



The impact of digital da'wah consumption intensity on anxiety levels in generation z students

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ABSTRACT

Background: The development of digital technology has shifted the pattern of Islamic propagation (da'wah) from conventional to digital, utilizing platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. Digital da'wah has now become the main medium for disseminating Islamic values, especially among Generation Z, who are known as digital natives with a high level of engagement with social media. This phenomenon raises questions regarding the influence of the intensity of watching digital da'wah content on psychological conditions, particularly anxiety, in university students. Based on the Uses and Gratifications theory and Spielberger's anxiety theory, this study aims to analyze the relationship between the intensity of watching digital da'wah and the anxiety levels of Generation Z students. **Methods:** The research employed a quantitative approach using a correlational method. The research subjects consisted of 60 students from Universitas Islam 45 Bekasi, selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected through two psychological scales: the Digital Da'wah Watching Intensity Scale, developed based on Del Barrio's theory, and the Anxiety Scale, adapted from Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). Data analysis was performed using the Pearson correlation test, simple linear regression, and the Chi-Square test with SPSS. **Findings:** The results of the study indicated no significant relationship between the intensity of watching digital da'wah content and the students' anxiety levels ($r = -0.135$; $p = 0.303$), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.018. This means that the intensity of watching only explains 1.8% of the variation in anxiety, while the remaining 98.2% is influenced by other factors such as academic pressure, social support, and personality. Descriptively, both variables were in the moderate category, indicating that although students actively watch digital da'wah content, it did not have a significant impact on reducing anxiety. The Chi-Square test results also indicated that some demographic factors, such as academic year, study program, activity, and the type of da'wah content, had a significant relationship with both watching intensity and anxiety levels. **Conclusion:** This study confirms that the effectiveness of digital da'wah is not determined by the frequency of viewing, but rather by the quality of the message and the delivery method that emphasizes empathy, compassion, and spiritual hope. Theoretically, this result reinforces the understanding that digital da'wah affects state anxiety (which is temporary), rather than established trait anxiety (which is fixed). **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This research is novel in examining the relationship between the intensity of watching digital da'wah and anxiety levels in Generation Z using a media psychology approach. The study highlights the phenomenon of micro-consumption of digital da'wah and finds that high frequency does not always correlate with a decrease in anxiety, thus offering a new perspective on the effectiveness of da'wah in the digital era.

KEYWORDS: anxiety; digital da'wah; generation z; watching intensity.

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1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has changed the way society obtains information, including in the religious sphere (Nay et al., 2025). Da'wah (Islamic propagation) is now delivered not only through conventional sermons but also through various digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram (Andayani et al., 2025; Sasongko et al., 2025). Da'wah through these digital platforms appears in the form of da'wah content, serving as a new space for the dissemination of Islamic values that is more flexible, interactive, and contextual. This aligns with the Uses and Gratifications theory, which emphasizes that individuals actively select media to fulfill their needs, including spiritual needs (Sirun & Surawan, 2025). As time progresses, da'wah content has become essential for society, especially for the younger generation (Nabila et al., 2023).

This phenomenon is highly relevant for Generation Z, individuals born between 1997 and 2012, who are known as the generation that grew up amidst digital technological advancements, making them highly familiar with internet and social media use (Sirun & Surawan, 2025). As digital natives, Generation Z is the group most closely associated with the digital da'wah phenomenon. According to a report by Muvid et al. (2024), more than 75% of the Indonesian population are active social media users, with the majority falling within the 18–24 age range, which includes university students belonging to Generation Z. This condition makes Generation Z a potential target for the spread of digital da'wah, given their high level of engagement with various online platforms (Yulius & Rusadi, 2024). This generation also tends to consume content that is visual, fast, interactive, and emotional, including digital da'wah content, which offers ease in obtaining religious knowledge amidst academic and social commitments (Aini, 2023; Arista et al., 2025). However, behind these benefits, a crucial question arises regarding the psychological impact of the intensity of watching digital da'wah content, particularly concerning the anxiety experienced by students.

According to Barrio et al. (2004), media use intensity refers to how often, how long, and how deeply an individual interacts with a particular form of media. This intensity not only describes the frequency of exposure but also the emotional and cognitive involvement of a person with the content consumed (Mahmudi, 2024). In the context of digital da'wah, students who frequently watch religious content may experience high emotional and cognitive attachment to the da'wah message presented, which can ultimately influence and encourage sustained behavioral transformation (Barri et al., 2025). High intensity can yield positive impacts, such as increased religious understanding and spirituality. However, it can also create psychological pressure if the da'wah content evokes feelings of guilt, fear of sin, or moral expectations that are difficult to meet (Safitri & Ahmad, 2021; Sirun & Surawan, 2025). Thus, the intensity of watching digital da'wah potentially has a dual influence on students' emotional condition, depending on the content and the context of reception.

