

Virtual Interaction of Islamic People in the Digital Era: Challenges of Cultural Shifts in Social Media

Arif Farhan Mubarak¹, Siti Khoeriyah², Rani Rakhmawati³
^{1,2,3}Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education Masters Study Program
K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid State Islamic University Pekalongan
Email: inspirasisejuk@gmail.com¹; sitikhoeriyahpemalang@gmail.com²

Abstract

This study uses the library research method by collecting data through reading, studying, and understanding various sources such as books, journals, and search engines related to the discussion of this journal. The main focus of this research is on the virtual interaction of Muslims in the digital era and the challenges of cultural shifts on social media. Data collected from various sources are used to identify conventional religious changes that occur as a result of the use of social media and their impact on Muslim culture in cyberspace.

In a digital era filled with technology and social media, the virtual interaction of Muslims is becoming increasingly important. The transformation from conventional media to digital media has brought a shift in the diversity of Muslims which was previously dominated by conventional forms of religion. Social media facilitates access to information and interaction with religion, creating new, wider and more interactive spaces for religious life.

However, the use of social media also brings the challenge of cultural shifts in cyberspace. Changes in Islamic culture in virtual space need to be understood and handled wisely so that the potential of social media can be utilized as best as possible to strengthen cultural values and religious teachings in the Muslim community. In facing the impacts and challenges of social media, an in-depth understanding of the virtual interaction of Muslims in the digital era is the key to taking advantage of opportunities and dealing with increasingly advanced cultural changes.

Keywords: *virtual interaction, muslims, digital era, social media, cultural shift*

Introduction

In the digital era marked by technological advances and the development of social media, the life of modern society has undergone significant changes. The transformation from conventional media to digital media creates a new, wider and more interactive space for movement, including in religious life. Social media, as an integral part of human life, facilitates access to information and interaction with religion, resulting in a shift in the previously dominant conventional religion (Oka Gede, 201, p. 4).

In this context, it is important to examine the influence of social media on the virtual interaction of Muslims. The role of social media in influencing the mindset and behavior of Muslims needs to be understood further, because its use has created more intense and different interactions in conveying religious messages (Hablu Ilhami, 2022, pp. 27-29). In addition, the emergence of the digital world and social media also brings challenges to shifting Islamic

culture in virtual space. The risks and impacts of a shift in Islamic culture that may occur when interacting on social media need to be explained properly in order to deal with it wisely.

This study discusses the process of externalizing religion which is then adapted to the social and cultural world. Religion as a dynamic phenomenon allows this adaptation to occur. Furthermore, the process of objectification combines religion with socio-cultural aspects, creating cultural diversity which is internalized by virtual society through social interaction. Virtual society creates a social reality around social, religious, cultural and political issues that can be accessed via sophisticated devices such as smartphones and computers without space and time limitations. In the digital era, the virtual interaction of Muslims on social media brings challenges to cultural shifts that need to be understood further (Ade Yul Pascasari Katili, 2018, p. 512).

Research on the virtual interaction of Muslims in the digital era and the challenges of shifting Islamic culture on social media can provide valuable insights in dealing with cultural and religious changes in an increasingly advanced digital era. A deep understanding of the influence of social media on Muslims and the potential for Islamic religious education through social media is the key to facing challenges and taking advantage of opportunities in this digital era.

Results

Definition of Social Media, Culture, and Islam

Social media is a platform designed to facilitate interactive or two-way social interaction. Based on internet technology, social media has changed the way information is disseminated from what was previously only accessible by one party to being accessible to many audiences at once. According to Nasrullah (2015), social networking sites or social media are used as media to publish various contents such as user profiles, activities, and opinions. In addition, social media also provides space for communication and interaction between users in cyberspace . (Gunawan Saleh, 2018, p. 104). Social media is a platform that allows users to express themselves, interact, collaborate, share and communicate with other users to form social relationships in virtual form. (Enjelya Dewi Pitaloka, 2022, p. 40)

In the General Indonesian Dictionary it is explained that "culture" refers to the mind and reason. The origin of the word "culture" comes from Sanskrit, namely "buddhayah," which is the plural form of "buddhi" which means mind or reason. More specifically, mind has the meaning of reason, behavior, and norms. Thus, in this context, "culture" refers to all aspects and expressions resulting from human mental activity, such as beliefs, art, customs, and other aspects that make up a society or group of people. Sociologists also interpret "culture" as the totality of human skills, including customs, morals, arts, knowledge, and other aspects that reflect values and norms in society. (Badrudin, 2014, p. 213)

Islam, etymologically, means submission, submission, or submission. In sharia terminology, Islam covers all aspects of religion, Harun Nasution defines religion as self-attachment to a way of life that recognizes the existence of sources outside of humans and influences human actions. (Aaron, 2011, p. 2) Includes ushul (principal) and furu' (branches), including faith, worship, beliefs, words, and deeds. This shows that Islam is acknowledging verbally, believing with the heart, and surrendering to Allah Azza wa Jalla for everything that

has been determined and predestined. This definition of Islam also includes the notion of Muslims as individuals who fully acknowledge and practice Islamic teachings in all aspects of their lives. As Muslims, they submit and obey Allah, practice their worship and stay away from polytheism and are determined to obey His teachings. Thus, being a Muslim means being part of a devout and obedient Muslim community in carrying out the teachings of Islam.

