platforms can organise devotional practice at scale (Nisa, 2018), while studies of broadcasting regulation highlight the difficulty of governing online proselytizing (Kholili et al., 2024). In parallel, scholarship on religious moderation and local wisdom suggests that cooperation, tolerance, and collective responsibility function as social capital that supports peaceful coexistence and moderate religious attitudes (Amin, 2025; Pajariantanto et al., 2022; Rusmalita et al., 2026). The findings across these streams are not fully aligned: digital media is portrayed both as a force that fragments authority and as a tool through which established institutions extend it, and local wisdom is portrayed as a stabilising resource but rarely as something that digital media can revitalise.

Three gaps follow from this review. First, research on digital da'wah predominantly concerns urban Muslims and online religious influencers, whereas few studies examine how digital religious communication operates in rural and coastal Muslim societies. Second, social media is often analysed as a communication technology without sufficient attention to the local cultural structures that shape religious acceptance and participation. Third, research on local wisdom and religious moderation emphasises cultural values but rarely asks how digital platforms can serve as instruments for sustaining them. Empirically, little is known about how traditional religious actors and local communities in coastal areas negotiate between cultural authenticity and the adoption of digital communication strategies. As a result, the relationship among digital media adaptation, local cultural identity, and religious moderation remains insufficiently theorised and empirically examined (Table 1).

Table 1
Research Gap in Prior Studies

Study	Main focus	Primary emphasis relative to the present study	Gap addressed by this study
Campbell (2017)	Theoretical approaches within digital religion studies	General conceptual orientation across religious traditions	Localised coastal Muslim practice
Solahudin & Fakhruroji (2020)	Social media, Islamic learning, religious populism, and authority in Indonesia	Online religious discourse and learning practices	Integration of offline community life and local culture
Akmaliah (2020)	Contestation of moderate Islam and religious authority on new media	Platform-level contestation among religious actors	Everyday moderation practices in a village setting
Pajariantanto et al. (2022)	Tolerance between religions through local wisdom and religious moderation	Cultural values as a basis for tolerance	Role of digital media in sustaining local wisdom
Heriansyah & Achmad (2025)	Management of, and congregational response to, a blended da'wah programme	Programme-level organisation of hybrid da'wah	Coastal identity and the moderation outcomes of hybrid da'wah
Abdurrahman et al. (2026)	Digital da'wah communication and destination image in an island religious-tourism setting	Image construction and religious tourism	Moderation as the outcome of hybrid da'wah
Present study	Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model in Bancar, Tuban	Integration of digital media, local wisdom, local religious authority, and coastal Muslim identity	Contextual hybrid da'wah framework for religious moderation

Source: Authors' synthesis of the cited literature.

Against this background, the study aims to develop and analyse a Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model that integrates digital media utilisation and local wisdom to promote religious moderation among coastal Muslim communities in Bancar, Tuban, East Java, Indonesia. Three research questions guide the investigation. RQ1: How do coastal Muslim communities in Bancar utilise digital media in contemporary da'wah practices? RQ2: How do local wisdom values influence the formation and acceptance of religious moderation in the community? RQ3: How can the integration of digital media and local wisdom constitute a hybrid da'wah model that is culturally relevant and socially sustainable?

The study contributes theoretically, empirically, and methodologically. Theoretically, it introduces the Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model, extending digital religion perspectives by incorporating geographical context, cultural identity, and local wisdom as constitutive components of religious communication, and by conceptualising da'wah as a hybrid process in which online media and offline cultural practice continuously interact. Empirically, it provides new evidence from Bancar as an underrepresented coastal Muslim community, showing how local religious actors adapt digital technologies while sustaining culturally embedded Islamic practice. Methodologically, it offers a contextual, NVivo-assisted analytic approach that examines da'wah at the intersection of digital communication, community culture, and religious moderation. Practically, the model can inform religious institutions, policymakers, and community organisations seeking inclusive and culturally sensitive da'wah strategies for the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Religion and Hybrid Da'wah Management

Digital transformation has changed the landscape of religious communication by creating new forms of interaction among religious institutions, religious actors, and communities (Eviyanti et al., 2025). The emergence of digital religion shows that technology is not merely a communication tool but a social and cultural environment in which religious meanings, authority, and practices are continuously negotiated. Campbell (2017) conceptualises digital religion as the intersection of online technological environments and offline religious traditions, emphasising that digital platforms reshape how communities construct identity, authority, and belonging. Evolvi (2022) extends this view by arguing that online and offline spaces are entangled and by drawing attention to materiality and space through the notion of hypermediated religious spaces, while Campbell and Evolvi (2020) situate current research within broader debates on emerging technologies. Methodologically, digital religion research has increasingly combined online and offline data to capture this entanglement (Tsuria et al., 2017).

From a da'wah management perspective, digital transformation requires religious actors and institutions to adapt communication strategies while safeguarding religious authority and ethical standards. Mediatization theory contends that media change the conditions under which religious authority is exercised without necessarily eliminating it (Hjarvard, 2016). Recent research published in *J-MD Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah* illustrates the point: the study of NU Online shows that Islamic institutions maintain authenticity in digital environments by combining established scholarly legitimacy with digital strategies and moderation-oriented values (Al-Manduri et al., 2025), and research on surau congregations documents how blended da'wah programmes are managed and received (Heriansyah & Achmad, 2025). In the Indonesian context, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become important

spaces for religious education and identity formation, yet digital da'wah also produces fragmented authority, competition among actors, and the circulation of exclusive interpretations (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020). This study therefore adopts Digital Religion Theory as its grand theoretical foundation, complemented by mediatization theory, because together they explain how religious communication develops through the interaction of technological innovation and existing socio-cultural structures. In coastal Muslim communities, digital da'wah cannot be separated from local cultural characteristics, social networks, and inherited traditions.

Local Wisdom as a Cultural Foundation for Religious Moderation

Local wisdom represents the collective knowledge, values, and practices that communities develop through historical experience and social interaction. It functions as cultural capital that guides social relationships, conflict resolution, and solidarity, providing culturally accepted mechanisms for negotiation and cooperation among community members. Within Muslim societies, local wisdom interacts with Islamic values to produce contextual religious practices that accommodate cultural diversity. These practices are closely connected to the principles of religious moderation, including tolerance (*tasamuh*), balance (*tawazun*), and justice (*i'tidal*). Empirical work indicates that local cultural traditions provide social frameworks that encourage peaceful interaction among groups and thus contribute to tolerance and moderation (Amin, 2025; Pajarianto et al., 2022).

For coastal Muslim communities, local wisdom has particular significance because social life is shaped by maritime culture, collective economic activity, and dense community networks. In Bancar, traditions of cooperation, communal gathering, and maritime identity are cultural resources that can support contextual da'wah models. Research on da'wah strategies in peripheral and border communities likewise underscores that religious outreach depends on mobilising community resources and relationships (Rusmalita et al., 2026), and studies of digital da'wah in island settings show that religious communication is embedded in local place-based meanings (Abdurrahman et al., 2026).