Meanwhile, this emotional condition can be explained through the anxiety theory proposed by Spielberger (1972) in the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, which posits that anxiety consists of two main components: state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety refers to a temporary emotional condition that arises as a response to specific tension-inducing situations, whereas trait anxiety is a stable tendency of an individual to feel anxious across various situations (Setyananda et al., 2021). In the context of digital da'wah consumption, students who watch religious content with spiritual themes often report feelings of calm, increased religious insight, and the strengthening of their religious identity. For individuals with high internal religiosity, repeated exposure to da'wah content can deepen the sense of closeness to religious values and reduce persistent feelings of anxiety (Fauzi & Muktaruddin, 2023). This indicates that the psychological effect of watching digital da'wah is determined not only by the content itself but also by the intensity of exposure and the psychological characteristics of the viewer.

Previous research suggests that digital media exposure has a complex relationship with mental health. Some studies reveal that digital religious content can have a positive impact on individuals' psychological condition, such as reduced stress levels, increased inner peace,

and the encouragement of self-reflection and the search for meaning in life. Such spiritual experiences play an important role for the younger generation who often face emotional pressure and confusion about life direction amidst the strong current of digital information (Nurlaili et al., 2025). However, other research indicates challenges, including potential exposure to extremist content, the emergence of polarized religious views, and a lack of source verification, which can ultimately trigger existential anxiety, especially when the da'wah message is delivered in a frightening or overly normative manner (Barri et al., 2025). Furthermore, Generation Z is known to have the highest digital engagement level compared to other generations, while also being vulnerable to psychological disorders like stress and anxiety due to social pressure and information overload (Budiana, 2024). This condition highlights a dynamic that needs to be studied more deeply between the intensity of watching digital da'wah and anxiety in the Generation Z student group.

The phenomenon of digital da'wah among Generation Z students illustrates how religious messages are no longer received in a one-way manner, as in conventional media, but through an interactive and emotional process. Da'wah content is now consumed simultaneously with students' daily activities, such as studying, socializing, and relaxing, thus forming a more personal and spontaneous religious experience (Mazlin et al., 2025). This pattern of involvement reflects the characteristic of Generation Z, which tends to prioritize time efficiency and emotional proximity when accessing spiritual information. However, intense and repeated exposure can also bring about certain psychological pressures, particularly when the da'wah content emphasizes guilt, sin, or moral demands that are difficult to fulfill (Nurhaidah et al., 2025). This condition shows that digital da'wah not only functions as a means of spreading religious values but also has the potential to influence students' emotional balance, making it an interesting topic to study from a psychological perspective, especially concerning the anxiety experienced by Generation Z.

Despite the extensive research on the relationship between digital media and mental health, studies specifically examining the influence of the intensity of watching digital da'wah content on anxiety remain very limited. Most research focuses more on the effectiveness of digital da'wah in increasing religiosity, rather than the accompanying psychological impacts. However, understanding this relationship is crucial for identifying how exposure to digital da'wah contributes to the spiritual and emotional balance of students. This research gap is the basis for conducting this study, to enrich the scientific understanding of how intense interaction with digital religious content can affect an individual's psychological condition.

Based on the description above, this research aims to analyze the influence of the intensity of watching digital da'wah content on anxiety in Generation Z students. Theoretically, this research combines the perspective of Del Barrio's media intensity theory with Spielberger's anxiety theory to explain the mechanism of the relationship between the frequency and depth of involvement in digital da'wah content and the emergence of anxiety symptoms. This study is also expected to provide empirical contribution to the study of psychology and digital da'wah, and offer new understanding of how religious phenomena in the digital world influence the emotional well-being of the younger generation.

2. Methods

2.1 Research design

This research uses a quantitative approach with a correlational method, which is a type of study aimed at determining the relationship or association between two or more variables without manipulating those variables (Selviana et al., 2024). The quantitative approach was chosen because it focuses on collecting numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to obtain objective and measurable conclusions (Creswell, 2013 in Waruwu et al., 2025). In its execution, this method aims to determine the influence of the independent variable, namely the intensity of watching digital da'wah content, on the dependent variable, which is anxiety in Generation Z students.

Thus, this method serves not only as a tool to test the relationship between variables but also as a means to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological dynamics of Generation Z students in the context of digital religious content consumption in the modern era. The subjects in this study were students of Universitas Islam 45 Bekasi who were born between 1997 and 2012 and met the participation criteria, encompassing both male and female students. These criteria include: being an active student registered at Universitas Islam 45 Bekasi; actively using social media to watch digital da'wah content; and being willing to participate in the research.

