Challenges and Opportunities for Mahasantri Da'wah through Social Media

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Abstract

The development of communication and information technology is now an opportunity for Tebuireng Jombang mahasantri in utilizing Instagram social media to broadcast information, develop existence, and preaching with attractive packaging that invites the attention of thousands of people. In the midst of many pesantren that are still closing themselves off from the presence of digital technology, mahasantri Tebuireng is able to answer the challenges of this age by utilizing them. Mahasantri is able to fill the opportunity and answer the challenges of this age among the dense activities of the cottage and campus. This research explains what the use of digital technology and social media is like now rather than looking at the negative side. This research was conducted with a qualitative method through interviews with social media managers on the @galeri_maha account managed by mahasantri Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang who has 114 thousand followers. This research answers that preaching can be done more easily and attracts the attention of the community, making people aware that social media can be a good fortune in terms of learning, creativity, literacy, and other positive activities, and the most interesting is the ability of students to balance technological developments by spreading the knowledge of pesantren today.

Keywords: Mahasantri; Social Media; Da'wah; Existence; Pesantren Tebuireng

Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest number of internet users in the world. According to the results of research conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) together with the UI Communication Studies Center (Puskakom), total internet users as of the beginning of 2015 were 88.1 million people. According to research reported by wearesocial.sg in 2017, there were 132 million internet users and continues to grow to this day (Nasrullah, et al., 2017). One of the media that is majority accessed by internet users is social media and all things in the media category new.

The new media of the internet has emerged as a testament to the advancement of knowledge and technology. The internet is part of sophisticated technology, in which there are various kinds of social media. This social media is a means of online social communication in cyberspace. Social media has a big influence on society. Its influence is social media as a medium of communication and education, where people can provide opinions and give information to one another. On the other hand social media can also

change the character of society. Social media is also useful as a medium of self-existence. People who use social media can display the activities and activities that they do, express opinions and express their feelings (Arnus, 2017).

One of the people who started using and utilizing social media was mahasantri Tebuireng Pesantren. For them, one of the functions of using social media is as a process of presenting themselves (existence) and preaching. Da'wah in essence is to actualize the values and teachings of Islam into daily life, in the personal, family, and community sphere so that the realization of a prosperous, happy world, and afterlife people. Da'wah means the process of organizing da'wah both individually and moreover in groups through organizations and institutions through the steps of setting goals, objectives, forms of activities and systematic steps in the process of activities, to achieve the objectives of preaching itself optimally, effectively and efficiently.

Pesantren is one of the bases of da'wah organization that has a function in empowering Islamic societies. The pesantren which used to have the impression of being a place to study the book and study the Koran, seemed very far from technology and the development of the times, but now began to show its function as a da'wah base for community empowerment by presenting multimedia-based learning, accepting the presence of new media in the form of media social. The presence of new media certainly has another impact on the world of pesantren, of course also on the student body itself. One example is the pesantren which usually uses conventional methods in teaching and learning, preaching, interacting, etc. It has become easier and changed through the presence of new media, especially Instagram.

The writings on pesantren and the media have been widely written, one of which is (Saputra, 2016) entitled "The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Religious Attitudes and Solutions through Islamic Religious Education". In this work, he stated that social media can be a communication tool that in one area must be considered, because the media does not have a filter in its distribution unless people use it. In this region religious education is a tool that can filter the spread of negative impacts from social media.

As an effort to understand the condition of the pesantren community today, this paper clearly discusses the relationship aspect of the existence of new media (social media) especially Instagram for the life of mahasantri Tebuireng Jombang, East Java, Indonesia. Social media in the form of intagram can have a positive impact on mahasantri, namely in the development of knowledge, self-introduction, and the spread of da'wah to the community. Although it cannot be denied from the positive side that there are still a number of things that must be considered by the pesantren community in an effort to continue to understand and utilize the use of social media so as not to disturb or damage the pesantren order that has been well known for a long time, in this case the presence of the new media is not will damage the good old culture in pesantren.

Formulation of the Problem

Seeing the phenomenon of the development of information and communication technology at this time, certainly a new color in the world of boarding schools. One pesantren community that uses technology media is mahasantri. The formulation of the problem in this research is how Mahasantri Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari Tebuireng Jombang faces challenges and opportunities in the era of digital technology (social media) "Instagram" as a space of existence and propaganda today.

