

Da'wah, Internet, and Social Reality

Dakwah, Internet, dan Realitas Sosial

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Abstract

This article discusses the relationship among da'wah, internet-based social media, and social reality. A number of theories are used to build a relational perspective between these three things, including the social construction theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. This study using a literature study approach resulted in the conclusion that Islamic preaching media always have the opportunity to shape people's thinking patterns. However, each content creator is always faced with other Islamic narratives originating from other channels. Discourse contestation regarding Islamic teachings cannot be avoided in the current era of open information. Social media is a channel for disseminating information regarding this matter, which is a reflection that the Cyber-Islamic Environment has been well developed in this country. Apart from being a learning medium, social media has also become a space for movement. Activism finds wide space on social media channels, and is able to penetrate the space and time of its users. Da'wah and activities to spread the wings of the community are increasingly open.

Keywords: Da'wah, Internet, Sosial Reality, Muslims in Indonesia

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang hubungan dakwah, media sosial berbasis internet, dan realitas sosial. Sejumlah teori digunakan untuk membangun perspektif relasional antara ketiga hal tersebut, antara lain teori konstruksi sosial Peter L. Berger dan Thomas Luckmann. Penelitian dengan pendekatan studi literatur ini menghasilkan kesimpulan bahwa media dakwah Islam selalu mempunyai peluang untuk membentuk pola pikir masyarakat. Namun setiap pembuat konten selalu dihadapkan pada narasi Islami lain yang berasal dari saluran media sosial lain. Kontestasi wacana mengenai ajaran Islam tidak bisa dihindari di era keterbukaan informasi saat ini. Media sosial menjadi saluran penyebaran informasi mengenai dakwah Islam, yang merupakan cerminan bahwa Cyber-Islamic Environment telah berkembang dengan baik di negeri ini. Selain sebagai media pembelajaran, media sosial juga menjadi ruang gerak kelompok. Aktivisme di media sosial mendapat ruang yang lebih luas di era internet. Dakwah dan kegiatan kelompok-kelompok Islam makin terbuka lebar dari waktu ke waktu.

Kata Kunci: Dakwah, Internet, Sosial Reality, Muslim di Indonesia

Introduction

Internet-based social media, with all its various platforms, has become an arena for exchanging information that cannot be separated from Muslims. Currently, the internet has become a means of Islamic learning, which includes elements of spreading doctrine. This doctrine relates to Islamic groups or communities, which have different religious sects or applications (Bunt, 2018). When contextualized in Indonesia, Islamic mass organizations or social media accounts with many variations of sects express various applications of worship and thought patterns. Social media is a channel for disseminating information regarding this matter, which is a reflection that the Cyber-Islamic Environment has been well developed in this country (Jauhari, 2021).

Apart from being a learning medium, social media has also become a space for movement. Activism finds wide space on social media channels, and is able to penetrate the space and time of its users (Rustandi, 2020). Da'wah and activities to spread the wings of the community are increasingly open. On the other hand, social media also provides promising economic opportunities. Apart from participatory culture which can be optimized through social media, so that accounts can gain profits from incoming advertisements because the account is considered to be accessed by many people, sales of products that have Islamic labels can also be done on social media. The products in question include Muslim clothing, dates, black cumin, honey, religious books, and so on, finding the right market (Rachman, 2019). Muslims learn, interact, communicate and convey ideas on social media. There is cultural and even economic reciprocity in the Islamic community's social media. In turn, arguments between communities, groups or points of view occur (Bunt, 2018).

Da'wah on internet social media is something that is commonplace in the current era. Islamic religious leaders use the platforms YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and so on, as media for conveying religious messages. They often have a special team to carry out technical tasks, related to optimizing internet channels. On the other hand, the followers of each of these religious leaders always faithfully watch their idols speak through cyberspace. Discussions about da'wah on the internet and human social reality always have appeal. In this topic, it is certain that there is a correlation between preaching content in the media and human beliefs in religion. Including, about how he carries out religious rituals (Ghofur, 2019).

Da'wah media that are believed to be true must be used as a reference in that person's life. Muslim society believes that da'wah is everyone's obligation. Da'wah is an effort to invite other people to walk the path of truth outlined by God Almighty (Mupida, 2019). This article discusses the relationship between da'wah, internet-based social media, and social reality. A number of theories are used to build a relational perspective between these three things, including the social construction theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann.

