



## The Role of WhatsApp Social Media in the Spreading of Community-Based Bil Tadwin Preaching: A Case Study of Ustadz Hanan Attaki's Preaching Channel

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### A B S T R A C T

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This study examines the role of WhatsApp as a community-based da'wah bil tadwin media, focusing on Ustadz Hanan Attaki's da'wah channel, which uses a one-way communication format. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of WhatsApp in spreading da'wah to a wide and diverse audience, while exploring how this approach allows full control over da'wah content. Using a qualitative method with a case study approach, data were obtained through observation of message content, interviews with community members, and analysis of literature related to digital da'wah. The study results indicate that WhatsApp's one-way format effectively maintains the consistency of da'wah messages, reduces the risk of information distortion, and maximizes control of narrative quality. Messages delivered through the bil tadwin format, such as inspirational quotes, study materials, and calls for goodness, were well received without direct interaction. This shows that the one-way approach on WhatsApp provides advantages in controlling the quality of da'wah messages, maintaining narrative consistency, and reducing the risk of information distortion. Messages delivered through the bil tadwin format, such as inspirational quotes, study

materials, and calls for goodness, were well received by the audience, even without direct interaction. In addition, the private nature of WhatsApp helps create an exclusive and focused environment for the da'wah community, where the audience feels more connected to the religious message being conveyed.

## Introduction

The digital era has brought about a massive eruption of change across various aspects of life, including how religion is disseminated. This transformation has sparked compelling academic debates regarding the acceptance of digital media in the context of religious propagation (H. Campbell, 2007). Some conservative groups view modern technology as threatening traditional religious values, believing it may distort the essence of dakwah by oversimplifying message delivery and reducing space for substantive dialogue (Zaid et al., 2022). Others, however, see digital media as a strategic tool that can bring religion closer to modern society, particularly amid high mobility and the currents of globalization (Echchaibi et al., 2013). Digital media is believed to reach wider audiences unhindered by time and space, thus allowing dakwah to be conducted more effectively. Within this context, WhatsApp emerges as a platform with notable advantages, such as high accessibility, low cost, and the ability to reach diverse social layers.

Technological development has also influenced the methods used by modern preachers. With the availability of various digital platforms, dakwah is no longer limited to conventional pulpits but has expanded into social media, podcasts, and online groups. This approach enables broader dissemination of Islamic messages and facilitates the formation of virtual communities actively engaged in religious discussion. One prominent preacher using digital media is Ustadz Hanan Attaki, known for his casual and youth-oriented preaching style. He has successfully built

a large and loyal audience by leveraging platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. His success in utilizing digital technology for dakwah reflects a significant shift in religious communication strategies in the modern era.

Ideally, Islamic dakwah should be able to reach a broad audience without losing the essence of its messages and core values. The two-way communication model—often emphasized in previous research—is highly relevant for dakwah that prioritizes active participation. However, this model often faces challenges such as message distortion and limited control over disseminated content (Rahayu & Khairani, 2022). On the other hand, a one-way communication via WhatsApp offers advantages in maintaining message consistency and quality, particularly in Islamic value-based communities that require a more structured approach. Hence, understanding the idealism of WhatsApp-based dakwah becomes essential in contexts where full message control is prioritized, especially in today's dynamic digital landscape.

This research supports using digital media as a strategic tool for disseminating Islamic teachings, specifically focusing on WhatsApp as a platform. It embraces the idea that digital technology is not merely a delivery tool but also a medium of social transformation relevant to the needs of modern society. Accordingly, this study supports the view that digital media can serve as an effective dakwah medium, provided it is used in a structured and controlled manner to preserve the core values of Islam. Moreover, this research seeks to offer a new theoretical contribution by exploring the potential of dakwah bil tadwin (written dakwah) through one-way communication formats on WhatsApp.

Previous studies have generally focused on social media platforms with two-way communication models, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, where interaction between the preacher and the audience is more open. These studies have highlighted the ongoing debate around digital media as a dakwah tool. Sikumbang et al. (2024) noted that platforms like Instagram increase preacher-audience interaction but are vulnerable to message distortion due to their interactive nature. Azizah et al. (2025) found Facebook effective for two-way dakwah, despite struggling to maintain message consistency. Kahfi et al. (2024) acknowledged WhatsApp's potential in personal communication but did not explore its use in dakwah communities. Efendi et al. (2023) stressed the importance of quality control in one-way dakwah communication, yet lacked a

platform-specific analysis. Ghozali (2022) emphasized the effectiveness of video content on YouTube in delivering religious explanations. This ongoing debate reveals a research gap concerning WhatsApp as a dakwah medium in structured, community-based, one-way communication settings. While direct interaction has merits, a structured one-way approach via WhatsApp introduces unique dakwah dynamics, particularly regarding message control and focus.

