

The Digital Da'wah Strategy Amid the Flow of Hoax Information

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the application of digital da'wah strategies to counter the spread of hoax information on social media, focusing on the role of the tabayyun approach and the importance of digital literacy. In the digital era, social media has become a powerful tool for spreading Islamic teachings, but it also facilitates the rapid dissemination of misinformation, especially concerning religious matters. This research used a library research method, analyzing secondary data from academic articles, books, and reliable online sources to identify effective strategies for digital da'wah. Key findings highlight the critical role of social media in reaching a broad audience, the need for verification of information (tabayyun), and the importance of enhancing digital literacy among da'is to ensure that Islamic teachings are conveyed accurately. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the challenges of competing for attention in the digital space and the necessity for collaboration with technology platforms and other digital communities. The research concludes by recommending a comprehensive digital da'wah strategy combining verification, literacy, innovation, and collaboration to effectively address the challenges of misinformation in the digital era. Keywords: digital da'wah, hoaxes, tabayyun, social media, digital literacy.

INTRODUCTION

The flow of information through social media, commonly referred to as "medsos," also influences societal behavior. The widespread circulation of various news on social media, often leading to religious propaganda, has become increasingly difficult to contain. In communication or media studies, propaganda does not always carry a negative connotation. However, in this discussion, propaganda leans more towards the dimension of provocation. Specifically, religious issues are turned into propaganda or politicized by elites and individuals spreading hoaxes (false information) to provoke communities through the massive dissemination of falsehoods (Muhammad & Khaerunnisa, 2020).

When using social media as a medium for spreading Islamic communication (da'wah), proper ethics and strategies are essential, aligned with the core principles of communication ethics based on the Qur'an and Hadith. Furthermore, Islamic da'wah is an effort to convey to individuals or the public about the purpose of human life in this world, which includes commanding what is good and forbidding what is wrong (Samsudin & Putri, 2023).

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Based on this, da'wah communication can be defined as a process of transmitting Islamic knowledge that influences recipients to spread, believe in, and uphold Islamic teachings. Additionally, da'wah communication involves relating da'wah messages to Islamic perspectives on various dimensions of life (Samsudin & Putri, 2023).

The digital era is closely tied to the internet, which has made everything more accessible and efficient. The positive impact is particularly evident in the information technology world, allowing for interactions beyond spatial and temporal boundaries (Pratama et al., 2024). While technology makes access easier, it also has downsides, such as the lack of opportunities for direct social interaction. On the other hand, it allows da'i (Islamic preachers) to gain popularity as public figures, but this also means that da'wah is judged not only by the content delivered but also by the delivery method and the media used (Pratama et al., 2024).

Social media has characteristics that allow da'wah to reach a broad audience, especially with the increasing number of social media users. Moreover, the interactivity offered by social media enables direct interaction between da'i or da'wah organizations and their audiences, making it easier to engage in dialogue and Q&A. The ability to share content also plays a crucial role in spreading da'wah messages, as users can easily share da'wah content within their social networks (Ummah, 2023). One of the main challenges is the high competition for attention on social media, where da'wah messages must compete with various other content for the audience's attention (Ummah, 2023).

Da'wah messages can be delivered on a larger and unrestricted scale through the internet as a medium. Information flows quickly, and the reach extends beyond spatial and temporal limits, making the internet an effective and efficient medium for da'wah. One widely used medium for religious exploration and references is the internet, which increases interest in learning about Islamic teachings (Fauzi, 2023).

Previous research provides a foundation for this study. Mahmuddin and Nasriah (2023), in their study at UIN Alauddin Makassar, emphasize the importance of the concept of tabayyun (verification) in countering hoaxes on social media. Laila Afifah (2019) examined how students at the Pondok Pesantren Mahasiswa Universal Bandung use Quran-based literacy strategies to address hoaxes. Meanwhile, Najib and Tahiyah (2023) discussed the importance of digital literacy da'wah to combat misinformation in cyberspace. These studies highlight the need for innovative strategic approaches in delivering da'wah in the digital age.

Although previous research has explored various aspects of digital da'wah, a gap remains in terms of a holistic strategic study on how to effectively counter the flow of hoax information on social media by utilizing digital technology. This study offers a new approach that integrates digital literacy with Islamic da'wah ethics to formulate communication strategies capable of competing with other content on social media.

The research questions for this study are: 1) How can da'wah strategies be used to counter the spread of hoaxes on social media?; and 2) What practical steps can be taken to increase the effectiveness of da'wah in the digital era? The aim of this research is to identify effective digital da'wah strategies in confronting the flow of hoax information and to provide practical recommendations for da'i (preachers) in utilizing social media as a communication tool.

