Postmillenial Netizens' Reception of Da'wah Messages on Social Media

Muhammad Qadaruddin; Wahyuddin Bakri

Abstract

Content of proselytizing at receptions differently. Da'wah content on social media is a negotiation process. Da'wah's content shows the potential position of postmillennial netizens as active meaning. They are free to choose proselytizing content. This research uses a qualitative method with an interpretive approach. The data were analyzed to find the postmillennial netizens' reception pattern. This research was conducted at State Islamic Religious universities in South Sulawesi Province. There are three groups in the reception of proselytizing content on social media. Firstly, netizen postmillennial oppositional position. In this group, postmillennial netizens are inconsistent in particular groups but watch a variety of messages and preachers. In this group, netizens examine religious concepts from multiple sources. The second negotiated position of this group is postmillenial netizens fanatical on certain mubaligh but still, put tabayyun on certain mubaligh. A third hegemonic position is a militant group without putting forward the principle of tabayyun. However, in this study, social media is a medium that offers various types of preaching and different proselytizing messages. So, some netizens experience the hybridization of proselytizing messages. But some netizens do not experience hybridization of religious understanding because they only watch certain mubaligh.

Keywords: Reception, Postmillenial netizen, Da'wah messages, Social Media.

Introduction

The influence of Islamic literature on the millennial generation cannot be ignored. Still, it is no less important to pay attention to the existence of online Islamic literature, which is also symptomatic among teenagers. Previous studies have raised research on the contestation of proselytizing discourse on social media. Bamualim et al. concluded that the strengthening of the role of social media changed the perspective on the role of religious education in families, educational institutions, and organizations (Bamualim, 2018). Bamualim et al. conclude based on empirical data from social media users among students (ages 17-24) from 18 districts or cities in Indonesia using surveys, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews.

It is in line with Weng's research (2018) which describes the form of the da'wah movement of a prominent preacher affiliated with transnational Islam and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) who actively transmits conservative Islamic understanding, especially HTI ideology through social media.

Researchers from PPIM UIN Jakarta 2020 conducted the latest research on religious discourse on social media. They found that
the concept of religion in social media is very dominant, where spiritual understanding leads to conservatism at 67.2%, moderate at 22.2%, leads to liberalism at 6.1%, and leads to Islam at 4.5% (Halimatus Sa’diyah, 2020). Based on these reasons, this article explores and analyzes how Postmillennial Netizens receive Islamic content on social media.

Several people, including Ummah, Sa’diyah, Sulfiq, Qudsy and Musakky, have researched the research topic of postmillennial netizens. Ummah investigates digital da’wah and the millennial generation. This research discusses the strategy of the Arus Informasi Santri Nusantara (AIS Nusantara) virtual community in carrying out digital da’wah movements. Carrying out digital da’wah movements or building Islamic narratives and formulating digital da’wah models for the millennial generation using various social media and digital media (Ummah, 2020).

The religious content presented by AIS Nusantara is adjusted to various profiles of young netizens (millennial generation). Content is published using multiple social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter). AIS Nusantara presents da’wah based on Islamic boarding school-based religious knowledge, which is claimed to have a clear sanad. (Umamah, 2020).

Meanwhile, Halimatusa’diyah examines social media and religious views in Indonesia. (Halimatus Sa’diyah, 2020). This research analyzes the growing religious discourse and its distribution patterns on social media. Besides that, it also looks at the actors who play the most role in spreading spiritual understanding on social media and the socio-political context of religious discourse on social media.

Sulfika’s research on Millennial Society's Reception of Da’wah Messages Through Social Media in Kabupaten Bone also unravels the problem of the public reception of da’wah.

Sulfika found that multimedia da’wah on social media is excellent because content can be accessed anytime and anywhere. Apart from that, social media has also made the people of Bone Regency more interested in studying Islam, moreover, the people who have limited time to participate in studies at assemblies (Sulfika, 2020).