This study uses the theoretical framework of dakwah bil tadwin, or preaching through writing, as its main conceptual basis. In the digital media context, this includes delivering religious messages through text, articles, or structured posts that can be widely distributed. With its features that support private, organized, and low-cost message distribution, WhatsApp offers an ideal platform for implementing dakwah bil tadwin. This approach is integrated with the one-way communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of control and consistency in delivering religious values, especially in response to the challenges of message distortion commonly found in interactive platforms.

This theoretical framework offers a new perspective in the study of digital dakwah, where content control becomes a key priority to ensure that Islamic messages remain aligned with intended values and essence. The study aims to fill a gap in digital dakwah literature by exploring how WhatsApp channels can effectively conduct structured, community-based one-way dakwah. It will analyze the effectiveness of this method in reaching wide audiences, maintaining message consistency, and minimizing distortion risks. Using the case study of Ustadz Hanan Attaki's dakwah channel, the research not only aims to understand WhatsApp's role as a medium for dakwah bil tadwin but also to explore the potential development of theoretical frameworks relevant to dakwah in the digital era. The findings are expected to significantly contribute to developing modern dakwah strategies that are adaptive to technological changes without compromising Islamic values.

### **Ustadz Hanan Attaki and Islamic Preaching through WhatsApp Channels**

Social media plays a crucial role in Islamic da'wah in the digital era. As a widely used and far-reaching platform, it provides an effective communication channel for preachers (da'i) to disseminate Islamic teachings to broader and more diverse audiences (Anggit Pamungkas, 2023). Through social media, preachers

can easily and rapidly share sermons, lectures, articles, and inspiring quotes about Islamic values (Budi et al., 2019). In addition, social media fosters interaction and active participation in Islamic dakwah (Salsabila & Muslim, 2022). Features such as comments, private messaging, and discussion groups allow preachers to engage directly with their audiences (Hadi, 2024), facilitating constructive dialogue, answering questions, addressing concerns, and expanding understanding of Islam.

The WhatsApp Channel feature is an effective and widely adopted approach to expanding the reach of dakwah messages through social media. This platform allows for the personal and direct delivery of dakwah content to users' devices (Nurhayati, 2019) through features such as broadcast messages, groups, and status updates. These tools support distributing dakwah material in various formats, including text, audio, images, and video. WhatsApp's key advantages lie in its private and easily accessible nature, which offers a sense of exclusivity for followers (Ummah, 2023). Its accessibility is demonstrated by its capacity to host millions of followers effortlessly. Furthermore, WhatsApp delivers information through the dakwah bi at-tadwin model—preaching through writing (Mukarromah & Dahliah, 2023). This model involves conveying Islamic messages via status updates or short messages that contain explanations of Islamic teachings and inspirational stories from the Qur'an and hadith.

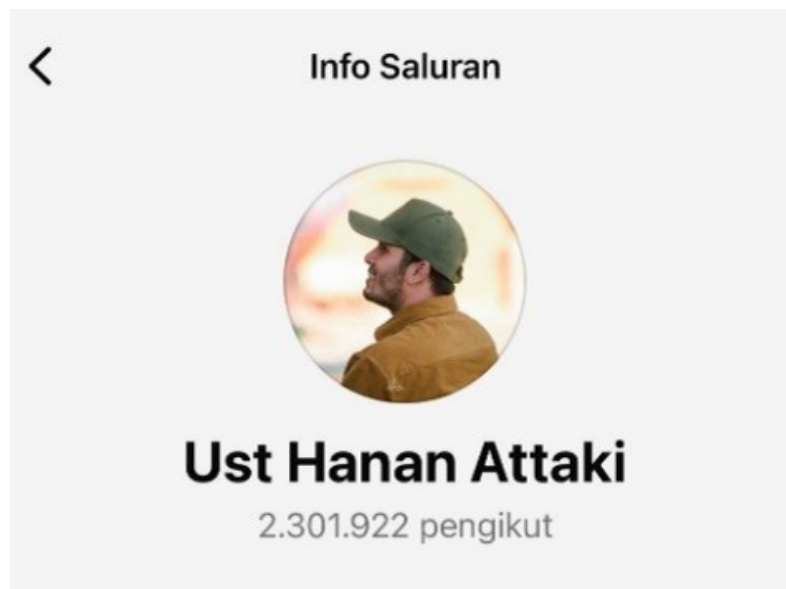


Figure 1. Ust Hanan Attaki's WhatsApp channel

Ustadz Hanan Attaki has chosen WhatsApp Channel as one of his primary platforms for delivering religious messages. Known for his strategic use of digital technology in conveying Islamic dakwah (Parhan et al., 2020), he actively shares religious content, as reflected in the significant number of followers on his WhatsApp Channel, which has reached 2.6 million subscribers. This platform serves as a space for broad information exchange to spread his understanding of Islam. The number of subscribers to Ustadz Hanan Attaki's dakwah channel on WhatsApp continues to grow daily, indicating the strong appeal of the content he presents. His dakwah messages are highly relevant to everyday life and are delivered in simple, accessible language that resonates with audiences from various backgrounds.

