

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION OF STUNTING PREVENTION: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS ON INSTAGRAM

Elfa Nuzila Halwa

University of Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia

e-mail: elfanuzila6@gmail.com



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Abstract

Stunting remains a significant public health issue in Indonesia, with Jember Regency reporting a prevalence rate of 3.49%. In response, Fatayat NU Jember – a women’s wing of Nahdlatul Ulama – has expanded its da’wah efforts to include health promotion, particularly maternal and child nutrition. This study explores how Islamic-based digital da’wah is utilized to communicate stunting prevention through @fatayatnujember’s Instagram content. Drawing on Holsti’s content analysis framework, six posts published in 2024 that explicitly address stunting and related health topics were identified through systematic observation and examined qualitatively. Findings reveal that the account integrates Islamic values with gender-sensitive health education to promote awareness during the critical first 1,000 days of life. However, the content tends to be expository and retrospective, focusing primarily on organizational activities rather than audience mobilization. Posts lack interactive elements, call-to-action strategies, or dialogic engagement, resulting in limited user interaction and feedback. This study highlights the underutilized potential of digital religious communication for public health advocacy and suggests that Islamic organizations can enhance their digital engagement strategies by incorporating participatory and campaign-oriented content. The research contributes to the growing discourse on the intersection of religion, digital media, and public health in Indonesia, particularly within the context of gender-responsive Islamic activism.

Keywords: *Content Analysis; Stunting; Instagram; Fatayat NU Jember.*

INTRODUCTION

Stunting, or impaired growth in children, represents a persistent and multifaceted global health crisis that affects both individual wellbeing and national development trajectories. It is defined as a chronic condition resulting from prolonged undernutrition during the most critical periods of growth and development, particularly the first 1,000 days of life. The World Health Organization (2014) estimates that approximately 162 million children under the age of five globally suffer from stunting. This condition is not merely a biological issue but has long-term implications on a child’s cognitive development, academic performance, and future economic

productivity. In Indonesia, stunting has emerged as a pressing national priority, with various provinces consistently reporting prevalence rates exceeding the global average. The Indonesian government, through the National Strategy to Accelerate Stunting Prevention (Stranas Stunting), has implemented multi-sectoral interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of this complex issue. Yet, progress remains uneven due to regional disparities, cultural resistance, and communication challenges in reaching vulnerable populations. This underscores the need for health communication strategies that are context-sensitive, culturally appropriate, and community-driven to ensure behavioral change and sustainability of impact.

Health communication scholars have long acknowledged that behavior change is not solely influenced by access to information but also by how that information is mediated through cultural, religious, and interpersonal dynamics. The two-step flow communication model proposed by Lazarsfeld et al. (1968) highlights the pivotal role of key opinion leaders as intermediaries between mass media and the wider community, suggesting that information dissemination is most effective when it is filtered through socially trusted figures. More recent studies by Kraft et al. (2020) and Wangqu & Peres (2023) emphasize that opinion leadership operates not only vertically from elites to the masses but also horizontally across peer groups, reinforcing the need to recognize micro-influencers within communities. However, while the role of opinion leaders in political and commercial contexts is well-researched, the specific influence of religious-based women's organizations in health promotion, particularly in digital spaces, remains underexplored. Moreover, there is limited empirical research that examines how Islamic values and digital communication intersect to address public health issues such as stunting, despite the growing engagement of religious groups in health advocacy (Flynn & Eastman, 1996; Suminar, 2023). This gap becomes even more pronounced when considering the limited analysis of localized religious actors as digital health opinion leaders in non-urban Indonesian settings.

Jember Regency in East Java serves as a compelling case for investigating the intersection between religious communication and health advocacy due to its high stunting prevalence and culturally unique demographic profile. According to the Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI, 2022), Jember recorded a stunting prevalence rate of 34.9%, the highest among all East Java districts. These figures are further disaggregated across subdistricts, with five Puskesmas—Rambipuji, Sukorambi, Mangli, Jelbuk, and Sumberjambe—identified as stunting hotspots, underscoring the chronic and localized nature of the problem (Dinas Kesehatan Kabupaten Jember, 2023). The region's Pendalungan culture—a synthesis of Javanese and Madurese ethnic traditions—is deeply intertwined with Islamic values. This cultural hybridity shapes not only language and social norms but also community engagement, religious expression, and health-seeking behavior (Arifin, 2012; Syamsuddin, 2019). Given that Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), one of Indonesia's largest

Islamic organizations, is highly active in the region, its women's wing, Fatayat NU Jember, occupies a strategic position in mobilizing religious authority and community trust for health-related initiatives. Despite this, there remains a lack of scholarly attention to how organizations like Fatayat NU leverage digital platforms such as Instagram to deliver culturally resonant health messages – especially in marginalized, semi-rural contexts like Jember.

