

UNDERSTANDING MUSLIM PREACHING STUDENTS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Ibrahim Latepo¹
Suharto Suharto²
Nurdin Nurdin³

^{1,2}Faculty of Islamic Philosophy, Humanities, and Communication, IAIN Palu

³Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, IAIN Palu, nnnurdin@iainpalu.ac.id

ABSTRACT: *The purpose of this study is to find out Muslim students preachers use of social media for preaching purposes. This study is employes quantitative method. Survey was distributed to 90 students within Islamic Communication department at State Institut for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Palu. The finding show that most students agree that the use of social media can help them to acces new information relating to Islamic knowledge. The students also agree that the social media can help them to build personal identity because the interact with other preachers in online space. More importantly, the use of social media has increased their knowledge regarding how to deliver preaching. As a result, they believe that the use social media can help them to deliver dakwah or preaching easily because it can reduce time and hinder geographical barriers. We argue that the findings may effect Islamic education institution to change their students' perspective in delivering dakwah with new media.*

KEYWORDS: Social media, da'wah, gratification and use theory, Students, IAIN Palu.

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of Internet has caused the emergence of social media platform tha enable interactive communication and interaction. The social media also changed the way humans interact and gain knowledge. Humans are strongly driven to interact with others ib online space to fulfill their communication needs continuously. Communication is a contact relationship between humans, both individuals, and groups (Goris, 2007). Through the using of social media, a person can convey messages or ideas to others in a virtual mode. The online communication is needed to build social relations within groups and in society. Communication is a process through which a person (communicator) delivers a stimulus (usually in the form of words) intending to change or shape other people's behavior or opinion (Hamrefors, 2010; Macintyre, Clement, Dornyel, & Noels, 1998).

Social media seems to be the most updated virtual world. Various kinds of news, ranging from important news to even news that can be considered "unimportant,"

quickly spread in this virtual world. From many social media, Facebook is one of the social media that has the largest number of users in the world (Kaya & Bicen, 2016). The number of Facebook users in the world is increasing from year to year. Similarly, Indonesia facebook users is also shaply increased in last few years. According to Inndonesia Facebook Director Sri Widowati, the number of Facebook users in Indonesia in 2016 was only 82 million users per month. Then, in August 2017, there were 115 million users, and a latest Indonesia Facebook user in 2020 is 140 million. Its almost 40 percent growth in one year and nearly 97 percent of Facebook users are connected via smartphone (Statista, 2021). Indonesia is also ranked 4th in the world with the most active Facebook users. Facebook is claimed to dominate the world of social media increasingly (Statista, 2021). The phenomenon encourages people to practice various communication activities in the social media platforms.

Preaching or dakwah is an Islamic communication activity which practiced to deliver Islamic teaching to promote peace life. The preacing is also understood as a religious activity to disseminate Islamic teaching and pursued people to do a good deed that has been carried out through social media technology (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020). Muslim communities believe that every Muslim is obliged to perform preaching, and preaching is indeed an essential aspect of Islam because the widespread of Islam as a religion relies on it and because the preaching could be interpreted in an unlimited number of ways. The preaching is open for relatively free interpretation is problematic in many ways because of the possibility of conveying less credible interpretations of Islamic teachings (Ridho, 2019).

Da'wah or preaching has been carried out since the Prophet's time to convey religious messages to the ummah (Haron, 2005). However, the method of preaching in the time of the Prophet Muhammad was generally carried out by means of oral (*da'wah billisan*) due to various limitations at that time. However, after centuries the Prophet Muhammad died, and during the increasingly rapid development of knowledge, information technology, and the busyness of the ummah (Musoin communities), would it still be helpful if the da'wah was "only" delivered orally face to face by gathering several people in one place? What if a group of people does not have "time and space" to collect? What strategies can the Da'i (preachers) adopt so that the message conveyed is more "interesting" and "quick to arrive" to the ummah? The questions may be answered with the transformation of the da'wah strategy and the preachers' transformation in preaching, especially by using social media applications on the Internet.

