

## ETHICS OF DA'WAH COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDONESIA

*Rosidi,<sup>1</sup> Mubasit,<sup>2</sup> and Abdul Qodir Zaelani<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung  
email: rosidi@radenintan.ac.id

**Abstract:** *In normal situations, da'wah can be done face-to-face through ta'lim or Friday prayers, where the da'i and audience (mad'u) meet in a forum. However, such da'wah cannot be carried out in the Covid-19 pandemic situation, which has been running for almost two years. Instead, the preachers use social media such as Youtube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and others to greet and provide enlightenment in the community. The problem is often found in social media content used by preachers with unethical language, sarcasm and lack of wisdom, especially those related to government prohibitions to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in houses of worship. Such as the prohibition of holding Friday prayers, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, the prohibition of homecoming, holding ta'lim, and the commemoration of religious holidays, especially in the red zone category for the spread of Covid-19. This study examines the language content of da'wah communication on social media during the Covid-19 pandemic. Primary data sources are obtained from YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook during the Covid-19 season. Secondary data is obtained from books, e-books, and relevant journals. This research is descriptive qualitative, with deductive and inductive thinking techniques. The research findings show that some preachers conveyed da'wah messages on social media with unethical, rude, and inappropriate languages to convey messages of a great and holy religion.*

**المخلص:** قبل ظهور جائحة كوفيد ٩١، تكون ممارسة الدعوة الإسلامية تقام وجهًا لوجه في شكل تعليم وخطبة الجمعة، حيث يمكن أن يجتمع الخطباء والجماعات بشكل مباشر في مكان معين. ولكن في حالة انتشار جائحة كوفيد ٩١ منذ ما يقرب من عامين، لا يمكن تنفيذ

الدعوة في شكل مباشر. وبدلاً من ذلك، يستخدم الدعاة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مثل: يوتيوب وإنستغرام وواتس آب وفيسبوك وغيرها لأنشطة الدعوة بين المسلمين. ظهرت المشكلات، عندما يستخدم الداعي لغة غير أخلاقية وسخرية وأقل إنسانية عبر وسائل الاجتماعية، خاصة في الاستجابة لسياسات الحكومة التي تمنع الاجتماع لأجل العبادة والدعوة لمنع انتشار جائحة كوفيد ٩١ في مكان العبادة. وهذا كمثل منع الحكومة عن قيام صلاة الجمعة وصلاة عيد الفطروعيد الأضحى ومنع الرجوع إلى الريف في العيد وتحديد الدعوة الدينية وإحياء الأعياد الدينية، مثل: الإسراء المعراج، ومولد النبي، واحتفال السنة الهجرية الجديدة خاصة في المناطق التي انتشرت جائحة كوفيد كثيراً. وتبحث هذه المقالة في استخدام اللغة في ممارسة الدعوة الإسلامية. تحاول هذه الدراسة فحص محتوى التواصل الدعوي على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي خلال جائحة كوفيد ٩١. وتكون مصادر البيانات الأولية من يوتيوب وإنستغرام وواتس آب وفيسبوك. وأما البيانات الثانوية فمأخوذة من الكتب والمجلات ذات الصلة بهذا البحث. وهذا البحث من البحث الوصفي النوعي بتقنيات التفكير الاستنتاجي والاستقرائي. تظهر نتائج البحث أن بعض الخطباء يستخدمون اللغة غير مهذبة ولائقة في ممارسة الدعوة الإسلامية من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي رغم أن المحتوى في دعوتهم من تعاليم الشريعة الإسلامية المقدسة والعظيمة.

**Abstrak:** *Dalam situasi normal, dakwah dapat dilakukan secara tatap muka melalui ta'lim atau shalat Jumat, dimana da'i dan hadirin (mad'u) bertemu dalam sebuah forum. Namun, dakwah tersebut tidak bisa dilakukan dalam situasi pandemi Covid-19 yang sudah berjalan hampir dua tahun ini. Sebagai gantinya, para dai menggunakan media sosial seperti Youtube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, dan lainnya untuk menyapa dan memberikan pencerahan di masyarakat. Permasalahan tersebut sering ditemukan pada konten media sosial yang digunakan oleh para penceramah dengan bahasa yang tidak etis, sarkasme dan kurang bijak, terutama yang terkait dengan larangan pemerintah untuk mengurangi resiko penyebaran virus di rumah ibadah. Seperti larangan pelaksanaan salat Jumat, Idul Fitri, Idul Adha, larangan mudik, ta'lim, dan peringatan hari besar keagamaan khususnya dalam kategori zona merah penyebaran Covid-19. Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang kandungan bahasa dalam komunikasi dakwah di media sosial pada masa pandemi Covid-19. Sumber data primer diperoleh dari YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, dan Facebook selama musim Covid-19. Data sekunder diperoleh dari*

