Prophetic Communication in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: Efforts to Convey Comprehensive Islamic Messages

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Abstract: The study essentially aims to analyze the changes occurring within the practice of dakwah as a form of communicating Islamic messages in the era of digital technology and artificial intelligence. The practice of dakwah must retain its prophetic communication dimension even as it adjusts to new communication formats brought about by the digital era and artificial intelligence. This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. This method was chosen for its capacity to provide a profound understanding of complex phenomena within their contexts, aligned with the research objective to analyze the changes in communication patterns and their effects on dakwah practices. Data is gathered through documentation and observation of dakwah practices across various platforms and digital media. The study indicates that the shifts in dakwah communication patterns in the digital era and the advancement of artificial intelligence have significant and intricate impacts on the comprehensive communication of Islamic prophetic messages. Key points include: (1) Changes in the meaning and practice of dakwah depict a shift in focus from the spiritual and moral aspects to the dissemination of Islamic messages through technological platforms; (2) Changes in dakwah communication formats and platforms reflect the adaptation of preachers to digital trends and audience preferences; (3) The influence of social media in dakwah practices opens broad avenues for disseminating Islamic messages; (4) Artificial intelligence (AI) has notably contributed to presenting dakwah content to the public; (5) Normative dynamics in digital-era dakwah communication reveal the challenges in maintaining a balance between popularity and the integrity of religious teachings; (6) Ethical challenges and controversies in digital dakwah underscore the need to uphold moral and ethical values in religious communication; and (7) Education and supervision emerge as pivotal in addressing the challenges of digital dakwah. Content creators, preachers, and society at large must be equipped with a proper understanding of technology usage aligned with scholarly and ethical responsibility, ensuring that the conveyance of religious messages remains accurate, substantial, and consistent with Islamic values.

keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Content Creator, Digital era, Islamic Dakwah, Prophetic Communication.

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini untuk menganalisis perubahan yang terjadi dalam praktik dakwah sebagai bentuk komunikasi pesan Islam di era teknologi digital dan kecerdasan buatan. Praktik dakwah harus tetap mempertahankan dimensi komunikasi kenabian bahkan ketika beradaptasi dengan format komunikasi baru yang dihadirkan oleh era digital dan kecerdasan buatan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif-analitis. Metode ini dipilih karena kemampuannya untuk memberikan pemahaman mendalam tentang fenomena yang kompleks dalam konteksnya, sejalan dengan tujuan penelitian untuk menganalisis perubahan pola komunikasi dan dampaknya pada praktik dakwah. Data dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi dan pengamatan praktik dakwah di berbagai platform dan media digital. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pergeseran pola komunikasi dakwah di era digital dan kemajuan kecerdasan buatan memiliki dampak signifikan dan rumit pada komunikasi komprehensif pesan kenabian Islam. Beberapa poin kunci meliputi: (1) Perubahan dalam makna dan praktik dakwah mencerminkan pergeseran fokus dari aspek spiritual dan moral ke penyebaran pesan Islam melalui platform teknologi; (2) Perubahan dalam format dan platform komunikasi dakwah mencerminkan adaptasi para penceramah terhadap tren digital dan preferensi audiens; (3) Pengaruh media sosial dalam praktik dakwah membuka peluang luas untuk menyebarluaskan pesan Islam; (4) Kecerdasan buatan (AI) secara signifikan berkontribusi dalam menyajikan konten dakwah kepada publik; (5) Dinamika normatif dalam komunikasi dakwah era digital mengungkap tantangan dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara popularitas dan integritas ajaran agama; (6) Tantangan etika dan kontroversi dalam dakwah digital menegaskan perlunya menjunjung nilai-nilai moral dan etika dalam komunikasi keagamaan; dan (7) Pendidikan dan pengawasan muncul sebagai hal yang sangat penting dalam mengatasi tantangan dakwah digital. Para pencipta konten, penceramah, dan masyarakat umum harus dilengkapi dengan pemahaman yang tepat tentang penggunaan teknologi yang sejalan dengan tanggung jawab ilmiah dan etika, sehingga penyampaian pesan agama tetap akurat, substansial, dan sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam.

keywords: Era Digital; Kecerdasan Buatan; Pembuat Konten; Dakwah Islam; Komunikasi Kenabian.