In addition, Qudsy and Muzakky, in their research, made the preaching of K.H. Ahmaad Bahauddin Nursalim (Gus Baha) his study. The hashtag Gus Baha (#gusbaha) on social media is viral and phenomenal. Almost all people use (click) the hashtag.

The results of their research show that online recitation or da’wah through social media has a positive value if the scholars who are followed have apparent integrity and authentic knowledge. The hashtag Gus Baha (#gusbaha) makes it easier for people to understand the Koran through gadgets or other electronic devices (Qudsy & Muzakky, 2021).

PPIM UIN Jakarta concluded that religious conservatism is more dominant on social media even though moderate spiritual understanding is also relatively common, which is suspected of having the potential to increase or increase intolerance.

Reception analysis is a theory and research methodology developed to analyze the symbolic implications of constructing the meaning of mass media messages. Initially, reception analysis studies were considered a conventional approach to analyzing audience responses to television broadcast
media. However, the emergence of different content and the development of mass media platforms today show audiences’ interactive and participative nature, so the audience's position becomes a central issue in media studies. (Mathieu, 2015).

Stuart Hall originally developed the theory of meaning (reception) in his writing entitled "Encoding and Decoding Television Discourse" (Hall, 1980). Hall describes the idea of communication in four aspects: production, circulation, distribution and or consumption, and reproduction, in which he criticizes the linearistic paradigm in the communication process (sender – message – receiver) (During, 1999). The central concept initiated by Hall is decoding and encoding in the realm of communication praxis by viewing coding and decoding as different moments formed in the communication process (Zaid, 2014).

Research conducted by Hall concluded that broadcast television programs have no meaning. However, texts can be read in different languages and by other people. Regarding Hall, television viewing is a negotiation process between the audience and the text. The term "negotiation" is considered necessary because it implies that reading the text means showing the potential or position of the audience as active meaning makers and not passive audiences. (Storey, 1996).

Hall also develops his theory of preferred reading into three categories to analyze the position of media audiences, as described below:

1. Hegemonic dominant position, audiences in this category understand media messages passively, positioned as audiences who approve or accept the dominant ideology constructed by the message's sender.
2. Negotiating position, audiences in this category do not take media messages for granted. Still, there are efforts to negotiate dominant messages or ideologies in general, adapting them to the local context and considering their social position.
3. Opposition position, audiences in this category take distance from the dominant ideology, or their place is in direct conflict with the dominant ideology (Storey, 1996).

One of the leading researchers, Morley (1996), used Hall's reception analysis model in his research on "The Influence of Nationwide Television Broadcast Programs" on Viewers, formulating Hall's decoding and encoding model into three aspects, (1) the same event can be encoded with more than one way, (2) the construction of the message always conveys more than one meaning, the message presents one particular meaning than the other, but the message is not entirely closed from its context, is polysemic or conveys various interpretations, (3) trying to understand the message is a problematic practice, not no matter how natural and transparent the practice may be, a message encoded in one way can always be decoded in a different way (Zaid, 2014).

The problem that seems to be of less concern to media analysts today is the existence of new media (social media) audiences which tend to be reduced or ignored as empirical reality. According to Mathieu, the reception analysis methodology needs adjustments to the current social media landscape to understand the conceptual function of audience reception analysis on social media. It is not society's acceptance that becomes the
object but texts that are increasingly complex and multiform (Mathieu, 2015).

Mathieu said that social media is included in the new media category from a theoretical perspective. It is a new focus or expansion of the object of reception analysis study so that the conception of media is no longer limited to broadcasting media with audiences but also includes all typologies of media audiences. Therefore research on text (social media content) and audiences (postmillennial netizens) is considered relevant as a research focus in reception analysis studies.

**Method**

Qualitative research methods involve a natural interpretive approach to reality and attempt to give meaning or interpretation to the object of research in terms of the senses obtained by researchers from the community. (Craswell, 2015).

Researchers seek to explore data holistically regarding the interpretation (reception) of postmillenial students or netizens of Islamic content and preachers accessed in cyberspace, among preachers who are the choice of students as netizens: Oki Setiana Dewi, Abdul Somad, Dasad Latif, Hanan Attaki, Felix Siauw, Habib Luthfi, Syafiq Riza Basalamah, Buya Yahya, Quraish Shihab, Nasaruddin Umar, Said Aqil Siraj, Zakir Naik Fahruddin Faiz.