*buku, e-book, dan jurnal terkait. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif, dengan teknik berpikir deduktif dan induktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian dai menyampaikan pesan dakwah di media sosial dengan bahasa yang tidak etis, kasar, dan tidak pantas untuk menyampaikan pesan agama yang agung dan suci.*

**Keywords:** ethics, da'wah, covid-19, social media.

## INTRODUCTION

The spread of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) that occurred in Indonesia in early March 2020 was the reason the government made a policy to protect the public from the transmission of the plague that claimed many victims. Covid-19 has impacted various sectors of the economy, education, and culture. It starts from a small household scale to a broader scale.<sup>1</sup> The policy is like closing and stopping all community activities in various fields, known as lockdown. In this situation, all activities are limited, whether for work or business purposes, especially those involving large numbers of people. It is intended to suppress and reduce the spread of Covid-19, for which no effective drug has yet been found. The orders to keep distance, wear masks, wash hands with soap, and stay away from crowds have become massive campaigns by doctors, medical personnel, and health experts. To support the implementation of the lockdown, the President issued the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2020 concerning the Determination of Covi-19 Public Health Emergency. The President's decision was followed up by ministers, such as the Minister of Health, by issuing Circular Letter Number HK.02.01/MENKES/335/2020 concerning the Protocol to Prevent Covid-19 spread. The Minister of Religion also issued Circular Letter Number 15 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Organizing Activities Religion in the House of Worship in Creating a Productive and Safe Society for Covid during the Pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Among the contents of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ismiati, "Perceraian Orang Tua dan Problem Psikologis Anak," *Jurnal At-Taujih Bimbingan Dan Konseling* 1, no. 1 (2018): 3.

<sup>2</sup> Available in "<https://www.Kemenag.go.id/archive> (Accessed March 2nd 2022).," 2022.

circular that the public protested the most was point f, which reads “implementing distance restrictions by placing a special mark on the floor/seat at least one meter apart”. For Muslims, it is considered contrary to the sunnah of the Prophet who ordered to close the rows of congregational prayers. Other criticisms and protests are related to the holding of Friday prayers in mosques and the implementation of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha prayers which are prohibited from being carried out in mosques for areas in the red zone.

In addition to the lockdown policy, which continues to be extended because it has not obtained significant results, a policy with other terms, such as Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSPB), has been implemented. A new term, Restrictions on the Movement of Community Activities (PPKM), labels level 1, level 2, level 3, and level 4. The effects of the lockdown, PSBB, and PPKM policies deteriorated the economy. In addition, people’s purchasing power weakened. Moreover, many layoffs and factories were closed. Furthermore, hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions were deserted; only the economic, health, and particular industrial sectors could still operate fully. Apart from these important sectors, everything must be done online from home. Work From Home (WFH) includes services to the world of education, government, and others. Everything can run with records held with remote or virtual services through the help of social media. Even though it is running, the obstacles are many, ranging from the unavailability of a communication network evenly distributed in all areas, not having a communication tool (mobile phone), to the problem of no internet connection and data package.

In a difficult situation due to the pandemic, *da’wah* activities must continue because people need spiritual strengthening so that they remain patient and fortitude not to do negative things due to economic pressures.<sup>3</sup> *Da’wah*’s actions during the pandemic are not as lively as in the previous normal period. However, advances in communication technology with the existence of mobile phones that have android or iOS programs with various owned applications make it easier for *da’i*, *ustadz*, and *muballigh* to convey religious messages that are considered essential to guide people during the pandemic. However, it is miserable that some communication expressions used

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<sup>3</sup> Cholil Nafis, Ketua MUI Bidang Dakwah Majelis Ulama Indonesia Pusat, January 22, 2002.

by da'i in conveying da'wah messages on social media are less ethical and less suitable from the *da'wah* communication ethics' point of view. Hence it is crucial to discuss the study of Communication Ethics of Da'wah through Social Media during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Primary data are obtained from YouTube, WhatsApp, and other internet sources. Secondary data from books and journals.

