Social Media: Millennial Generation Alternative Solutions in Learning Religion During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: The use of social media as a communication medium is not limited. In the era of technological development with the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, social media is also used to access information about spiritual issues. This study aims to explore the use of social media as a religious learning solution for the millennial generation in the era of the spread of Covid-19. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method to the millennial generation's tendency to use social media. Data collection uses observation, interviews, and analysis studies of *da'wah* accounts on social media. The data analysis technique uses the theory of Miles and Huberman, namely collecting data, reducing, and presenting. Data validation uses data triangulation and data sources. This study shows that the millennial generation filters *da'wah* accounts on social media based on their understanding *(manhaj)*. This research needs to be followed up by mapping the concept of *da'wah* through social media which is relevant for the millennial generation in Indonesia.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic; millennial generation; religious study; social media.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology makes it easy for users to access knowledge. Technology is a primary need for society in various professions and institutions, whether government, civil, educational, health, social, UMKM, agriculture, etc. (Hunecke et al., 2017) (Kumar et al., 2018) (Glover et al., 2019). In fact, the increasingly massive spread of the Covid-19 virus in Indonesia has increased the intensity of society towards technology (Wasserman et al., 2020). This can be seen from community activities carried out through internet connections, such as Zoom media, Google Meet, Whatsapp, and social media.

Information technology is divided into a variety of media commonly used by the public as a means of communication. Research data released by "We Are Social" notes that communication media that are in great demand by the Indonesian people include Youtube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (Puspitarini & Nuraeni, 2019). The Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) explains the diagram of the use of social media for the community in 2020 as follows: Facebook is the favorite media with a user number of 65.8%, followed by Youtube at 61.0%, Instagram occupies the third position at 42.3%, Twitter 10.0% and Linkedin 2.1% (APJII, 2020). The results of a survey conducted by Digital 2021, explained

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that Youtube is the most popular social media in Indonesia. 93.8% of Indonesia's population aged 16-64 admitted to using the Youtube video service as a medium of information. Followed by Whatsapp as the second most popular social media with usage of 87.7%, Facebook 85.5% and Twitter 63.6% (2021, 2021). So it is emphasized that social media users are in the age range of teenagers to the elderly.

The millennial generation referred to in this article are those born in 1980 – 1995. This generation is known as Generation Y who are aged between 25-40 years at a time when technology has developed rapidly (Febriani & Desrani, 2021). This age corresponds to the average age of students studying in higher education, which is around the age of 19-34 years (Hidayatullah et al., 2018). While generation Z is known as the generation born in 1997 to the 2000 where they have never known life without technology (Zazin & Zaim, 2017). So it is only natural that learning media always experience differences from one generation to the next. The millennial generation is more likely to use social media as a learning tool to find information both in the realm of lifestyle and education. While the old generation prefers to look for primary sources such as books as learning media.

The use of social media has a positive and negative impact on its users. The weaker one's religious knowledge, the more likely it is to misuse social media. And conversely, the higher one's religious understanding the more able to use social media wisely. Maintaining peace among human beings as social beings is everyone's responsibility (Hope & Jones, 2014). So being kind to every creature must be done both in the "virtual" and "real" era.

Social media is very useful for digital-based education in the 4.0 era which is now developing into 5.0. Social media is also effective in helping student learning during the Covid-19 pandemic (Ritonga et al., 2020) (Obi-Ani et al., 2020) (Wasserman et al., 2020) (Jogezai et al., 2021). Even the millennial generation uses social media as a source of religious learning, through *da'wah*

accounts that they consider credible and valid. Social media users will consider social media security, choose content that suits their needs, as well as accounts that have a high intensity of followers (Zhang & Gupta, 2018).

Research on the use of social media as a learning resource has been widely discussed. (Baraybar-Fernández et al., 2020) Stated that social media has become a platform that is widely used to form virtual communities which discuss strategies in unifying the vision of world civilization development. In addition to learning resources, today's social media creates a lot of work in the development of religious values, increasing social and religious values, and sociological approaches in religion-based social media (Kgatle, 2018). (Woodward & Kimmons, 2019) Affirming that in this era of technological development, formal and informal learning must adopt technology such as social media. Because social media is a communication technology that is widely used by students everywhere. (Alimi, 2019) advises social media users to use social media wisely. Because social media contains elements of hoax news that are easily trusted by the Indonesian people. In a religious context, post truth describes the shallow distribution of religion, unverified forms of religious interpretation, on the internet and social media. It is undeniable that people who spread persuasive content on social media often use the name of a certain religion to carry out their actions (Kursuncu et al., 2019).