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach. Researchers look at the phenomenon that exists in the pesantren community, namely mahasantri. How mahasantri use social media as a process of showing the existence of self and media propaganda. This research goes through several processes such as observation, interview, and documentation to the student manager of Instagram account @galeri_maha. Qualitative research has several advantages. As for some of the advantages of qualitative research according to (Moleong, 2012), namely: describe or show the condition of the object, view and analyze the data assessed gives a picture of a related event, select and determine data that has a relationship with reality, and collect data.

Theory Review

A.   *Social Media and Instagram*

The virtual world provides a pseudo meeting place that expands the social world, creates new knowledge opportunities, and provides a place to share views widely. Of course, new media is not like face-to-face interaction, but it provides a new form of interaction that brings us back to personal relationships in ways that could not have been done before. New media also contains power and boundaries, losses and gains, and uncertainty. For example, new media might provide an open and flexible use, but can also cause confusion and chaos (Littleljohn, 2018).

The existence of new media such as the internet can go beyond traditional media message dissemination patterns; the nature of the internet that can interact obscures geographical boundaries, the capacity of interaction, and most importantly can be done in real time. (Holmes, 2012) divides the media in a historical perspective which is the first media era with a broadcast pattern and the second media era. This means that in new media audiences are not merely placed as objects that are targeted by the message. The audience and changes in media technology and the meaning of the medium have renewed the role of the audience to be more interactive with the message.

In addition, according to him new media provide far more personal information than traditional media in general. If in the real world new self-information is revealed along with the intensity and interaction between entities, whereas in interactions on the internet information becomes so much open. Social media is one phenomenon that arises with the development of technology and innovation on the internet. Aside from being a new media in interacting and socializing, social media also has an extraordinary influence on various aspects, such as journalism, public relations, and marketing (Nasrullah, 2015).

Ordinary people who share ideas, work together, and collaborate to create creations, think, debate, find people who can be good friends, find partners, and build a communication. While social networking is a site where anyone can create a personal web page, then connect with friends to share information and communicate. Social media provides a space for freedom of comment and channel two opinions without worry. This is because on the internet, especially social media, it is very easy to fake one's identity or commit a crime. Yet in its development at school, adolescents try to find their identity by hanging out with their peers. But now teenagers often assume that the more active they are on social media, the more they will be seen as sociable. While adolescents who do not have social media are usually considered old-fashioned or out of date and not sociable.

Adolescence is a period that shows clearly the nature of the transition or transition, because adolescence has not gained adult status and no longer has the status of children. Adolescence is a

transitional period because at that time a person has left childhood but he also has not entered adulthood. Besides the transition period adolescents also have changes that include mental, emotional, social, and physical maturity (Ardiansyah, 2014).

Instagram is a social media that has become popular because it has its own characteristics and uniqueness, which only contains the flow of photographic works from its users. Its main features are similar to Twitter, from using the term "follower" to accounts that are connected to each other, to the @mention and #hastag features. Even though Twitter has placed a photo sharing feature with a main focus on product development, Instagram is still the most superior in networked platform photography. The use of Instagram social media can be seen by selecting the use of available features, because each feature has a different function (Ayun, 2015).

The social system in Instagram is by following other users' accounts, or having followers of their Instagram accounts. (Followers here mean friends). The main use of Instagram is as a place to upload and share photos with other users. Photos that have been taken through the Instagram application can be stored in the iDevice. The use of the camera through Instagram can also directly use existing effects, to regulate the coloring of the photo desired by the user (Ardiyansyah, 2014).

B.   Pesantren and Mahasantri

According to (Hidayat, 2017) Islamic boarding schools refer to Islamic training centers for further study. This is considered the oldest education system in Indonesia. From classical Javanese sources, he found that Islamic studies was provided by pesantren in the early 16th century. Since this period, small pesantren have been in the coastal areas of Java, where Islam first came to Indonesia. Previous schools did not support the modern education system.

Pesantren as an agent for community development, is expected to prepare a number of concepts for developing mahasantri resources, both to improve the quality of the boarding school and to improve the quality of community life. In order to carry out his da'wah as a realization of Ma'ruf's amar, pesantren does not only carry out preaching verbally but needs to be developed with the model of preaching in terms of empowering mahasantri (Ismah, 2016).