Based on the background of the problem above, the formulation of the problem in this article is how should preachers use the ethics of *da'wah* communication on social media during the Covid 19 Pandemic?

### **DA'WAH COMMUNICATION ETHICS**

According to Ahmad Amin, ethics in terminology means science that explains the meaning of good and bad, explains what humans should do, states the goals humans should aim for in their actions, and shows the way that should be done.<sup>4</sup> Ki Hajar Dewantara, as quoted by Enjang AS and Hajir Tajiri, said that ethics is a science that studies the good and evil in human life, especially those related to the movements of the mind and feelings, which are considerations and emotions so that they can achieve goals in the form of a deed.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, according to Mafri Amir, ethics reflects people's views about good and bad and distinguishing acceptable and rejected behavior to achieve well in life together.<sup>6</sup>

From some of the opinions mentioned above, it can be understood that ethics is a science that discusses good and bad, what should be done and what needs to be abandoned, and what should and should not be done by humans to perceive a good life in society.

Meanwhile, according to al-Ghazali, in Enjang AS and Hajir Tajiri, ethical discussion objects cover all aspects of human life, both as individuals and as groups. From these definitions, Abuddin Nata concludes that ethics has at least four things:

a. In terms of discussion, ethics tries to discuss human actions;

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<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Amin, *Etika (Ilmu Akhlak)* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1996), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Enjang AS and Hajir Tajiri, *Etika Dakwah Suatu Pendekatan Teologis & Filosofis* (Bandung: Widya Padjadjaran, 2009), 2–3.

<sup>6</sup> AS and Tajiri, *Etika Dakwah Suatu Pendekatan Teologis & Filosofis*.

- b. In terms of its function, ethics functions as an assessor of human actions, namely whether someone's actions are good, bad, noble, honorable, and so on;
- c. In terms of its source, ethics comes from reason and philosophy;
- d. In terms of its nature, ethics is relative. That is, it changes according to the demands of the times.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, ethics is a systematic thought about morality. Ethics is a human effort to use reason and the power of his mind to solve the problem of how he should live if he wants to be good. Therefore, ethics is needed in human life.

*Da'wah* communication is carried out by *da'i* in the process of delivering *da'wah* messages, with the aim that *mad'u* (communicants) understand and carry out Islamic religious teachings to achieve safety and happiness in the hereafter. Etymologically, *da'wah* has the meaning of broadcasting religion among the community and its development; a call to embrace, study and practice religious teachings.<sup>8</sup> In conceptual terminology, *da'wah* is directed at efforts to change the religious attitude of the *da'wah* recipient community, and in its implementation, it is carried out with a sincere spirit.<sup>9</sup> According to Endang Syaifudin Ansari, *Da'wah* itself means conveying Islam to humans, orally or written.<sup>10</sup> Toha Yahya Umar interprets *da'wah* as an effort to invite people in a wise way to the right path according to God's command for their benefit and happiness in the hereafter.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Ahmad Gholwusy, as quoted by Asep Muhyidin and Ahmad Syafei', defines *da'wah* as conveying the message of Islam to humans at any time and place with methods and media that are following the situation and condition of the recipients of the message of *da'wah*.<sup>12</sup>

From the explanation above, it can be understood that what is meant by the ethics of *da'wah* communication is decency, propriety,

<sup>7</sup> AS and Tajiri.

<sup>8</sup> Tim Penyusun Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa Indonesia, 2008), 309.

<sup>9</sup> Raib Santosa et al., "Udeng VS Keteklek" Dakwah Multi Kultural Mbah Sholeh Semendi Winongan Pasuruan," *Jurnal Al-Tahrir* 17, no. 1 (2017).

<sup>10</sup> Toto Tasmara, *Komunikasi Dakwah* (Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama, 1997), 31.