### **Text Messages as Mediators of Religious Messaging: Ustadz Hanan Attaki's Dakwah on WhatsApp Channel**

WhatsApp Group Channels that rely on narrative-based communication emphasize more efficient delivery of information by focusing on the core message. Effective message delivery is key to the dakwah bi at-tadwin model to engage and be understood by audiences. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) assert that the effectiveness of media as a message delivery tool depends on the communication model applied. The use of media in dakwah communication increases audience engagement. Syam refers to this as multimodal communication, which helps sustain the audience's interest and enhances their understanding of dakwah messages (Syam, 2022). WhatsApp Group Channels in religious preaching contribute to message delivery through various narrative forms.

Ustadz Hanan Attaki's use of new media in delivering dakwah messages reflects the integration of modern platforms into his religious outreach. Data reveals three narrative forms used to make Islamic teachings more accessible on WhatsApp Channels:

First, inspirational quotes are often structured in short, memorable sentences, such as "Draw closer to Allah, and your heart will find peace." These short motivational messages fulfill psychological needs by offering inspiration and clear direction without being imposing. A consistent pattern is the encouragement of good deeds, whether in the form of religious practices like sunnah prayers and charity, or daily behaviors such as patience and honesty.



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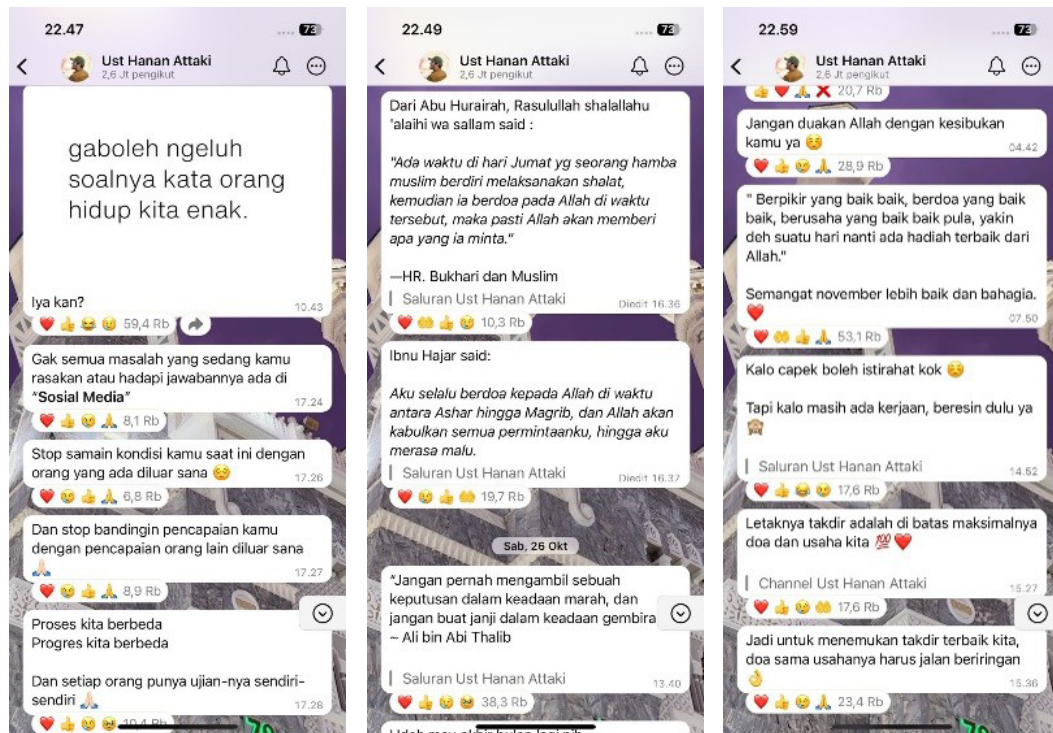


Figure 2. Message in the form of an inspirational-spiritual quote

Second, ustadz Hanan Attaki provides insights into fundamental Islamic teachings, the wisdom behind Qur'anic verses, and inspiring stories from the Prophet's life. The short-format dakwah content on WhatsApp is designed to provide a deep understanding of Islam in a digestible form. Topics include tawhid, sincerity (ikhlas), trust in God (tawakal), and practical guidance for everyday challenges. He serves as a guide in this context, offering concise material drawn from the Qur'an, hadith, and inspirational narratives. These texts or short audio messages are accessible anytime, making information delivery efficient and audience-friendly.