This research was conducted in South Sulawesi Province, where the State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) is located. The location was chosen according to the research focus, which intends to analyze student reception in the category of postmillenial netizens.

Qualitative research using the case study method is based on six data sources: document data, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical devices (Yin, 2008). This study seeks to explore various data using data collection techniques: interviews and focus group discussions with 156 students from five State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN).

Data analysis is a process of organizing, categorizing, and combining research finding data based on theoretical propositions or a descriptive framework approach (Yin, 2008).

**Result**

**Hegemonic Dominant Position (HDP)**

The dominant hegemonic position is when audiences understand and understand and even accept messages and ideology conveyed through social media. It occurs when postmillennial netizens receive messages from preachers on social media because they are considered exciting and very easy to understand. In Nurlaela's opinion, a preacher preaching should use good language so there are no misunderstandings. Thus, the da’wah messages are conveyed properly (Qumairoh, 2021).

A better da’wah message is short and does not discuss issues that can offend the audience. A good message is following religious teachings. It can be conveyed on various social media and is clear enough. The language that is easy to understand, not convoluted without distorted and complete denotations, the message contains the truth that has been tested (Jafar & Amrullah, 2018).

The message is based on facts, not making it up and not doubting it. The message is complete and systematically arranged. The message covers the whole. The scope of
the message includes essential parts that the communicant should know (Siahaan, 1991). However, the da’wah message must be short. Following the ethics of preaching, in contrast to what was conveyed by Kaharuddin, who stated that an exciting da’wah is “an interesting way of delivery, the way of delivery is not long-winded” (Informant Interview at UIN Alauddin Makassar, October 13, 2021).

Adi Hidayat and Habib Jafar preached in light language, making it easy to understand. Explicit sources also accompany it, and the message conveyed always refers to the Al-Qur’an and hadith. This statement is in line with the results of Pertiwi’s research (2018), which revealed Adi Hidayat’s method of preaching was obvious, with soft but passionate intonation.

Adi Hidayat’s rhetoric is suitable according to the conditions of postmillennial netizens of all ages. His speech is detailed, but sometimes they get confused if they don’t hold the Al-Qur’an. However, if he holds it, the audience will understand, especially with the blackboard. So can immediately record. Adi Hidayat’s da’wah is carried out in a good way, not patronizing, and can be used as an example. His words made an impression on the soul, hit the heart, and there was no coercion” (Pertiwi, 2018).

Da’wah through art is one of the da’wah carried out in a gentle, polite, and entertaining way. Through art, Da’wah can attract the audience’s attention, but sometimes some people consider da’wah through art to be incompatible with Islamic teachings. The connection between da’wah and art is that art is carried out in a religious and Islamic manner by the Shari’a guided by amar makruf nahi mungkar. Art in Islam is the evidence of spirituality which is seen as the origin of its occurrence and helps spiritual life to return to its source (Mutmainnah & Arifuddin, 2021).

"Everyone wants to be close to Allah, but that closeness depends on the amount of worship and solemnity. According to Ibn Taimiyah, two types of people draw closer to Allah: the Al-Muqtasid and the Al-Muqarrabun. Al-Muqarrabun not only carries out God’s commands and stays away from his prohibitions but also carries out the Prophet’s sunnah. According to Nurul Izzah, da’wah messages that are easy to understand and implement are those related to Islamic law. Meanwhile, da’wah messages that are not easy to understand are related to the political system” (Informant Interview with UIN Alauddin Makassar, October 13, 2021).

Da’wah messages by Mubaligh to postmillenial netizens contain truth and goodness to humans sourced from the Al-Qur’an and hadith. Allah ordered the Prophet Muhammad to choose a material in the conditions of society and does not come out of Islamic thought or law. (Supena, 2013).

