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REVIEW ARTICLE

Prophetic Communication Strategy in Facing Contemporary Challenges

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Abstract: Digital da'wah is not merely a response to technological advancements but also an adaptive prophetic communication strategy in addressing contemporary challenges. This study aims to understand the concept of digital da'wah, the prophetic communication strategies embedded within it, and its relevance in facing the challenges of the modern era. The research employs a literature review methodology. The findings indicate that through information and communication technology, digital da'wah enables the broader, more relevant, and interactive dissemination of Islamic teachings. By emphasizing authenticity, credibility, context, engagement, creativity, and relevance to contemporary settings, digital da'wah can serve as an effective medium for spreading messages of inclusivity, tolerance, and rahmatan lil 'alamin (a mercy to all creation). The implications of this study highlight digital da'wah as a means for da'wah practitioners to overcome contemporary challenges, expand the reach of da'wah, and contribute positively to strengthening religious understanding and Islamic values in the digital era.

Keywords: Challenges, Contemporary Da'wah, Prophetic Communication, Strategy

1. Introduction

In Islamic teachings, da'wah is an obligation for every Muslim, as it represents an effort to call for goodness and a strategic step to transform society toward a better direction. The Qur'an mentions this in Surah Ali Imran, verse 104, which translates as follows: "And let there be among you a group that invites to goodness, enjoins what is right, and forbids what is wrong; they are the successful ones.""(Madani, 2017).

Etymologically, scholars state that the word da'wah originates from the Arabic root da'a yad'u da'watan, which means "to invite" or "to call upon." Terminologically, da'wah refers to inviting or calling people to live in accordance with the path of Allah, as stated in Surah An-Nahl, verse 125, which translates as follows:

"Invite [all] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in the best manner." (QS. An-Nahl: 125) (Sanwar, 1985).

There are several methods that can be used in da'wah, including oral (direct) communication, written communication (bi al-qalam), actions (haal), home visits (silaturrahim), infiltration

(sisipaan), drama, and others. Additionally, da'wah content (maddah) consists of messages conveying Islamic teachings so that they can be known, understood, and practiced as a guide for life. (Muhaemin, 2017).

Throughout history, da'wah has taken place over a long and diverse period. Several scholars have engaged in ijtihad regarding da'wah approaches in industrial societies and the information era, exploring how Islam can be transmitted to communities with diverse cultural characteristics. Due to its dynamic nature, society is constantly changing, leading to increasingly complex challenges.

The presence of the internet as a medium for da'wah has undeniably provided tremendous benefits. In the past, the Qur'an was written on palm fronds, stones, leaves, animal skins, and bones. Today, it is not only recorded on paper but also disseminated in cyberspace. Through the internet, not only can Qur'anic verses and Islamic writings be shared, but also the melodious recitations of the Qur'an by qari and qariah, as well as sermons by mubaligh delivered with powerful rhetoric. (Aswad, 2022).

The number of da'wah preachers who use writing to spread Islamic messages in cyberspace is steadily increasing. From short messages in Facebook statuses to articles and e-books on websites and blogs, as well as recorded sermons shared and streamed on YouTube—every form of da'wah that exists in the physical world can now be accurately replicated in the digital realm. As a result, the internet has become a crucial domain for da'wah within the framework of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil) and *iman billah* (faith in Allah), which are the core missions of Islamic da'wah.

As an obligation for Muslims, da'wah is a continuous effort that must never cease. At the same time, it faces an ever-evolving society shaped by rapid advancements in communication technology and human civilization. Therefore, utilizing the internet as a da'wah medium in the cyber era is not only important but also essential, complementing other media that have long been used. (Aswad, 2022).

Although the internet has certain limitations, it undeniably offers advantages that other media do not possess (Inayah, 2024). It is reasonable to consider that the time has come for da'i (Islamic preachers) to utilize and optimize the internet as a da'wah medium. This is because the internet, like public transportation, is used by hundreds of millions of people—whether as drivers or passengers. Digital da'wah refers to the dissemination of Islamic teachings through various digital platforms. This phenomenon has become an integral part of contemporary da'wah activities. Digital da'wah encompasses a wide range of content formats, including written articles, videos, audio recordings, and direct interactions between da'wah practitioners and their audience.

In digital da'wah, religious messages are conveyed in a creative and engaging manner, tailored to the needs and characteristics of digital audiences. The primary objectives are to spread Islamic values, correct negative perceptions of Islam, and provide a deeper and more accurate understanding of its teachings.

2. Literature Review

Prophetic communication is a new concept introduced by Kuntowijoyo (1998). The prophetic concept encompasses three aspects: humanization, liberation, and transcendence. (Kuntowijoyo, 2019). Prophetic communication refers to the communication model of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which is rich in values and ethics. This concept aims to perfect human character (akhlaq), as reflected in the Prophet's hadith:

"I was not sent except to perfect noble character." (H.R. Ahmad) (A'yuni, 2008). The prophetic concept also emphasizes social awareness, which, historically, has sought to elevate human dignity and guide people toward faith. In essence, the prophetic approach seeks to emulate and develop the social responsibility of scholars and intellectuals. (Kuntowijoyo, 2007).