Third, these messages urge the audience to perform virtuous acts such as giving charity (infak), observing sunnah fasting, or attending religious gatherings. The aim is to emotionally engage the audience, encouraging spiritual growth, consistent worship, and avoiding sinful behavior.

This narrative-based preaching model enhances audience appeal through new media, emphasizing inspiration and brief calls to good deeds. Brief religious messages contribute to persuasive understanding more effectively than complex descriptions (Indrawati, 2019). This style enhances message appeal among general

audiences and facilitates easier cognitive processing. John Sweller (2011) states that content presented in small chunks is easier for the human brain to process, increasing information retention. Such linguistic patterns foster a dialogic interaction model, making the audience feel more involved in the dakwah process. Simarmata (2024) argues that audience-involved communication enhances support for message narratives due to a shared sense of moral purpose. This shared commitment to the mission of religious propagation is reinforced by re-sharing the content with equally inspirational narratives and calls to action.

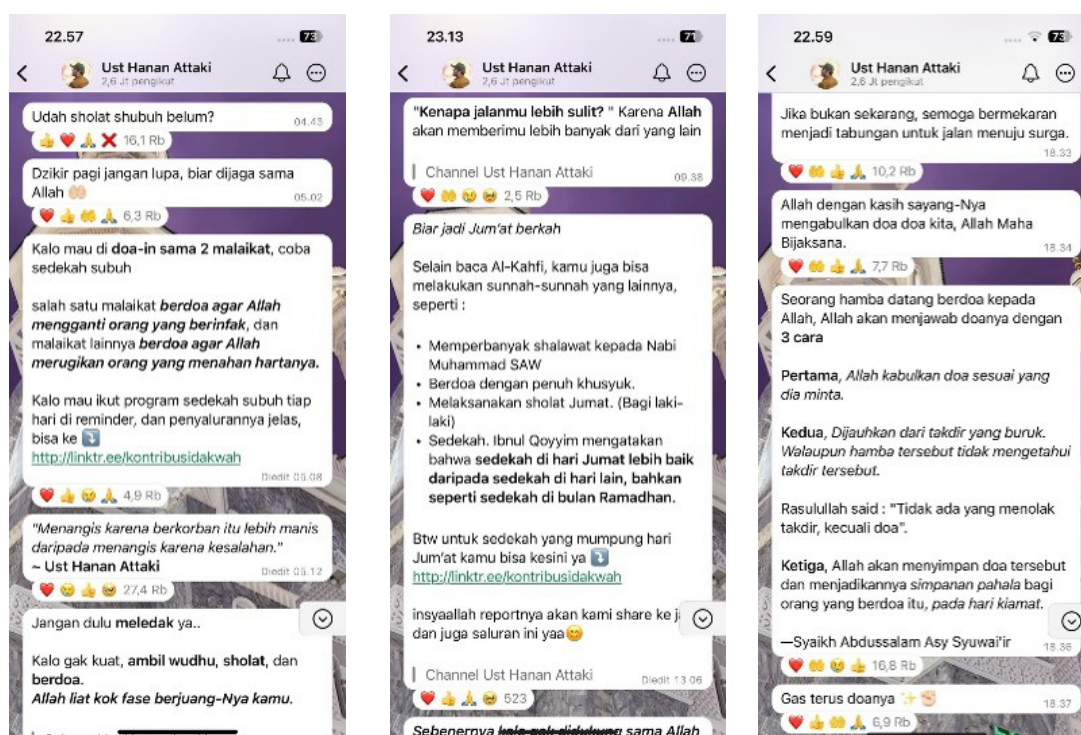


Figure 3. Preaching message about religious teachings

The tendency to duplicate messages in this way leads to a new discourse model in religious communication, adopted by followers on a large scale. It enables a new form of dakwah that prioritizes religious messages in simple, effective formats. The use of WhatsApp channels for religious messaging reflects a growing awareness among da'i of the potential of technology (Lundby, 2012). These preachers play an active role in shaping how technology is used, understood, and even adapted. This shows that preachers are not merely passive users of WhatsApp but negotiate, modify, and reframe it in alignment with religious values and norms (H. A. Campbell, 2010). Such awareness of integrating religious orientations into everyday media contributes to forming new discursive models in Islamic da'wah.



