

# Dakwah Via Social Media: Opportunities and Challenges In Indonesia

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## Article Info

### Article history:

Received :  
Acceptance :  
Published :  
Available online

<http://aspublisher.co.id/index.php/kolaborasi>

E-ISSN: xxxx-xxxx

### How to cite:

Suntoro, FA. (2024). "Da'wah Via Social Media: Opportunities and Challenges In Indonesia," *KOLABORASI: Journal Of Multidisciplinary*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 53-60, 2024.



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## ABSTRACT

*This article explores the increasing use of social media as a new kind of dakwah. Opportunities and obstacles that social media dakwah advocates will face, particularly in the Indonesian setting, are the primary emphasis of this article. This study aims to determine the efficacy of social media as a voice and to explain the potential and obstacles in Indonesia. This study employs descriptive qualitative methodology by collecting data via a literature review. This study's findings were gathered from a variety of dakwah science-related sources, including scientific journal publications, reference books, and online reports from research institutes. The findings demonstrate that social media is an effective and efficient method for propagating Islam. Therefore, social media provides several options for dakwah, including accessibility, reach, and affordability. On the other hand, social media presents substantial obstacles for dakwah activists, such as the necessity for dakwah activists to restrict the propagation of bad information and online hoaxes*

**Keywords:** dakwah, social media, chances, and obstacles

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development and popularity of social media in recent years is an interesting phenomenon to observe. The high intensity of public interaction in accessing social media has even given rise to an addictive effect on social media. The results of a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association stated that the growth of internet users in Indonesia has increased from year to year (Sriati & Hendrawati, 2020). This phenomenon certainly has both positive and negative impacts. One of the positive impacts is that social media has become a technology that makes it easier for humans in their daily lives. The negative impacts include the free spread of negative content.

Viewed from a preaching perspective, social media is very attractive as an alternative means of spreading the message of Islam. The offers of convenience

that social media has, seem very promising. This is what may be the background for some preachers to jump into the world of social media. Some famous preachers on social media include Abdul Somad, AA Gym, Felix Siau, Husain Basyaiban and others. Social media, like other means of preaching, certainly has its own advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, this article will outline some of the opportunities and challenges faced by anyone who wants to preach via social media. This description is important, because it will illustrate the path that will be taken by preaching activists on social media.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

The type of research in this article is classified as library research, the process of which is carried out by collecting data from various literatures (Kaelan, 2012). The data collection technique used by the researcher is a descriptive technique, meaning that the researcher describes what is meant by da'wah and describes the opportunities and challenges of da'wah from the sources that have been collected (Danim, 2002). Several reference sources that the researcher used in compiling this research include books and reputable scientific journal articles related to da'wah science and management, as well as other sources that discuss information and communication technology, and observations of current social media. Data analysis in this study was carried out using the content analysis technique, namely analyzing data according to its content. The data analysis method uses the inductive method (Sugiyono, 2010). The researcher tried to analyze how effective and efficient social media is as a da'wah medium, as well as its opportunities and challenges by looking at the development of social media da'wah in Indonesia.

## **3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**

### **Social Media As A Contemporary Medium For Dakwah**

Social media is an online media, where users can share, participate and create content in the form of blogs, wikis, forums, social networks, and virtual world spaces supported by increasingly sophisticated multimedia technology. Today, social networks, blogs, and wikis are the most widely used and rapidly growing social media among others (Mulyati, 2014). Another opinion says that social media is an online media that supports social interaction and social media uses web-based technology that turns communication into interactive dialogue. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Heanlein define social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideology and technology of web 2.0 and that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Cahyono, 2021).

Historically, the history of the birth of social media began in the 70s, namely the discovery of a bulletin board system that made it possible to connect with other people using electronic mail or upload and download software, all of this was still

done through a telephone line connected to a modem. Then in 1995 the GeoCities site was born which served web hosting. GeoCities was the forerunner of the establishment of websites. Two years later, starting in 1997 to 1999, the first social media appeared, namely Sixdegree.com and Classmates.com. In the same year, a site for creating personal blogs also appeared, namely Blogger. Two different models of social networks that were born around 1999 were trust-based developed by Epinions.com, and friendship-based social networks such as those developed by Bishop Jonathan which were later used on several regional UK sites between 1999 and 2001 (Mukhlason & Aljawi, 2012).

