

## **Religious Communication in Local Radio Broadcasting: A Case Study of the Dakwah Program on Dakwatul Musthofa 88.3 FM Rogotrunan Lumajang**

**Alhimni Fahma<sup>1</sup>, Izza Afkarina<sup>2</sup>, Laily Rismawati<sup>3</sup>**

Universitas Islam Syarifuddin Lumajang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia.

Email: [alhimnifahma@iaisyarifuddin.ac.id](mailto:alhimnifahma@iaisyarifuddin.ac.id)

**Saiful Ridho<sup>4</sup>**

PT Kelumajang Siber Media, Lumajang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia.

Email: [saifulridho680@gmail.com](mailto:saifulridho680@gmail.com)

### ***Abstract***

*Dakwah in the modern era has undergone significant transformation in line with the development of digital technology. In the classical era, dakwah was synonymous with pulpits and face-to-face meetings, but today mass media such as radio remains relevant as a means of religious communication. This study aims to analyze the role of Radio Dakwatul Musthofa 88.3 FM Lumajang as a local dakwah media using the Agenda Setting theory. A qualitative approach was used to examine broadcast programs, including religious lectures, interactive dialogues, Quran recitations, and off-air activities. The results of the study show that this radio station's 24-hour broadcasts are able to shape public attention to religious issues, increase religious understanding, and strengthen social bonds among communities across regions.*

**Keywords:** *Da'wah Communication, Radio, Mass Media, Agenda Setting*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In today's rapidly developing era of digitalization, the mass media has a strategic position in shaping, disseminating, and constructing the social reality of society. Developments in communication technology have given rise to various information platforms, ranging from conventional media to internet-based digital media. In this context, the media not only functions as a conveyor of messages, but also as a social agent that has the ability to shape public opinion, influence mindsets, and direct audience behavior. From the perspective of mass communication theory, the media has informative, educational, persuasive, and entertainment functions (McQuail, 2010). These functions are also relevant in the context of Islamic preaching, where the media can be a strategic instrument in conveying religious values to the wider community in a systematic manner.

Dakwah as a communication activity is essentially a process of conveying messages from the communicator (da'i) to the audience (mad'u) with the aim of changing attitudes, understanding, and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. In the classical communication model proposed by Lasswell (1948), the communication process is formulated through the question: who says what in which channel to whom with what effect. When contextualized in radio preaching, the preacher acts as the communicator, the preaching material as the message, the radio as the channel, the community as the audience, and religious change as the desired effect. Thus, radio as a mass media has a significant role in supporting the effectiveness of preaching communication.

Although digital media such as social media and streaming platforms are increasingly dominant, local radio remains highly relevant, especially in reaching communities at the regional level. Radio has the characteristics of proximity, flexibility, and the ability to build emotional closeness with listeners through the voice (intimacy of voice). These advantages make radio an effective medium for conveying persuasive and reflective religious messages. In the context of development communication, local media also plays a role in strengthening social identity and community values (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). Therefore, the existence of local religious radio is important in strengthening the religious awareness of the community.

In Lumajang Regency, one of the radio stations that focuses on da'wah programs and the dissemination of Islamic teachings is Radio Dakwatul Musthofa 88.3 FM (DaMu FM). This radio station was founded on the spirit of da'wah by Habib Umar bin Sholeh Al-Hamid on January 3, 2007, or 13 Dhu al-Hijjah 1427 AH. Since its inception, DaMu FM has been committed to spreading Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and Sunnah as well as the understanding of the Salafus Shalih. Information about the history and background of the establishment of this radio station can be found on the official website of Dakwatul Musthofa (Dakwatul Musthofa, n.d.). The consistency of its continuous broadcasts shows that this radio station is not merely a medium of information, but also an organized da'wah institution.

In the perspective of the Agenda Setting theory proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), the media has the ability to determine which issues are considered important by the public. The media does not directly determine what people should think, but it does determine what people should think about. If this theory is applied to religious radio, then the selection of lecture themes, fiqh study topics, moral issues, and social problems raised in broadcasts can shape the audience's priority of attention to certain religious issues. Through its programs, Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM has the potential to frame religious issues as important and relevant in the daily lives of the people of Lumajang.

