

Ethics of Preaching in Cancel Culture: Analysis of Gus Miftah's Communication Style

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Submitted Marc 22, 2025 Accepted Apr 9, 2025 Published May 30, 2025 Keywords: Cancel Culture, Ethical Preaching, Gus Miftah's Communication Style	<i>This study explores the dynamics of Gus Miftah's digital preaching in the context of cancel culture. As an active preacher on social media, Gus Miftah often reaps controversy related to the style and content of his preaching. First, this study aims to analyze how he applies the principles of preaching ethics to respond to criticism and public pressure in the digital space. Second, this study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach with discourse analysis and a case study approach. Third, data was collected through observations of his digital content, interviews, and relevant literature on preaching ethics and cancel culture. Fourth, research findings show that Gus Miftah emphasizes inclusivity, tolerance, and moderation in his preaching. His communicative style and openness to criticism are the main strategies in responding to cancel culture. Despite facing criticism from various groups, Gus Miftah remains consistent in conveying religious messages adaptively and contextually. Fifth, his approach shows how digital preaching can maintain ethical integrity while remaining relevant to contemporary audiences. Sixth, this study highlights the importance of flexible and communicative preaching ethics to overcome challenges in the digital era. Furthermore, this book offers valuable insights for preachers and scholars in developing effective preaching strategies that engage modern digital culture and the evolving nature of public discourse.</i>

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital da'wah is the spread of Islamic teachings through digital media, Digital da'wah utilizes various platforms such as social media, websites, videos, and online applications to convey da'wah messages more easily and

quickly.¹ With digital technology, da'wah becomes more interactive and interesting, and in accordance with the times.² Features such as live streaming, short videos, podcasts, and Islamic articles that are easy to share make the spread of Islamic values more effective, especially for the modern generation.³ In addition, digital da'wah also facilitates the formation of online communities that support each other in understanding Islam through group discussions, webinars, and online classes, so that religious knowledge can be accessed flexibly anywhere and anytime.⁴ However, this ease of access also presents challenges, one of which is the cancel culture phenomenon.⁵ Cancel culture is a social practice in which individuals or groups boycott public figures because of statements or actions that are considered controversial.⁶ This phenomenon is a concern in the context of digital da'wah, because the religious message conveyed can be the target of widespread criticism or rejection through digital media.⁷ Therefore, da'wah practitioners need to develop the right communication strategy so that da'wah remains effective and ethical in this dynamic digital era.⁸

In the context of da'wah, this creates a gap between theory and practice. In theory, da'wah should reflect Islamic values such as wisdom, mau'izhah hasanah, and dialogue (al-mujadalah bil lati hiya ahsan). However, Reality shows that criticism of da'wah methods often does not only take the form of scientific discussions, but also ends in major attacks that damage the da'wah's

¹ Rina Juwita, "Streamlining Religiotaainment: The Influence of Da'wah Content in Digital Space on the Life of the Samarinda Muslim Community in Indonesia.," *Manchester Journal of Transnational Islamic Law & Practice* 19, no. 3 (2023).

² Sunggu A Yang, "The Word Digitalized: A Techno-Theological Reflection on Online Preaching and Its Types," *Homiletic* 46, no. 1 (2021): 75-90.

³ Michael P Knowles, "E-Word? McLuhan, Baudrillard, and Verisimilitude in Preaching," *Religions* 13, no. 12 (2022): 1131.

⁴ Michael P Knowles, "E-Word? McLuhan, Baudrillard, and Verisimilitude in Preaching," *Religions* 13, no. 12 (2022): 1131.

⁵ Ruth Tsuria, "Digital Media: When God Becomes Everybody – The Blurring of Sacred and Profane," *Religions* 12, no. 2 (2021): 110.

⁶ Moch Khafidz Fuad Raya, "Digital Islam: New Space for Authority and Religious Commodification among Islamic Preachers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Contemporary Islam*, 2024, 1-34.

⁷ Mutaqin Alzamzami, "The Hijrah Phenomenon in Social Media: A New Social Movement in Indonesia," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 22, no. 66 (2023): 46-64.

