
FROM STORIES TO STRATEGY: AI-BASED INSIGHTS INTO MUSLIM REVERT NARRATIVES FOR DIGITAL DA'WAH

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an AI-assisted qualitative study of 1,192 Muslim reversion narratives sourced from online platforms. The objective is to identify recurring themes, trigger events, and motivational pathways in the reversion journey. Data was collected from YouTube channels and Islamic websites, processed through web scraping and transcript extraction tools (yt-dlp, BeautifulSoup), and structured using OpenAI GPT prompts with manual validation. Thematic coding, clustering algorithms (KMeans), and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) were employed to analyze patterns. The findings highlight Tawheed, the Qur'an, and Muslim behavior as key motivational factors, while interaction with Muslims and online content served as common trigger events. Gender and age patterns were also observed, suggesting different influences across demographic groups. The study offers data-driven insights for more empathetic and targeted digital Da'wah strategies and demonstrates the potential of AI in analyzing religious narratives for academic and practical applications.

Keywords: Islam, Religious Conversion, Revert Narratives, Artificial Intelligence, Da'wah.

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Acknowledgment: All praise is due to Allah (SWT), without whose guidance this work would not have been possible. The author sincerely thanks the academic supervisors and advisors at the International Open University for their valuable feedback throughout the course of this research. Special gratitude is extended to the data analyst who provided technical support during the AI-assisted data processing and modeling phase. May Allah reward everyone involved.

1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly digital world, platforms such as YouTube, blogs, and online forums have become modern spaces for religious exploration and identity transformation. Among the many phenomena emerging in this digital landscape is the growing visibility of Muslim revert stories, first-hand accounts of individuals who have chosen to embrace Islam. These narratives not only reflect deeply personal spiritual transformations but also serve as powerful indicators of the broader socio-cultural dynamics influencing religious change in the 21st century.

Despite their abundance and accessibility, revert narratives remain underutilized in academic research and strategic Islamic outreach (Da'wah). While individual stories have often been shared as anecdotal inspiration, little effort has been made to systematically analyze them using computational tools. Meanwhile, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) have gained prominence in analyzing human behavior in domains such as marketing, psychology, and politics. This article attempts to bring these tools into the field

of Islamic studies to better understand what draws people to Islam, and how Da'wah can be more effectively tailored.

This research aims to bridge the gap between qualitative narrative richness and quantitative pattern discovery by applying AI-assisted analysis to over 1,100 public reversion stories. The goal is not simply to catalog personal journeys, but to extract recurring themes, motivations, and trigger events that can help shape evidence-based and empathetic digital Da'wah strategies.

The article investigates questions such as:

- What are the most common reasons for reversion to Islam?
- How do initial perceptions evolve during the reversion process?
- What role do digital platforms, personal relationships, and social environments play in shaping spiritual transformation?
- Can AI-assisted narrative analysis help in understanding religious change with greater precision and depth?

By answering these questions, the study offers practical insights for scholars, Da'wah practitioners, and Muslim communities seeking to better engage with seekers of faith in the digital era.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theories of Religious Conversion

The study of religious conversion has evolved across multiple disciplines, sociology, psychology, theology, and anthropology. Each offers unique models to understand why and how individuals change their religious affiliation. One of the most influential frameworks is Lewis R. Rambo's seven-stage model (1993), which outlines conversion as a gradual, multidimensional process consisting of context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment, and consequences. Rambo's model emphasizes the interplay of internal experiences and external influences, making it especially relevant for analyzing Muslim reversion narratives.

Other scholars have expanded these models to include subtypes such as social conversion (motivated by community ties), mystical conversion (through spiritual experiences), and intellectual conversion (driven by rational inquiry). These frameworks collectively offer a lens to interpret the complex and personal pathways of individuals embracing Islam, particularly in secular or multi-religious environments.

