



## Da'wah on new media and religious authorities in Indonesia

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Da'wah, new media, authority.

### Abstract

**Purpose** - The purpose of this research is to find out the art and management of Ustadz Syam's da'wah in the TikTok account from the analysis of the sociology of da'wah.

**Method** - This research uses a netnographic approach that focuses on the art and sociology of da'wah Ustadz Syam on the TikTok account.

**Result** - The results showed that religious authority is not only controlled by traditional da'i who have a scientific base in *pesantren*, but now new authority is born from those Da'is who are close to new media, content, packaging, fashion, and social media platforms to preach.

**Implication** - The da'wah movement that needs to be carried out in the future should adapt to the dynamics of the times and in accordance with the needs of the wider community..

**Originality** - This research is related to the application of da'wah in TikTok, Ustadz Syam presents a new authority as a challenge to the old Da'i who need to care about popular media platforms.



**Kata kunci:**

Da'wa, new media, authority.

**Abstrak**

**Tujuan** - Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui seni dan manajemen dakwah Ustadz Syam di akun TikTok dari analisis sosiologi dakwah.

**Metode** - Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan netnografi yang berfokus pada seni dan sosiologi dakwah Ustadz Syam di akun TikTok.

**Hasil** - Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa otoritas keagamaan tidak hanya dikuasai oleh da'i tradisional yang memiliki basis keilmuan di pesantren, namun kini otoritas baru lahir dari para da'i yang dekat dengan media baru, konten, kemas, fashion, dan platform media sosial untuk berdakwah.

**Implikasi** - Gerakan dakwah yang perlu dilakukan di masa depan harus menyesuaikan dengan dinamika zaman dan sesuai dengan kebutuhan masyarakat luas.

**Orisinalitas** - Penelitian ini terkait dengan penerapan dakwah di TikTok, Ustadz Syam menghadirkan otoritas baru sebagai tantangan bagi para Da'i lama yang perlu peduli dengan platform media populer.

## Introduction

JID | 270 In the digital era that continues to develop, humans are only ready for some changes in virtual media. These changes then change how humans think, act, and communicate. The first change the author considers as representative in this paper is described by Alvin Toffler with the term Future Shock. Although basically, this future shock describes changes in the third wave. However, for the author, future shock represents the first change to continue the author's thinking that has gone through the second change, namely popular culture, which then the third change the author calls cancel culture. The first change described by Alvin Toffler was Future Shock. This term describes when humans are not ready to accept change - culture, thought, religion, technology, and even economics. Future Shock is the book's title and a concept introduced by Alvin Toffler in 1970 (Wan Zakaria, 2012).

This concept refers to the tremendous disorientation and anxiety that individuals and societies can experience when they cannot cope with the rapid pace of change in modern life. Future Shock for Alvin Toffler is a sensation that leaves humanity baffled by rapid and constant technological, cultural, and societal changes. This impacts social and psychological life, such as stress, anxiety, and difficulty adapting to the future (Islas et al., 2018).

Unlike Alvin Toffler above, the second change is called popular culture. Popular culture, or popular culture, refers to everything that is popular and attracts the attention of the majority of people in a certain period. It covers various elements, including entertainment, music, movies, fashion, food, technology, and language. Popular culture often reflects many people's preferences, habits, and lifestyles. Popular culture is also often referred to as pop culture. It is a culture produced by the general public, which contrasts with a high culture, which has more to do with high art, literature, and more exclusive and elite cultural works. The history of popular culture has long roots, but the author can note some crucial points in the development of popular culture (Hoesterey & Clark, 2012).

In the Middle Ages, popular culture was much associated with oral traditions, such as folklore and folk songs passed down from generation to generation. This was an early form of popular culture. The Industrial Revolution in the 19th century brought dramatic changes in society with technological developments, urbanization, and economic changes. This creates a culture of consumption that supports the growth of popular cultures, including theaters, circuses, and entertainment magazines. Then, the mass media era of the 20th century saw the emergence of mass media, such as radio, television, and film, that brought popular culture to a new level. Musicians, actors, preachers, and celebrities from the entertainment world became integral to popular culture (Fairuz, 2021; Rafique et al., 2022).

The 21st century then became the digital age, which brought a massive transformation with the internet and social media. This allows popular culture to expand quickly and reach a larger audience. Phenomena like viral videos, memes, and streaming music are examples of this change. Recent changes in the era of globalization have expanded the reach of popular culture--music, movies, and other cultural products from different countries and cultures can be easily accessed by people around the world. Popular culture has become an essential part of everyday life, and people have now drowned in it without being able to return (Hoesterey & Clark, 2012; Kusumawardhani & Sari, 2021).