⁸ Nabila Tabassum Nabila, "Islamic Preaching: Using Digital Media to Approach Pakistani Users," *The Dialogue* 18, no. 2 (2023): 66-91.

image and continuity. This phenomenon is evident from interview data and observations, which reveal that preachers especially those active in digital platforms frequently face harsh public responses, including cancel culture, rather than constructive academic debate reputation. This phenomenon shows an imbalance between the concept of da'wah ethics and the response of the digital community which tends to be reactive to controversy.

This phenomenon can clearly be observed in the preaching style of Gus Miftah, a well-known religious figure who has gained recognition for his open-minded, flexible, and culturally adaptive approach to da'wah. Gus Miftah is known for stepping outside traditional preaching spaces and engaging in environments that are often overlooked by more conventional religious leaders, such as nightclubs, cafes, and other social venues where marginalized communities gather. He has used these unconventional settings as platforms for conveying Islamic teachings, often focusing on tolerance, inclusivity, and dialogue with those who may not typically attend mosques or religious events. His approach has sparked a range of reactions from the public, with some people supporting his methods, viewing them as progressive and in tune with contemporary social dynamics. These supporters argue that his approach addresses the needs of modern society, particularly in reaching out to individuals who may feel alienated by traditional religious spaces.

However, there are also groups who strongly oppose his methods, arguing that his actions contradict the core principles of Islamic norms and traditional religious practices. They believe that preaching in such unconventional places undermines the sanctity of religious teachings and risks diluting the message. This disagreement has led to a growing polemic, which is further exacerbated by the rise of cancel culture in the digital world. Cancel culture, in this context, becomes a tool for those who seek to silence or discredit religious leaders whose views and methods do not align with their own values or expectations. The use of cancel culture to target Gus Miftah highlights the broader issue in the digital preaching space: the blurring of lines between constructive criticism and social pressure that aims to suppress or silence public figures. This situation reveals a growing challenge in the world of digital preaching, where the freedom of expression of religious leaders is increasingly at risk from those who hold differing views.

The involvement of cancel culture complicates the ability to have an open and honest discussion about the role of digital preaching in modern society, as it often leads to online harassment and attempts to cancel or discredit preachers. In this regard, the boundary between healthy, constructive criticism aimed at improving religious discourse and undue social pressure to conform to specific ideological expectations remains unclear. The phenomenon serves as a reminder that digital platforms, while offering unprecedented access to audiences, also come with significant risks,

including the erosion of open dialogue and the suppression of diverse viewpoints.

Several previous studies have discussed the ethics of preaching in a digital context. For example, research conducted by Morehouse and Saffer⁹ examines how social media has become a new space for preaching and the challenges faced by preachers. Meanwhile, studies from Casey T Sigmon¹⁰ focus more on how audience interactions respond to digital preaching. In addition, studies by Rebecca Lewis and Angèle Christin¹¹ discuss the role of cancel culture in shaping public opinion towards preachers on social media, while studies from Henrik Åhman and Claes Thorén¹² highlight the communication strategies of preachers in dealing with criticism and social pressure in the digital space. However, these studies are still rare in specifically discussing how a preacher responds to the cancel culture phenomenon. Therefore, this study occupies a unique position by highlighting how Gus Miftah applies preaching ethics to deal with social pressure in the digital space. Thus, this study can fill an academic gap that has not been widely studied in previous literature.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the interaction between da'wah ethics and cancel culture in social media. Rather than just looking at it from the perspective of digital da'wah in general, this research analyzes in more depth how a da'i responds to public pressure in maintaining his da'wah method. By combining discourse analysis and case study approaches, this research offers a new perspective in understanding the dynamics of da'wah in the digital era. This study is also relevant for da'is, academics, and policy makers in formulating more adaptive and effective da'wah strategies in the challenging era of social media.

Based on this background, this study aims to answer several main questions: (1) How does Gus Miftah apply the ethics of preaching in dealing with cancel culture? This question is crucial in understanding the paradigm shift of preaching in the increasingly complex digital era.

As a temporary answer, this study argues that Gus Miftah faces cancel culture with an approach that emphasizes the values of inclusivity, tolerance, and open dialogue. His strategy in responding to criticism reflects the

⁹ Morehouse and Saffer, "Promoting the Faith: Examining Megachurches' Audience-Centric Advertising Strategies on Social Media."

¹⁰ Casey T Sigmon, "The Courage to Preach in the Digital Age," *Religions* 14, no. 4 (2023): 551.

