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OPTIMIZATION OF CONVENTIONAL AND DIGITAL DA'WAH MEDIA IN BUILDING THE DA'WAH ECOSYSTEM OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS (CASE STUDY: HIDAYATULLAH MASS ORGANIZATIONS)

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Abstract

The transformation of digital communication has fundamentally reconfigured the religious public space and changed the structure of the da'wah practice of Islamic organizations. The media no longer functions solely as a channel for conveying messages, but becomes a social institution that frames, shapes, and determines the visibility of religion in the public space. Islamic organizations face a dual challenge: maintaining institutional legitimacy while adapting to the logic of digital platforms based on algorithms, data function, and the economy of attention. This research aims to formulate an integrated da'wah ecosystem model based on the theory of mediatization of religion, media convergence, digital religion, and platform society, with a case study on Hidayatullah CSOs as a regeneration-based Islamic organization. The research uses a qualitative approach through conceptual analysis and organizational case studies. Data was obtained through international and national academic literature studies, analysis of organizational documents, and digital observations of Hidayatullah's official platform. The results of the study show that mediatization results in a shift in communication format, audience fragmentation, and transformation of religious authority patterns, but does not automatically remove institutional legitimacy. Hidayatullah shows a hybrid authority model that combines collective legitimacy, representation of dai figures, and algorithmic visibility. This study formulated an "Integrated Da'wah Ecosystem" model consisting of three main subsystems: sources of religious authority, convergent communication channels, and data-driven feedback mechanisms. This model contributes to the development of the study of Islamic communication and organizational da'wah in the era of digital platformization.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah, Mediatization, Media Convergence, Hidayatullah

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of digital communication in the 21st century has not only brought technological innovation but also reshaped the structure of social reality as a whole. The development of digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and podcasts has created a new public space mediated by algorithms and datafication. Van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal refer to this condition as a platform society, a society whose social relations are organized through a digital platform infrastructure based on data extraction and the attention economy. (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018)In a platform society, the distribution of information is no longer determined solely by formal institutions, but by algorithmic logic that prioritizes engagement.

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In the context of religion, this transformation gave birth to a phenomenon that Stig Hjarvard calls the mediatization of religion.(Hjarvard, 2011a)Mediatization does not simply refer to the use of media by religious institutions, but rather demonstrates how religion is increasingly shaped by the logic of the media itself. Media are no longer neutral; they possess formats, rhythms, and logics of representation that influence how religion is understood and practiced. Within this framework, religious messages tend to be condensed, visualized, personalized, and dramatized to suit the demands of digital audiences.

This phenomenon has significant implications for the da'wah of Islamic organizations in Indonesia. For decades, organizational da'wah has been based on pulpits, Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), religious study groups (masjid taklim), and print media. Religious authority is determined by the chain of knowledge, institutional legitimacy, and cadre structure. However, in the digital space, authority can be established through the number of followers, level of interaction, and platform visibility. Heidi Campbell calls this phenomenon networked authority, a form of religious authority built through digital network relationships.(Campbell, 2013).

In Indonesia, research on digital da'wah has flourished over the past decade. Eva F. Nisa demonstrates how creative da'wah on social media combines spirituality and digital capitalism.(Nisa, 2018). Noorhaidi Hasan highlights how clerical authority is undergoing transformation in an increasingly fluid and competitive digital space(Hasan, 2019)Muzakki noted the emergence of Islamic influencers who gained public legitimacy through digital popularity.(Muzakki, 2019)However, most of these studies focus on individual figures, not on the systemic governance of Islamic missionary organizations.

Yet Islamic organizations have complex internal structures and a collective basis of legitimacy. The primary challenge for organizations is not simply maintaining a digital presence, but building sustainable integration between conventional and digital media. Without such integration, organizations risk narrative fragmentation and erosion of authority.