2.2 Sampling technique and sample size

The sample size was determined using the convenience sampling method, which is based on the availability and willingness of individuals to participate as respondents who are considered capable of providing relevant information (Fatimah, 2023). This technique enabled the researcher to efficiently obtain data from students who met the required characteristics. The number of participants in this study was set at 60, referring to Roscoe's guideline in *Research Methods for Business* (1982), which suggests that a sample size ranging from 30 to 500 respondents is generally adequate for social and behavioral research (Repi et al., 2021). However, the relatively limited number of participants constitutes a limitation of this study, as it may reduce the generalizability of the findings. This limitation was influenced by time constraints during the data collection and analysis process. Nevertheless, the sample size remains within an acceptable range and is considered sufficient to provide an initial understanding of the phenomenon under investigation..

2.3 Research instruments

The primary instruments used in this research were psychological scales for data collection. According to Azwar (2022), a psychological scale is a set of statements or items that function to reveal an individual's psychological condition through responses given according to their true state. The research instruments consisted of two types of scales: the Anxiety Scale and the Digital Da'wah Watching Intensity Scale. The Anxiety Scale referred to the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) developed by Spielberger (1972) and covered four main aspects: tension, fear, restlessness, and worry, with a total of 20 items. The Digital Da'wah Watching Intensity Scale was adapted from a social media use intensity scale compiled by Mahmudi (2024) and developed based on Barrio et al. (2004). This scale consisted of four aspects: attention, comprehension, duration, and frequency, with a total of 36 items. Both scales used a Likert scale format with four alternative answers: SS (*Sangat Setuju/Strongly Agree*), S (*Setuju/Agree*), TS (*Tidak Setuju/Disagree*), and STS (*Sangat Tidak Setuju/Strongly Disagree*).

2.4 Data analysis

Data analysis in this study was performed using simple linear regression analysis to test the formulated hypothesis. Data processing was conducted with the aid of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows program. Simple linear regression analysis is the most basic form of regression analysis involving one independent variable (X) to predict the dependent variable (Y). The goal of this analysis is to determine the strength of the relationship between the two variables and to ascertain the direction of the influence between the independent and dependent variables (Rahmawati et al., 2022). Subsequently, a chi-square test was performed to evaluate the relationship between the research variables and demographic data. This test aimed to determine whether there were significant differences in the frequency distribution between variables based on the respondents' demographic characteristics.

3. Results and Discussion

This research was conducted with the aim of determining the influence of the intensity of watching digital da'wah content on anxiety in Generation Z students, and analyzing how demographic characteristics and digital da'wah media consumption habits relate to their psychological condition. In its execution, the study involved 60 Generation Z students at Universitas Islam 45 Bekasi who met the participation criteria, possessing diverse characteristics in terms of gender, year of birth, academic year, study program, daily activities, and digital da'wah content consumption patterns. The overall characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	f (%)	Intensity			Anxiety		
				High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
Sex	Men	33	55%	4(12%)	26(79%)	3(9%)	3(9%)	25(76%)	5(15%)
	Women	27	45%	5(18%)	17(64%)	4(15%)	4(15%)	21(78%)	2(7%)
Year of birth	2001	1	1.7%	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
	2002	10	16.7%	2(20%)	6(60%)	2(20%)	2(20%)	7(70%)	1(10%)
	2003	21	35%	1(5%)	16(76%)	4(19%)	3(14%)	17(81%)	1(5%)
	2004	23	38.3%	5(22%)	16(69%)	2(9%)	0(0%)	21(91%)	2(9%)
	2005	1	1.7%	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(100%)
	2006	3	5%	1(33%)	2(67%)	0(0%)	1(33%)	1(33%)	1(33%)
	2007	1	1.7%	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(100%)
Year of group	2021	4	6.7%	2(50%)	1(25%)	1(25%)	0(0%)	2(50%)	2(50%)
	2022	53	88.3%	6(11%)	40(76%)	7(13%)	7(13%)	43(81%)	3(6%)
	2023-2025	3	5%	1(33%)	2(67%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(33%)	2(67%)
Major	Islamic Edu.	28	46.7%	3(11%)	24(86%)	1(3%)	3(11%)	21(75%)	4(14%)
	Psychology	22	36.7%	4(18%)	14(64%)	4(18%)	4(18%)	16(73%)	2(9%)
	Etc.	10	16.6%	2(20%)	5(50%)	3(30%)	3(30%)	8(80%)	1(10%)
Regular class	Regular A (Morning)	58	96.7%	9(16%)	42(72%)	7(12%)	7(12%)	45(78%)	6(10%)
	Regular B (Night)	1	1.7%	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)
	Regular C (Employee Class)	1	1.7%	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(100%)
Current activities	Lecture	40	66.7%	6(15%)	30(75%)	4(10%)	5(12.5%)	30(75%)	5(12.5%)
	Lecture & Intern/Freelance/Extra	20	33.3%	3(15%)	13(65%)	4(20%)	2(10%)	16(80%)	2(10%)
Marital status	Unmarried	59	98.3%	9(15%)	42(71%)	8(14%)	7(12%)	45(76%)	7(12%)
	Married	1	1.7%	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(100%)	0(0%)
Internet access	Wi-Fi	23	38.3%	2(9%)	19(82%)	2(9%)	4(17%)	16(70%)	3(13%)
	Data	21	35%	4(19%)	14(67%)	3(14%)	1(5%)	18(86%)	2(9%)
	Data&Wi-Fi	16	26.7%	3(19%)	10(62%)	3(19%)	2(12.5%)	12(75%)	1(12.5%)
Da'wah digital platform	YouTube	11	18.3%	0(0%)	10(91%)	1(9%)	2(18%)	9(82%)	0(0%)
	TikTok	10	16.7%	2(20%)	5(50%)	3(30%)	0(0%)	9(90%)	1(10%)
	Instagram	6	10%	1(17%)	5(83%)	0(0%)	1(17%)	3(50%)	2(33%)
	YouTube, TikTok, Instagram	14	23.3%	2(14%)	9(64%)	3(22%)	1(7%)	11(79%)	2(14%)
	Other	19	31.7%	4(21%)	14(74%)	1(5%)	3(16%)	14(74%)	2(10%)
Types of da'wah content	Aqidah	22	36.7%	3(14%)	18(82%)	1(4%)	3(14%)	17(77%)	2(9%)
	Akhlaq	10	16.7%	0(0%)	9(90%)	1(10%)	2(20%)	5(50%)	3(30%)
	Syari'ah	6	10%	2(33%)	1(17%)	3(50%)	0(0%)	6(100%)	0(0%)