This study focuses on how Fatayat NU Jember, a women's division of NU, utilizes Instagram as a platform for digital da'wah to communicate stunting prevention strategies. In particular, the study analyzes the Instagram account @fatayatnujember to understand how the organization integrates Islamic teachings, gender-responsive narratives, and culturally grounded appeals in its health communication content. Given the increasing relevance of digital da'wah in shaping Muslim public discourse, particularly among younger and tech-savvy demographics, this inquiry situates Fatayat NU not merely as a religious actor but as a health opinion leader. Previous studies have examined digital da'wah as a tool for spiritual engagement and moral instruction, yet few have explored its applications in promoting public health. This study argues that Islamic organizations, when effectively utilizing digital media, can serve as influential intermediaries for translating national health agendas into community-level behavioral change. Such religiously framed communication is particularly potent in regions like Jember, where trust in religious authorities often surpasses that of state actors. Furthermore, this research contends that women's religious organizations hold unique power in fostering maternal and child health norms due to their embeddedness within family and social networks, a dimension that remains understudied in both health communication and Islamic studies literature.

In response to these gaps and contextual challenges, this study aims to examine how Fatayat NU Jember communicates stunting prevention as part of its digital da'wah strategy through Instagram. The central research question guiding this investigation is: How does Fatayat NU Jember use Instagram to communicate stunting prevention within the framework of Islamic-based digital health advocacy? Through a content analysis of the organization's Instagram posts, this study explores the narrative techniques, visual strategies, and religious symbols employed to engage audiences and promote behavior change. The objective is to contribute to both theoretical and practical discourses by mapping the role of Islamic organizations as digital health communicators and identifying how religious legitimacy, gendered authority, and cultural proximity are leveraged to address pressing public health issues. By doing so, this research extends the scholarship on health communication, opinion leadership, and digital religion while offering recommendations for designing inclusive, ethically grounded, and culturally tailored health interventions in predominantly Muslim societies.

METHOD

The dataset comprised all Instagram posts published in 2024 on the @fatayatnujember account. Data were collected through direct observation of the account feed. Posts were screened against two inclusion criteria: explicit mention of stunting and health-related content. Only six posts published in 2024 met these criteria and were retained for analysis. The six selected posts underwent qualitative content analysis guided by Holsti's theoretical framework. This approach enabled systematic coding of thematic units and interpretation of messaging strategies related to stunting prevention and health promotion.

This study uses the content analysis theory proposed by Holsti. According to Holsti, content analysis is a research method aimed at making objective inferences and systematically identifying the characteristics of messages (Eriyanto, 2021; Saris-Gallhofer, et al., 1978). In the approach developed by Holsti, this analysis is used to answer three main questions in the communication process: "what," "to whom," and "how." The question "what" focuses on the content of the message being conveyed, including analysis of trends, patterns, and differences in messages generated by various communicators. Meanwhile, the question "to whom" relates to the target audience of the message, i.e., the intended audience in the communication. The question "how" highlights the form and technique of message delivery, such as the persuasive, informative, or educational strategies used in communication. Holsti's framework was selected because it ensures objectivity and systematic rigor in content analysis by defining explicit units of analysis, supports a descriptive-quantitative examination of theme frequencies, incorporates a standardized formula for calculating intercoder reliability, and facilitates easy replication by other researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Fatayat NU Kabupaten Jember as Key Opinion Leaders

From the data gathered through interviews with the residents of Jember Regency regarding culture and traditions, the researcher found that the community in Jember has a strong attachment to religious values. This is evident from their preference for attending Islamic study sessions over health education activities. This condition indicates that religion plays a central role in social life and decision-making within the community.