1. Introduction

In contemporary times, the progress of technology has propelled humanity into the domain of the digital milieu, replete with its multifaceted attributes, encompassing global information perusal, social media engagement, and applications fortified by artificial intelligence. Paramount among these transformations resides the evolution of communication paradigms and methodologies. Communication within the digital epoch has transcended erstwhile conceivable boundaries, ushering in novel paradigms necessitating the dependence on a diverse array of technological instruments to establish digital interconnections. The emergence of the internet, social media platforms, and systems underpinned by artificial intelligence has catalyzed a fundamental shift in the contours of human communication (Grewal et al., 2022; Kovaitė et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2022).

However, amidst these developments in information technology and communication innovation, pertinent inquiries surface, pertaining to the ramifications of altered communication patterns coupled with the ascendancy of artificial intelligence, upon the praxis of Islamic dakwah (proselytization). The transformations ushered forth by technological advancements resonate not solely with shifts in the mechanisms of dakwah communication, but also reverberate throughout the epistemology of religious tenets. The exploration of these transformations emerges as a significant pursuit within the ambit of this discourse.

Evidently, the effects of technological innovations have permeated beyond the precincts of communication methodologies, pervading lifestyles comprehensively, thereby impacting the modus operandi for disseminating and assimilating information. Within the intricate tapestry of societal frameworks, these alterations are manifest, especially in the arenas of dakwah and religious pedagogy. The necessity for physical attendance at religious assemblies has abated; the populace now accesses a plethora of digital dakwah content seamlessly via websites or social media platforms. Moreover, individuals are no longer constrained to engage with religious luminaries (Kyai, Ustadz, Dai) in person to seek elucidation on religious intricacies; instead, they can engage in real-time virtual interactions, navigate the digital expanse, or seek elucidation from an array of artificial intelligence applications (Supratman & Wahyudin, 2020; Hilmi, 2021; Kamilah et al., 2023; Machendrawaty et al., 2022). Diverse forms of digital dakwah content, promulgated by a variety of individuals, have become accessible ubiquitously, contingent on internet connectivity and the requisite technological apparatus.

A critical juncture unveils itself, revealing that conventional dakwah methodologies have seemingly encountered obsolescence. A realization of pertinence is that these changes permeate more profoundly than mere alterations in the conduits of dakwah communication; they extend their tendrils to reshape the epistemological fabric of the religious teachings themselves. Islam's dakwah, originally encompassing the propagation of Islam as a benevolent religion embracing all realms ("rahmatan lil 'alamin"), whilst concurrently fostering the ethical continuity of Islamic scholarship through normative education (Mahmoud, 1995; Ismail & Hotman, 2011; Hasyim, n.d.), has, regrettably, evolved into a domain of unilateral communication bereft of unequivocal origins. Consequently, the profound edifice of Islamic teachings is often fragmented into abbreviated TikTok videos, brief narratives, reels, or images accompanied by textual snippets, bereft of contextual grounding. The knowledge imparted to the community, in their earnest endeavor to comprehend Islam, deviates from the pursuit of holistic education and the conveyance of Islam's universal message, thus offering transient emotional resonance while often leaving a dearth of lucidity concerning the religion's essence (Kholili, 2023; Ermayani et al., 2021; Leiliyanti & Larasati, 2020).

The primary challenges for proselytization practice in the digital era are undeniably intertwined with the intricate fabric of technology-driven pop culture,

necessitating adaptations in the manner of conveying religious messages to align with prevailing tendencies. In the endeavor to maintain relevance and efficacy, religious preachers and figures are compelled to acknowledge the changing communication patterns and information consumption trends of the modern society. Within the sphere of dakwah communication, for instance, preachers must meticulously craft their messages into content of specific formats, which may inadvertently diminish the inherent values they intend to disseminate. With trends such as short videos, podcasts, and visually and audibly oriented platforms surging in popularity, preachers are obligated to assimilate these formats without sacrificing the essence of their message (Kurniasih & Raya, 2022; Budiantoro, 2018; Azmi, 2019). This adaptation mandates the creation of captivating content, appealing to both the visual and auditory senses, while retaining the educational and normative facets of dakwah. Nonetheless, dakwah remains fundamentally a prophetic form of communication, seeking to propagate Islamic teachings and beckoning individuals to return to the teachings of Allah and His Prophet.