<sup>11</sup> Toha Yahya Umar, *Ilmu Dakwah* (Jakarta: Wijaya, 1971), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Asep Muhyidin and Ahmad Safci, *Metode Pengembangan Dakwah* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2022), 32.

good and bad communication in terms of the philosophy of life and morality of a community of a nation. The *da'wah* process involves *da'i* and *mad'u* or communicators and communicants, between the preacher and the congregation in conveying the message of Islam. Thus, *mad'u* might understand and follow what the communicator conveys (*da'i*). Or in other words, the ethics of *da'wah* communication is the manners or morals in communicating in delivering messages.

From the understanding of the ethics of *da'wah* communication, it emphasizes that *da'wah* must be carried out by considering the use of methods, media, and messages that are suitable for the situation and condition of the *da'wah* audiences. Inviting people to the path of goodness and salvation is not an easy matter. Therefore, persuasive methods, approaches, and appropriate communication are needed according to the psychological situation and condition of the audience. Historical experience proves that the Prophet Muhammad had failed to invite his uncle, whom he loved very much, Abu Talib, who had not converted to Islam until the end of his life. It proves that communication in *da'wah* is not easy to do. Instead of inviting people to accept Islam, if there is a mistake in the approach and language used by the preacher, the public can run away from the invitation to convert to Islam. According to Toto Asmara, *da'wah* communication is unique because the message contains a sacred religion (profane) which is different from communication in general. *Da'wah* is also a communication process, but not all communication processes are *da'wah* processes.<sup>13</sup>

In *da'wah* there should be no lies and manipulation of information. It is different from political communication practiced by politicians. Political promises and reality are often paradoxical. Likewise, in product marketing communications, such as advertisements in the mass media, the goods offered and the available qualities often do not match the message and contents. *Da'wah* communication is bound by basic norms from the Shari'a owner, God. In preaching, inviting people to convert to Islam, the Qur'an provides instructions to be carried out with wisdom and good advice and discuss (*mujadalah*) in a good way, respectful of each other, not forcing the will. In Surah al-Nahl, Allah says: "*Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and share your thoughts in a better way. Verily,*

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<sup>13</sup> Tasmara, *Komunikasi Dakwah*, 39.

*your Lord knows best who has strayed from His path, and it is He who knows who is guided*" (QS. al-Nahl: 125).

M. Natsir in his book *Fiqh al-Da'wah* defines wisdom as the ability to: (1) Knowing the group, (2) Ability to choose when to speak, when to be silent, (3) Wisdom in making contact of thoughts and finding common ground, (4) Wisdom not to lose identity (*shibghah*), (5) Wisdom in separating, (6) the wisdom of *uswat al-hasanah* and *lisan al-hal*, and (7) the ability to choose good words that are appropriate to the subject matter, commensurate with the atmosphere of the people faced.<sup>14</sup>

While the word wisdom in Surah al-Nahl: 125, according to Toto Tasmara, the word wisdom is often translated wisely, namely an approach in such a way as to the communicant so that it seems as if what the communicant is doing arises of his own will, not by coercion, or even a feeling of pressure.<sup>15</sup> In the language of communication, this wisdom is related to what we call the frame of reference and field of experience, namely the actual situation that affects the attitude of the communicant. In other words, we can also say that *bi al-hikmah* is a communication approach carried out on a persuasive basis because the task of the *da'i* is just a messenger/caller. As has been said by the Qur'an itself as follows: "*That you are a warning giver, not that you are forcing something you want*" (QS. al-Ghashiyah: 22). This is also confirmed in Surah al-Nahl, which means: "... *if they (mad'u) turn away too, then your obligation is only to convey clear and real messages*" (QS. al-Nah: 82).

The two verses above emphasize that the communicator (*da'i*) does not have the prerogative right to force the audience to accept the message he conveys. *Da'i* tries their best to approach *mad'u* with language and speech that is soft and polite and captivates their hearts. The rest is God who will move their hearts to embrace and follow the way of Islam.

## DA'WAH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

A principal element of *da'wah* is the channel or media of *da'wah*. In the past, *da'wah* media still used traditional media such as Friday podium media, *ta'lim* assemblies, and the commemoration of

<sup>14</sup> M. Natsir, *Fiqhu Da'wah* (Jakarta: Media Dakwah, 1989), 159–201.

<sup>15</sup> Tasmara, *Komunikasi Dakwah*, 39.



religious holidays, coupled with cultural arts media such as *qasidah*, tambourines, plays, puppets, and *gambus*. Today, propaganda media is increasing with the emergence of radio, television, internet, and mobile phones with all their applications that can quickly and easily present news, advertisements, and various information, including science and da'wah, with various exciting and fun images.