3. Research Method and Materials

In this paper, the author employs the library research method. Library research is a study in which data sources are obtained by utilizing library facilities, such as books, journals, documents, records, historical accounts, narratives, and other relevant studies related to the research subject. (Rukin, 2019).

This paper adopts the library research method, as research materials are obtained from books, journals, papers, and other relevant sources, which are then reviewed according to the research data needs. Several stages must be undertaken in library research. The first step is collecting research materials from books, journals, and research reports that are relevant to the study. The next step is reading research materials to explore and deeply understand their content, allowing the emergence of new ideas related to the research. After that, researchers must take research notes to document key findings. These notes are then processed and analyzed to draw conclusions that will later be presented in the research report. This study employs a qualitative approach, which emphasizes meaning, reasoning, and definitions within a particular context. (Rukin, 2019).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. *Strategi Komunikasi Profetik dalam Dakwah Digital*

In the perspective of prophetic communication, one can find enlightenment and a consistent theme regarding the role and contribution of prophetic communication in the historical development of communication studies. Prophetic communication is not limited to religious discourse but is also relevant in a broader academic context, as it simultaneously considers both humanitarian and religious aspects. This form of communication tends to emphasize a normative framework rather than an empirical concept, yet it remains practical and oriented toward unifying and providing space for all forms of scholarly appreciation within the Islamic tradition, particularly in relation to communication issues. Prophetic communication is not solely about *da'wah*; it also encompasses a broad humanitarian dimension.

In this context, the concept of prophetic communication is proposed within a new framework of Islamic communication studies, integrating these ideas with existing knowledge in the field. This approach can be seen as an "immunization injection" to adapt to the rapid development of communication technology, particularly by applying prophetic communication principles to the dynamics of modern communication studies. Given its crucial role in responding to the acceleration of social change, this integration ensures that communication users, consumers, and media platforms develop a form of "ethical immunity" in various communication practices.

Prophetic communication is inherently humanistic—it calls without insults, hatred, or harassment; invites without ridicule; advises without arrogance; educates without persecution; and sets an example of goodness in life without misleading people through excessive image-building. Prophetic communication provides solutions, not illusions; it demonstrates excellent performance based on intelligent ideas rather than action without clear planning or vision. It seeks to liberate humanity from darkness into the light of faith, knowledge, and a civilized society. The following are strategies for implementing prophetic communication in digital da'wah:

1) Authenticity and Credibility

During the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), authenticity and credibility were crucial factors in the dissemination of da'wah. Similarly, in digital da'wah, the authenticity and credibility of da'wah practitioners serve as the fundamental keys to success. These qualities can be achieved through courage in conveying religious truth, consistency in behavior and Islamic teachings, and integrity in interacting with the audience.

2) Context and Relevance

The Prophet (SAW) always considered the context and societal needs when delivering da'wah. Likewise, in digital da'wah, da'wah practitioners must understand the digital audience's context and needs to communicate Islamic messages in a relevant manner. Content that aligns with everyday life, current issues, and contemporary challenges will be more easily accepted and comprehended by the audience.

3) Engagement and Interaction

The Prophet (SAW) was known for his deep concern for his followers and his active engagement with them. In digital da'wah, interaction between da'wah practitioners and audiences can be enhanced through interactive features, such as comment sections, Q&A sessions, and discussion groups. These features enable constructive dialogue and help strengthen the relationship between da'wah practitioners and their audience.

4) Creativity in Presentation

The Prophet (SAW) utilized various methods and strategies in delivering da'wah, including storytelling, parables, and analogies. In digital da'wah, creativity in content presentation is essential to capturing the audience's attention. The use of images, videos, infographics, and other multimedia techniques can significantly enhance the appeal and effectiveness of da'wah messages. (Ahmad, 2014).

4.2. *Relevansi Dakwah Digital dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Kontemporer*

Currently, digital da'wah has become a crucial necessity for spreading Islamic teachings while addressing contemporary challenges. In this context, da'wah faces two major challenges. The first challenge is the intellectual challenge, where the field of da'wah appears to be stagnant in its scientific development. There is a need for continuous academic progress to ensure that da'wah remains relevant in addressing modern intellectual discourses.

The second challenge is the practical challenge of da'wah. Since media serves as an unavoidable source of entertainment, technological advancements can assist da'wah practitioners in delivering their messages in an engaging and entertaining manner. Utilizing modern media platforms effectively can enhance the reach and impact of da'wah, ensuring that Islamic teachings remain accessible and appealing in the digital age. (Permadi, 2023). However, on the other hand, technological advancements have also had a negative impact on the orientation of da'i, which continues to evolve and may become biased. Initially, da'wah was closely related to the domain of worship (ibadah) and was always motivated by spiritual intentions. However, the shift in da'wah methods due to technological progress presents a unique challenge for da'i. Like celebrities, da'i are now sometimes assessed based on material aspects, leading to a possible distortion of their role and purpose.

