

Effectiveness of Digital Media in Socialization Implementation of the Hajj Pilgrimage in the Regency Kebumen

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ABSTRACT

This research analyze effectiveness use of digital media in socialization organizing the Hajj pilgrimage at the Regency Ministry of Religion Office Kebumen 2025. The transformation of communication from conventional methods to digital platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and digital mail is the main focus of the study. A descriptive qualitative approach was used with interview, observation, and documentation techniques with informants consisting of the Head of the Hajj and Umrah Organization Section, Ministry of Religious Affairs employees, and prospective Hajj pilgrims. Data validation was carried out through source triangulation to ensure accuracy and objectivity. The results of the study indicate that digital media can accelerate information distribution, increase the reach of socialization, and provide easy access for prospective Hajj pilgrims. Digital platforms have shifted communication patterns from a conventional approach based on physical letters to an integrated system based on applications and social media. However, challenges such as low digital literacy among the elderly and limited infrastructure in certain areas remain significant obstacles. This study confirms that the effectiveness of digital media is greatly influenced by adaptive communication strategies and the support of religious instructors in the field in overcoming the digital divide.

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1. Introduction

The Hajj pilgrimage in Islam is the fifth pillar of Islam which is obligatory carried out by Muslims who have capable or fulfil condition *istith'ah* , good in a way financial , physical , and administrative . Every the year hundreds thousand candidate Hajj pilgrims in Indonesia depart and perform the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage is crucial thing Because need communication and coordination involving Lots agencies and institutions in it . On the other hand , socialization Organizing the Hajj also involves Lots candidate pilgrims in matter This most age candidate the Hajj pilgrims are age elderly.

In a study, one of the challenges in the implementation of the Hajj is socialization to the implementation of the Hajj foundation in provisioning candidate related Hajj pilgrim preparation in good implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage in a way administrative and spiritual. In the digital era where all over aspect life depend on technology in it, digital media is one of the parts not inseparable in life daily many people. Information integration through social media, digital content, websites, and digital applications to create access to information become easy obtained by the community.

This matter become opportunity new in utilization of digital media in socialization organizing the Hajj as means education and bridges information related accurate and precise Hajj implementation time and easy for accessed. The Office of the Ministry of Religion of Kebumen Regency, as Hajj organizers in the Regency Kebumen can convey information important related Hajj implementation from registration, preparation, departure, until homecoming Hajj pilgrims with utilization of digital media effective as spearhead of information to candidate Hajj pilgrims.

Even though Thus, there are challenge in the socialization process the organization of the Hajj, especially Because part big candidate the Hajj pilgrims are carry on general age No control or no can use technology optimally. In addition, the number of distribution information that is not accuracy is also a must become attention specifically by the Hajj organizers. Management information as well as management good risk can increase service fast, accurate, and efficient information.

This research aim for know how digital media is used as means socialization Hajj administration at the Regency Ministry of Religion Office Kebumen 2025 and identify factor supporters and inhibitors the use of digital media at the Ministry of Religion Office, Kebumen Regency. With focus main identify role and effectiveness use of digital media on the Hajj Podcast on the YouTube platform of the Ministry of Religion Office of Kebumen Regency, group candidate Hajj pilgrims of the Regency Kebumen on WhatsApp application, digital letters, and posts regarding the Hajj on the Instagram platform of the Ministry of Religion Office of Kebumen Regency.

The results of the study obtained from this research expected can give contribution in development management socialization organizing the Hajj and finding strategies for using digital media more optimally and efficiently so that candidate Hajj pilgrims get more Hajj experience solemn with thorough preparation.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. Qualitative methods were chosen because they are appropriate for exploring the meanings, perceptions, and experiences of subjects in real-world contexts. This approach is effective for understanding social phenomena in depth. Descriptive methods were used to describe the use of digital media in detail within the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Kebumen Regency. This approach is relevant because it allows researchers to explore the dynamics of digital communication in Hajj administration, which involves complex interactions between actors and media.

2.1. Location and Time of Research

The research was conducted at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Kebumen Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Head of the Hajj and Umrah Organization Section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Kebumen Regency, several employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Kebumen Regency, and prospective Hajj pilgrims in Kebumen Regency during the period of March 10-11, 2025. This timing coincided with the intensive preparation and socialization period for the 2025 Hajj organization.

