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### The Trends of Digital Da'wah: Cyber Media Analysis on Instagram Account

Nurul Khotimah<sup>1\*</sup>; Fitri Shafa Kamila<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia

Corresponding author's email: [nurulkhotimah@uinsaizu.ac.id](mailto:nurulkhotimah@uinsaizu.ac.id)

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**Abstract:** The transformation of da'wah from time to time has entered the joints of technology. Da'wah, primarily conducted face-to-face, has now turned digital, especially through social media such as Instagram. @Ngajikyaigusbaha is an Instagram account that engages in da'wah activities through videos. The contents are delivered using video compilations of da'wah by Gus Baha. They are conveyed in an attractive and straightforward visual presentation, making it easier and more understandable for the audience. This research's objective is to find out and analyze the forms of digital da'wah trends on the @ngajikyaigusbaha account. This research data was collected from virtual interviews, observation, and documentation. The data were analyzed using cyber media analysis, including four unit levels; media space, media archive, media object, and experience. The results showed the digital da'wah trend on the @ngajikyaigusbaha account at each level as follows: 1) The media space level; the da'wah adopted the preaching of Gus Baha and gained 93,6 thousand followers. 2) The media document level; the content contains the real-life phenomenon within society in videos, either in video recordings or attractive visuals, up to 3-4 contents in a day covering messages of aqidah, morality, and syariah. 3) Media object level; there are interactions between users and admins. 4) Media experience level; the uploaded contents are relevant to real life and experienced by almost all followers.

**Keywords:** *digital da'wah; cyber media; social media; instagram*

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#### A. INTRODUCTION

Da'wah and technology are inseparable (Estuningtyas, 2021). The da'wah must be delivered optimally, including utilizing social media to be accepted wider and quicker (Habibi, 2018). Some preachers have become trendsetters on social media. For instance, Ustadz Abdul Somad, who owned several accounts as media to do da'wah (Hasmawati & Hamandia, 2022); Felix Siau, a convert

to Islam who developed lectures on social media when the HTI organization was dissolved by the government (Haq, 2019); and Hanan Attaki, the pioneers of Gerakan Pemuda Hijrah on millennials who actively participates in digital da'wah activities on social media (Octaviani, 2022). Hence, based on contemporary da'wah, the da'wah should use modern technology (Ummah, 2020).



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The trend of digital da'wah has been widely studied, but it only examines the trendsetter issues. As indicated (Lestari, 2020), the trendsetter has become one of the factors for the success of digital da'wah. On the other hand, digital da'wah is also a significant part of delivering da'wah in this era. This study implies a widespread discussion about the dependence of da'wah on digital technology (Riza, 2021; Rachmadhani, 2021; Masfufah, 2019; M. Tata Taufik, 2020). Digital da'wah in previous studies was not seen as relying on the substantive values of da'wah that apply in a society that determines how digital media is used. Existing studies ignore religious missions by analyzing digital da'wah outside the context of the da'wah tradition that has prevailed in the society.

This research aims to complement the shortcomings by mapping the digital da'wah trend on Instagram. In line with that, four research questions will be answered: (1) how is the trend of digital da'wah at the level of the media space; (2) what is the form of digital da'wah at the level of media documents; (3) what is the form of digital da'wah at the level of media objects; (4) how is the experience of digital da'wah users as followers on social media.

This paper is based on an argument that the spread of da'wah conveyed by everyone often has other motives. Numerous Instagram accounts that contain da'wah are sometimes used as a tool only to seek profit or endorsement. In addition, several da'wah contents contain provocation elements and hate speech which, on the contrary, contradicted the essence of Islam as the religion of rahmatan lil alamin, the religion of the welfare of the people. Such transformation often creates two sides, black and white, so we should be clever in filtering various news as a wise society.

## **B. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research will examine the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha. This account conveys da'wah messages through Instagram by inviting its followers to learn together to increase knowledge about personal life and groups to society and knowledge of the afterlife. The video contents dominate the account @ngajikyaigusbaha. Da'wah material or contents vary, ranging from creed, morals, fiqh, and muamalah to sharia.

