Utilization of Mass Media for Preaching Activities

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ABSTRAKSI (10PT)

Abstrak: Kemajuan dan perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan dan teknologi saat ini telah memasuki berbagai bidang kehidupan masyarakat, yang akan berdampak pada kehidupan masyarakat. Perkembangan informasi dan teknologi (IT) saat ini menjadi sebuah keniscayaan di era saat ini. Di era teknologi ini, setiap manusia akan selalu terikat dengan alat informasi visual yang menyertainya, yaitu media massa. Munculnya era digital ini akan memberikan manfaat yang besar untuk melakukan kegiatan dakwah Islam. Media massa dianggap sebagai pilar keempat dalam menegakkan demokrasi di suatu negara, menandakan bahwa media massa sangatlah penting. Secara umum, media massa merupakan sarana komunikasi massa. Dakwah merupakan suatu proses penyampaian, ajakan atau seruan kepada orang lain atau kepada masyarakat agar bersedia memeluk, mempelajari, dan mengamalkan ajaran agama dengan penuh kesadaran. Keberadaan media massa memberikan suasana baru bagi penyampaian pesan-pesan dakwah yang lebih dinamis dan fleksibel, tentunya mengikuti perkembangan zaman. Dalam konteks dakwah Islam, media massa memiliki peran penting sebagai sarana untuk menyebarkan pesan-pesan Islam secara global.

Abstract: *The progress and development of science and technology has now entered various fields of community life, which will have an impact on people's lives. The development of science in the field of information and technology (IT) is currently a necessity in the current era. In this technological era, every human being will always be bound by the visual information tools that accompany him, namely the mass media. The emergence of this digital era will provide great benefits for carrying out Islamic preaching activities. The mass media is considered the fourth pillar in upholding democracy in a country, showing that the mass media is very important. In general, mass media is a means of mass communication. Da'wah is a process of delivery, invitation or appeal to others or to the community to embrace, study, and practice religious teachings consciously. The existence of mass media provides a new atmosphere for the delivery of da'wah messages that are more dynamic and flexible, of course following the times. In the context of Islamic da'wah, mass media has an important role as a means to spread Islamic messages globally.*

I. Introduction

The progress and development of science and technology today has entered various areas of community life, which of course will have an impact on community life, both positive and negative. No exception, the impact felt is in the field of Islamic preaching, which of course its existence is not a barrier but must be able to adapt to the progress of science and technology so that preaching activities that try to convey religious messages can be achieved properly so that the order of

community life becomes peaceful, happy and prosperous based on the implementation of worship correctly and appropriately.

The development of information and technology (IT) science is currently a necessity in the current era. Technological progress will continue to accompany the development of increasingly developing science so that new innovations emerge in various scientific fields, one of which is the most impactful, namely information science and technology. This development has a huge impact on the order of human life which will certainly make it easier for humans to carry out all world activities.

Currently we are in an era of increasingly rapid technological development so that every human being will always be tied to the visual information tools that accompany them, namely mass media. With the ease and number of users of digital communication tools such as cellphones, it has opened up wide access to information for these users and facilitated the spread of the use of digital communication tools. Almost all uses of mass media have entered various levels of society . Along with the development of information and communication technology, society is no longer limited in communicating by numbers. Thousands of people or even millions of people can communicate at one time live using mass media or digital media, such as live football broadcasts, news and so on. (Mamdud, 2019)

The emergence of this digital era will provide great benefits for carrying out Islamic preaching activities. In this way, it will be easy for Islam to be disseminated to all people universally in the sense of carrying out da'wah to all people without any coercion to convert to Islam. (Ummah, 2023)

Da'wah through the internet is a new innovation in Islamic propagation, and of course it will facilitate the process of da'wah activities and will expand the network of da'i to listeners to preach. The use of mass media as a da'wah medium is an opportunity and challenge that must be faced by da'i with In other words, they must be able to utilize digital media as much as possible as a medium for preaching. So that the message of Islam can be conveyed properly.