2.2. Research Subjects

The research subjects consisted of a key informant, namely the Head of the Hajj and Umrah Organization Section, who has direct authority and responsibility for managing digital communications for Hajj administration. Supporting informants included several employees of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Kebumen Regency who are involved in digital media operations, as well as prospective

Hajj pilgrims from various sub-districts in Kebumen Regency who are the target recipients of information through digital platforms.

2.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, observation of digital media used in Hajj socialization, and documentation related to socialization activities. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information about experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of the use of digital media in Hajj socialization.

Observations were conducted on the content and communication activities across various digital media platforms, including YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and digital mail systems. These observations aimed to understand communication patterns, the types of content disseminated, the frequency of communication, and the responses from prospective Hajj pilgrims. Documentation was conducted on various forms of digital content, activity reports, and communication records available on digital media platforms. This documentation provided secondary data to support the findings from interviews and observations.

2.4. Data Validity

Data validity was obtained through source triangulation so that the research results could improve data accuracy and obtain a comprehensive and objective perspective regarding the use of digital media in the socialization of the implementation of the Hajj at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office of Kebumen Regency in 2025. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing and confirming information obtained from various informants who had different roles and perspectives in the process of socializing the implementation of the Hajj.

2.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to identify key patterns in digital media use, categorizing findings based on effectiveness, challenges faced, and impact. The analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions aligned with the research objective of understanding the effectiveness of digital media in promoting the Hajj.

3. Results

3.1. Changes in Socialization Strategy Towards Digitalization of Services

The shift in the Hajj and Umrah outreach strategy from a conventional approach to digital media demonstrates the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs' adaptive response to the dynamics of information technology in the digital era. Prior to 2023, outreach was largely conducted through physical mail, which was time-consuming, costly, and labor-intensive. In line with the demands of digital-based public service policies and budget efficiency, the communication strategy has undergone a comprehensive transformation toward digitalization.

These changes are not only administrative but also impact the cultural realm of institutional communication patterns with the public. The adoption of digital media has provided a solution to logistical and time constraints in the outreach process. With social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, information can be delivered in real time and reach the public quickly.

An interview with the Head of the Hajj and Umrah Organization Section at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Kebumen Regency revealed that this transformation has been systematically implemented since 2023, incorporating a paperless approach to all service processes, including registration, transfer, and payment of Hajj fees. This transformation is also supported by the use of the Siskohat application, which allows pilgrims to access services from home without needing to visit the office.

This strategy is highly effective in accelerating information distribution, especially during crucial moments leading up to departure. For example, when there's a change in the payment schedule, the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office can immediately notify pilgrims via WhatsApp

groups and YouTube content, ensuring that prospective pilgrims receive immediate follow-up instructions based on the information they've gathered.

This demonstrates efficiency in information delivery while simultaneously reducing geographical and administrative barriers. This strategic shift also strengthens the integration between mass communication theory and digital media. In this context, the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office has optimized digital media as an interactive, effective, and flexible means of institutional communication.

This success is evident in the increased speed of information dissemination and public involvement in every stage of the Hajj pilgrimage. Thus, digitalizing communication strategies is not merely an option, but an essential requirement for information-based public service governance.

3.2. Effectiveness of Digital Media in Delivering Information on Hajj Implementation

Digital media has proven effective in disseminating information about the Hajj pilgrimage to the wider public, particularly through YouTube, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms. This effectiveness is reflected in the ease of access, speed of information dissemination, and the platforms' ability to convey messages visually and interactively.

Observations show an increase in content intensity from 2024 to early 2025, packaged in the form of informative videos, podcasts, and digital flyers. The outreach materials cover various aspects, such as payment of fees, passport application, and departure preparation.

The use of YouTube as a podcast platform has become a key tool for conveying technical and educational information. Videos such as "Preparing for the 2025 Hajj" or "Hajj Costs and Payment" not only provide information but also serve as digital documentation that prospective pilgrims can access at any time. This makes digital media a timeless and spatially unrelated source of information, unlike conventional, temporary approaches.