According to Helmy Faisal Zaini, Secretary General of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board, internet users from the millennial age group reached 143 million in 2018. This number increased from the previous year, which reached 132 million people. According to Helmy Faisal, this phenomenon is challenging for da'wah interpreters, including preachers from the Nahdlatul Ulama circle. According to him, we must not allow millions of people who are actively 'live' on social media to access religious information with no valid source or reference.<sup>16</sup> Helmy further explained that when the era of social media became the primary source of obtaining information and bringing various kinds of news, the source of which was unclear or what was often called a hoax, the result was not enlightenment that readers received but misguidance. He further explained that social media is widely used by groups that adhere to radical ideologies, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). For instance, to spread ideas through the internet through a campaign called Dabiq released online and can be accessed and used as a guide for movements in various countries.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding the use of social media such as YouTube, according to the research results of Ricka Handayani and Ambang Daulay, they concluded that YouTube is one of the compatible media that supports *da'wah* activities quite effectively. Because of its visuals, various styles and patterns, ease of access, and long duration, YouTube is an advantage that content creators are interested in. Those are the advantages of YouTube compared to other media.<sup>18</sup> YouTube also has advantages such as efficiency, saving costs, space, and time.

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<sup>16</sup> Helmy Faisal Zaeni, "Tantangan Dakwah Di Media Sosial," 2021, nuonline.or.id.

<sup>17</sup> Zaeni.

<sup>18</sup> Ricka Handayani and Ambang Daulay, "Youtube Sebagai Media Komunikasi Dalam Berdakwah Di Tengah Pandemi," *Jurnal Hikmah IAIN Padang Sidempuan*, 2021.

With YouTube, the lectures of the *da'i* can be reached by broader audiences anywhere and anytime.

The same opinion was also expressed by Gita Rastika Dhela, who conducted research on the Utilization of YouTube Channels as a Media for Da'wah at the Ad-Du'a Wayhalim Mosque, Bandar Lampung. The results of this study conclude that *da'wah* through YouTube has many advantages, including it did not cost much compared to face-to-face *da'wah*.<sup>19</sup> It was enough to make a video recording that can be uploaded on YouTube and can be seen by the wider community. It will also make it easier for the congregation or the public to be able to enjoy broadcasts delivered by preachers or *da'i* who are liked or followed without having to come to the mosque or to the *ta'lim* assembly. Just open the YouTube channel and search for preachers and what content you like.

Besides YouTube, another social media that is quite effective as a propaganda medium in this millennial era is WhatsApp. This application, released on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009 has its own distinctiveness, where the login mechanism is carried out through a mobile phone number. WhatsApp has various features for sending and receiving various media. Such as text, photos, videos, documents, locations, and voice calls. These messages and calls are end-to-end encrypted, meaning no third party, including WhatsApp cannot read the notes and hear the user's calls. *Da'i* can use this media to share religious knowledge, experiences and advice and at the same time, answer questions that arise in the community about religious views on an issue that is considered necessary to friends, companions, and groups they have easily and inexpensively.

## **ETHICS OF *DA'WAH* COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE PANDEMIC ERA**

In this pandemic situation, *da'wah* must be focused on supporting the government's efforts to cope with the impact of the current epidemic. On the other hand, the public must be encouraged to take care of themselves and to be aware of the transmission of the deadly

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<sup>19</sup> Gita Rastyka Dhela, "Pemanfaatan Channel Youtube Sebagai Media Dakwah (Studi Pada Akun Youtube Masjid Addu'a Wayhalim Bandar Lampung)" (n.d.). available in: <http://repository.radenintan.ac.id/id/eprint/12862> (accessed in October, 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021).

virus. However, the community was also given reinforcement to remain steadfast and pray to God to avoid the Corona virus. As for the families who are affected and become victims, they can accept with fortitude and patience as part of God's destiny.