In general, da’wah messages are divided into three groups. They were, first, preaching messages that discuss matters of faith. The two da’wah messages discuss sharia issues. The three da’wah messages discuss moral issues. The problem with sharia is about the rules that come from God. Islamic law discusses worship and muamalah. Informants conveyed the same thing about the importance of the da’wah message about praying.

"The sharia issue is not only a matter of muamalah but also a matter of worship. One worship considered difficult to carry out is the night prayer, a way humans communicate with God. According to Ayu Astari Iksan: Da’wah messages that are light in delivery but
use clear references interpret the texts of the Al-Qur’an according to context” (Informant Interview with UIN Alauddin Makassar, October 13, 2021).

This statement shows that they are in a group with a dominant hegemonic position, namely messages conveyed by preachers on social media related to life problems, praying, and getting closer to Allah and Islamic law. In addition, they like and accept or agree with what the preacher conveys on social media because it is a concise and clear way of delivering da’wah.

The attitude of postmillennial netizens is very dynamic and diverse in choosing religious preachers on social media. In other words, the spiritual understanding of netizens is very diverse. Missionary Da’wah content on social media such as Das’ad Latif, Abdul Somad, Oki Setiana Dewi, Hanan Attaki, Buya Yahya, Syafiq Riza Basalamah, Felix Siauw, Sheikh Abdullah Awadh Abdun, Habib Luthfi, that religious messages shaped the understanding of postmillennial netizens and accepted as a whole. According to informants, messages capable of influencing are packaged concisely and briefly. The message can be packaged through art and film.

**Negotiated Position (NP)**

The negotiated position is a mixture of interpretations of messages received with experiences that have been experienced. This position explains that postmillennial netizens accept the message’s meaning but do not agree with all of its meaning. Informants categorized in the negotiated place are when the informant gets his meaning for the message of da’wah on social media. Several informants only watched but did not fully agree or agree with the delivery method and content of the material conveyed by preachers on social media. (Dwiputra, 2021).

Postmillennial netizens have their own opinions by mixing interpretations with specific social experiences. In this context, several informants’ answers reflect the negotiated position.

Da’wah's messages about preaching through war are alternative. If specific problems can no longer be resolved through debate or peaceful preaching, a war in Islam is the last way to solve problems.

The discourse on cultural accommodation in Islam indicates that many Muslims still experience a dilemma between culture and Islamic teachings. Culture is always considered to be contrary to Islam. Religion is regarded as something sacred, metaphysical, heavenly, and absolute. Thus, religion cannot be mixed up with culture. Hasmian said, ”what is easy to understand is about hijrah and daily life” (IAIN Parepare Informant Interview, October 19, 2021).

According to the informant, the da’wah message is easy to understand about hijrah. Hijrah is moving from an evil deed to a good one, from a bad character to a good one. Hijrah can be interpreted as a sacrifice. Life is more meaningful and contains the meaning of trust.

Lutpia said, ”The message of da’wah that is easy to understand is when we always weigh the information, in the sense of always
asking and examining whether it is true or false. Meanwhile, da’wah messages are not easy to understand when the preacher delivers in a hurry and does not know the da’wah material” (Informant Interview with IAIN Parepare, September 23, 2021).

In conveying da’wah messages, preachers, besides mastering da’wah material, must also realize da’wah methods. Da’wah messages given to postmillennial netizens must be arranged systematically. The da’wah message is not received directly by the postmillennial netizen, but he needs to be tabayyun with the preacher. Batari said: The message of preaching is easy to understand when the preacher provides explicit material. In contrast, da’wah, which is not easy to understand, is when the preacher is too wordy in giving an explanation or problem (Interview with the informant, October 23, 2021).

According to Michel Jucius, motivation is encouraging someone to take action. Inspiration can be divided into two parts: the inspiration that comes from outside (extrinsic) and from within (intrinsic). Extrinsic motivation arises when postmillennial netizens carry out da’wah messages because they want heaven and abundant sustenance. Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation arises from self-awareness when carrying out da’wah messages (Nurhayati, 2014).