On the other hand, the emergence of new media in the public sphere has given rise to fragmentation and religious authority in contemporary Indonesia. This fragmentation led to a lengthening contestation between the new and traditional religious authorities. The owners of this authority are those who are affiliated with mainstream organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI who convey da'wah, but in fact, not only come from mainstream organizations but those whose popularity is due to being intertwined with new media, called *micro-celebrities* (Akmaliah, 2020).

Da'wah is the whole human activity to invite people to Islam. Shaykh Ali Mahfuz understood da'wah as calling and inviting people to God's guidance and performing *amar makruf* and *nahi munkar* to achieve the world's good and the hereafter. In the Qur'an, Allah SWT mentions da'wah as a call to the excellent path containing wisdom so that humans go the path Allah SWT pleases. So, the command of Allah SWT to call on all humans is a command to interact through information and communication (Ariani, 2012; Chozin, 2013).

Da'wah is the duty of a prominent religious figure trusted by the community to convey the religion of Allah SWT as once done by the Prophet SAW. Usually, da'wah is carried out face-to-face, through pulpits, at *ta'lim* councils, and places that present speakers or da'is. However, apart from that, a da'I needs art and management in preaching. The essence of art is beauty. Art is an expression of the human soul that contains and expresses beauty. He was born from the deepest side of a man who drove him to express everything beautifully (Syaefuddin, 2018; Yun Masfufah, 2019) so that the art of da'wah can deliver da'wah messages to be more beautiful, directed, and polite.

In addition, da'wah management is also needed to regulate da'wah activities so they can run systematically. Da'wah management is a process of implementing da'wah through management principles, namely planning, organizing, *actuating*, and *controlling* (Fauzi & Indah, 2021; Hasan, 2019). Today's portrait of da'wah is in line with technological developments. Where da'I can give da'wah through social media such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and lately, the most popular is the TikTok account. The existence of social media presents a variant of information that can be enjoyed by the community about the economy, business, education, social, conflict issues, and religion (Anggita Falestyana Sari & Lutfhi Ulfa Ni'amah, 2022; Ulfa & Rachman, 2022).

Based on a report by We Are Social, the number of active social media users in Indonesia was 191 million people in January 2022. That number has increased by 12.35% compared to the previous year, which was 170 million people. WhatsApp is the most widely used social media in Indonesia. The percentage was recorded at 88.7%. After that, there are Instagram and Facebook, with a percentage of 84.8% and 81.3%, respectively. Meanwhile, the proportion of TikTok and Telegram users was 63.1% and 62.8% respectively (WeAreSocial, 2022).

The large number of social media users in Indonesia allows preachers to participate in contests to spread da'wah messages through social media. Da'I today must be able to take part in interacting, communicating, and establishing closeness with the community through social media. Recently viral, a cleric made the name of his congregation with the name Al-Tiqtoqiyah on his TikTok account. He is Ustadz Syamsuddin Nur Makka, familiarly called Ustadz Syam. Jama'ah Al-tiqtoqiyah was officially opened by Ustadz Sham on January 17, 2021, in his post (@Syam\_elmarusy) (Anggita Falestyana Sari & Lutfhi Ulfa Ni'amah, 2022).

Through his TikTok social media account @Syam\_elmarusy, he currently has 330 video posts and several followers 1.8 M, among which he has content aimed at sharing his knowledge about Islamic teachings (Anggita Falestyana Sari & Lutfhi Ulfa Ni'amah, 2022). TikTok accounts are already in demand by many people around the world. Based on *the We Are Social* report, TikTok has had 1.4 billion monthly active users (MAU) aged over 18 globally as of the first quarter of 2022. This number increased by 15.34% compared to the previous quarter, which was 1.2 billion users. By country, the United States has the most significant active users of TikTok worldwide. The number was recorded at 136.4 million people in April 2022. Indonesia is in second place with the number of active TikTok users of 99.1 million people. TikTok users in Indonesia spend an average of 23.1 hours per month on TikTok (Monavia Ayu Rizaty, 2022).

