

DAI PERCEPTIONS OF CHATGPT USE IN THE PRODUCTION OF DIGITAL DAKWAH CONTENT IN CIREBON

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Abstract

The wave of digital transformation that has pervaded nearly every aspect of human life in the twenty-first century carries implications that extend far beyond mere technological change. This shift reshapes the ways in which Muslims in Indonesia conduct dakwah (Islamic proselytisation), which has historically relied on face-to-face forums, religious study circles (majelis taklim), and Friday sermons. In the contemporary digital landscape, dakwah has evolved into digital content disseminated freely across platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, driven by the rapid growth of generative artificial intelligence most notably ChatGPT, launched by OpenAI in late 2022. This study examines the perceptions of dai (Islamic preachers) in Cirebon, West Java, toward the use of ChatGPT in the production of digital dakwah content, employing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as its analytical framework. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with purposive sampling, data were gathered from five informants through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and subsequently analysed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model. Findings reveal that perceived usefulness is generally positive, particularly regarding content-production efficiency, whilst perceived ease of use varies substantially according to age and digital-literacy level. Three attitudinal typologies were identified: affirmative-pragmatic, critical-selective, and conservative-apprehensive, each grounded in distinct theological, epistemological, and ethical considerations. Behavioural intention to continue using ChatGPT is moderated by social norms within the religious community and the availability of institutional support.

Keywords: dai perceptions, ChatGPT, digital dakwah, technology acceptance model, religious content

INTRODUCTION

The wave of digital transformation that has pervaded nearly every aspect of human life in the twenty first century carries implications that extend far beyond mere technological change. This shift fundamentally reshapes how humans communicate, share knowledge, and fulfil religious obligations. Within the context of Indonesian Muslims, this phenomenon has given rise to new patterns of dakwah activity, which has traditionally centred on face-to-face forums, Islamic study circles (majelis taklim), and sermons. Today, dakwah has transformed into digital content that flows

freely through platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and various other digital channels. This change is not merely a shift in medium; it represents a profound transformation in how religious messages are packaged, disseminated, and received by audiences increasingly accustomed to consuming information instantaneously and visually. As Nasrullah (2022) argues, the social media ecosystem in Indonesia has restructured the architecture of public communication including religious communication wherein the boundary between communicator and audience has grown increasingly blurred, and interaction occurs in real time without geographical barriers. This condition compels dai not only to master religious substance but also to possess adequate digital literacy so that the dakwah message remains relevant and capable of reaching audiences who are steadily migrating to virtual spaces.

Amid this digital transformation, the emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) most notably ChatGPT, launched by OpenAI in late 2022 marks a new chapter in the history of human-machine interaction. ChatGPT is capable of producing coherent text, answering complex questions, and assisting users in a variety of creative and analytical tasks through natural-language instructions alone. The arrival of this technology has disrupted not only industry and education but has also opened new horizons for dakwah practitioners who face the demands of producing content massively and consistently. According to Mollick (2023) in Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI, the ability of generative AI to produce high-quality content rapidly has fundamentally altered the way humans work and create a change that no profession can avoid, including those engaged in religious communication. Furthermore, Baidowi & Ashif (2023) note that the use of AI in Islamic practice in Indonesia has begun to show a significant upward trend, even though understanding and acceptance of it remain highly varied among religious leaders and the general public.

Islam itself has never closed the door to the use of tools and means that support the dissemination of truth and goodness. The Quran explicitly encourages humankind to continually employ reason and explore the gifts bestowed by God upon the earth as a means of worship and dakwah. Allah SWT declares in Surah al-Nahl, verse 125:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is guided."