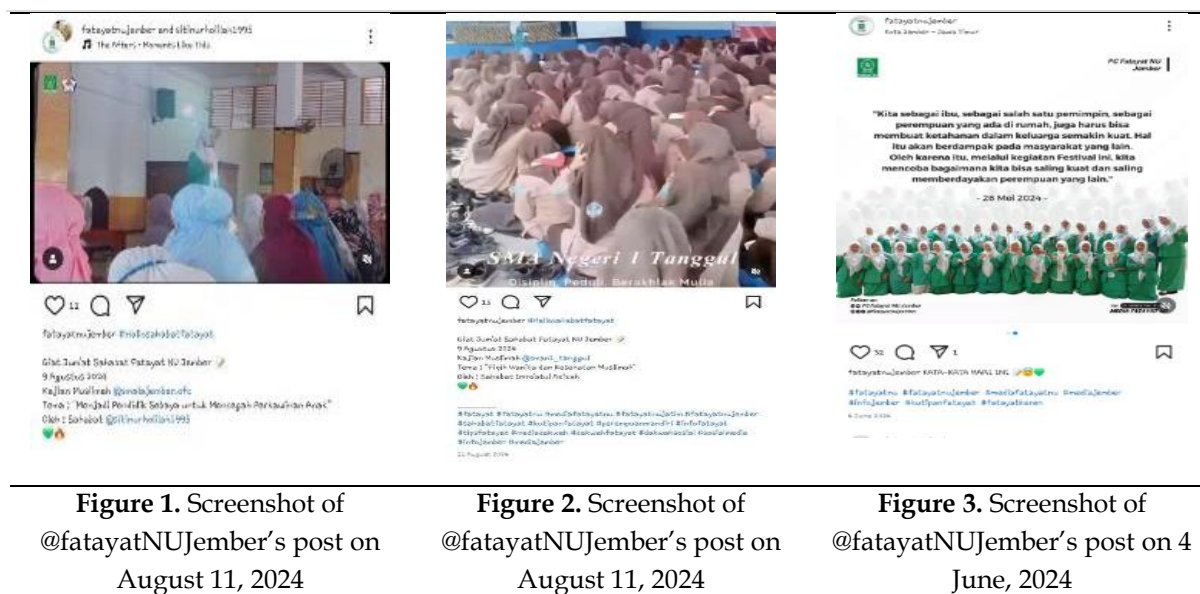
In the context of communication, it was found that the community tends to receive information more readily from individuals with whom they have a social connection, such as religious leaders and local health workers. As an outsider, the researcher realized that direct approaches without intermediaries from respected figures could lead to resistance in message acceptance. Therefore, the strategy implemented was to collaborate with local stakeholders, such as *kyai* (religious leader) and village midwives who have social legitimacy within the community. By utilizing

trusted communication channels, the education provided becomes more effective and better accepted.

This finding reinforces the concept that social trust and local authority play a crucial role in the effectiveness of information delivery, especially in communities with strong cultural and religious values. An approach based on the involvement of community leaders can be a more persuasive and accepted communication strategy, compared to one conducted directly by outsiders without a strong social bridge. Fatayat NU Jember plays a strategic role as a key opinion leader in disseminating information related to religion and social issues that impact community welfare, including stunting prevention. As a religiously based women's organization, Fatayat NU Jember holds social legitimacy and high trust from the community, especially in areas with strong Islamic values. This position provides an advantage in delivering socialization that not only focuses on religious aspects but also integrates education on public health, particularly on stunting prevention and management.

Instagram Content of Fatayat NU Jember in Stunting Socialization

On 11 August 2024, @FatayatNUJember disseminated a "Giat Jumat" post via its official social media channels in Figure 1. The update recorded twelve user "likes," with no accompanying comments or shares. This digital engagement metric reflects preliminary audience receptivity but also indicates a need for targeted strategies to stimulate two-way interaction and content dissemination within the network of pesantren-based women's organizations. Earlier, on 9 August 2024, the Kajian Muslimah event—coordinated in partnership with the @smalajember.ofc Instagram account—convened a thematic lecture entitled "Menjadi Pendidik Sebaya untuk Mencegah Perkawinan Anak." Delivered by Sahabat Siti Nurholilah, the session exemplified a peer-education model designed to address underlying sociocultural drivers of child marriage. By situating young women as both beneficiaries and facilitators of the discourse, the program leveraged horizontal learning processes to enhance uptake of preventive norms across adolescent networks. To maximize reach and reinforce collective identity, both posts employed a suite of branded hashtags: #Hallosahabatfatayat, #fatayat, #fatayatnu, #mediafatayatnu, #fatayatnujatim, #fatayatnujember, #sahabatfatayat, #kutipanfatayat, #perempuanmandiri, #infofatayat, #tipsfatayat, #mediadakwah, #dakwahfatayat, #dakwahsosial, #sosialmedia, #infojember, and #mediajember. This taxonomy of tags functions as a semantic index, facilitating content retrieval, network clustering, and the diffusion of gender-sensitive health and social messaging throughout the Jember region.