II.   Literature Review

A. Theory of Utilization

1)   Uses and Gratifications Theory

The foundational theoretical framework for examining media utilization is the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). Originating from the works of Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch in the early 1970s, UGT posits that audiences are active participants who select media sources based on their individual needs, preferences, and expectations (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). This theory is particularly useful in analyzing how religious messages are consumed, as it provides insights into why individuals might turn to certain media channels for spiritual guidance, social connection, or emotional reassurance.

From a preaching perspective, UGT suggests that religious communicators can strategically tailor their content to address the specific gratifications that audiences seek. These may include the need for social integration, self-identity reinforcement, and even escapism from daily stresses. Contemporary studies have extended UGT to include digital media platforms, arguing that the interactive and personalized nature of social media further empowers audiences in shaping their religious experiences (Fai, 2021)

B. Mass Media in Indonesia

1)   Historical Development and Regulatory Framework

Indonesia's mass media landscape has evolved considerably over the past decades, reflecting broader socio-political transformations. The historical trajectory of media in Indonesia is marked by periods of state control, gradual liberalization, and the advent of digital technologies. During the New Order era, media were tightly regulated, with content largely reflecting government interests (Hasyim, 2004). However, the reformation period in the late

1990s ushered in a more pluralistic media environment, characterized by greater freedom of expression and the emergence of private broadcasting networks.

The regulatory framework governing mass media in Indonesia has also seen significant reform. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) plays a central role in regulating content, ensuring that programming adheres to ethical standards while accommodating the country's diverse cultural and religious landscape. Contemporary regulations strive to balance freedom of expression with social responsibility, which is critical for maintaining trust among audiences and ensuring that religious content is presented in an inclusive manner.

2) Diversity and Convergence in Media Platforms

The convergence of traditional and digital media has further enriched Indonesia's media landscape. Television and radio remain influential, especially in rural areas; however, digital media platforms—such as social media, streaming services, and online news portals—are rapidly gaining prominence among younger demographics. This convergence has created a dynamic environment where religious messages can be disseminated through multiple channels, reaching varied audiences in both urban and remote regions.

Studies on Indonesian media have highlighted the critical role of digital platforms in enhancing audience engagement. For example, platforms like YouTube and Facebook not only allow for the broadcast of sermons but also enable interactive discussions, user-generated content, and real-time feedback. This interaction is pivotal in building community trust and enhancing the impact of preaching activities (Siregar, 2017). Moreover, the accessibility of digital media has democratized content creation, empowering grassroots religious organizations to broadcast their messages without the need for extensive financial resources.

3) Socio-Cultural Context and Media Consumption Patterns

Indonesia's rich cultural diversity and multi-religious context further influence media consumption patterns. The nation's predominant Muslim population, alongside significant Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist minorities, creates a unique media environment where religious broadcasting must navigate complex cultural sensitivities. Media outlets often adopt programming strategies that reflect this diversity, incorporating a mix of secular and religious content to cater to a broad audience.

Research indicates that Indonesian audiences exhibit high levels of media trust when it comes to religious broadcasting, largely due to the credibility of religious scholars and the moral authority vested in them (Purwanto, 2015). The interplay between tradition and modernity in Indonesia is evident in the way media are used to both preserve religious heritage and introduce contemporary interpretations of Islamic teachings. This dual role of mass media reinforces its potential as a powerful tool for preaching activities.

C. Preaching Activities in Mass Media
1) Traditional Broadcast Media

Historically, preaching in Indonesia has relied heavily on traditional broadcast media, particularly television and radio. Religious programs on these channels have long served as vehicles for disseminating Islamic teachings, offering sermons, religious discourses, and call-to-prayer segments. The popularity of these programs is underpinned by the trust placed in established religious broadcasters who are seen as authoritative voices in the community.

Television, with its audio-visual capabilities, offers a "rich" medium that can effectively convey both the emotional and intellectual dimensions of religious content. Sermons and religious debates broadcasted on TV not only inform but also engage viewers through visual storytelling, dramatization, and live interaction. Similarly, radio has maintained its relevance due to its accessibility, especially in rural areas where television penetration may be limited.