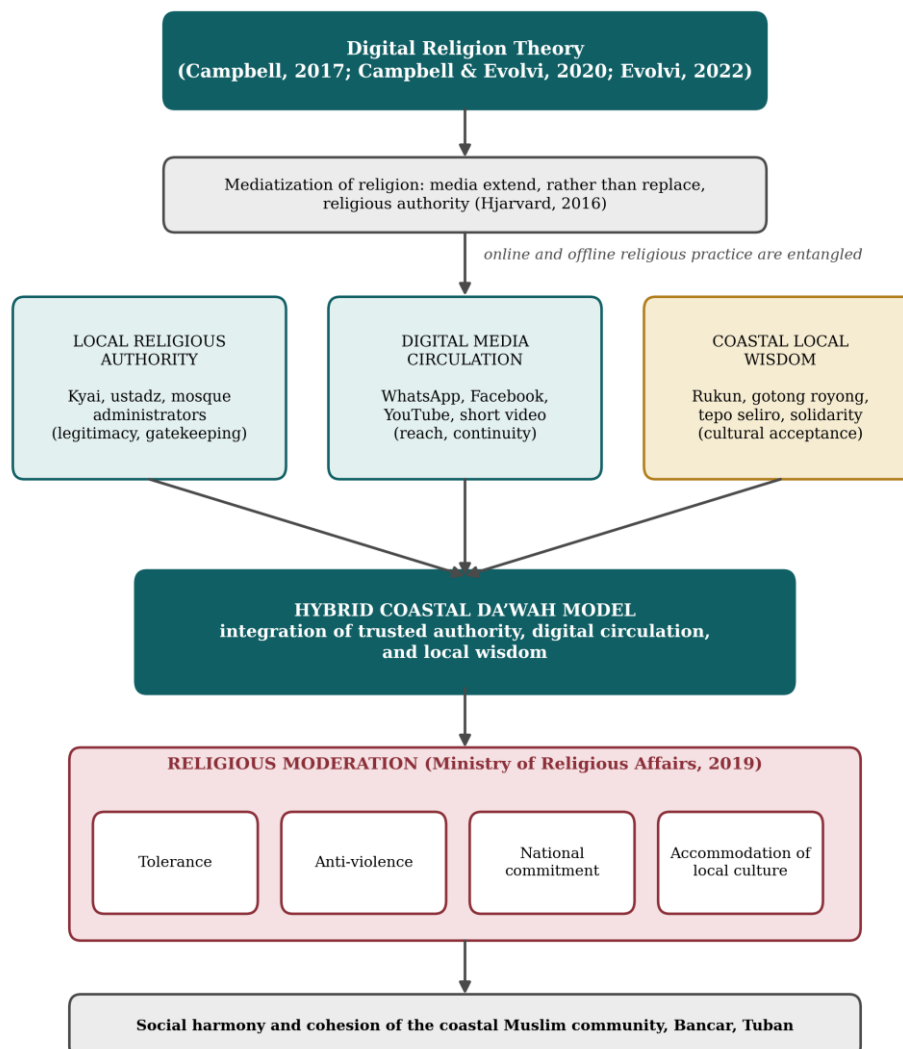
Religious Moderation in Coastal Muslim Communities

Religious moderation has become a central concept in contemporary Islamic studies, particularly in culturally and religiously diverse societies. It denotes a balanced religious understanding that avoids both excessive conservatism and radical interpretation. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019) frames moderation through four indicators: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. These indicators guide the analysis in this study. Moderate attitudes are shaped not only by theological understanding but also by social environment, cultural experience, and communication practices; moderation should therefore be analysed as a social process embedded in community interaction rather than as a purely doctrinal position. The contestation of moderate Islam on new media in Indonesia illustrates how moderation is claimed, challenged, and negotiated in digital arenas (Akmaliah, 2020), and the political significance of moderate Muslim actors in Indonesian public life has been widely debated (Menchik, 2019).

Coastal communities offer a valuable setting for examining moderation because they combine strong collective values, arising from dependence on cooperation and shared resources, with exposure to economic adaptation, globalisation, and cultural change. These characteristics create opportunities for religious communication strategies anchored in social solidarity. Yet increased access to online religious content may also introduce interpretations that do not align with local cultural values, and social media can intensify polarisation when

emotionally charged or identity-based content circulates in algorithmically segmented spaces (Lim, 2017). A contextual da’wah approach that integrates digital communication and local wisdom is therefore needed to sustain religious moderation (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Theoretical Relationship of the Hybrid Coastal Da’wah Model



Source: Authors’ conceptualisation, informed by Campbell (2017), Campbell and Evolvi (2020), Evolvi (2022), Hjarvard (2016), and Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2019).

Research Proposition Development

Because this study is qualitative, research propositions rather than statistical hypotheses are developed. The propositions serve as sensitising concepts that guide the exploration of relationships among digital media, local wisdom, hybrid da’wah practice, and religious moderation. From the perspective of Digital Religion Theory, digital media utilisation transforms traditional da’wah practice by expanding religious communication networks. Digital technology does not replace conventional religious practice but reshapes it by creating interconnected online and offline spaces (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020; Evolvi, 2022). Through digital platforms, religious actors and communities gain new opportunities to disseminate Islamic messages, strengthen engagement, and build broader networks of religious interaction.

Accordingly:

P1: Digital media utilisation transforms da'wah practice in coastal Muslim communities by extending the reach and continuity of religious communication.

Local wisdom, in turn, provides cultural frameworks that support tolerance, solidarity, and contextual Islamic understanding. Prior studies show that local cultural values operate as social mechanisms of religious harmony because they supply shared norms, collective identities, and community-based approaches to managing relationships (Amin, 2025; Pajariantio et al., 2022). In Bancar, values such as gotong royong, communal solidarity, and maritime cultural tradition are plausible foundations for moderate religious practice aligned with local social realities. Accordingly:

P2: Local wisdom strengthens religious moderation by providing cultural norms that make tolerant, peaceful, and contextual da'wah socially acceptable.

Building on these perspectives, the study proposes that the integration of digital media and local wisdom creates a hybrid form of da'wah that sustains moderation. This proposition extends prior literature by arguing that effective contemporary da'wah requires simultaneous adaptation to technological change and cultural identity; combining digital communication capability with locally embedded values makes da'wah more contextual, inclusive, and socially acceptable. Accordingly:

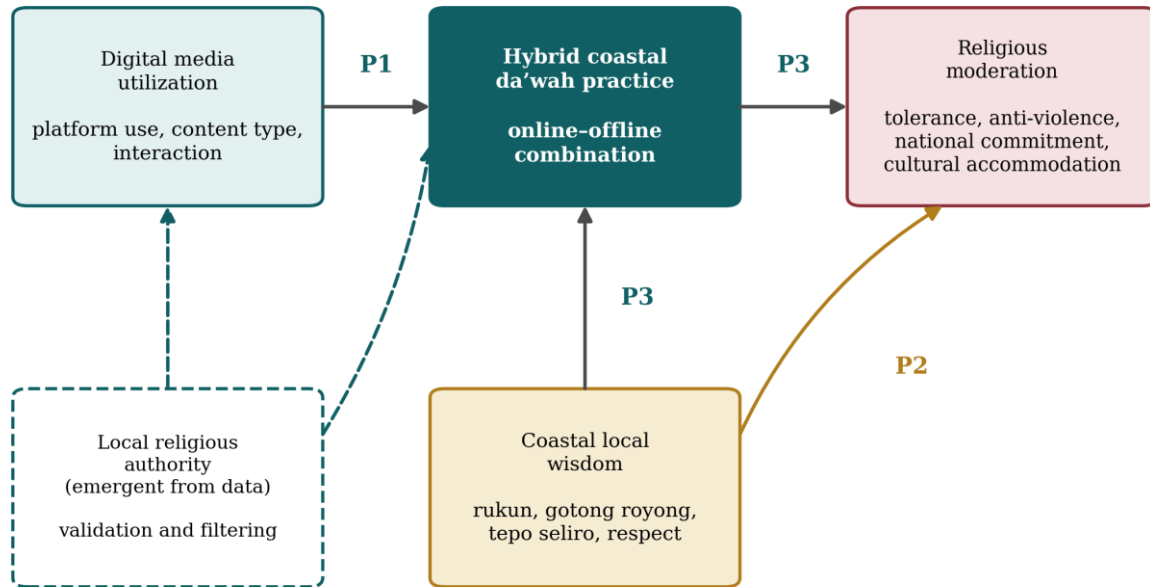
P3: The integration of digital media and local wisdom constitutes a Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model that promotes sustainable religious moderation.

Conceptual Research Model

Figure 2 depicts the conceptual model derived from the propositions. Digital media utilisation (P1) and local wisdom (P2) are conceptualised as inputs that converge in hybrid coastal da'wah practice (P3), which in turn is expected to promote religious moderation. Consistent with the inductive logic of qualitative inquiry, the model also allows for components that emerge from the data. Local religious authority is shown as such an emergent component because, as the Results demonstrate, it conditions how digital messages are validated before circulation. The model aligns the research objectives, theoretical framework, propositions, and empirical analysis, and provides the logic for the methodology that follows.

Figure 2
Conceptual Research Model

P1: digital media transform da'wah practice | P2: local wisdom strengthens moderation | P3: their integration sustains moderation



Source: Authors' conceptualisation. Dashed elements indicate components that emerged inductively from the field data.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study design to investigate the Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model as a way of integrating digital media and local wisdom to promote religious moderation among coastal Muslim communities. A qualitative approach was selected because the objective is not to measure causal relationships among variables but to explore social meanings, community experiences, cultural practices, and religious communication processes within a specific context. Qualitative research enables researchers to understand how individuals and communities interpret social phenomena through their own experiences and cultural backgrounds (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The case study design was chosen because the phenomenon is a contemporary social process unfolding in a real-life setting. Case studies are appropriate when researchers pose "how" and "why" questions about phenomena that cannot be separated from their contextual conditions (Yin, 2018). Digital da'wah practice, local wisdom, and religious moderation are therefore examined as interconnected phenomena within the coastal Muslim community of Bancar District, Tuban Regency. The theoretical foundation of the research is Digital Religion Theory (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020), which makes a qualitative case design suitable for examining how digital media and local wisdom interact in constructing a contextual da'wah model.

Research Setting and Informants

The research was conducted in Bancar District, Tuban Regency, East Java, Indonesia, a coastal area characterised by strong Islamic traditions, maritime cultural identity, and

community-based social relations. The site was selected purposively because Bancar is a coastal Muslim community undergoing social transformation in which digital media is increasingly used for religious communication. Informants were individuals with direct experience of religious communication, digital da'wah activity, and local cultural practice: religious leaders (kyai and ustadz), mosque and prayer-group administrators, digital da'wah administrators or content managers, coastal youth, women's religious-group representatives, fishermen and coastal residents, and village or community stakeholders. The study combined purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling identified participants with relevant knowledge of the phenomenon, and its logic was justified by the alignment between the sampling frame and the research questions (Campbell et al., 2020; Palinkas et al., 2015); snowball sampling then identified additional participants recommended by earlier informants.

In total, 18 informants participated. Sample size was guided by the principle of data saturation, operationalised as the point at which additional interviews no longer yielded significant new codes or themes (Guest et al., 2020). Empirical reviews indicate that saturation is typically reached within roughly 9–17 interviews in relatively homogeneous samples with narrowly defined objectives (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), and that meaning saturation, which requires a fuller understanding of issues, may call for somewhat larger samples (Hennink et al., 2017). The sample of 18 informants, drawn from a single community and a focused set of research questions, falls within these ranges.

Data Collection

Data were collected using three complementary techniques: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Combining these techniques enabled methodological triangulation and strengthened the credibility of the data, a practice that is particularly valuable when informants occupy positions of authority (Natow, 2020). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all informants using a guide derived from the theoretical framework and organised around three dimensions: (1) digital media utilisation in contemporary da'wah, (2) the role of local wisdom in shaping religious communication, and (3) strategies for promoting religious moderation among coastal communities. Participant observation captured community religious activities, cultural traditions, social interaction, and digital communication practices, showing how religious values and local wisdom are enacted in daily life. Document analysis examined digital da'wah content, social media posts, religious publications, community documents, and cultural records related to the coastal communities of Bancar, in line with approaches that integrate online and offline sources in digital religion research (Tsuria et al., 2017). Fieldwork took place between March and May 2026. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission, transcribed, and prepared for analysis. Interview excerpts reported here were originally in Indonesian and were translated into English by the authors.

Research Instruments and Operationalisation

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analysing data. The study was nevertheless supported by structured instruments: an interview guide, observation protocols, and a documentation framework. Three analytical dimensions derived from the theoretical framework (digital media, local wisdom, and religious moderation) were operationalised into indicators that guided data collection and the initial coding frame (Table 2). Because the design is qualitative, these indicators function as sensitising analytical categories rather than as scale items.

Table 2
Research Dimensions and Analytical Indicators

Research dimension	Conceptual definition	Analytical indicators
Digital media utilisation	Use of digital platforms for religious communication	Social media usage, online da'wah content, digital interaction
Local wisdom integration	Cultural values and traditions embedded in community life	Gotong royong, coastal traditions, communal solidarity
Hybrid coastal da'wah	Integration of digital communication and cultural practice	Online–offline da'wah combination, contextual religious messages
Religious moderation	Balanced and inclusive religious understanding (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019)	Tolerance, harmony, inclusiveness, anti-violence, national commitment, accommodation of local culture

Source: Authors' operationalisation of the theoretical framework.