Hidayatullah was chosen as a case study due to its characteristics of a cadre-based organization, hierarchical structure, and national educational network. This organization combines education, ideological development, and social outreach. The presence of print media like Suara Hidayatullah and its digital expansion through websites and social media make it a relevant object for analyzing how traditional Islamic organizations adapt to mediatization.

This research aims to formulate a conceptual model of "Integrated Da'wah Ecosystem" which explains how Islamic organizations can integrate authority, media convergence, and feedback mechanisms in a sustainable communication system.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive paradigm. This paradigm was chosen because the phenomenon being studied, namely the transformation of organizational da'wah in the context of mediatization and platformization, cannot be reduced to quantitative variables alone. Da'wah transformation is a social process involving the construction of meaning, negotiation of authority, changes in communication structures, and institutional adaptation to the

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digital media environment. Therefore, this research seeks to understand social reality as something shaped through interactions, symbols, and communication practices, as emphasized in the interpretivist tradition.(Creswell, 2014).

The research design combines two main strategies: conceptual literature review (conceptual analysis) and an embedded case study. The conceptual literature review is used to build a theoretical framework that integrates mediatization theory.(Krotz, 2009), media convergence (Jenkins, 2006), digital religion (Campbell, 2013), and platformization (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). This approach allows researchers to construct a conceptual synthesis that does not simply summarize theories, but builds a new analytical model based on integration across perspectives.

Meanwhile, case studies are used to deeply analyze the Hidayatullah organization's da'wah practices in an empirical context. Haryadi (2026 states that case studies are relevant when researchers want to understand contemporary phenomena in a real-life context that cannot be separated from their environment.(Yin, 2018). The transformation of organizational da'wah is a highly contextual phenomenon, so that case studies allow for a comprehensive exploration of organizational structures, communication policies, and digital media practices in an integrated manner.

This design is embedded because the research not only looks at the organization in general, but also analyzes specific subsystems, such as authority structures, media infrastructure, and digital interaction patterns.

The unit of analysis in this study is the Hidayatullah organization's da'wah system, with a focus on the integration of conventional and digital media in building a communication ecosystem. The focus of the study includes: 1. Organizational authority structure (Shura Council, national leadership, cadre system). 2. Conventional media infrastructure (print magazines, bulletins, community radio). 3. Digital media infrastructure (website, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook). 4. Communication governance (editorial process, doctrinal supervision, branding policy). 5. Audience feedback mechanisms (comment interaction, engagement, organizational response).

The observation period focused on the period 2015–2024, which represents the phase of intensification of digitalization of da'wah in Indonesia, especially after social media penetration increased significantly.

This study uses three main data sources: 1). Academic Literature. The literature was obtained from Scopus, Google Scholar, SINTA, and Garuda databases, with a publication range of 2000–2024. The keywords used include: “mediatization of religion,” “digital religion,” “Islamic communication,” “media convergence,” and “platform society.” Literature selection was based on thematic relevance, journal credibility, and conceptual contribution.

This process follows the principles of systematic literature review, although on a conceptual scale.(Couldry & Hepp, 2017). From a total of 68 identified initial literatures, 42 primary sources were selected for use in the theoretical analysis. 2). Organizational Documents. Organizational documents include: Articles of Association/Bylaws (AD/ART). Vision-mission and institutional structure. Official publications and archives of Suara Hidayatullah magazine. Content of the organization's official website.

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Document analysis was conducted using the document analysis approach as explained by Bowen, which emphasizes the importance of reading documents as social artifacts that reflect organizational values and policies.(Bowen, 2009)3). Digital Observation. Observations were conducted on Hidayatullah's official platforms, including: Official website. YouTube channel. Instagram. Facebook. This observation follows a light digital ethnography approach (digital observation), as developed by Pink et al., which emphasizes the analysis of communication practices in the digital environment without involving direct interaction with research subjects.(Pink, 2016). Observation focuses include: Content types (long-form, short-form, infographics). Cross-platform distribution patterns. Message framing. Audience interaction (comments, likes, shares).