The peak in 2002 was the emergence of Friendster which at that time became a very popular social media. Unlike before, Friendster offered various features that later became trends for social media, such as chat features and friendship features. So that the development of social media has grown rapidly (Cahyono, 2021). If in 2002 Friendster dominated the world of social media because it was only a single player, now the emergence of various new social media is increasingly mushrooming and unstoppable. Just to mention a few examples, such as LinkedIn, MySpace, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, Wiser, Google+, Tiktok and so on.

As a result of the unstoppable development of social media, social media seems to be a basic need for modern society. According to McLuhan, the development of social media has resulted in the impact of society's dependence on the electronic world, which is called the global village. There has been an evolution of community culture which is indicated by disintegration in the real world so that socialization and face-to-face interaction have begun to be abandoned (Zahid, 2019). For Indonesian people, especially young people, social media seems to have become an addiction, not a day goes by without accessing social media, even almost 24 hours they are inseparable from their smartphones (Cahyono, 2021). It can be admitted that social media does offer many conveniences that make people feel at home surfing the virtual world for a long time.

Social media is like a double-edged sword, on the one hand it has advantages or positive values but on the other hand it also contains disadvantages or negative values. Some of the advantages of social media include: First, fast, concise, compact and simple. Unlike conventional media that requires special skills, standard standards and superior marketing capabilities. However, social media is actually very easy to use (user friendly), even users without a knowledge base in Information Technology can use it. Second, wide and global reach. Conventional media sometimes also have global reach, but require large costs and a relatively long time. As for social media, anyone can communicate quickly and without geographical barriers. Even social media users also have access to design content according to their wishes (Sumadi, 2016, p. 185).

The disadvantages of social media include; reduced direct interpersonal interaction, causing addiction, the spread of content that violates morals such as

pornography, and the spread of fake news (hoaxes). Social media has now brought the distant closer and distanced the close. In a matter of seconds we can communicate with other people in other parts of the world, but on the other hand, interaction with people around us is actually reduced. Social media has made many of its users addicted, thus reducing a person's productivity (Sriati & Hendrawati, 2020, p. 50). Worse still, social media has enabled the distribution of pornographic material easily, quickly, and very openly (Anwar, 2018). No less dangerous, social media is a hotbed for the spread of fake news (hoaxes).

Starting from the bias of the right to freedom of speech to being misinterpreted to create hoax news that aims to create a sensation or seek profit on the internet (Rahadi, 2017). Therefore, wisdom in the use of social media must be considered because the impact is difficult to predict, especially if the content violates propriety, ethics, community norms, culture and others (Sumadi, 2016). Reviewing the phenomenon of the increasing development of social media in society, it has opened the eyes of da'wah activists to see the gaps in opportunities for social media as a means of da'wah.

On Instagram social media, for example, there is Felix Siauwh whose account is almost ten years old (the first photo was uploaded on December 22, 2012), Felix Siauwh has uploaded 3,241 content with 5 million followers. Meanwhile, on Youtube, there is an account of Ustadz Abdul Somad Official with 2.74 million subscribers and has uploaded 1,500 videos. On Twitter, there is a famous preacher, Abdullah Gymnastiar, with his account @aagym who has been a member since June 2010 with more than 3.6 million followers. On Facebook, there is a fanpage account CakNun.com which is operated with the permission of Cak Nun, this account has reached more than 160 thousand fans. Finally, on the recently popular social media, namely Tiktok, there is an account with the username @Basyasman00 which is managed by Husain Basyaiban. This account has 5.2 million followers with 262.3 million likes. Of course, there are many more accounts containing preaching content on various social media that have not been mentioned such as Adi Hidayat, Hanan Ataki, Handy Bonny and others. This means that preaching via social media has now become a trend among social media activists.

### **Opportunities And Challenges of Dakwah Via Social Media**

The proliferation of accounts and content creators who are inspired by da'wah on social media is proof that social media offers great opportunities for the spread of Islam. By analyzing the advantages and positive values of the internet in general and social media in particular, several opportunities can be found offered by social media as a contemporary da'wah medium. The most obvious opportunity is that social media offers easy access because of its fast, concise, dense and simple features. Unlike conventional media that require special skills, standard standards and superior marketing capabilities. However, social media is so easy to use (user

friendly), even users without a basic knowledge of Information Technology can use it (Sumadi, 2016). That way anyone can operate it without any difficulty. Of course, such convenience is a great opportunity for the development of da'wah activities, because conventional da'wah media such as tabligh akbar, seminars, sermons, and so on tend to be more difficult, complicated and draining (Sumadi, 2016).