TikTok accounts are new media for preaching. In general, new media refers to media presented online on the internet. To access it requires a device (gadget/device) and an internet connection. Departing from that, the author describes that Ustadz Syam is a creative, innovative, and modern da'I because he has been able to fill da'wah spaces in accordance with the times, ranging from face-to-face da'wah on TV stations to social media, especially on TikTok accounts. Da'wah's content on the TikTok account has provided education about religious values, so Ustadz Syam unconsciously made TikTok not just entertainment, information, music, and dancing but made it a new medium for preaching.

The research question that needs to be answered is about the art and management of Ustadz Sham's da'wah on the TikTok account from the sociological analysis of da'wah. The author uses a netnographic approach to obtain, collect, and explore as much data as possible according to the title needed.

## Research Methods

This research uses qualitative methods with a netnographic approach. This approach is used to understand individual behavior and interactions online, such as communities, social networks, forums, or other platforms (Lopez-Rocha, 2010). This approach involves observing, analyzing, and interpreting the data generated from those online activities. Here are the steps that the author did. *First*, the author identifies the topic and online community on the social media platform, which the author then accesses and collects data from relevant online sources. This relates to the text of forums, messages, comments, images, videos, or other elements related to da'wah in new media and religious authorities in Indonesia in studying the sociology of da'wah. *Second*, the authors passively observed online activities in communities related to dominant topics of conversation, social norms, and interaction patterns. Then, the author makes observations in the form of notes, screenshots, or data storage in other forms. *Third*, the authors perform data analysis to identify patterns, trends, and relevant findings, such as content analysis, narrative analysis, or social network analysis (McMullan, 2020; Yujie et al., 2022).

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Strategy and da'wa management*

In popular scientific dictionaries, art is defined as everything related to the work produced by the element of taste. Art is the result and talent of man. Man and art cannot be separated because art embodies one's ideas and feelings that are never separated from society and raised through culture.

There are several arts that we know, such as some in the form of writing, calligraphy (painting), carving, literature, puppet art, fine art, dance, and so on. Art is an expression of the human soul that contains and expresses beauty. He was born from the deepest side of man, which drove him to express everything beautiful. JID | 273

The art of da'wah that the author refers to is not in the form of art as a medium of da'wah, such as dance, puppet art, and other arts. However, the beauty of da'wah is produced, conveyed, and given to *mad'u* by a da'I, so that when the messages of da'wah have been wrapped in art, then the comfort, tranquility, familiarity, and happiness of *mad'u* will be present amid da'wah that is being delivered (Anwar, 2019; Fauzi & Indah, 2021).

The art of da'wah Ustadz Syam can be seen from the melodious voice when reading the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet, gentleness in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, the hadith of the Prophet, and Islamic stories. In addition, Ustadz Syam also showed humor and a communicative attitude. He showed a friendly, friendly, and open attitude. He invited *mad'u* to conduct reciprocal communication in the form of questions and answers, both face-to-face and on accounts on TikTok.

The success of conveying the art of da'wah must be connected to management in da'wah. Management comes from the word *management (English)*, which means "management, governance, management." In the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, management is implementing the achievement of specific goals organized with supervision. In Arabic, management is called *idarah, tadbir, siyasah, and qiyadah, an-nizham or tanzim*, which means a place to store everything and the placement of everything in its place (Ahmad Suja'i, 2022; Mahmud, 2020).

Management contains three meanings: *first*, management as a process; *second*, management as a collectivity of people who carry out management activities; Management as an art and a science (Ahmad Suja'i, 2022). James Stoner explained that management is the process of planning, organizing, directing, and supervising the efforts of the organization's members and using resources to achieve predetermined goals.

Da'wah management is a process of planning tasks, grouping, gathering, and placing training personnel in the compiled task groups and then moving them toward achieving the goals of da'wah. In other words, da'wah management is a process of implementing da'wah through management principles: planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling (Atabik, 2016; Tria Suci Rachmawati, 2022; Karim, et al, 2021). In essence, da'wah management is cooperating with fellow Muslims to spread Islam into the life system of humanity effectively and efficiently. Mahmuddin revealed that da'wah management is a process of utilizing resources (human and natural) and is carried out to realize the values of Islamic teachings as a common goal (Mahmud, 2020).

The da'wah messages Ustadz Syam conveys through his TikTok account are inseparable from da'wah management. Da'wah management starts with interesting da'wah material, music compatibility with material, clothing or costumes, da'wah intonation, and background or place to take da'wah videos. The da'wah material delivered by Ustadz Syam is more directed at general things about Islam, such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving, marriage, relationships, moving on, upset, good manners, and others. The costumes used by Ustadz Syam are more for young people or teenagers, such as T-shirts, hats, and jeans, while the place to take da'wah videos is more in the yard of the house and the parks. Ustadz Syam greeted his worshippers with great warmth regarding communication and appearance.