On 11 August 2024, the Sahabat Fatayat NU Jember social media account published a photographic update documenting its regular Jumat activity under the caption “Giat Jum’at Sahabat Fatayat NU Jember” in Figure 2. The post garnered fifteen user likes and recorded no comments or shares, suggesting a primarily observational form of audience engagement. By pairing a succinct textual description with a visual representation of community members in collaboration, the entry both reaffirmed organizational continuity and implicitly invited further dialogic participation. That post coverage of a Kajian Muslimah session held at SMAN 1 Tanggul. Titled “Fiqh Wanita dan Kesehatan Muslimah” and delivered by Sahabat Imro’atul Azizah, the event was presented as a peer-led educational forum aimed at integrating Islamic jurisprudence with women’s health discourse. Both posts consistently employed a network of thematic hashtags—#Hallosahabatfatayat, #fatayat, #fatayatnu, #mediafatayatnu, #fatayatnujatim, #fatayatnujember, #sahabatfatayat, #kutipanfatayat, #perempuanmandiri, #infofatayat, #tipsfatayat, #mediadakwah, #dakwahfatayat, #dakwhsosial, #sosialmedia, #infojember, and #mediajember—to facilitate semantic indexing, foster collective identity, and optimize content discoverability within regional and organizational communities.

On 4 June 2024, the official Sahabat Fatayat NU Jember social media channel published a concise motivational entry under the caption “KATA-KATA HARI INI” in Figure 3. The photo post contains the following text “Kita sebagai ibu, sebagai salah satu pemimpin, sebagai perempuan yang ada di rumah, juga harus bisa membuat ketahanan dalam keluarga semakin kuat. Hal itu akan berdampak pada masyarakat yang lain. Oleh karena itu, melalui kegiatan festival ini, kita mencoba bagaimana kita bisa saling kuat dan saling memberdayakan perempuan yang lain.” The post’s engagement metrics—32 likes, zero comments, and one share—suggest a predominantly observational interaction pattern, with limited user-generated discourse but appreciable content endorsement.

Accompanied by a suite of seven thematic hashtags (#fatayatnu, #fatayatnujember, #mediafatayatnu, #mediajember, #infojember, #kutipanfatayat, #fatayatkeren), the update exemplifies a deliberate semantic indexing strategy designed to amplify content retrieval, consolidate organizational identity, and sustain visibility within both local and broader digital networks.



Figure 4. Screenshot of @fatayatNUJember's post on April 21, 2024



Figure 5. Screenshot of @fatayatNUJember's post on April 23, 2024



Figure 6. Screenshot of @fatayatNUJember's post on February 18, 2024

On 21 April 2024, the Sahabat Fatayat NU Jember social media outlet published a retrospective post documenting the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on 19 March 2024 between the Jember Regency Government and the PC Fatayat NU Jember. In Figure 4, the agreement, endorsed in the presence of the Vice Regent of Jember, formalizes collaborative commitments to enhance the quality of life for women and children across the regency. The post achieved 27 likes, one comment, and no shares—metrics indicative of modest yet focused audience engagement. By employing the hashtags #Hallosahabatfatayat and #latepost, the entry leverages digital tagging conventions to situate the content within ongoing organizational dialogues and to acknowledge its retrospective nature. This strategic use of metadata supports content discoverability and reinforces the mobilization of civil-religious partnership narratives in regional development discourses.