¹¹ Rebecca Lewis and Angèle Christin, "Platform Drama: 'Cancel Culture,' Celebrity, and the Struggle for Accountability on YouTube," *New Media & Society* 24, no. 7 (2022): 1632–56.

¹² Henrik Åhman and Claes Thorén, "When Facebook Becomes Faithbook: Exploring Religious Communication in a Social Media Context," *Social Media+ Society* 7, no. 3 (2021): 20563051211041644.

principle of persuasive communication that avoids direct confrontation, but still maintains the basic principles of preaching. This approach allows preaching to continue amid high social pressure, while also showing that the ethics of preaching have a central role in facing the challenges of digital preaching. This study aims to test this argument through an analysis of preaching practices and audience responses in the digital environment.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore how Gus Miftah responds to the cancel culture phenomenon in his digital preaching. This approach was chosen because it is able to explore social phenomena in depth, especially those related to the meaning, interpretation, and context of religious communication. Discourse analysis is used to examine the language, narrative, and communication strategies used in Gus Miftah's preaching content. In addition, a grounded research approach is used to identify themes that emerge inductively, especially those related to public interaction and responses to preaching content on social media. The research was conducted through online fieldwork on social media platforms where Gus Miftah is active in preaching, namely YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. A total of 15 preaching video contents (5 each from each platform) uploaded in the period 2022–2024 were selected purposively based on high engagement levels (number of views, comments, and shares).

From these videos, around 450 user comments were collected and analyzed to explore the public response to preaching messages and the cancel culture phenomenon. In addition, the data sources of this study are divided into three main categories: first, respondents, namely individuals who provide comments on Gus Miftah's content on social media; second, informants, namely five people consisting of two Islamic communication academics, one religious figure (kiai), and two digital da'wah practitioners; and third, texts, which include online news articles, netizen comments, and literature related to da'wah ethics and digital communication.

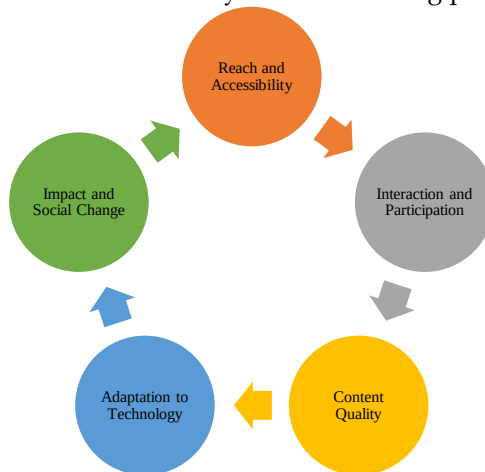
Data collection techniques include observation of da'wah content and public reactions on social media, in-depth interviews with informants, and documentation studies of relevant scientific publications and media articles. Interviews were conducted online via Zoom and WhatsApp, using flexible semi-structured guides to explore in-depth views on the ethics of da'wah and cancel culture. The validity of the research was built operationally through method triangulation (observation, interviews, and documentation), source triangulation (respondents, informants, texts), and theory triangulation (content analysis, discourse analysis, and interpretive approaches). In addition, a thematic coding system was used consisting of four main codes: ethical responses, public pressure, communication strategies, and narrative framing. These codes were developed inductively from field data and adjusted during the analysis process.

Data analysis was carried out in three stages: first, data condensation, namely the process of reduction and categorization based on certain themes; second, presentation of data in the form of narratives and concise tables to facilitate understanding of the pattern of findings; and third, drawing conclusions and verifying data which was carried out continuously through comparisons between sources and confirmation with informants. This method framework allows a comprehensive understanding of how a prominent digital preacher like Gus Miftah deals with social pressure in the digital space while maintaining the ethical principles of preaching. This study also provides new insights into the relationship between religious communication and digital audiences in a changing moral and social landscape.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Dynamics of Digital Preaching

The dynamics of digital preaching in this study refer to the various changes, shifts, and emerging challenges faced by preachers in delivering religious messages through digital platforms. The rise of social media and other digital technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of da'wah, enabling broader and faster dissemination of Islamic teachings across diverse audiences. However, this advancement also brings new complexities, such as increased exposure to public criticism, misinterpretation, and the phenomenon of cancel culture. In this digital context, preaching is no longer limited to the content of religious messages, but also involves how preachers navigate social pressure, respond to trending issues, adapt to platform algorithms, and maintain credibility amid fluctuating public opinion.