Although several studies (e.g: Muchtar & Ritchey, 2014; Rustan, Amin, Haramain, & Nurhakki, 2020) suggest that social media should be used as the primary means of preaching because it reaches the wider community. However, there is no proper research on whether the use of social media among students has to do with propaganda activities, either spreading values to Islam or absorbing various Islamic teachings

spread by preachers and scholars. The motivation behind the use of social media among students needs to be studied in order to provide understanding to us. So that in the future, ways to use social media can be found effectively for da'wah purposes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is the latest development of new internet-based web development technologies, making it easier for everyone to communicate, participate, share, and form a network online to spread their content in cyberspace. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) define social media as a group of internet-based applications built on the foundation of Web 2.0 ideology and technology, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Nurdin & Rusli, 2013).

According to Boyd & Ellison (2008), social networking sites are a web-based service that allows individuals to create profiles publicly, establish relationships, and share in an online network. The types and manner of connections may vary from one another. The uniqueness of social networks is not because they are able to make individuals meet strangers alone, but because they can make users connect and pay attention to their social networks (Gudelunas, 2012).

The types of social media that are often used by the community in assisting Islamic preaching include online social networking. It is a web-based service that allows individuals to create a public profile in a connected system, list several other related users, view, and connect with people on the list on the network (Nurdin & Rusli, 2012). Other social media that support preaching also include Blog (web blog), a form of a web application that resembles writings, Mailing List, YouTube, and Instagram, which allows users to share photos and videos.

THEORY OF USES AND GRATIFICATIONS

The Uses and Gratifications model shows that the main problem is not how the media meets the audience's personal and social needs, but the audience is considered to be active and deliberately using the media to meet their needs and have goals (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Studies in the new media field focus on using media content to obtain gratifications for achieving one's needs. That is where the term uses and gratifications arise (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Most of the audience's behavior will be explained through various needs (requirements) and individual interests. Thus, individual needs are the starting point for the emergence of this theory (Ruggiero, 2000).

The uses and gratification theory was first stated by Elihu Katz, who emphasized not what the media do towards the audience but what the audience does to the media (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). Users or audiences are actively using the media to fulfill their satisfaction and wishes. The Uses and gratifications model shows that the main problem is not the media fulfilling the personal and social needs of the audience.¹

Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch (1973) explain the basic assumptions of the uses and gratifications theory, namely:

- a. The audience is considered active, meaning that the audience is an essential part of mass media, which is assumed to have a purpose.
- b. In the mass communication process, the initiative to link needs satisfaction with media selection rests with the audience.
- c. The mass media must compete with other sources to satisfy their needs. The Needs that are met by the broader media. How these needs are met through media consumption is highly dependent on the behavior of the audiences concerned.
- d. Mass media voters' objectives are deduced from the data provided by members of the audience, meaning that people are considered sufficiently understanding to report interests and motives in certain situations. Judgments about the cultural meaning of the mass media must be postponed before researching the audience orientation.

The uses and gratification theory begins in a social environment, where what is seen is the audience's needs. The social environment includes characteristics of group affiliations and personality traits. Individual needs are as follows:

- a. Cognitive Needs are needs related to confirmation of information, knowledge, and understanding of the environment. This need is based on a desire to understand and master the environment, satisfy curiosity, and drive inquiry.
- b. Affective needs are a need related to knowledge of aesthetic, pleasant, and emotional experiences.
- c. Integrative personal needs are needs related to the fulfillment of credibility, trust, stability, and individual status. These things come from a desire for self-respect.
- d. Integrative social needs are needs related to strengthening contact with family, friends, and the world. These things are based on a desire to be affiliated.
- e. Need for release: The need for the desire to escape from reality, emotional release, tension, and the need for entertainment (Smock, Ellison, Lampe, & Wohn, 2011).