The ability of digital media to reach diverse demographics is also a distinct advantage, particularly in the context of Kebumen Regency, which has diverse geographic and social backgrounds. WhatsApp's effectiveness as a primary platform for internal and external communication is further enhanced by its ability to disseminate information directly to the Head of the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) and then to the congregation.

Message formats, which can include text, images, and videos, make communication more comprehensive and easier to understand. Interviews revealed that WhatsApp is the most frequently used medium due to its simplicity and user familiarity. The Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs office also utilizes WhatsApp groups as a two-way communication channel, allowing prospective pilgrims to respond to information or ask questions directly.

Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok also play a significant role in reaching young people and families of prospective pilgrims. By targeting users based on their interests and communication styles on each platform, the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office has successfully developed an adaptive and varied communication approach.

The effectiveness of digital media in the context of Hajj socialization in Kebumen Regency is measured not only by the volume of content produced, but also by the actual impact in the form of pilgrims' actions and understanding. Interviews with prospective pilgrims indicate a high level of satisfaction with digital media due to ease of access, accessibility of information, and clarity of messages.

3.3. Challenges of Implementing Digital Media in Local Contexts

While the use of digital media has proven effective, its implementation in the field is not without significant challenges, particularly in the context of promoting the implementation of the Hajj in Kebumen Regency. One of the main obstacles identified in an interview with the Head of the Hajj and Umrah Organization Section was limited digital literacy among prospective Hajj pilgrims, the majority of whom are elderly.

Most of them lack adequate devices or are unfamiliar with accessing information via mobile devices, so information sent via digital media often doesn't reach them directly. In this regard, the role of children

or grandchildren of prospective pilgrims is crucial as an information bridge between the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office and prospective elderly pilgrims.

Difficult geographical conditions and areas without signal coverage, also known as blind spots, also present technical challenges. Several districts, such as Sadang and Ayah, are cited as examples of areas with limited internet coverage. This results in information distribution via digital media being inaccessible to all prospective Hajj pilgrims.

To address these obstacles, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Kebumen Regency has activated the role of religious instructors and the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) as manual liaisons for disseminating information to residents in these remote areas. This step represents an alternative, local community-based solution.

In addition to technical and demographic constraints, another challenge that arises is the institution's internal limitations in producing digital content routinely and professionally. Content creation, such as videos and flyers, is often handled by staff who also have direct service responsibilities to the public. As a result, content production is carried out outside of working hours or to accommodate staff availability.

This reflects the importance of allocating sufficient human and technical resources to sustainably maintain the effectiveness of digital media. If not managed properly, this dual workload has the potential to degrade the quality of the information delivered.

The widespread dissemination of false information also requires the public to be more critical of the information they receive, especially through unofficial social media. To address this challenge, the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office has established a standard for authenticity, requiring every official message to be accompanied by the institution's logo and an official's signature. This approach is part of public communication risk management, which is crucial for maintaining the institution's credibility and public trust in the Hajj organizers.

3.4. The Impact of Digital Socialization on Congregation Responses and Actions

The implementation of digital outreach in the Hajj administration has demonstrated a positive impact on increasing engagement and response from prospective pilgrims. Interviews with several prospective pilgrims from various districts in Kebumen revealed that digital media is an effective means of conveying clear and easy-to-understand information.

Information such as passport application procedures, manasik (prayer) schedules, payment of fees, and departure procedures can be accessed more quickly without having to visit the office in person. This certainly makes things easier for prospective pilgrims, especially those with limited mobility or living far from service centers.

Public response to digital media also reflects a shift in information behavior. While previously people relied more on face-to-face meetings or physical mail, they are now accustomed to checking information through WhatsApp groups or watching educational videos on YouTube. Some even expressed a preference for this approach because it can be accessed from home and can be replayed if something isn't clear.

Digital media is not only a tool for disseminating information, but also a flexible and adaptive means of independent learning tailored to individual needs. Public involvement in digital outreach also manifests itself in direct interactions, such as asking questions, clarifying information, or following up on information presented.