Based on interviews with two informants, it was found that digital da'wah provides a great opportunity to reach a wider audience. The first

informant stated that "social media helps spread da'wah faster, but also risks causing misunderstandings." (Mh_25)

The second informant added that "criticism received by da'wah is often harsher in the digital world because of the anonymity of internet users." (Ls_25) The researcher interpreted this data as an indication that although digital media makes da'wah easier, there are still challenges in dealing with public responses that are not always positive.

The results of the observation indicate that Gus Miftah actively engages with social media as a primary tool for preaching, utilizing a more flexible and culture-based method tailored to the dynamics of the digital world. His approach is characterized by a strong emphasis on promoting values of tolerance, understanding, and compassion. He frequently uploads content that appeals to a broad range of social groups, from the mainstream Muslim community to marginalized or underrepresented communities, aiming to foster inclusivity and social harmony. By doing so, Gus Miftah positions himself as a preacher who bridges the gap between traditional Islamic teachings and the diverse, modern-day society. However, the observation also revealed that some of his uploaded content attracted negative reactions, particularly from certain groups who perceived his approach as being inconsistent with established or conservative Islamic norms. These groups criticized his style and messaging, which led to public debate and discourse about his approach. The researcher identified a recurring pattern in the data: as the reach of digital preaching expands, the likelihood and intensity of criticism tend to increase.

From these findings, it can be concluded that the dynamics of digital preaching are complex and involve a delicate balance between the opportunities presented by digital platforms and the challenges that arise from public scrutiny and social pressure. While digital media provides preachers with unprecedented access to a global audience, it also exposes them to increased risk, including the dangers of cancel culture, negative feedback, and online attacks. Therefore, it is essential for preachers to be mindful of how they convey their messages while staying true to the ethics of preaching, ensuring that their content is both responsible and engaging, without being overly influenced by fleeting public opinion.

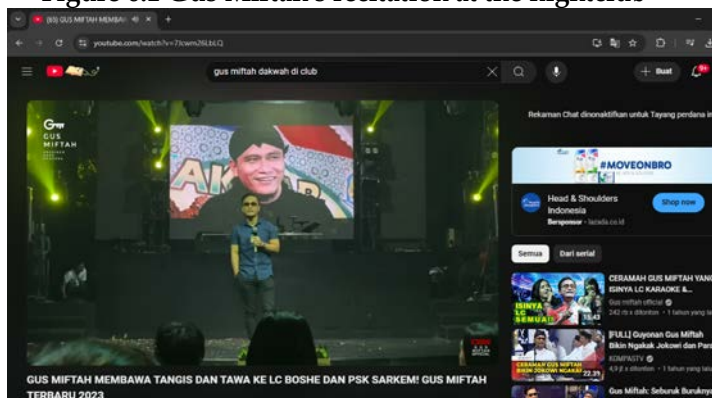
Overall, this study demonstrates that the current pattern of digital preaching is moving toward a greater adaptation to technological advancements and social changes. Preachers like Gus Miftah, who are able to effectively integrate technology with religious messaging, tend to reach a wider audience and connect with followers in a more meaningful way. However, despite these opportunities, they continue to face challenges in the form of digital attacks, criticism, and the pressures of cancel culture. Therefore, it is crucial for preachers to develop a robust communication strategy, one that is adaptable and responsive to the evolving digital landscape. Understanding the mechanics of digital media and social media

algorithms is key for maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of their preaching in a rapidly changing world.

Gus Miftah's Preaching Ethics

Gus Miftah's preaching ethics in the context of digital preaching emphasize an inclusive, humanistic, and culturally adaptive approach. In this study, preaching ethics are understood as a set of values, principles, and communication strategies employed by Gus Miftah in delivering Islamic messages through digital media. His preaching is characterized by flexibility, openness, and a deep sensitivity to the diversity of his audience, which includes not only mainstream Muslim communities but also marginalized and non-mainstream groups. He prioritizes messages of tolerance, compassion, and dialogue, seeking to bridge gaps between religious teachings and real-life social conditions. By doing so, Gus Miftah positions himself as a preacher who embraces pluralism and cultural understanding, especially in spaces often neglected by traditional da'wah methods. His ethical stance also reflects an awareness of the digital audience's sensitivities and the need for preaching that resonates with contemporary social realities.