This research is included in library research (Soewidji, 2012) that focuses on revealing the object of research, which is the existence of digital da'wah trends on Instagram. Library data is used to build question items in in-depth interviews. The required data relates to (a) posts that are shared on Instagram (photos, videos, or quotes); (b) comments that appear on posts; (c) the number of likes in each post; (d) Instagram stories that the followers share; (e) followers' experience after receiving and reviewing each post.

The followers of @ngajikyaigusbaha were involved as participants in this study. They were selected taking into account gender and socio-economic background, which are considered relevant to the digital da'wah trend. The initiator of this account is also involved in being the informant of the research. In the research process and collecting data, the researcher reconfirms to the informant through direct message. The researcher also mutually followed the informant's account to establish the needed information.

In this study, the data collection techniques used are interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted with the creator of the account @ngajikyaigusbaha and several followers through direct messages. The researcher asked the followers to be the research participants. In addition, the researcher used documentation to collect data in the

form of screenshots of posts and comments with a time limit of June 2022, as well as other literature related to the focus of the research.

The data was processed using cyber media analysis (CMA) techniques. Cyber media analysis is divided into two units, i.e., macro-level and micro-level. The macro-level unit is seen from the context that occurs in the cause-and-effect text. The micro-level unit explains how internet devices can exist, how connections flow, and how people can connect with what is visible on the surface. The data analysis is divided into four stages. First, the media space level. It provides an overview of using devices or media on the internet. Second, the media document level. This stage focuses on contextualized text in sentences, pictures, audio-visual, or other visual material. Third, the media object level. Researchers shift how the text process is responded to or interacts with other cyber users. Fourth, the level of experience. Researchers reveal that the reality behind the published text also occurs in real life. Thus, this level connects the online and offline worlds.

### **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The trend of digital da'wah on social media is a popular phenomenon in all circles. Both da'wah using the traditional way and utilizing technology such as social media prove that the essence of da'wah has never died until now. It will always find its way using creativity, innovation, and challenges for every da'wah activist. Accordingly, four things need to be studied carefully: what are the dimensions of the media space in the digital da'wah trend; how is the form of media documents in the trend of digital preaching; how are media objects in digital da'wah trends; how does the level of digital da'wah experience have implications in the social context.

### **1. Cyber Media Analysis at the Media Space Level in Digital Da'wah on Instagram**

In media space, this level reveals the existing structure of the medium on the internet. This medium is the location or place where culture occurs, and the community interacts. Analysis of the media space reveals the reasons for accounts owner broadcast the da'wah and provides an overview to Instagram users interested in understanding spirituality from credible sources. Thus, Instagram can also be used for da'wah activists as a place to deliver knowledge.



Figure 1. The Instagram profile @ngajikyaigusbaha

Source: Instagram @ngajikyaigusbaha, Instagram account profile in June 2022

As can be seen from the profile of @ngajikyaigusbaha, the followers in 2022 recently reached 81.9 thousand with 1,659 post updates. The video

content is adapted from Islamic learning with Kyai Gus Baha. One of Gus Baha's students from East Java manages the account, Muhammad Mahmudi. The content contains learning videos with Gus Baha, with simply adding visuals and titles or other sentences in each post. It will ease the users to understand the substance of the content. On the other hand, the creator provides an Indonesian subtitle at the bottom of the video because Gus Baha often speaks in Javanese, his mother language, while preaching.

Before creating @ngajikyaigusbaha, the owner created another account, but irresponsible parties misused it. Nonetheless, they were still enthusiastic about continuing broadcasting Gus Baha's preaching to the public and exploring the religion of rahmatan lil alamin. After creating this account, the number of followers grew and increased significantly. The vision and mission of creating an account are to utilize technology, especially Instagram, to invite people to look for religious provisions in the world towards the hereafter through authentic and credible sources.

