The Use of Social Media as a Platform for Obtaining and Disseminating Da'wah Content by College Students

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DOI: 10.31958/jies.v3i2.11511

Abstract

The Information Technology era inseparably intertwines students' behavior with internet usage through computers, laptops, and gadgets. Da'wah (Islamic preaching) is a responsibility for every Muslim, regardless of their profession, requiring effective means for its delivery. Social media serves as a platform for accessing and disseminating moral messages of da'wah. This qualitative descriptive research focuses on the utilization of social media by students for obtaining and spreading Islamic da'wah content. The study involves students of Islamic Education at UIN Batusangkar, specifically the 2023 cohort. Data collection employed a questionnaire distributed to 50 students from December 6 to December 15, 2023. Key findings reveal that 100% of students possess social media applications, with 86% favoring Instagram. Furthermore, 100% have encountered digital da'wah, 78% consistently receive it through the "For You Page" (FYP) feature, and 94% have shared digital da'wah. The predominant platform for disseminating da'wah content is WhatsApp (78%), driven by the goal of earning continuous rewards (pahala jariyah) for sharing beneficial knowledge (88%).

Keywords: Social Media, Dakwah Digital, Students

Abstrak

Era Teknologi Informasi tak terpisahkan dari perilaku mahasiswa yang menggunakan internet melalui komputer, laptop, dan gadget. Dakwah menjadi tanggung jawab setiap Muslim, tanpa memandang profesi, dan memerlukan sarana efektif agar tujuannya diterima masyarakat. Media sosial menjadi saluran untuk mengakses dan menyebarakan pesan moral dakwah. Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini menyoroti penggunaan media sosial oleh mahasiswa untuk mendapatkan dan menyebarankan konten dakwah Islam. Penelitian melibatkan mahasiswa Pendidikan Agama Islam UIN Batusangkar, khususnya angkatan 2023. Pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner yang disebarkan kepada 50 mahasiswa pada tanggal 6-15 Desember 2023. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa 100% mahasiswa memiliki aplikasi media sosial, dengan 86% lebih memilih Instagram. Selain itu, 100% pernah mengalami dakwah digital, 78% selalu menerima melalui fitur "For You Page" (FYP), dan 94% pernah menyebarankan dakwah digital. Platform utama untuk menyebarankan konten dakwah adalah WhatsApp (78%), dengan 88% mahasiswa melakukannya dengan tujuan mendapatkan pahala jariyah dari ilmu yang bermanfaat.

Kata Kunci: Media Social, Dakwah Digital, Mahasiswa
INTRODUCTION

Entering the information age has transformed information resources from old media to new media (Haryatmoko, 2011). The current development of information and communication technology is inseparable from our daily lives. Technology enables people to access various information and communicate with others, becoming more sophisticated and diverse over time.

Currently, almost every human activity involves smartphones. With the increasing number of smartphone users, there is a proliferation of internet-based social media applications, facilitating communication and interaction in the virtual world (Surya, 2016). Various social media platforms commonly used by students include YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Line, Twitter, Reddit, Pinterest, and Tumblr (Widyananda, 2020). The accessibility of social media makes it a preferred choice, optimizing the effectiveness of preaching in terms of time, distance, process, and cost (Habibi, 2018).

However, social media has certain categories based on age, gender, occupation, religion, and background. The interaction space between preachers and their followers allows the exchange of concise messages through comments. This interaction showcases their existence, as the impact of preaching on social media triggers both positive and negative factors. One positive aspect of using social media for preaching is the ease with which followers can access the latest preaching information anytime and anywhere. On the negative side, social media preaching is often exploited to convey messages of hatred, violence, and other negative content (Sumadi, 2016). Certainly, the presence of social media provides many benefits for users, making it easier for them to communicate or socialize digitally, even without direct face-to-face interaction (Ibrahim et al., 2018).

The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) reported receiving 500,000 complaints about negative content on social media in 2019. In 2018, detailed records indicated that Facebook and Instagram contained the most negative content, with 8,903 reports, followed by Twitter with 4,985 reports, and Google and YouTube with 1,683 reports. The development of Instagram, surpassing Facebook and reaching 1 billion users by June 2018, underscores the dangers of open access to social media for children without parental guidance. This situation has prompted millennial preachers from Islamic boarding schools to create social media accounts to counteract the spread of millions of negative content on these platforms.

