

Optimizing Da'wah in the Digital Era Through the Imam, Dai, and Khatib Certification Program in Bandar Lampung City

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ABSTRACT

The digital era provides significant opportunities for the development of Islamic preaching (dakwah) through information technology. However, challenges to the competence and capabilities of imams, preachers (dai), and khatibs have also intensified. This study aims to explore the implementation of the certification program for Imams, Dai, and Khatibs in Bandar Lampung City as an effort to optimize dakwah in the digital era. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study's findings indicate that this certification program not only enhances competence in delivering digital-based dakwah but also promotes professionalism in preaching. Technological support, government regulations, and collaboration with the community are key factors contributing to the success of this program.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has provided significant changes in various aspects of life, including da'wah. Currently, da'wah is no longer limited to mosque or assembly rooms, but can be delivered through various digital platforms such as social media, applications, and websites. However, this also presents new challenges, especially related to the competence of dai, imam, and khatib in conveying relevant and effective da'wah messages in the digital era [1],[2].

The city of Bandar Lampung, as one of the major cities in Indonesia, has quite complex da'wah dynamics. The Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification program initiated by local religious institutions together with the

government aims to improve the quality of da'wah. The program is designed to ensure that dais, imams, and khatibs have a deep understanding of religion, effective communication skills, and skills in using digital technology [3].

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the method of spreading Islamic da'wah. Social media, such as YouTube, has become an effective platform for dai to convey religious messages to a wider audience. The research by Isna Yufita Hamdalah highlights the optimization of da'wah through social media in the digital era, with a case study on Hanif Luthfi's YouTube channel. The results of this study show that the proper use of social

media can increase the reach and effectiveness of da'wah [4].

On the other hand, the quality and competence of the imams, dais, and khatib are crucial factors in ensuring that the da'wah message conveyed is in accordance with Islamic teachings and relevant to the context of the times. For this reason, various training and certification programs have been initiated. For example, the Da'wah Institute of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (LD PBNU) routinely holds a program to standardize the competence of imams and Friday khatib [5]. This program aims to improve the competence of imams and khatibs to be able to deliver da'wah that is of higher quality and in accordance with the needs of the community [6].

In Bandar Lampung City, the implementation of the certification program for imams, dais, and khatib is a strategic step in optimizing da'wah in the digital era. With the certification, it is hoped that preachers have adequate competency standards, be able to utilize digital technology effectively, and convey a moderate da'wah message and in accordance with the demands of the times [7]. This is in line with efforts to improve the quality of da'wah through social media, as outlined in the research by Isna Yufita Hamdalah. However, the challenges in implementing this certification program are not light. Cooperation between the government, religious institutions, and preachers is needed to ensure that this program runs effectively and achieves its goals. In addition, adaptation to technological developments and social dynamics of the community is also an important aspect that must be considered in optimizing da'wah in the digital era [8].

One of the most influential factors in the success of da'wah is to optimize the use of media as a means to spread the message of da'wah widely and efficiently through programs that are designed professionally and systematically. This is important to do so that da'wah is not underestimated or ignored, which is feared to cause a decrease in public interest in da'wah messages.

In today's digital era, the optimization of da'wah through online media and social media is a *wasilah masalah mursalah fi da'wah*, which is a means that brings goodness to society at large, including in areas that are difficult to reach physically. Even though there are limitations in distance, the essence and purpose of da'wah can still be felt by the community.

Optimizing da'wah in the digital era can be realized by utilizing information and communication technology, as well as following the latest technological developments to continue to be creative and productive. Da'wah and technology are now two inseparable elements in the concept of modern da'wah that are relevant and easily accepted by the community. Previous research has shown that da'wah needs to adapt to technological advances, provide quick access, and present interesting content in digital formats.