Data collection was conducted in three main stages: 1. Identification and selection of literature, through abstract reading and content analysis. 2. Analysis of organizational documents, by identifying authority structures, communication policies, and narrative consistency. 3. Mapping of digital content, through cataloging content formats and publication frequencies. These stages were conducted iteratively, meaning that initial findings from digital observations could influence the refinement of the theoretical framework, and vice versa.

Data analysis was conducted through four systematic stages: Open Coding; This stage identified key concepts emerging in the literature and empirical data, such as "authority," "algorithm," "convergence," "personalization," and "engagement." Thematic Categorization; These concepts were then grouped into broad themes: Authority transformation, Media integration, Digital governance, and Communication ecosystem. Comparative Mapping; Empirical findings were compared with mediatization and digital religion theories to examine their congruence and differences. Conceptual Model Construction; The final stage was the formulation of an Integrated Da'wah Ecosystem model based on a synthesis of findings and theories. This process followed the conceptual approach as described by Jabareen, which emphasizes the importance of establishing relationships between concepts within a systemic framework.(Jabareen, 2009).

To ensure the validity of the research, the principle of trustworthiness is used in qualitative research, as formulated by Lincoln and Guba.(Lincoln & Guba, 1985)1. Credibility was maintained through triangulation between literature, organizational documents, and digital observations. 2. Transferability was achieved through detailed contextual descriptions. 3. Dependability was maintained by documenting the analysis process. 4. Confirmability was achieved through researcher reflexivity. This research used public data and did not involve individuals' personal information. Observations focused on openly available institutional content. No manipulation or intervention was carried out on organizational activities.

This study has several limitations: In-depth interviews with organizational media managers were not conducted. Detailed quantitative analysis of engagement metrics was not conducted. The single-case study limits statistical generalizability. However, the goal of this study was to generate analytical generalizations through a conceptual model that can be further tested in future research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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Findings: This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study while also discussing them theoretically. Because this study uses a conceptual-empirical approach, the results and discussion are not strictly separated but rather integrated to demonstrate the relationship between data and theory.

First, mediatization and reconfiguration of the organization's da'wah structure. Digital transformation has created a fundamental shift in the communication structure of organizational da'wah. Whereas previously, organizational da'wah operated in a one-way communication pattern (pulpits, assemblies, and print media), in the digital space, da'wah has become part of a participatory, algorithmic, and data-driven communication ecosystem.

In Hjarvard's perspective, mediatization causes religion to become increasingly integrated into media logic that emphasizes personalization, visualization, and dramatization.(Hjarvard, 2011b)Research findings indicate that Hidayatullah has adopted some of this logic, particularly in digital content formats. Long lectures originally held in physical forums are recorded and edited into YouTube videos. The lecture clips are then condensed into short videos for Instagram or Facebook.

However, this process does not demonstrate the complete dominance of media logic over organizational structures. Unlike influencer-based da'wah models that rely heavily on personal figures, Hidayatullah maintains the Shura Council as the center of legitimacy. Content production is under structural oversight, and ideological narratives are maintained to align with the organization's core.

This phenomenon demonstrates that mediatization in the context of cadre-based organizations is not deterministic. Friedrich Krotz emphasized that mediatization is a long-term process that interacts with existing social structures.(Krotz, 2009)In Hidayatullah's case, a strong cadre structure served as a filter against the penetration of platform logic.

Thus, it can be concluded that what is happening is not a "handover of authority to the media," but rather a negotiation between platform logic and institutional governance. Organizations utilize media as a means of distribution, but do not cede theological legitimacy to algorithms.

Second, layered hybrid authority in the digital space. One of the key findings of this research is the emergence of a hybrid, layered authority model. This model consists of three interacting layers: Institutional Authority, namely legitimacy based on organizational structure and cadre formation. Representational Authority, namely the preacher's figure appearing in the digital space as a public symbol. Algorithmic Authority, namely visibility generated by the platform's recommendation system.

