

# Islam,\_Culture,\_and\_Social\_Med ia.pdf

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## Islam, Culture, and Social Media: A Study on the Culture of the Social Media Usage in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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### Abstract

*The Covid-19 pandemic has brought various significant impacts on the cultural shift in the society, one of which is the culture of using social media. This is based on the fact that in the Covid-19 pandemic situation there has been a very significant cultural shift in the use of social media, so that in practice, social media culture in the Covid-19 pandemic era has various impacts, both positive and negative impacts. With these various problems, this study aims to look at social media culture in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic from an Islamic perspective. As an effort to answer the problems above, this study uses a literature review with data sources from books, journal articles, and various online newspapers with data analysis methods using content analysis. The findings in this study indicate that the culture of society in the use of social media in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic has experienced a very significant increase. This increase in the view of Islam is supported when humans explore the ability to increase their knowledge and abilities in their fields. On the other hand, if the increasing culture of social media in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic leads people to a crime, then Islam has the consequence of giving a ban.*

**Keywords:** culture, social media, islam, covid-19

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## INTRODUCTION

In digital era nowadays, social media has become one of the real manifestations of the development of knowledge and technology. As a result, the culture of the community experiences a shift when all of its activities are dependent on and require social media. In such conditions, the development of social media is not only accompanied by various advantages and conveniences, but also accompanied by a series of problems that accompany it. For Muslim groups, social media is certainly an advancement in the scientific world that must be supported. But in the Islamic conception, the use of social media must be based on an ethic.

Social media has been very popular among youth by connecting them on social media platforms (Marie Plaisime 2020). These social media platforms have had a real impact on Muslim social life, including religious practices, religiosity, da'wah, fatwas (religious decisions), and building virtual communities in Muslim-majority countries or in the diaspora (Fita Fathurokhmah 2019). Muslim-majority countries in today's digital age are witnessing the rapid spread and adoption of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. In the Arab world, Facebook is the leading social networking website with 45,194,452 users and Twitter follows with 2,099,706 users. (Yanuar Nugroho and Sofie Shinta Syarief 2012) The Arab region is second only to the United States in terms of the number of daily YouTube views. With 90 million video views per day, Saudi Arabia has the highest number of YouTube views in the world per Internet user. The popularity of social media platforms in the Arab world has led some scholars to hope that their impact on religious life will increase. The general argument is that social media has the potential to change Muslim religiosity and pious practices. (Nurdin 2017) The impact of social media on individual and community religious behavior in an environment characterized by conservatism and traditionalism is said to be greater than in an environment characterized by liberalism and openness. (Syifaul Arifin 2017)

Unexceptionally when the world was struck by the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of social media seemed to have experienced an enormous increase. As quoted from Kompas.com, a study conducted by KG Media Research stated that the behavior of Indonesian social media consumers in the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak further emphasized that social media is a source of information and

misinformation in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The public has positioned social media as the main source of information to get information about Covid-19 (Amir Sodikin 2020).

Fattah and Sujono stated that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought many social changes in society, especially in science. (Raihan Abiyan Fattah and Firman Kurniawan Sujono 2020) Srivastava et al's research stated that mass media and social media platforms play an important role in providing information related to the virus. Covid-19. Because little is known about Covid-19, various fake news, misinformation, and rumors are spread in digital media that create public panic. (Kumar Chandan Srivastava, Deepti Shrivastava, Kumar Gaurav Chhabra, Waqar Naqvi 2020) Meanwhile, Wong et al in their research found that During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of social media has accelerated to become part of the modern healthcare system everywhere. As with any tool in healthcare, the risks and benefits need to be carefully considered (Adrian Wong, Serene Ho 2020).

From the mapping that has been described above, it shows that the culture of using social media in the Covid-19 pandemic era has a very significant increase. The increase and change in the use of social media in the Covid-19 pandemic era as the research findings above have confirmed that social media culture in the pandemic era is an interesting phenomenon to study and analyze. Moreover, the analysis focuses on a religious-based cultural framework. Because in Islam, social media culture is something that is caused by the development of science. While the development of science in Islam is something that is recommended. However, in the practice of social media culture, Islam teaches various guidelines and guidelines to realize an Islam that is rahmatan lil 'alamin.