The use of social media in Muslim communities in Indonesia is a study that is of interest to researchers. This country has the largest Muslim population in the world, so studies on the Cyber-Islamic Environment are often carried out by taking Indonesian society as an object, including the title *Life Is Local in the Imagined Global Community: Islam and Politics in the Indonesian Blogosphere* (Lim, 2012). This study discusses the use of digital media in the form of blogs by three Muslim communities, namely, Indonesian Muslim Blogger (IMB), Islam Dot Net (ISDN), and Muslimah-IT. This research discusses that the era of globalization which is also marked by the accelerated development of internet technology has made people more sensitive to world political conditions. Not only that, Muslims around the world have also used the internet as a discussion space as well as a medium for preaching to convey Islamic message (Rachman, 2018).

Religious social practices are implemented through social media. Not only as a medium for da'wah and dissemination of information, but also for branding or building one's Islamic image. This phenomenon has resulted in the emergence of many Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other social media accounts with Islamic roots. The Islamic discourse carried by each social media account may be different from one another. Islamic religious practices also emerge with various forms of

worship, including; through the One Day One Juz program, Online Koran, Daily Sunnah Devotionals, Tahajud Call, Ahlus Sunah Wal Jamaah Stories, and so on. After reform, the religious practices of Muslim communities in Indonesia experienced changes along with freedom of expression for every citizen (Slama, 2018).

Social Reality

The study of social reality cannot be separated from the theoretical building regarding social construction which was popularized by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann through the book *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociological of Knowledge*. Social construction theory is one of the popular treasures in social science studies which studies the reciprocal relationship between thought and society to connect ideas with social reality, as well as studying the historical setting in which ideas are produced and received (Collin, 1997). Knowledge, individual understanding, as well as the individual himself, are formed in concrete historical social conditions. Knowledge and concrete reality are connected by what Foucault calls discourse in society (Ngangi, 2011).

In the book *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault stated, "The term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation". What is meant by "a series of statements" can reach the audience of course because of power, at least it can reach because it has the power to touch its target. This means that discourse is closely related to power control techniques. Power has the power to define knowledge. In turn, through discourse, power seeks to guide, even determine; what is good and bad; what is appropriate and inappropriate; regulate and discipline (discipline); and provide punishment. Individuals as subjects are regulated by power regimes. What was said above is an analogy of how social construction can influence behavior and social orientation in society (Rachman, 2016).

The process of constructing social reality in Berger and Luckmann's perspective takes place through a dialectical process of three forms of reality which are the entry concept, namely subjective reality, symbolic reality and objective reality. All of this takes place in three simultaneous moments, namely, externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). What is meant by "simultaneous" walking cannot be understood as sequential; externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Simultaneous is a simultaneous and continuous process in ongoing dialectical dynamics (Collin, 1997).

Subjective reality or subjective reality is a construction of the definition of reality that an individual has and is constructed through an internalization process. Knowledge and experience, which is usually called stock of knowledge, are factors that determine an individual's subjective reality. The stock of knowledge is also influenced by the discourse that develops in the surrounding community. Assuming that individuals are always influenced by the environment. Subjective reality is the basis for each individual to involve themselves or externalize in the social structure. Through the process of externalization, individuals carry out objectivation, which at one point constructs an objective reality that exists outside themselves.

Symbolic reality is a symbolic expression that also becomes the building material for the construction of objective reality. This symbolic reality includes, among other things, texts presented in the mass media and consumed by the public. Where the texts and language in the mass media, which currently extends its scope to internet social media, can shape discourse in society. Meanwhile, objective reality is a complexity in the definition of reality, in which many things are

intertwined, including: ideology to established and patterned routines. All of this is then understood by every individual in society as a fact. Based on the understanding that the social construction of society builds its social reality, it can be ensured that the social reality in one place is different from that in another place. Social reality depends importantly on the construction processes that exist in each community group.

For example, social reality in one country states that homosexuality is deviant sex, while social reality in another country may consider this phenomenon to be normal. However, a social reality is an "organism" that is alive and can change like humans themselves. For example, while in a country before the mid-1990s, homosexuality was still considered taboo and violated local religious principles, in the early 2000s this situation changed. Was it a process of just five years (mid-1990s to early 2000s)? Of course not, the social construction process has been going on for longer than that period. Along with the development of society which continues to experience changes through the dialectic of subjective reality and objective reality, externalization, objectivation and internalization also always occur continuously (Fanani, 2010).

Externalization is the process of human adjustment to the socio-cultural world, to borrow the term: "Society is a human product". In this process, humans try to pour out or express themselves to the outside world by utilizing the objective reality that has been internalized. Outwardly, human nature is openness. Meanwhile, objectivation is human interaction in an intersubjective world that is institutionalized or experiencing institutionalization. The achievement in this process is the emergence of an objective reality that exists outside the individual. Objectivation is a channel for society towards a suigeneric reality. There is also internalization which is a process when individuals identify themselves among institutions, institutions and social institutions. In this context, the phrase "man is a social product" is implemented. Internalization is the "absorption" stage. The internalization process is more of a re-absorption of the objective world and ensures that the individual's subjective is always influenced by the structure of the social world (Bungin, 2011).