Figure 0.1 Gus Miftah's recitation at the nightclub



The results of interviews with two informants revealed diverse views on Gus Miftah's preaching methods. The first informant, a congregation member who actively follows his online studies, stated that "Gus Miftah's approach makes preaching easier to accept because it is not judgmental, but rather embracing" (Ab_25).

Meanwhile, the second informant, a cleric from a traditional community, stated that "Gus Miftah's approach tends to be controversial because it does not comply with general preaching norms" (Uk_25). The results of this interview show that more flexible preaching can reach more people, but also gets rejection from groups who consider it inconsistent with stricter Islamic teachings.

Observations made on Gus Miftah's preaching on social media show that his approach is indeed different from conventional preaching. In several videos observed, he uses light language, jokes, and speaks to audiences from various backgrounds, including in places that are considered unusual for preaching, such as nightclubs and marginalized communities. Interpretations of these observations indicate that this method aims to bring Islam closer to the wider community in a way that is more relevant and easily understood by various groups. Overall, this study confirms that Gus Miftah's preaching ethics are oriented towards acceptance and openness to audience diversity. His unique approach to preaching allows the message of Islam to reach groups that are often marginalized. However, on the other hand, this method has also sparked criticism from some parties who consider it less in accordance with traditional norms in preaching.

From the data obtained, it can be concluded that the digital preaching pattern applied by Gus Miftah reflects the need for a more inclusive and contextual method in facing the challenges of the times. This phenomenon shows that the success of digital preaching does not only depend on the content of the message, but also the way it is delivered which is able to adapt to the increasingly diverse social and cultural conditions of the audience.

Cancel Culture in Digital Preaching

Cancel culture in digital preaching refers to a complex and growing phenomenon where a preacher is subjected to widespread rejection, criticism, or public attacks on social media platforms. This backlash typically occurs due to the preacher's views, statements, or methods of preaching that are perceived as deviating from or conflicting with the norms, values, or beliefs of certain groups or communities. This phenomenon often emerges as a form of collective reaction, driven not only by individual grievances but also significantly influenced by the dynamics of public opinion, the viral nature of social media, and the algorithms that shape what content is seen by large audiences. In the context of digital preaching, cancel culture has a far-reaching impact, as it can affect both the individual preacher and the broader patterns of religious discourse. Beyond just targeting specific individuals, cancel culture also influences how Islamic teachings are disseminated in the digital space, potentially altering the ways in which preachers adapt their messages and engage with audiences. It creates an environment where preachers must navigate both the opportunities and risks of using digital platforms to reach wider audiences, while also managing the potential for backlash that can arise from misinterpretations or disagreements.

Based on interviews with two informants, one of the informants stated that "cancel culture often occurs when a preacher expresses views that differ from the mainstream. This makes them vulnerable to excessive attacks and criticism."(Kn_25) Meanwhile, the second informant added that "digital attacks on preachers are not always fact-based, but are more driven by

emotions and subjective perceptions of society."(Hn_25) From the results of this interview, the researcher interpreted that cancel culture in preaching is more than just criticism, but can also be a systematic effort to silence public figures who have a different approach.

Observations of social media activity reveal that attacks on preachers tend to escalate rapidly once controversial statements or actions go viral. In these instances, negative comments and widespread calls for boycotting certain preachers often become highly amplified, spreading quickly through networks of followers. These interactions are further fueled by social media algorithms, which prioritize content that generates high levels of engagement, such as likes, shares, and comments. As a result, controversial content tends to gain more visibility, intensifying the reach and impact of criticisms. Researchers interpret these dynamics as evidence that social media algorithms play a crucial role in accelerating the spread of cancel culture, creating a snowball effect where pressure on preachers continuously escalates over time.