Santri in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) means (1) a person who studies Islam; (2) People who worship seriously; (3) People who study their teachings in Islam by studying to distant places such as pesantren. Mahasantri is a student who lives in a pesantren, in order to surrender. This is an absolute requirement to enable him to become a student of the kiai in the full sense (Wardani, 2017). He must obtain the readiness of the kiai by following all his interests. Service must be considered an honorary task which is a measure of that surrender. The willingness of the kiai, known in the pesantren as barokah, is the reason for mahasantri's place in studying; with the emphasis on the need to obtain the kiai's willingness, a consensus mechanism was created in the formation of values in pesantren. Status as a student in Islamic boarding schools, thus has a function as a medium to create submission to the values that apply at the boarding school itself (Wahid, 2007).

Islamic boarding schools have regulations for their students, all for the sake of saving the students. Mahasantri who have religious values, very rarely fall into the negative world, especially a group that has a detrimental impact. In addition, the existence of cyberspace such as social media is very helpful for students to get ahead and get to know him. Although it is admittedly a concern for mahasantri in an effort to be able to make good use of it or vice versa it has a negative impact on mahasantri with the existence of this new media and social media. Besides that, the public appreciated the Ministry of Communication and Information which had tried hard to block porn sites. Freedom on the internet and

social media, makes there are no filters for its users. Unwittingly, many crime activities are started from social media, or better known as cyber crime, criminal acts in cyberspace (Laily, 2018).

Discussion
A.   Mahasantri Utilizes Social Media

Instagram, Facebook, What App, BBM, Line, one of the social media currently in the mainstream of student care. Adherence of adolescents with social media makes teens have a new world that is cyberspace. Even the real world seems to be the world that is on social media. Social media easily changes patterns and behavior and teenage lives. Personalities of adolescents who are still unstable are so vulnerable and easily influenced. The search for self which is sometimes misinterpreted makes adolescents do whatever they want without considering religious and social values. Not infrequently adolescents are often trapped in a negative association, both for themselves, their families, the environment and others (Anwas, 2015).

Human existence is a dynamic process, a "being" or "being". Existence can we also know with one word, namely the existence that is recognized by others. Existence is not rigid, but experiences development or reverse setback, depending on the individual in actualizing his potential (Mahendra, 2017).

The phenomenon of instagram social media in social existence among adolescent students who use Instagram in Jombang, adolescents who are actually still unstable in mental and behavior, makes students have a greater curiosity compared to adults who are stable in mental and behavior. Especially with new things, especially new things about the internet and social media. They really do not want to be out of date or not follow the trend and always want to appear to have and have many friends, with social media things that are desired by teenagers, almost everything can be channeled, such as sharing photos, writing status, publishing videos, and communicating with friends. her friend. Things like this are what make social media very important for teenagers, including students.

Existence for adolescents (mahasantri) is recognized as indeed important in relationships. Existence is a symbol that a teenager can get along and have connections with others. Being existent for a teenager is a pleasure in itself. Show themselves, whether through captions, photos, videos, and other forms, they do every day. This is considered as proof that they are millennial adolescents who can keep up with the times, life may be in boarding schools but their extensive experience is still well understood. The process of self-existence, for them is exemplified as having many friends and connections, known to many people, being an important person, and some other pleasures from an adolescent's existence such as being able to express themselves freely and do things that have become a trend of other teenagers without having to violate their obligations and rights as mahasantri in pesantren which have rules. Because after all, pesantren also has a time rule for mahasantri in using media facilities, outside the activities of the cottage and does not interfere with the ongoing other spiritual activities.

According to Bambang & Dwi Atmoko (2012), if teenagers do not exist in their environment, teenagers will have difficulty making friends and adapting to their environment. Teenagers always want to be recognized for their existence and want to get a pride, and if they do not exist they will have difficulty in getting friends and information. Until this becomes the right argument for mahasantri in utilizing social media in this era.