The account @ngajikyaigusbaha purely engages in da'wah without bringing other elements such as business, a.k.a endorsements. It had been confirmed by the informant and proven through all posts containing preaching videos without any other enclosures. The content themes originate from social phenomena and are based on the Al-Qur'an, Hadith, and Kitab Kuning (yellow book).

## 2. Cyber Media Analysis at the Level of Media Documents in Digital Da'wah on Instagram

The media document level is used to see how content—as a text and its

meaning—is produced and disseminated via the internet. This level answers what factors become cultural artifacts in this study. The texts built by users (encoding) are an important highlight to be decoded at this level. The discussion themes vary from light matters to serious matters, such as akidah or faith. Content on @ngajikyaigusbaha consists of three main points, i.e., akidah, morals, and syariah.

Below is an example of content posted on the account @ngajikyaigusbaha on June 2022 regarding akidah, Pindah Agama (Convert Religion)



Source:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CePyKfMjL8Z/>

The post uploaded on June 1, 2022, explained several cases of people who converted from non-Muslim religions to Muslims or vice versa. What was questioned by the community was the identity of a Muslim who changed his faith. Through the video, Gus Baha said that the faith of Muslims who converted to another religion had been doubted since the very beginning because, in

truth, as a Muslim, there has never been any doubt from any side that Islam is a complete religion. Muslims who change their faith can be said to be Muslim KTP (Muslim only on ID) who do not understand what Islam really is, that the beauty of Islam is a pleasure.

Here is another example of video content posted by the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha on June 2022 regarding syariah entitled Lupunya Nabi sebagai Dasar Hukum (Forgetfulness of the Prophet as a Legal Basis).



Source:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CeS yXhepXMj/>

Based on the post on June 2, 2022, regarding the law in worship, Gus Baha explained that the Prophet once forgot the number of rakaat in zuhur (the noon) prayer until, in the end, his friends asked whether it was a new law then the Prophet did another takbir and finished praying two forgotten rakaat. There was also a moment when the Prophet took the intention of fasting when he asked his wife if there was breakfast, but there was no breakfast on the table. Finally, the Prophet decided to fast until 10 o'clock. The Prophet asked again if there was breakfast. Then the

wife replied whether the Prophet was canceling his fasting.

It proves that fasting is sunnah and does not have to be lived gradually. If people live it, they will get a blessing from Allah SWT. Even so, in the first case, that prayer is an obligatory worship that cannot be abandoned. Humans are naturally forgetful, but the rules must still be implemented. For this reason, the Prophet, when he found out that his prayer had not been completed to four rakaat, he decided to complete it with two cycles afterward.

Follow is another content posted on the account @ngajikyaigusbaha on June 2022, entitled Keinginan Membuatmu Miskin (Desire Makes You Poor).



Source:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Ceh0x NQpJ-5/>

Posted on June 8, 2022, this content contains a message about the desire people feel might cause them to always feel poor for what they have. No matter how much money, wealth, or anything they have, they will never feel enough if human desires exceed the capacity of their abilities. Instead of being busy thinking about something

we do not have, it would be nice to be grateful for what we currently have.

Gratitude for ownership does not always have to be about wealth but health, family, and a pleasing environment. Even with a small thing, being able to open our eyes after sleeping is a pleasure God has bestowed on mankind.

### 3. Cyber Media Analysis at the Media Object Level in Digital Da'wah on Instagram

At this level, the media object is a specific unit because researchers can notice how the activities and interactions of users or between users, both in micro and macro units. Research data can be obtained from texts in cyber media or the context around them. The features on Instagram are used as a tool to communicate with fellow users about da'wah content in the comment section or by using mention, like, direct message, repost, mention, etc.