Data from We Are Social states that Indonesia is the third-largest user of social media in 2023, with 11.1% of the total population of 276.4 million aged between 18-24 years. This implies that the third-largest user of social media is occupied by students, including high school and university students (Ramadani & Pratama, 2020). Therefore, the role of students in obtaining and disseminating digital preaching content is significant. In general, every Muslim, whether an ordinary community member, student, or otherwise, is obligated to spread the message of preaching, as stated in the hadith, "Convey even if it's one verse."
Preaching encompasses all activities aimed at inviting people to goodness and preventing evil. It is carried out through verbal expressions, writings, images, or appropriate means and media according to Islamic principles. Its purpose is to achieve the happiness of human beings in this world and the hereafter. Historically, the process of preaching has varied from era to era, adapting to the changing times. Etymologically, the word "dakwah" is derived from the root words "yad'u" and "da'a," both meaning to call, invite, summon, urge, and pray. In addition to the word "dakwah," the Quran also mentions "tabligh," meaning delivery, and "bayan," meaning explanation (Hikmawati & Farida, 2021).

Zakir Naik defines dakwah as the effort to influence and invite individuals or groups to goodness and prevent evil through verbal, written, or visual means compatible with Islamic principles (Zulaecha et al., 2023). With the rise of digital technology, dakwah has evolved into digital preaching, defined as the process of inviting people to walk the path of God, believe in and practice Islamic sharia, using digital media, particularly websites and applications (Lestari & Mariska, 2023). Digital preaching has become prevalent today and can be performed without face-to-face interactions. Initially carried out through newspapers and radio, the process has evolved with the advent of television, the internet, and smartphones, addressing the shortcomings of previous preaching methods (Riza, 2021).

The popularity of digital preaching in today's era is known as digital dakwah, defined as the process of inviting society to follow the path of God, believe, and practice Islamic sharia, using digital media, especially websites and applications. The thirst for religious knowledge in the present era can be quenched through digital dakwah (Zulaecha et al., 2023). With various social media applications, individuals use them to spread dakwah, as social media is an effective means of preaching in this era, leveraging the influence of millennial preachers from Islamic boarding schools who create social media accounts to counteract the spread of negative content. These applications offer a platform for accessing and disseminating religious content, playing a crucial role in promoting preaching and Islamic values in society. Mahasiswa, or university students, play a significant role in this context as they are among the most extensive users of social media.

Social media is widely used among students, not only for learning and academic communication but also as a means of exchanging information and expressing opinions on current issues. The positive aspects of social media use include efficient learning and communication, while negative aspects include addiction, individualism, and social anxiety. Given this background, the researcher aims to analyze the forms of social media use by students in obtaining and disseminating preaching content.

METHODS

This research is a descriptive qualitative study aimed at describing phenomena, events, and occurrences that are happening at the present time. It tends to use qualitative
analysis, emphasizing processes and meanings, with theoretical foundations serving as a guide to maintain research focus in accordance with field facts.

The research subjects are students majoring in Islamic Religious Education from the 2023 cohort at Universitas Islam Negri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar. Data collection is conducted through questionnaires or Google Forms distributed in WhatsApp groups from December 5 to December 12, 2023. The data analysis technique employed in this research is survey method, which gathers information from a sample through questionnaires or interviews, portraying various aspects of the population, with a questionnaire as the research tool.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media applications that students have on their cellphones

Diagram 1: Social Media Applications Owned on Smartphones

All students at UIN Batusangkar or UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, batch 2023, possess various types of legally available social media applications on their smartphones, constituting 100% of the student population. Notably, none of the students reported not having any social media applications. This outcome aligns with the observation that the rapid development of social media is evident in contemporary times (Habibi, 2018).

Social Media Applications Owned by Students

Diagram 2: Social Media Applications Owned by Students

Among all students at UIN Batusangkar or UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, 86% have the Instagram social media application, 84% have WhatsApp, 76% have YouTube, 38% have Facebook, 34% have Telegram, 5% have X (Twitter), 2% have Line, and others. From the data, it is evident that Instagram is the most commonly owned social media application by students at 86%, followed by WhatsApp at 84%, and YouTube at 76%. It is undeniable that in today's era, social media serves as a means of...
connection for many people, whether for communication or obtaining information (Kurnia, 2020).