Heidi Campbell states that in the digital age, religious authority has become networked authority, where legitimacy is gained through audience interaction and participation.(Campbell, 2013)However, in Hidayatullah's case, the primary legitimacy still comes from the institution, while digital engagement serves as a distribution amplifier.

Observational data shows that videos featuring more well-known preachers tend to receive higher views. However, organizational branding remains dominant through the use of official logos, uniform visual designs, and thematic framing that minimizes the emphasis on individual names.

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This phenomenon demonstrates the distinction between legitimacy and visibility. Legitimacy remains structure-determined, while visibility is influenced by algorithms. This extends Campbell's theory by showing that networked authority can be integrated into collective structures, rather than operating solely individually.

Third, media convergence: from coexistence to integration. Henry Jenkins defines convergence as the flow of content across platforms that involves audience participation.(Jenkins, 2006)In Hidayatullah's practice, convergence occurs in three forms: 1). Replicative Convergence. The same content is uploaded to multiple platforms without significant changes. 2). Adaptive Convergence. Long lectures are broken down into short, vertical videos according to Instagram's characteristics. 3). Narrative Convergence. Thematic consistency between print and digital media. Bolter and Grusin explain that new media does not replace old media, but rather remediates it.(Bolter & Grusin, 1999)In this context, digital media does not replace Suara Hidayatullah's print magazine, but rather expands its reach through online formats.

However, data analytics-based integration is not yet fully evident. No formal mechanism exists to demonstrate the use of engagement data as a basis for editorial policy. Thus, the convergence that has occurred remains at the functional, not strategic, stage.

Fourth, Platformization and the Attention Economy. Digital platforms operate within the logic of an attention economy that prioritizes engagement.(Poell, Nieborg, & van Dijck, 2019)Shoshana Zuboff calls this phenomenon part of surveillance capitalism, where user data becomes a commodity.(Zuboff, 2019).

In the context of preaching, emotional and controversial content tends to go viral more easily than in-depth theological studies. However, Hidayatullah maintains long-form content on YouTube as a commitment to depth of substance.

Papacharissi mentions the formation of affective publics, namely digital publics that are connected through emotional resonance.(Papacharissi, 2015). Islamic missionary organizations face a dilemma between following the logic of virality or maintaining scientific depth.

Research findings show that Hidayatullah tries to balance the two through format differentiation: short videos as an entry point, long videos as material reinforcement.

Fifth, Feedback Mechanisms and Integration Limitations. The comments section demonstrates audience participation in the form of appreciation and questions. However, there is no formal system in place to integrate this feedback into content planning.

In the communication ecosystem model, the feedback subsystem is a crucial element in ensuring adaptability. Without a data-driven evaluation mechanism, organizations risk stagnating in format innovation.

This shows that the development of a digital da'wah ecosystem requires more structured media governance, including performance analytics and periodic evaluation.

Sixth, Formulation of an Integrated Da'wah Ecosystem Model. Based on the synthesis of findings, this study formulated an Integrated Da'wah Ecosystem model consisting of three main subsystems: (1) Authority Subsystem. Leadership structure, doctrinal supervision, cadre development. (2) Convergent Channel Subsystem. Print

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media, radio, offline assemblies, websites, social media. (3) Feedback Subsystem. Engagement, audience participation, data analytics.

These three subsystems operate cyclically: authority determines the direction of the message, channels distribute the message, feedback provides evaluation, and evaluation reinforces or adjusts policy. This model positions organizational da'wah as a dynamic system that adapts to mediatization without losing its ideological foundation.

CONCLUSION

This research study begins with the fundamental question of how Islamic organizations can optimize conventional and digital da'wah media to build sustainable communication systems amidst the processes of mediatization and platformization. Digital transformation not only brings technological changes but also changes the structure of the religious public sphere, message distribution mechanisms, and the configuration of religious authority. In this context, Islamic organizations face the challenge of integrating cadre-based institutional legitimacy with the logic of platforms based on algorithms and the attention economy.