In his exegesis Tafsir Al-Misbah, Shihab (2002) interprets the word hikmah as correct knowledge accompanied by a method of delivery that is precise and effective in accordance with the condition of the dakwah recipient. Shihab affirms that effective dakwah requires a deep understanding of the needs and conditions of the audience, as well as the utilisation of the best means available in any given era. In a contemporary context, this interpretation may be extended to encompass the use of digital technology including AI as a modern instrument of hikmah, enabling the message of Islam to be conveyed in a manner that is more engaging, comprehensible, and far-reaching. This verse therefore constitutes a strong theological foundation for dai to not merely permit, but actively encourage, the adoption of cutting-edge technology, provided the aim is to establish effective and responsible dakwah (Shihab, 2002)

As the country with the world's largest Muslim population exceeding 237 million according to the most recent census data Indonesia possesses an exceptionally rich and diverse dakwah ecosystem. Within this ecosystem, dai occupy a central role as agents of religious communication who bridge Islamic teachings and the daily life of society. In the digital era, however, this role can no longer be fulfilled through religious scholarship alone. Dai are now expected to become content creators capable of competing in a dense and competitive digital media landscape. Mufid (2022) explains that digital dakwah in Indonesia has evolved into a content industry in its own right, involving not only individual dai but also religious institutions vying to build their digital presence. Competition for audience attention in the virtual world drives dai to continually innovate in the format and approach of their message delivery, including experimenting with new technologies that offer efficiency and effectiveness in content production.

In seeking to understand how individuals and groups respond to and adopt new technologies, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Fred Davis (1989) stands as the most widely used conceptual framework, with validated applicability across diverse cultural and disciplinary contexts. TAM identifies two principal constructs that determine technology acceptance: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which together shape user attitudes and ultimately determine the behavioural intention to use or reject a given technology. As cited in Morissan (2013), Davis defines perceived usefulness as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will enhance their performance, whilst perceived ease of use refers to the belief that the system can be used without excessive effort. Both constructs are highly pertinent to analysing the inclination of dai to accept or reject ChatGPT, given the highly varied educational backgrounds, ages, and digital-literacy levels within the dai community in Indonesia.

The city of Cirebon and its surrounding areas possess a strong Islamic tradition and a long history as a centre of Islamic propagation on the island of Java. The city is renowned as one of the wali cities, preserving the dakwah legacy of the Walisongo, particularly Sunan Gunung Jati, whose proselytisation method was known for its cultural adaptability. This spirit of adaptation has historically characterised dakwah in Cirebon, distinguishing it from other regions. In a modern context, dai in Cirebon face challenges not dissimilar to those in other major cities: how to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of dakwah amid a flood of digital information. Research on AI technology adoption within the dai community in Cirebon, however, remains extremely limited. As argued by Wahid & Mufidah (2023), local studies on technology acceptance in religious contexts are essential to producing contextually grounded understanding rather than simply generalising findings from different cultural settings. This research gap constitutes one of the primary justifications for undertaking this study.

From the standpoint of usefulness, ChatGPT offers enormous potential for dai in the process of producing dakwah content. The model's capacity to generate structured text, identify reference analogues, and automatically draft sermon outlines can significantly reduce the time and energy typically expended during the material-preparation phase. A study by Pratama & Hidayat (2024) on the use of AI in the production of religious content on social media found that Islamic content creators who integrated generative AI into their workflow were able to increase content-production frequency by up to three times compared with before, without sacrificing substantive depth. Nevertheless, this usefulness is neither absolute nor universal. An important nuance must be noted: the accuracy of religious information generated by AI depends heavily on the quality of the model's training data and the user's capacity to validate the output. In the context of dakwah, errors in religious information are not merely technical problems; they can have serious consequences for the religious understanding of the target audience.

The ease-of-use dimension is another critical factor determining the extent to which ChatGPT can be widely adopted within the dai community. Unlike technology users from younger generations who grew up with smartphones and the internet, many senior dai possessing high religious authority often exhibit comparatively low digital literacy. This disparity creates a paradox: those who most need efficiency in content production given their demanding preaching schedules are frequently those who encounter the greatest difficulty in accessing the benefits of AI technology. According to Kurniawati & Baroroh (2023), the digital-literacy gap among Islamic religious figures in Indonesia represents a structural challenge that cannot be resolved simply by providing technological access; it also requires specially designed training programmes that take into account the learning culture characteristics of religious communities. Furthermore, ChatGPT's interface, which is entirely text-based in English, presents a linguistic barrier for some dai who are not fluent in English, despite the availability of various Indonesian-language interfaces developed by local communities.