Another challenge emerges with the proliferation of various forms of artificial intelligence. While these forms aid preachers in curating content tailored to specific needs, they also provide digital society with access to information and teachings without recourse to religious preachers or the diverse gamut of dakwah materials (Khoirunnisa et al., 2023; Raquib et al., 2022; Sucipto et al., 2023; Andriansyah, 2023). However, an inherent predicament lies herein. Many AI-based applications often process material without adhering to academic and normative accountability. Consequently, the information disseminated may be inaccurately conveyed, leading individuals astray and fostering erroneous interpretations of Islamic teachings.

In its essence, this study strives to analyze the shifts occurring within the realm of proselytization as a practice of communicating Islamic messages in the digital era replete with artificial intelligence. The practice of dakwah must invariably retain its prophetic communication even as it adapts to novel communication formats in an era heavily influenced by metrics such as likes, views, content brevity and convenience, and the popularity of personalities. Within the context of prophetic communication in the era of artificial intelligence, this paper endeavors to address fundamental inquiries concerning the dissemination, reception, and preservation of spiritual, moral, and ethical messages of Islam within a world increasingly permeated by technology. By doing so, it is hoped that preachers can harness technology as a medium to facilitate prophetic communication, transcending the purview of artificial intelligence and revitalizing the spiritual messages of Islam in a pertinent new context.

This study aims to analyze the transformations occurring within the practice of dakwah as a communicative endeavor for disseminating Islamic messages in the digital and artificial intelligence era. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical methodology, the chosen method permits researchers to comprehend the intricate phenomena within a profound context, aligning with the research's goal of

analyzing the shifts in communication patterns and their effects on dakwah practices. Data is collected through the documentation and observation of dakwah practices across various platforms and digital media.

The steps undertaken in this study encompass: (1) Case selection. The study strategically selects cases of dakwah practices involving the utilization of social media, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence for propagating Islamic messages. These cases are meticulously chosen to encapsulate variations in dakwah approaches and strategies in the digital age; (2) Data collection. Data is collected through observations on diverse digital dakwah media. Furthermore, observations are extended to dakwah content on social media, websites, and digital platforms to comprehend the multifaceted forms of dakwah communication; (3) Data analysis. The amassed data is subjected to qualitative analysis. This entails identifying patterns of change in dakwah communication, alterations in content formats, and shifts in the manner of delivering Islamic messages. In this manner, the study seeks to fathom the impact of communication pattern changes on Islamic messages, addressing challenges encountered in upholding the substance of religious teachings within novel communication formats; (4) Discussion of findings. The analytical results are juxtaposed with communication theories, social changes, and conventional dakwah practices. The discussion delves into the implications of these changes on the epistemology of Islamic teachings and the challenges in preserving substantial values within dakwah communication.

Through the utilization of the descriptive-analytical methodology and qualitative approach, this research aspires to provide a profound understanding of the shifts in dakwah practices in the digital and artificial intelligence era. It also offers insights into how preachers and religious figures can judiciously harness technology and artificial intelligence to sustain the values of Islamic teachings in prophetic communication for comprehensive Islamic dakwah.

2.   Results and Discussions

The findings from the observation and documentation within this study reveal several significant insights concerning the shifts in dakwah communication patterns in the digital and artificial intelligence era, along with their impact on the comprehensive dissemination of Islamic messages. These findings encompass various crucial aspects within the transformation of dakwah communication in the digital age and the advancement of artificial intelligence, including:

Shifts in the meaning and practice of dakwah.