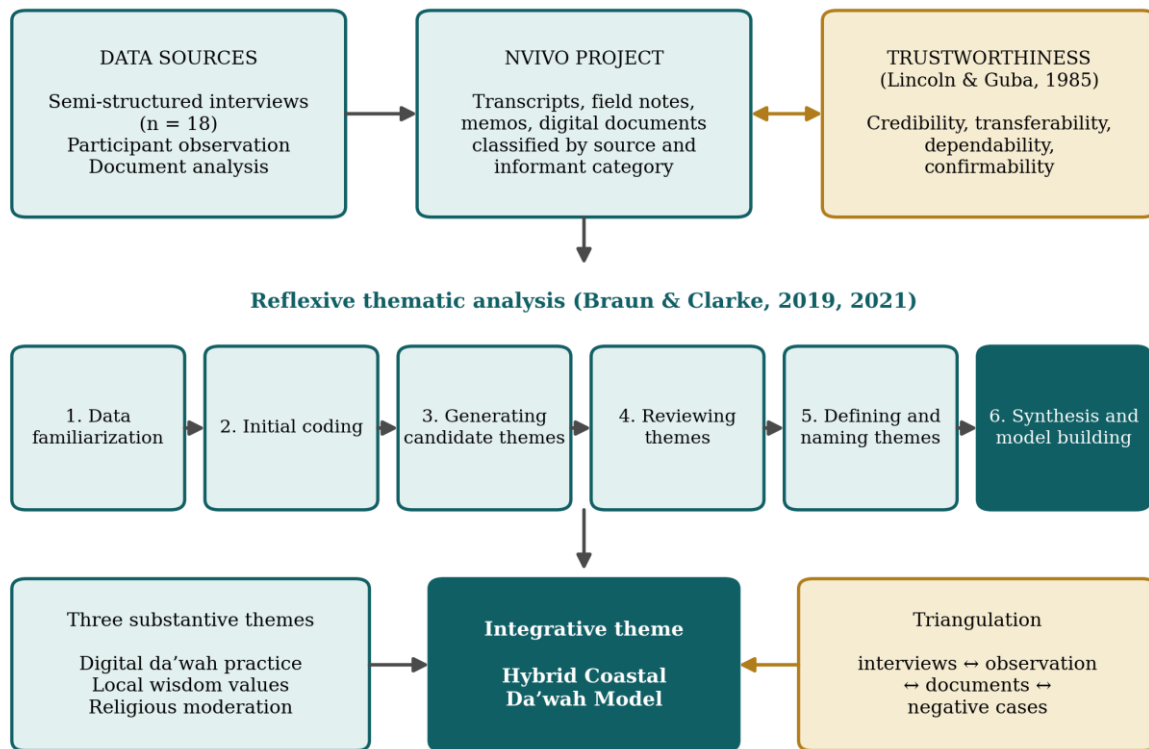
Research quality was safeguarded through the four criteria of trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and elaborated for thematic analysis by Nowell et al. (2017): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was maintained through triangulation of interviews, observations, and documents. Transferability was supported by thick description of the research context; because the aim is analytic rather than statistical generalisation, the findings are offered as a model that readers can assess for relevance to comparable settings (Smith, 2018). Dependability was ensured by systematic documentation of procedures, and confirmability by a transparent audit trail of analytical decisions.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analysed through reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2019, 2021, 2022). This approach was chosen because it offers a systematic yet interpretative procedure for identifying patterns of meaning and developing conceptual explanations from qualitative data. In line with Braun and Clarke (2023), themes were treated as patterns of shared meaning organised around a central organising concept, not as summaries of topics. The analysis proceeded through six phases: (1) familiarisation with transcripts and field notes; (2) initial coding of meaningful statements related to digital da'wah, local wisdom, and religious moderation; (3) generation of candidate themes by grouping related codes; (4) review of themes against the dataset and theoretical relevance; (5) definition and naming of final themes; and (6) synthesis of relationships among themes to construct the Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model (Figure 3). The process was recursive rather than linear (Byrne, 2022; Kiger & Varpio, 2020), and the movement from codes to categories to themes can be understood as progressively higher levels of abstraction and interpretation (Lindgren et al., 2020).

NVivo was used to organise coding, manage qualitative materials, and improve analytical transparency (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). Transcripts, observation notes, field memos, and documents were imported into a single project and classified by source, informant category, collection date, and relevance. The software functioned as an organisational and audit tool rather than as a substitute for researcher interpretation (Table 3).

Figure 3
Qualitative Data Analysis Framework



Source: Authors' analytical design, based on Braun and Clarke (2019, 2021) and Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Table 3
NVivo-Assisted Analytical Process

Analytical stage	NVivo-assisted procedure	Analytical output
Data preparation	Importing transcripts, observation notes, documents, and field memos	Organised qualitative database
Source classification	Assigning case classifications and informant attributes	Comparable informant groups
Initial coding	Coding meaningful statements and observed practices	Preliminary codes
Code review	Combining duplicate codes and separating overly broad codes	Refined code structure
Category development	Grouping related codes into conceptual categories	Digital da'wah, local wisdom, and moderation categories
Theme formation	Comparing categories across data sources and informant groups	Three substantive themes and one integrative theme
Triangulation	Comparing interviews, observations, documents, and negative cases	Confirmed and qualified findings
Model development	Using matrices, memos, and conceptual mapping	Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model

Source: Authors' analysis.

RESULTS

Informant Characteristics

The 18 informants occupied complementary positions in the production, circulation, reception, and contextualisation of da'wah messages (Table 4). Hybrid coastal da'wah does not operate exclusively through formal religious institutions; it also emerges through interpersonal relationships, family networks, fishermen's groups, women's religious gatherings, youth communities, mosques, village activities, and digital platforms. Including informants from different social positions allowed the perspectives of message producers to be compared with those of community members who received, interpreted, and redistributed the messages. Religious leaders provided information on the theological content and ethical objectives of da'wah; community members explained how messages were understood and applied in everyday life; and digital media administrators and younger informants supplied evidence on platform selection, circulation, audience interaction, and the challenges of online religious information.

