Da’wah and the Dynamics of Modern Communication

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Abstract

This article discusses the adaptation of da’wah strategies in modern communication dynamics. The method and approach used in this study is library research with a descriptive qualitative approach through literature study, content analysis, and meta-analysis to obtain a comprehensive understanding. Based on the study in this paper, it is found that da’wah needs to be adapted to the development of modern communication. Social media platforms become very important as one of the effective media in da’wah by referring to ethical/moral values and professionalism while still paying attention to the social and cultural context to maintain quality and harmonious communication with all parties.

Keywords: Da’wah, Modern Communication, Islam

Dakwah dan Dinamika Komunikasi Modern

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang adaptasi strategi dakwah dalam dinamika komunikasi modern. Metode dan pendekatan yang digunakan pada kajian ini adalah library research dengan metode pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui studi literatur, analisis isi, dan analisis meta, untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang komprehensif. Berdasarkan kajian dalam tulisan ini ditemukan bahwa dakwah perlu disesuaikan dengan perkembangan komunikasi modern. Platform media sosial menjadi sangat penting sebagai salah satu media efektif dalam dakwah dengan mengacu pada nilai etika/moral dan profesionalisme dengan tetap memperhatikan konteks sosial dan budaya untuk menjaga komunikasi yang bermutu dan harmonis dengan semua pihak.

Kata kunci: Dakwah, Komunikasi Modern, Islam

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A. Introduction

Modernization and globalization are an undeniable necessity in various aspects of human life today, especially in the field of communication and information technology. This inevitability is referred to by experts as the multiscreen era or digital era, where the entire community's attention is focused on digital media such as cellphones, laptops, and televisions that are integrally connected through the internet network.¹ The multiscreen or digital era offers various conveniences in various activities and human needs, especially accessing information. People will very easily accept and become an integral part of strategic issues that are being discussed, for example, issues of diversity, issues of multiculturalism, political issues, economic issues, issues of legal justice, and other issues that have implications in all aspects of human life that are increasingly strong and unlimited, between individuals, groups and even between countries around the world, even the territorial boundaries of a nation become "narrow" or by John Naibit calling it the global village.² Interconnection between people becomes more accessible and more open. For example, someone who lives singing in the far west at the same time, other people will watch in different places, even in remote areas.³

In the context of da'wah, communication media is very important in the process of delivering religious messages (da'wah) to reach a broader and more influential audience. Along with the development of information technology, the dynamics of modern communication also affect the ways of doing da'wah. On the one hand, efforts to adapt and adjust da'wah strategies to the dynamics of modern communication are needed. Nevertheless, on the other hand, da'wah also needs to be carried out gently and quickly to digest so that the intended audience can well receive the message.⁴

One of the main challenges of da'wah today is how to maintain the quality of da'wah messages delivered in accordance with Islamic principles, especially in the

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⁴ Abu Ghuddah, Khudori, & Rahmat, 2015; Al-Banna, 1993; Qaradawi, 2007).
era of digitalization and modern communication. Information can quickly spread and is often not well verified, leading to the emergence of stigma and a false or even radical understanding of Islam. Therefore, da’wah scholars must be more selective in choosing platforms and media used in delivering da’wah.

Social media is one of the crucial platforms for disseminating da’wah messages to the public today. Through modern communication media, it is possible for da’wah messages to reach all elements of society. Even territorial boundaries are no longer a barrier to conveying information about Islam. The preachers (da’i) can deliver da'wah messages widely and effectively, even to people who are in distant places.

In addition, modern communication media also provide excellent opportunities for da’wah to be more interactive and participatory. It can be done through online platforms such as discussion forums, groups, and social media to facilitate two-way dialog and collaboration. In this way, da'wah can become more responsive and up-to-date to the needs and expectations of the people. Furthermore, to deal with the development of modern media today, da’wah scholars also need to pay attention to aspects of ethics and professionalism in the delivery of da’wah. It is related to the content of da’wah messages that contain not only religious values but also human values, tolerance, and social harmony. Therefore, preaching scholars need to pay attention to the social and cultural context in the delivery of preaching and maintain quality and harmonious communication with all parties to avoid causing new problems that obscure the substance of the preaching message delivered.

