

The Development of Digital Da'wah at The Indonesian Ulema Council of South Sulawesi Province

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Abstracts: Digital da'wah is a response to the dynamics of technological development in the lives of Muslim communities. The proselytizers are transforming and adapting from the phenomenon of conventional da'wah to digital da'wah. This research aimed to reveal the response of the Indonesian Ulema Council (IUC) of South Sulawesi Province to the development of digital da'wah construction amidst changes in the transformation of da'wah with its various dynamics and problems. This qualitative research was conducted at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province located in Makassar. The approach in this research was interdisciplinary by looking at the phenomenon of society and proselytizers conveying their da'wah via digital. The data source was obtained from the IUC of South Sulawesi Province website at <https://muisulsel.or.id/> and the researcher conducted interviews with core administrators such as the general chairman, secretary general, commission for da'wah and Islamic community development, and communications and informatics commission at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province. The finding of this research revealed that the IUC of South Sulawesi Province has innovated in responding to technology through digital da'wah. The progress of digital da'wah allowed the IUC of South Sulawesi Province to explain Islamic messages to individual believers and groups so that they reminded each other and connected in accessing digital da'wah. The digital da'wah phenomenon at IUC of South Sulawesi Province referred to the use of digital technology and online platforms to spread religious messages and Islamic da'wah. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province was developing digital da'wah. The digital da'wah developed by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province consisted of six forms, including social media, podcasts and streaming video, da'wah communication websites, live streaming, social campaigns and activism, as well as e-books and digital publications. The idea of developing digital da'wah carried out by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province raised the hope that the proselytizers would be able to reach all groups in spreading divine and prophetic messages. The perfection of digital da'wah also needed to be developed as ideally as possible, such as by adding aspects of Islamic media applications, da'wah applications, and online Islamic learning platforms.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah, Da'wah Activity, Indonesian Ulema Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam is a religion of da'wah.[1] The progress and setbacks of muslims are closely related to their da'wah activities.[2] Al-qur'an calls da'wah activities *ahsan al-qaula* (the best words).[3] The da'wah activities are carried out by competent and credible proselytizers.[4] The technological advances also force proselytizers to follow existing developments so that their da'wah material can be enjoyed by muslims.[5] The da'wah of islam can be carried out in various ways, including da'wah *bi al-lisān*, *bi al-hāl*, *dakwah bi al-bi al-qudwah*, and *dakwah bi al-qalam*. [6] With the development of existing technology and media, da'wah must be formatted in such a way that it remains in accordance with current developments.[7] The beautiful teachings of islam must be understood by people wherever they are and through whatever medium they are conveyed.

The proselytizers must improve their abilities and capabilities, not only conveying da'wah through pulpits or official religious forums, but also the presence of digital da'wah proselytizers,[8] who can not only convey islamic messages through face-to-face communication are required,[9] but can also convey da'wah messages on digital media such as facebook, twitter, instagram, youtube, and so on.[10] with this complete and consistent spirit, digital da'wah mujahids can convey islamic teachings professionally and continuously for the sake of realizing the glory of islam and muslims.

Nowadays, digital da'wah has become a significant trend among proselytizers and the general public.[11] the development of communication technology, especially the internet and social media,[12] has brought major changes in the way da'wah is spread. Digital da'wah also has challenges, such as problems with inaccurate content, polarization, and online harassment.[13] therefore, it is important for proselytizers to use this platform

wisely, follow good preaching ethics, and always ensure that the messages conveyed are in accordance with true religious values.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (IUC) of South Sulawesi Province responds to the market share in the field of digital da'wah, which has great potential by carrying out innovative developments. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province invites proselytizers to intensify digital da'wah considering that social media users in Indonesia reach 191 million people. The proselytizers must understand the internet, and social media, and must enter into preaching there through digital da'wah.