Table 4
Characteristics of Research Informants

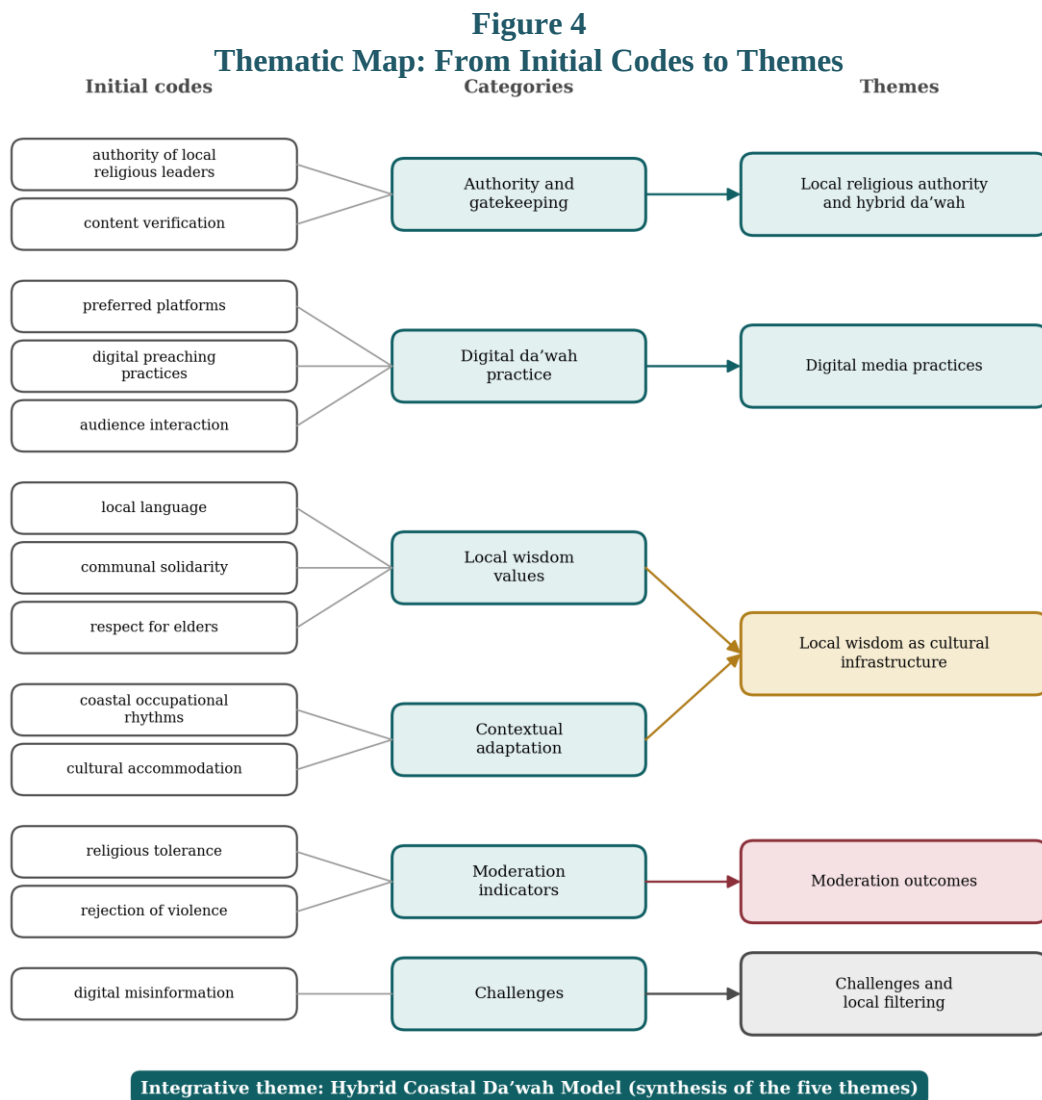
Informant category	Institutional or social role	n	Primary contribution to the data
Kyai, ustadz, or local religious leaders	Religious authority and da'wah guidance	3	Religious interpretation, da'wah methods, and moderation narratives
Mosque or prayer-group administrators	Organisation of local religious activities	3	Offline da'wah activities and community participation
Digital da'wah administrators or content managers	Management of WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, or other platforms	3	Production and circulation of digital religious content
Coastal youth representatives	Active users and recipients of digital religious media	3	Digital engagement, religious learning preferences, and media literacy
Women's religious-group representatives	Members or administrators of majelis taklim and community groups	1	Family-based religious education and community transmission
Fishermen and coastal residents	Community recipients of da'wah messages	2	Everyday religious practice and coastal cultural experience
Village or community stakeholders	Local governance and social coordination	3	Community cohesion, conflict prevention, and institutional support
Total		18	

Source: Field data, March–May 2026.

Thematic Structure

The analysis generated three principal substantive themes (digital da'wah practice, local wisdom values, and religious moderation) that were integrated into a fourth, higher-order theme: the Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model. Initial codes included digital preaching practices, preferred social media platforms, authority of local religious leaders, audience interaction, local language, coastal occupational rhythms, communal solidarity, religious tolerance, rejection of violence, cultural accommodation, and digital misinformation. Codes concerning WhatsApp distribution, Facebook announcements, recorded sermons, and online religious consultation were grouped under digital da'wah practice; codes concerning local language, communal cooperation, respect for elders, collective religious activity, and culturally familiar communication were organised under local wisdom values. Figure 4 summarises how codes were consolidated into categories and themes. The themes were analytically distinct but closely interconnected: digital media provided communicative reach, local wisdom supplied social and

cultural legitimacy, and religious moderation provided the ethical orientation of the model. The following subsections present each theme in turn; Indonesian excerpts are provided in Appendix Table A1.



Source: NVivo-assisted analysis of field data.

Local Religious Authority and the Formation of Hybrid Coastal Da'wah

The first finding is that hybrid coastal da'wah in Bancar is shaped by the continued importance of local religious authority. Although digital media has expanded the circulation of Islamic messages, mosque administrators, kyai, ustadz, and community elders remain central in determining which messages are acceptable, trustworthy, and socially appropriate. Digital da'wah in Bancar therefore does not replace traditional authority; it operates through a hybrid relationship between offline legitimacy and online distribution (Hjarvard, 2016; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020).

Mosques function as the primary institutional base of da'wah. Messages are first produced, validated, or socially approved through Friday sermons, Qur'anic recitation groups, study circles, and community announcements, and are only then circulated through WhatsApp groups, Facebook posts, YouTube links, or short digital reminders. A village head emphasised

that digital media is useful but that messages must still be controlled by trusted local actors:

“Nowadays, whenever there is a religious study session, an imam’s schedule, or a mosque activity, we usually share it through the WhatsApp group. The congregation gets to know faster. But we still choose messages whose source is clear so that they do not cause misunderstanding among the congregation.”

— *Village Head, Mr. Sarmin, interview, May 2026*

The role of the mosque administrator (takmir) is not limited to administration. Mosque administrators act as communicative gatekeepers: they filter religious content, select speakers, organise activities, and prevent the spread of provocative messages. This is consistent with research showing that online religious communication can challenge authority but can also strengthen local institutions when digital tools are managed by trusted actors (Kholili et al., 2024; Tsuria et al., 2017). A mosque administrator explained the filtering logic:

“Not every sermon from the internet can be shared immediately. If the language is too harsh or the source is unclear, we usually hold it back first. We prefer da’wah that calms the congregation and does not provoke conflict.”

— *Mosque Administrator, Mr. H. Bari, interview, May 2026*

Hybrid coastal da’wah is thus not simply a digital communication model but a locally rooted system in which mosque-based authority provides legitimacy while digital media provides speed, reach, and continuity.

Digital Media Practices in Coastal Religious Communication

The second finding concerns the practical use of digital media. WhatsApp is the dominant platform because it is easy to use, familiar to older and younger residents, and suited to village-based communication. It distributes religious announcements, prayer schedules, study-session invitations, donation information, moral advice, and short reminders. Facebook and YouTube are used more selectively, mainly for recorded sermons or content from recognised scholars. Digital da’wah in Bancar is not designed for large-scale branding or influencer-style popularity; its principal function is community maintenance. It keeps residents connected to mosque activities even when they cannot attend, which matters in a setting where work rhythms are irregular because of fishing, trade, market activity, weather, and family responsibilities. A coastal resident explained:

“When I am out at sea or at work, sometimes I cannot attend the religious study. But through the WhatsApp group I can still learn about the mosque announcements and receive religious advice from the ustadz.”