The Role of Social Media Affecting Muslim Cultural Interaction

Social media has an important role in influencing cultural interactions. As an institutional medium, information can be conveyed to many people. However, interaction on social media tends to be limited because of its one-way nature. Nonetheless, social media can reach a wide audience, transcending time and distance barriers. The use of technology in social media allows Islamic da'wah to reach a wider and more diverse audience. In this technological era, social media has become an innovative and effective tool for attracting worshipers and interacting with various cultures. (Dwy Rahmawati, 2021, p. 164) The use of social media as a means of conveying messages has an important role in influencing the cultural interactions of Muslims. Social media with characteristics such as institutional, limited interaction, broad reach, use of technology, and openness allows Islamic da'wah to reach a wider audience. However, in dealing with this technological development, it is necessary to be aware of its negative impacts and to maintain cultural values so that interactions remain beneficial and harmonious. (M. Haqqi AnnaZilli, 2018, p. 28)

The use of social media as learning has not been maximized by educators. However, this platform has great potential to be an engaging learning tool. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube can be used by teachers to design lessons and communicate with students. The use of social media must be wise so as not to interfere with student productivity and maintain the role of the teacher. Teachers in the digital era are expected to be creative facilitators who motivate students to become discoverers of knowledge. The influence of social media also influences cultural interaction in Islamic society. (Rifa Suci Wulandari, 2022, pp. 282-284) In the context of the role of social media in influencing Muslim cultural interactions, virtual theology has significant relevance. Virtual theology goes beyond sophisticated digital technology, but focuses on the human ability to think and establish social relations with empathy and strong social bonds. The development of digital technology and social media can be a tool for humans to glorify God and respect others. However, if you only emphasize aspects of technological sophistication without paying attention to social relations based on empathy and social bonding, then it can create a negative impact on Muslim culture. Therefore, in the use of social media, virtual theology emphasizes the importance of prioritizing spiritual and ethical values that are integrated with technology, so that the cultural interactions of Muslims on social media can bring positive benefits to the community and strengthen cultural ties in Muslim societies. (Izak YM Lattu, 2021, p. 24)

The success of social media in influencing the cultural interactions of Muslims is highly dependent on the ability and sincerity of Muslims in preaching through the internet, as well as their efforts to overcome divisions and internal disputes within the Islamic community. Leaders of sects in Islam have a responsibility to reconcile people and minimize differences, as well as prioritize similarities. (Dr. Bambang SM, 2010:173) The internet, although it has advantages

and disadvantages, is an alternative medium that has the potential to spread da'wah, information, and values of globalization. The success of da'wah media also depends on the readiness of da'wah developers, especially in preparing creative and competent da'wah candidates (Divine Revelation, 2010:112).

Discussion

Understanding the Impact of Social Media on Muslim Culture

The use of social media has both positive and negative impacts on Muslim culture. The positive impacts include increasing and expanding friendships, enabling the development of important social and technical skills in the digital era, providing motivation and opportunities for self-development from network friends, and generating empathy and concern in social interactions. In addition, social media is also an effective means for exchanging information and data quickly, efficiently and easily. Remote communication and even face to face can occur through social media platforms such as Instagram. The ease of finding information and data is also an advantage of social media in its use (Leysa Khadzi Fi, 2013).

However, on the other hand, there are also negative impacts that need attention. The use of social media can make teenagers and students less concerned about their surroundings. Dependence on social media can reduce face-to-face interactions and result in laziness to communicate in the real world. In addition, the existence of unclear grammar rules in social media, especially for children and adolescents, can make it difficult for them to distinguish between direct communication in the real world and on social media. Misuse of social media by individuals can lead to fraud that harms others. The presence of pornographic and violent content on social media also increases the risk of crime and negative behavior. Apart from that, social media can also be misused to do online gambling.

Understanding the positive and negative impacts of social media on Muslim culture is important so that it can be used wisely and responsibly. Muslims need to understand and manage the impact of social media in order to stay in line with their religious and ethical values. With this awareness, the use of social media can make a positive contribution in strengthening cultural ties and supporting da'wah within the Muslim community. (Dewi Immaniar Desrianti , 2021, p.49) In the context of understanding the impact of social media on Muslim culture, it is necessary to recognize that advances in information technology, especially the internet, have changed the way social interaction has taken place and removed class, power and gender boundaries. The use of social media can provide benefits in spreading religious information and expanding the reach of religious messages. However, you need to be aware that unwise use of social media can have negative impacts, such as spreading false information or contrary to Islamic values. Therefore, it is important to understand how social media influences Muslim culture and how to manage its use so that it remains in line with upheld religious values (Muna Yastuti Madrah, 2019, page 23).

Challenges of Social Media in Shifting Islamic Culture

In the future, social media will play a crucial role in influencing the cultural shifts of Muslims. The phenomenon of religious rituals and religious activities as a whole will face new challenges from the virtual world provided by social media. Religious activities that were

previously only carried out in physical holy places , have the potential to move to virtual shrines that are built artificially in computer rooms.