In delivering *da'wah* through social media, whether through YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, or others, one must understand the methods and ethics that must be upheld in preaching. Islam, as the name suggests, means safety, purity, and cleanliness. So even this religion must be introduced in clean and saving ways. Islam does not have a destructive character destroying the existing positive order.<sup>20</sup>

In the view of Endang Saefuddin Anshori, *da'wah* is to preserve, maintain good order, reduce and eliminate bad habits that exist in society, and create new things that are more creative and positive habits. In practice, it must be *ma'ruf (bi al-ma'ruf)* ways and methods, approaches, and implementation. It includes how communication must be done properly, by choosing good words and language because the language in communication shows one's dignity. Moreover, *da'wah* conveys a sacred religious message (profane). It must be delivered in good and polite language.

Regarding social media ethics, the Indonesian Ulama Council issued fatwa number 24 of 2017, which contains the law on social media and is a guide for Muslims in social media. The fatwa reads as follows:

- a. Every Muslim who *mu'amalah* through social media is forbidden to do *ghibah* (talking about the grotesqueness of others), slander, *namimah* (fights), and the spread of hostility.
- b. They forbid acts of bullying, hate speech, and hostility on the basis of ethnicity, race, or between groups.
- c. It is forbidden for Muslims to spread hoaxes and false information even with good intentions, such as information about the death of a living person.
- d. Muslims are forbidden to spread pornographic material, disobedience, and everything prohibited by syar'i. It is also forbidden to spread correct content but not in the right place and/or time.

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AS and Tajiri, *Etika Dakwah Suatu Pendekatan Teologis & Filosofis*, 6.

e. Prohibiting activities to produce, disseminate and or make accessible content or information that is not true to the public.<sup>21</sup>

In reality, *da'wah* communication through social media (YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook) in the pandemic era, there is a lot of use of language and harsh innuendos (sarcasm) especially related to policies made by the government related to efforts to deal with Covid-19 which continues to grow. The “attack” on government policies includes the issue of the existence of the pandemic which they considered a hoax or a global conspiracy. Appeals for worship at home to avoid the spread of Covid in mosques and places of worship, maintain distance in prayer, wear masks, ban going home for Eid, to vaccinations. In short, all government policies issued by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Tourism, and Ministry of Religion caused public reactions, including among social media preachers.

Several examples can be given in this research, considering that at the time of writing, a lot of anti-government content had been removed by the cyber police, so it could no longer be tracked on social media. For example, you can find videos on YouTube:

*First*, a man named K.H. Mahyan Ahmad came from Purwodadi who was in a lecture explaining about Covid-19 being likened to a dog with the phrase “*Corona iku Asu*”, Corona is a dog.<sup>22</sup> It means *Asu* or the dog will obey its owner. In his explanation, the *kyai* reminded that Covid-19 is about to leave Indonesia, we must report it to its employer. What is meant by the employer of the virus is Allah S.A.W. This means that if the Covid case wants to end soon, humans must draw closer to God, not even leaving God’s house like a mosque or *mushalla*. In his explanation, the *kyai* also said that Covid-19 was deliberately created for the economic interests of people from certain countries so that the drugs produced could sell well.

*Second*, Friday sermon at Masjid Jami’ Fatahillah Blok. B. Tanah Abang Jakarta, with the title “How come the government regulates mosques”. Released at MJF. Channels. In the sermon, the young preacher “attacked” the government’s policy for

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<sup>21</sup> “Jernih Melihat Dunia,” 2021, Kompas .com.Kompas .com, (accessed October, 4<sup>th</sup> 2021).

<sup>22</sup> “Corona ASU,” 2021, <https://m.youtube.com/watch>.

implementing worship during the pandemic by keeping a distance in prayer. According to the preacher, the mosque is financed by the community, why is the government managing the mosque? If you want to organize a mosque, you have to pay for all mosque activities, starting from the *marbot*, cleaning, preaching, all of which must be paid for by the government. The preacher's statement was also in a high tone.<sup>23</sup>

*Third*, Friday sermon at the Nurul Yaqin Mosque, South Jakarta, with the theme "This country is getting worse, who is responsible". Khatib harshly criticized the government's policy which was considered to follow foreign wishes and abandon Islamic law. We are more afraid of health protocols than afraid of shari'a. The Shari'a teaches that congregational prayers are held in meetings, while health protocols recommend distanced prayers. The Prophet commended that Muslims meet to shake hands, but health protocols forbid that. And in fact, people believe more in health protocols than in running the shari'a. As a result, this Muslim-majority country is increasingly damaged.<sup>24</sup>

*Fourth*, Friday's sermon at the Fatahillah Tanah Abang Mosque in Jakarta with the title "Vaccine Santri, PPKM level 3" at the sermon was a young *muballigh* who dared to challenge the enemies of Islam. According to him, the vaccination policy to prevent the spread of Covid-19 is an effort by the enemies of Islam. Only he did not mention who was the enemy of Islam here. He reminded the government not to impose vaccines, especially on Muslims. The Friday sermon was reported on the MJF Channel was watched by 313,057 people.