The idea of developing digital da'wah at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province experiences its own challenges and problems because there are still many proselytizers who prefer to carry out conventional da'wah. The existence of IUC proselytizers in delivering digital da'wah is an interesting highlight. Therefore, digital da'wah carries the role of a comprehensive da'wah message

2. METHODS

This research was qualitative research conducted at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province located in Makassar City. The approach in this research was interdisciplinary by looking at societal phenomena more comprehensively across scientific fields and proselytizers in conveying their da'wah via digital. The data source was obtained from the IUC of South Sulawesi Province website at <https://muisulsel.or.id/> and the researcher conducted interviews with core administrators such as the general chairman, secretary general, commission for da'wah and development of Islamic society, and communications and informatics commission at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province. Research on various sources was also carried out, such as library materials, journals, and several literatures related to digital da'wah. The collected data was then analyzed critically and comprehensively using content analysis techniques within the framework of the digital da'wah phenomenon. The data analysis was carried out descriptively, systematically, analytically, and argumentatively to provide a comprehensive understanding of the results. The discussion would most likely explain the findings, interpretations, and arguments obtained from the analysis, as well as highlight the various factors that contributed to the success of the IUC of South Sulawesi Province in carrying out digital da'wah

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province and Digital Da'wah Responses

The IUC of South Sulawesi Province maintains its consistency in conveying religious messages to revive religion without having to abandon various new phenomena in modern life. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province is also making innovations in responding to technology through digital da'wah. In today's digital era, Muslims pay little attention and forget the obligation of da'wah. The activities to encourage goodness and anticipate evil in society must be conveyed in various forms and abilities by each person. Various one-sided views originate from the wrong perception that da'wah is the responsibility of only ulema who are limited to conventional lectures in the pulpit.

Muammar Bakry,[14] as Secretary General of the IUC of South Sulawesi Province, emphasized that the IUC of South Sulawesi Province always responds to the dynamics of digital forms of da'wah in the era of technology 4.0. The proselytizers are transforming in response to the change from conventional da'wah to digital da'wah. However, it should be noted that the change to digital da'wah must be in line with Islamic, comprehensive, and integrated principles. The proselytizers strive in digital da'wah so that the spirit of da'wah to bring about change is evenly distributed among Muslims.

Digital da'wah plays a role in the lives of Muslims these days.[15] Digital da'wah is used as a mission sacred that must be encouraged in response to the needs of Muslims. Islamic da'wah must be actualized and follow developments in the conditions and places where Islamic teachings are delivered. The activities that have been keeping Muslims busy lately have become inevitable but need to be controlled and reminded by proselytizers through digital da'wah.[16] Da'wah Islamiyah is a business process that never stops and ends. Da'wah continues to be needed to provide a positive way for the lives of Muslims whose problems are very complex.

Gurutta Najamuddin Safa,[17] as General Chairman of the IUC of South Sulawesi Province, explained that proselytizers must be able to adapt to the 21st century, which is the rise of information technology and communication media. Muslims in all generations have gadgets that have internet, which has become a favorite that is very fast and unstoppable.[18] In the context of the Muslim community in South Sulawesi, the digital da'wah phenomenon must progress. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province encourages proselytizers to be technologically literate. Muslims' dependence on technology is so great, that it has even become a primary need like food and clothing.

Nowadays, Muslims like to access lectures, advice, da'wah, and sermons via their smartphones.[19] Smartphones have become a medium for Muslims to learn about Islamic teachings in more depth. Digital da'wah at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province exists as a response to the needs of Muslims. Digital da'wah has become a trend because of its influence in shaping the public in various ways. As a new method, digital da'wah replaces conventional da'wah methods. Digital da'wah is a new media that is increasing in the practice of da'wah every day.

Digital da'wah creates a dynamic Muslim society in South Sulawesi. On the other hand, with the advancement of digital da'wah, individual people or groups can remind each other and connect in accessing digital da'wah. Islam outlines the importance of da'wah in living life. Good da'wah has many benefits, including the spread of Islam with wisdom and good advice.[20] In fact, clashes based on religious groups start from bad da'wah. Da'wah is an integral part of the Islamic religion.[21] Digital da'wah has clear principles because it will be difficult for a preacher to carry out da'wah activities in a pluralistic society.

The digital da'wah presented by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province is to prevent harsh da'wah, fighting against each other, slander, and other despicable things. Digital da'wah remains the ultimate goal of the existence of da'wah itself, namely introducing Islam as a religion that is full of love and teaches peace. Digital da'wah has various twists and turns. Therefore, digital da'wah requires proselytizers to have the ability to adapt to existing facilities. The proselytizers are able to open hearts and selves through digital da'wah by providing communication that does not easily hit but rather embraces, does not offend the hearts of Muslims, does not look for points of difference but rather seeks common ground. Therefore, presenting the wisdom of digital da'wah is part of the process of Islamic da'wah. The digital da'wah targets being intensified by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province have a variety of methods and approaches. However, of the many methods, they only lead to two principles, namely *da'wah bi al-hikmah* (wisdom da'wah) and *da'wah bi mau'izat al-hasanah* (good advice da'wah). Those who do da'wah via digital must be accommodating so that they know as well as threat maps and can avoid the possibility of friction among Muslims