The spirit of da'wah promoted by Habib Umar bin Sholeh Al-Hamid also reflects the urgency of religious communication amid the rapid flow of digital information. The development of social media has led to the emergence of various unverified information that has the potential to cause religious disinformation. In this situation, radio da'wah can serve as an authoritative source that provides systematic and responsible references to Islamic teachings. Islamic da'wah in this context is not only oriented towards delivering lectures, but also as a process of social change that emphasizes moral and ethical dimensions (Aziz, 2017). In other words, da'wah through the media is part of social communication that aims to build a moral society.

However, the practice of da'wah in society still faces various challenges. One of them is a narrow understanding of da'wah, which is only perceived as face-to-face lectures. In addition, some preachers have not fully utilized modern communication technology optimally (Arifin, 2018). This condition shows a gap between the development of communication technology and the da'wah strategies applied. Therefore, adaptation to mass media and digital media is an urgent need so that da'wah remains relevant and effective.

Within the framework of Uses and Gratifications theory, the audience is viewed as active individuals who choose media according to their needs and interests (Katz et al., 1973). Listeners to religious radio programs do not simply receive messages passively, but have specific motivations, such as the need for religious knowledge, spiritual guidance, inner peace, and religious identity. Thus, the success of Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM is not only determined by the content of the message, but also by its ability to meet the psychological and spiritual needs of its listeners.

Furthermore, the existence of Undang-Undang Nomor 32 Tahun 2002 tentang Penyiaran provides a legal foundation for the use of media as a means of dakwah in the global and digital era. This regulation enables *da'i* (Islamic preachers) to develop Islamic preaching through broadcasting media while adhering to ethical standards, contextual conditions, and the needs of the *mad'u* (audience) (Republik Indonesia, 2002). Therefore, the utilization of broadcasting media such as radio remains relevant in supporting the dissemination of Islamic dakwah that is adaptive to contemporary developments.

Considering various perspectives of communication theory, ranging from Lasswell's communication model, Agenda Setting, to Uses and Gratifications, it can be understood that religious radio is not merely a medium for delivering sermons, but a strategic arena in the construction of meaning, opinion formation, and religious social change. Radio Dakwatul Musthofa 88.3 FM in Lumajang is a concrete example of how local media can act as an adaptive agent of religious communication in line with the times. Therefore, studying the role and communication strategies of religious radio broadcasting is relevant to understanding the dynamics of Islamic preaching in the digital age and its contribution to increasing public awareness and the quality of religious life.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the communication strategies used by Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM in Lumajang Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on the process, meaning, and construction of religious messages conveyed through radio media, rather than solely on quantitative measurements. In the communication paradigm, qualitative research allows researchers to explore social reality as something that is formed through symbolic interactions between communicators and communicants (Creswell, 2014). Thus, this study seeks to examine how dakwah messages are constructed, disseminated, and received by the audience through the medium of radio.

Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM is a dakwah radio station founded by Habib Umar bin Sholeh Al-Hamid and broadcasts on 88.3 FM for 24 hours nonstop. This radio station is based on the Qur'an, As-Sunnah, and the Salafus Shalih method in presenting its lecture material. The characteristic of broadcasting throughout the day is one of the communication strategies that distinguishes this radio station from other radio stations that only broadcast da'wah

programs at certain hours. In the perspective of mass communication theory, the intensity and continuity of broadcasting can strengthen the exposure of messages, thereby increasing the possibility of cognitive and affective effects on the audience (McQuail, 2010).

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through observation of the official website and social media of Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM. The observation focused on broadcast program content, interaction with listeners, and patterns of presenting religious messages. In addition, documentation of broadcast programs such as religious lectures, interactive fiqh dialogues, qasidah, nasyid, Quran recitation, majelis taklim, and other interactive programs were also analyzed as part of the research data (Arif & Rohmah, 2024). The data obtained was then analyzed descriptively and analytically to identify the communication strategies used in religious broadcasting.

In the theoretical framework, this study used the Agenda Setting theory as the main basis for analysis. Introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972), this theory states that the media has the ability to influence the public agenda by highlighting certain issues. In the context of Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM, the selection of lecture themes, fiqh study topics, and socio-religious issues raised in broadcast programs is understood as a form of religious agenda setting. Through certain frequencies and emphases, radio has the potential to shape listeners' perceptions of what issues are considered important in religious life.