— *Coastal community member, Mr. Saefudin, interview, May 2026*

A generational division in digital participation was also evident. Older residents tend to consume digital information passively, whereas younger residents actively produce, edit, forward, and repost content. This division did not generate conflict; young people helped mosque administrators and community leaders circulate information and became digital intermediaries between traditional authority and online audiences. As a young resident put it:

“Usually the young people help make digital pamphlets or spread information about the study session through WhatsApp and Facebook status. The elders give direction; we

help spread the information.”

— Young resident, A. Najib, interview, May 2026

Observable indicators of digital da’wah include platform type, message frequency, message format, sender identity, audience response, and the extent to which digital messages lead to offline participation. A WhatsApp announcement becomes meaningful not merely when it is read but when it encourages residents to attend study sessions or join communal religious events; digital effectiveness must therefore be assessed through both online circulation and offline social response. Overall, digital media functions as an amplifier rather than a replacement: it magnifies mosque-based messages, supports coordination, and expands participation, but its effectiveness depends on social trust, local authority, and cultural appropriateness (Aidulsyah, 2023; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020).

Local Wisdom as the Cultural Infrastructure of Religious Moderation

The third finding is that local wisdom is the cultural infrastructure that makes religious moderation socially acceptable in Bancar. Values such as rukun (social harmony), gotong royong, tepo seliro (empathic consideration of others), respect for elders, communal solidarity, and sensitivity to coastal livelihoods shape the tone, language, examples, and social objectives of religious messages (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019; Pajarianto et al., 2022). Effective da’wah is judged not only by doctrinal correctness but by its capacity to maintain harmony. Informants stressed that messages should not humiliate others, provoke conflict, or reject local traditions without careful explanation; a doctrinally correct message delivered harshly may be rejected. A village head confirmed the preventive role of local wisdom:

“In a coastal village like this, the most important thing is that residents remain harmonious (rukun). Local traditions are maintained as long as they do not contradict religious values. If there are differences of opinion, they are usually resolved through deliberation.”

— Village Head, Mr. Sarmin, interview, May 2026

Local wisdom also shapes attitudes toward cultural-religious practices. Collective prayers, religious commemorations, village gatherings, and communal coastal traditions are generally accepted when interpreted as expressions of gratitude, solidarity, and social cohesion. This acceptance is not uncritical: local actors negotiate religious meaning through dialogue, explanation, and gradual adjustment. A community member emphasised the preference for a peaceful tone:

“We prefer da’wah with a peaceful tone. If a preacher blames other people too much, people usually dislike it, because here people know each other closely.”

— Coastal community member, Mr. Saeful, interview, May 2026

Local wisdom is therefore not an ornament of da’wah but a core mechanism that translates religious moderation into socially recognisable behaviour. In Bancar, moderation becomes effective when communicated through local language, values, authority, and experience.

Religious Moderation Outcomes in Hybrid Coastal Da’wah

The fourth finding is that hybrid coastal da’wah contributes to four dimensions of

religious moderation identified by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019): tolerance, anti-violence, national commitment, and accommodation of local culture. These dimensions appear not only in formal statements but also in everyday communication: in how residents respond to difference, avoid provocation, respect traditions, and sustain social cohesion. Tolerance appears in residents' willingness to maintain social relations despite differences in religious preference, organisational affiliation, or worship style, and informants described it as an active effort to avoid unnecessary conflict. In digital spaces, tolerance appears when residents decline to forward insulting, sectarian, or politically provocative religious messages. Anti-violence appears in a preference for calm, persuasive da'wah; because preachers address people they know personally, social closeness creates accountability. A coastal resident explained:

"For us, religion should make people feel at peace. Village traditions can still be preserved, but their meaning needs to be directed so that it stays in line with Islamic teachings."

— *Coastal community member, Mr. Saefudin, interview, May 2026*

National commitment appears in the integration of religious messages with civic responsibility: mosque announcements and village religious activities emphasise public order, cooperation, discipline, and participation in community programmes, so religious identity and citizenship are not treated as opposing commitments. A village head linked religious activity to social order:

"Religious activities here are not only about worship. They also help maintain relations among residents. The village government supports mosque activities and religious study because they also help maintain social order."

— *Village Head, Mr. Sarmin, interview, May 2026*

Accommodation of local culture appears in the community's ability to preserve traditions while maintaining Islamic values. Local actors do not automatically reject cultural practices; they reinterpret them through religious ethics and social benefit, so that local culture supports moderation rather than becoming a source of conflict. The key mechanism is contextual negotiation, not uncritical acceptance. Overall, hybrid coastal da'wah promotes moderation because it combines the credibility of local authority, the reach of digital media, and the social legitimacy of local wisdom. Digital media alone cannot guarantee moderation, local culture alone cannot reach all audiences, and mosque authority alone is limited by physical attendance.

Challenges and the Proposed Model of Hybrid Coastal Da'wah

The fifth finding concerns challenges. The most visible is uneven digital literacy: some residents can identify reliable religious sources, while others forward messages without checking origin, context, or social impact, which creates vulnerability to external narratives that may not fit Bancar's religious culture (Kholili et al., 2024; Lim, 2017). A second challenge is the gap between local da'wah style, which is relational, polite, and context-sensitive, and some external online content that uses sharper language, simplified claims, or polarising frames. A mosque administrator described the concern:

"We must be careful with religious content from outside. Sometimes the message is good, but the language is too harsh for our community. If it is shared without explanation, it can cause confusion."

The findings suggest a model of hybrid coastal da'wah comprising four interrelated components: local religious authority (legitimacy), digital media circulation (reach), coastal local wisdom (cultural acceptance), and moderation values (ethical direction). Each component can be traced through empirical indicators: informant trust, sermon influence, and content verification practices for authority; platform use, content type, frequency, and audience interaction for digital circulation; references to rukun, gotong royong, respect, and communal practice for local wisdom; and tolerance, anti-violence, national commitment, and cultural accommodation for moderation. The model should not be reduced to online da'wah; it is a socio-religious system in which online and offline practices reinforce each other. The central finding is that religious moderation in Bancar is promoted not by digital transformation alone but by the integration of digital media, trusted local authority, and culturally rooted wisdom (Table 5).

Table 5
Summary of Research Findings

Sub-theme	Empirical indicator	Data source	Interpretation
Local religious authority	Takmir, kyai, and ustadz validate religious messages	Interviews, observation	Digital da'wah depends on offline legitimacy
Mosque-based communication	Mosque announcements circulated online	Observation, digital documentation	Mosque remains the centre of religious communication
Digital media use	WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, short videos	Digital documentation	Digital media expands da'wah reach
Youth as digital intermediaries	Young residents help circulate da'wah content	Interviews	Hybrid da'wah is intergenerational
Local wisdom	Rukun, gotong royong, tepo seliro	Interviews, observation	Culture shapes da'wah tone
Tolerance	Avoiding provocative and sectarian messages	Interviews, digital observation	Moderation appears in daily digital conduct
Anti-violence	Preference for calm and persuasive preaching	Interviews	Social proximity reduces aggressive rhetoric
National commitment	Religion linked with civic responsibility	Interviews, village observation	Islam and citizenship are locally integrated
Cultural accommodation	Local traditions interpreted through Islamic values	Interviews, observation	Local culture supports moderation
Hybrid model	Offline authority plus online circulation	Cross-data analysis	Da'wah becomes locally rooted and digitally mediated

Source: Authors' analysis of field data.