In general, the informants believed that good da’wah messages were contextual messages, but in interpreting da’wah messages, they remained by Islamic thought. Contextual da’wah is moderate preaching in which a da’i conveys da’wah messages according to current conditions. Astri Rahayu said that the message of da’wah that is easy to understand is when the preacher is wise.

For example, taking an approach so that the object of the da’wah can carry out da’wah on his own accord, not feeling coercion, pressure, or conflict (Interview with the informant, October 12, 2021).

Preaching through social media needs to pay attention to the ethics of social media. Through social media, Da’wah must be carried out wisely and prudently, not aggressively, discriminatory, and provocatively, as in surah al-Hujarat verse 13.

Simple language style can be seen from simple word choice, straightforward tone of voice, sentence structure with climax style, repetition, and satire. The simple language style is a style that is often used to give instructions. Words that touch the heart are also commonly called qaulan baligha. According to Ali Ash-Shabuni, qaulan baligha are words that leave an impression on the bosom and contain wisdom. At the same time, according to Hamka, they are words that are eloquent and easy to understand. In communication, there are five signs of adequate words: respect, empathy, audibility, clarity, and humility.

Fauziyah Mukhtar said: The da’wah messages that are easy for me to understand are the da’wah messages about motivation to worship. In contrast, the da’wah messages that are difficult for me to understand are those related to the political system (UIN Alauddin Makassar Informant Interview, October 13, 2021).

Politics can be used as a tool of da’wah. Even so, some people think that politics and da’wah cannot be linked because they believe that in politics, there is a lot of cunning, betrayal, and intense ambition, and politics is understood as something that has a bad
connotation. Besides being a servant, the human task on this earth is also a Khalifah (Day, 2005). Meanwhile, Suci Ramadhani said that it is easy to understand by combining Indonesian, millennial slang, and verses from the Qur’an or hadith. It’s also easy to understand if accompanied by video and subtitles so that deaf brothers and sisters can understand too (UIN Alauddin informant interview, October 13, 2021).

Da’wah needs to consider the audience’s needs so that the message conveyed not only increases understanding but can change behavior. Annisa Raihan Fadillah said that for the general public, da’wah should use simple language. Da’wah also requires gentleness so everyone can receive da’wah messages (UIN Alauddin informant interview, October 13, 2021).

Some people think that da’wah should not only be spread gently, but sometimes it needs to be a little harsh. Dakwah, with rage, gave rise to the opinion in some communities that Islam was spread through violence.

The Prophet preached in wisdom and gentleness ways. When Aisyah r.a was asked what the morals of the Prophet were, the answer was that the morals of the Prophet were the Qur’an (Bahrisy, 2018). Da’wah Rasulullah sometimes also by way of humor. When the Rasulullah ate dates with his friends, Ali bin Abi Talib shifted the date seeds he had eaten in front of the Prophet. Ali asked: who eats the most dates? Then the eyes of the companions looked at the Prophet. Then Rasulullah said: whoever eats dates with their seeds means that he is the most hungry. All eyes were on Ali, and everyone laughed again (Muniruddin, 2019). In line with the interview statement from Umm Kalsum, "which contains an implied and humorous meaning, of course" (Informant Interview with IAIN Palopo, October 13, 2021).

Postmillennial netizens in the negotiated position category do not accept da’wah easily because several things cannot be discussed. These problems include Islamic law, jihad, and war. Da’wah material about jihad, this issue is considered too heavy to be received by certain circles because it involves matters of faith. Few postmillennial netizens accept religious messages on social media but reject some of the messages conveyed by preachers on social media.

Oppositional Position (OP)

An oppositional position is a position where the audience completely rejects the message or meaning conveyed by the sender of the message. But on the other hand, audiences can understand the message's sense, but fight and have different interpretations, then change the message's meaning according to their way of thinking. Oppositional positions in this study are informants who understand the message of da’wah on social media. Still, they do not accept and agree that what the preacher conveys is not entirely what is expected (Dwiputra, 2021).