Even more amazingly, social media is able to correspond with conventional da'wah, namely by uploading recordings of sermons and lectures on social media. Another opportunity of social media as a medium for da'wah is that social media offers a wide and global reach. Conventional media sometimes also have global reach, but require large costs and a relatively long time. As for social media, anyone can communicate quickly and without geographical barriers (Sumadi, 2016). Given the basic nature of da'wah, namely spreading (nasyr) the Islamic religion, the ability of social media to spread information with a wide and global reach is clearly a very significant opportunity. Barriers to da'wah such as geographical limitations are no longer found on social media, because social media is global. Everyone in any part of the world can upload their da'wah content, see other people's da'wah content, or simply interact socially anywhere and anytime. Thus, social media is a very effective and efficient means in terms of time for the dissemination of da'wah content.

In addition to being effective and efficient in terms of time and facilities, social media is also relatively inexpensive. To access social media, the only means needed is an electronic device such as a smartphone or computer connected to the internet. Nowadays, both smartphones and computers are no longer luxury items. Almost everyone now has one, because these electronic devices are available on the market at prices that are easily affordable for the lower middle class. Likewise, an internet connection is not too difficult to obtain. After having both, someone can surf the internet and access social media. Creating an account on social media is also generally free of charge. The low cost of social media will be more obvious when compared to other electronic media, such as television or radio. Let alone creating a television or radio station, advertising alone requires a large cost (Retno Hernani & Masrunik, 2020). So the relatively low cost of using social media is a golden opportunity for da'wah activists to get involved in this field. because da'wah in a conventional way does require a relatively large budget.

Because social media is so cheap, easy, efficient and effective, it has become popular with many people. Of course, not everyone who is involved in social media uses it to spread good values. There are also social media users who actually use social media to spread negative things irresponsibly. For example, content that is pornographic and violent, deviant and misguided thoughts or even fraud. So for da'wah activists on social media, in addition to paying attention to da'wah opportunities on social media, what is no less important to anticipate are the challenges of da'wah there. Among the challenges of da'wah on social media, as

mentioned above, is preventing the spread of content that is pornographic, violent and various other immoral acts. This role in da'wah activities is called amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar. Namely, active actions to close sites that spread and produce this negative content, as well as preventive actions in the form of appeals to stay away from it (Badarussyamsi et al., 2021). In the context of Indonesia, the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemenkominfo) is probably the party with the most capacity to block accounts that publish negative content (Pratama & Sihombing, 2019). In fact, this action is also part of da'wah. Preventive actions can be taken by anyone. Namely by spreading and explaining to the community about manners in social media.

Another challenge that must be faced by social media da'wah activists is correcting various deviant thoughts that are spread on social media. The impact of easy access to social media includes the spread of various deviant and misguided thoughts. Unlike negative content such as pornography and violence, thoughts spread through social media are more difficult to block, because the thoughts are abstract, vague and invisible. For example, Shia, Ahmadiyah, Liberal, Pluralist and other thoughts are now so free to spread on social media. So in fact this is a big challenge and opportunity for da'wah activists. This is a war of thoughts (ghazwul fikr) that must be endured.

The derivative of the war of ideas on social media, namely the spread of fake news (hoaxes) on social media. In social media, everyone has the potential to become a news spreader. The term that then developed was citizen journalism, namely someone regardless of educational background and expertise, can plan, explore, process and represent information in the form of writing, images, photos, speech, videos and others (Yustitia, 2010). In citizen journalism on social media, there are no specific rules and standards for producing or spreading information. So the consequence is that the news produced is certainly wild and without clear validation standards. This is where the role of social media preachers comes in. There are at least two roles that can be taken, namely filtering wild news on social media and as a producer of valid news for the people on social media.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Seeing the phenomenon of the development of social media today, it should be able to open the eyes of da'wah activists to engage in dialectics with the challenges of globalization and modernization. The intensity of human interaction in this era with social media is a very promising da'wah opportunity. The phenomenal changes in society should be balanced with changes and developments in da'wah methods by its practitioners. Da'wah should not be stagnant and use conventional methods such as lectures alone. Because da'wah must be dynamic, progressive and full of innovation. The dialectic of Islamic da'wah with the development of digital technology is actually a golden opportunity to compete against Western hegemony

that has damaged the thinking and ideology of Muslims. Islam must be shown its "true face", because so far it has been portrayed with a "bad face".

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