This study is expected to contribute by providing solutions to the challenges of da'wah in the digital age, particularly in countering the spread of hoaxes. The results of this study are also expected to provide strategic guidance for da'i and da'wah organizations to deliver Islamic messages in ways that are relevant, engaging, and grounded in Islamic values.

METHODS

This research has used a library research method to explore digital da'wah strategies in addressing the flow of hoax information. This method has involved analyzing secondary data from written sources such as books, scientific journals, research reports, articles, and relevant electronic documents. The literature review has aimed to understand and integrate various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings from previous research, enabling the researcher to explore key concepts related to digital da'wah and the challenges of hoax dissemination on social media.

The data sources for this study have included literature related to digital da'wah, Islamic communication ethics, and media literacy. Research articles from reputable journals, such as da'wah and communication journals, have been important references. Additionally, electronic content from academic platforms like Google Scholar and university repositories, as well as related documents such as statistics on social media users and reports on hoax trends, have been used to support the validity of the study.

Data has been collected through a literature search using keywords such as "digital da'wah," "hoaxes," "communication strategies," and "media literacy." The sources found have been selected based on credibility and relevance. The literature has been categorized into themes such as da'wah strategies, hoax information challenges, and media literacy approaches. Data analysis has been conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach, which has included steps such as categorizing main concepts, synthesizing information from various sources to find effective da'wah strategies, and critiquing previous literature to identify research gaps.

The research procedure has begun with identifying the problem and formulating research questions that focus on the relationship between hoax phenomena on social media and digital da'wah strategies. After literature data has been collected and critically analyzed, the research findings have been presented in a systematic and argumentative narrative.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, source triangulation has been performed by comparing data from different literatures. Cross-referencing has also been applied to avoid interpretative bias, resulting in more credible findings. This library research method has aimed to provide a deep understanding of relevant digital da'wah strategies in addressing hoaxes. It is expected that this study will contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of digital da'wah in the modern era.

RESULTS

1. The Role of Social Media in Digital Da'wah

Social media has emerged as a powerful platform for da'wah (Islamic preaching) due to its vast reach and interactive nature. With billions of users worldwide, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube provide da'is (preachers) with the opportunity to spread Islamic teachings to a diverse audience, including people from various backgrounds and geographical locations. The interactive element of social media allows for direct engagement with followers, enabling da'is to address questions, offer advice, and share content in real-time. Moreover, social media's real-time nature allows da'wah to respond quickly to current events and issues, providing a sense of immediacy and relevance in addressing the concerns of the ummah (Muslim community).

However, as powerful as these tools are, social media also poses challenges. One significant issue is the rapid spread of hoaxes, misinformation, and misleading interpretations of religious teachings. The viral nature of social media can easily amplify rumors and falsehoods, particularly when it comes to sensitive topics like religion. Improper use of social media, such as sharing unverified information or engaging in heated debates without proper knowledge, can inadvertently

contribute to the spread of hoaxes. Therefore, it is crucial that da'is possess digital literacy skills, allowing them to navigate the digital landscape responsibly and verify the authenticity of information before sharing it. As emphasized by Samsudin & Putri (2023), proper digital literacy enables da'is to discern between valid sources and falsehoods, ensuring that their message remains credible and aligned with Islamic values.

2. The Importance of the Tabayyun Approach in Countering Hoaxes

The tabayyun approach, rooted in Islamic principles, plays a vital role in countering hoaxes and misinformation, particularly in the context of social media. Tabayyun, which means verification or seeking clarification, is a key Islamic principle emphasized in the Qur'an (49:6), which instructs believers to verify information before spreading it. In the era of digital communication, this principle is more relevant than ever, as false information can spread quickly and widely.

For da'is, applying the tabayyun approach means taking the time to verify the truth of information before sharing it with their audience. This can involve checking the source of information, cross-referencing with other reliable sources, and considering the context in which the information is being shared. By doing so, da'is can maintain their credibility and protect their followers from falling victim to hoaxes. As noted by Mahmuddin & Nasriah (2022) and Laila (2023), tabayyun serves not only to preserve the integrity of da'wah but also to ensure that Islamic teachings are conveyed accurately, thereby fostering trust between da'is and their followers. This approach helps da'is combat the spread of misinformation and strengthens the credibility of their message.

3. Digital Literacy as an Effective Da'wah Strategy

In the digital age, where information is constantly being exchanged on social media platforms, digital literacy has become an essential skill for both da'is and the public. Digital literacy refers to the ability to use digital tools effectively to access, evaluate, and communicate information. For da'is, possessing digital literacy skills means being able to identify trustworthy sources, verify the authenticity of content, and present information in a manner that is clear, accurate, and engaging.