Contemporary dakwah practices are often interpreted as primarily disseminating Islamic messages to the public through technology-based platforms. This interpretation differs from the conventional notion of dakwah, which was initially perceived as a call

to follow Allah's teachings and the Prophet's guidance in its early stages, and the construction of a virtuous Islamic society in its later stages (Syalaby, 2000; Ismail & Hotman, 2011). Present-day dakwah practices also extend beyond the confines of specific media or venues such as tabligh (outreach) and sermons in mosques or designated Islamic places of worship. Instead, contemporary dakwah is predominantly executed through the creation of digital dakwah content distributed across diverse digital technology-based platforms (Kholili, 2023; Ermayani et al., 2021; Leiliyanti & Larasati, 2020).

Digital technology-based dakwah content.

Research findings indicate a significant transformation in dakwah practices concerning format and platform. Numerous religious figures, preachers, and content creators (third parties) employ various digital technology-based applications, including social media, podcasts, and video-sharing platforms, to propagate Islamic messages. However, this shift has also led to changes in the duration and format of messages, which tend to be shorter and more visually oriented. This phenomenon poses a challenge in maintaining the depth and coherence of Islamic teachings in dakwah communication. An exemplification of such digital dakwah content can be observed in various YouTube channels featuring recordings of lectures by specific preachers such as Gus Baha, Ust. Adi Hidayat, Ust. Abdul Somad, Ust. Salim Fillah, Ust. Khalid Basalamah, Buya Yahya, Habib Ja'far, Habib Bahar bin Smith, among others.

The influence of social media in dakwah practice.

The findings also underscore the pivotal role of social media in disseminating Islamic messages. Various social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook have emerged as the primary conduits for dakwah communication. However, the use of social media also introduces the risk of oversimplification and the loss of the essence of religious teachings. Dakwah content designed to garner likes, views, and positive reactions often leads to the reduction of messages into more popular forms, sidelining the intricate, rich, and contextual elements of Islam (Syeed, 2022; Octaviani, 2021; Hilmi, 2021). For instance, in a content piece discussing the ethics of animal care, the material presented might feature a snippet of a specific preacher's opinion with a narration such as, "I've heard of someone spending 3 million a month on caring for a cat. Imagine if that sum was used to support orphaned children. Think of the abundant rewards." Such brief video excerpts lacking context and elaboration can inadvertently lead people to believe that caring for animals is insignificant and discouraged in Islam.

Reduction of Dakwah Content through Artificial Intelligence.

Research indicates that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has contributed to the presentation of dakwah content to the public. Despite its potential to enhance information access, AI often generates content that is not always accurate and aligned with the context of Islamic teachings. The use of AI in processing and delivering religious information may also lead to a shallower understanding of religious principles. Another issue lies in the fact that the information provided by AI often lacks accuracy, clear sources, and fails to encapsulate the richness of Islamic intellectual heritage (Khoirunnisa et al., 2023; Sucipto et al., 2023; Andriansyah, 2023). However, religious education emphasizes the importance of "sanad" or source clarity due to the normative nature of Islamic teachings. For instance, when querying AI about a hadith as the basis for a particular Islamic law, the generated hadith often differs in wording from the accurate hadith.

Normative Dynamics in Dakwah Communication.

This research identifies normative shifts in dakwah communication in the digital era. Shorter and visually appealing message formats can lead to the loss of context and accurate interpretations of Islamic teachings. Preachers face the challenge of remaining relevant in popular communication formats while preserving the integrity and complexity of Islamic messages (Wibawa, 2019; Rustandi, 2020; Ermayani et al., 2021). Consequently, dakwah communication might lean more towards being profane rather than prophetic. Content creators, in particular, often disregard the prophetic nature of dakwah communication, resulting in end products that might contain inappropriate content.

Ethical Challenges and Controversies in Digital Dakwah.

Findings show that ethical challenges arise in the use of technology for dakwah. Digital dakwah content is often produced for the purpose of gaining popularity, without considering social implications and potential conflicts. This can undermine the intended purpose of dakwah, which should promote deeper understanding and peace within society. For example, provocative titles like "Ustadz A's Perspective According to Ustadz B" or content with a warning tone are used. In some cases, dakwah content displayed on certain platforms includes advertisements that are not congruent with the dakwah content, especially advertisements for games, gambling, or products featuring explicit images.

The Necessity for Education and Supervision.

