

THE EXISTENCE OF GUS IQDAM'S DAKWAH IN THE SPIRITUAL PREFERENCES OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

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Abstract: In rapid changes in the digital world, da'wah as an effort to spread religious values is also required to keep up with the development of information technology. Currently, many preachers utilize social media, especially Tik Tok, to attract the participation of the younger generation who are already very familiar with social media. Various styles of da'wah are offered as a characteristic of each preacher. The author focuses the research study on one of the preachers quite famous among the younger generation, Gus Iqdam. This study aims to review more deeply the existence of Gus Iqdam's preaching in the spiritual preferences of the younger generation. The research method used is a qualitative approach. Data collection was carried out through observation of the Tik Tok social media content of Majelis Sabilu Taubah @hadrohsabilutaubah, then the data was analyzed using content analysis. The results showed the central

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role of a figure, namely Gus Iqdam, who has a distinctive and contemporary characteristic in delivering da'wah. He can attract the participation of the wider community, especially the younger generation. Gus Iqdam's da'wah style is adapted to the spiritual preferences of today's younger generation. On the fifth day of Harlah, Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah invited singers who were trending among young people to enliven the event. In the perspective of the spiritual marketplace theory developed by Wade Clark Roof, this shows the synergy between worldly interests and the spirituality of the generation of seekers.

Keywords: dakwah, young generation, spirituality preference

PREFACE

In this era of technological development, preaching through social media has become a necessity. The conditions and situation of our society today have changed, so the patterns and methods of preaching carried out by preachers have also evolved (Mabrur & Hairul, 2022). The digital age has affected the way people interact and obtain information, so da'wah is also adapted to this condition. Dakwah in the digital era utilizes social media that allows preachers to get feedback that makes them more widely known by the public, especially the younger generation.

The younger generation, born in the era of advanced technology and all digital, has different behaviors and habits, so da'wah is also tailored to their needs and preferences (Zaman et al., 2023). This research focuses on the study of the spirituality preferences of the younger generation, namely generation Z. Generation Z is a demographic group that generally includes individuals born between mid-1997 and early 2012. The younger generation tends to like things that are practical and in accordance with the times (Sintia & Parihat, 2023). They are the ones who interact most intensely with social media, especially Tik Tok. In recent years, Tik Tok social media has been loved by many Indonesians. According to the We Are Social report, there were approximately 126.83 million TikTok users in Indonesia in January 2024 (Palupi et al., 2021).

Through Tik Tok social media, preachers can share information in the form of interesting videos and images about dakwah conducted at their majelis taklim (Mutmainah et al., 2022). Many ustadz-ustadzah

share their da'wah activities on the Tik Tok platform, thus inviting the interest of their followers to flock to their studies directly. Examples are, Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, Gus Iqdam, Ustadzah Halimah Alaydrus, Ustadzah Oky Setiana Dewi, and so on. They are quite famous among the younger generation of Tik Tok users in Indonesia .

This research examines Tik Tok content about the da'wah activities carried out by Gus Iqdam at Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah. Gus Muhammad Iqdam Kholid, or better known as Gus Iqdam, is the caregiver of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah which is located in Karanggayam Village, Wonodadi District, Blitar Regency. Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah uses the Tik Tok platform with the @hadrohsabilutaubah account to share Gus Iqdam's da'wah activities. Currently the account has 582.5 thousand followers. Gus Iqdam has unique, interesting, and fun characteristics in delivering his da'wah messages. In fact, Gus Iqdam's style of da'wah closely follows the interests of the younger generation. The younger generation tends to integrate spirituality into aspects of their daily lives, such as work, entertainment, and hobbies. They like spirituality that is intertwined with their worldly life, such as hobbies that are being pursued, even entertainment that is trending among them.

One form of Gus Iqdam's da'wah implementation that is tailored to the preferences of the younger generation can be seen in the fifth Harlah (Birthday) event of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah. Apart from being filled with religious lectures and sholawat together, the Harlah event was also enlivened with entertainment favored by the younger generation. The Harlah event of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah also invited Indonesian music celebrities who are on the rise among the younger generation such as Deny Caknan, Aftershine, Happy Asmara, Elsa Safira, Dike Sabrina, and Arlinda Putri. This reflects creative and modern ways of religious expression. So it is not surprising that the da'wah message delivered by Gus Iqdam is easily accepted by the younger generation (Schutte, 2018).

This phenomenon will be reviewed using the perspective of the spiritual marketplace theory proposed by Wade Clark Roof. According to Roof in his book entitled "Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion", there are differences in the way of religion between the baby boomers and the younger generation at that time in America. Many people, especially

the younger generation, are seeking spiritual meaning and connection in more diverse ways. They seek more authentic spiritual experiences outside of traditional religious structures. In his theory, Roof suggests that modern society has many choices when it comes to spirituality and religion, similar to a marketplace that offers a variety of products and services. Individuals are free to choose and create spiritual experiences that suit their needs and preferences (Davies & Freathy, 2014).