Characteristic	Category	n	f (%)	Intensity			Anxiety		
				High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
	Aqidah, Akhlaq, Syari'ah	14	23.3%	2(14%)	11(79%)	1(7%)	2(14%)	12(86%)	0(0%)
	Other	8	13.3%	2(25%)	4(50%)	2(25%)	0(0%)	6(75%)	2(25%)
Screen time	<1 hour/day	41	68.3%	5(12%)	28(68%)	8(20%)	5(12%)	32(78%)	4(10%)
	1-3 hour/day	11	18.3%	2(18%)	9(82%)	0(0%)	1(9%)	7(64%)	3(27%)
	>3 hour/day	8	13.3%	2(25%)	6(75%)	0(0%)	1(12%)	7(88%)	0(0%)
Watch frequency	Once time/day	35	58.3%	3(9%)	25(71%)	7(20%)	5(14%)	27(77%)	3(9%)
	2-4 times/day	17	28.3%	5(29%)	11(65%)	1(6%)	1(6%)	12(71%)	4(23%)
	>4 times/day	8	13.3%	1(12%)	7(88%)	0(0%)	1(12%)	7(88%)	0(0%)

Based on the respondents' demographic data, it can be seen that the majority are male students totaling 33 people (55%) and female students totaling 27 people (45%). The respondents' birth years range from 2001–2007, with a dominance of those born in 2003 21 people (35%) and 2004 23 people (38.3%), all falling into the Generation Z category. The majority of respondents, 53 people (88.3%), belong to the 2022 academic cohort, with the most common study program backgrounds being Islamic Education (PAI) at 28 people (46.7%) and Psychology at 22 people (36.7%), and they are predominantly morning class students 58 people (96.7%). Fifty-nine people (98.3%) of the respondents are unmarried, and their main activity is studying 40 people (66.7%), followed by others who are also active in organizations, internships, or work. In accessing the internet, 23 people (38.3%) use Wi-Fi, 21 people (35%) use mobile data quota, and 16 people (26.7%) use both.

Regarding digital da'wah platforms, 14 respondents (23.3%) access da'wah through a combination of YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, while 19 respondents (31.7%) use a combination of other platforms such as Facebook, Telegram, and religious podcasts. The most frequently watched type of da'wah content is themed around Aqidah (Islamic Creed), totaling 22 people (36.7%), followed by a combination of Aqidah, Sharia, and Akhlaq (Ethics) at 14 people (23.3%). Based on watching duration, the majority of respondents 41 people (68.3%) watch digital da'wah content for less than 1 hour per day, and based on watching frequency, most watch once per day 35 people (58.3%) out of all respondents.

Based on the categorization results, the level of digital da'wah watching intensity for the majority of respondents falls into the moderate category, with a consistent percentage dominating across almost all demographic characteristics. In the gender category, both male (79%) and female (64%) students mostly show moderate intensity in watching da'wah. When viewed by birth year, respondents born in 2004 have the highest proportion in the moderate category (69%), indicating a tendency for fairly routine but not excessive digital da'wah consumption. A similar pattern is seen in the 2022 cohort, where the majority (76%) are also in the moderate category. From the study program perspective, respondents from Islamic Education (PAI) show the highest proportion in the moderate category (86%), followed by Psychology students (64%). Generally, watching duration of less than one hour per day also dominates the moderate intensity category (68%), indicating a tendency to watch da'wah for short but regular periods.