The development of increasingly complex and diverse cyberspace technologies, including social media, will affect the intensity and scope of religious activities. The use of social media in religious rituals can open up new opportunities, such as expanding reach and increasing social interaction, as well as facilitating discussions and meetings between Muslims.

However, in utilizing social media, there are also challenges that need to be watched out for. Virtual shrines may not completely replace the inner dimension, spirituality and sacredness of physical shrines. In addition, the presence of unfiltered information in the virtual world also brings threats, such as the emergence of negative or inappropriate content that can affect cultural values and norms.

Therefore, in using social media, Muslims need to understand and respond wisely to the challenges and opportunities that exist. It is important to maintain religious and ethical values that are in line with Islamic teachings in interacting and doing activities in cyberspace. In this way, social media can be an effective means of spreading da'wah and strengthening cultural ties within the Muslim community. (Zanniro Sururi Hsb , 2019 , p. 149)

In library research, the role of social media and digital technology in influencing Muslim cultural interactions needs to be understood by taking into account previous studies such as Digital Religion. The concept of Digital Religion emphasizes the interaction between technology users and religious expressions in the digital world which is assisted by internet access. This phenomenon gives rise to new religious ideas that are different from conventional religious discourse and have become the focus of research by experts, including Heidi A. Campbell. (Abdullah Muslich Rizal Maulana, 2022, p. 176)

However, in this digital era, it is necessary to be aware of the impact of a shift in Islamic culture that may occur due to the use of social media. We need to understand deeply the impact of social media on Muslim culture, both from its positive and negative aspects. The use of social media must be managed wisely in order to maintain religious values and strengthen cultural ties within the Muslim community. With a deep understanding of the role of social media and digital technology, we can face challenges and take advantage of opportunities in this digital era wisely.

With the advent of the internet, a new generation known as the "ne(xt) generation" has emerged. This generation grows up in a digital media culture that tends to be alone, to communicate personally, to be computer literate, and to spend more time playing videogames, watching television, and listening to the radio (Idi Subandy, 201, p. 310). These changes have resulted in shifts in cultural traditions, whereby traditional media are being replaced by an increasingly dominant digital media culture. One example is the huge influence of social media such as Facebook in Indonesia, with more than 11 million users in 2009 (Koran Kompas, 2009). The existence of social media has changed the way people access digital technology and communicate online (Primada, 2015, p.1).

The use of social media in today's digital media culture has become an inseparable part of modern society's life. Every day, people access social media to find information through platforms such as Google and Facebook, and share activities via Twitter or Path. The Ministry of Communication and Informatics survey results show that there are five most popular social media in Indonesia, namely Path with 700 million users, Facebook with 65 million users,

Twitter with 19.5 million users, Google with around 3.4 million users, and LinkedIn with 1 million users (Suara Merdeka, 2015). The use of social media has become an important part of shaping digital media culture, but it also brings challenges in maintaining traditional values and social norms that are rooted in religious teachings. Therefore, the role of social media in shaping Muslim culture needs to be properly understood in order to maintain the continuity of the religious values that underlie Muslim society.

In the digital era, the presence of the internet as a medium of da'wah cannot be ignored. Therefore, Islamic scholars, preachers and leaders need to realize how important strategic steps are to guide the younger generation in facing negative challenges from the internet media. Islamic scholars in the Middle East and Europe as well as America have made good efforts by welcoming the internet as a potential da'wah weapon. Da'wah steps through the internet can be realized through various Islamic networks such as cybermuslim or cyberdakwah, Islamic da'wah sites, Islamic YouTube or IslamTube, websites, blogs, and the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Each of these da'wah tools provides information about Islam with a variety of facilities and methods, which are challenges and opportunities in strengthening the virtual interaction of Muslims and understanding the impact of cultural shifts faced on social media (Cut Sri Wahyuni, 2022, pp. 4527-4528).

Conclusion

In the digital era filled with technological advances and the development of social media, the virtual interaction of Muslims has undergone significant changes. The transformation from conventional media to digital media creates a new, wider and more interactive space for movement in religious life. Social media has become an important tool in facilitating access to information and interaction with religion, which in turn has resulted in a shift in conventional religion which previously dominated.

However, the use of social media also brings new challenges in the form of cultural shifts in virtual spaces. Muslims need to understand and overcome the negative impacts that may arise so that the potential of social media can be utilized as best as possible to strengthen cultural values and religious teachings in the Muslim community. In facing this challenge, an in-depth understanding of the virtual interaction of Muslims in the digital era is the key to taking advantage of opportunities and dealing with increasingly advanced cultural changes .

With a deep understanding of the influence of social media on Muslims and the potential for Islamic religious education through social media, we can face challenges and take advantage of opportunities in this digital era wisely. Understanding the positive and negative impacts of social media on Muslim culture is important so that it can be used wisely and responsibly. As such, social media can be an effective tool in spreading da'wah and strengthening cultural ties in Muslim societies.

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