In addition, this study also considers the Uses and Gratifications theory, which views the audience as active participants in choosing media according to their needs (Katz et al., 1973). The diversity of Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM's broadcast programs, including interactive dialogues and question-and-answer services, demonstrates an effort to meet the spiritual, informational, and social interaction needs of listeners. Listener participation via telephone, social media, and streaming services indicates that communication is not one-way, but interactive.

Another unique feature that is the focus of this study is the implementation of dakwah programs that are not only carried out in the studio, but also through majelis taklim activities that move from place to place (*anjang sana*). Although carried out outside the studio, these activities are still broadcast via radio and streaming, thereby expanding the reach of communication. From the perspective of media convergence communication, the integration of analog broadcasting and digital platforms allows for expanded audience access and participation (Jenkins, 2006).

With a qualitative approach and a foundation in communication theory, this study attempts to comprehensively analyze the broadcasting strategies of Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM and their impact on shaping the religious awareness and understanding of the community.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of research conducted on the Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM Lumajang religious media, a number of phenomena were found that indicate the strategic role of this radio station in shaping the religious awareness and understanding of the community. The analysis was conducted using a qualitative approach and the Agenda Setting theoretical framework to examine how the media determines religious issues that are considered important by the audience. The results of the study show that broadcasting strategies, patterns

of interaction with listeners, and the social impact have a close relationship with the function of mass communication in shaping public opinion and collective consciousness.

### **Determining the Religious Agenda Through Program Variation**

The results of the study show that Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM consistently broadcasts programs oriented towards strengthening Islamic values, such as religious lectures, recitations of the Qur'an, qasidah, nasyid, daily wirid, and thematic studies relevant to everyday life. This program variation is not merely a form of content diversification, but a structured communication strategy in shaping the religious agenda in society.

From the perspective of Agenda Setting theory, the media has the power to influence what the audience considers important through the frequency and emphasis placed on certain issues. Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM, through its 24-hour non-stop broadcasts, indirectly frames religious issues as a top priority in the lives of its listeners. Topics such as morals, fiqh worship, sakinah families, and socio-religious issues are raised repeatedly and systematically. This repetition and consistency creates a cognitive effect in the form of increased awareness of the urgency of Islamic values in everyday life.

The findings show that listeners do not only consider this radio station as a means of entertainment, but also as a credible source of religious reference. In the context of mass communication, this indicates cognitive (knowledge), affective (religious feelings), and conative (tendency to act in accordance with Islamic teachings) effects. Thus, this radio station successfully performs its educational and persuasive functions as described in mass communication theory.

In addition, the presentation of qasidah and nasyid as part of the da'wah program also strengthens the emotional approach in communication. Da'wah messages are not only conveyed verbally through lectures, but also through musical mediums that are able to touch the affective aspects of the listeners. This approach expands the dimensions of da'wah communication from merely conveying information to a more comprehensive spiritual experience.

### **Listener Interaction and Participation as a Form of Two-Way Communication**

The second finding shows that Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM does not only apply a one-way communication pattern, but also opens up space for active participation for listeners through interactive dialogue, direct questions and answers, as well as interaction through social media and streaming services. Listeners can submit questions, criticism, or life problems, which are then answered directly by the source or radio host.

This phenomenon can be analyzed through the Uses and Gratifications theory, which views the audience as active parties in choosing and using media to fulfill certain needs. Based on the results of the observation, listeners utilize interactive programs to fulfill their needs for religious information, clarification on fiqh issues, and spiritual support. This direct interaction strengthens the sense of closeness between the communicator and the audience.

## **Social Impact and Strengthening Community Ties**

The third finding shows that the Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM da'wah program has a fairly broad social impact. The broadcast coverage, which includes Lumajang, Probolinggo, Malang, and Banyuwangi, shows that the religious agenda presented not only affects one administrative area but also creates a network of listeners across regions.

The most visible social impact is an increase in the community's religious understanding and the formation of a community of listeners who actively participate in off-air activities, such as majelis taklim (religious gatherings) and pengajian berpindah (mobile religious lectures). These off-air activities are an extension of the communication carried out through radio. Thus, mass communication, which was initially mediative in nature, has developed into face-to-face communication that strengthens social solidarity.