**Obtaining Dakwah Content from Owned Social Media Applications**

Among all students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, 100% have received digital dakwah content on their smartphones. Contemporary preachers or dakwah figures are required to convey dakwah not only from the pulpit but also through social media with the aim of amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil). Compared to traditional dakwah or going to the mosque and speaking from the pulpit, digital dakwah, as discussed in this topic, is significantly different. As Andini et al. state, "Dakwah through the internet or online dakwah is considered easy and effective. Online dakwah can reach all groups without considering race, ethnicity, nationality, class, etc. Therefore, preachers can freely express their thoughts, and it is not limited, so the discussion is more comprehensive and can be accepted by all groups" (Andini et al., 2023).

**Average Reception of Dakwah Content Per Day**

Among all students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar majoring in Islamic Religious Education, batch 2023, 78% always receive dakwah content on their smartphones daily, while 22% occasionally receive dakwah content on their smartphones. No students reported not receiving dakwah content on their smartphones in a day. From the data, it can be observed that technology can alleviate or potentially replace the role of a preacher or da'i. According to Kasali, this phenomenon can be referred to as disruption, which is a period when unexpected, fundamental changes
occur in almost all aspects of life (Rustandi, 2020: 27). Disruption is characterized by unexpected and fundamental changes in various aspects of life (Bashori, 2018).

How to Obtain Digital Dakwah

From the diagram above, it is known that 84% of students majoring in Islamic Religious Education at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, batch 2023, obtain dakwah content through the appearance of FYP (For Your Page) (Luthan, 2021: 129). FYP is designed by the system in each application, eliminating the need to search for dakwah videos, as they are readily available without prior searching. 12% of the data indicate that they obtain dakwah content by actively searching on their social media platforms. The majority of students, 84%, obtain dakwah content through FYP.

Types of Digital Dakwah Obtained

Among all students majoring in Islamic Religious Education at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, batch 2023, they receive digital dakwah in various forms: full lectures (14%), short lectures (44%), Islamic quotes, and others. The most frequently obtained type of digital dakwah from the data is short lectures at 44%.

Spread of Digital Dakwah Videos

Diagram 5: How to Obtain Digital Dakwah

Diagram 6: Types of Digital Dakwah Obtained

Diagram 7: Spread of Digital Dakwah Videos
All students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, batch 2023, report having spread digital dakwah content, with a percentage of 94%, while 6% have not spread any video or dakwah content. The majority, 94%, have shared digital dakwah content online.

**Various Types of Digital Dakwah Spread**

Among all students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, batch 2023, they disseminate various types of digital dakwah, including long lectures (1%), short lectures (42%), Islamic quotes (52%), and Quranic verses (1%). The highest percentage of disseminated digital dakwah types is Islamic quotes, with 52%.

**Spread of Digital Dakwah**

All students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, batch 2023, engage in the spread of digital dakwah across various social media platforms: WhatsApp (70%), Facebook (12%), Instagram (56%), YouTube (4%), Telegram (2%), and others. The most prevalent platform for sharing videos is WhatsApp, with a percentage of 78%.

**Objectives of Spreading Digital Dakwah on Social Media**
Among all students at UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, batch 2023, their objectives in spreading digital dakwah on social media include earning ongoing rewards (pahala jariyah) at 88%, motivation at 6%, and becoming a content creator at 2%. The majority, 88%, spread digital dakwah with the intention of earning ongoing rewards. Engaging in enjoining good and forbidding evil in the digital era is considered less challenging, utilizing the prevalent technology of the internet. One of the objectives is to prevent millennial youth from succumbing to momentary pleasures, which may lead to moral decay, improper social interactions, and a lack of consideration for their future lives (Nugraha et al., 2020: 176).

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate a unanimous presence of social media applications among all respondents, their active engagement with digital dakwah, and proactive involvement in disseminating it. All participants have received diverse forms of digital dakwah through various applications, primarily accessed via the For You Page (FYP) feature. Notably, their active role in spreading digital dakwah predominantly occurs on platforms like WhatsApp, with a focus on sharing short lecture videos. Their collective intent in disseminating this content is aimed at accruing ongoing rewards (pahala jariyah) while deterring the moral decay associated with fleeting pleasures, underlining a commitment to utilizing technology for religious and ethical purposes.

REFERENCES