Meanwhile, regarding the anxiety aspect, the majority of respondents are also categorized as moderate, illustrating that the activity of watching digital da'wah is not associated with extreme anxiety levels. In the male group, 76% are at a moderate anxiety level, while in the female group, it is slightly higher at 78%. When reviewed by the academic cohort, 2022 students show the largest proportion in the moderate anxiety category (81%). Based on the platforms used, the combination of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram is dominated by moderate anxiety levels (79%), while single TikTok users even reach 90%. Watching duration of less than one hour per day is also most commonly

associated with a moderate anxiety level (78%). This finding indicates that respondents with moderate watching intensity tend to have moderate anxiety levels as well, signifying a balance between digital da'wah consumption and their psychological condition.

This data shows that most respondents actively watch digital da'wah for short durations but routinely every day. This pattern illustrates the micro-consumption characteristic typical of Generation Z: the habit of repeatedly enjoying short-duration content as a form of adaptation to the dense flow of information on social media. Other characteristics that reflect this behavior include a short attention span and a tendency to consume content quickly but repeatedly (Budiana, 2024). This type of consumption pattern can be interpreted as an effort to meet spiritual needs practically and instantly, but on the other hand, it potentially reduces the depth of religious reflection. In other words, frequent but shallow exposure is not always directly proportional to an increase in psychological well-being.

The findings concerning the respondent characteristics also provide further understanding of the psychological context of Generation Z students in responding to digital da'wah. The majority of respondents are in the 19–22 age range, which falls into the emerging adulthood phase, a developmental stage characterized by the search for self-identity, emotional stability, and the need for life meaning (Adlu et al., 2024). In this stage, individuals tend to utilize digital da'wah as a means of spiritual reflection and self-worth strengthening amidst academic and social pressures. Digital da'wah can function as a coping mechanism, particularly for students in regulating emotions and finding spiritual meaning amidst academic stress. This aligns with the meta-analysis results of Cheng & Ying (2023), which showed that religious coping has a protective effect against emotional distress in students during periods of high pressure, such as pandemics or academic transitions.

Looking at the gender aspect, the composition of male (55%) and female (45%) students shows that digital da'wah has broadly reached the audience evenly. The characteristics of the digital era make it wider and more inclusive, where digital da'wah platforms provide equal opportunities for both men and women to participate in religious activities (Zahra & Pratiwi, 2024). A study by Yoo (2022) found that digital media increases cross-gender religious participation by providing more flexible and convenient access for users. Thus, there is no significant gap in digital-based religious engagement between male and female students. As for the study program aspect, respondents who are students from Islamic Education (PAI) and Psychology dominate. These two study programs have a close connection to the themes of religiosity and mental health, making them relevant to the focus of the research. This academic background also shapes how students interpret and internalize religious messages. In their learning, PAI students tend to highlight normative values and aspects of ritual spirituality, while Psychology students emphasize psychological well-being and the reflective meaning of the da'wah message (Müller & Friemel, 2024). This explains the tendency for moderate watching intensity because the respondents are quite connected to the topic.

Meanwhile, the daily activity characteristics also show variations in media behavior. The majority of respondents focus only on college activities (66.7%), while others are active in organizations, internships, or part-time work. Students tend to choose to watch da'wah in the form of short videos on TikTok or Instagram, adjusting to their spare time. This phenomenon aligns with Mazlin et al. (2025) view that Generation Z prefers da'wah content that is visual, interactive, and time-efficient, allowing them to remain connected to spiritual values even amidst busy activities.

The combination of YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram is the main media used by respondents in this study to access digital da'wah. These three platforms offer different but complementary content formats. YouTube provides a space for long explanations for in-depth understanding, TikTok for quick reminders, and Instagram for visual inspiration (Bhatiasevi, 2024). This model makes da'wah content more easily accepted by young audiences. Nevertheless, excessive exposure from various platforms can lead to digital fatigue if the da'wah content is normative and monotonous (Haroon et al., 2020). Regarding content type, the themes of Aqidah and Akhlaq are the most frequently watched topics by

respondents. This tendency indicates that students are more interested in da'wah messages that are reflective and calming compared to those containing warnings or moral threats. Safitri & Ahmad (2021) found that da'wah prioritizing positive moral values (Akhlaq) can reduce religious anxiety by fostering a sense of acceptance and inner peace.

The analysis of respondent characteristics shows that the students of Universitas Islam 45 Bekasi have an adaptive and moderate digital da'wah consumption pattern, consistent with the characteristics of Generation Z, who are critical, selective, and pragmatic in choosing media content (Aini, 2023; Arista et al., 2025). They use digital da'wah to meet spiritual needs and self-reflection. Thus, the "moderate" category that dominates various aspects of the respondents can be interpreted as an indicator of stable and healthy involvement in digital da'wah activities (Arinie & Surawan, 2025; Barri et al., 2025). This finding also reinforces Sirun & Surawan (2025) view that the effectiveness of digital da'wah is more determined by the quality of the message and the psychological context of the audience than by exposure frequency alone.