Based on the above explanation, one of the grand issues that are the focus of this article is how da’wah can be adapted to the dynamics of modern communication to reach a broader and more influential audience in spreading the teachings of Islam.

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In this context, the focus of the discussion includes several aspects, namely the dynamics of modern communication in the context of da’wah, the role of technology and social media as effective media for da’wah, strategies and approaches that can be used to answer the challenges of da’wah in the digital era.

B. Research Methods

This study employs qualitative methods with data collection, analysis, and interpretation stages. The data analysis process is carried out by searching for related journal articles on da’wah and modern communication dynamics through online databases such as Google Scholar or Pubmed. Then, it is analyzed by examining the abstract, introduction, methodology, results, and conclusions. This method is carried out by analyzing the contents of related journal articles to identify themes or topics discussed, arguments or hypotheses proposed data or evidence used, and conclusions drawn. This method can help to gain a deeper understanding of the content of the journal article and compile a summary or notes about the journal article. Third, a meta-analysis was done by collecting journal articles with similar themes or topics about da’wah and the dynamics of modern communication, then conducting a statistical analysis or synthesis of the research results.

This method can help to gain a more general understanding of the phenomenon of da’wah and the dynamics of modern communication through published journal articles. The researcher chose this study method by considering the purpose and type of article being studied and the availability of literature. This review is expected to help gain a more comprehensive insight into da’wah and the dynamics of modern communication.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Dynamics of Modern Communication in the Context of Da’wah

Islam and the development of modern communication are two closely related phenomena. These two phenomena cannot be separated because modern
communication has had a significant impact on the dynamics of the development of Islam, which can change the appearance of Islam in the global community.\(^9\)

The relationship between Islam and the development of modern communication through historical and contemporary perspectives has been established since the beginning of the spread of Islam by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).\(^10\) Islam has spread rapidly around the world through human intermediaries. Religious messages were communicated from one individual to another through simple oral and written media. However, along with modern technology and media development, Islamic communication has become easier and faster. The emergence of information technology, such as the internet, smartphones, and social media, has opened up new opportunities for Islam to reach its people worldwide. Through the application features, Muslims can easily and quickly access religious-related information, such as scriptures, hadith, and tafsir, without having to meet with scholars.\(^11\)

However, the development of modern communication through various media for Asep Saeful Muhtadi in Dudung Abdul Rohman also poses challenges for Islam itself, especially against the religious identity crisis.\(^12\) According to him, there are three things should be taken into account, namely: 1) the vulnerability of its own cultural identity that can be shifted and replaced by an outside culture that is not necessarily suitable; 2) the dryness of the spirituality of the religious community that ignores the teachings of the values of the primary sources of religious teachings; and 3) the low power of social control over the spread of messages through fast and massive media so that it can shift the authority of religious figures in society, can even be a source of invalid information (unverified) and even strengthen radical

\(^13\) Rohman.
beliefs as recently rampant in social media.\textsuperscript{14} The intensity of the development of radical thought is increasing and challenging to swallow along with the rapid development of technology, which implies that many radical movements emerge, especially in social media.\textsuperscript{15} There are many social media platforms that are used to spread misinformation. In addition, social media is also often used as a means of propaganda that can obscure religious messages and create conflict between Muslims and other groups in society. Therefore, education on the wise and careful use of information technology is essential to protect Muslims from misinformation and radicalization.\textsuperscript{16} The inevitability of the presence of modern communication is something that cannot be avoided. Therefore, it requires a pearl of selective wisdom toward its various impacts.

In the context of da’wah, modern communication today, along with its development, is becoming increasingly important in the process of transforming Islamic values that no longer depend on the pattern of da’wah \textit{bil lisan} alone or through the forum on the pulpit whose access to the spread of da’wah messages is limited to certain places, regions, and groups. Nevertheless, it can reach a broader and faster audience. Modern communication media platforms are used as domains for da’wah movements such as the use of social media Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.\textsuperscript{17} Through these media, da’i can deliver da’wah messages in a more interesting and accessible way to the audience. Preachers (da’i) can also use visual content, such as images and videos, to attract audience attention and convey da’wah messages in a more precise and easier-to-understand way.\textsuperscript{18}

In addition, live streaming technology has also become one of the alternatives and is also increasingly used in da’wah today. Through live streaming technology, preachers (da’i) can deliver da’wah messages directly to the audience so that the audience can feel the same experience as when they are in a live da’wah

event, even allowing audiences from different countries and regions to follow da’wah events easily and even dialogue directly with the resource person.