In fulfilling their needs, people are selective in choosing mass media to consume. The need for certain types of information, the need for entertainment, access, convenience in obtaining the media, etc. is a separate consideration for someone in selecting the mass media consumed (Schröder, 2015). This will then provide competition among the mass media itself. The Internet is present in the mass media competition. By offering

¹ Onong UchajanaEffendy, *Ilmu*, 89.

various types of information and easy access to it, making the Internet a medium capable of alienating from the mass media that had previously existed (Peterson, Balasubramanian, & Bronnenberg, 1997). Each individual hopes that the use of certain media will fulfill their needs. This activity generates gratification of needs but can also lead to dependence on changes in individual habits. In this case, the use of media can be said to be a functional alternative for real interactions.² In addition, this theory places more emphasis on a human approach in viewing media. This means that humans have the autonomy, the authority to treat the media.³

ISLAMIC PREACHING

Preaching or da'wah is a religious activity that has been carried out through social media technology (Nurdin & Rusli, 2013). Islamic preaching is understood as an activity to encourage people to do a good deed and follow the Islamic teaching, calling on them to kindness and preventing misguidance from obtaining happiness in the world and the hereafter (Millie, 2011)

Da'wah has been carried out since the Prophet's time to convey religious messages to the ummah. However, the preaching method in the Prophet Muhammad's time was generally carried out through oral (*da'wah billisan*) due to various limitations (Bahtiar, Ghazali, Nasution, Shonhaji, & Yanti, 2020; Wirman & Fauziah, 2020). However, after about fifteen centuries, the Prophet Muhammad died, and amid the increasingly rapid development of knowledge and information technology and the busyness of the ummah, the practice of preaching might not effective if the preaching is delivered orally face to face by gathering a number of people in one place. A Muslim preacher requires new media that can help them reach audiences in large number and in a short time. There is a huge challenges for Muslim preachers in delivering messages to Muslim communities if they do not use the new media in preaching activities. The challenges can be resolved with the transformation of the da'wah strategy and the transformation of the da'i (preachers) themselves in preaching, especially by using social media applications on the Internet (Shukri, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed quantitative method (Miller, 2001). This research aims to make systematic, factual, and accurate descriptions of the facts and characteristics of a particular population or object use of social media for Islamic praching. This type of research describes the reality that is happening without explaining the relationship between variables (MacIntyre, 1994). Meanwhile, the data were collected using a survey by distributing questionnaires to the respondents.

² Ibid., 72.

³ Nurudin, *Komunikasi Massa*(Malang :Penerbit Cespur, 2004), 181.

This research was conducted at the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palu (IAIN) with a sample of 90 students at Islamic Communication department. The sample constitutes about one percent of the total student population of IAIN Palu, which is around 9000 students. Samples were taken using random quota sampling. Fourty questions were created to reflect four variables in the questionnaire distributed to respondents. The researcher distributed the questionnaire directly to the respondents to be filled out and then retrieved after filling it. The results of the questionnaire were calculated using SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis results of the four variables that have been distributed to respondents, the researcher found that almost all the indicators in the questionnaire were adopted from the uses and gratification theory and the science of da'wah. In this study, the assumptions built in the uses and gratification theory and Islamic teaching perspective. The students a purpose and want to benefit from the use of social media. In terms of the intended use, the results of this study indicate that most respondents use social media because there are purposes such as seeking Islamic information, building personal identity, and obtaining preaching or dakwah knowledge, which then cause them to perceive the the use of social media can ease them to perform Islamic preaching.

Table 1 below is a summary of the survey demographic use of social media by Islamic Communication Department students. The results resume in the following table make it easier for readers to understand how instense the students use of social media for preaching purposes.

Table 1: State Institute For Islamic Studies Students Use of Social Media for Dakwah

No	Question	Answer options				
1.	Do you use social media?	Yes			No	
		100%			-	
2.	How long do you use social media every day	<1hour	1 hour	2 hour	3 hours	>4hours
		22.2%	31.1%	15.6%	13.3%	17.8%
3.	What devices do you use social media on	Smartphone	laptop	desktop	Smartphone and laptop	
		80.0%	6.7%	-	13.3%	
4.	Where you frequently access social media	On-campus		At home		Both
		6.7%		33.3%		60.0%

The data from the table shows a high percentage that the use of social media for da'wah activities. Most students used social media for a minimum of one hour each day, and they use smartphones to access social media. The use of social media in daily campus life or at home. The intense use of social media highlights the students' high sense of psychological bond with the new media. The students might feel that the various dakwah materials available on social media can fulfill their religious needs.