There were two informants whose answers reflected oppositional positions, namely: Mauidhotul Hasanah Ridwan and Putri Waliyu Sari. They liked the preaching content of Oki Setiana Dewi and Ustad Somad, especially the da’wah, which contained motivational material.

Discussion

The research on postmillennial netizens' reception of da’wah content on social
media shows that for hegemonic. Several postmillennial netizens only watch the religious messages of Das'ad Latif, Abdul Somad, Oki Setiana Dewi, Hanan Attaki, Buya Yahya, Syafiq Riza Basalamah, Felix Siauw, Sheikh Abdullah Awadh Abdun, Habib Luthfi, but never watched the religious messages of Quraish Shihab, Nasaruddin Umar, Habib Jafar, Said Aqil Siraj, Zakir Naik, and Fahruddin Faiz.

In the negotiated, several postmillennial netizens only watch Dasad Latif, Abdul Somad, Oki Setiana Dewi, Hanan Attaki, Buya Yahya, Syafiq Riza Basalamah, Felix Siauw, Quraish Shihab, Nasaruddin Umar, Habib Jafar, Said Aqil Siraj, Zakir Naik, Fahruddin Faiz and never watched the religious messages of Sheikh Abdullah Awadh Abdun, Habib Luthfi.

On the oppositional position, postmillennial netizens only watch Das'ad Latif, Abdul Somad, Oki Setiana Dewi, Hanan Attaki, and Buya Yahya. But they never tend to religious messages delivered by Syafiq Riza Basalamah, Felix Siauw, Quraish Shihab, Nasaruddin Umar, Habib Jafar, Said Aqil Siraj, Zakir Naik, Fahruddin Faiz and never watched the religious messages of Sheikh Abdullah Awadh Abdun, and Habib Luthfi.

Some preachers on social media are received by postmillennial netizens in hegemonic and negotiated oppositional positions. Still, some preachers are received hegemonic and negotiated, but not in oppositional positions, for example, Syafiq Riza Basalamah and Felix Siauw. It can be interpreted as postmillennial netizens. Those in these two positions are postmillennial netizens who sometimes perceive da'wah messages fanatically to certain preachers. Still, regarding the content of da'wah messages delivered by other preachers, postmillennial netizens remain tabayyun. Unlike the social media preachers, Quraish Shihab, Nasaruddin Umar, Habib Jafar, Said Aqil Siraj, Zakir Naik, and Fahruddin Faiz, they are only in a negotiated position and not in the hegemonic and oppositional areas. This position postmillennial netizens are very selective in choosing da'wah messages. Netizens negotiating postmillennial can be said to be postmillennial netizens who are passionate about the preacher but still maintain their rationality. In contrast, for preachers in the hegemonic area, namely Syekh Abdullah Awadh Abdun and Habib Luthfi, the da'wah message is entirely accepted by fanatical postmillennial netizens.

This study result illustrates that postmillennial netizens can choose preachers and respond to preaching messages from preachers. The results show that the variety of da'wah messages received by postmillennial netizens forms a religious reception. Where da'wah messages and the election of preachers affect the reception of postmillennial netizens, each informant differed in interpreting the messages conveyed by preachers on social media. For example, the da'wah messages delivered by Das'ad Latif, Abdul Somad, Oki Setiana Dewi, Hanan Attaki, and Buya Yahya were sometimes interpreted in a dominant position, sometimes in an oppositional position and were analyzed in a negotiated manner. It is due to differences in experience, culture, and social environment.

**Conclusion**

In the reception of postmillennial netizens, there are three positions in interpreting da'wah messages, 1) the dominant hegemonic position, 2) negotiating position, and 3) the opposition position. In
the dominant hegemonic position, messages delivered by preachers on social media related to life problems, praying, and getting closer to Allah and Islamic law.

Negotiated positions include the message of preaching the hijab, hijrah, non-violent jihad, religious tolerance, Islam and local wisdom, contextual preaching, moderate preaching, messages originating from the Qur’an and hadith, and motivation. Meanwhile, in the opposition position, postmillenial netizens only watch preaching messages but are not used as references or guidelines for behavior.

References