This study used a descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. Data collection was carried out by observing some of the content from Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah's account @hadrohsabilutaubah in the form of videos sharing Gus Iqdam's da'wah activities. Then, the data that has been obtained is analyzed by content analysis which is a research method used to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns, themes, or meanings in a content.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah led by Gus Iqdam shows how a combination of tradition and innovation can create a model of da'wah that is relevant and impactful in the context of modern society. His da'wah is known for its inclusive da'wah approach and is able to embrace various groups, including the younger generation. Gus Iqdam's dakwah are often interactive and entertaining. Gus Iqdam uses humor and interesting and contemporary stories to convey moral messages and religious teachings. This approach makes Gus Iqdam's da'wah much in demand by the younger generation. Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah successfully combines traditional elements of religious teaching with innovation in its preaching style. Gus Iqdam still maintains fundamental religious values and teachings, but he packages them in a modern and attractive way.

This research analyzes a Tik Tok video content of Majelis Sabilu Taubah using content analysis techniques. The first process is to collect relevant data and ensure that the data is in a format that can be analyzed. Then, the codification or coding stage by identifying and assigning codes or categories to the data in the form of patterns, themes, and meanings in the data. After that, the data is analyzed based on the code that has been set and interpret the findings. Then the next stage is to compile a report on the results of the analysis by presenting the main findings, themes, and interpretations clearly and

systematically.



Figure 1: Flyer Harlah Sabilu Taubah

The Tik Tok content of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah @hadrohsabilutaubah analyzed is the content of the Harlah Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah which is held for five days. This research will focus on the second day's harlah footage uploaded on February 25, 2023 (<https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSY2Bhqv6/>) with the caption "Harlah 5 Sabilu_Taubah The second day was enlivened by Aftershine, Happy Asmara, Elsa Safira, Dike Sabrina, and Arlinda Putri", the video upload has now reached 36.1 thousand views.

Content Analysis of Harlah Sabilu Taubah Video



Figure 2: Harlah Sabilu Taubah performance

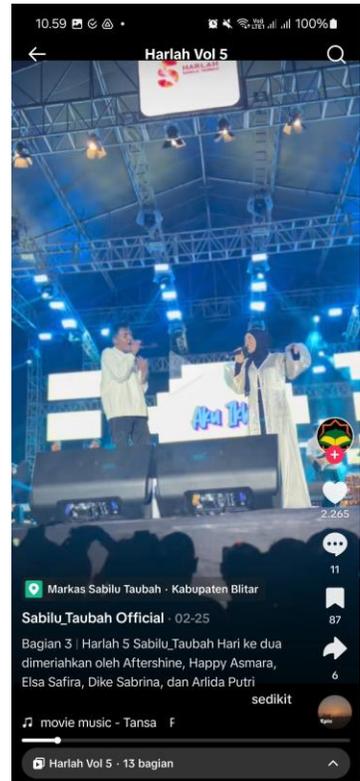


Figure 3: Harlah Sabilu Taubah performance

The footage of Harlah Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah above is footage of the second day which invited several well-known dangdut and koplo artists and singers such as Aftershine, Happy Asmara, Elsa Safira, Dike Sabrina, and Arlinda Putri. The presence of several singers was intended as a form of interlude for tauiyah and also sholawatan from Gus Iqdam. The festive event was attended by many spectators. Many of them were present until the peak of the event with the lighting of fireworks into the air. The fifth Harlah Sabilu

Taubah presented a variety of famous dangdut singers and presented a different harlah packaging from the usual harlah. Harlah as it happens in the social life of religious people is identical to the usual religious activities, such as reciting the Quran, khotmil quran, and the like. However, in the Sabilu Taubah phenomenon, harlah is packaged in a different way. By combining popular entertainment with religious activities, it makes Sabilu Taubah events more relevant and accessible to the wider community, including the younger generation who are looking for new ways to experience spirituality. The integration of entertainment and tausiyah emphasizes the holistic value of spiritual experience. This implies a holistic experience, involving emotional, social and spiritual aspects, felt by the audience of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah.

The content snippet above shows the festive celebration of the 5th Harlah of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah, inviting artists and dangdut singers as an interlude, and ending with fireworks that express the excitement of Sabilu Taubah's harlah event. This reflects what Wade Clark Roof calls the concept of generation of seekers. The audience of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah got a new color through the combination of entertainment with spirituality in the world of da'wah presented by Gus Iqdam and Sabilu Taubah. In addition, this event shows the diversification and flexibility in the spiritual marketplace that can attract broad participation and create a solid community among the audience.