### *New media and Islam*

Media is a tool or means used to convey information or messages by communicators to communicants. In Arabic, the word *wasilah* (plural: *wasai*) means media. *Wasilah* is "Ma yataqarrab bihi ala al-syay'I (*something that is used as a tool or means to achieve goals*) or "Ma yasta'in mutsmir" (*a tool that helps da'I to deliver da'wah to be effective and efficient, some say wasilah is "Ma yastakhdimuh al-da'I min wasa'il hissiyah li naql al-da'wah ila mad'uwin (tool or means used by da'I in delivering da'wah to mad'u (Husna, 2021; Udin, 2019).*

Media is one of the pillars (essential elements in communication, in addition to communicators (*source*), message (message), *receiver* (receiver), and *influence* (effect)). Media can also be understood as *channels*. Both media and channels are considered identical because they both mean the tools used in communication. However, some view that media and channels differ (Aziz, 2011; Ginda, 2018). Today's social media allows preachers to do da'wah online and widely. Where da'wah activities are usually carried out face-to-face, from the pulpit, and *ta'lim* assemblies whose congregations or *mad'u* are limited. Now the da'I innovates and creatively creates da'wah content through social media such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.

Social media is a new media in da'wah, in the language of new media (*new media*) means a channel for delivering new messages or information. New media refers to media that is presented online on the internet. To access it requires a device (gadget/device) and an internet connection. According to Denis McQuail, new media is a container where all communication messages can be centralized and accessible to channels using internet technology and engage audiences to improve the process of interaction and communication (Khan & Aytes, 2020; McMullan, 2020).

The TikTok account is one of the new media used by Ustadz Syam in preaching. TikTok accounts contain short videos that combine a person's video and music. Usually, these videos present information, entertainment, and others much favored by millennials or young people. However, today, Ustadz Syam took advantage of this opportunity by making the TikTok account a medium of da'wah, so he showed that if the TikTok account is used by good people well, it will be a piece of beneficial information to the community, especially about Islamic values (Lynch, 2016).

### *Islamic narrative and da'wah Ustadz Syam on TikTok*

There are many Islamic narratives conveyed by Ustadz Syam through his TikTok account, among which are;

*First*, a woman's aurat. Ustadz Syam explained that a woman's *aurat* in her prayers is her whole body, all over her body except the palms of her hands, the backs of her hands, and her face. However, scholars differ in opinion about the face, what the face is, and whether the chin is included rather than the face. Most scholars mention the chin, including the face, analogical when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ordered ablution. The chin is worn with water, even the bearded one in between water. So, if the chin includes the face, it can be seen in women's prayers, but if you want to be safe to cover, the chin is closed.

*Second*. Intention of Fasting Debt. Ustadz Syam mentioned that Allah Almighty gave eleven to pay the debts of Ramadan with the intention, "I intend to fast pay the debts of Ramadan," it has already gained the reward of his sunnah, but his intention is obligatory.

*Third*. Prayer Can Change Destiny. Ustadz Syam explained that when a woman came to the Prophet Moses. Prophet of Allah who can converse with Allah, ask Allah to grant mercy to me because I have been married for a long time but have no children. Then Prophet Moses asked Allah, and Allah Almighty replied that he could not because I destined him to be barren. Then, a few years later, came to Moses holding a baby, and Moses said whose son. Then the mother answered, this is my son. The prophet Moses was astonished and asked God. My God, do you not predestine him barren? Allah said, indeed, I destined him to be barren, but he always called me *Ya Rohim*, *Ya Rohim*, so I gave him offspring because my affection exceeded my destiny.

*Fouth*. Will crying torture Mayit in his grave. Ustadz Syam explained that the Prophet wept when his son and mother died. The Prophet also wept, and the Prophet said - these tears are lawful, but what is haram is words such as leaning life on the may it and as if belittling Allah, such as I cannot live without him, who loves me to eat and others.

*Fith*. Does Resisting Wind/Fart Include Jihad. Ustadz Syam explained that holding wind/fart does not include Jihad. After all, it is arranged to be removed from praying to pass wind continuously because it must maintain health first. After that, remove and perform ablution again when there is a feeling of wanting to pass wind/fart when praying. It is better to let it out because the Prophet explained that if there is no sound or smell, then make sure it is not void.