PILOT STUDY

All item measurements used in this study were tested in a pilot study before used in the research analysis. The pilot study aimed to test the validity and reliability of the items. As a result of the pilot study analyses, we found that all items used in this study were valid and reliable. Therefore, all of the items can be used for further analysis. The result of the validity test of each item are depicted in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Validity Test

Variable	Items	Corrected Item Questions Total Correlation	R Table	Validity
Islamic Information Search	I search for information on social media.	,402	0,257	VALID
	I search various practical issues relating to preaching social media.	,309	0,257	VALID
	I am curious to find various information relating to Islamic teaching on social media.	,575	0,257	VALID
	The latest information on Islam can be found on social media	,532	0,257	VALID
	I obtained information about Islam on social media.	,624	0,257	VALID
	I often look for various information on social media to help me preaching	,550	0,257	VALID
	I think the are a lot of information on social media	,389	0,257	VALID
	I know social media provide a lot of positive Islamic information	,580	0,257	VALID
	I often get information form other preachers	,389	0,257	VALID
	I believe that information shared on social media is trustworthy	,580	0,257	VALID
	Building Personal identity	I found supporters of personal values related to Islam on social media.	,278	0,257
I found roles model for preaching on social media.		,663	0,257	VALID
I identify myself with Islamic values on social media.		,568	0,257	VALID
Social media increase self-understanding of various		,350	0,257	VALID

	Islamic knowledge on social media.			
	I get mental and aesthetic pleasure by using social media	,518	0,257	VALID
	I found new strategies for preaching on social media	,305	0,257	VALID
	I am enjoying online preaching.	,314	0,257	VALID
	I am very confidence of using social media for preaching	,375	0,257	VALID
	I can differentiate myself with other preachers on social media	,532	0,257	VALID
	I build my preaching branding on social media	,544	0,257	VALID
Da'wah knowledge	I gain knowledge on how the deliver preaching on social media.	,530	0,257	VALID
	I get knowledge from other preachers on social media.	,324	0,257	VALID
	I read preaching information on social media.	,436	0,257	VALID
	I learn preaching strategy from social media.	,701	0,257	VALID
	Social media help me to learn how to deliver good preaching.	,669	0,257	VALID
	Social media increase my knowledge on preaching	,695	0,257	VALID
	I use social media to transfer my preaching knowledge	,642	0,257	VALID
	My friends on social media help me to obtain new knowledge	,315	0,257	VALID
	I was introduced to preaching knowledge on social media.	,321	0,257	VALID
	I often use preaching knowledge obtained from social media in my preaching activities	,282	0,257	VALID
	Social media help me finding preaching material.	,561	0,257	VALID

Ease of performing da'wah	I found various preaching materials on social media.	,609	0,257	VALID
	I do not need to spend much time find preaching material	,487	0,257	VALID
	I found it easy to download preaching material.	,362	0,257	VALID
	I think many preaching materials on social media.	,663	0,257	VALID
	I think social media help me to find preaching material quickly.	,270	0,257	VALID
	I think social media provide a lot of preaching material	,698	0,257	VALID
	I think it is easy to find information related to preaching	,545	0,257	VALID
	Many types of preaching material are available on social media	,612	0,257	VALID
	I found much information on social media	,788	0,257	VALID

All data from table 2 above show that each item has r value higher than r table (0,257), and they show positive results. Thus, all question items are valid. Then, the reliability test of each variable is shown in the following table 3.

