

The Influence of an Islamic Preaching Influencer on Muslim Political Preferences: A Case Study of Kadam Sidik on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

The rise of digital preachers and Islamic influencers on social media has shaped Muslim public opinion, including political preferences. One prominent figure is Kadam Sidik, who often inserts moral messages, social criticism, and implicit political cues through his da'wah content. This study aims to analyze how Kadam Sidik's communication strategy on Instagram and TikTok influences Muslim voters. This research adopts a qualitative case study method with content analysis of short videos, posts, and viral quotes. The findings reveal that his blend of humorous, symbolic, and contextual preaching makes his political messaging effective among young Muslim voters. The study concludes that digital da'wah influencers now serve as informal political actors significantly influencing electoral behavior.

Keywords: Islamic Politics, Influencer Da'wah, Political Communication, Kadam Sidik, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the development of social media has given birth to a new phenomenon in the world of Islamic preaching, namely the emergence of preaching influencers. They convey religious teachings in a lighter, more interactive, and sometimes entertaining way. One figure who has received much public attention is Kadam Sidik or Husain Basyaiban, a preaching influencer active on the Instagram and TikTok platforms. In his various contents, Kadam discusses morals and daily life and includes moral and political messages that often go viral, especially during the 2024 presidential election period. This phenomenon is interesting to study in the context of Islamic political communication in the digital era.

Social media has become a new space influencing public opinion, including religion and politics. In today's digital era, da'wah influencers act as conveyors of religious messages and have great potential to influence people's political preferences, especially among the younger generation, such as Gen Z and millennials. This phenomenon is increasingly evident along with the increasing use of platforms such as TikTok and Instagram to spread da'wah messages that are packaged creatively, communicatively, and relevant to current issues that are developing in society.

One example of influencer preaching that has succeeded in building a large audience base on social media is Kadam Sidik. Through the TikTok account @kadamsidik00, Husain Basyaiban, the figure behind Kadam Sidik, can package preaching messages with a storytelling approach, humor, and the use of social media trends so that the messages conveyed are easier to accept and understand by the younger generation. The content discussed Islamic values and often touched on hot social and political issues to build emotional closeness with the audience and influence their perspective.

Previous research has shown that influencers who share the same values or political views as their audience tend to be more effective in influencing political preferences, especially if the message delivered is packaged persuasively and relevant to the interests of young voters. In addition, active interaction between influencers and followers through comments and live streaming also strengthens the influence of the message delivered and builds a solid community around the influencer figure.

Thus, the study of the influence of da'wah influencers such as Kadam Sidik on people's political preferences is very relevant. It is important to understand the new dynamics in political and religious communication in the digital era and to see how da'wah strategies can adapt and contribute to forming political opinions among the younger generation, who have often been considered passive in the political realm.

The phenomenon of da'wah influencers like Kadam Sidik shows how social media has become a strategic arena for spreading religious messages while forming political opinions, especially among the younger generation. Kadam Sidik utilizes platforms like TikTok and Instagram with a light, interactive, and relevant approach to everyday life so that his da'wah is not only normative but also applicable and readily accepted by Gen Z and millennial audiences. The storytelling, humor, and social media trend approaches he

uses to make his da'wah messages feel close and down to earth while also being able to raise hot social and political issues in a non-patronizing way.

In Islamic political communication, Kadam Sidik's role is quite significant because he conveys Islamic values and weaves moral messages with practical political issues, such as the ethics of choosing a leader and the importance of maintaining Islamic brotherhood despite different political choices. This shows that influencer preaching can be an effective agent of change in shaping the political preferences of the people, especially the younger generation, who have been considered less active or passive in the political realm. Intense interaction through comments and live streaming also strengthens his influence, building a solid community and increasing the audience's trust in Kadam Sidik as a moral and political role model.

Furthermore, Kadam Sidik realized the importance of awareness of one's capacity to preach in the digital world. He reminded digital preachers to know the limits of their knowledge and deliver material according to their abilities to avoid spreading inaccurate or baseless information. This approach is important so digital preaching remains credible and does not cause detrimental controversy. In addition, Kadam highlighted the influence of the digital environment, especially social media, which significantly shapes the character and views of the younger generation. Therefore, he encouraged preachers to utilize social media positively and strategically so that religious and moral messages can be widely spread and positively impacted.

Studying the influence of da'wah influencers such as Kadam Sidik is important for understanding the dynamics of political and religious communication in the digital era. This phenomenon shows that da'wah is no longer limited to traditional spaces but has transformed into an activity heavily influenced by technology and digital culture. With the right communication strategy, influencer da'wah can bridge religious values and contemporary socio-political realities while mobilizing the political participation of the younger generation, who have been underrepresented. Therefore, a creative and interactive approach to digital da'wah is the key to success in building public opinion and political preferences in the future.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, focusing on the figure of Kadam Sidik as the main subject. Political communication theory is the main framework that explains how messages conveyed through social media can shape the perception and political choices of the audience. The primary focus of this study includes digital communication and symbolic and religious political narratives that Kadam Sidik implicitly builds.