Research findings underscore the need for a judicious approach in utilizing technology and artificial intelligence in dakwah practice and the communication of Islamic messages to the public. Education, especially directed towards content creators,

preachers, and society, about the responsible and ethical use of technology is crucial to avoid conveying erroneous or controversial messages.

In this context, the effort to uphold prophetic communication within the practice of dakwah in the digital era and artificial intelligence necessitates a holistic approach that combines technological sophistication with the essence of religious teachings. Education and awareness regarding the risks and impacts of communication changes must be integrated into modern dakwah strategies. Furthermore, preachers and particularly the content creators of dakwah messages need to strike a balance between meeting the demands of new communication formats and preserving the profound and comprehensive essence of Islamic teachings.

Building upon these findings, it can be observed that the shift in the meaning of dakwah practice from a call to the teachings of Allah and His Prophet to mere dissemination of Islamic messages through technology-based platforms reflects a change in focus from spiritual and moral aspects within dakwah. This indicates that dakwah is increasingly influenced by market logic and popularity. This phenomenon raises questions about whether this shift aligns with the goal of dakwah as the propagation of comprehensive Islamic teachings or if it obscures the substantial meaning of dakwah itself. Confronting this change, it is vital for preachers to reexamine the essence of dakwah and ensure that the conveyed messages remain consistent with the rich and profound teachings of Islam while keeping pace with technological advancements (Novinggi, 2019; Syeed, 2022). Additionally, preachers and content creators should consider striking a balance between the demands of new communication formats and preserving the profound substance of Islamic teachings.

Regarding the evolution of dakwah communication formats and platforms, it essentially reflects the adaptation made by preachers to digital trends and audience preferences. While these changes offer opportunities for Islamic messages to reach a broader audience, on the other hand, this shift also carries the risk of simplifying messages and reducing the depth of religious teachings. The success of dakwah is not solely measured by how many individuals are reached by the message, but also by how deeply the message is internalized and how it influences societal behavior. Hence, efforts are needed to ensure that dakwah messages retain their profound dimension within digital communication.

The utilization of social media as the primary channel for dakwah communication has indeed brought significant impacts in reaching a wider audience to disseminate the messages of Islam. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter/X, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook provide spaces for preachers to interact with diverse audiences across geographical and cultural boundaries (Rohma, 2020). However, it is acknowledged that the use of social media also carries complex risks that need to be carefully considered. Content produced in short and visual formats to garner positive reactions from the public may result in the simplification of religious messages. In the

pursuit of likes, views, and interactions, there is a possibility that the profound and complex essence of Islamic teachings could become fragmented and distorted.

Religious messages presented in brief and limited forms may omit the context and deep nuances inherent in Islamic teachings. More intricate or controversial topics might be overlooked or altered to align with preferences and general viewpoints. This could lead to a shallow understanding of the true richness and depth of Islamic teachings. For instance, complex messages concerning religious laws or moral values are often difficult to fully comprehend in a concise format, potentially resulting in misunderstandings or superficial interpretations. Therefore, it is crucial for preachers and content creators to prioritize the integrity of religious messages while utilizing social media as a platform for dakwah. Creativity and adaptation of communication formats suitable for each social media platform can be pursued, but they must be balanced with efforts to maintain the substance and complexity of religious teachings. As a result, Islamic messages propagated through social media will retain profound meanings and provide accurate understanding to a broader audience.

In conjunction with the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in delivering dakwah content, it is imperative to acknowledge that despite AI's potential to enhance significant information access, it also carries potential risks in the form of inaccurate or contextually inappropriate information related to Islamic teachings (Khoirunnisa et al, 2023; Sucipto et al., 2023; Andriansyah, 2023). The role of AI in processing and delivering religious information has the potential to oversimplify or even misinterpret the meanings of religious messages, considering that AI is based on algorithms and data that may not always grasp the contextual and spiritual aspects of religious teachings. Hence, the human role in supervising and curating the content presented by AI becomes increasingly critical. Humans possess the capacity to encapsulate the intellectual treasure trove of Islam, considering the nuances, interpretations, and diverse perspectives inherent in the religion. Faced with AI's limitations in comprehending deep contextual and value-based aspects of Islamic teachings, a wise human approach can help ensure that the content presented remains aligned with the ethical and moral values upheld in Islam.

