

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ONLINE STUDY OF SUNAN DRAJAT LAMONGAN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN SANTRI'S DIGITAL DA'WAH ON RELIGIOUS LITERACY

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Abstract: The development of digital technology has driven the transformation of Islamic da'wah from physical spaces to digital environments that are open, fast, and interactive. In this context, digital media-based religious studies have become one of the da'wah strategies increasingly adopted by Islamic boarding schools. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of online religious studies conducted by Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan in supporting digital da'wah among santri, focusing on the study model, audience reach, and its influence on religious literacy. This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. The findings indicate that the online religious studies at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan implement an adaptive study model that responds to contemporary developments, are able to reach a wide audience, and contribute positively to the improvement of religious literacy. Online religious studies function not only as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as a space for fostering a more critical, moderate, and contextual understanding of religion. These findings affirm that online religious studies can serve as a strategic instrument in strengthening digital da'wah among santri in the digital era.

Keywords: digital da'wah, online religious studies, santri, religious literacy, Islamic boarding school

Abstrak: Perkembangan teknologi digital telah mendorong transformasi dakwah Islam dari ruang fisik menuju ruang digital yang bersifat terbuka, cepat, dan interaktif. Dalam konteks tersebut, kajian media digital menjadi salah satu strategi dakwah yang semakin banyak diadopsi oleh lembaga pesantren. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas kajian online Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat Lamongan dalam dakwah digital santri, dengan fokus pada model kajian, jangkauan audiens, serta pengaruhnya terhadap literasi keagamaan santri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kajian online Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat

Lamongan memiliki model kajian yang adaptif terhadap perkembangan zaman, mampu menjangkau audiens secara luas, serta berkontribusi positif terhadap peningkatan literasi keagamaan. Kajian online tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai media transmisi ilmu keagamaan, tetapi juga sebagai ruang pembentukan pemahaman keagamaan yang lebih kritis, moderat, dan kontekstual. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kajian online dapat menjadi instrumen strategis dalam penguatan dakwah digital santri di era digital.

Kata kunci: dakwah digital, kajian online, santri, literasi keagamaan, pesantren

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought the fundamental changes in the way people access, produce, and distribute religious knowledge. Islamic da'wah that was previously present physically is moving into the digital space that is fast, open, and easy to reach a wide audience recently. The change of da'wah strategy not only shows a shift in conventional da'wah media, but also a change in the paradigm of da'wah communication from a one-way pattern to a more interactive, participatory, and network-based communication¹.

In the study of digital da'wah, students occupy a strategic position. Students have religious scientific capital, cultural legitimacy, and a strong literacy tradition, so that they can be a counterbalance to the flow of religious information in the digital space which is often superficial, biased, or does not have a clear scientific basis². The presence of students in the digital da'wah strategy is important to maintain the quality of religious messages so that they can be moderate, argumentative, and enlightening.

One of the strategies that is currently developing in da'wah strategies is the use of online studies³. Online studies allow the process of transmitting religious knowledge to be flexible, sustainable, and easy to reach a wider audience than conventional studies⁴. Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School is one of the Islamic boarding schools that is actively developing online studies as part of the digital da'wah strategy and religious guidance for students.

¹ Wahyu Nisa, "Efektivitas Penerimaan Pesan Dakwah Konvensional Dan Dakwah Online Jamaah Teras Dakwah," *Hikmah* 17, no. 1 (2023): 31–46, <https://doi.org/10.24952/hik.v17i1.6563>.

² Noval Setiawan and Arifatul Khiyaroh, "Urgensi Dan Strategi Dakwah Santri Di Era Digitalisasi," *Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 7, no. 2 (2022): 223, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jdk.v7i2.5774>.

³ Fauzi, "Strategi Dakwah Di Era Digital Dalam Meningkatkan Pemahaman Agama Islam," *Liwaul Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah Dan Masyarakat Islam* 13, no. 1 (2023): 35–55, <https://doi.org/10.47766/liwauldakwah.v13i1.2433>.