From these findings, it can be concluded that cancel culture in digital preaching is not simply a spontaneous reaction from the public but is also significantly shaped by the underlying dynamics of algorithms and the collective power of public opinion. While cancel culture can serve as a form of social control, upholding moral or societal standards, it also has the potential to curtail the freedom of religious expression. The pattern that emerges shows that preachers who adopt unconventional or differing approaches are particularly vulnerable to cancel culture, especially when their views challenge the dominant or mainstream perspectives. Furthermore, the involvement of social media users in shaping public opinion whether to amplify or dilute certain viewpoints plays a pivotal role in determining a preacher's standing in the digital space. Therefore, it is essential for preachers to develop a more adaptive and strategic communication approach to effectively navigate these challenges and ensure that their preaching remains both relevant and sustainable in the ever-changing digital landscape.

This study found that Gus Miftah's preaching ethics in dealing with cancel culture focuses on an inclusive and cultural approach, which distinguishes it from conventional preaching approaches. When compared to existing literature, such as studies¹³ which highlight how audience interactions respond to digital preaching, this study shows that adaptive communication strategies are key to maintaining influence in the digital space. This adaptation includes the use of more familiar language, choosing topics that are relevant to everyday life, and effectively utilizing social media

¹³ Frida Mannerfelt, "Co-Preaching: The Effects of Religious Digital Creatives' Engagement in the Preaching Event," *Religions* 13, no. 12 (2022): 1135.

platforms to build closeness with the audience¹⁴. While studies¹⁵ discuss preachers' communication strategies in dealing with criticism, this study adds a new dimension by highlighting how social pressure in the form of cancel culture can influence preaching methods. In addition, this study shows that dealing with cancel culture is not enough by simply responding to criticism directly, but also requires a long-term strategy to build image and trust in the digital world. Thus, the ethics of preaching applied by Gus Miftah provides a new perspective in the study of contemporary preaching, especially in understanding the dynamics of social interaction and media that continue to develop. While previous studies have discussed the communication strategies of preachers in dealing with criticism¹⁶, this study adds a new dimension by highlighting how social pressure in the form of cancel culture can influence preaching methods. In addition, this study shows that dealing with cancel culture is not enough by simply responding to criticism directly, but also requires a long-term strategy to build image and trust in the digital world¹⁷. Thus, the ethics of preaching applied by Gus Miftah provide a new perspective in contemporary preaching studies, especially in understanding the dynamics of social interactions and media that continue to develop¹⁸.

The results of this study also reveal a significant aspect of cancel culture within the realm of digital preaching: it can serve as a mechanism of social control. In some instances, cancel culture functions to enforce societal norms and expectations, compelling preachers to be more cautious in their messaging and communication strategies. The fear of being publicly shamed, ridiculed, or canceled often leads preachers to tailor their messages more carefully, making sure not to step outside the boundaries of accepted social or religious norms. In this sense, cancel culture can act as a regulatory force, pushing religious leaders to align their preaching more closely with prevailing values. However, while this could encourage preachers to be more

¹⁴ José Van Dijck and Thomas Poell, "Understanding Social Media Logic," *Media and Communication* 1, no. 1 (2013): 2-14.

¹⁵ Tom Boland, "Iconoclastic Critics? Understanding the 'Just like a Religion' Critique," *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2025, 13684310251316506.

¹⁶ Azahara Cañedo, Mónica López-Golán, and Olga Blasco-Blasco, "Obsolescence as a Pattern: An Analysis of How Public Service Media Managers Perceive and Cope with Resistance to Change in the Platformisation Era," *Journal of Media Business Studies* 22, no. 1 (2025): 50-66.

¹⁷ Vassiliki Kamariotou, Maria Kamariotou, and Fotis Kitsios, "Strategic Planning for Virtual Exhibitions and Visitors' Experience: A Multidisciplinary Approach for Museums in the Digital Age," *Digital Applications in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage* 21 (2021): e00183.

¹⁸ Dawam Multazamy Rohmatulloh, Muhammad As'ad, and R M Malayati, "Gus Baha, Santri Gayeng, and The Rise of Traditionalist Preachers on Social Media," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022): 303.

responsible in their approach, it also brings a darker side to the fore. The findings of this study suggest that cancel culture has the potential to become a form of social dysfunction when it is used as a tool to unfairly silence or undermine preachers who express views that may not conform to the expectations of specific groups.