There is a correlative and continuous relationship between the human self and the social context. The formation of habituation or normality of individuals and groups of society, which then becomes typical of certain groups of society, contributes to constructing subjective and objective reality. In the scope of subjective reality, humans are organisms that are free to choose and interpret anything to become knowledge. Although the knowledge absorbed through public spaces has of course already been controlled and directed by power. In terms of subjectivity, humans or individuals have a tendency to live creatively in their social environment. Meanwhile, in objective reality, humans are influenced by the structural environment in which they live and absorb knowledge. The direction of human development is included in the context of social reality which they believe is socially determined from birth to adulthood and old age in their environment (Dharma, 2018).

Philosophical Foundations

Social construction theory explains that knowledge and reality are fundamental elements in various individual social actions and practices. Social construction observes that knowledge and reality are always present in everyday life. This is an approach to reject, or at least offer an alternative, to studying society which previously held the principle that materialism was the pillar of all life. The social construction perspective often refers to phenomenology which runs on the rails of the "structure of consciousness" or subjective knowledge structure of individuals.

Individual knowledge is chosen intentionally as part of everyday life. The structure of knowledge in phenomenology is formed by experience. Experience is one or more events created by an individual's actions towards anything outside of him. The actions taken become a series that continues to accumulate and becomes a stream of experience. This flow of experience becomes the starting point for the individual's subjective knowledge structure. On the one hand, there appears to be a relationship between experience and knowledge. On the other hand, knowledge is a reference to the subjective reality of each human being.

In order to understand how and what meaning the subject constructs around everyday events, phenomenology seeks to enter the subjective conceptual world. Researchers must try to understand the subject from the subject's own point of view, as well as create a conceptual scheme and keep open opportunities for interpretation (Subadi, 2009). Based on the paradigm of "social definition" or "social science humanism" which is the starting point for phenomenology, research subjects (research informants) will be given the opportunity to provide their interpretations, which will then be interpreted by the researcher to obtain meaning that is relevant to the main research problem.

Researchers emphasize subjective things that are influenced by experiences, without ignoring human realities that restrain or encourage an action to occur. Berger calls the patterns described above first order understanding and second order understanding. The phenomenological method recognizes that there are empirical ethical truths that require observation, explanation and logical arguments from human reason. The use of reason means using a higher standard than simply judging whether an action is: "right" or "wrong" (Muhadjir, 1998).

Social construction theory which discusses social reality, both subjective and objective, is a development of Alfred Schutz's philosophical foundation. He was a student of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), an important figure in the introduction of phenomenology in the world of social sciences and humanities. Apart from creating Husserl's thoughts, Schutz was interested in Max Weber's theory of social action (Collin, 1997).

There are many key words coined by Schutz which later became important points in phenomenological studies, including, stock of knowledge; stream of experience; and typifications. Schutz also explained meaning contexts to refer to the interconnectedness of a series of subjective sensory experiences of individuals. Schutz assumes that the social world is an intersubjective entity that is reinforced by meaningful experiences. Every action has meaning. All of these meanings are identical to the underlying motive (in order to motive). Schutz continues to carry out theoretical development by completing a context known as "because motive". This is a study of subjective meaning with the concept of causes and effect relationships underlying individual actions (Waters, 1994). The process of reflecting on the subjective meaning of various events around us has been an influence on phenomenological thinking that came after the Schutz era (Collin, 1997).

Berger and Luckmann's phenomenology rely on the "nature of meaning" popularized by Schutz. From there they offer a first order understanding approach (seeking explanations from the party being researched in order to get an authentic explanation) followed by second order understanding (the researcher provides explanations and interpretations of the interpretations of the party being researched until a new and authentic meaning is obtained). Social construction starts from the premise that humans construct social reality in which subjective processes can be objectified. Efforts to build social reality require legitimacy and justification. On the one hand, meaning must first be justified within the individual based on his or her experience. On the other

hand, a world of meaning that is different and localized in one particular sphere needs to be created, held, agreed upon and recognized together.

The discussion regarding "meaning" in action also refers to the concept of "Meaningfulness of Action" which was popularized by Wilhelm Dilthey, a German philosopher and historian who lived in the 19th century (1833-1911). His contribution was great to the development of hermeneutics and phenomenology through the idea of "Meaningfulness of Action". Dilthey argued that human actions have meaning that goes beyond mere physical or empirical actions. He emphasized the importance of understanding human actions through the dimensions of experience and the subjective meaning that exists within them. This concept shows the difference between humanities: which seeks to understand the meaning and context of humanity, and natural sciences: which focuses on causal explanations like positivistic substance (Subadi, 2006).