Table 3. The activities of 'like' the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha

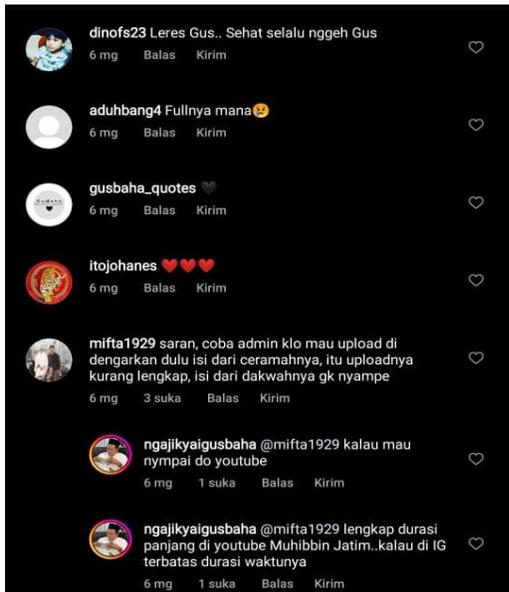


Source: The Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha on June 19, 2022

As in majlis in general, interactions among people on Instagram are the same. The Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha occurs in forms of interaction and communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Based on the image in Table 3, there are non-verbal activities, such as likes, which are symbolized by the heart symbol, and views by the followers on the posted content. Based on video viewing time, it can be seen in Table 3 that the content has played as many as 13,337 views.

The following is another interaction using Instagram features called 'mention' or inviting other users in a comment section on the Instagram post @ngajikyaigusbaha.

The interactions in the comment section of @ngajikyaigusbaha are not only mentioned but also comments among Instagram users, whether in the form of questions, suggestions, or statements. One of the followers of @ngajikyaigusbaha commented that the content of the video was incomplete and had a limited duration. Thus, the owner of @ngajikyaigusbaha replied and suggested watching the full video on YouTube due to the limited duration of videos posted on Instagram. Nevertheless, the da'wah message can still be learned and used as knowledge.



Source: The Instagram account @ngajikyagusbaha on June 2022

Meanwhile, others commented that this content seems to be teasing the user. It is expressed in the comments section as follows:



Source: The comment section of @ngajikyaigusbaha on June 2022

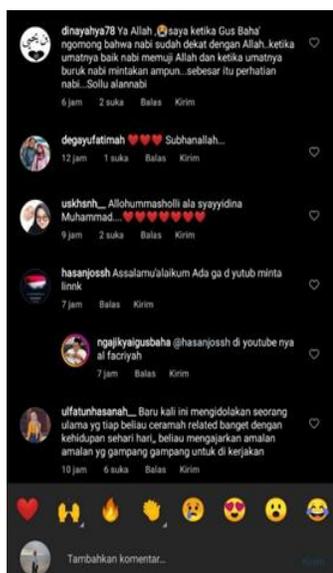
The Instagram account @rumahtsabrota said the uploaded posts made him quip, laugh, and cry simultaneously. Thus, the da'wah content makes someone who listens feel and empathize, creating an emotional effect on the user. Even though the da'wah is conveyed through the media, and the followers and the preacher are not directly connected in a face-to-face meeting, the essence of the da'wah can still be well delivered.

#### 4. Cyber Media Analysis at Experience Level in Digital Da'wah on Instagram

The level of experience or experiential stories is a macro picture of how people or community members are in the offline world. It means that what appears online has a connection with the real world. At this level, the researcher uncovers the reality behind the uploaded or created text and examines how, for example, the motivation or effect is. Researchers can connect the reality that occurs in the

virtual world (online) with reality in the real world.

The virtual and the real world seem to be worlds that are never connected and separated by minuscule, but in reality, what happens on the internet is not much different from what happens in the real world. There are forms of emotion, events and other things that are felt the same emotionally by the community.



Source: Screenshot of posts on the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha in June 2022

The content of the da'wah video on @ngajikyaigusbaha depicts the words of Gus Baha that relate to life and are felt by other users, where this is proven through comments. One was a post entitled Rasulullah SAW Mengajarkan Islam Itu Mudah (The Prophet Muhammad Teaches that Islam is Easy).

@ulfatunhasanah commented, "This is the first time I idolized an ulama whose every lecture is very related to everyday life. He teaches practices that are easy to do." This comment proves that what is conveyed in cyberspace is not just content, but what is conveyed is felt by users.