Figure 4: The audiences of harlah Sabilu Taubah



Figure 5: The audiences of Harlah Sabilu Taubah

Many of the spectators who attended the harlah event were young men. Not a few of the akhwat (women) who came in groups gathered at one point and cheered loudly. The lack of separation between the rows of male and female spectators is a slightly different scene at religious events in general. The use of uniform clothing with the color of the shirt used as a symbol for a particular study group, and as a sign to be easily recognized when they are separated from their group. The large attendance of young men and women represented that the event was successful in attracting the younger generation who are often described as the generation of seekers. The younger generation seeks spiritual experiences that are relevant and interesting to them. They seek spiritual connection in a variety of ways, one of which is by attending Harlah Sabilu Taubah which is more expressive in appealing to this younger audience. Sabilu Taubah comes in da'wah packaging that is more friendly to the color of the younger generation's interests. The spiritual packaging presented by Sabilu Taubah at Harlah has an impression on the joyful expressions

of the youth of the audience. This shows that this religious expression is held in a format that suits modern tastes. The presence of spirituality that integrates with these things makes Sabilu Taubah the spiritual preference of the younger generation. The audience's active participation in cheering, smiling and waving shows that the harlah packaging with this theme is enjoyed by young people.



Figure 6: Gus Iqdam, Singers of dangdut and koplo, with audiences of harlah Sabilu Taubah.

At the closing ceremony, the performers gathered in a long line to listen to the closing sentence from Gus Iqdam. Not only the performers who listened to the closing sentence from Gus Iqdam but all the audience who were present in the center of the glittering stage also listened to the sentence. Not to forget the closing prayer and hopes for Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah were also included in the closing of the anniversary event. The event was also held as a form of gratitude for Gus Iqdam and the students of Sabilu Taubah. Through the presence of dangdut singers and entertainment in the anniversary

event, it shows innovation in delivering spiritual messages. Through the delivery of his dawa, Gus Iqdam gave taujihah and hope as a closing, “Semoga setelah harlah ini, *ngajine Panjenengan tambah istiqomah*”. The Taujih was responded to by the congregation with “Amiin”. The audience who responded carefully to Gus Iqdam's wishes in the closing session showed an interactive response. Gus Iqdam's charismatic figure plays an important role as a spiritual leader who is able to inspire and motivate his congregation to remain consistent in the Quran. This shows how spiritual leaders can play a role in guiding and strengthening the spiritual quest of individuals and communities. Gus Iqdam and Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah appeared with a new color for the young generation of Indonesian Muslims.

The crowded stage and active participation of the congregation showed how spiritual events can be collaborated into something interesting and interactive. This creates a new element of spiritual experience for the generation of seekers, especially the young generation of Indonesian Muslims (Romadi et al., 2022). This entertainment-packed Harlah describes various forms and 'mediums used to attract the interest and public participation of Muslim audiences'. This shows how the spiritual marketplace provides a space for expressions of gratitude and joint celebrations become a form of social religious expression. Based on the above description, further analysis was needed to validate the data. The author is then interested in looking at media audience comments on the Fifth Harlah Sabilu Taubah series of events. The following is a media audience comment on one of the contents of the Fifth Harlah Sabilu Taubah which can be an illustration of the media audience's response to the event:



Figure 7: Media Audience Comments on the fifth Harlah Sabilu Taubah content



Figure 8: Media Audience Comments on the fifth Harlah Sabilu Taubah content



Figure 9: Media Audience Comments on the fifth Harlah Sabilu Taubah content



Figure 10: Media Audience Comments on the fifth Harlah Sabilu Taubah content

The comments above are some of the comments that show a picture of the audience's response to the fifth Harlah of Sabilu Taubah. Referring to the comments above, it shows the enthusiasm expressed by the media audience on the @hadrohsabilutaubah account. Media audiences gave a positive response to the procurement of the five-day harlah event. The unique harlah packaging brought by Sabilu Taubah and tends not to be the same as the harlah culture in general does not affect the response of media audiences. Media audience responses that carry positive connotations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it is concluded that the content presented by Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah in its Tik Tok account illustrates the existence of Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah and Gus Iqdam in the world of Islamic preaching. Spiritual expression can coexist with worldly hobbies when ukhrawi things still exist in the life of a servant of God. Then, on the fifth harlah of Sabilu Taubah, Gus Iqdam presented entertainment consisting of majlis sholawat and various Indonesian dangdut and koplo music singers. The presence of harlah with this new face interprets Gus Iqdam's efforts to enter the world of the younger generation in preaching. The new face of unconventional da'wah packaging can attract the interest of the younger generation in the pursuit of the spiritual world. In both contexts, there is a da'wah approach that is relevant and attractive to Indonesian Muslims, especially the younger generation. Gus Iqdam and Majelis Taklim Sabilu Taubah offer a new da'wah bridge that can meet the spiritual needs of diverse religious communities.

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