Social media has become a technology product that is being favored by many groups including young students. With this service we can communicate with old friends, expand the network of friends, or just know the condition or status of friends and relatives. The presence of social media cannot be

separated from the lives of teenagers because at this time almost every day hours minutes even seconds do not stop for status updates. Usually social networks are used by teenagers to talk about life, they talk about what they do every day and even show their existence by showing where they are going or places they like and posting photos. Things like this are very clearly seen the role of social media in the search for existence for adolescents.

Social media such as Instagram, in addition to being a place for mahasantri's existence process, also become an intermediary for mahasantri in achieving ease in preaching, both verbally, in writing, pictures, and other forms. Da'wah in essence is to actualize the values and teachings of Islam into daily life, within the scope of personal, family, and society so that the realization of a prosperous society physically and spiritually, happy in the world and the hereafter. Da'wah means the process of organizing da'wah both individually and moreover in groups through organizations and institutions through the steps of setting goals, objectives, forms of activities and systematic steps in the process of activities, to achieve the objectives of preaching itself optimally, effectively, and efficient.

Islam is a propaganda religion, in which there is an attempt to spread the truth of teachings believed to be from Allah, to be disseminated to all humans. This spirit of spreading the truth is a sacred duty and a form of devotion to God. Carrying out da'wah is an obligation for all Muslims, both men and women, both individually and in organized groups.

Da'wah in the reality of its work has a colorful pattern of strategies, among the da'wah strategies used by the preachers is the da'wah empowerment of the Islamic community. The development of Islamic society aims to develop the potential of the ummah from the less good to the better and better. These developments also have their respective ways in the form of community economic development, skills development and knowledge development in accordance with the situation and condition of the community and the potential possessed by a preacher.

Aside from expressing themselves, social media, especially Instagram is also a place for teenagers' creativity, especially in this case is mahasantri. mahasantri which incidentally is a salafi pesantren community and can be called a human being who is always familiar with worship, chanting, and dhikr activities, utilizing the presence of Instagram social media as a propaganda media. Da'wah is one of the student activities in the pesantren. As happened in Jombang Islamic Boarding School, this preaching has become a habit of mahasantri, both in some pesantren events, or in the outside community. Mahasantri activities related to this da'wah, began with the work program of the boarding school administrators who had a da'wah training program and general activities of all mahasantri in the Tebuireng Pesantren environment in learning to preach before hundreds of other mahasantri. This is inseparable from the vision of the pesantren's mission to create mahasantri who dare to convey the truth and preach the word of God. For this activity, of course there is documentation which is then disseminated as a propaganda media to the general public outside the pesantren, one of which is through instagram which is owned by the pesantren.

B. @galeri_maha Account as Mahasantri Da'wah Room

The Instagram account @galeri_maha Tebuireng Jombang which has 2,811 posts, 114 thousand followers is managed by several mahasantri who are active accounts in providing information about mahasantri activities, quotations from the kiai, written mahasantri articles, lectures by the figures, Hadith studies, and other advice which is considered as one of the preaching of mahasantri for the community at large. As for the matters uploaded in the account in the form of photos along with captions, videos, pictures, and other things that become media of communication and information of pesantren and mahasantri to the outside community, be it alumni or who need information related to pesantren.

Consciously students in Jombang Islamic Boarding School are also familiar with social media. However, there are certain times when using the media. According to Fatikhuddin, one of the managers of the @galeri_maha account said that since they knew and had Instagram, the mahasantri were very interested in innovating more interesting da'wah. With this Instagram also mahasantri information more widely spread and very easy to find information needs. Fauzul Adzim, a member of @galeri_maha, also testified that with this account, mahasantri appeared more enthusiastic in their activities, from hadith and fiqh studies which were then used as quotes and video narratives which were then published through Instagram as a pesantren scientific development disseminated to the public.

Mahasantri is more active because of the urge of individuals to want to know about something they do not know and are not taught in pesantren, even though it is likely to have positive and negative impacts. Mahasantri productivity can be supported by the presence of a media or container that makes them able to compete in the field of technology, social, and culture. The role of mahasantri in the modern era is very important in order to change the productivity of mahasantri not only by achieving and being active in pesantran but also outside pesantren.