## **METHOD**

This study is based on a literary review that aims to explore data related to increasing social media culture in the Covid-19 pandemic era and explore Islamic views regarding social media culture. Considering that the study is purely a literature study, (Mestika Zed 2009) the data in this study were obtained by conducting a study of various literatures consisting of books, online news, journals, or the results of previous studies that were related to the object of

discussion. In this case are books, online news, and journals that discuss the use of social media. While the analytical method in this study uses critical analysis which aims to formulate Islamic views on social media culture in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic (N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln 2011).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Islam and Social Media Culture: Reflection of Religious Social Expression**

Social media has been a very significant way to take the path of *da'wah* and the spread of Islam. Few voices condemn the use of social media in the contemporary era as incompatible with Islamic practice. For example, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, the Grand Mufti in Saudi Arabia who puts forward a critical attitude towards social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter because as he says they spread lies and can destroy an established Muslim's religious relationship. Correspondingly, religious authorities in several Islamic countries issued fatwas against the use of social media such as Twitter on the grounds that it is not in accordance with sharia (Islamic law) for accusations of trafficking and promoting lies. While some Islamic religious leaders advise their followers to use social media platforms. Because the majority of scholars and preachers take advantage of the effectiveness and efficiency of social media in engaging with religious communities (Lawal 2020).

During the first generations of internet, there were several traditional websites such as Islam Online which acted as “one-stop shopping” for religious information and comprehensive services to the Muslim community. This digital platform led to the emergence of what some have called the “Facebook fatwa” or “F-fatwa”. They introduced a new paradigm to the practice of religious instruction through social media. The proliferation of digital platforms during the second era of Internet Web 2.0, led to the process of destroying the monopoly orthodox nature of religion. For many, social media has become the ideal platform for a new mosque or madrasa for the spread of Islam. While the F-fatwa triggers comments and feedback among many sectors of Muslim society, including religious authorities, Islamic intellectuals, urban Muslims or young people, and ordinary people (Mutohharun Jinan 2012).

One type of social media use in Islam is *da'wah* which is widely popular among Islamic preachers and intellectuals. Some observations put the number of Twitter followers for some clerics at 600,000. Famous preachers like Tareq Al Suwaidan and Amr Khaled even reached 1 million in terms of Facebook fans and “likes”. Even religious followers and intellectuals who idolize clerics on social media have aspired to reach a new generation of digital natives and followers by creating Facebook pages, Twitter streams, and YouTube channels, making social media an increasingly important source of religious information for many people around the world. Muslim world. As a result, a new media culture emerged that had a significant impact on global Muslim consciousness (Mas'udi 2013).

The use of social media is not limited to religious leaders, but is also used by ordinary Muslims who start tweeting verses from the Koran and hadith as social media capital. Social media has integrated into the habit of not only spreading the word of Allah, but also protecting Islam from outside criticism. For example, Muslims created the pages of the Face book to protect the prophet Muhammad from attacks. The “Social and Islamic Media” Website is a page that promotes the message of Islam on social media. Social media also creates popular Islamic diplomacy. This involves the global mobilization of the faithful via virtual platforms in the event of an individual or group attack against the Prophet or the Qur'an. Notable examples are the plan by a US pastor to burn copies of the Koran in 2010 and the distribution of the anti-Islam video clip Innocent of Muslims. This incident has sparked a global mobilization of Muslim protests via social media platforms. Countries like Pakistan, Jordan, and Egypt asked YouTube to remove the film from its platform (Editors Team 2020b).

Some conservative leaders are calling for the creation and launch of a halal social media platform. In response to this call, a number of digital initiatives and projects were undertaken. Islam-centric Facebook alternatives, such as Muslimocial.com, Muslim.com, and SalamWorld are emerging, but their adoption rates are still very low. SalamWorld has recently sought support from Saudi scholars and salafi (puritans). This social networking site filters what it sees as harmful content, such as pornography, terrorist activity, or human rights

violations with the mission of respecting Islamic values (Ferdian Ananda Majni 2020).