From the perspective of social communication theory, this phenomenon shows that the media can act as an agent of social integration. Radio not only conveys messages but also builds a collective identity as a religious community. Listeners who were previously connected through the airwaves then meet in real activities, creating stronger social cohesion.

Another identified impact is an increase in moral and ethical awareness in everyday life. Based on observations of listeners' responses on social media, many of them shared testimonials about changes in their behavior after regularly listening to religious broadcasts. This shows the conative effect of continuous religious communication.

When linked back to the Agenda Setting theory, this social impact shows that the issues raised by the radio station have truly become a public concern and have influenced people's thinking and behavior. The media not only determines what is important to think about, but also encourages real action through the internalization of religious values.

## **Synthesis of Discussion**

Overall, the results of the study show that Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM acts as an effective religious communication agent in the digital era. Through program variety, two-way interaction, and the integration of analog and digital broadcasts, this radio station is able to shape a religious agenda that is relevant to the needs of the community.

The Agenda Setting approach explains how this radio station determines the priority of religious issues, while the Uses and Gratifications theory explains the active participation of listeners in utilizing the media. The combination of the two shows that communication of religious teachings through radio is not a passive, one-way process, but rather a dynamic interaction that produces cognitive, affective, and social impacts.

Thus, Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM functions not only as a broadcasting medium, but also as a da'wah institution capable of building religious awareness, strengthening community solidarity, and shaping the moral orientation of communities across regions. These findings reinforce the argument that local media remains strategically relevant in the context of da'wah communication in the digital age.

In addition, based on the analysis conducted, it was also found that the da'wah programs on Dakwatul Musthofa 88.3 FM Rogotruman Lumajang also pay close attention to the use of the Agenda Setting theory in the preparation of their broadcasts. They consistently set the da'wah agenda by choosing topics that are relevant and important to the community, especially the local community of Lumajang itself. These topics include religious understanding, worship, Fiqh, and morality. In addition, they also use narratives that can motivate and provide innovation and inspiration to increase the active participation of the audience in religious activities carried out by the Dakwatul Musthofa radio da'wah media. Moreover, they are not only active on one social media platform or mass media, but the Dakwatul Musthofa radio da'wah media also utilizes media that are frequently used by the general public and Generation Z today, such as Instagram and TikTok.

Discussion of research findings that reveal the appeal of Dakwatul Musthofa's media, as it relates to several communication theories, such as the Diffusion of Innovations theory, Agenda Setting, and so on. However, in this research analysis, the researcher focuses on research results based on the Agenda Setting theory. The analysis discussion shows that local radio stations such as Dakwatul Musthofa 88.3 FM Lumajang have great potential in increasing religious awareness within their communities. The use of the Agenda Setting theory in the preparation of da'wah programs on this da'wah media proves that local mass media also has the power to significantly influence social change and community behavior. The implications of this research can also help develop communication strategies, especially in terms of more effective religious communication in spreading religious messages at the local level.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research results presented in the introduction, methodology, and results and discussion sections, it can be concluded that Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM plays a strategic role in local religious communication in Lumajang Regency and the surrounding area. This radio station not only functions as a medium for broadcasting religious information, but also as a da'wah institution that actively shapes the religious awareness of the community through structured, sustainable programs that are relevant to the needs of the audience.

Through an intensive and consistent approach to mass communication, Radio Dakwatul Musthofa FM has succeeded in setting a specific religious agenda that has become a public concern. The use of Agenda Setting theory in this study shows that the selection and emphasis of religious issues in broadcast programs can influence listeners' perceptions and priorities regarding Islamic values. Additionally, the application of interactive communication patterns through direct dialogue, question and answer sessions, and the use of social media strengthens audience engagement as active participants, not merely passive recipients of messages.

The integration between analog broadcasting and digital platforms also expands the reach of religious outreach, allowing religious messages to be accessed across regions without geographical boundaries. The impact is not only cognitive and affective, but also social, namely the formation of a community of listeners who have strong religious ties through off-air activities. Overall, this study provides conceptual and practical contributions on how local media can optimize effective and adaptive da'wah communication strategies in the digital age.

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