The attitudinal dimension toward AI use in dakwah constitutes the most complex and multifaceted aspect of this study. On one hand, some dai enthusiastically welcome ChatGPT as a technological gift capable of amplifying the impact of dakwah. On the other, many express profound concern regarding the ethical implications of AI use in a religious context. These concerns encompass several dimensions: first, the authenticity of dakwah messages produced with AI assistance; second, the potential dissemination of inaccurate or deviant religious information; third, anxiety about excessive technological dependence that may erode the scholarly depth of dai; and fourth, questions about moral responsibility for content partly generated by machines. Ramli (2024), in his examination of AI ethics from an Islamic perspective, affirms that Muslim communities' acceptance of AI technology cannot be separated from considerations of *maqashid al-syariah* (the overarching objectives of Islamic law), particularly regarding the preservation of intellect (*hifz al-aql*) and the preservation of religion (*hifz al-din*). In this view, the use of AI in dakwah must actively support not replace the intellectual and spiritual processes that constitute the core of religious activity.

Behavioural intention to continue using (behavioral intention to use) represents the culmination of the entire technology-acceptance process within the TAM framework. This intention is directly influenced by user attitudes formed through the combination of perceived usefulness and ease of use. In the context of dai in the digital era, the sustainability of ChatGPT use is largely determined by positive initial experiences and the presence of peer communities that validate such use. Research by Setiawan et al. (2024) on religious content creators across various Indonesian digital platforms found that the strongest predictor of sustained AI use was the perception of enhanced content quality and positive audience responses. In other words, when dai directly observe that AI-assisted content receives a better reception from their digital congregants, the intention to continue using the technology is further reinforced. This finding carries important implications for the development of AI literacy programmes for religious communities, where experiential, demonstration-based approaches are more effective than purely conceptual awareness campaigns.

Although research on technology adoption within religious communities has begun to show an upward trend, specific studies employing the TAM framework to analyse dai perceptions of ChatGPT in the context of digital dakwah content production remain extremely rare, particularly at the local level. Existing studies tend to be general in nature and do not address the specificities of the latest generative AI technologies. Lubis & Siregar (2023) identified a similar research gap in their study of social media adoption among *pesantren* scholars in Sumatra, finding that research results from cosmopolitan urban contexts cannot be straightforwardly applied to religious communities

with different cultural and institutional characteristics. This gap is especially pertinent given that ChatGPT is a relatively new and rapidly evolving technology, making up-to-date empirical inquiry essential to accurately capturing the landscape of its acceptance within the dakwah community.

Drawing on all the urgencies outlined above, this study aims to address this scholarly lacuna by providing a deeply empirical perspective on the perceptions of dai in Cirebon toward the use of ChatGPT in digital dakwah content production. Beyond its academic value in enriching the literature on AI technology adoption within the Indonesian Islamic context, this study also carries high practical significance. Its findings are expected to form the basis for developing digital literacy training curricula for dai communities, formulating ethical guidelines on AI use in dakwah by Islamic organisations such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and informing policies that support the optimisation of AI technology for constructive religious purposes. Ultimately, this study is not merely an inquiry into technology, but into how human beings in this instance, dai negotiate with modernity while remaining steadfast in the religious values that serve as their moral compass in fulfilling their dakwah mission in the age of artificial intelligence.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to obtain a thorough understanding of dai perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in the production of digital dakwah content in Cirebon. The qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to explore the experiences, viewpoints, and meanings that informants attribute to the phenomenon of artificial intelligence use in digital dakwah activities (Sugiyono, 2022). Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with five dai selected using purposive sampling that is, informants meeting specific criteria such as active engagement in dakwah via digital media, familiarity with ChatGPT, and direct involvement in dakwah content production on social media. The informant profiles comprised a TikTok social-media dai, a YouTube channel and dakwah podcast manager, a pesantren director actively engaged in digital dakwah, a mosque media manager, and a senior dai who has recently begun utilising digital technology in his dakwah activities. Secondary data were obtained from books, academic journals, articles, and supporting documents related to digital dakwah, artificial intelligence, and the Technology Acceptance Model (Moleong, 2021).