One of the supporting theories in this study is Max Weber's charismatic authority theory (1947), which explains that a person's influence does not solely come from formal positions but from the audience's perception of his personal qualities. Kadam Sidik, although not from a formal religious institution such as a pesantren or large Islamic mass organization, could attract attention and gain public trust because he was considered authentic, relevant, and close to the reality of his audience's life.

In addition to the charismatic authority theory proposed by Max Weber (1947), another relevant approach in analyzing the influence of Kadam Sidik on the political preferences of the people is the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). This theory emphasizes that the audience is an active agent who consciously chooses certain media to fulfill their specific needs, such as the need for information, entertainment, personal identity, or social integration. In this context, Kadam Sidik's followers can be categorized as an active audience who seeks da'wah content that provides spiritual enlightenment and answers the socio-political anxieties they face every day. Kadam's content touches on social justice, leadership, and political morality, fulfilling the need for information and affirming values for the audience.

In addition, the agenda-setting theory developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) can also be used to see how Kadam Sidik frames specific issues as discourse priorities in society. Although Kadam does not explicitly mention the names of political figures, the narrative he builds implicitly guides his followers to pay attention to specific values when choosing a leader. Thus, he also influences the cognitive structure of the audience in determining what issues are important, ultimately influencing their political attitudes.

The Spiral of Silence theory by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1974) can also be used to explain how the content of da'wah influencers such as Kadam Sidik provides a sense of security for audience groups with similar political opinions. In this context, when individuals see that Kadam's narrative is supported by many people (for example, as seen from the number of likes, comments, and shares), then individuals who were previously hesitant to voice their political opinions will be encouraged to get out of the "spiral" of silence. Thus, Kadam's role as an opinion leader on social media also strengthens collective courage in voicing Islamic political views that align with his values.

In addition, the concept of the mediatization of religion shows that religious institutions and preachers are starting to shift to digital media spaces to gain legitimacy and influence (Hjarvard, 2011). In this context, Kadam Sidik represents how Islamic symbols are packaged visually and narratively to support political messages subtly.

Data was collected through non-participatory observation of Kadam Sidik's TikTok and Instagram content during the political campaign leading up to the 2024 Election. Several viral videos were observed and analyzed for their narratives, delivery style, and audience responses. Discourse analysis was used to uncover implied meanings, the use of religious symbols, and the direction of opinions constructed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before discussing further the communication strategy of Kadam Sidik, it is important to understand the socio-political context surrounding digital preaching activities ahead of the 2024 General Election. The 2024 General Election in Indonesia is a political contestation event that massively highlights digital media's role. Unlike previous elections, the use of social media as a campaign tool and political communication in this period has experienced a significant spike. Data from Kominfo (2023) shows that more than 70% of potential voters in 2024 are part of the millennial and Gen Z generations, most of whom access political information through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. This has caused political actors, both formal and informal, to compete to utilize digital space to reach young constituents.

Amidst the rapid flow of information and increasing political polarization, the emergence of figures such as Kadam Sidik as da'wah influencers offers an alternative approach to conveying political messages. Instead of using partisan campaign rhetoric, Kadam inserts political messages subtly through moral and religious narratives. This strategy has proven effective in building trust, especially amidst increasing public distrust of conventional political elites.

This context is important to understand why the influence of da'wah influencers is increasingly relevant. In a society that is starting to get bored with traditional political campaigns, figures with a religious image, close to the people, and not openly affiliated with political parties are considered more authentic and worthy of being role models. Therefore, political messages wrapped in da'wah content become a more "acceptable" medium, especially among young Muslims who are looking for moral guidance amidst political contestation full of interests.

In addition, before the 2024 Election, issues of religious identity have again become a hot topic in the public sphere. Narratives about Islamic leadership, ideal leaders according to the people, and the importance of Muslim unity have become discourses that often appear in online discussions. Kadam Sidik, in his various contents, responds to this condition by calling for the election of a wise, critical leader while still maintaining the Islamic brotherhood. His down-to-earth communication style, interspersed with humor and not preachy, makes the message more effective than the conventional lecture approach.

In this context, Kadam Sidik's role is not only as a moral message deliverer but also as a mediating agent who bridges religious values and political reality. He is a symbolically neutral moral reference but is still biased towards the values of justice, honesty, and intelligence when choosing a leader. This is what makes him have his appeal compared to other influencers who tend to be partisan or just chasing sensation.

The analysis reveals several communication patterns that Kadam Sidik consistently uses. First, he uses relatable language and does not patronize everyday language, thus building emotional closeness with his audience. This is one of the keys to his communication effectiveness.

Second, he often raises current socio-religious issues. For example, in several of his videos, Kadam discusses social inequality, political ethics from an Islamic perspective, and the importance of maintaining Islamic brotherhood despite differing political choices. In this way, his content feels down to earth and does not come across as preachy.