Indeed, the presence of modern technology today is no longer a taboo but a necessity. Information through communication media is no longer a secondary need but has become a primary need for the community. Information about anything can be accessed through websites already available; depending on desired information, the machine will track and display the information.

The role of communication media today is very helpful in the process of da’wah because of its unlimited reach. Religious messages conveyed are able to reach a more comprehensive and heterogeneous object in a study conducted by Hidayatullah and others that social media and the internet are preaching tools that have a strategic role in religious propagation to facilitate preaching activities to people who are in remote areas, even allowing crossing cultural and linguistic boundaries. Likewise, according to Nurul Shahnaz Mohd Shahrullah, da’wah can be carried out continuously with higher intensity through modern communication media. It shows that da’wah, through modern communication media, especially social media, is very helpful in spreading da’wah messages to more people so that da’wah messages make it possible to be more readily accepted by people everywhere.

However, da’wah through modern communication media is believed to be more effective, but on the other hand, it also needs to be balanced with the right approaches and methods. Therefore, modern communication is very promising in helping to increase the effectiveness of da’wah implementation, especially in reaching a wider and heterogeneous audience and maintaining high da’wah intensity. However, keep in mind that modern communication for da’wah requires expertise and the right approach so that the message of da’wah can be received by the community optimally and not actually cause new problems in the community.

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Therefore, da‘i need to ensure that da‘wah content disseminated through modern communication media, especially social media, is accurate and verified. In addition, da‘i must also understand the ethics of using social media and other technologies not to harm da‘wah’s image and affect other people’s perceptions of Islam. In addition, da‘is also need to ensure they have sufficient technical skills to use technology and social media effectively.

Advances in communication and information technology with its various derivations (digitalization era) today have implications for significant changes in human thinking and behavior patterns. It is a complicated and complex challenge and problem that does not recognize space, time, and layers of society but all sectors of life and human livelihood, including religious issues. It means that the religious life of humankind, including Islam, wherever it is located, will face the same challenges, although, in different nuances, Soejatmoko emphasized.22

Human dependence on communication technology that has changed drastically is relatively high. However, without realizing it, its presence brings challenges and complexities to human life. Widespread information can be easily influenced and misinterpreted. In addition, the existence of open public discussion spaces in modern communication media, such as social media, can also bring up various conflicting opinions and views. Therefore, da‘wah, in this context, must be able to face these challenges and develop appropriate communication strategies and ensure that the messages conveyed remain consistent with religious values and principles and are not distorted by existing technological advances. Thus, advances in communication and information technology significantly affect the religious life of humankind, including in the context of Islamic preaching. Da‘wah needs to adapt to the dynamics of modern communication to remain effective in spreading religious teachings while maintaining the authenticity and consistency of religious values believed.

2. The Role of Technology and Social Media as Effective Da‘wah Media

22Rajah, Soedjatmoko "Agama dan hari depan Umat Manusia" dalam Edy A. Efendy (ed), Islam dan Dialog Budaya (Cet.1; Jakarta: Puspa Swara, 1994), p. 78
In today's rapidly growing digital era, technology and social media have opened up new opportunities for disseminating da'wah messages. The acceleration and ability to reach the object of da'wah to the corners of the earth impact the practical implementation of da’wah.\(^{23}\) As a means of communication that connects people globally, technology and social media play an essential role in expanding the reach as a medium (**washilah**)\(^{24}\) to understand religious teachings more deeply. The role of technology and social media as a medium for da’wah is very effective, focusing on aspects such as broad reach, multimedia content, interactive interaction, and even fundraising. An in-depth understanding of how technology and social media affect proselytization activities can provide valuable insights for presenters and social media users who want to convey religious messages in a rapidly evolving environment effectively.