On 23 April 2024, the Sahabat Fatayat NU Jember social media channel published a retrospective post documenting its attendance at the Coordination Meeting of the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team held on 4 April 2024. In Figure 5, the entry recorded seven likes, zero comments, and zero shares—metrics that denote modest audience acknowledgment without active discourse or redistribution. By Captioning the activity as “Menghadiri Rapat Koordinasi Tim Percepatan Penurunan Stunting,” the post underscores Fatayat NU Jember’s commitment to

multisectoral collaboration on child growth and nutrition interventions. A comprehensive array of hashtags was employed to enhance thematic indexing and network visibility: #Hallosahabatfatayat, #latepost, #fatayat, #fatayatnu, #mediafatayatnu, #fatayatnujatim, #fatayatnujember, #sahabatfatayat, #kutipanfatayat, #perempuanmandiri, #infofatayat, #tipsfatayat, #mediadakwah, #dakwahfatayat, #dakwahsosial, #sosialmedia, #infojember, #mediajember, #harikartini, #kartiniindonesia, and #kartinimasakini. This tagging strategy serves to consolidate organizational identity, facilitate discoverability across digital platforms, and align the post with broader discourses on women's empowerment, stunting prevention, and national commemorations of Kartini Day.

On 18 February 2024, the Sahabat Fatayat NU Jember social media account published a post reporting a community outreach activity on the prevention of child marriage as a core component of child protection in Jember Regency. In Figure 6, the update garnered thirty-two likes, zero comments, and one share, reflecting predominantly observational audience engagement with limited dialogic interaction. In the caption, the event is framed as a program of PC Fatayat NU Jember—specifically through its LP3A Jember unit—in collaboration with the Child Protection Division of DP3AKB Jember. The socialization session was conducted within the Forum Ketua Fatayat NU Jember and the Forum Da'iyah Fatayat NU Jember, hosted at the Sukorejo Village Hall in Bangsalsari. This multi-stakeholder approach underscores the organization's commitment to leveraging religious-civil networks for preventive education on child rights and wellbeing. By employing thematic hashtags—#Hallosahabatfatayat, #fatayat, #fatayatnu, #fatayatnujember, #fatayatnujatim, #fatayatkeren, #perlindungananak, and #perkawinananak—the post strategically enhances content discoverability, reinforces organizational identity, and situates the initiative within broader discourses on gender, youth empowerment, and social welfare.

Content Analysis with Holsti's Framework

Using Holsti's framework, a systematic content analysis was conducted on all Instagram posts published by Fatayat NU Jember in 2024. Each post—comprising caption, image, and hashtags—served as the unit of analysis. A coding scheme was developed a priori to capture five thematic categories: nutritional education, stunting-prevention guidance, religious framing, community engagement calls, and multimedia elements.

The post on 11 August 2024 contained information about a socialization activity at SMALA Jember, a part of the "Giat Jum'at Sahabat Fatayat NU Jember" event on August 9, 2024, with the theme "Becoming Peer Educators to Prevent Child Marriage." The source of the message in this post is Fatayat NU Jember, a young women's organization under NU that is actively involved in social and health issues, including

the prevention of child marriage. This activity was also in collaboration with SMAN 5 Jember (@smalajember.ofc), which serves as the Muslimah study venue. The content aims to inform the public that Fatayat NU Jember, as a key opinion leader with a background as a Muslimah, is conducting socialization to educate teenagers about child marriage prevention. Stunting is indirectly related to child marriage or early marriage because early marriage poses a high health risk for having stunted children.

The post on 11 August 2024 is informative to Instagram users that Fatayat NU Jember is conducting socialization activities for high school students of SMAN 1 Tanggul. The message conveyed in this activity includes two main aspects: Fiqh for Women, which studies Islamic law related to women, such as cleanliness, worship, and women's rights in Islam, and Muslimah health education, which promotes healthy living in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Based on content analysis according to Holsti's theory, the post on 4 June 2024 on @fatayatnujember contains the main message about the role of women in family resilience and social empowerment. In this statement, women, particularly mothers, are depicted not only as household managers but also as leaders with a strategic role in strengthening family resilience. This resilience is said to have a broader impact on society as a whole. Furthermore, there is a call to build solidarity among women to empower and strengthen each other. From a communication goal perspective, this statement is persuasive, urging women to be more active in building strong families, and informative, highlighting the link between family resilience and women's empowerment. The implied meaning in this statement is the importance of collaboration and support among women to create stronger social resilience. Therefore, this message reflects a call to build collective awareness that women contribute significantly to creating change, both at the family and societal levels.