This misuse of cancel culture undermines the essence of free speech and open dialogue, which are essential to any healthy social or religious discourse. In such cases, cancel culture shifts from being a tool for social correction into a weapon used to suppress diverse perspectives. This aligns with existing research, which suggests that the pressures exerted by social media and digital platforms can have an extreme impact on public opinion, shaping it in both positive and negative directions. Social media algorithms amplify voices and opinions that align with the dominant narratives, while silencing or diminishing those that challenge the status quo. As a result, cancel culture can create an environment in which individuals and preachers feel compelled to self-censor or conform to popular beliefs, out of fear of backlash or social exclusion.

This dual nature of cancel culture, acting both as a social control mechanism and a potential source of dysfunction, presents a complex challenge for digital preachers. While the pressure to conform may encourage more responsible and socially acceptable preaching, it also raises critical questions about the limits of free expression in the digital era and the ethical implications of using cancel culture as a means of silencing dissent. These findings highlight the need for a more balanced and fair approach to public discourse, where constructive criticism is encouraged, but the suppression of diverse ideas is actively resisted.

The implications of these findings suggest that the sustainability of digital preaching requires a balance between freedom of speech and the application of ethics in conveying religious messages. If cancel culture is used constructively, it can be a tool to encourage preachers to be more reflective in their preaching methods. However, if applied excessively, this phenomenon can hinder freedom of preaching and create fear in conveying religious messages in the digital public space.

In the context of digital social structures, this study shows that cancel culture does not occur in a vacuum, but is influenced by social media algorithms that reinforce majority opinion. As a result, preachers who have a different approach, such as Gus Miftah, are more vulnerable to attacks than those who follow the mainstream of preaching. This phenomenon shows a correlation between the dynamics of social media algorithms and the formation of public opinion that can strengthen or weaken the position of a preacher.

Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of awareness of digital ethics in preaching and communication strategies that are able to respond to challenges in the era of social media. Digital preaching requires not only a

strong understanding of religion, but also skills in navigating the ever-evolving digital space. In the future, further research can explore how digital platforms can create a more inclusive space for preachers to convey messages without getting caught up in the excessive pressure of cancel culture.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that inclusive and culture-based preaching strategies as exemplified by Gus Miftah can be effective tools for navigating the pressures of cancel culture in digital media. While cancel culture may function as a form of informal social control that encourages ethical responsibility, it can also constrain freedom of religious expression when driven by bias or intolerance. The findings suggest that preaching in the digital age is not merely about message delivery, but also about strategic adaptation to sociocultural dynamics, including the influence of digital platforms and audience sentiment. From this perspective, cancel culture does not only represent opposition or resistance, but also a communicative challenge that shapes the boundaries of public religious discourse.

Theoretically, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of digital da'wah ethics by offering a model of communicative resilience, where religious figures must balance between authenticity, contextual sensitivity, and digital platform logic (e.g., algorithms and virality). It adds to the existing literature by framing digital preachers not only as transmitters of sacred texts but also as digital actors navigating a complex field of visibility, controversy, and accountability. This study also refines the concept of "public piety" in the digital realm by showing how religious authority must now be negotiated within participatory media spaces that are shaped by user feedback, trends, and shifting moral expectations.

Practically, the research provides important implications for digital preachers, Islamic institutions, and media regulators. For preachers, it highlights the importance of developing media literacy and ethical communication strategies to remain relevant and credible in the face of criticism. For da'wah institutions, it suggests the need to provide structured support—such as ethical guidelines, media training, and crisis management—for preachers operating in digital spaces. Meanwhile, for religious media regulators, this study emphasizes the need to consider nuanced policies that protect freedom of expression while also promoting respectful discourse and discouraging harmful forms of public shaming.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. It focuses exclusively on the case of Gus Miftah, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings to other preachers or contexts. The analysis also does not fully explore demographic aspects—such as audience age, gender, or educational background—that may influence public responses to digital preaching.

Moreover, the study prioritizes qualitative methods and discursive interpretation without broader quantitative validation.

Future research is encouraged to explore similar cases involving diverse preachers, including women and younger digital influencers, across various digital platforms. Quantitative approaches such as surveys, content analytics, or sentiment analysis can help provide a more comprehensive understanding of audience behavior and public discourse patterns. These studies will be crucial for developing more adaptive, inclusive, and ethical preaching models that are responsive to the realities of the digital age and its sociocultural complexities.

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