Especially in the millennial era, where the majority of people depend on the internet and carry out daily activities through modern media, a da'wah approach that suits the characteristics of this generation is very important [9]. An in-depth study of the characteristics of the millennial generation needs to be carried out to determine an effective da'wah strategy in achieving the success of da'wah [10]. The Da'wah Institute of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (LD PBNU), as one of the largest community organizations with a significant number of followers in Indonesia, plays a role in designing an effective strategy for preaching through social media to achieve optimal results. There are at least four strategies applied in da'wah in the digital era, especially those aimed at young people or youth organizations, considering that they are the most users of social media.

The Da'wah Institute of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (LD PBNU), as one of the largest community organizations with a significant number of followers in Indonesia, plays a role in designing an effective strategy for preaching through social media to achieve optimal results. There are at least four

strategies applied in da'wah in the digital era, especially those aimed at young people or youth organizations, considering that they are the most users of social media [11].

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Zuchri Abdussamad [12] explained that qualitative research methods are approaches used to study objects in natural conditions, where researchers play the role of the main instrument. The results of this study focus more on understanding meaning than efforts to make generalizations. Respondents in this study include imams, dais, and khatib who have participated in the certification program in Bandar Lampung City, as well as program organizers from local religious institutions. Data analysis is carried out through the steps of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and methods.

In order to find relevant and accurate data sources, the existence of data sources is a very important aspect because it contains various facts or information. When the data is processed, it will produce useful information. This article uses the library research method, which is by collecting data from various written sources that are scientific, such as biographies, official documents, articles, and news that have credibility and commitment to the truth of their contents. Therefore, the research in this article uses a qualitative approach with the aim of providing a deeper understanding of the process of optimizing da'wah management in Bandar Lampung City, both at the central and regional levels. This research also aims to ensure that da'wah and the information conveyed can be spread quickly, accurately, and evenly in today's digital era.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Optimizing Da'wah in the Digital Era

Based on the Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language (KBBI) Digital, optimization is defined as the process of finding the best method that can be applied to achieve maximum and ideal results by making optimal use of available resources [13]. In simple terms, optimization is a series of steps to improve the performance of something that already exists. In addition, optimization can also be interpreted as a method that aims to increase efficiency and effectiveness in its implementation. Efficiency is concerned with the balance between inputs and outputs [14], while effectiveness focuses on achieving goals that are in accordance with the goals that have been set [15].

Da'wah Etymologically, the Great Dictionary of Indonesian (KBBI) defines da'wah as an invitation, the dissemination of religion, and its development in the community [13]. Da'wah is also interpreted as a call to believe, learn, and practice religious teachings and their understanding.

In Arabic, the word *da'wah* comes from the root word *da'a* (دعا) which means to call or beg (pray). People who carry out da'wah activities are called *da'i* or *da'iyah* [16]. According to S. Noor Chazin Sufri in his journal, the term "da'wah" is mentioned directly in the Qur'an about 198 times spread across 55 letters with a total of 178 verses. Terminologically, da'wah can be interpreted as the process of conveying Islamic teachings to the community with the aim that they understand, receive, and practice the content of the message conveyed. Da'wah serves to guide the community towards a balanced and dynamic goodness by forming a person with good morals. From these various definitions, it can be concluded that da'wah is basically an invitation or call to believe in Allah Ta'ala and carry out His teachings.

Da'wah has three main elements, namely:

- Maudhu' Da'wah, which is the material or content of da'wah delivered to the audience.

- Da'i, namely individuals or parties in charge of delivering da'wah.
- Mad'u, namely the recipient of da'wah or the party who is targeted in delivering the da'wah message.

Da'wah in Islam is not only conveying religious teachings, but also has rules and procedures that must be followed in accordance with the guidance of sharia. Islam teaches that da'wah must be done with wisdom, good advice, and polite dialogue. These principles have been set in the Qur'an, one of which is in Surah An-Nahl verse 125, where Allah SWT says:

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good exhortation, and argue with them with what is best, for your Lord knows best who has strayed from His path, and He knows best those who are guided .