Furthermore, in the endeavor to uphold the profound dimension of prophetic communication, it is acknowledged that Islam embraces diverse perspectives and interpretations as an inherent part of its intellectual tradition. Within the context of dakwah communication involving technology, this diversity needs to be respected and recognized. It is essential to create an environment where various viewpoints can be fairly and accurately represented, without diminishing the core values of the religion. By integrating artificial intelligence with human wisdom in curation, dakwah communication can proceed proportionally and profoundly, preserving the essence of prophetic communication that underpins religious teachings.

Another crucial point that requires attention is the controversy within digital dakwah, revealing that ethical challenges can arise when religious messages are

transformed into commodities for the sake of popularity. In the pursuit of popularity, certain dakwah content might even sacrifice the moral and ethical values that should be upheld in Islam. This phenomenon serves as a reminder that religious messages should not be compromised by the urge to attain popularity or personal gain. This dynamic is undoubtedly a complex issue, especially when the primary players in the digital realm are content creators rather than direct preachers. Content creators play a central role in designing, constructing, and refining dakwah content, which is then presented across various digital platforms.

Furthermore, concerning the challenges arising from the use of technology and artificial intelligence in dakwah, this overall underscores the importance of education and supervision in the processing and dissemination of digital dakwah content. While creative and innovative content has its place, it must be executed while upholding the integrity of Islamic teachings and ethical norms. Education for content creators, preachers, and the broader community needs enhancement to generate content that is correct, accurate, and in line with Islamic values. In an era where information can spread swiftly and extensively, awareness of moral responsibility in disseminating religious messages becomes increasingly critical.

The findings of this research underscore that changes in the pattern of dakwah communication in the digital era and the evolution of artificial intelligence have complex and ambivalent impacts on the effort to convey comprehensive Islamic messages. While technology and digital media can expand the reach of religious messages, these changes also bring the risk of substance reduction and a decrease in the quality of understanding of religious teachings. Therefore, a wise approach, education, and stringent supervision are necessary to maintain prophetic communication within the context of modern dakwah.

3. Conclusions

This study indicates that changes in the pattern of dakwah communication in the digital era and the advancement of artificial intelligence have significant and complex impacts on the effort to convey comprehensive Islamic messages. These findings portray the evolution of dakwah communication from conventional practices to more technology-based approaches, while also unveiling challenges that need to be addressed. Firstly, the shift in the meaning and practice of dakwah reflects a transition of focus from spiritual and moral aspects to the dissemination of Islamic messages through technological platforms. Secondly, changes in the format and platforms of dakwah communication reflect the adaptation of preachers to digital trends and audience preferences. While providing opportunities to reach a wider audience, this shift also carries the risk of simplifying messages and diminishing the depth of religious teachings. Thirdly, the influence of social media in dakwah practices has opened the doors for the spread of Islamic messages. However, the use of social media also presents

the risk of reducing message substance for the sake of popularity. Fourthly, artificial intelligence (AI) has contributed to the presentation of dakwah content to the public. However, it must be acknowledged that AI usage can result in content that is not always accurate or aligned with the context of Islamic teachings. Fifthly, the normative dynamics in dakwah communication in the digital era underscore the challenge of maintaining a balance between popularity and the integrity of religious teachings. Sixthly, the ethical challenges and controversies in digital dakwah emphasize the need to uphold moral and ethical values in religious communication. Simplification of messages for popularity and the utilization of technology for commercial purposes can undermine the prophetic and lofty purpose of dakwah. Lastly, education and supervision are crucial keys to addressing the challenges of digital dakwah. Content creators, preachers, and the community need to be equipped with a proper understanding of responsible and ethical use of technology to ensure the accurate and substantial delivery of religious messages aligned with Islamic values.

Substantively, this study demonstrates that the transformation of dakwah communication in the digital era and the development of artificial intelligence bring forth significant opportunities as well as challenges that must be tackled. A holistic approach that merges technology with the essence of religious teachings, education, and ethical awareness stands as the key to preserving prophetic communication in the endeavor to effectively and profoundly convey Islamic messages in this modern era.

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