The popularity and usage of various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have soared from children to the elderly, from the city to remote areas. Through these platforms, da’wah presenters can easily reach people from different backgrounds and geographical locations.\(^{25}\) Through content that can be shared and accessed quickly, da’wah is no longer limited to physical or geographical boundaries but can reach communities worldwide. The presence of technology and social media now provides opportunities to reach and interact with audiences that were previously difficult to reach.

Through multimedia, da’wah content can be packaged to be more interesting through existing features so as to make da’wah more effective through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and several other social media platforms. These platforms are means of making sharing content of lectures, studies, recitations, and other religious content in the form of video, audio, images, and writing. This multimedia content attracts attention and facilitates audience


\(^{25}\) Sahril Halim et al.
understanding, especially among the younger generation, who are more accustomed to visual and interactive media. By packaging da’wah messages into interesting content, the presence of technology and social media allows da’wah to be more adaptive.

Likewise, technology and social media make the interaction between da’wah presenters and audiences more accessible. They can even give comments to each other, have discussions, or live two-way dialogs. It creates opportunities to answer questions, give advice, and deepen religious understanding on a personal level. This interactive interaction strengthens the relationship between the presenter and the audience and builds an online community that promotes spiritual growth and mutual support.

In addition, one of the positive effects of technology and social media to support da’wah activities to be more efficient and more accessible is fundraising. Crowdfunding platforms and online payment systems allow individuals and da’wah organizations to raise funds from audiences who want to participate in supporting da’wah. Information about da’wah projects that require financial support can be quickly disseminated through social media, and users can donate easily through the links or instructions provided. Technology facilitates transparency and more accessible participation in fundraising, which helps carry out broader da’wah activities that benefit the community.

Thus, technology and social media have implications for implementing effective da’wah. According to Fadly Usman in Misbakhul Khoiri, social media is among today’s most influential Islamic da’wah media, as well as according to Dwy Rahmawati and Ahmad Zaini, communicating da’wah through information technology media encourages the implementation of da’wah more creatively and even very effectively, such as through the use of social media platforms. Through

26 Devina Murizka, ‘Pengaruh Media Baru Crowdfunding Kitabisa.Com Dalam Meningkatkan Minat Bersedekah (Studi Pada Pengikut Akun Twitter @kitabisacom)’, Sripsi (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2021).
technology and social media capabilities, da’wah can reach a broader and more diverse audience worldwide. Engaging multimedia content facilitates the understanding and acceptance of religious messages. Direct interaction between presenters and audiences strengthens bonds and builds communities that support spiritual growth. In addition, technology also facilitates efficient fundraising to support proselytization activities. In this rapidly evolving environment, a wise understanding and application of technology and social media can contribute significantly to the practical and positive dissemination of religious messages.

3. Strategies and Approaches to Responding to Challenges in Conducting Da’wah in the Digital Age

In today’s increasingly digital era, da’wah is no longer limited to conventional methods such as teaching in taklim assemblies or visiting Muslims in villages. Da’wah has expanded into a global phenomenon everyone can access through the internet. However, da’wah in today’s digital era also has challenges that must be faced, such as the risk of spreading misinformation and even being used as a locomotive to build a network of radical understanding and online terrorism. Therefore, to answer this challenge, effective and appropriate strategies and approaches are needed, including:

a. Value-based Approach

A values-based approach emphasizes ethical values, morals, and principles that form the basis for decision-making and action. It assumes that ethical and moral values should guide all aspects of life, including in the context of public policy and social relations.29 This approach involves identifying values that are considered essential and serve as a moral foundation. Such values may include integrity, justice, freedom, social responsibility, respect for human dignity, environmental sustainability, and other values that a particular individual or group considers essential.30

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30 Muvid.
Values-based approaches often involve ongoing discussion, reflection, and evaluation of the values adopted. Values can change over time and situations, and this approach encourages individuals to adapt and update their views on their values continually.31

This approach aims to achieve decisions and actions that follow ethical and moral principles in modern digitalization-based da’wah activities. In addition, this approach is also an alternative approach with reliable resources in disseminating da’wah messages to answer the challenges of da’wah in the digital era using appropriate methods. This approach can also strengthen the commitment to developing ethical and moral values in disseminating da’wah and developing quality and useful content for Muslims so that all those involved in these activities, both as the preachers and preached (mad’u), are enlightened.