⁴ Nisa, "Efektivitas Penerimaan Pesan Dakwah Konvensional Dan Dakwah Online Jamaah Teras Dakwah."

However, the effectiveness of online studies as a digital da'wah medium cannot be assumed as the way it is. The main challenge of digital da'wah lies in the inequality between the breadth of the audience and the depth of religious understanding resulted⁵. A lot of digital da'wah contents found on various platforms are superficial, because the main focus produced is not the message of da'wah itself but popularity. Therefore, this study is important to empirically examine the effectiveness of the online study of the Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School in the digital da'wah of students, especially related to the study model, audience reach, and its influence on the religious literacy of students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of analytical descriptive research⁶. This approach was chosen to understand deeply about the effectiveness of the online study of the Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School in the context of student digital da'wah. The research was carried out in an online study organized by the Sunan Drajat Lamongan Islamic Boarding School.

The subjects of the study are students who join online studies, as well as managers and presenters of online studies as key informants. The determination of informants was carried out by purposive sampling technique based on active involvement in online studies and digital da'wah activities.

Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participatory observations on the implementation of online studies, and documentation studies in the form of study recordings, materials, and audience engagement data. Data analysis is carried out with an interactive analysis model which includes data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing and verification. The validity of the data is ensured through source triangulation, technical triangulation, and member check.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Research shows that the online study of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School has a systematic and adaptive study model to the characteristics

⁵ Wahyu Budiantoro, "Dakwah Di Era Digital," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 11, no. 2 (2018): 263–81, <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v11i2.1369>.

⁶ Amtai Alaslan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Center for Open Science, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.31237/osf.io/smrhb>.

of digital audiences. This study model is characterized by the existence of a clear material structure, the continuity of the study theme, and the use of scientific references sourced from classical books and contemporary Islamic literature.

In addition to the systematics aspect of the material, the online study model of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School also utilizes digital media features that allow the interaction between the presenter and the audience. The interaction can be seen through the comment column, as well as direct responses from the presenter to the students' questions. This communication pattern strengthens the character of digital da'wah which is dialogical and participatory, as emphasized in the theory of new media communication that the audience is no longer in a passive position, but they can be an active subject in the process of communication⁷. In this context, students not only receive study materials, but also engage in the process of understanding religious meaning.

In terms of audience reach, the results of the study show that the online study of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School is able to reach relatively wide audiences. The audience of study is not limited to students who are in the pesantren environment, but also includes alumni students, students from other Islamic boarding schools, and the general public who have an interest in religious studies. The breadth of this reach is influenced by the use of easily accessible digital platforms, time flexibility, and redistribution of study content through social media. These findings are in line with Campbell's view that digital media allows religious messages to transcend geographical and institutional boundaries, thereby significantly expanding the space of da'wah⁸.

However, the study also found that the breadth of audience reach is not always directly proportional to the depth of participation. Not all audiences were actively involved in discussions or interactions during the study. Nevertheless, the existence of passive audiences still has significance in the context of digital da'wah, because it shows the broad reach of religious messages and the potential for gradual internalization of religious values.

The influence of online studies on students' religious literacy can be seen from changes in the way of how students understand and respond to religious materials. Students show increased ability to understand religious teachings in a

⁷ Fathurrahman 'Arif Rumata, Muh. Iqbal, and Asman Asman, "Dakwah Digital Sebagai Sarana Peningkatan Pemahaman Moderasi Beragama Dikalangan Pemuda," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 41, no. 2 (2021): 172–83, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v41.2.9421>.

⁸ Ghina Zahidatushalihah Firdausi et al., "Dakwah Di Kalangan Gen Z: Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Minat Generasi Muda Terhadap Kajian," *Al-I'timad: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam* 3, no. 2 (2025): 163–78, <https://doi.org/10.35878/alitimad.v3i2.1693>.

more contextual way, rather than textual way. This is reflected in the ability of students to relate study materials to social realities, contemporary Islamic issues, and religious challenges in the digital space. These findings reinforce the concept of religious literacy that not only emphasizes the ability to read religious texts, but also the ability to interpret and apply them critically and responsibly⁹.