2.2 Islamic Perspectives on Conversion and Da'wah

Within the Islamic tradition, Da'wah (دعوة) is the act of inviting others to Islam through wisdom, compassion, and moral example, as encouraged in the Qur'an (16:125). Scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that Da'wah should be rooted in sincerity, rationality, and contextual understanding. In modern times, thinkers like Farid Esack (1997) have explored Da'wah in relation to liberation theology and

justice, while Larry Poston (1992) provided historical overviews of Da'wah strategies in the West.

However, much of the existing Islamic literature does not address the digital nature of contemporary Da'wah or the lived experiences of reverts who encounter Islam through online platforms, media content, or cross-cultural friendships. This study attempts to fill that gap by incorporating digital dynamics into the traditional Da'wah discourse.

2.3 Digital Religion and Revert Narratives

The concept of "Digital Religion", as developed by scholars like Heidi Campbell and Mona Younis, recognizes the internet as a space where religious beliefs are negotiated, constructed, and shared. In her 2021 study, Younis emphasized that narrative authenticity and emotional resonance are key elements in successful online Da'wah. Her work supports the idea that first-person revert testimonies, when analyzed systematically, can provide strategic insights for outreach.

While some academic studies have explored Muslim identity on digital platforms, very few have examined revert narratives as structured data. This research builds upon existing work by treating these stories not only as anecdotal content but as valuable qualitative data capable of revealing behavioral patterns, motivational stages, and demographic trends.

2.4 Artificial Intelligence, NLP, and Narrative Analysis

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) have become essential tools for analyzing large-scale textual data across disciplines. In marketing, they track

consumer sentiment; in psychology, they detect mental health cues; in political science, they decode ideological shifts. In Islamic research, however, the application of such tools is still emerging.

Recent efforts include AI-based Qur'an translation, automated Hadith categorization, and Islamic chatbots. Yet, few studies apply AI to spiritual narratives or conversion stories. Drawing inspiration from Jurafsky & Martin's work (*Speech and Language Processing*, 2021), this research uses AI-assisted tools, such as OpenAI's language models and clustering algorithms to analyze narratives, map thematic trends, and support data-driven religious research.

2.5 Identified Research Gaps

Despite a growing body of literature on religious conversion and online Islam, the following intersections remain underexplored:

- The use of publicly available revert stories as academic datasets.
- The integration of AI-assisted structuring with Islamic studies.
- The application of clustering models to uncover motivational patterns in Da'wah.

By addressing these gaps, this study contributes to contemporary Islamic discourse and strategic Da'wah planning, offering a novel blend of faith-based insights and computational rigor.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative-descriptive design supported by structured data modeling and AI-assisted narrative analysis. Rather than using surveys or interviews, it draws from publicly available Muslim revert stories sourced from online platforms. These narratives were analyzed using a mixed-method approach combining human insight with computational tools to uncover patterns of perception, motivation, and transformation.

The objective was not only to explore personal experiences but to categorize, quantify, and model the stages of religious reversion in a way that could inform future Da'wah strategies.

3.2 Data Collection

A total of 1,842 revert stories were initially collected from:

- YouTube channels such as Muslim Revert Stories and Aisha Rosalie
- Islamic websites like MuslimConverts.com and Islamestic.com

From this, 1,192 narratives were selected based on inclusion criteria (outlined below). YouTube transcripts were extracted using yt-dlp, while website content was scraped using BeautifulSoup (Python). Only English-language stories were included in this study.

3.3 Data Structuring and Thematic Domains

Each narrative was transformed into two outputs:

- A narrative summary capturing the full journey.
- A structured summary segmented across thematic categories.

Table 1. Structured data categories

Code	Thematic Domain	Description
A	Personal & Demographic Info	Gender, age, origin, location
B	Religious Background	Prior religion, practice level, family religiosity
C	Early Perception of Islam	Initial views, stereotypes, media influence
D	Turning Points	Trigger events, first resources, exploration stage
E	Acceptance of Islam	Final motivations and Shahadah context
F	Post-Reversion Experience	Social reactions, life changes, psychological impact
G	Media & Technology Influence	Role of digital content and online communities

Source: The author's own work.