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, observation of informants' digital dakwah activities, and documentation comprising social-media posts and digital dakwah content archives. Interviews were conducted to gather information concerning perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies toward the use of ChatGPT in digital dakwah. Observation was carried out to examine directly the practice of AI technology use in dakwah content production, whilst documentation served as supplementary research data (Hardani et al., 2020). Data validity was verified through source triangulation and technique triangulation to ensure the data obtained were valid and trustworthy. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, encompassing data condensation, data display, and systematic conclusion drawing, thereby enabling a nuanced interpretation of AI technology acceptance within the practice of digital dakwah (Miles et al., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Research Informants

This study involved five informants selected through purposive sampling based on their active engagement in dakwah on digital platforms and their direct involvement in content production using or evaluating ChatGPT. The five informants represent a diverse spectrum of backgrounds: a dai active on TikTok with more than 80,000 followers (Informant 1/I1), a YouTube channel and dakwah

podcast manager (Informant 2/12), a modern pesantren director pioneering a digital dakwah programme (Informant 3/13), a mosque dakwah media manager (Informant 4/14), and a senior dai aged over 55 who has only recently become acquainted with digital platforms in the past two years (Informant 5/15). This diversity of profiles enabled the researchers to obtain rich, non-monolithic perspectives on AI technology acceptance within the dakwah context in Cirebon. As affirmed by Creswell & Poth (2022), the strength of qualitative research lies precisely in the depth of description of purposively selected cases, rather than in statistical representation of a broader population. The informants' educational backgrounds also varied, ranging from graduates of traditional Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) to holders of degrees in Islamic communication, lending distinct colour to the ways in which each informant makes sense of and responds to ChatGPT in their daily dakwah practice.

Perceived Usefulness of ChatGPT in Digital Dakwah

The first dimension examined in this study is perceived usefulness that is, the extent to which dai believe that using ChatGPT can add genuine value to their digital dakwah content-production process. Research findings indicate that perceived usefulness among informants is generally positive, albeit with considerable gradation depending on the intensity of each informant's interaction with the technology. Informants who had actively incorporated ChatGPT into their content-production workflow consistently reported that the technology provides substantial efficiency gains, particularly in brainstorming dakwah topics, drafting sermon outlines, and composing social-media captions. As conveyed by I2 during the interview: "I used to need two to three hours to prepare the material for a single podcast episode. Now with ChatGPT, the initial outline can be completed in 20 minutes, and I simply deepen it using the reference texts I already have." This finding is consistent with the research of Pratama & Hidayat (2024), which documented a productivity increase of up to three times among Islamic content creators who integrated generative AI into their workflow, without compromising the substantive depth of the content delivered.

Informants identified several more specific and contextual dimensions of usefulness. First, ChatGPT was considered highly effective in adapting dakwah messages for different audiences. I1, who targets Generation Z through TikTok content, reported frequently using ChatGPT to transform textual and formal dakwah material into lighter narratives employing everyday language close to the lived experience of young people. Second, some informants found ChatGPT useful in cross-referencing Islamic sources, albeit with the important caveat that AI output is always verified manually against authoritative classical texts. I3 offered a particularly insightful perspective: "ChatGPT is like an assistant who has read many books, but still needs to be supervised because it sometimes misattributes hadith or conflates the opinions of different legal schools." This statement reflects a mature yet pragmatic critical stance toward the limitations of AI technology, embodying what Mollick (2023) terms a "co-intelligence" approach whereby humans and AI collaborate with each retaining roles that the other cannot replace. This usefulness dimension is further reinforced by ChatGPT's capacity to assist in the production of multilingual content, highly relevant for dai seeking to reach the Indonesian Muslim diaspora abroad or to expand their audience to non-Indonesian-speaking communities.

The sole informant expressing scepticism toward ChatGPT's usefulness was I5, the senior dai who has only recently been introduced to digital platforms. I5 questioned whether the content-production speed offered by AI is truly meaningful if the quality of the religious substance cannot be adequately verified. This view, whilst appearing conservative, touches upon the core issue examined by Ramli (2024) in his analysis of AI ethics from the perspective of maqashid al-syariah: that the value of usefulness in an Islamic context cannot be measured solely by technical efficiency; it must also encompass the dimension of protecting religious integrity (hifz al-din) and maintaining the intellectual quality required for ijtihad in conveying the message of truth. Thus, the perceived usefulness of ChatGPT among dai in Cirebon is neither singular nor linear; it constitutes a social construct shaped by personal experience, religious authority, and the epistemological framework of Islam that underlies each individual's dakwah activity.