Third, content about politics is implicitly conveyed through analogies of everyday life, such as calling for choosing a leader with precise and mature analysis, not based on reasons that seem trivial. He encourages his followers to think critically by refusing to vote for a candidate just because they feel sorry for never winning, without mentioning names explicitly. This narrative is in line with the practice of soft persuasion in digital political communication strategies (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

His content is easily shared and often sparks discussion in the comments section, indicating high audience engagement. Although he does not explicitly support a particular candidate, the direction of Kadam Sidik's political message is quite clear to his followers. The effectiveness of his communication is also evident from the high number of views, likes, and shares, especially on TikTok, which is the primary channel for spreading his preaching. The form of audience engagement is evident from the many comments and interactions on political content. Several comments indicate that his followers use Kadam Sidik as a moral reference before making political choices. Some also ask for Kadam's opinion on specific candidates. This indicates the high level of trust that the public has in him as a role model.

Overall, Kadam Sidik's success in conveying da'wah and political messages through TikTok cannot be separated from his ability to adapt a communication style that suits the characteristics of the Gen Z audience, namely using simple language, storytelling, humor, and utilizing the latest social media trends. This approach not only makes his da'wah more interesting and easy to accept but also strengthens the emotional closeness and engagement of the audience so that the message conveyed can have a broader and more profound impact.

Thus, Kadam Sidik's communication pattern can be an example of a strategy in digital preaching, especially in social media, which demands creativity, social sensitivity, and the ability to build authentic relationships with the audience. This humanistic,

contextual, and interactive communication approach is key to building trust and effectiveness in preaching in today's digital era.

In the digital preaching landscape in Indonesia, Kadam Sidik's approach is strikingly different from figures such as Gus Miftah. Gus Miftah is a politically open preacher who is even directly involved in various campaign activities for presidential candidates and specific political figures. He uses the preaching stage to convey support explicitly and sometimes positions himself as part of a legitimate political machine. This has often resulted in Gus Miftah being criticized for blurring the line between preaching and practical politics.

On the other hand, Kadam Sidik chose a more subtle and non-confrontational path. He did not openly declare support for a particular figure or political party. However, he inserted political values through moral messages, everyday life analogies, and symbolic approaches that tended to be subtle. This method made the message more neutral and did not trigger public resistance. By not displaying political affiliations directly, Kadam gained sympathy from young people who had previously tended to be skeptical of the political elite.

In terms of communication style, Gus Miftah appears more outspoken and bold, while Kadam Sidik uses humor, satire, and everyday narratives to convey his ideas. This strategy makes Kadam Sidik closer to the digital culture of young people, especially TikTok and Instagram users who like light but reflective content. The striking difference between the two approaches is that Gus Miftah appears as a religious public figure who enters the formal political space. At the same time, Kadam Sidik plays a greater role as an opinion shaper who influences the direction of public thinking through the digital space informally.

This comparison shows that political preaching patterns can range from explicit to implicit. Kadam Sidik's success lies in his ability to build a political and moral narrative without getting caught up in partisanism. This strategy is important for maintaining public trust and expanding preaching reach to a more ideologically diverse audience.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of da'wah influencers such as Kadam Sidik (Husain Basyaiban) shows a significant transformation in Islamic political communication in the digital era. Through social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, Kadam Sidik has successfully conveyed religious and political messages with a light, interactive, and relevant approach for the younger generation (Gen Z and millennials). His ability to package content using storytelling, humor, and digital trends makes his da'wah easy to accept while influencing the audience's political preferences.

As a preaching influencer, Kadam Sidik has successfully utilized social media to convey political messages wrapped in a religious and communicative package. His credibility as a young preacher, strong symbolic approach, and ability to build audience engagement make his political messages influential in shaping the political preferences of the people, especially the young generation of Muslims.

This study reveals that Islamic political communication on social media is no longer one-way and normative but instead adopts a soft persuasion strategy through daily life narratives, analogies, and implicit discussions about current issues. Kadam Sidik, although not from a formal religious institution, was able to build charismatic authority (Weber, 1947) through emotional closeness, authenticity, and responsiveness to audience interests. Its viral content—such as calls to choose leaders critically and maintain Islamic brotherhood—triggers high engagement, strengthening its role as an agent of political opinion formation.

Another key finding is the mediatization of religion (Hjarvard, 2011), where digital preaching utilizes Islamic symbols creatively packaged to convey political messages subtly. The effectiveness of this strategy is seen from the high level of interaction (likes, shares, comments) and audience trust that makes Kadam Sidik a moral reference in political decisions.

This study confirms that da'wah influencers have become new actors in Islamic political communication, combining religious values with contemporary socio-political realities. Their success depends on their ability to adapt to social media's characteristics, such as creativity, interactivity, and humanization of messages. This study also proves that the

role of da'wah influencers in political communication cannot be underestimated, especially in the digital era, which is full of information and narratives.

Amidst increasingly complex political dynamics, figures like Kadam Sidik prove that the voice of da'wah can be an important part of a healthy public discourse as long as it is packaged wisely and responsibly. With an adaptive and critical approach, digital da'wah can be a means of political empowerment for the younger generation without sacrificing substantive Islamic values.

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