Radio broadcasts often provide a personal touch, with the soothing timbre of experienced preachers reinforcing the message of moral guidance and spiritual solace.

2) *Digital Media and the Rise of Online Preaching*

In recent years, digital media has dramatically transformed the landscape of preaching activities. The internet has facilitated the rise of online platforms that allow religious content to be disseminated beyond geographical boundaries. Social media networks, live streaming services, and dedicated religious apps have become popular channels for preaching. This digital transformation offers several advantages:

Interactivity and Engagement: Unlike traditional media, digital platforms enable real-time interactions between preachers and their audiences. Live-streamed sermons, for example, often incorporate live chat features that allow viewers to ask questions and share reflections, thereby fostering a sense of community and immediacy.

Digital media support the integration of various multimedia elements. such as text, video, audio, and interactive graphics—enhancing the delivery of complex religious narratives. This multimedia approach helps in making abstract theological concepts more tangible and relatable. With sophisticated analytics and data-driven strategies, online preaching can be finely tuned to target specific demographics. This is particularly relevant in a culturally diverse society like Indonesia, where different groups may require tailored messages that resonate with their unique contexts. The proliferation of smartphones and affordable internet access has democratized the production and consumption of religious content. This allows even small-scale religious organizations to create and distribute content without the high production costs typically associated with traditional media platforms.

Several case studies have illustrated the transformative impact of digital media on preaching. For instance, platforms such as YouTube and Instagram have hosted numerous channels dedicated to Islamic teachings, where preachers share short video clips, full-length lectures, and interactive sessions. These channels have not only reached millions of viewers globally but have also set new standards for audience engagement and content personalization (Mahfudz, 2019).

3) *Hybrid Models and Future Directions*

The convergence of traditional and digital media has given rise to hybrid models of preaching that leverage the strengths of both realms. For example, some religious broadcasters now integrate live digital streaming with scheduled television programs, thereby expanding their reach and enhancing audience interaction. Hybrid models also offer a strategic advantage by combining the trust and authority associated with traditional media with the immediacy and engagement of digital platforms.

Looking forward, the future of preaching in mass media appears increasingly intertwined with technological innovations. Artificial Intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) represent promising frontiers for immersive religious experiences. Such technologies could revolutionize the way religious content is created and experienced by enabling highly interactive, personalized, and context-aware preaching formats. As these technologies mature, preachers may find innovative ways to engage audiences in a manner that is both spiritually enriching and technologically advanced.

Moreover, the ethical dimensions of digital preaching are also attracting scholarly attention. Issues related to content moderation, data privacy, and the commercialization of religious messages pose significant challenges that require careful regulation and ethical guidelines. The ongoing discourse among scholars and practitioners suggests that a balanced approach one that harnesses the benefits of digital media while safeguarding ethical and cultural values will be essential for the sustainable development of preaching activities in the digital age (Nasution, 2020).

III.   Research Method

The methodology of this research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. This literature involves several literatures such as journals, articles, books, magazines and several other sources to strengthen the basis of understanding. Then we write an opinion related to the benefits of using mass media as a medium for preaching which still has a basis from several references that we are looking for. This study uses a qualitative research method with a methodological sequence starting from collecting reference sources from various sources, understanding, analyzing research results, and drawing conclusions.(Miles et al., 2014)

IV.   Discussion

A. Mass Media as a Media for Preaching

At present, we are in a time of technological development that is always developing in every era. In the past, before the existence of mobile phones, people in the past when they wanted to communicate, they had to write a manual letter that was made then go to the post office to send the letter and it took several days for the letter to arrive. However, now we only need a mobile phone and internet, we can communicate quickly without waiting for a long time.