Perceived Ease of Use of ChatGPT

The second dimension under analytical focus is perceived ease of use the assessment by dai of how easy and intuitive ChatGPT is to operate within the context of their dakwah practice. Findings on this dimension display a more varied pattern, closely linked to each informant's level of digital literacy and age. Younger informants accustomed to the digital ecosystem I1 and I2 consistently reported that the ChatGPT interface is highly intuitive and readily mastered in a short time. I1 noted that he began using ChatGPT without any guidance whatsoever and immediately experienced its benefits on the very first day of use. This smooth onboarding experience is consistent with ChatGPT's natural-language conversational interface design, which significantly minimises the technical barriers that typically impede the adoption of new software. Davis (1989), in his original formulation of TAM, emphasised that perceived ease of use exerts a dual influence: directly upon behavioural intention to use, and indirectly through its effect on perceived usefulness, since systems that are easy to use tend to be perceived as more beneficial by their users.

A markedly different picture emerged from informants with lower digital-literacy levels. I5 recounted a barrier-laden experience in his initial encounters with ChatGPT: difficulty grasping the concept of an effective "prompt", confusion when faced with responses in English, and uncertainty about how to verify information produced by the machine. These obstacles are not unique to I5 as an individual; they reflect the broader structural challenge identified by Kurniawati & Baroroh (2023) in their study of the digital-literacy gap among Islamic religious leaders in Indonesia. The researchers found that this gap is not merely a matter of individual technical skill but is rooted in the absence of a learning ecosystem suited to this group including a dearth of Indonesian-language training modules designed with the learning-culture characteristics of traditional religious communities in mind. I4, the mosque media manager in his mid-forties, occupied a middle position between these two poles: he was able to operate ChatGPT after several weeks of self-directed learning, yet still experienced difficulty formulating prompts that yielded outputs religiously relevant to jurisprudential topics requiring high terminological precision.

Notably, I3 the modern pesantren director developed a creative solution to overcome this ease-of-use barrier. He enlisted more technologically literate senior students (santri) as "intermediaries" between himself and ChatGPT: these students are tasked with formulating prompts based on substantive directions from the kiai (Islamic scholar), then filtering and presenting relevant outputs for the kiai's validation and refinement. This structured delegation model produces a compelling synergy between traditional religious authority and the digital competence of the younger generation a form of institutional adaptation reflecting the pesantren's flexibility in responding to technological change. Wahid & Mufidah (2023) document a similar phenomenon in their study of ICT-based dakwah in Java, wherein traditional Islamic institutions frequently develop hybrid and contextual technology-adoption models that differ from the individual adoption patterns assumed by most technology-adoption theories developed in Western contexts. This finding enriches our understanding of how perceived ease of use is not solely an individual attribute, but can also be socially and institutionally constructed and mediated within religious communities.

Attitudes Toward the Use of ChatGPT in Dakwah Content Production

The attitudinal dimension represents the most nuanced aspect of this study, illustrating how dai emotionally, normatively, and ethically make sense of ChatGPT's presence in their dakwah ecosystem. Unlike perceived usefulness and ease of use which are more cognitive and evaluative in nature attitudes carry a deeper affective dimension, shaped by Islamic values internalised over years of living as religious leaders. Research findings identify three distinct attitudinal typologies among informants: affirmative-pragmatic, critical-selective, and conservative-apprehensive.

The first typology, affirmative-pragmatic, is most evident in I1 and I2, who regard ChatGPT as a legitimate and strategically valuable dakwah instrument. I1 grounds his stance in the theological principle that in Islam, the tools or means (wasilah) employed for a good purpose derive their legitimacy from the goodness of that purpose, provided the means itself does not contradict Islamic law. He cites the jurisprudential maxim (qa'idah fihiyyah) he learned at the pesantren al-wasail laha hukmul maqashid, that means take the legal ruling of their ends as the theological justification

for AI use in dakwah. This view is supported by the exegetical dimension articulated by Shihab (2002) regarding the term hikmah in the Quran (Q.S. al-Nahl: 125), which he interprets as knowledge accompanied by the most precise and effective mode of delivery appropriate to the context of the era. Baidowi & Ashif (2023) note that such progressive interpretations are increasingly adopted by the younger generation of highly educated Indonesian Muslim scholars, who view AI not as a threat to religious authority but as an extension of human intellectual capacity that can be leveraged to expand the reach of dakwah.