For example, after the publication of a podcast about the first phase of Hajj payment in February 2025, many prospective pilgrims immediately contacted the Ministry of Religious Affairs to confirm payment details. This demonstrates that digital media not only informs but also motivates audiences to take action.

The impact of digital outreach on Hajj implementation in Kebumen Regency is very real and tangible, both in terms of the efficiency of information distribution and the increasingly rapid and targeted public response. The public is better prepared and guided in following the stages of the Hajj pilgrimage because they receive relevant, valid, and timely information. This demonstrates that digital media is not

merely a tool but has become a vital element in proactive public communications management that is oriented toward community needs.

3.5. Evaluation and Implications of Digital Services for Public Policy

Evaluating the effectiveness of digital media in promoting the Hajj is an integral part of the communications management process at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Kebumen Regency. Based on interviews, evaluations are conducted periodically, both after specific events such as Hajj rituals (manasik) or completion of Hajj pilgrimage, during monthly and annual meetings, and after the pilgrims return.

This evaluation aims to measure the success of the communication strategy implemented, including identifying the media platforms most favored by the congregation and the effectiveness of the content delivered. The evaluation process demonstrates the Ministry of Religious Affairs' awareness of the importance of data-driven decision-making and field experience.

Evaluation results indicate that WhatsApp dominates as the easiest and most widely accessed medium for prospective Hajj pilgrims. This is based on the fact that WhatsApp doesn't require advanced technical skills, supports a variety of message formats, and is real-time.

Other platforms like YouTube and TikTok are considered effective in targeting younger audiences or families of congregants, who then pass information on to their parents. This suggests that information dissemination is multi-layered, indirect, and through intermediaries, involving family and community networks, rather than simply between institutions and individuals.

Therefore, the effectiveness of digital media is also determined by social interaction factors and family relationship structures. The evaluation also yielded reflections on the importance of accountability, transparency, and participation in digital services.

Content created by the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office always includes the official logo and signature of an official, as a form of accountability and guarantee of authenticity. This strategy demonstrates an understanding of the importance of maintaining the institution's credibility amidst the flood of information circulating freely in the digital world.

By adopting good governance principles in digital communications, the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office not only conveys information but also builds public trust, a key asset in providing spiritually and emotionally sensitive Hajj services. A digital communications strategy that implements information verification standards through official logos and official signatures demonstrates the institution's commitment to accountability and transparency in the digital age. This is crucial given the complexity of information management in the digital era, which is vulnerable to the spread of misinformation and disinformation that can undermine public trust in Hajj organizers.

4. Discussion

The digital transformation of Hajj socialization in Kebumen Regency reflects a broader paradigm shift in public communication in the digital era. This research finding demonstrates that the implementation of digital media has not only changed the way information is delivered but has also transformed the relationship between government institutions and the public, making it more interactive and responsive.

The successful transformation from conventional, physical-letter-based methods to an integrated digital system aligns with McQuail's theory of mass communication, which posits a role in disseminating information, educating the public, and building social integration through systematically and structured messages. In this context, digital media has expanded the concept of traditional mass communication by adding dimensions of interactivity and personalization.

The use of the Siskohat application, which allows congregants to access services from home, demonstrates the adoption of public service principles oriented toward ease of access and efficiency. This aligns with the concept of public service effectiveness, which emphasizes the degree to which an organization achieves its goals by delivering services that are effective, targeted, and meet the needs of the community.

This transformation also reflects the implementation of the principle of service digitalization, which is a solution to overcome geographic and temporal barriers in providing information to the public. The effectiveness of public services, which relies on active public participation, information transparency, and information technology innovation in delivering messages, has been realized through the use of diverse digital platforms.

The findings on WhatsApp's dominance as the most effective platform provide important insights into Indonesians' communication preferences. Its interface simplicity, user familiarity, and two-way communication capabilities make WhatsApp the most widely adopted medium across various demographic groups, including those with limited digital literacy.

The challenges of digital literacy among elderly pilgrims, who make up the majority of prospective Hajj pilgrims, reflect the broader digital divide in Indonesian society. These findings demonstrate the importance of an inclusive approach to implementing digital technology for public services. The role of intermediary actors such as families, religious instructors, and the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) as communication bridges demonstrates that the success of digital transformation depends not only on technology but also on the social structure and social capital within the community.