Social media has opened up opportunities especially for young Muslims to engage with their faith and communicate with fellow believers in ways their parents never imagined. Where once the ummah was a spiritual idea with a Muslim community separated by language and geography. But now social media has broken down barriers and allowed young Muslims to connect, wherever they are. This allows them to discuss what it means to be Muslim in the 21st century, especially for those living in the Western Hemisphere. Adolescents and adults of second and third generation Muslims living in Western Europe and North America have engaged in digital discussions and debates about religious issues and identities.

For some hyperdigital activists, social media is used as a mean of reunification of the people in the form of the ummah. Digital social platforms, are expected to contribute to the creation of virtual communities that can pave the way for actual physical communities and thereby support global cohesion for people to believe by forging relationships between community members from different countries around the world. In several urban centers in North America and Western Europe, Islamic social media websites have contributed to the spread of Islamic icons, indexes and symbols among members of the Muslim diaspora. Recent research has shown that young Muslims in Western societies are more receptive to religious beliefs and values. One indication of the greatness of their religion is that they tend to go to the mosque more often. In Islamic communities in the Northern Hemisphere, da'wah efforts have been very successful. In Europe and the United States, non-Muslims accept calls to convert to Islam. The converter's private videos are broadcast on YouTube and discussed in virtual chat rooms. Young Muslims have uploaded a large number of videos discussing issues related to the creation of the universe. For example, there are about 70,000 YouTube videos on the "Scientific Wonders of the Qur'an" which show their particular popularity (M. Noor Sulaiman Syah 2016).

From the various religious expressions and attitudes expressed on social media as described above, it seems that religious expressions are mapped into religion with a friendly face and religion with an angry face. This becomes a necessity when religious expressions must clash with certain interests and goals.

Nevertheless, the argument war by bringing religion into the realm of social media is a necessity that cannot be avoided. The screening process from religious groups becomes very important to maintain the image and dignity of religion.

### **The Culture of Social Media Usage in the Covid-19 Pandemic Era in Islamic Perspective**

The disastrous situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic has left its mark all over the world. For example, starting March 12, 2020, work and school from home will be implemented until April 2020 and then extended to January 2021 due to the second wave of the Covid-19 emergency. However, community activities may increase to continue to fund activities at home during the crisis through the use of smartphones via the internet. This is because almost everyone has their own smartphone without the need to purchase additional hardware. For formal learning, the public can take advantage of the opportunity to use social media platforms that facilitate conversation, such as through the use of smartphones, even tablets (Editors Team 2021).

For students, the use of social media helps the online learning process easily. For example, they can use tools to communicate via social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Zoom, and Edmodo to connect with friends and lecturers. Students can share information on social media to deliver school assignments, especially using platforms such as padlet or google drive. Students can work on video assignments using applications such as Macromedia Flash, Filmora or Movie Maker. Lecturers can use the above platform online to conduct dialogues or conversations with students in front of a wireless network through applications such as Zoom or Skype from their respective homes. Employers and workers can interact using technology transfer, transfer documents, and share information about their current employment status. Everyone can benefit from using an open source platform to easily carry on conversations to read and gain new knowledge during the Covid-19 outbreak by reducing their movement outside the home and spending time more effectively (Artanti Zahra Adisa 2021).

For instance, they can sign up for free with an e-learning platform through easy switching between providers. Discoverable platforms such as Udemy and Coursera provide free courses for students to study and review subjects related to



subjects or life skills and various subjects using videos. Especially for informal courses, this can be used to continue learning using information technology (IT) through various social media channels. So that all families at home can gain new knowledge such as cooking, gardening, financial management, health care, food, and exercise methods using social media such as YouTube. All distant families can also communicate via social media such as Skype or Zoom and digitally using transferable technology. Many tutorials on using this social media app can be found on YouTube. Those who need religious materials can find them easily and precisely on their smartphones, such as the holy books of their respective religions, for example to access the Qur'an and Hadith.

For youngsters, apart from watching films and games apps, they can also take advantage of opportunities to learn and use transferable apps and social media such as language learning, learning to code with the help of their mothers and fathers. This pandemic makes it difficult for someone to move from place to place to get goods such as food. Therefore, e-commerce can be used to buy food online without the need to go to the market and can avoid crowds. Financial matters such as bill payments and money transfers can be done by using online banking services without the need for place and location. The public can also use social media such as Telegram, Instagram, Facebook provided by the National Disaster Management Agency and the Ministry of Health by providing valid information and the latest data regarding the status of Covid-19.