Meaning: *Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom⁴²⁴ and good teaching and debate them in a better way. Indeed, your Lord He knows best who has strayed from His ways, and He knows best who has been guided.* (QS. An-Nahl: 125)

This verse emphasizes that in da'wah, a wise and gentle approach is needed so that the message of da'wah can be well received by the community. By following the rules that have been set in Islam, da'wah is not only a means of conveying religious teachings, but also a way to build harmonious relationships and bring benefits to all people. In this digital era of the 21st century, the three da'wah methods can be fully optimized through various online media platforms, so that they can be felt by all levels of society [17]. This is due to the fact that people now use mobile phones more often in their daily activities, including to find information about Islam. The majority of these users come from the younger generation [18].

Based on the explanation of the keywords discussed, it can be concluded that the concept of da'wah optimization is an effort to achieve the goals of da'wah organizations by maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of management functions in systematic and well-structured management in each da'wah program, so that it can be felt

by various circles. This concept is very important for Muslim communities around the world, especially in Indonesia which has the largest number of Muslims, especially in the city of Bandar Lampung.

Islam is a religion that encourages its people to continue learning, developing, and mastering science. One of the verses of the Qur'an that is an important basis for this recommendation is Surah Ar-Rahman verse 33, where Allah SWT says:

Ya'mashr al-jin wa'l-an-ista'atam in tanfzwa min aqtar al-sama'at wa'l-raz al-fanafzwa wa la tanfzon ala bisalatan

It means: *"O jinn and humans! If you are able to penetrate (traverse) the heavens and the earth, then pierce; You will not be able to penetrate it except by the power (of science)."* (QS. Ar-Rahman: 33).

This verse teaches that the ability of humans to master and explore the heavens and earth can only be achieved through strength, which in interpretation is often interpreted as science and technology [19]. Therefore, Muslims are encouraged to study technology as a means to understand Allah's creation and utilize this knowledge for the benefit of mankind.

By mastering technology, Muslims can not only improve the quality of life but also optimize Islamic da'wah in the modern era. Mastery of information technology, such as digital media, also allows da'wah to reach a wider audience effectively, as demanded by the times [20].

During the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to the Ottoman Turkish Dynasty, before the digital era, the spread of da'wah and information related to Islam tended to be slow, so that the response to issues that occurred in various regions was ineffective and often there was no response at all. However, with the digital era, this is a challenge as well as a new opportunity for Islamic da'wah to be more creative in spreading the correct Islamic teachings and sharia to all corners of the world [21], especially by utilizing online media devices and facilities such as websites and social media platforms such as YouTube.

In order for one of the functions, namely actuating, to run optimally in da'wah in this digital era in organizations or da'wah institutions, the application of certain techniques is needed, including:

- a. Providing a comprehensive explanation of the content and strategy of da'wah to all organizational administrators.
- b. Encouraging every individual to be aware, understand, and accept well the goals of the da'wah strategy in the digital era that has been set.
- c. Ensure that each manager understands the structure of the da'wah organization that is formed.
- d. Treat members well, give awards, and provide guidance and guidance for all members [22].

4.2 Imam, Dai, and Khatib Certification

Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification is a formal process carried out by religious institutions or authorities to provide official recognition of the competence and capabilities of individuals who play the role of imams, dais, and khatib in carrying out religious duties [23]. This process includes an assessment of theological ability, communication skills, and an understanding of the values of religious moderation [24]. This certification aims to ensure that certified individuals have adequate capacity to be role models for the people, convey religious messages wisely, and be able to adapt to the needs of modern society, including in the use of digital technology [25].

4.3 Optimizing Da'wah in the Digital Era Through the Imam, Dai, and Khatib Certification Program in Bandar Lampung City

Da'wah in the digital era requires creative and strategic adaptation to face the challenges of the times. One of the strategic efforts that can be made is through the Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification program [26]. In Bandar Lampung City, this program aims to increase the competence of religious leaders in providing relevant, effective, and digital technology-based da'wah [27].

a. Implementation of the Certification Program

The implementation of the Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification program in Bandar Lampung City is carried out through several stages:

- Participant Identification and Recruitment

The local government together with the Office of the Ministry of Religion conducts data collection and recruitment of imams, dais, and khatibs who are already active in the community. Recruitment is carried out through cooperation with mosques, Islamic educational institutions, and religious organizations [28].