A hybrid strategy combining digital communication with conventional approaches through religious instructors and the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) reflects a thorough understanding of local conditions and the diverse capabilities of the community. This approach aligns with the principles of adaptive public service and responsiveness to community needs.

Infrastructure limitations in blind spots like Sadang and Ayah Districts demonstrate that digital transformation in public services is inseparable from equitable technological infrastructure development. This underscores the importance of synergy between service digitalization policies and information and communication technology infrastructure development.

Implementing information authenticity standards through official logos and official signatures demonstrates awareness of the challenges of misinformation and disinformation in the digital age. This strategy reflects the application of accountability and transparency principles in public communications, while simultaneously building public trust in official information.

Periodic evaluations conducted by the Kebumen Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office demonstrate the adoption of continuous improvement principles in public service management. This evaluative approach is crucial to ensuring that digital technology implementation remains aligned with community needs and preferences.

The positive impact on changes in people's information behavior, from passively waiting for information to actively seeking information, shows that digital media not only changes the way information is delivered but also empowers people to be more independent in accessing public services.

The multi-layered communication patterns through families identified in this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of digital communication depends not only on direct relationships between institutions and individuals, but also on social networks and family structures. These findings provide important insights for designing more effective public communication strategies.

The success of digital media in mobilizing audiences to action, as seen in the response to information on Hajj payment, demonstrates that digital media has fulfilled its communication function, not only being informative but also persuasive and actionable. This aligns with mass communication theory, which emphasizes the cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects of the communication process.

5. Conclusion

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of digital media in the socialization of the 2025 Hajj pilgrimage at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Kebumen Regency, it can be concluded that digital transformation has successfully increased the effectiveness of public communication in the religious services sector. The shift from a conventional approach based on physical letters to an integrated digital system involving YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and digital letters has had a significant positive impact on the speed of information distribution, communication reach, and the quality of interaction between organizers and prospective Hajj pilgrims.

WhatsApp has proven to be the most effective platform for Hajj communication in Kebumen Regency due to its ease of use, two-way communication capabilities, and familiarity among the community. YouTube serves as an educational platform, providing comprehensive, ubiquitous information, while Instagram and TikTok play a role in reaching the younger generation and families of prospective pilgrims, who then serve as intermediaries in disseminating information.

The implementation of the Siskohat application as part of the digitalization strategy has enabled pilgrims to access services from home, reducing administrative burdens and increasing service efficiency. The paperless approach adopted since 2023 not only reduces operational costs but also accelerates real-time communication processes.

However, the implementation of digital media also faces significant challenges, particularly related to the digital literacy gap among elderly pilgrims, who make up the majority of prospective Hajj pilgrims. Limited technological infrastructure in certain geographic areas, such as Sadang and Ayah Districts, also poses a barrier to equitable access to digital information.

Adaptive strategies developed through the intermediary roles of religious instructors and the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) have proven effective in addressing the digital divide. A hybrid approach combining digital communication with conventional methods enables inclusiveness in Hajj information services.

Regular evaluations demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making. Implementing information authenticity standards through official logos and official signatures demonstrates awareness of the challenges of misinformation and an effort to maintain the institution's credibility.

The positive impact on changing people's behavior from passive to active in seeking information shows that digital media not only changes the way information is delivered but also empowers people. Studies on digital communication media use and psychological well-being show that the effectiveness of digital media is highly dependent on how it is used and the context in which it is implemented (Liu et al., 2019). Multilayered communication patterns through family networks demonstrate the importance of considering social structures in designing digital communication strategies.

The effectiveness of digital media in promoting the Hajj is greatly influenced by adaptive communication strategies, technological infrastructure support, the community's digital literacy capacity, and the role of intermediary actors in addressing the digital divide. The hybrid communication model developed in Kebumen Regency can serve as a reference for similar implementations in other regions, with adaptations to local conditions.

This research confirms that digital transformation in public services in the religious sector requires a holistic approach that considers not only technological aspects but also social, cultural, and demographic factors. Successful digital media implementation depends on the institution's ability to integrate technology with a deep understanding of the characteristics and needs of the community it serves.

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