Strengthening digital literacy among da'is is crucial in combating the spread of hoaxes and misinformation. When da'is are digitally literate, they can help their audience navigate the vast ocean of information on social media, teaching them how to critically assess and verify the content they encounter. This empowers followers to distinguish between factual information and hoaxes, reducing the likelihood of misinformation spreading within the community. As Najib & Tahiyah (2023) and Rahmawati & Yusuf (2022) highlight, digital literacy not only helps in ensuring that the da'wah message remains authentic but also fosters a more informed and critical audience. By teaching digital literacy, da'is can enhance the effectiveness of their da'wah, helping to create a more responsible and discerning online community.

4. Challenges in Digital Da'wah

Da'wah, or Islamic preaching, faces a series of challenges in the digital age, particularly in the realm of social media. One of the primary obstacles is the intense competition for attention. With the rise of social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, content is constantly being shared, and users are bombarded with a wide range of information. Da'is (Islamic preachers) must contend not only with other religious messages but also with a vast array of secular content, entertainment, and news that competes for the same audience's attention. As Ummah (2023) points out, this competition can result in short attention spans, making it more difficult for da'wah messages to reach their full potential audience.

In this context, da'is are compelled to innovate in their approach to delivering da'wah messages. The use of engaging visuals, such as infographics, videos, and interactive posts, has become an essential tool in making da'wah more appealing and accessible. Simplifying complex religious concepts into easily understandable language is also crucial in capturing and maintaining the audience's attention. By adapting to the visual and concise nature of social media, da'is can create content that resonates with a wider audience, especially younger generations who are used to consuming content quickly (Fauzi, 2023). Therefore, da'is must be equipped with the skills to create high-quality, engaging, and informative content that can stand out in a crowded digital space.

Another challenge is the need for consistency in delivering quality content. As public figures, da'is are expected to maintain a certain level of credibility and professionalism in their content. Fauzi (2023) highlights that the popularity of da'is, particularly those with large followings, places additional pressure on them to ensure that their messages remain consistent, well-researched, and aligned with Islamic values. This consistency is crucial not only for maintaining the trust of their followers but also for ensuring that their da'wah remains a reliable source of information in an environment where misinformation is rampant.

5. Collaboration in Digital Da'wah Strategy

Effective digital da'wah strategies require more than just individual effort from da'is. Collaboration with technology platforms, such as social media companies, and with digital communities, is becoming increasingly important. As Hasanah (2023) notes, collaboration can significantly extend the reach of da'wah messages. Technology platforms provide the infrastructure and tools that can amplify the voice of da'is, allowing them to reach a global audience. Furthermore, working together with other digital communities, such as online groups, educational platforms, or influencers, can help build a network that promotes the values of Islam in a more diverse and inclusive way.

Such collaborations also play a vital role in building trust with the audience. When da'is partner with reputable platforms or communities, their messages are more likely to be viewed as credible and authoritative. This trust is crucial in the digital space, where misinformation and hoaxes are prevalent. As trust grows, so does the likelihood that the da'wah will be received positively and have a lasting impact.

6. Hoaxes Targeting Religious Issues

Hoaxes and misinformation targeting religious topics have become a significant concern in digital da'wah. Social media is rife with falsehoods that can be easily propagated, and religious issues are often prime targets for such hoaxes. These hoaxes are designed to create division, spread confusion, and sometimes even incite violence or hatred among different religious or sectarian groups. Fathurrahman & Nisa (2023) emphasize the importance of da'is being proactive in addressing these hoaxes. Given their role as community leaders and influencers, da'is must ensure that their followers are not misled by false information.

To combat hoaxes, da'is must provide clarifications and fact-based explanations that counter the spread of misinformation. This involves not only responding to hoaxes but also actively educating their audience about how to recognize and avoid falsehoods. Educational and informative da'wah messages are key in this regard, as they not only clarify misconceptions but also help raise awareness within the community about the potential dangers of hoaxes. By equipping followers with the tools to critically evaluate information, da'is can help protect the integrity of Islamic teachings and foster a more informed, cohesive, and resilient community.

The research concludes that an effective digital da'wah strategy in the face of hoax information involves a combination of the tabayyun approach, enhancing digital literacy, innovating message delivery, and collaboration among actors in the digital space. This aligns with the purpose of da'wah to deliver Islamic values wisely in the information age. The references used have been selected based on credibility and relevance to ensure the validity of the findings.

DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that social media, due to its interactive nature and vast reach, offers great potential as a platform for da'wah (Islamic preaching). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok enable da'is (preachers) to directly engage with a global audience, share messages, and interact with followers in real-time. This characteristic of interactivity is especially important in a world where traditional forms of communication are less effective in reaching younger, tech-savvy generations. As Pratama et al. (2024) and Samsudin & Putri (2023) suggest, strategies and communication ethics rooted in Islamic values play a crucial role in maximizing the effectiveness of these digital tools. The ethical use of social media, coupled with tailored strategies that resonate with diverse audiences, is essential for successful da'wah in the digital age.

The findings underscore the importance of the tabayyun approach—an Islamic concept that emphasizes the need for verification and clarification of information—when addressing misinformation or hoaxes online. Tabayyun, derived from the Quran and Hadith, encourages individuals to seek the truth before acting on information, a principle highly relevant in today's age of rapid information spread. By using the tabayyun approach, da'is ensure that their messages remain credible and trustworthy, even in an environment rife with misinformation. This approach aligns with the findings of Mahmuddin & Nasriah (2023), who argue that clarification of information is vital for maintaining the integrity of da'wah in the digital space.

Moreover, digital literacy plays a central role in combating hoaxes and misinformation. Educating both da'is and the broader public about how to critically assess information online is a key strategy for safeguarding the quality of da'wah content. As highlighted by Najib & Tahiyah (2023), digital literacy empowers individuals to verify the truth of information, discern credible sources, and distinguish between fact and fiction. This skill is especially critical given the proliferation of fake news and hoaxes in online spaces, many of which target religious issues to sow division and confusion. By strengthening digital literacy, da'is can equip their followers with the tools needed to navigate the complex digital landscape, thereby promoting a more informed and cohesive community.

The research emphasizes the importance of combining the tabayyun approach with enhanced digital literacy to counter misinformation and ensure that da'wah in the digital space remains effective. By leveraging the interactive nature of social media responsibly and ethically, da'is can strengthen their influence and maintain the credibility of their messages, ensuring that the core values of Islam continue to reach and resonate with global audiences.

This study reinforces the conclusions of Laila Afifah (2019), who found that an Al-Qur'an literacy-based approach helps students identify and combat hoaxes. Additionally, this research aligns with the findings of Ahmad Ainun Najib and Firyal Tahiyah (2023), who emphasized the importance of digital literacy da'wah as a response to information challenges on social media. However, this study adds a new contribution by integrating digital literacy approaches into da'wah strategies to enhance the competitiveness of Islamic content on social media.

The results have significant practical and theoretical implications. Practically, the study provides guidance for da'is in developing da'wah strategies that are engaging, relevant, and based on Islamic values. Theoretically, the study expands the literature on digital da'wah by combining Islamic communication ethics and media literacy approaches. Therefore, these findings can serve as a reference for future studies exploring the impact of digital technology on the effectiveness of da'wah.

This study is limited in its scope, particularly regarding the literature used, which primarily relies on secondary sources. Additionally, the research has not explored the direct impact of digital da'wah strategies on audience reception, as it only used a library research method. In-depth studies with empirical data, such as surveys or interviews, would provide additional insights.

Overall, this research indicates that the tabayyun approach, digital literacy, and innovation in message delivery are key in addressing the challenges of hoaxes in the digital age. These findings provide a relevant context for developing digital da'wah strategies that can compete with other information flows on social media.

By understanding the potential and challenges of social media, this research helps da'is and da'wah institutions maximize da'wah opportunities while minimizing the risks of hoax dissemination. This section serves as a foundation for a more comprehensive conclusion in the following sections.

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that effective digital da'wah strategies in confronting hoaxes on social media rely on a combination of key approaches. The tabayyun principle, emphasizing the verification of information before dissemination, is crucial in maintaining the credibility of da'wah and combating misinformation. Additionally, enhancing digital literacy among da'is is essential, enabling them to navigate the digital landscape and teach their audiences how to critically evaluate the information they encounter. The study also identifies the need for innovative methods to engage audiences on social media, given the competition for attention in this digital space. Collaboration with technology platforms and other digital communities further amplifies the reach and impact of da'wah messages, helping build trust and credibility in the digital environment. By adopting these strategies, da'is can more effectively spread Islamic teachings, protect their followers from hoaxes, and contribute to a more informed and resilient community. This study provides practical recommendations for da'wah practitioners and organizations to adapt to the digital age while staying true to the ethical principles of Islamic communication. Future research could explore the impact of these strategies in different cultural and regional contexts to refine digital da'wah approaches.

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