One of the main challenges of da'wah in virtual spaces is the potential expansion and distortion of message meanings. Initially intended as an alternative da'wah medium, virtual platforms may fail to serve as an optimal medium for spreading Islamic teachings. Many digital da'wah efforts are now driven by monetization strategies, such as AdSense revenue, which can shift the primary purpose of da'wah from spreading Islam to commercial gain. As a result, da'wah content on digital platforms often prioritizes profit-oriented objectives, while the audience (mad'u) is treated more as a commodity rather than a subject in need of spiritual nourishment.

The utilization of the internet for da'wah also presents challenges related to the authenticity and purity of Islamic teachings. The mixing of Islamic messages with misleading information on digital platforms can distort the meaning of Islamic teachings and dilute their symbolic identity. Additionally, one of the most critical consequences of internet-based da'wah is the debate over religious authority. Given the open and unrestricted nature of the internet, anyone can present their interpretation of Islam in the digital sphere.

This unrestricted access has led to a crisis in religious authority and authenticity. It is often unclear who manages Islamic websites, whether they are qualified scholars (ulama) or merely

enthusiasts presenting Islamic content without scholarly grounding. This challenge is closely related to the issue of identity, where website administrators may have a misconception of Islamic identity and its true meaning. At times, the credibility and level of understanding of Islamic teachings among da'wah content creators on the internet are questionable.

Before the digital era, the interpretation of religious truths was primarily the domain of scholars with deep expertise in Islamic knowledge. Additionally, religious authority was traditionally held by individuals recognized for their piety, both personally and socially. This foundational principle emphasized that a da'i must possess noble character (akhlak mulia) and a comprehensive mastery of various Islamic disciplines to effectively carry out da'wah. (Fakhruroji, 2017).

This aligns with communication theory, which states that effective communication can only achieve optimal outcomes when the message is delivered by a communicator with credibility and an appealing personality. In the context of da'wah, maintaining the substance and clarity of Islamic teachings without causing dilution or misinterpretation presents a significant challenge in the digital era. The lack of boundaries on digital platforms makes it difficult to distinguish between the sacred and the profane.

Additionally, fostering critical thinking, literacy, and authenticity in understanding Islamic teachings among internet users is often challenging. As a result, many individuals passively absorb religious information provided online without verifying its authenticity. This has led to the rapid spread of content that contradicts Islamic teachings, which in turn obscures the true message of da'wah.

Addressing the challenges of da'wah for millennial audiences in the digital age requires specialized strategies tailored to their characteristics. The increasing trend of religious learning through short-form content on social media also presents opportunities and risks. While it enhances accessibility, the content shared on social media is often misaligned with Islamic teachings, as some content creators prioritize popularity over religious authenticity.

The transformation of da'wah in the digital era must be supported by educating mad'u (audiences) about the importance of relying on religious experts for authentic information. To ensure credible sources, individuals must go through several essential stages: inquiring, analyzing, processing information, and finally disseminating verified religious knowledge responsibly. (Fauzi, 2023).

The transformation of digital da'wah presents increasing challenges, as preachers are now required not only to be skilled in delivering religious messages but also to understand the characteristics and preferences of society. They must be capable of utilizing various technological tools that can serve as media for da'wah, as well as developing strategies and methods that align with the advancements of the digital era.

The use of digital media in da'wah serves as both a response and a functional tool to address the various waves of social change. While digital da'wah is highly relevant to contemporary times, conventional da'wah remains essential in certain contexts. Some individuals still prefer face-to-face preaching, as they believe that direct interaction with a preacher not only enhances understanding but also brings spiritual blessings.

Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that digital transformation, driven by technological advancements, has made the flow of information more open and less regulated. The unfiltered distribution of values and other social changes have had profound impacts on culture and society as a whole.

5. Conclusion

Digital da'wah is a prophetic communication strategy that adapts to the challenges of the modern era. By leveraging information and communication technology, digital da'wah facilitates the broader, more relevant, and interactive dissemination of Islamic teachings. Through authenticity, credibility, contextual understanding, engagement, creativity, and

relevance to contemporary issues, digital da'wah serves as an effective medium for spreading messages that are inclusive, tolerant, and embody the spirit of rahmatan lil 'alamin (a mercy to all creation). By understanding and applying prophetic communication strategies in digital da'wah, it is hoped that da'wah practitioners and Islamic communicators will be able to overcome contemporary challenges, expand the reach of da'wah, and contribute positively to strengthening religious understanding and Islamic values in this ever-evolving digital era.

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