The post on 21 April 2024 on @fatayatnujember contained information about the MoU between the Jember Regency Government and PC Fatayat NU Jember on March 19, 2024, marking a strategic partnership to improve the quality of life for women and children in the region. Based on content analysis according to Holsti's theory, this text contains both informative and persuasive messages, demonstrating the local government's commitment to social empowerment. The involvement of the Deputy Regent of Jember in the MoU adds policy legitimacy and emphasizes that improving the welfare of women and children is part of the local development agenda. Additionally, the collaboration with PC Fatayat NU reflects the importance of cooperation between the government and social organizations to create broader change. Implicitly, this message emphasizes that social development is not only the responsibility of the government but also requires support from various stakeholders, including community organizations, to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the programs.

The content posted on 23 April 2024 provides information about the coordination meeting of Fatayat NU Jember with the Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team held on Thursday, April 4, 2024. This activity reflects the government's commitment to addressing the issue of stunting as part of health and community welfare policies. Based on content analysis according to Holsti's theory, this text contains informative elements that emphasize the importance of cross-sectoral coordination in formulating effective strategies to reduce stunting rates. The participation in this meeting shows that the acceleration of stunting handling cannot be done individually but requires cooperation among stakeholders to ensure the systematic and data-driven implementation of policies. Additionally, this meeting signifies that evaluation and strategic planning are crucial in determining concrete actions that can have a real impact on the community. This text underscores that stunting management is a national priority requiring synergy from various parties to achieve optimal results.

The post on Instagram @fatayatnujember on 18 February 2024 provides information about the socialization of child marriage prevention as a form of child protection in Jember Regency. It reflects educational and persuasive efforts involving various stakeholders in addressing the issue of child marriage, especially in relation to the risk of stunting. Based on content analysis according to Holsti's theory, this text contains both informative and persuasive messages that emphasize the importance of synergy between community organizations, such as PC Fatayat NU Jember, and the government through the DP3AKB Jember Child Protection Department in strengthening child protection. Child marriage is known to pose risks for giving birth to stunted children, so this collaboration aims to raise public awareness about the health and social impacts of early marriage. The event took place at the Fatayat NU Jember Leaders Forum and Fordaf (Forum Da'iyah Fatayat NU), indicating that religious leaders play a strategic role in encouraging social change, especially in socializing the risks of child marriage to the well-being of future generations. Moreover, this text also suggests that child marriage prevention is part of a broader strategy to reduce stunting by educating the public on the importance of physical and mental readiness for marriage to create healthy and prosperous families.

CONCLUSION

Based on Holsti's content analysis theory, this study finds that the Instagram account @fatayatnujember serves as a medium for delivering information, education, and persuasion related to stunting prevention. The posted content reflects Fatayat NU Jember's efforts to educate the public on the importance of addressing stunting, aligning with their role as digital da'wah agents integrating Islamic values with public health messages. The novelty of this research lies in its identification of the role of Islamic women's organizations—particularly Fatayat NU—as digital-based opinion

leaders in health campaigns. The study highlights that in a local context such as Jember—where stunting rates remain high and religious culture is deeply rooted—the role of female religious actors in disseminating health messages through social media is both strategic and impactful. These findings contribute to expanding the academic discussion on religion-based health communication in the digital era, particularly in non-urban contexts that have been underexplored in prior research.

This study offers a theoretical contribution by enriching the discourse on the intersection between digital da'wah, health communication, and religion-based opinion leadership. Practically, its findings can be utilized by health policymakers and religious organizations to design more participatory and contextualized campaigns on stunting prevention. However, a key limitation is the low level of audience engagement—as reflected in the minimal interaction such as comments, discussions, or content sharing. This indicates that @fatayatnujember's communication approach remains largely one-way and documentary in nature, rather than promoting active behavioral change campaigns. Therefore, it is recommended that Fatayat NU Jember expand its digital da'wah strategy by adopting a more interactive, campaign-oriented communication approach. This could include educational storytelling content, Instagram Live sessions, collaborations with influencers, or other interactive online programs that encourage direct public participation.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The author contributed to data collection in the field, gathering online data, interpreting the data, and analyzing the data.

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