The two variables in this study, consisting of watching intensity and anxiety, both show a moderate category tendency. This pattern can be interpreted as a form of emotional stability among students amidst the routine consumption of digital religious media. Generation Z students tend to make digital da'wah a part of their daily life, but without excessive emotional involvement (Mazlin et al., 2025). This is consistent with the finding that consuming da'wah content through social media can be a source of spiritual support for students when accessed moderately.

As presented in Table 2, the descriptive analysis results for each variable indicate that the average score of digital da'wah watching intensity among respondents is 97.8, with a minimum score of 81 and a maximum score of 115. The categorization results show that 43 respondents (72%) are in the moderate category, 9 respondents (15%) are in the high category, and 8 respondents (13%) are in the low category ($M = 97.8$; $SD = 6.2$). Meanwhile, the average anxiety score is 45.7, with 46 respondents (76%) in the moderate category, 7 respondents (12%) in the high category, and 7 respondents (12%) in the low category ($M = 45.7$; $SD = 6.1$). These values indicate that students have digital da'wah watching intensity levels and anxiety levels that are both in the moderate category.

Table 2. Results of descriptive statistic

Variables	Min score	Max score	Mean	Standard deviation	Category					
					Low	Sum (%)	Moderate	Sum (%)	High	Sum (%)
Anxiety	25	60	45.7	6.1	<39.6	12%	39.6-51.8	76%	>51.8	12%
Intensity of viewing digital da'wah content	81	115	97.8	6.2	<91.6	13%	91.6-104	72%	>104	15%

In this context, a high intensity of digital da'wah consumption does not necessarily correlate with a reduction in anxiety levels. This discrepancy may be attributed to a difference between intensity and quality of engagement. Many students view da'wah content not due to a deep spiritual need, but rather because social media algorithms repeatedly display similar content. Consequently, they are frequently exposed to da'wah content without a specific intention to seek spiritual tranquility. This phenomenon of algorithmic exposure renders digital da'wah consumption more passive, thus limiting its psychological impact. This finding aligns with the research by Ma'ad (2025), which explained that the frequency of digital da'wah exposure does not always guarantee an increase in inner peace, as the effect is dependent on the message's context and the recipient's psychological state.

Before conducting data analysis to test the formulated hypothesis, preliminary assumption tests were first performed, including normality and linearity tests. As shown in Table 3, the normality test results revealed that the significance values for both variables exceeded 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that the data were normally distributed. Consequently,

the data could be analyzed using a parametric test, specifically the Pearson correlation test to examine the relationship between variables, followed by a simple linear regression analysis to determine the magnitude of the influence of the intensity of viewing digital da'wah content on anxiety among Generation Z students.

Table 3. Results of the normality test

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Sig.)	Details
Anxiety	0.059	Data are normally distributed
Intensity of viewing da'wah	0.060	Data are normally distributed

As shown in Table 4, the linearity test results showed that the relationship between the two variables obtained an F value of 0.793 and $p = 0.714$ ($p > 0.05$). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the relationship between the intensity of viewing digital da'wah content and anxiety was linear.

Table 4. Results of the linierity test

Variables	Linierity ($p > 0,05$)		Details
	F	p	
Anxiety*Intensity of Viewing Da'wah	0,793	0,714	The data indicated a linear relationship

As shown in Table 5, the results of the Pearson correlation test revealed a correlation coefficient of -0.135 with a p-value of 0.303 ($p > 0.05$), suggesting no significant relationship between the intensity of viewing digital da'wah content and the anxiety levels of Generation Z students. Although the correlation coefficient was negative, it merely represents the statistical direction of the relationship. Since the result was not statistically significant, it should not be interpreted as suggesting any specific tendency in the relationship between the two variables.

Table 5. Results of the Pearson correlation test

Variables	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (p)	Details
Intensity of Viewing with Anxiety	-0.135	0.303	Not significant

As shown in Table 6, the simple linear regression test results indicated a t-value of -1.038 , a p-value of 0.303 ($p > 0.05$), and an R^2 of 0.018. This indicates that the intensity of viewing digital da'wah content does not significantly influence student anxiety. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value suggests that the viewing intensity variable is only capable of explaining 1.8% of the variance in anxiety, while the remaining 98.2% is influenced by other factors, such as gender, age, personality, physical health, academic pressure, academic experience, environment, social support, and life circumstances (Chaerany et al., 2024).