From the description above, it can be interpreted that during the period of social restrictions and limited contact with many people, social media has become a very important place to accommodate all forms of human interaction and communication. Where the social media platform has the aim of connecting and making it easier for humans to interact. Moreover, that through the social media function as described above, it seems that the use of social media in the Covid-19 pandemic era has experienced a very significant increase. This condition is certainly caused by the government's request to stay at home, so they switch and vent to social media-based communication and interaction activities.

In reality, the Covid-19 pandemic has an influence on everyone to switch to using social media. This is reinforced by the existence of social media networks that are used to provide information about the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, social media is also able to provide humor with memes that entertain boredom in

the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The existence of these humorous memes is actually caused by the imposition of a human lifestyle that is under mental, economic and social pressure. So they seem to have a mental disorder in the face of this pandemic. However, this condition does not stop there, even increasing the online counseling model through social media (Mazdalifah Firmansyah et al. 2020).

In addition to the positive and negative sides of social media in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, it turns out that Covid-19 is also referred to as an infodemic. Because direct access through content with platforms such as YouTube and Twitter turns out to make users vulnerable to information that cannot be accounted for. The information turned out to have such a big impact on influencing the behavior of each individual. In addition, on the positive side, it can also be used by policy makers to socialize and disseminate information related to Covid-19.

The MIT Technology Review mentioned the Covid-19 virus pandemic a social media infodemic. (Joan Donovan 2020) Previous research has shown how to stop getting information from browsers and other search methods that prefer to rely on social media. This information can have a significant impact on behavior, limiting cohesion and thereby limiting the effectiveness of government action against the virus. There is preliminary evidence that people's trust in science and scientists is linked to how trustworthy they are at finding misinformation about Covid-19. Although the researchers encourage caution in interpreting the findings pending further studies. Even National Geographic has reported an increase in fake news on social media during the pandemic.

Many young people get the latest information and news from various social media platforms. For example, Twitter has an entire page dedicated to news updates. While there is some factual information being spread from social media, most of the information is sent by bots. There is no way to tell if the information read by Twitter or other social media platforms comes from a trusted source or a bot created. Political bots are a common way to spread false information and publicity and manipulate people's opinions. Cases of propaganda and misinformation vary from country to country. False information can be

disseminated strategically, but it can also be disseminated unintentionally. Therefore, misinformation can make a pandemic more dangerous than ever.

On Facebook, BBC News reported that groups opposing vaccines and groups campaigning against 5G mobile networks were generating unwanted rumors. Facebook 5G and another group, the Stop 5G UK group, posted an article from Technocracy News, claiming that the Covid-19 virus was clearly a designed and deliberately acquired biological weapon. These online rumors have led to massive attacks in India and massive poisonings in Iran (Rachel Schraer & Eleanor Lawrie 2020).

The research results also show that the coverage of information and coverage of Covid-19 is faster and more massive than that of sports (soccer) news. The rapid intensity of the news about Covid-19 is due to its rapid spread and many casualties. Where as of February 21, 2020, cases of Covid-19 transmission were only in 29 countries, but within seven days Covid-19 had spread to 61 countries. The number of cases is more than 100,000 with more than 3000 deaths that exceed the death toll from SARS.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Gebreyes said that this is a battle against troll and conspiracy theories. According to Tedros, false information causes confusion, spreads fear and hinders the response to the outbreak. Hunter's results show how low public trust in authorities is associated with a tendency to believe in conspiracy theories, and how people interact in online information bubbles (Poppy Ruliana 2020).

False information and conspiracy theories about Covid-19 have been removed from social media platforms by Facebook and Instagram. Facebook focuses on discouraging claims that include fake treatments and preventative measures. Facebook's third-party fact-checkers fake by sending links to fact-checked information to accounts that are trying to share or share content and provide correct information. Limit content distribution. For posts like "Drinking bleach cures coronavirus", Facebook removes information and hashtags related to false information that are blocked or restricted on Instagram and Facebook. The latest support and information is available from the Facebook post at the top of the Facebook news feed as a guide provided by the World Health Organization. When using Facebook's search function, or via relevant Instagram hashtags based on

data from global health organizations and state local health authorities, you'll see educational pop-ups containing reliable information (Editors Team 2020a).