Based on the analysis of previous research, it is necessary to conduct a study on the trend of using social media as a source of religious learning for the millennial generation during the Covid-19 emergency in Indonesia. Seeing the rapid development of social media and the millennial generation's attention to social media is also very high amid the surge in the spread of the Covid-19 virus. This study is expected to be able to explore the benefits of social media as the media with the most users in the world in its function as a digital-based religious learning resource for the millennial generation

METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive analysis approach with phenomenological methods. Researchers see a unique phenomenon from the function of social media which was originally a communication medium and is now being used as a source of religious learning amidst the increasingly massive spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia. The source of information used as research data is the millennial generation aged 15-30 years totaling 40 people from high school students to university students. Data was collected using online interviews via Google Form to obtain data on the use of social media for the millennial generation in studying religion and document studies from *da'wah* media accounts used by the millennial generation as a source of religious learning. The data is then analyzed using the theory of Miles and Huberman, namely by collecting data through interviews and documentation, reducing the data that has been obtained to be selected based on the suitability of the research data, and presenting the data and drawing conclusions. That way, the use of social media as a source of religious learning for the millennial generation can be described in detail

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of using social media has become a pleasant habit for the community, both from children, adults to the elderly. Social media activities carried out are one's efforts to get information and knowledge from social media that is accessed. Millennials surf on social media looking for *da'wah* accounts that are used as a means of learning religion. This activity has become a phenomenon favored by millennials now because of easy and practical internet access in answering religious problems found.

The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia has limited public social activities. Holding religious recitations that cause crowds of people is banned from the Covid-19 task force. This is done as an effort to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. As a result, people use social media as a medium to gain religious knowledge online (Baihaqi et al., 2020). Both religious recitations are followed directly from social media and video playback that has been uploaded to the social media account in question.

Table 1. The reason millennials choose social media

Informant	Reason Millennials	Social Media
DK (39)	In this pandemic era, social media platforms will often be used as study rooms due to limited meetings and very responsive even though it takes more effort to concentrate. Certainly, different from learning directly face to face with the teacher.	YouTube
MRU (23)	Information on social media is very helpful in learning religion. However, it is undeniable that the real figure of a teacher is still very much needed. Because the material obtained through youtube videos or articles, some can be understood by themselves, some need further explanation. With the real figure of a teacher, the knowledge we get is wider, more than just what is written in the article or included in the video, if in doubt, you can ask directly. Not all videos on youtube are full of explanations, some are cut off. So, I do not think there's anything better than face to face.	Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube
YA (21)	presentation of *da'wah* delivered through social media is very interesting. The display of a relatively short duration with dense material made me understand things related to religion even though it was only a little, but it was very useful. For those who like to read, they prefer to look for primary sources such as books and articles, while those who are visual prefer videos as learning media.	YouTube, Facebook
IH (20)	Social media can add new knowledge and knowledge. Very effective also for the millennial generation now. Because many young people are more active on social media than directly following the recitation directly. This makes it easy for the millennial generation to continue to study religion even though they do not meet the speakers directly.	YouTube

Informant	Reason Millennials	Social Media
PS (21)	*Alhamdulillah,* the knowledge gained is the same as studying by studying the Koran, but what makes the difference is the condition when we are in the religious learning science assembly, we will be calmer, while social media has many obstacles, such as networks, quotas, laziness, boredom. However, these obstacles are felt to be eroded by the need for access to religious knowledge which is widely spread on social media. Currently, I use Youtube, Facebook, and Tiktok to find explanations about religious knowledge.	
AD (16)	During the Covid-19 pandemic, social media has become the main means of learning religion. Very helpful to increase knowledge and other good practices. The pandemic era forces every millennial generation to self-isolate and is required to be able to increase their religious insight. Currently, social media with its rapid development provides education for everyone to be able to learn independently from their respective places.	

Table 1 above states that the millennial generation prefers to use social media as a medium for religious learning. Knowledge and study information obtained through social media is the same as studying religion directly with an ustadz or da'i. In addition, religious studies on social media can be played repeatedly whenever and wherever needed. However, following the study of religion directly in the science assembly would be better in the social and togetherness category (Ritonga, 2021). Learning religion online using social media forms a person to be individualistic, and learning religion offline in a scientific assembly forms a high social-minded society (Zaim, 2020).
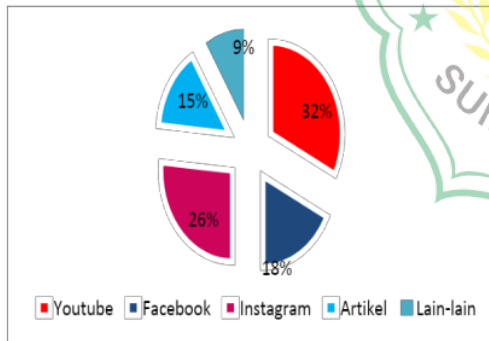