Table 6. Results of the simple linear regression analysis

Model	t	p -value
Intensity of viewing da'wah	-1.038	0.303
R^2	0.018	

These findings indicate that viewing frequency is not the primary factor determining the emotional state of students. Within the context of digital da'wah, the ethical aspect and communicative approach are crucial, emphasizing the importance of the quality of the message content and the delivery method. The principles of da'wah in the digital era stress the significance of moderation, tolerance, and conveying messages based on compassion and wisdom, rather than emotional pressure or moral fear. Da'wah content that is

threatening or emphasizes guilt tends to trigger conflict and feelings of anxiety related to moral fear and sin. Conversely, content that highlights compassion and hope is actually more effective and fosters spiritual tranquility (Nurhaidah et al., 2025).

This finding can also be understood through the Emotional Contagion Theory (Herrando & Constantinides, 2021), which explains that emotions can be transmitted through media interaction. If the da'wah message is delivered with a positive, gentle, and calming tone, the audience will more easily experience a reduction in anxiety levels. Conversely, if the message is delivered harshly, tensely, or intimidatingly, it can trigger an increase in state anxiety. Therefore, in the context of digital da'wah, the psychological effect is not determined by how often students watch, but by how "healthy" the emotion transmitted through the content is.

Theoretically, consistent with Spielberger (1972) State-Trait Anxiety Theory, anxiety comprises two forms: state anxiety, which is temporary, and trait anxiety, which is persistent (Ninawati et al., 2023). These results suggest that viewing digital da'wah likely only influences state anxiety by providing momentary peace, but is not strong enough to reduce trait anxiety. Furthermore, these findings align with the Uses and Gratifications Theory by Katz et al. (1973), which explains that active social media users select content according to their needs (Sirun & Surawan, 2025). Generation Z students use digital da'wah as a form of meaning-seeking and emotional support, but the psychological effect obtained depends on the depth of their comprehension and internal contemplation of the message (Shamim, 2024).

The result showing no significant influence can also be linked to the psychological balance factors of the students. Generation Z is known to be more open to mental health issues, leading them to possess other sources of emotional support besides digital da'wah, such as campus communities, peers, or online counseling. The existence of these support sources can act as a buffer against stress and anxiety, consequently making the influence of digital da'wah statistically insignificant. In this case, digital da'wah serves only as one of many factors contributing to the emotional well-being of students, not the primary determinant.

Several studies support this finding. Sirun & Surawan (2025) found that digital da'wah can strengthen spirituality but does not always reduce anxiety because its effect depends on audience characteristics. Fauzi & Muktaruddin (2023) also confirm that inspirational da'wah content provides a temporary calming effect, whereas judgmental content can actually increase religious anxiety. Budiana (2024) explained that the intensity of using digital religious media can increase self-awareness and spiritual reflection when accompanied by a strong religious intention. Meanwhile, Nurlaili et al. (2025) highlighted that the effect of digital da'wah on the psychological well-being of students tends to be indirect and is mediated by personal religiosity variables.

Supplementary Chi-Square Analysis As an in-depth analysis, the Chi-Square test was conducted to determine the statistical relationship between demographic factors and the variables studied. The analysis results indicated that several demographic factors have a significant relationship with the intensity of viewing digital da'wah: cohort year ($p = 0.004$), study program ($p = 0.006$), regular class ($p = 0.002$), daily activity ($p = 0.013$), and digital da'wah platform ($p = 0.046$). Concurrently, the factors of birth year ($p = 0.000$), cohort year ($p = 0.000$), regular class ($p = 0.015$), and type of da'wah content ($p = 0.029$) showed a significant relationship with student anxiety levels.

These findings demonstrate that demographic aspects and viewing behavior also contribute to the intensity of digital da'wah consumption and student anxiety levels. Students from younger cohorts tend to have higher viewing intensity due to more intense social media exposure. However, not all forms of da'wah consumption yield a positive effect on psychological conditions. Content themed around moral character (akhlaq) and spiritual motivation proved to reduce anxiety, whereas content with a tone of moral threat can induce state anxiety (Barri et al., 2025; Safitri & Ahmad, 2021). Consequently, what causes anxiety is not the viewing frequency itself, but the affective and cognitive aspects of the da'wah content, such as a delivery style that emphasizes threat, fear, or moral burden. This

aligns with the theory of (Barrio et al., 2004), which explains that media intensity involves aspects of attention, contemplation (penghayatan), duration, and frequency. If the contemplation/comprehension of the da'wah content is negative, its impact on emotions can lead to anxiety rather than tranquility. In this context, exposure to digital spiritual content can be ambivalent, capable of increasing serenity or reinforcing stress, depending on the message quality and the audience's mental readiness (Hutauruk et al., 2024). The research by Haroon et al. (2020) also shows that excessive attachment to da'wah content on social media can amplify stress if not balanced with healthy spiritual reflection.