Along with the advancement of technology, mass media has developed and even thrived in today's society. Even society is not only a mere audience, but can already operate it well. This is due to the increasing education and income of the community, thus making people aware of using mass media. Mass media, both print and electronic, have a very strategic function to broadcast information, educate, entertain, present entertaining columns, and influence readers so that they believe in what is presented by the media.(Haryadi, 2018)

In a country, mass media is considered the fourth pillar in enforcing democracy in a country, indicating that the existence of mass media is very important. Freedom in conveying information is highly expected and it can be done by all people around the world. Since the existence of mass media in various forms, especially social media, it has had a significant impact on other users and the spread of information is very fast and can be done by everyone, allowing some information to be hoaxes. Of course, as users we must optimize the use of mass media for more useful things such as what we will discuss now, namely mass media for preaching.(Rabbani, 2022)

In general, mass media is a means of mass communication. The process of delivering messages, information, or ideas of mass media to many people (the public) is done simultaneously. A media can be said to be mass media if it has certain characteristics. Characteristics according to (Cangara, 2011) include: 1) It is institutional in nature, meaning that the parties managing the media consist of many people, namely from collecting, managing, to presenting information. 2) One-way, meaning that the communication is less likely to allow dialogue between the sender and the recipient. Even if there is a reaction or feedback, it usually takes time and is delayed. 3) Widespread and simultaneous, meaning it can overcome the obstacles of time and distance because it has speed.

Media is a means that can be used to convey information or messages by communicators to communicants in another sense, da'wah media is often referred to as da'wah wasilah, which is something that is used as a means to achieve goals or tools that help da'wah in conveying da'wah effectively and efficiently. There are also those who say that wasilah is a tool or means used by da'wah in conveying da'wah to mad'u . (Farihah, 2013)

The word media comes from Latin, median, which is the plural form of medium. Etymologically, it means tool. intermediary. Wilbur Schramm defines media as technology information that can be used in teaching. In more detail specifically, what is meant by media are physical tools that explain the contents of messages or teachings, such as books, films, video cassettes, slides, and so on (Kustiawan, 2022)

From the several opinions above, a rational understanding of the media of preaching can be given, namely everything that is used or becomes a support in the ongoing message from the communicant (preacher) to the audience. Or in other words, everything that can be a support/tool in the preaching process that functions to make the delivery of ideas (messages) from the communicator (preacher) to the audience more effective.

Mass media can be a medium for Islamic preaching to spread messages to Islam easily, whether on radio, television, social media and others. This will make it easier for preachers to preach and mad'u (those being preached to) will more easily receive information or messages of preaching only through mass media.

B. Hermeneutic of Islamic Preaching

Islam teaches its people to carry out da'wah as written in the Al-Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran verse 104:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِّنْكُمْ اُمَّةٌ يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَاُولٰۤىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

Meaning: "And let there be among you a group of people who call to virtue, command (do) what is good, and forbid what is wrong. These are the lucky ones." (QS Ali-Imran: 104)

Da'wah is a process of conveying, inviting or calling to other people or to society to embrace, learn, and practice religious teachings consciously, so as to awaken and restore the person's natural potential, and can live happily in the world and the hereafter (Budihardjo, 2007) . The most important essence is the belief or trust that Allah is only one and no one can match Him, so that they are willing to carry out His commands.(Alimudin, 2007)

The law of da'wah is wajib a'in (the scholars namely by Muhammad Abduh, al-Razi, Abu A'la al-Maududi, Sayyid Qutub, and other scholars). in the sense that it is obligatory for every Muslim to da'wah according to what he knows. The object of *da'wah* in order to oneself, family, close relatives or relatives, some groups, to all mankind. Da'wah needs to use a method, namely a regular and well-programmed da'wah method so that the intention is to invite to carry out the teachings of Islam properly and perfectly. The da'wah method is with *Hikmah, Maw'izhah Hasanah*, discussing or exchanging ideas in a good way, conveying a story, parable, question and answer, and good example.(Suparta, 2003)

The existence of da'wah is very urgent in Islam. Da'wah and Islam cannot be separated from each other. As is known, da'wah is an effort to invite, call, and influence humans to always adhere to the teachings of Allah in order to obtain happiness in life in the world and in the hereafter. Efforts to invite and influence humans to move from a situation that is far from Allah to a situation that is in accordance with His guidance and teachings. So every Muslim is required to convey Islamic da'wah to all mankind, so that they can feel peace and tranquility.(Marfu'ah, 2018)