In addition to relating to the use of social media in social phenomena, it seems that social media is used in socio-religious aspects such as da'wah. The use of social media as a means of da'wah also seems to have two major poles. That is the da'wah model that puts forward friendly Islam and angry Islam. That is, when the Islamic da'wah model is friendly, the preachers prioritize aspects of education and public understanding in order to respond positively to the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, angry Islamic preachers put more emphasis on the provocative aspect that the Covid-19 virus is a curse (Achmad Fairozi & Sulistya Ayu A 2020).

The massive use of social media in the pandemic era as described above, it seems that Islam sees it as something that cannot be avoided in this modern era. Islam teaches a social theory and communication (including using social media) is always bound by religious commands and prohibitions. (Yeni Ratnayuningsih 2013) Where the source of religion (al-Qur'an and al-Hadith) is a rule and is a guide in carrying out interactions on social media. These rules and guidelines certainly have a goal so that human behavior on social media is in accordance with religious orders and prohibitions. Thus, behavior and communication on social media in the view of Islam always prioritize ethics accompanied by sanctions in the afterlife.

In the Islamic perspective on the culture of using social media, the Qur'an provides a key word related to communication. Like the keyword al-bayan in the Qur'an which is defined as the ability to communicate. In addition, the Qur'an also provides the keyword al-qaul which is then developed into qaulan sadida, namely the ability to communicate correctly and well. Communication allows humans to express themselves, form networks of social interaction, and develop their personalities. Communication experts agree with psychologists that communication failure can be fatal both personally and socially. Socially, communication failures hinder mutual understanding, cooperation, tolerance, and implementation of social norms. So the Qur'an mentions good communication as one of the principles of humanity (Muslimah 2016).

It can be concluded that the root of communication in social media taught by the Qur'an is always based on the ethics of social media. The ethics taught by Islam is how to speak and use social media with *himah*, *mauidhah*, and *mujlah* which is based on the principles of *qaulan sadida*, *qaulan baligha*, *gaulan maisura*, *qaulan layyina*, *qaulan karima* and *qaulan ma'rufa*. The roots of social media itself in the Qur'an place Islamic teachings that use social media with correct news and information. Islam also provides guidelines for humans to provide information on social media accompanied by an attitude of honesty, accuracy, justice, and accountability. (Iffatin Nur and Muhammad Ngizzul Muttaqin 2020) Caution in using social media taught by Islam is also given to them who received the information. There, they must adopt a *tabayun* attitude and not easily believe in receiving information. The roots of communication in social media from an Islamic point of view lead to the constant invitation of others without getting bored with the virtues of God's direction, and making people good, that is, being well recognized by the community. In addition, it is also justified by customs that have been consistent with God's values and prevent them from becoming evil, meaning those who are denied common sense in society and are considered bad. (Ali Nurdin 2014)

Unexceptionally when the world is dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, the massive use of social media in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic has raised its own problems in the use of social media based on Islamic teachings. The problem is the use of social media which is contrary to the ethical values of communication in Islam. Such as untrue news related to the Covid-19 pandemic, provocation of public distrust of the government, and other things that do not prioritize improving living standards and increasing community immunity.

## CONCLUSION

The culture of social media usage in this era of globalization has become a distinguished trend that cannot be avoided by the current millennial generation. No exception when the world is faced with the Covid-19 pandemic, social media seems to be an outlet in dealing with work from home. In addition, social media is also used by the public to access information about Covid-19, distance learning, work from home and others. However, it seems that crime and misuse of social media in the current Covid-19 pandemic era are also showing an increase. So that

Islam in its presence to see the culture of using social media in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic has positioned itself as a supporter or as a prohibitor. As a supporter, Islam supports when social media is based on utilization that can increase scientific abilities and knowledge. Meanwhile, as a prohibition, Islam is present as signs and regulations that social media cannot be used and exploited to be misused and used for crime.

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