The structured data was categorized into seven major domains. All records were manually validated after AI-assisted extraction to ensure accuracy and thematic consistency.

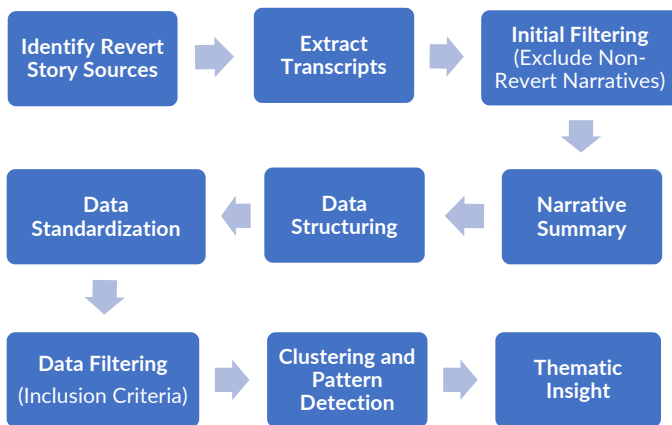


Figure 1. Workflow

3.4 Standardization and Categorization

To enable comparability and clustering, narrative elements were mapped to predefined categories. For example:

- *Early Perception of Islam*: Curious, Negative, Positive, Confused
- *Trigger Events*: Interaction with Muslims, Life Crisis, Online Content
- *Final Motivation*: Tawheed, Qur'an, Muslim Behavior, Intellectual Quest

This approach preserved analytical coherence across a large dataset, though rare or nuanced cases were grouped as "Other" for separate consideration.

3.5 Inclusion Criteria

Narratives were included if they contained:

- Two essential items: Final Motivation and Trigger Event
- At least two supporting items: Early Perception, First Resource, Key Teachings, Exposure, or Points of Comparison

This yielded a final dataset of 1,192 structured narratives.

Table 2. Tools and Technologies Used

Tool/Library	Purpose
yt-dlp	YouTube transcript extraction
BeautifulSoup	HTML scraping from websites
OpenAI GPT	Prompt-based summary generation
Pandas / NumPy	Data wrangling and transformation
Matplotlib	Data visualization
KMeans / PCA	Clustering and dimensionality reduction

Source: The author's own work.

These tools enabled large-scale narrative analysis with a semi-automated yet human-verified process.

3.6 Limitations of Methodology

- Geographic skew: 70% of the stories came from Western (Europe and North America) countries.
- Platform bias: Only four YouTube channels and two websites were used.

- Standardization trade-off: Grouping data into fixed categories occasionally led to loss of nuance.
- Language limitation: Only English-language content was analyzed.
- Manual effort: Despite automation, human validation was essential, limiting scalability.

Nonetheless, this methodology offers a replicable, ethical, and innovative model for using AI in religious and social research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview of Dataset

From the 1,842 collected narratives, 1,192 revert stories met the inclusion criteria. These were analyzed using categorical mapping, clustering algorithms (KMeans), and dimensionality reduction techniques (PCA). The dataset spans demographic, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of reversion to Islam.

Key characteristics:

- Gender: 73% available (approx. 33% female, 40% male)
- Age group: 34% available (dominantly 20–40 age group)
- Final Motivation: 100% available
- Trigger Events: 98% available
- Exposure to Muslims: 84% available

4.2 Early Perception and Influences

The most common initial perception of Islam was neutral or curious (53.78%), followed by positive (22.9%) and negative (19.21%).

Table 3. Initial Perceptions Toward Islam

Perception Category	%
Neutral / Curious	53.78
Positive	22.90
Negative	19.21
Confused	3.69
No Exposure	0.42

Source: The author's own work.

Insight: This suggests that most converts began with an open or under-informed view, with fewer shaped by hostility or misinformation.