3.2. Digital Da'wah Construction at The IUC of South Sulawesi Province

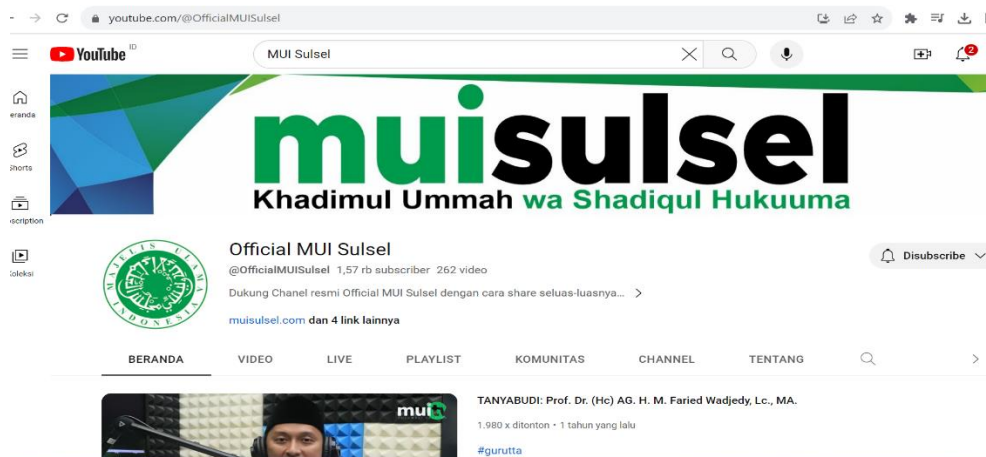
The IUC of South Sulawesi Province uses digital da'wah as a communication medium to disseminate arguments developed to enlighten the public.[22] This digital da'wah responds to actual issues that are developing in the lives of Muslims with an approach to Islamic studies and local wisdom that is inherent in the lives of the people of South Sulawesi. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province needs effective communication to market the scientific products of proselytizers. The purpose of communication is to convey messages to the message receiver, in this case, Muslims although in reality, the da'wah message is not always binding.



The digital da'wah phenomenon at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province refers to the use of digital technology and online platforms to spread religious messages and Islamic da'wah. This phenomenon has developed rapidly along with advances in information and communication technology. The digital da'wah of the IUC of South Sulawesi Province is developed through the channel <https://muisulsel.or.id/>. The following are several aspects of the digital da'wah phenomenon:

Social Media: The IUC of South Sulawesi Province uses YouTube, Facebook,[11] Instagram,[23] TikTok,[24] and WA channels as social media tools for conveying divine messages. The YouTube channel has become the main place for many preachers and clerics to share lectures, religious lectures, and da'wah messages. The proselytizers use this social media to reach a wider audience and interact with the Muslim community.

The YouTube channel of the IUC of South Sulawesi Province can be accessed at @OfficialMUISulsel (<https://www.youtube.com/@OfficialMUISulsel>). This account is made by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province to provide enlightenment to the wider community. The proselytizers included in the video are competent proselytizers who have the capacity and are widely known by the people of South Sulawesi.