Furthermore, online studies contribute to the formation of a more reflective and moderate attitude of students' religious attitudes. Students become more selective in filtering religious information in digital media, and have a critical awareness of the authority of religious sources. Thus, online studies not only function as a medium for the transmission of religious knowledge, but also as a space for religious literacy learning that encourages students to be more open, dialogical, and responsible in dealing with the diversity of Islamic discourses in the digital era.

Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the view that the effectiveness of digital da'wah cannot be reduced solely to the breadth of the audience. In the context of Islamic da'wah in the digital space, a wide reach is important, but it is not enough to ensure the achievement of da'wah goals that are educational and transformative. The results of this study show that the quality of the study model and the depth of religious literacy produced are actually the main indicators of the effectiveness of digital da'wah. An online study of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School proves that Islamic boarding schools have the institutional and scientific capacity to adapt da'wah into the digital space without losing the scientific substance and traditional values of the Islamic boarding school.

The adaptation of da'wah to the digital space carried out by the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School shows that digital da'wah does not have to be identical with oversimplifying religious materials. On the other hand, online studies can be designed systematically and academically, while maintaining authoritative scientific references. These findings are in line with Campbell's view that religious institutions have a great opportunity to maintain scientific authority in the digital space as long as they are able to adapt the form of communication to the characteristics of new media. In this case, pesantren not

⁹ Mohammad Syifa Amin Widigdo, "Islam Digital: Meningkatkan Digital Literacy Untuk Dakwah Dan Kajian Islam Dengan Media E-Library," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Program Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.18196/ppm.46.823>.

only play a role as a producer of da'wah content, but also as a guardian of the quality of religious discourse in the digital space.

Furthermore, online studies function as a space for religious learning that allows for the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the students. The process of negotiating this meaning can be seen from the two-way interaction, discussion, and critical response of students to the study material. This condition confirms that digital da'wah communication is no longer linear, but dialogical and participatory. This is in line with the new media communication theory that places the audience as the active subject in the communication process, not just the recipient of the message¹⁰. In this context, students play the role as *co-creators* of meaning who actively interpret, criticize, and contextualize religious messages.

From the perspective of religious literacy, the findings of this study show that online studies contribute to the formation of a more critical and reflective religious literacy of students. Religious literacy no longer stops at mastering religious texts, but develops on the ability of students to understand contexts, compare sources, and respond to the diversity of Islamic discourse in the digital space. This is in line with the concept of religious literacy put forward by Hoover and Hjarvard, which emphasizes the importance of reflective and contextual skills in understanding religion in the midst of the mediatization of public space¹¹.

In this context, the online study of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School cannot be separated from the central role of KH. Abdul Ghofur as an authoritative figure who becomes the main reference in the practice of da'wah in the Islamic boarding school. As a caretaker of the pesantren as well as a religious figure, KH. Abdul Ghofur has strong scientific and cultural legitimacy in the perspective of students and the community. His presence in the online study not only serves as a presenter of religious materials, but also as a symbol of the sustainability of the Islamic boarding school's scientific tradition in the midst of digital transformation. It shows that the adaptation of da'wah to the digital space is carried out based on a central figure who has scientific and moral authority.

The adaptation of digital da'wah carried out by KH. Abdul Ghofur through an online study also shows that digital da'wah does not have to be

¹⁰ Muzayanah Agustriani and Lubis Yasser Muda, "Dinamika Dakwah Islam Dalam Era Digital: Kajian Terhadap Strategi Implementasi Dan Tantangan Yang Dihadapi," *El Madani: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi Islam* 5, no. 2 (2025): 98–117, <https://doi.org/10.53678/9arf1z07>.