- Certification Curriculum Development

The curriculum is structured with a focus on three main aspects:

- Islamic Theological and Scientific Ability: Strengthening religious materials such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, and morals.
- Digital Da'wah Skills: Training in the use of social media, presentation applications, and technology-based effective communication techniques.
- Social Competence: Strengthening national insights, tolerance, and religious moderation.

b. Training and Competency Exams

This program involves intensive training conducted face-to-face and online. Each participant is required to follow:

- Workshop and Seminar: Speakers consist of scholars, academics, and digital media practitioners.
- Da'wah Simulation and Practice: Participants are asked to simulate lectures or sermons with evaluation from mentors.
- Competency Exam: Includes written tests, interviews, and hands-on practice.

c. Certificate Issuance

After being declared passed, participants receive an official certificate from the Ministry of Religion or an authorized

institution. This certificate is proof of recognition of their competence in preaching.

d. Implementation Steps

○ Program Socialization

Using digital media, such as government websites, social media, and instant messaging applications, to disseminate information about this program.

○ Collaboration with Related Institutions

Involving religious organizations, Islamic universities, and da'wah communities to support the implementation of the program.

○ Technology Facilities

Providing digital devices, internet access, and supporting applications for participants in need.

○ Monitoring and Evaluation

Each participant is monitored in the implementation of da'wah after certification, with periodic evaluations to ensure the sustainability of the quality of their da'wah.

The Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification program in Bandar Lampung City is a progressive step in optimizing da'wah in the digital era. With a planned implementation strategy and support from various parties, this program can be a model for other regions in Indonesia. The results of the study show that the Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification program in Bandar Lampung City has had a positive impact on improving the quality of da'wah. Some of the key findings include: *Competency Improvement*: Program participants showed improvements in religious understanding and communication skills. *Utilization of Technology*: Certification provides training in using digital media for preaching, such as video content creation and the use of social media. *Professionalism*: This program encourages dai, imams, and khatibs to be more professional in conveying the message of da'wah.

The Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification program in Bandar Lampung City is a strategic step in optimizing da'wah in the digital era. This program not only improves the competence of participants but

also strengthens the role of da'wah in society. The success of this program requires greater support, both in terms of technology and government regulations. This study recommends further development in digital training and cross-sector collaboration to support more inclusive and relevant da'wah.

4. CONCLUSION

Optimizing da'wah in the digital era through the Imam, Dai, and Khatib certification program in Bandar Lampung City is a strategic effort that answers the need for da'wah in the midst of technological developments. This program aims to improve the competence of dai, imam, and khatib in three main aspects: religious understanding, digital da'wah skills, and strengthening the values of religious moderation [29]. The implementation of the program includes participant identification, development of relevant curriculum, intensive training, competency exams, and issuance of certificates as official recognition. These stages are supported by cross-sector collaboration between the government, religious institutions, and the community, as well as the use of digital technology to facilitate implementation.

The results of this program show several positive impacts, such as:

- 1) **Competency Improvement**: The participants better understand religious teachings and are able to deliver da'wah professionally.
- 2) **Use of Digital Technology**: Certification provides skills in using social media, presentation applications, and digital platforms to convey religious messages.
- 3) **Strengthening Religious Moderation**: The da'wah messages conveyed are more inclusive, tolerant, and relevant to the dynamics of society.
- 4) **Increased Professionalism**: This program encourages higher standards in the delivery of da'wah.

However, the success of this program still faces several challenges, such as limited access to technology for some participants

and the need for more systematic training development. Therefore, this program needs greater support in terms of regulation,

technology, and cross-sector collaboration for better sustainability and effectiveness.

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