Upon closer examination, this study suggests that the influence of the intensity of viewing digital da'wah on anxiety in Generation Z students cannot be explained solely by frequency or duration of exposure. Based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory, media effects are heavily influenced by the individual's motivation for accessing the content. Students who view digital da'wah with the goal of seeking spiritual peace or solutions tend to experience a reduction in state anxiety, whereas those who watch due to social pressure or merely following trends do not gain significant emotional benefits (Sirun & Surawan, 2025). This means high intensity, without deep religious contemplation, does not necessarily contribute to anxiety management.

These results are also inseparable from the unique characteristics of Generation Z, which influence their interaction with digital da'wah media. This generation is known to have a short attention span and tends to multitask while consuming digital media (Mazlin et al., 2025). Da'wah viewing activities are often performed simultaneously with other activities, such as studying or socializing online, leading to low cognitive engagement with the da'wah content. This condition prevents the optimal internalization of religious messages. However, according to Barrio et al. (2004), media use intensity that impacts emotions requires a balanced combination of attention, comprehension, duration, and frequency. If the aspects of comprehension and contemplation are weak, high exposure will not yield meaningful psychological change. Overall, this study concludes that the intensity of viewing digital da'wah content does not significantly influence the anxiety of Generation Z students, although the direction of the relationship shows a negative tendency. Digital da'wah retains potential as a spiritual development medium that can aid emotional regulation and religious strengthening, but its effectiveness depends on the context of delivery, the quality of the message, and the psychological readiness of the audience. This result confirms that digital da'wah plays a positive role in the psychological well-being of students, but viewing intensity is not the primary factor affecting anxiety reduction. Therefore, the consumption of digital da'wah should not only be understood as a means of conveying religious teachings, but also as a psychological space that fosters a sense of security, optimism, and spiritual empowerment. The presentation of digital da'wah content should not merely be informative, but must also be delivered with a reflective and empathetic approach toward the psychological needs of the younger generation so that it can function optimally in enhancing the mental well-being of students, particularly in the digital era.

4. Conclusions

Based on the research findings involving 60 Generation Z students at Universitas Islam 45 Bekasi, it can be concluded that the intensity of watching digital da'wah content does not significantly influence the students' anxiety levels. Although the correlation direction shows a negative relationship (i.e., higher intensity of watching digital da'wah tends to be followed by a decrease in anxiety), the relationship is not statistically significant ($r = -0.135$; $p = 0.303$). The results of the simple linear regression analysis also showed an R^2 value of 0.018, meaning the watching intensity was only able to explain 1.8% of the variation in student anxiety, while the remaining 98.2% was influenced by other factors such as academic pressure, personality, social support, environmental conditions, and individual spirituality.

Descriptively, the results showed that both the level of digital da'wah watching intensity and student anxiety levels were in the moderate category, with an average

intensity score of 97.8 and an anxiety score of 45.7. This indicates that even though students are actively consuming digital da'wah content regularly, it does not automatically lead to a decrease in anxiety levels. In other words, the frequency of watching digital da'wah is not the main factor determining students' emotional condition. This finding indicates that the frequency of watching da'wah does not necessarily correlate with a decrease in anxiety, as the effect of digital da'wah is more determined by the quality of the message, the style of delivery, and the psychological readiness of the audience.

Furthermore, the Chi-Square test results showed that several demographic factors, such as academic year, study program, regular class status, daily activities, and digital da'wah platform, had a significant relationship with da'wah watching intensity. In contrast, year of birth, academic year, regular class status, and type of da'wah content were significantly related to anxiety levels. This affirms that the psychological impact of digital da'wah on students is contextual and is influenced by personal background and media consumption habits.

Theoretically, these research results are consistent with the state-trait anxiety theory, which suggests that exposure to digital da'wah content is more influential on state anxiety (the temporary form of anxiety) rather than trait anxiety (the persistent form). Additionally, based on the uses and gratifications theory, Generation Z students utilize digital da'wah as a means of fulfilling spiritual and emotional needs, but the psychological effects heavily depend on their intention, internalization, and how they interpret the da'wah message.

Thus, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of digital da'wah in reducing anxiety is not determined by how often one watches it, but rather by how the da'wah message is packaged and internalized by the audience. Da'wah delivered empathetically, fostering hope, and oriented towards compassion, is more likely to provide spiritual calmness than da'wah that emphasizes threats or moral fear. Therefore, strengthening the quality of digital da'wah content is essential to ensure it functions as a medium for spiritual guidance that promotes the psychological well-being of students in the digital era.

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Author Contribution

Conceptualization, C.N. and M.A.; Methodology, C.N. and H.W.G.; Software, H.W.G.; Validation, C.N., M.A., and H.W.G.; Formal Analysis, H.W.G. and L.P.; Investigation, C.N. and M.A.; Resources, L.P.; Data Curation, H.W.G. and L.P.; Writing – Original Draft Preparation, C.N.; Writing – Review & Editing, M.A., H.W.G., and L.P.; Visualization, H.W.G.; Supervision, M.A.; Project Administration, C.N.; and Funding Acquisition, none.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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