*Fifth*, Ustadz Sofwan Nizhomi's lecture criticized the government's policy regarding the implementation of an Emergency Community Activity Restriction (PPKM) which was considered to prevent Muslims from worshipping. He insinuated that human demons continue to frighten residents with the Coronavirus so that people will be negligent. The video went viral and became a public spotlight. Sofwan further said that people who do not fear Allah will make the devil happy. Even today, many demons in the form of humans are

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<sup>23</sup> "Antara Vaksin Dan Santri" (Khutbah Jum'at, Masjid Jami' Fatahilah, Blok B Jakarta MJF Chanel, 2021) (accessed in October, 8<sup>th</sup> 2021).

<sup>24</sup> "Negeri Ini Makin Rusak Siapa Yang Bertanggung Jawab," 2021, [https://1 me/mimbartube](https://1me/mimbartube). (accessed in October, 8<sup>th</sup> 2021).

scaring the people with Covid 19. Human demons scared down to the level of village heads, sub-district heads, regents, governors, and ministers to the president. PPKM, made until July 20, 2021 is an effort to prevent Muslims from celebrating Eid al-Adha.<sup>25</sup>

Of course, there is much more content on YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp, which contains criticism, innuendo, and statements made by preachers about government policies dealing with the Covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia. The communication used tends to be provocative, with a harsh language style (sarcasm). Of course, not everyone agreed and was willing to take for granted the *da'wah* message of the *kyai*, and preachers who harshly criticized the government. So the response was sent back by activists and also *da'wah* institutions such as the Ulama Council to delete content on social media that is considered provocative and can make it counter-productive to overcome Covid-19 in Indonesia. The resistance, for example, came from the Non-Governmental Organization of the Aceh Bansigom Volunteer Forum (FORBA), through its chairman Mukhtaruddin Maop. He said that in the video, there was a cleric in a white turban, ustad Tgk. Wahid said in Acehnese that the communists made the Covid-19 disease and hoped that the Muslims would be alert because the communists were back in Indonesia. According to Mukhtaruddin, what the *mubaligh* said was very tendentious and provocative. Suppose, indeed, Corona is part of communist propaganda in Aceh. What about other countries such as Saudi Arabia, where Saudi Arabia also closed the Haram Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Is that also the influence of communists or the PKI? said Mukhtaruddin in a questioning tone.

Inspector General of Police Anang Syarif, Head of the Bangka Belitung Islands Regional Police, was also annoyed when a lecturer provoked the public about Covid 19. The provocative lecture contained an invitation to the public not to want to be vaccinated and not to implement health protocols. According to the Bangka Belitung Police Chief to the media crew, if the provocation continues, it will be dangerous. He has also ordered the West Bangka Police Chief to take action against the preacher. Because if left unchecked will plunge the

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<sup>25</sup> Sofwan, "PPKM Darurat Menghalangi Umat Islam Rayakan Idul Adha," Suara.com, July 7, 2021. (accessed in October, 8<sup>th</sup> 2021).

community. He also reminded the public not to believe fake news (hoax) that discriminates against the Covid-19 vaccination.<sup>26</sup>

Similar frustrations were expressed by the Riau Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) Region administrators. According to information from the Governor of Riau, Syamsuar, there was an *ustadz* who called Covid 19 a fabrication and a hoax in his preaching. According to him, the material of the *ustadz*'s preaching was feared to make the public uneasy. According to Syamsuar, he received a report "that in the mosque in Pekanbaru there were still *mubaligh* who lecture as if Covid did not exist, and that is said to be the work of the Jews. Even though in the Jewish country there was also Covid, he didn't know." This was a lecture that was not true, so people thought that Corona no longer existed. The governor asked the lecturers not to convey false material. On that basis, the Riau MUI board requested that the preacher who gave such lectures be removed from the *Da'wah* Institute.<sup>27</sup>