Table 3.Items Reliability Test

Variables	Reliabilities Coefficient	Cronbach Alpha	Reliable
X			
Islamic Information Search	10 items	0,791	Reliable
Building Personal identity	10 items	0,780	Reliable
Da'wah knowledge		0,710	Reliable
Y			
Ease of performing dakwah	10 items	0,690	Reliable

The reliability test from table 3 above shows that each variable has Alpha Cronbach higher than 0,6, which means all variables (halal product expectation, social environment, fiqih knowledge, and intention to use sharia FinTech products) are reliable. Next step, we calculate multiple linear regression, and the results are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Calculation Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	-1,681	2,271		-,740	,461		
X1	,449	,065	,528	6,911	,000	,654	1,529
X2	-,034	,075	-,032	-,457	,649	,769	1,300
X3	,574	,093	,454	6,157	,000	,702	1,424

a. Dependent Variable: Y

The regression calculation shows that the value of variable Islamic information search is 0.791, and t value for building personal identity is 0,780, while t value for the access dakwah knowledge is 0,710. The calculation results mean that all variable Islamic information search (X1), building personal identity, and access dakwah knowledge have a positive influence on ease of performing dakwah. The result of hypotheses testing, then, is presented in figure 1 below.

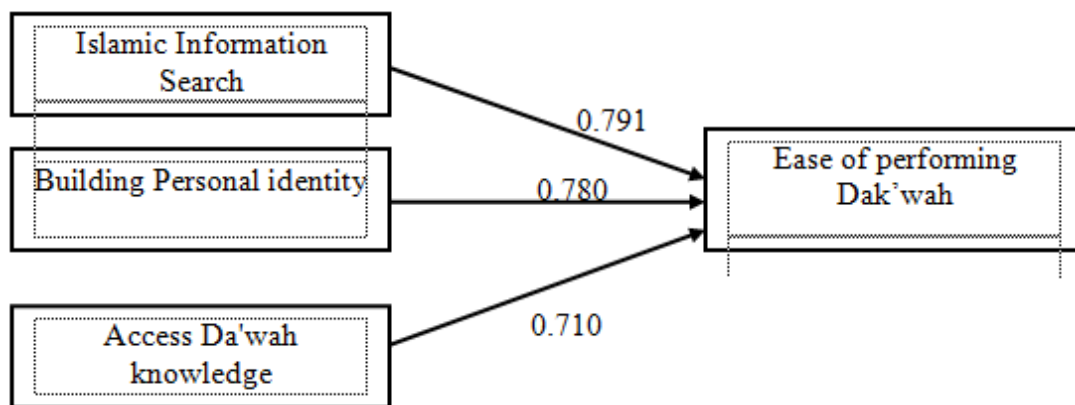


Figure1. Summarized Result of Hypothesis

Then social media users want to get benefits when using social media. This study found that the respondents use social media because it is helpful in terms of how social media can help them to perform preaching or dak'awah easily. Besides that, the respondents also felt the benefits of social media because it could increase their insight into Islamic teachings, increase knowledge about the methods and strategies of other da'i in preaching.

Furthermore, the findings shows that using social media help users to get Islamic knowledge which can be used to deepen their knowledge on Islamic teaching (Islam, 2019). Previous studies (e.g. Rusli, Hasyim, & Nurdin, 2021) have found that Islamic knowledge is widely available online now and it has been used intensively by Muslim society. Other than social media can help users find new Islamic knowledge, the users also agree that the use of social media can build their personal identity in the online platforms. The personal identity is built through online interaction with other preachers or da'i in the online platform. The findings also show that in gaining insight and knowledge of social media users, not only do they get da'wah information from one preacher, but many other preachers share da'wah material with the method they want.

Regarding social media's ability as a means of knowledge production, respondents also admitted that social media is very helpful in delivering dakwah and Islamic teaching to Muslim communities (Nurdin & Rusli, 2012, 2013). In this study, we argue that the social media can reduce time and hinder geographical barrier in dakwah practice. In this study, the students may have experience that various dakwah teaching have been designed and uploaded to social media platforms which they considered as a helpful tools.

CONCLUSIONS

Students of Islamic Communication Departemnt at State Institute for Islamic Studies Palu have actively used social media for preaching purposes. They use social media because the social media can help them to access Islamic information, build personal identity, and access dakwah knowledge. The students also experience that using social media can help them to deliver dakwah easily. Our findings reflect new perspective on the use of social media by Muslim students in particular for dakwah purposes. The findings might effect Islamic education institutions in practicing education for Islamic Communication Department who will be future Isalmic preachers.

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