b. Social-based Approach

In addition to a value-based approach, a social-based approach can also be used to overcome the challenges of proselytizing in the modern (digital) communication era. This approach involves utilizing social networks and other digital media to communicate and build good relationships with the public. In this approach, it is important to consider practical and efficient ways to utilize social media to spread da’wah messages that benefit the general public.32

In this era, society is increasingly diverse in terms of culture, religion, and even sects in religion itself. It causes more complex challenges so that in delivering da’wah messages, the ability to read and understand the phenomena that occur in the life of the community itself is needed so that the da’wah message delivered can accommodate and be accepted by various groups with different backgrounds.33 Thus, in this context, a deep understanding of the social and cultural context in which da’wah is carried out is needed.

First, there are multiple views and opinions. Everyone has a platform to express their views and opinions in the digital age. It has led to the emergence of

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31 Muvid.
33 Wahid.
various conflicting views and opinions, including those related to religion and da’wah.\textsuperscript{34} The challenge of da’wah is how to deal with conflicting views and explain the message of da’wah in a clear and understandable way. Second, there is a shift in communication patterns. In the modern communication era, communication patterns change along with the development of communication media, from face-to-face communication to social media and digital technology.\textsuperscript{35} It causes challenges in building personal relationships and direct interaction with people who are the target of da’wah. Therefore, practical communication skills are needed to overcome this challenge. Third, there is a changing social context. Society in the era of modern communication undergoes changes in terms of social values and norms.\textsuperscript{36} It causes challenges in delivering da’wah messages that are relevant and in accordance with the developing social context. A deep understanding of the social and cultural conditions in which da’wah is carried out is needed so that there is no misunderstanding between dai’ and mad'u.

Therefore, for the right approach and effective strategy for delivering da’wah messages, it is essential to pay attention to the social and cultural context in which da’wah is carried out, and using modern communication technology and media wisely also plays a role in achieving the goals and objectives of da’wah as expected.

c. \textit{Technology-based Approach}

The technology-based approach is also one of the strategies that can be used in doing da’wah in the digital era.\textsuperscript{37} The technology referred to here is not creating technology but utilizing and optimizing existing technology services to convey da’wah messages by filling programs with Islamic nuances, visual and audio, or live


\url{https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v23i1.3484}
In addition, it involves using technology such as applications, websites, and other digital platforms to spread da'wah messages to the public. Through this approach, it is necessary to consider the use of appropriate and accessible technology by the community to convey the da’wah message effectively.

d. Science-based Approach

A scientific-based approach is one of the urgent strategies and approaches in proselytizing in the digital era. This approach involves utilizing the knowledge and expertise gained by preachers to create da’wah materials through the approach of various religious disciplines but also how to develop abilities in other midwives, especially technology, in creating da’wah content through modern communication media platforms. This approach certainly involves the use of reliable and trusted resources in developing da’wah material/content that should be clear and concise. Show only the most significant or main findings of the research. Discussion must explore the significance of the results of the work. Adequate discussion or comparison of the current results to the previous similar published articles should be provided to show the positioning of the present research (if available).

D. Conclusion

To conclude this article, several matters have been discussed which should be taken into account. First, technology and social media are essential in effective da’wah. With various social media platforms, preachers can easily reach people from different backgrounds and geographical locations. Physical or geographical boundaries no longer limit Da’wah but can reach communities worldwide. Second, da’wah in the modern communication era has complex and diverse challenges. The rapid development of information technology, increasing pluralism, various views and opinions, shifting communication patterns, and changing social contexts are challenges that must be faced in delivering da’wah messages. Third, the right

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approach and strategy are needed to overcome these challenges in delivering da’wah messages.

It is essential to pay attention to ethical and moral values in utilizing modern communication technology as a media platform for da’wah, the social and cultural context in which da’wah is carried out, using modern communication technology and media wisely to achieve da’wah goals, and an interdisciplinary scientific approach, especially in the fields of technology and communication, is needed to build the quality of relevant da’wah materials. Finally, in the modern communication era, da’wah requires skills and deep understanding in delivering relevant and easy-to-understand da’wah messages. It aimed to strengthen religious values and build harmonious relationships between diverse communities.

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