From the description above, it can be understood that the reactions to the lectures of the *da'i* who are against government policies in dealing with the impact of Covid are quite numerous and varied. Even those who are unfortunate in conveying the message of the preachers are no longer ashamed to use words such as: *Asu* (dog), *Iblis*, and other sentences that were given in a loud tone with a threatening manner, making fake news (hoax) convey something that he did not understand. Regarding the origin of Covid-19, vaccines were considered forbidden because they contain elements of pork, etc. The Ulema Council has issued a fatwa that vaccines were *halal*, and can be used. On the other hand, a lot of criticism has been made by the public to build public trust in the government. As the situation continues to improve, with the trend of decreasing Covid cases in the country, critics are now starting to fall silent.

In terms of the ethics of *da'wah* communication, what the preachers and *mubaligh* done was clearly not following the ethics taught in preaching. In delivering religious messages, it must be based

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<sup>26</sup> Deby Nerwandi, "Kapolda Babel Kesal, Ada Ceramah Provokatif Tentang Covid 19 Di Bangka Barat," in: rri.co.id, 2021. (accessed in October, 9<sup>th</sup> 2021).

<sup>27</sup> Raja Adil Siregar, "MUI Riau Minta Agar Ustad Ceramah Corona Kerjaan Yahudi Dicoret Dari Lembaga Dakwah," <https://news.detik.com>, April 21, 2021, <https://news.detik.com>. (accessed October, 9<sup>th</sup> 2021).

on guidance from the teachings of Islam itself, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. In the Qur'an, there are many verses about guidance for communicating using good language/*qaulan karima* (QS. al-Isra': 27), namely language that is clean from elements that demean the wearer's dignity, such as dirty and indecent words. Second, soft language/*qaulan layyina* (QS. Taha: 44), the opposite is harsh, harsh and sarcasm language, such as yelling and rebuking people, threatening and others. Third, an imprinted language that can affect the communicant/*qaulan baligha* (QS. al-Nisa': 63) and fourth, an appropriate language, which is in accordance with the culture, the circumstances of the da'wah partner/*qaulan maysyura* (QS. al-Isra': 28).

While the ethics of *da'wah* communication in hadith can be read in Muslim in his hadith book Juz II and Fuad Abdul Baqy in *al-Lu'lu' wa al-Marjan* volume II hadith 1142, which means: Abu Hurairah heard that Rasulullah, said: "*Sometimes a person releases a sentence (communicates) verbally regardless of the consequences, with that sentence, he is thrown in hell further than the east end and west end*".

This hadith implicitly warns that people who speak without paying attention to the good and bad of the conversation will bear all the consequences that arise from the conversation. This hadith also explicitly reminds the preachers and Muslims to be careful in choosing and conveying messages to the public.

The hadith above explains that communication must be done using good language. Both in terms of culture, knowing who to deal with, and how to behave. Both in terms of text, arranged with a neat sentence structure, in terms of grammar and both in terms of context or existing situations and conditions. According to M. Natsir, this is called the wisdom of choosing the right words in the *da'wah bi al-hikmah* approach.

Guided by the two religious sources above, communication of *da'wah* both verbally and in writing on social media should not deviate from the basic norms that are the primary references in preaching. So that da'wah communication using any media remains in Islamic values, humanity, and compassion. According to Zuhairi Misrawi as quoted by Kasinyo Harto, affection is important amid differences and diversity. Anything must be based on love, so that differences do not cause social conflict. If you leave the existing norms, *da'wah* will



increasingly lose its guidance and run without direction. As a result, *da'wah* is increasingly being abandoned by the people.

## CONCLUSION

*Da'wah* in any situation must not stop, including in the atmosphere of the Covid-19 pandemic, so that people do not lose their calming religious guidance. Along with the advancement of science and technology, *da'wah* media is also growing with the presence of social media such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, which effectively convey *da'wah* messages. In reality, during the Covid 19 pandemic, there were many *da'wah* that “attacked” the government by using inappropriate words such as “*Corona Iku Asu*”, disrespectful, causing unrest in the community related to government policies to fight Covid with the need to wear masks, keep a distance in public places, in mosques, wash hands and PPKM policies, including vaccinations.

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