Based on the interviews with account followers, it is confirmed that some posts touch the audience's hearts and are experienced in life. One of the followers of @ngajikyaigusbaha, Rafi Alfindra, revealed that some posts are relevant to real life and others are used as guidelines in life. Aziz Setiawan agrees that uploaded content mostly suits him, so it is not uncommon for him to feel quip about what Gus Baha conveys in the video.

Thus, the video content on @ngajikyaigusbaha inspires people and encourages them to live as Muslims. As revealed by Faizal Izal in an interview through Instagram DM, "Yes, I think not only for me but for all who see the post, insyaAllah, they will rethink, particularly the ones posted by the clergy."

Even though users of the virtual world do not know each other, as fellow Muslims, reminding and helping each other in terms of goodness is a kindness that can be done anywhere and anytime, such as through social media. Besides spreading da'wah, social media is a place to remind each other to grow

and live as a human with good character.

## **5. Discussion**

Studies that discuss "digital da'wah trends" using "cyber media analysis" show (in contrast to previous studies) that the concept of da'wah in digital space can be carried out by all virtual communities, which can post messages related to da'wah to increase one's understanding of religious teachings. This digital da'wah trend gives enough time for the sender or receiver to process the message, provides greater control in the dialogue, and can also provide direct feedback so that some people may respond by expressing themselves through Instagram. Thus, the da'wah messages delivered are more quickly accepted, easy to understand, and can be practiced in everyday life.

The Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha is a community that carries out da'wah activities in the digital space through the Instagram application. Its da'wah message includes three Islamic teachings: akidah, syariah, and morals. Of course, material selection is based on real-life phenomena within society. The distinctive feature of the content is that all messages are based on one teacher, Gus Baha. Interactions that the owner of the @ngajikyaigusbaha account made with their followers are through content in the form of videos. The contents are based on events occurring in society; stories experienced by the prophets, the companions, or ulama; and lessons about the afterlife. Online interactions between Instagram users make the @ngajikyaigusbaha account a community.

Dakwah in digital space on the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha is a means of establishing

communication with followers in cyberspace, be it through text, visuals, audio-visual, or snapgrams as cultural artifacts of virtual communication interactions. In line with the virtual dimension of interaction that shapes communication behavior, first, virtual interactions are aspatial (distance does not affect the process of communication and interaction). Second, virtual interactions via the system are predominantly asynchronous (communication via a device can be operated based on the desired time and schedule). Third, interactions that occur through computer networks are represented through text. Fourth, the interactions that occur ignore the stigma against certain individuals.

A study of da'wah trends in the digital space is a transformation of da'wah from traditional to digital. The researchers found three "action plans" that can be formulated to strengthen its existence. First, the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha maintains its sincere intention as a student of Gus Baha. All content being disseminated is a way to get closer and benefit the people. Second, the video content has attracted much interest and love from followers of Kyai. In the future, translations from Indonesian can be adapted to followers' needs, especially those who are adults. Third, the video's visuals can be further developed to attract the interest of Gus Baha's muhibbin and other Instagram users.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

A study of da'wah trends in digital space conducted on the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha in June 2022 using cyber media data analysis, it can be concluded that; 1) at the level of the media space, the Instagram account

@ngajikyaigusbaha is an account that utilizes social media as a forum for da'wah to all people by adopting the preaching or teaching of a Kyai figure named K.H. Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim or known as Gus Baha; 2) at the media document level, the content used by admins in conveying da'wah is in the form of videos that are based on da'wah messages; akidah, syariah, and morals; 3) at the media object level, there is a process of interaction and activity on the account carried out by fellow users such as followers and account managers.

4) At the level of media experience, Instagram users follow the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha because a follower likes the speaker, Gus Baha, and the message conveyed by him provides insight into knowledge not only about religion but all aspects of life. The culture of interaction and activity that is formed on this account has two types of followers, i.e., active followers who actively respond to content and passive followers who are less active in responding to content from the Instagram account @ngajikyaigusbaha even though the followers are actually active.

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