The second typology, critical-selective, is most prominent in I2, I3, and I4, who welcome ChatGPT with enthusiasm tempered by epistemological caution. These three informants have each independently developed personal protocols to ensure that AI use in dakwah does not compromise the accuracy and authenticity of the religious message. I3, for instance, consistently applies the principle of "AI as first draft, kiai as final decision" a principle he regularly reinforces with the students involved in his pesantren's dakwah content-production team. He emphasises that ChatGPT can produce content that "appears Islamic" yet contains subtle errors in hadith attribution, deviates from the opinion of the majority of scholars (jumhur ulama), or conflates the positions of different legal schools without clear markers. This concern is highly pertinent given findings from multiple studies showing that large language models like ChatGPT are prone to "hallucinations" the tendency to generate information that sounds convincing but is factually incorrect, particularly for domain-specific knowledge (Mollick, 2023). In the context of dakwah, where the accuracy of religious information carries implications far beyond academic fact, this vulnerability constitutes a serious concern that responsible dai cannot afford to overlook.

The third typology, conservative-apprehensive, is most apparent in I5, who expresses fundamental concern about the long-term consequences of dependence on AI in dakwah. I5 questions whether generations of dai accustomed to relying on ChatGPT will lose the intellectual capacity for independent thought, for elaborating original religious arguments, and for addressing complex questions from congregants without the assistance of machines. This concern, though expressed in deeply personal terms, touches on the epistemological issue raised by Ramli (2024) in his examination of AI ethics from the perspective of maqashid al-syariah: that the preservation of intellect (hifz al-aql) as one of the primary objectives of Islamic law demands that humans continually exercise and develop their capacity for critical thought, rather than delegating it to machines. I5's apprehensive stance also reflects a broader anxiety about the depersonalisation of dakwah the concern that AI-generated religious messages, however sophisticated, can never replicate the authentic relationship between dai and congregation that constitutes the true spirit of dakwah in the Islamic tradition.

Behavioural Intention to Use ChatGPT

The final dimension examined is the behavioural intention of dai to continue or further increase their use of ChatGPT in the future which, within the TAM framework, represents the culmination of the entire technology-acceptance process. Research findings reveal a strong correlation between the combined strength of perceived usefulness and ease of use and the strength of behavioural intention, consistent with the predictions of the TAM model as originally formulated by Davis (1989). Informants with high perceived usefulness and adequate perceived ease of use namely I1 and I2 expressed a strong intention not only to continue using ChatGPT but also to explore more advanced features and to integrate it more deeply into their content-production workflow. I1 specifically mentioned plans to use the ChatGPT API to build a dakwah topic recommendation system tailored to trending conversations within the local Muslim community in Cirebon.

I3 and I4 displayed a more moderate yet consistently positive intention: they plan to continue using ChatGPT in a limited capacity with rigorous oversight, whilst gradually developing more systematic usage protocols that can be followed by their content-production teams. I3 explicitly stated his intention to draft an internal guideline for AI use in dakwah at his pesantren an initiative he hopes will serve as a model for other pesantren in the Cirebon region and beyond. Setiawan et al. (2024) found in their research that the most significant factor predicting sustained AI use among religious content creators is positive audience responses to AI-assisted content. This finding is highly

consistent with I3's experience of reporting a significant increase in the reach and engagement of his pesantren's dakwah content since integrating AI into the production process an empirical experience that reinforces his intention to continue using the technology.

The sole informant expressing an ambiguous intention was I5, who stated that he would "try further if someone guides me" but did not feel compelled to invest time and energy independently to master a technology he considers not yet proven safe for dakwah integrity. This statement reveals the critical importance of social and institutional support in shaping behavioural intention beyond the two principal TAM constructs. Lubis & Siregar (2023), in their study of social media adoption among pesantren scholars, similarly found that subjective norms pressure and encouragement from one's immediate social environment play an equally or more significant role than individual cognitive factors in determining technology-adoption decisions within traditional religious communities. This finding indicates the need for a more communal and community-based approach to AI technology adoption, in which Islamic organisations such as MUI, NU, and Muhammadiyah take an active role in providing guidance and normative legitimacy for the use of AI in dakwah activities.