Based on conceptual analysis and case study of Hidayatullah Mass Organization, this research produces several main findings.

First, mediatization does not automatically erode or replace the institutional authority of Islamic organizations. Rather, its impact depends heavily on the strength of the organization's internal structure and governance. In the case of Hidayatullah, the Shura Council structure, cadre development system, and strong doctrinal supervision served as buffers against potential fragmentation of authority in the digital space. This suggests that mediatization is a negotiated process, not a deterministic one.(Krotz, 2009).

Second, this study finds a layered hybrid authority configuration consisting of institutional authority, representational authority, and algorithmic authority. Institutional authority remains the primary source of theological legitimacy, while the preacher's digital presence serves as a public representation. Platform algorithms, on the other hand, influence visibility but do not determine doctrinal legitimacy. This model expands on Campbell's concept of networked authority by demonstrating that in cadre-based organizations, network authority can be integrated into collective structures.(Campbell, 2013).

Third, in terms of media convergence, Hidayatullah demonstrates practices of coexistence and format adaptation, but has not yet fully achieved systemic integration based on data analytics. Print media such as Suara Hidayatullah remain as ideological reservoirs, while digital media is used to expand reach. The process of content remediation—from offline lectures to YouTube videos, then condensed into short content—demonstrates awareness of platform logic.(Bolter & Grusin, 1999)However, the absence of a formal, data-driven system for content evaluation suggests that the feedback subsystem still needs strengthening.

Fourth, this research shows that Islamic missionary organizations face an epistemological dilemma between scientific depth and the demands of virality. Digital platforms operate within the logic of an attention economy that prioritizes engagement.(Poell et al., 2019)In this environment, there is a risk that emotional

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content will gain visibility more easily than argumentative scientific studies. However, Hidayatullah demonstrates an effort to maintain balance through format differentiation: short content as an entry point, and long content to reinforce the substance. This strategy allows the organization to remain adaptive without losing theological integrity.

Based on the synthesis of empirical findings and theoretical framework, this study formulates an Integrated Da'wah Ecosystem model consisting of three main subsystems: the Authority Subsystem, which includes leadership structure, cadre development, and doctrinal supervision. The Convergent Channel Subsystem, which encompasses conventional and digital media in one integrated narrative plan. The Feedback Subsystem, which encompasses audience participation, performance analytics, and strategic evaluation. These three subsystems operate cyclically and influence each other. Authority determines the direction and substance of messages; convergent channels distribute messages across platforms; and feedback provides evaluative information that can strengthen or adjust da'wah policies. This model positions organizational da'wah as a dynamic and adaptive communication system to mediatization.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of Islamic communication studies by integrating theories of mediatization, media convergence, and digital religion within the context of cadre-based organizations. This research demonstrates that the impact of platformization on religion is not uniform, but rather dependent on internal institutional configurations. Thus, the study of digital da'wah needs to move from a descriptive, figure-based approach to a systemic, organization-based analysis.

Practically, this research provides several recommendations for Islamic organizations: 1) Establish an integrated media governance unit that coordinates cross-platform content production. 2) Develop an ethics-based digital analytics system to strategically utilize engagement data. 3) Improve the digital literacy of cadres and preachers to understand the dynamics of algorithms and content distribution. 4) Institutionalize audience feedback mechanisms in da'wah planning.

This study has limitations, particularly the lack of in-depth interviews with organizational media managers and the lack of quantitative analysis of engagement metrics. Further research could develop comparative studies across Islamic organizations, quantitatively test the da'wah ecosystem model, or expand the study to a global context.

Ultimately, digital transformation should not be understood as a threat to organizational da'wah. Rather, it can be a strategic opportunity to expand reach and strengthen legitimacy, as long as it is managed within an integrated, values-based ecosystem. Organizational da'wah in the platform era is not simply about social media presence, but about the ability to build a communication system that maintains theological integrity while adapting to changes in the structure of the public sphere.

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