According to Fatikhuddin, the head of the account manager @galeri_maha admitted that the existence of this account was considered effective in spreading propaganda today. For him, accounts that used to publish the results of mahasantri studies, works of mahasantri, and quotes from kiai and figures were very popular among the people, this was evidenced by the number of likes and responses from followers who had reached 114 thousand. One of the posts that involved a lot of responses was the post "Example of Hadratusyaikh KH. Hasyim Ash'ari in Receiving Guests "reached 92,980 impressions in April 2020.

One member of the account manager @galeri_maha Fauzul Adhim reinforced the vision and mission of the pioneering account. According to him the Instagram account was founded on the basis of spreading the understanding of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah and hoping to counteract the understanding of extremist Islam. In this case he claimed to be inspired by the words of Gus Nadir who revealed that social media as "propaganda land". If this social media is not used, it will become a propaganda ground for the spread of hatred and radical groups. Fauzul said preaching using the internet is the most effective thing in this era. The Instagram media becomes a question and answer forum for the community towards mahasantri on all kinds of issues, from fiqh, monotheism, domestic affairs, to basic religious laws.

This was confirmed by Dana Iswari, one of the mahasantri who also holds the @galeri_maha account. According to him the benefits of using social media are not only felt by students and boarding schools but also by the community in general. This account is not only productive in spreading religious da'wah, but also becomes a trigger for mahasantri in its blessings, one of which is poetry, quote, and some opinions. In addition, it also makes it easier for students to access information from outside and inside so that students are able to find out issues and activities outside Ma'had Aly Hasyim Asy'ari and when at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School.

@Galeri_maha's posts have reached 2,811 in which spreading preaching in the form of text, audio, video, and narration with images. On average in each post will always attract hundreds to thousands of followers. one of the most response posts was "Welcoming Ramadan" which aired on April 17, 2020 with 71,608 views. In the video shows Habib Lutfi bin Yahya who invites people to learn to patiently accept the arrival of the current month of Ramadan. In the midst of the Corona pandemic, people are expected to remain calm and be able to control themselves to advise, protect and help one another.

Da'wah that is packaged in an interesting way will certainly make people who are in fact very close to digital technology will be more enthusiastic and easy to receive the message conveyed. Apart from being in the form of video narratives, pictures and texts, the use of words is very simple and easy to

understand and accepted by all groups. One of the simplest things delivered interestingly is the post "The Benefits of Always Maintaining Themselves in a State of Being" which featured Habib Umar's lecture with 7,695 impressions.

In the use of online media for da'wah, of course, mahasantri faces some challenges behind its success in exploiting the opportunities of this digital age. This is acknowledged by Fatikhuddin that the biggest challenge in spreading da'wah in the digital age at this time is the issue with unclear sources scattered on social media. That is a challenge for mahasantri in answering the issue in accordance with the available data and facts in order to calm the community and provide valid information to the community. In this case Fatikhuddin along with several members of the account manager always hold deliberations, training, and studies in sharpening their knowledge and mutual cooperation in increasing creativity and productivity to keep the @galeri_maha account active as a preaching mahasantri account.

Conclusion

Functionally social media can help mahasantri to establish broader relationships with people outside and also provide benefits as a medium in finding new knowledge, including in the space of self-existence, da'wah space, work space, and activities outside the mandatory activities of pesantren, which support better mahasantri life. Social media like Instagram has provided a good solution for mahasantri in developing their creativity to preach verbally, in writing, pictures and other ways that are more in demand by society today. Aside from being a process to facilitate the preaching of mahasantri or pesantren communities, social media is also an important part of mahasantri in introducing themselves to the community, both introducing through writing, design, and even in business spaces commonly managed by teenagers or mahasantri today.

Social media with the @galeri_maha account has contributed very positively to the community at this time. the challenge that must be faced today is the spread of radicalism and terrorism issues which then must be faced peacefully through lectures by figures who are in the muderat and with narratives that reconcile, do not blame, claim, or discredit one of the parties, but instead rectify the thoughts who need more valid and responsible references. Mahasantri has now been able to answer the challenges of the times by utilizing digital technology well and using the opportunity to preach as well as possible and as wide as possible. With this of course @galeri_maha which is managed by mahasantri has provided an interesting preaching service to the community and proves that the internet or digital technology is of extraordinary benefit when used properly and wisely. One of them is by advancing the science of pesantren through the development of these technologies.

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