Da'wah is not just a sermon on the pulpit, there will still be various media that can be used for da'wah. And there are various methods in da'wah. Such as doing good to others, inviting to do good, and many more. Especially in the modern era which is increasingly developing, and especially da'wah can be done with mass media. So, this mass media is a tool to facilitate da'wah activities.(Encep Dulwahab, 2015)

C. Understanding the Role of Mass Media in Preaching: Our Perspective

Preaching, is often identical to speaking on the pulpit facing the crowd and delivering messages of goodness. However, along with the development of mass media, preaching is not a product that is always delivered on the pulpit. Mass media is part of the innovation of delivering preaching messages. The existence of mass media provides a new atmosphere for delivering preaching messages that are more dynamic and flexible, of course following the development of the times.(Abdurrahman, Q., & Badruzaman, 2023)

The use of mass media as a means of contemporary da'wah increasingly provides great opportunities for all levels of society who want to invite and convey goodness which in this case is da'wah activities. Someone can convey messages of goodness through writing (*kalam*), oral and behavior or deeds (hal) with audio visual recordings on online media and social media such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, short films, TV radio and so on.(Haryadi, 2018)

Mass media plays a significant role in Islamic da'wah in the digital era. As a popular and broad platform, mass media provides an effective communication channel for preachers to spread Islamic teachings to a wider and more diverse audience. Through mass media, preachers can easily share lectures, studies, writings, and inspirational quotes about Islamic teachings.(Ni'matul Rohmah, 2020)

The large number of diverse mass media users is a sign that da'wah must evolve into an activity that invites to goodness with a more innovative and creative appeal. So that the community or mad'u will choose which media will be used in receiving da'wah messages from *da'i*.

The use of mass media as a means of preaching is not easy.(Susanti, 2015) There are many things that need to be considered by preachers so that the preaching carried out can run well and achieve its goals. Good management is needed in preparing content that is packaged in an attractive way so that the public does not get bored with the way of delivering preaching and its contents which are almost the same. Preachers are required to be extra active, innovative and creative in carrying out preaching on social media, clever in choosing the media to be used, and proficient in using existing technology and understanding the conditions of the *mad'u* as objects of preaching who will receive the message of preaching through responses to changes in mindset and behavior.(Chang & Yang, 2013)

In the context of Islamic preaching, mass media has an important role as a means to spread Islamic messages globally.(Rohman, 2020) Through global, preaching messages can be quickly and effectively reach a wider audience in various parts of the world. However , to use mass media must be used wisely and responsibly . The content of preaching broadcast through mass media must pay attention to the truth, credibility and methods of preaching that are in accordance with Islamic teachings . In addition, *ustdaz, kyai* and students have an important role in maintaining local wisdom of the community through digital literacy activities and cyber advocacy.(Setyaningsih, 2019) Through digital literacy, they can increase their understanding of the proper use of mass media in spreading Islamic messages. In addition, they can also play a role in overcoming negative or controversial content that can damage the image and understanding of Islamic teachings. Thus, through collaboration between *ustdaz, kyai*, students, and wise users of mass media, the use of mass media in preaching can provide positive benefits in spreading Islamic teachings in this digital era.(Ni'matul Rohmah, 2020)

V.   Conclusion

As a conclusion of this article, the author concludes that the use of mass media has a great impact on the order of human life, especially when mass media is used for preaching activities, it will greatly help all preachers to do good. preaching in the mass media will be more easily spread and accepted by all people in the world. Islam will be easily spread and will be accepted by all people regardless of religion.

In this digital era, it is expected that every Muslim is able to utilize this mass that has mass media as a medium to broadcast the Islamic religion. Of course, we need to re-learn the method of preaching so that the messages of religion are also easier to be accepted by the mad'u (those being preached to). So that Islam becomes a religion that is *Rahmatan lil alamin*, namely Islam that is able to provide peace and compassion for the entire universe

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