### *Ustad celebrities and popular Islam*

Ustadz celebrity is a trending topic in Indonesia. Ustadz celebrity is a da'I who delivers da'wah through TV, Radio, and social media stations in Indonesia. Celebrity clerics can attract sympathetic listeners because they can make jokes, joke, and invite tears. Ustadz celebrities have price rates adjusted according to contract agreements on TV and Radio stations (Abdullah et al., 2018; Mohammed, 2017). The famous Da'i is usually asked to be a performer in television programs, and this can increase his popularity. The popularity of da'I is what becomes the label of da'I celebrities. It is providing expensive rates, busy schedules, and filling a lot of television programs and religious activities in the community.

Ustadz Syam is one of Indonesia's celebrity preachers. His presence on one of the television stations makes him known throughout Indonesia as a young ustadz and hafiz Al-Qur'an with a beautiful voice. Its popularity in the world of da'wah is undoubtedly because the message of da'wah delivered is wrapped based on the interpretation of the Qur'an and al-hadith delivered. One of the TV stations where he filled da'wah was Trans TV. His popularity is known as a modern ustad, and



it can be seen through the clothing typical of young people. Da'wah material is packaged in accordance with the needs of the millennial community in general, so Ustadz Syam da'wah is included in Popular Islam (Dahlan, 2012).

JID | 276 Famous Islam is a form of modernization's influence on Islamic cultural values in society. This acculturation then directly or indirectly changed Islamic culture, which was initially perceived as a conservative, conventional, and exclusive culture to be more dynamic and modernist (Rafique et al., 2022). The examples of popular Islamic culture range from fashion, music, language style, and daily behavior (Akmaliah, 2014; Rafique et al., 2022).

### *Religious authorities in Indonesia*

Regarding religious authority in Indonesia, those affiliated with mainstream organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Ulama Council or Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) are part of the religious authority. These three organizations are official organizations essential in providing religious guidance and fatwas for Muslims in Indonesia. NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI significantly influence religious policy and practice in the country. NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI strive to maintain the sanctity and integrity of Islam in Indonesia and encourage interfaith tolerance. All three engage in interreligious discussions and dialogues to promote better interfaith harmony and understanding (Akmaliah, 2020).

However, in this aspect, the religious authority referred to by the author is the ustaz, preacher, kyai, traditional da'I, and new da'I - traditional da'I and new da'I are undoubtedly different. The traditional Da'I in packaging, fashion, and content of the lectures did not touch young millennial circles, although the lectures were conducted on new media platforms (Khan & Aytes, 2020; McMullan, 2020). While the new da'I in packaging, fashion, and lecture content touches young people and is active in new media that are more popular. Thus, religious authority has fragmented from the traditional da'I to the new, more popular da'I.

Many young preachers are fashionable, and lecture content that directly touches the lives and problems faced by young people is more popular than traditional da'I. This has undoubtedly led to the fragmentation of religious authority, which is not only in traditional da'I, but authority has moved to new da'I. These new preachers are a choice for young people to get religious messages in the midst of the problems they face, such as love affairs, relationships dating, friendships, turmoil, insecurity, moving on, and other materials that are in direct contact with millennial life (Laksana & Wood, 2019; Wijaya Mulya, 2021). The presence of new preachers on this media platform is undoubtedly an alternative for young people and a challenge to traditional religious authorities because the presence of these new preachers is a sign that the birth of new authority on religious aspects is more prevalent among youth in the new media era.

## **Conclusion**

In the digital era that continues to develop, humans are only ready for some changes in virtual media. These changes change how humans think, interact, act, and communicate. The aspect of da'wah and religious authority has also experienced fragmentation amid the rise of popular culture. Popular culture refers to everything popular and attracts most people's attention in a certain period. It covers a wide range of elements, including entertainment, music, movies, fashion, food,

technology, ways of preaching, and language. The term famous Islam is inherent in Ustadz Syam; the message of da'wah delivered is inseparable from Islamic themes needed by society in general, and the style of language and clothing used is adjusted to the current trends or *fashion* that can take sympathetic millennial people. In addition, the author also concludes that the art and management of da'wah Ustadz Syam on the TikTok account presents a new term about da'wah media, namely the use of social media such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and other social media as new media in doing da'wah, so that the da'wah movement carried out is always dynamic in accordance with the times and according to the needs of the popular community.

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