Integrative Discussion: ChatGPT Acceptance in the Cirebon Digital Dakwah Context

When the findings across all four TAM dimensions are synthesised, a more complex and nuanced portrait of ChatGPT acceptance among dai in Cirebon emerges. First, the acceptance of ChatGPT is not a uniform, linear process but an active negotiation between, on the one hand, the technology's potential and, on the other, Islamic values, local dakwah traditions, and individual digital-literacy capacity. The TAM framework proves relevant as a basic conceptual map, yet it requires contextualisation that accounts for the religious dimension absent from the original model. Morissan (2013) cautions that communication theories developed within a secular Western context cannot always be directly applied to religious communication settings, where normative, theological, and cultural factors serve as important mediators that modify the inter-variable relationships the theory predicts.

Second, Cirebon as the research locus imparts a distinctive and non-generic character to the findings. The adaptive dakwah tradition bequeathed by Sunan Gunung Jati and his successors has created an ethos that is relatively receptive to innovation in dakwah methods, provided that the Islamic substance conveyed remains authentic and accountable. This ethos is reflected in the general tendency of informants not to reject ChatGPT outright, but instead to seek to integrate it selectively and critically into well-established dakwah practices. Wahid & Mufidah (2023) emphasise the importance of understanding the dimension of locality in Indonesian digital dakwah scholarship, recognising that each dakwah community possesses its own history, traditions, and internal dynamics that uniquely shape its collective response to new technology in ways that cannot be generalised from other contexts.

Third, the findings point to an urgent need to develop a comprehensive ethical framework for the use of AI in Islamic dakwah one grounded not only in classical jurisprudential principles but also attentive to the specific technical characteristics of generative AI technology. Such a framework must address at least three fundamental issues: (1) how to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of religious information generated with AI assistance; (2) how to preserve the individual moral responsibility of dai for the content they publish, even when that content is machine-assisted; and (3) how to prevent excessive AI dependence that may erode long-term religious competence. Baidowi & Ashif (2023) identify a similar lacuna in their study and call for collaboration among scholars, technology academics, and AI developers to formulate guidelines that are contextually grounded and practically implementable. This study endorses that call and proposes that Cirebon, with its rich academic and Islamic tradition, has the potential to serve as a laboratory for developing an ethical and sustainable AI-based digital dakwah model.

Fourth and finally, this study finds that generational factors constitute a highly significant moderating variable in shaping patterns of ChatGPT acceptance a finding with direct practical implications for dai capacity-development programmes. The gap between digitally literate younger dai and senior dai with high religious authority creates a structural paradox: the former possess the

technical competence to use AI yet sometimes lack the religious depth to validate its output, whilst the latter possess precisely the religious depth needed to oversee the quality of AI-generated content yet are hindered by low digital literacy. The solution to this paradox is not merely technical training, but a structured intergenerational collaboration model such as that organically developed by I3 at his pesantren in which senior religious competence and junior digital competence complement each other within an integrated dakwah content-production ecosystem. Such a collaborative model is consistent with the recommendations of Kurniawati & Baroroh (2023) regarding the importance of a peer-learning-based, communal approach in digital literacy programmes for religious communities, as this approach proves more effective and sustainable than individual technical training divorced from the relational context of the community.

CONCLUSION

Based on findings obtained through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving five dai informants in Cirebon, this study concludes that dai perceptions of ChatGPT use in digital dakwah content production are shaped by the complex interaction of the four principal dimensions of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). First, perceived usefulness is assessed as generally positive, particularly with regard to content-preparation efficiency and message adaptation for diverse digital audiences, though concerns about the accuracy of AI-generated religious information remain a critical caveat. Second, perceived ease of use is significantly influenced by informants' digital-literacy level and age, thereby creating a gap that necessitates structured mentoring and support. Third, dai attitudes are distributed across three typologies affirmative-pragmatic, critical-selective, and conservative-apprehensive each grounded in distinct theological, epistemological, and ethical considerations. Fourth, behavioural intention to continue using ChatGPT is directly proportional to positive perceptions on the first two dimensions, and is simultaneously moderated by the social norms of the religious community and the availability of institutional support.

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