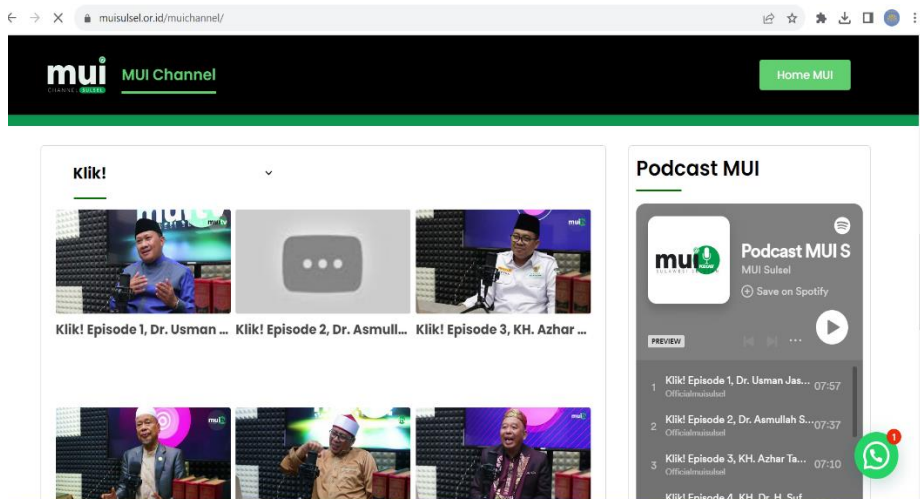


Source: YouTube

Asnawin, as a member of the communications and informatics commission at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province, reminds proselytizers that they are in the era of information, the internet, and social media. The pin da'wah must go to social media, especially YouTube. The use of YouTube media as a medium for da'wah is increasingly promising and easier to do. It is said that the connection between YouTube media and da'wah is the

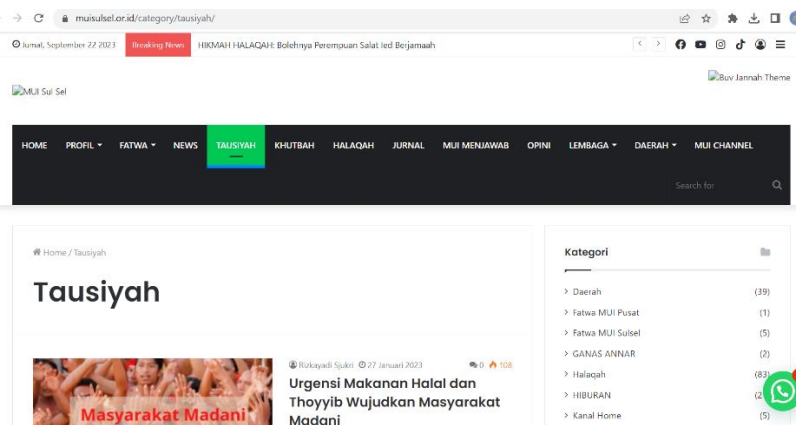
same target, the same segmentation, and the same needs.[25] Meanwhile, most well-known proselytizers have used YouTube as a medium for da'wah and made the best use of it. There are also models of preaching on YouTube, which can be in the form of serial lecture videos, short lecture videos, lecture clip videos, music/song videos, short story videos, and live streaming.

Podcasts and Streaming Videos: Apart from using YouTube as a digital da'wah medium, the IUC of South Sulawesi Province is also developing digital da'wah in the form of Podcasts and Streaming Videos with a duration of around 30-40 minutes. Well-known lecturers and clerics appear for special podcasts, which contain recordings of religious lectures and discussions as well as introducing the lives of certain ulema.[26] It allows people to listen to or watch da'wah messages anytime and anywhere.



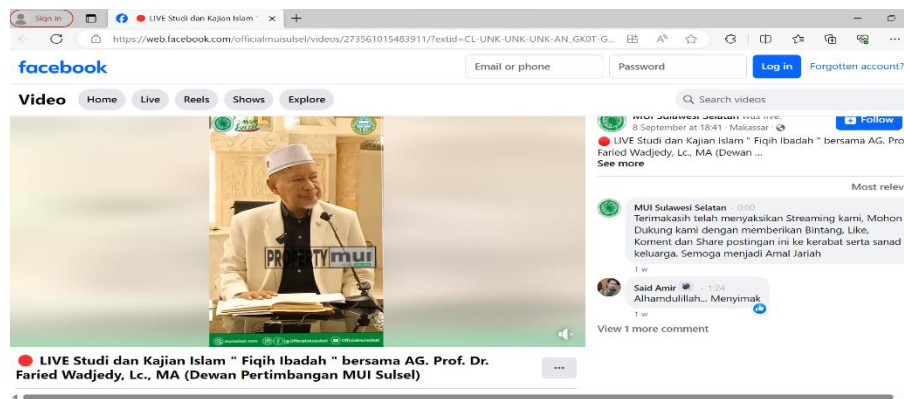
Source: www.muisulsel.or.id

Da'wah Communication Website: The IUC of South Sulawesi Province develops its website by enriching the website with a selection of tausiyah, religious news, sermons, halaqah, and IUC answers in response to direct questions from the public about religious issues. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province creates a website containing religious articles, videos, and resources. This website is often used to spread religious knowledge and answer religious questions.