Experience and understanding influence meaningful human behavior. Experience is the basis and source of human behavior. It consists of the subjective mental life of humans, which holds that human behavior originates from two different mental sources, beliefs and desires. Apart from that, experience is also said to be a source of behavior that originates from unified thoughts and desires. Dilthey called this a holistic unity. Dilthey rejected deductive approaches that simply view actions as a series of empirical events without paying attention to the depth of meaning attached to each action, and argued that researchers must enter the world of a person's subjective experiences and interpretations to understand their actions. He believes that human actions show how unique and complex each person's mind is, which cannot be reduced to the basics of natural science (Collin, 1997).

Discourse and Media Reality

Discourse in the study of social sciences is known to be a subject that has complexity. It is a series of language practices to convey ideas, values, norms and concepts or whatever. Discourse can be studied through analysis of forms of communication that involve the use of text and language to convey meaning and build understanding between individuals or within a social group. Discourse is manifested in various forms of text and language; whether written, verbal, visual, audiovisual, or even non-verbal (Fairclough, 1992).

Discourse or in Indonesian is translated as discourse, is not a representation of entities or social interactions that occur in a particular community environment. It is a construction of all these things. Therefore, different discourses construct key entities differently, as well as position people in different ways as social subjects (Sparringa, 2000).

Discourse is often associated with power and social construction. It is not only used to convey information but also to shape and influence the way people understand the world. This includes word choice, sentence structure, and communication norms that play an important role in shaping collective perceptions and identities. The intertwined relationship between power and knowledge in discourse was popularized by Michel Foucault, a French philosopher. Knowledge conveyed through text, language and other tools is impossible without the involvement of systems of power in the process of conveying and packaging it (Foucault, 1980).

Understanding discourse is very important in the study of linguistics, sociology, anthropology and other social sciences to uncover the communication dynamics that shape world views and social order (Darma, 2009). Based on the explanation above, it can be understood how closely discourse and social reality are related. These two things are interrelated in forming collective

understanding and meaning in a society. Discourse can influence, create, reproduce, or change an individual's subjective reality through the narrative conveyed. The mechanism is that the narratives (in the form of text, language, symbols, etc.) that build the discourse are absorbed by the individual into his stock of knowledge. Thus there is always a close relationship between discourse and knowledge (Foucault, 1972).

This process is an internalization of the individual before he has subjective reality. This subjective reality can also continue to be updated based on knowledge and experience that develops over time. In turn, individuals externalize their subjective reality which is then objectified as another objective reality. In everyday life in the contemporary era, mass media has become a powerful tool for conveying narratives. These narratives, which in the new media era have so many channels available, enter the realm of individual and group understanding. Narratives construct discourse that becomes symbolic reality. In a position like this, research on discourse in mass media, including internet social media, has become widespread.

The reality construction process that occurs in mass media begins with the actors or content creators in the media. The initial reality can be circumstances, events, objects, thoughts and so on. The communication system used has a big influence on discourse makers in the mass media. Communication strategies in print, electronic and internet media certainly have their own wisdom and uniqueness. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, different interaction models and key entities certainly construct reality differently.

In other words, the formation of discourse in mass media will never be born in a vacuum. Influence can come from all corners, such as various ideologies, knowledge, and messages that are full of interests. The choice of angle, diction, and method of delivering content in the media, become part of the dynamics of meaning for the listener (Hamad, 2007). For example, there are two television stations, each owned by entrepreneurs with different political party orientations. News about the Presidential Election conveyed on each television must have different emphasis and selection and editing. The title that is then broadcast may also be contradictory to the interests of the media owner. Content creators build reality with certain strategies. For example, there is the arrangement of text, speech/dialogue, actions and documentary artifacts in the content. Mass media constructs and distributes information, where this is not possible with the principle of neutrality without idealism being fought for and demonstrated to the public (Karman, 2015).

Conclusion

Advances in information and communication technology bring knowledge across a spectrum that has never been achieved before. Apart from that, the emancipation of subjects who were previously confined to minimal treasures has found freedom. The increasingly widespread expansion of advanced capitalism is one of the triggers for complexity in understanding knowledge. Internet-based social media that focuses on preaching content has a great opportunity to influence society. Including, in the aspect of forming people's mindset towards the teachings of the Islamic religion. On the other hand, each media has big challenges, because the narratives it conveys always face other narratives that can also be easily found in cyberspace.

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