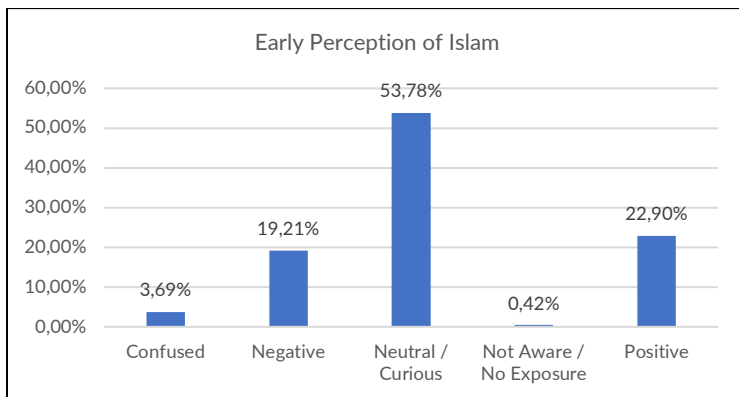


Figure 2. Early Perception of Islam

Influence Shaping Perception:

- Personal relationships and role models were the strongest influence among those with positive or neutral perceptions.
- Media portrayal was linked with negative perceptions in early stages.

4.3 Trigger Events

The leading trigger event across all demographics was interaction with Muslims, followed by Islamic content (e.g., YouTube videos) and life crises.

Table 4. Common Trigger Events by Demographic Profile

Trigger Event	Common Among
Interaction with Muslims	Both genders, especially men
Islamic Media Content (YouTube)	Younger groups
Family Influence	Female reverts
Life Crisis / Emotional Events	40–60+ age group

Source: The author's own work.

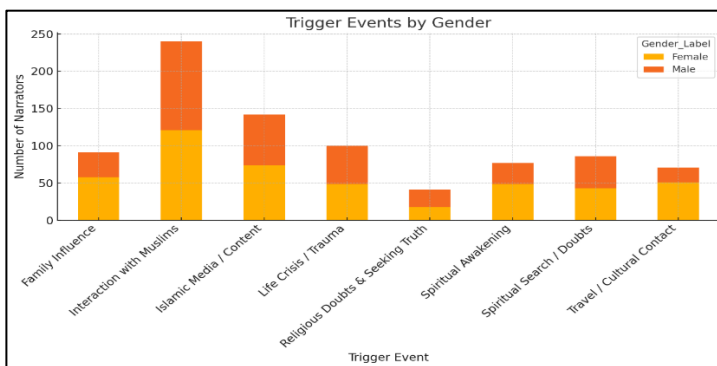


Figure 3. Distribution of Major Triggering Events Categorized by Gender

Insight: The human element (friendships, character) consistently emerged as the strongest motivational factor—even in a digital context.

4.4 Final Motivations

Across all narratives, Tawheed (Monotheism) and the Qur'an emerged as the most frequently cited final motivations.

Table 5. Primary Motivational Themes Cited by Reverts

Motivation Category	% of Total
Tawheed / Monotheism	36%
Qur'an	25%
Muslim Behavior & Conduct	12%
Intellectual/Philosophical	8%
Family Influence	3%

Source: The author's own work.

Insight: A combined 73% of reverts cited theological clarity (Tawheed, Qur'an) and lived character of Muslims as their reason for reversion.

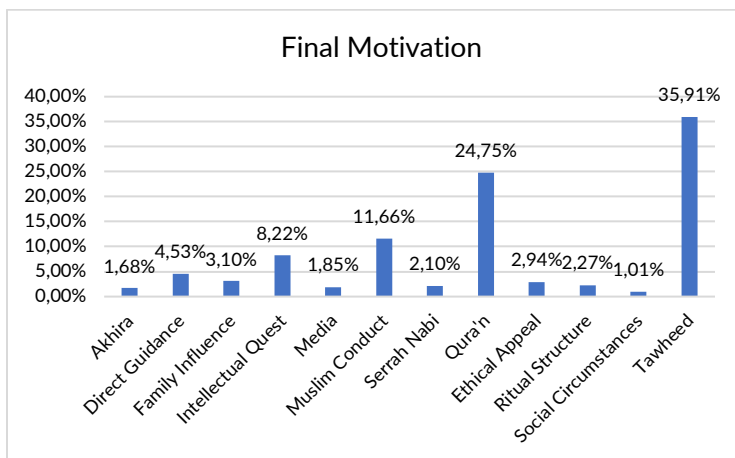


Figure 4. Final Motivations for Reversion to Islam

4.5 Clustering Results

A. Early Perception vs Influence

Five thematic clusters were discovered:

Table 6. Early Perception, Influence Matrix of Reverts

Cluster	Perception	Influence	Narrative Insight
C0	Neutral / Positive	Role Models	Motivated by observing Muslims' character and behavior
C1	Negative	Media & Societal Portrayal	Initially skeptical, later corrected through direct exposure
C2	Curious	Academic Texts / Learning	Engaged Islam intellectually via books, lectures
C3	Confused	Upbringing / Cultural Gaps	Passive influence until exposure to Islam
C4	Mixed	Spiritual Reflection	Emotionally or spiritually drawn toward faith

Source: The author's own work.

B. Perception → Trigger → Motivation

This 3-variable clustering yielded distinct narrative types:

Cluster A: *Negative Perception → Interaction with Muslims → Tawheed/Monotheism* → Represents individuals who overcame negative views through direct contact with Muslims, ultimately drawn to the core belief of monotheism.

Cluster B: *Curious Perception → Interaction with Muslims → Intellectual or Philosophical Quest* → Reflects reverts who started with neutral curiosity, engaged socially, and intellectually reasoned their way into Islam.

Cluster C: *Curious Perception → Influenced by Islamic Media → Qur'an* → Individuals exposed through media or online platforms, where the Qur'an became the central motivating resource.

Cluster D: *Positive Perception → Media Exposure → Tawheed / Monotheism* → People already receptive to Islam, reaffirmed by media content, with monotheism as their anchor belief.

Cluster E: *Curious Perception → Interaction with Muslims → Tawheed / Monotheism* → Similar to Cluster A but from a more neutral/cautious starting point; social interaction was the key trigger.

Insight: Each cluster highlights a behavioral archetype, helping design tailored Da'wah responses.

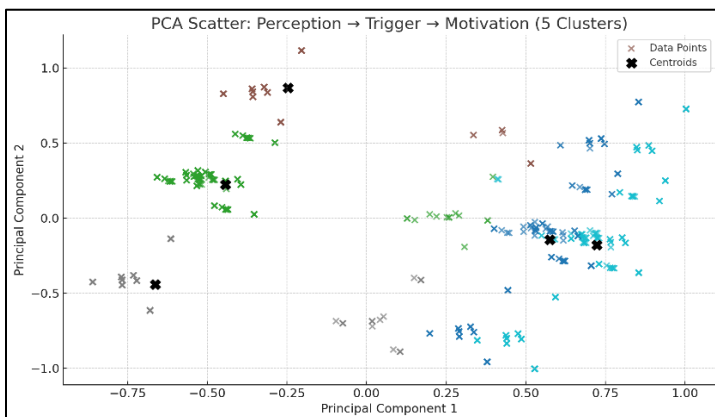


Figure 5. Reversion Pathways Based on Perception, Trigger Event, and Final Motivation

This visualization shows five distinct clusters of reverts, grouped based on their initial perception of Islam, the event that triggered their exploration, and the motivation that led to their reversion. Centroids (black X) represent the center of each cluster.

4.6 Religious Background vs Practice Patterns

Religious intensity and background had a complex influence:

- Highly practicing Indian Religion adherents showed philosophical interest in monotheism.
- Atheists/Agnostics cited rational inquiry and clarity in belief as motivation.
- Cultural Christians often responded to community behavior and personal engagement.

4.7 Strategic Implications for Da'wah

This study presents five key recommendations for Da'wah organizations:

- a. Highlight Tawheed clearly in materials aimed at rational or spiritual seekers.
- b. Encourage Muslims to embody Islamic values publicly, behavior is powerful Da'wah.
- c. Promote direct engagement with the Qur'an, especially via translated and thematic content.
- d. Use short, narrative-driven content on digital platforms like YouTube and TikTok.
- e. Introduce Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ in emotionally resonant and human-centered ways.