Source: www.muisulsel.or.id

Live Streaming: The IUC of South Sulawesi Province develops live streaming on social media allowing lecturers and ulema to interact directly with their audience. They can answer questions in real time and discuss religious topics. One of the live streaming routinely carried out every day is the recitation (reading Al-Qur'an) after the maghrib prayer, which is streaming via all social media of IUC of South Sulawesi Province.



Source: Facebook

Social Campaigns and Activism: Digital da'wah is also developed by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province for the purpose of social campaigns and activism in an Islamic context. This includes campaigns for the welfare of Muslims, alleviating poverty, and supporting various social initiatives.[27]

The IUC of South Sulawesi Province has responded to many public issues in the South Sulawesi area, one of which is by issuing fatwas based on local wisdom, such as the fatwa regarding *panai* money. Also, the IUC of South Sulawesi Province is encouraging the entire community to be moderate in assessing all the differences that occur.

The Chairman of the Commission for Da'wah and Islamic Community Development at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province, Amrullah Amri, hopes that da'wah must prioritize tolerance through digital da'wah. Digital da'wah still pays attention from heart to heart, not mouth to ear. Digital da'wah must emulate the sincerity of previous ulema in da'wah.

E-Books and Digital Publications: The IUC of South Sulawesi Province is developing digital da'wah with electronic books and publications in the form of journals. The religious books and publications are also available in digital format, which facilitates access and distribution to those seeking religious knowledge.

Asmullah, as a member of the Commission for Da'wah and Muslim Community Development, explained that digital da'wah through e-sermons and online fatwas demonstrates the importance of communication via internet media in the Islamic community sector and is a contemporary Islamic study that has relevance to cyber society by using religious identity within the internet framework. Both e-jihad and on-line fatwas can be formatted in such a way as to present content that characterizes the Islamic concept of *rahmat lil alamen* (the grace and peaceful face of Islam). Instead of spreading and instilling a negative view of the sanctity of Islamic teachings.

With this phenomenon of digital da'wah development, the IUC of South Sulawesi Province has made it easier for religious messages to be accessed by people throughout Indonesia, especially the South Sulawesi region, more easily and quickly than before. It also allows preachers and ulema to communicate with diverse groups of people and respond to their questions and needs more effectively. However, as with social media and other digital technologies, digital da'wah also has its own challenges and risks that need to be managed wisely.

The phenomenon of developing digital da'wah carried out by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province shows the need for Muslims to master communication and information technology, especially the Internet. This is no longer the time for Muslims to forbid or engage in counterproductive discussions about internet technology. Islamic da'wah through digitalization is essentially a da'wah that can keep up with the times. This is in accordance with the Islamic principle "*al-Islām shalih li kulli zamān wa makān*" (Islam is a religion that can always follow all times and eras).

The digital da'wah message developed requires people from South Sulawesi to upgrade and update technological capabilities, especially in using the internet for peaceful da'wah activities taught by Islam. The beauty of Islamic teachings, which are full of love and mercy, will be difficult for Muslims to understand internally, as well as for non-Muslims externally, especially Westerners who always see Islam as a religion that supports violence and terror, that in fact, Islam is not what some of them predict. Digital da'wah with congregations that are also virtual will no longer be possible for da'wah activists to avoid.

CONCLUSIONS

The IUC of South Sulawesi Province has adopted innovation in dealing with technological developments through digital da'wah. The advancement of digital da'wah allows the IUC of South Sulawesi Province to convey Islamic messages to individual believers or groups in a way that allows them to remind each other and connect when accessing digital da'wah. The digital da'wah phenomenon at the IUC of South Sulawesi Province refers to the use of digital technology and online platforms to spread religious messages and Islamic da'wah. The IUC of South Sulawesi Province has developed this digital da'wah through its official website at <https://muisulsel.or.id/>. Overall, the digital da'wah that has been developed by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province consists of six main forms, namely social media, podcasts and streaming video, da'wah communication websites, live streaming, social campaigns, and activism, as well as digital book publishing (e-books) and electronic publications. The concept of developing digital da'wah implemented by the IUC of South Sulawesi Province creates hope that proselytizers will be able to reach various groups in an effort to spread religious and prophetic messages. Apart from that, to make this digital da'wah can be more perfect, the IUC of South Sulawesi Province is also pursuing further development. This includes ideas for adding elements of Islamic media applications, da'wah applications, and online learning platforms that focus on Islam. In this way, it is hoped that digital da'wah can become a more effective tool in bringing people closer to religious values and Islamic education.

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