¹¹ Nuha Nabila, "The Application of Da'wah Communication in Ciputat Community in the Digital Era," *Jurnal Kajian Manajemen Dakwah* 6, no. 2 (2025): 84–96, <https://doi.org/10.35905/jkmd.v6i2.11058>.

identical with oversimplifying religious materials. On the contrary, the study material is still delivered systematically, argumentatively, and based on authoritative scientific references that is in line with the tradition of teaching in pesantren generally. The digital da'wah strategy applied is not oriented to sensation or popularity itself, but to the sustainability of the religious learning process. These findings are in line with Campbell's view that religious institutions and leaders have a great opportunity to maintain scientific authority in the digital space as long as they are able to adapt the form of communication to the characteristics of new media. In this case, KH. Abdul Ghofur plays the role of a key actor who bridges the scientific authority of the pesantren with the demands of digital communication.

Furthermore, an online study led by KH. Abdul Ghofur functions as a religious learning space that allows for the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the students. Da'wah develops into a dialogical and participatory process. This condition confirms the relevance of new media communication theories that position the audience as active subjects in the communication process. In the context of this study, students are not only passive listeners, but also take the role as co-creators of meaning who actively interpret and contextualize the religious messages conveyed by KH. Abdul Ghofur.

From the perspective of religious literacy, the role of KH. Abdul Ghofur in his online study also contributed to the formation of a more critical and reflective religious literacy of students. His scientific authority allows students to obtain credible religious references in the midst of the rapid flow of Islamic information in the digital space. The religious literacy of students does not only develop in mastering religious texts, but also in the ability to understand context, compare sources, and respond to the diversity of Islamic discourses in a moderate and responsible manner. These findings are in line with the concept of religious literacy, explained by Hoover and Hjarvard, which emphasizes the importance of reflective and contextual skills in understanding religion in the midst of the process of mediating public space.

Thus, the online study of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School can be understood as a form of digital da'wah practice that puts KH. Abdul Ghofur as a central actor in maintaining the continuity between the scientific tradition of Islamic boarding schools and the dynamics of digital media. Digital da'wah through online studies is not only oriented to the delivery of religious messages, but also to the process of forming the awareness, reason, and ethics of religious teachings of students. These findings emphasize that the success of digital da'wah of Islamic boarding schools is inseparable from the role of religious

leaders who have scientific authority, as well as being able to manage da'wah communication strategies in an adaptive, literacy, and sustainable manner in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the online study of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School is effective as a medium for students' digital da'wah in the context of increasingly complex digital media developments. This effectiveness is not only reflected in the ability of online studies to reach a wide audience, but also from the quality of the study model that is adaptive to the characteristics of the digital audience and the depth of impact produced on the religious literacy of students.

The online study model applied shows that there is a systematic effort to integrate the scientific tradition of Islamic boarding schools with the character of digital media. The planned structure of the material, the continuity of the study theme, and the use of authoritative religious references are important factors that maintain the quality of the substance of da'wah. This adaptation confirms that Islamic boarding schools have the capacity to transform digitally without losing their scientific identity and basic Islamic da'wah values.

In terms of audience reach, the online study of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School is able to go beyond the geographical boundaries of the Islamic boarding school and reach students as well as the wider community. This reach strengthens the position of online studies as a strategic digital da'wah tool and opens opportunities for the formation of inclusive religious learning spaces. However, the findings of this study also show that the breadth of reach needs to be balanced with strengthening the quality of interaction and deepening the material so that the goals of da'wah can be achieved optimally.

Furthermore, online studies make a real contribution to the formation of religious literacy of students. Students not only experience an increase in religious knowledge, but also show progress in their ability to understand religious teachings in a contextual, critical, and reflective manner. Online studies function as an educational instrument that helps students to be more selective and responsible in responding to various religious information in the digital space.

Thus, online studies cannot be understood solely as a medium for conveying religious messages, but as a strategic instrument in the formation of students' religious literacy in the digital era. This study emphasizes that strengthening the digital da'wah of Islamic boarding schools through online

studies has high relevance for the development of literatic, moderate, and sustainable Islamic da'wah in the midst of a digital society dynamic.

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