Figure 1. Variety of Social Media

Based on the results of interviews with informants, it is known that Figure 1 shows that there are four kinds of media used by the millennial generation as a source of religious learning. The four media are Youtube, Instagram, Tiktok, and Online Articles. Youtube is the social media account that is mostly used as a source of religious learning by 32%, then followed by Instagram by 26%

as the second place, Facebook ranks third at 18% and the third media is online articles accessed from websites, journals, blogs, Wordpress, Blogspot of 15% users, while 9% learn religion from Tiktok applications, books and discussions. The media above are a variety of online platforms that are easily accessible for free, and easy to use anywhere and anytime (Jogezai et al., 2021).

Informants selected the *da'wah* account which was used as the account of choice for religious learning. The selection of the *da'wah* account was done based on the understanding *(manhaj)* of different informants. The informants were divided into three sects, namely the *Salafi, Nahdlatul Ulama* and *Muhammadiyah*. In Islam itself, there are variants of religious understanding and religious teachings that will affect religious perspectives during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hanik & Zahid, 2021). Informants received religious studies from the three groups through their social media accounts. The ustadz who are considered valid informants in the religious field are Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Ustadz Khalid Basalamah, Ustadzah Oki Setiana Dewi, Ustadz Felix Siaw, Ustadz Quraish Shihab, and Ustadz Muhammad Nuzul Dzikri.

Table 2. Followers of *da'wah* social media accounts

Account Name	Youtube		Instagram		Facebook	
Ustadz Abdul Somad Official	2.11 M Subscribers	1,216 Videos	5.5 M Followers	2,375 Post	Public Groups	261,000 Members
Oki Setiana Dewi	2 M Subscribers	513 Videos	107 K Followers	1,235 Post	Fans Page	3,417,240 Followers
Khalid Basalamah Official	1.87 M Subscribers	2,355 Videos	2.5 M	3,366 Post	Fans Page	244,912 Followers
Felix Siaw	1.05 M Subscribers	621 Videos	4.8 M Followers	3,165	Public Groups	11,000 Members
Adi Hidayat Official	920,000 Subscribers	613 Videos	3.2 M Followers	619	Public Groups	149.700 Members
Muhammad Nuzul Dzikri	456 K Subscribers	1,383 Videos	6,788 K Followers	2,725 Post	Fans Page	69.000 Followers
Quraish Shihab	64.7 K Subscribers	191 Video	224 K Followers	156 Post	Fans Page	5,300 Followers

Based on the observations of researchers, Table 2 above explains that of the seven *da'wah* accounts used as sources of religious studies by the informant, Ustadz Abdul Somad's social media account has followers the most followers on social media Youtube and Instagram. Meanwhile, the Facebook social media account with the most followers is Ustadzah Oki Setiana Dewi, totaling 3,417,240 followers. (Yuan & Lou, 2020) confirms that the number of social media followers is motivated by the performance of the social media. The social culture of the community will be formed according to the social media accounts that are always seen (Helal et al., 2018).

The issue of religion is a topic that is always studied in the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Religious communities are chosen between the truth of the existence of Covid-19 and concerns about carrying out worship activities in places of worship such as mosques, prayer rooms, ta'lim assemblies, etc. Many Muslim community activities cause crowds, such as five daily prayers, friday prayers, funeral prayers, *tabligh akbar, walimah al-'urs* (Suyadi et al., 2020). The prohibition of gathering to conduct religious recitations during the Covid-19 pandemic makes people long for the figure of a "religious teacher". So there are many

religious matters that you want to ask the *ustadz,* but are blocked because of the Covid-19 condition.

Spiritual needs are the reasons for the millennial generation to access religious studies through social media. Based on data collected from informants, there are six religious studies needed by the millennial generation during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely, morals, marriage, practice according to the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah, *mu'amalah* contracts, faith and monotheism materials and life motivation. Moral education is needed because people are vulnerable to losing emotional control during the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to poor social welfare and difficult economy (Tisdell, 2020). So that people need an emotional antidote in the spiritual study of moral development through social media. However, during the pandemic, many people misuse social media which will cause moral destruction in all circles of society, both children, teenagers, and adults. Morals are one of the main pillars in people's lives throughout history. Therefore, in addition to controlling emotions, attitudes, and behavior by learning morals. Limiting oneself to deviant social media is strictly prohibited.