DISCUSSION

Local Religious Authority and the Hybridization of Coastal Da'wah

The findings indicate that local religious authority remains the main foundation of da'wah practice in Bancar. Mosque administrators, kyai, ustadz, and respected community figures determine which messages are acceptable, and the legitimacy of digital messages depends on trusted local actors. Digital da'wah thus does not replace conventional da'wah; it creates a hybrid in which mosque-based authority and digital media support each other. This supports the mediatization argument that media change the form of religious communication without necessarily eliminating established authority (Hjarvard, 2016) and resonates with evidence that institutions with strong scholarly legitimacy can carry that legitimacy into digital environments (Al-Manduri et al., 2025).

The finding differs from accounts that emphasise the rise of influencer-based authority in digital spaces, in which visibility and follower numbers generate legitimacy (Zaid et al., 2022), and from analyses of contestation among competing religious voices on new media (Akmaliah, 2020; Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020). In Bancar, authority is built through social trust, personal recognition, and long-term involvement in community life, which makes coastal da'wah more relational and community-based than urban, platform-centred models. A plausible explanation is the density of coastal social networks: when preacher and audience know one another, authority is continually checked by everyday interaction. Mosque administrators also act as digital gatekeepers, selecting and filtering content rather than passively relaying it. The main contribution of this finding is the argument that moderation in digital da'wah requires local legitimacy, not only online visibility.

Digital Media as an Extension of Community-Based Religious Communication

Digital media is used mainly as an extension of community-based religious communication. WhatsApp is the most practical medium because it is familiar and suited to village-level communication, and its main function is to sustain religious connectedness rather than to build religious brands. This echoes research demonstrating how WhatsApp groups can organise devotional practice among Indonesian Muslims (Nisa, 2018), while showing a different logic: in Bancar the platform serves a pre-existing congregation, not a newly formed online movement. For residents whose schedules are shaped by fishing and trade, digital channels reduce barriers of time, distance, and occupational mobility, thereby increasing the inclusiveness of da'wah.

The intergenerational pattern, in which older actors provide direction and authority while younger residents handle technical production and circulation, shows that hybrid da'wah is also a collaboration between generations. This supports the view that digital religion should be understood as part of everyday religious practice rather than merely online content (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020; Evolvi, 2022), and it is compatible with organisational accounts of blended da'wah in congregational settings (Heriansyah & Achmad, 2025). Digital media in hybrid coastal da'wah should therefore be understood as an amplifier: it extends the reach of mosque-based messages without replacing the mosque, the study circle, or direct social interaction.

Local Wisdom as the Cultural Basis of Religious Moderation

Local wisdom plays a central role in shaping moderation in Bancar. Rukun, gotong royong, tepo seliro, respect for elders, and coastal solidarity act as cultural norms that regulate religious communication, making da'wah more acceptable when delivered peacefully and respectfully. This is consistent with studies showing that local wisdom supports tolerance and moderation (Amin, 2025; Pajarianto et al., 2022) and with the Indonesian moderation framework, particularly the indicator of accommodation of local culture (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). The study adds two refinements. First, accommodation does not mean accepting all traditions uncritically: practices are guided so that they remain socially meaningful and religiously acceptable, which reflects negotiation rather than rigid opposition between religion and culture. Second, village leadership matters: village actors support religious activity, encourage deliberation (musyawarah), and prevent conflict, which indicates that moderation is not solely the responsibility of religious leaders but also involves local governance. Without local wisdom, digital da'wah risks becoming detached from the lived reality of coastal Muslim communities.

Religious Moderation as an Outcome and the Challenge of Digital Literacy

Hybrid coastal da'wah contributes to tolerance, anti-violence, national commitment, and accommodation of local culture, and these are visible in everyday practice and digital conduct, such as declining to forward provocative content. Moderation here is the outcome of an interaction among technology, authority, and culture, not of digital media alone. Examining moderation at the level of everyday practice is a contribution in itself: in coastal communities moderation is often expressed not through formal terminology but through how people speak, share messages, respect traditions, and avoid conflict.

Uneven digital literacy is the main challenge. Digital literacy in this context is not only the technical ability to use smartphones; it includes evaluating sources, understanding religious authority, recognising provocative language, and considering the social consequences of sharing. Where external content enters local digital spaces without contextualisation, even well-meant messages can cause misunderstanding because tone and framing do not fit local communication ethics. This is relevant to research showing that social media can intensify polarisation when emotionally charged or identity-based content circulates (Lim, 2017) and to concerns about the limited governability of online proselytizing (Kholili et al., 2024). In Bancar, the risk is mitigated when content is filtered by trusted authority and framed by local wisdom. Table 6 summarises the discussion.

Table 6
Discussion Matrix of Hybrid Coastal Da'wah

Finding	Theoretical interpretation	Empirical indicator	Contribution to religious moderation
Mosque-based authority remains central	Digital media extends, not replaces, local authority	Takmir filters messages before sharing	Prevents misleading and provocative da'wah
WhatsApp and social media support da'wah	Digital religion is embedded in everyday practice	Religious announcements shared online	Expands access to religious messages
Youth act as digital intermediaries	Hybrid da'wah is intergenerational	Youth create and share digital content	Connects traditional authority with digital audiences
Local wisdom shapes da'wah tone	Culture regulates religious communication	Rukun, gotong royong, tepo seliro	Reduces conflict and supports tolerance
Village leadership supports harmony	Moderation requires social governance	Musyawah and community mediation	Strengthens civic and religious harmony
Digital literacy remains uneven	Online da'wah requires filtering capacity	Selective sharing of external content	Protects the community from extreme narratives