Table 7. Data-to-Action Matrix: Strategic Da'wah Insights Derived from Reversion Patterns

Empirical Finding	Relevant Group / Archetype	Practical Da'wah Action	Suggested Content Format
Most reverts cite Tawheed and the Qur'an as their final motivation	Rational/Philosophical Seekers	Highlight clarity and logic of monotheism and Qur'anic guidance	Short explainer videos, illustrated Qur'an excerpts, infographic threads
Interaction with Muslims is the most common trigger event	General audience, especially those with Muslim neighbors/friends	Promote role-model behavior and encourage engagement with non-Muslims	Real-life stories, reels of kind acts, testimonials from neighbors
Female reverts are significantly influenced by family and character	Women with Muslim partners or friends	Empower Muslim women in Da'wah, address gender-related misconceptions	Personal interviews, women-only discussion podcasts, visual narratives
Younger converts are influenced by digital content, especially YouTube	Youth (18-35), digital natives	Create short-form, engaging Islamic content for platforms like YouTube and TikTok	Animated shorts, Seerah shorts, reaction-style faith videos

Negative early perceptions are often corrected after personal interaction	Skeptics and misinformed individuals	Address common misconceptions with empathy and clarity	FAQs, myth-busting video series, respectful debate formats
Spiritual reverts value emotional peace and prayer structure	Trauma survivors, emotionally vulnerable individuals	Emphasize structure, inner peace, and healing through Salah and Dhikr	Guided meditation/Dhikr sessions, "My First Salah" videos
Converts from Christian background resonates with Prophet's Seerah and shared values	Cultural Christians	Focus on Prophet Muhammad ﷺ's compassion, family life, justice	Documentary series, character-focused Seerah visuals
Reverts often discover Islam through a "secondary" motivation before final conviction	Mixed-motivation seekers	Provide multi-dimensional content (spiritual + rational + ethical)	Story-based explainer series, multi-part YouTube playlists

Source: The author's own work.

5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This study analyzed over 1,100 Muslim reversion narratives through an AI-assisted, structured methodology to uncover recurring perceptions, triggers, and motivations in the journey toward Islam. By combining narrative summaries with thematic clustering and demographic segmentation, the research revealed a rich tapestry of motivational pathways shaped by personal relationships, intellectual quests, spiritual needs, and digital media exposure.

Key findings reaffirm that Tawheed (Islamic monotheism), the Qur'an, and the character of Muslims remain among the most compelling reasons for embracing Islam. Interactions with Muslims, whether through family, friendship, or online content, consistently served as pivotal triggers. Additionally, age and gender differences influenced how individuals encountered Islam and what ultimately resonated with them.

The use of clustering models further enabled the identification of thematic revert archetypes such as:

- Rational Seekers
- Emotionally-Driven Converts
- Relationship-Based Reverts

These insights suggest that Da'wah strategies can no longer rely on a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, they must be data-informed, audience-specific, and context-sensitive, especially in the digital era where narratives shape belief and belonging.

This study offers an evidence-based framework for enhancing Islamic outreach in the 21st century:

- Muslim conduct should be emphasized in Da'wah training.
- Personal stories and authentic digital narratives should be strategically highlighted in media.
- The Qur'an and Prophet's Seerah must be presented not only theologically but also as emotionally and ethically transformative narratives.

This is one of the first studies to use AI and NLP tools to analyze large-scale religious narratives in Islamic studies. It contributes to:

- The digital sociology of religion

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- Strategic Da'wah methodologies
 - Ethical application of AI in narrative analysis

The study is limited by its language (English) and geographic concentration (Western countries). Future research should:

- Expand to non-English and non-Western narratives
- Include post-reversion interviews for longitudinal insight
- Apply topic modeling and sentiment analysis for deeper computational understanding.

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