In addition to morals, the discussion about *muamalah* is a topic that

requires explanation for the community. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this study of *muamalah* was sought after by the public through social media. This is motivated by vaccination programs imported from friendly countries as a form of *muamalah* between the Indonesian government and the governments of vaccine distributor countries . As it is known that the function of the vaccine is to provide immunity for the body from the transmission of the Covid-19 virus (Jr & Fernan, 2021).

The use of the Covid-19 vaccine is still being rejected by some people. Concerns about vaccine side effects such as fever and pain that are widely found on social media are the reasons for the rejection of the vaccine. In addition to side effects, people still question the administration of vaccines from the point of view of the Islamic religion. Even though the Sinovac vaccine has received an emergency use permit from the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency of the Republic of Indonesia (BPOM RI) (Masyarakat, 2021) and has received a halal label from the Indonesian religious assembly (MUI). This is stated in the MUI fatwa Number 2 of 2021 after considering the audit results from LPPOM MUI.

Religious factors are one of the reasons for public distrust of vaccines. This is based on the results of an online survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Indonesian Ministry of Health (Kemenkes), the Indonesian Technical Advisory Group in Immunization (ITAGI), and UNICEF on more than 115,000 respondents in 34 provinces in Indonesia to measure public acceptance. against the Covid-19 vaccine (P2P, 2020). The public's unwillingness to receive vaccines is due to the rise of hoaxes on social media, including vaccine concoctions containing pork.

How important is the role of religion in every activity of human life.

Being serious in religion must always grow in a person both in happy and in difficult conditions, both in health and in the midst of the threat of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic (Malla et al., 2020). The use of social media to find religious discussions needed in social life is expected to be a solution to learning religion happily. Because the urgency of using learning media is to provide happiness in its use and lead to stronger self-motivation (Das et al., 2020).

In the midst of the Covid-19 emergency, people need enthusiasm and motivation to survive. The role of parents greatly determines the continuity of their children's religious education when the learning process is carried out online due to the spread of the Covid-19 Virus (Munastiwi, 2020). Parents must appear to be at the forefront of welcoming their children's religious qualities (Susanto et al., 2022). (Ubabuddin et al., 2020) emphasized that cooperation between fathers and mothers in meeting household needs is the dream of every family. Family happiness lies in the level of religious observance. Because religion is a human phenomenon, culture and social aspects must always be embedded in the soul of every servant (Jensen, 2019).

The use of social media as a medium for religious learning is increasing in the midst of the surge in the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning religion through social media is increasingly favored by people in Indonesia (Ummah, 2020). The ease with which information enters through social media is the reason the millennial generation prefers to use social media to find answers to religious problems rather than taking religious studies directly to the ustadz. Because social media can be done in a free situation, while religious studies of ustadz can be followed according to a predetermined schedule.

Based on the source of the findings, social media is still an alternative source of

religious activities for the people of Indonesia. As the role of social media can have a positive influence on religious understanding, such as the selection of content that is needed by the community. In addition, social media is also an option for people who view that the study of religious sources can be accessed without being limited by space and time (Aisa & Ratnawati, 2022).

However, based on the positive impact of social media that can be used as a medium for religious learning, social media is a medium tool on the internet, which allows users to be able to represent themselves and collaborate, interact, and communicate with other users and form virtual social bonds. We still need to pay attention to more or less the negative impact is the tendency towards social media so they are reluctant to study and spend time in vain, keeping people who are close and vice versa, face-to-face interactions tend to decrease, making people addicted to social media, internet, causing conflict, privacy problems, vulnerable to the bad influence of others (Kadam & Atre, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Social media has become a widely used religious learning medium during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is shown through the enthusiasm of the millennial generation in accessing various religious learning information from *da'wah* accounts on social media. The findings of this study indicate that social media is an alternative solution for *da'wah* learning for the millennial generation during a very massive spike in the spread of Covid-19. This happens because of restrictions on community activities that can cause crowds such as *tabligh akbar*, *majlis ta'lim*, five daily prayers in mosques, etc. Another finding reveals that there is a process of selecting *da'wah* accounts carried out by the millennial generation for religious learning media. The *da'wah* account used as a source of religious learning is based on the understanding *(manhaj)* of the sources, such as the *manhaj* of the *Salaf*, *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdlatul Ulama*. Through technological developments in the field of social media, it is expected to be able to contribute to the millennial generation to answer religious problems through credible *da'wah* accounts. The limitation of the research is that it only discusses the use of social media, so it needs to be developed for further research by looking at the mapping of the ideal online *da'wah* concept using social media for the millennial generation in Indonesia.

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