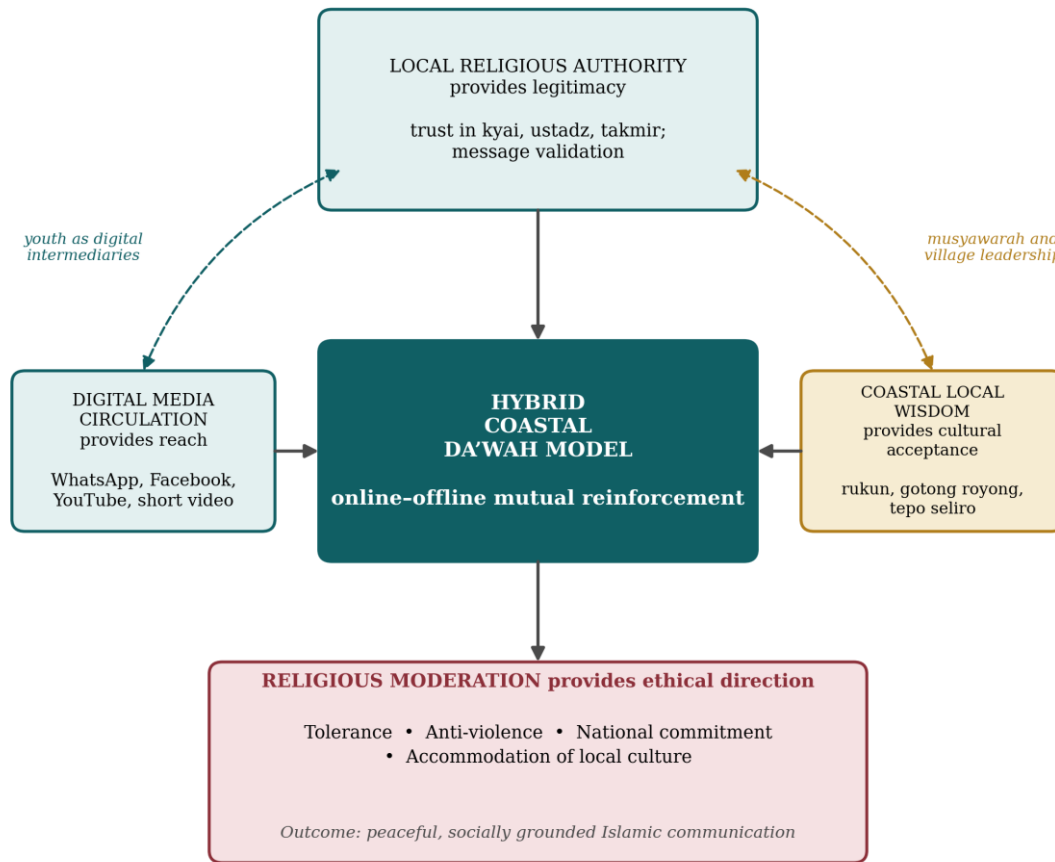
Source: Authors' analysis.

The Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model

Based on the discussion, the study proposes a model with four interrelated components (Figure 5). Local religious authority provides legitimacy; digital media circulation provides reach; coastal local wisdom provides cultural grounding; and religious moderation provides ethical direction. The model differs from online da'wah, which may centre on digital platforms alone, because it couples digital circulation with local authority and cultural values. This distinction matters because religious communication in coastal communities cannot be separated from social relations, local traditions, and communal life. The model is analytically measurable through the indicators identified above and can be examined in other settings.

Figure 5
The Hybrid Coastal Da'wah Model

Constraints: uneven digital literacy; external content with a harsher tone



Source: Authors' model, developed from the thematic analysis of field data.

Theoretical Contribution

The study contributes to digital religion and da'wah scholarship in three ways. First, it refines Digital Religion Theory by showing that the online–offline entanglement documented in prior work (Campbell, 2017; Evolvi, 2022) is structured by local authority, place-based culture, and an ethical orientation toward moderation. Hybrid da'wah is therefore an integrated system of technology, relational authority, cultural identity, and ethical moderation rather than merely a combination of online and offline communication. Second, it extends mediatization perspectives (Hjarvard, 2016) by specifying a mechanism, community gatekeeping, through which media do not displace authority but are subordinated to it in tightly knit communities. Third, it connects two literatures that have developed largely in parallel, digital da'wah and local wisdom–based moderation (Amin, 2025; Pajariantanto et al., 2022), by showing that digital platforms can revitalise local wisdom when they circulate messages framed through it.

Practical Implications

For religious institutions and da'wah managers, the findings suggest that mosque administrators should strengthen their role as digital gatekeepers through shared criteria for

verifying sources and assessing tone. Youth groups can be organised as digital facilitators, building on their existing role as intermediaries. Village leaders can support religious communication that sustains social harmony through deliberative forums. Religious teachers can produce messages that are doctrinally sound, locally relevant, and socially calming. For policymakers and religious affairs agencies, digital literacy programmes in coastal and rural communities should extend beyond technical skills to source evaluation, recognition of provocative framing, and awareness of the social consequences of sharing. Evaluation of such programmes should consider both online circulation and offline participation.

The findings are situated in a Muslim-majority, developing-country context in which religious life is organised around mosques and local congregations, kinship and neighbourhood ties are dense, and religious moderation is an explicit national policy framework. In other contexts, for example urban settings with weaker community ties or settings in which religious authority is more fragmented, the balance among the four components may differ, and platform-centred authority may play a larger role. The Bancar case suggests that, where community ties and local religious institutions are strong, digital transformation can reinforce rather than erode moderate, community-based religious communication.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the hybrid coastal da'wah model in Bancar, Tuban, is an adaptive form of Islamic communication that integrates digital media, local religious authority, coastal wisdom, and religious moderation. Digital transformation does not replace traditional da'wah structures but extends their reach and strengthens community-based religious communication. Mosque-based institutions, religious leaders, and local social networks remain sources of trust and legitimacy, while WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and short-video applications provide complementary spaces for dissemination and sustained engagement. The effectiveness of digital da'wah depends not only on technological accessibility but also on social trust and on the ability of local religious actors to interpret, verify, and contextualise information. Theoretically, the study positions hybrid da'wah as an integrated system of technology, relational authority, cultural identity, and ethical moderation. Practically, religious institutions and da'wah practitioners should develop culturally grounded digital strategies that combine technological competence, local wisdom, trusted authority, and moderation-oriented communication.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The research was conducted in a specific coastal context with a localised set of participants and social networks, so findings cannot be generalised directly to all Muslim coastal communities; they are offered as analytically transferable. The qualitative design provides contextual and interpretive insight rather than statistical measurement of the model's effectiveness. The study primarily captures the current interaction between digital da'wah and community practice and does not fully examine long-term development or generational differences. Future research could address these limitations through comparative studies across coastal and urban communities, longitudinal designs, or mixed-method approaches with larger and more diverse samples, and could examine how hybrid da'wah evolves with digital transformation and how local wisdom, religious authority, and digital media interact in strengthening moderation.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S.K.F.W.L. and A.U.; methodology, S.K.F.W.L.; software, S.K.F.W.L.; validation, S.K.F.W.L., A.U., and F.I.; formal analysis, S.K.F.W.L.; investigation, S.K.F.W.L.;

resources, S.K.F.W.L.; data curation, S.K.F.W.L.; writing original draft preparation, S.K.F.W.L.; writing review and editing, A.U. and F.I.; visualization, S.K.F.W.L.; supervision, A.U.; project administration, S.K.F.W.L.; funding acquisition, A.U. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles for studies involving human participants. Ethical review and approval were waived for this study because the research involved minimal-risk qualitative inquiry focusing on community perceptions, communication practices, and social experiences, without collecting sensitive personal information or conducting clinical interventions.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. All participants were informed about the objectives of the research, data collection procedures, confidentiality procedures, and their right to participate voluntarily or withdraw from the study.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Claude (Anthropic) to support language refinement, alignment of the manuscript with the journal template, drafting of figures, and organisation of references. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The qualitative data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available because of ethical considerations related to participant confidentiality and privacy. Information on the research design, analytical procedures, and thematic findings is provided within the manuscript.

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