This new mechanism of incorporating media as a delivery tool in dakwah has become a common phenomenon identified by researchers studying the modern spread of religious narratives. This model has been found in various media-based dakwah activities, including books (Muthohirin, 2021), the internet (Adeni et al., 2022; Pimay & Niswah, 2021), Instagram (Marwantika, 2021), and TikTok (Maghfirah et al., 2021). A common trend across these studies is pursuing more effective and flexible dakwah methods. However, many studies overlook everyday technologies like WhatsApp, reflecting a deeper awareness among preachers of the importance of consistent, value-driven religious messaging. This aligns with Fakhruroji's (2021) findings that highlight the significance of maintaining the essence and goals of dakwah through appropriate and accessible media platforms.

### **One-Way Communication as a Guarantee of Religious Message Authenticity: Ustadz Hanan Attaki's Dakwah Model on WhatsApp Channel**

The open accessibility of media, which allows everyone to actively participate, presents a challenge to its use in dakwah, particularly in guaranteeing the integrity of religious narratives. This issue becomes crucial in using information technology to ensure and control the accuracy of messages and their long-term impact on the audience (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000). Message control is the foundation for delivering effective dakwah content, providing a deep understanding, and encouraging positive behavioral change. In this context, Shannon and Weaver (1964) propose controlling messages by restricting communication channels to a single source while disregarding the need for feedback.

The mechanism of message control in Ustadz Hanan Attaki's dakwah content via WhatsApp Channel is identified through a one-way communication model. This approach allows full control over the message, ensuring consistency and minimizing the risk of distortion commonly found in more interactive communication models. Messages delivered through his WhatsApp Channel are in broadcast format, where the audience receives content without direct two-way interaction. Ustadz Hanan Attaki ensures that the content remains consistent and undistorted by interpretations or opinions from recipients. When dakwah is delivered via one-way platforms such as WhatsApp, the sender can present well-prepared material in a structured manner without interruptions or debates that might obscure the original meaning.

This broadcast-based control allows full regulation of religious messages while assuring that the narrative originates directly from Ustadz Hanan Attaki. The accuracy of the content is maintained by filtering out extraneous information that could obscure core religious teachings and doctrines. The audience can thus trust that the messages received are verified and part of valid Islamic teachings. This level of control also supports a dakwah model focused on spiritual encouragement, undisturbed by divergent opinions that might come from group members susceptible to misinformation or deviation. Centralizing information through a single channel enables the massive and effective dissemination of religious teachings without interference from unverified content.

Message authenticity is further supported by the design of the WhatsApp Channel as a private and exclusive medium. The channel managed by Ustadz Hanan Attaki tends to attract selective followers who are committed to regularly engaging with his dakwah content. This creates a focused and conducive environment, making audiences feel more personally connected to the messages. The absence of two-way interaction within the group minimizes unnecessary debate or distraction, helping to keep the focus on the primary dakwah goals. In this sense, the WhatsApp Channel is a controlled medium, enabling religious messages to stay aligned with their intended objectives without external disturbances.

The restricted access model implemented in Ustadz Hanan Attaki's WhatsApp Channel demonstrates a dakwah strategy that relies on single-source messaging. This control mechanism is intended to ensure the accuracy and alignment of the messages with Islamic values (Ruswandi & Arifin, 2021). Compared to other platforms, this model offers a rational choice for religious communication via WhatsApp. Sikumbang et al. (2024) advocate limiting digital dakwah content to reduce the spread of misinformation. Moreover, one-way communication via private channels strengthens member bonds and creates an intimate space for information sharing (Dewi et al., 2024; Mahmuddin, 2021; Salsabila & Muslim, 2022). The resulting group solidarity becomes a strength of this restricted-message dakwah model.

The formation of new religious communities on WhatsApp Channels reflects the emergence of virtual religious spaces that shape contemporary Islamic understanding. These channels function as distribution media for dakwah content and as environments where members feel personally and purposefully connected

to religious values. McLuhan's (2013) concept of the "global village" is manifested here—information spreads rapidly, and people across Indonesia with shared values connect as though they are in the same gathering. These communities also help broaden dakwah outreach. When the content inspires members, they often forward the messages to their networks, whether on WhatsApp or other social media platforms. This process amplifies the dakwah message, reaching wider audiences without requiring additional effort from the primary preacher.

The emergence of new religious communities on WhatsApp Channels that participate in spreading religious content has become a catalyst for reinforcing religious values. The audience's new role as transmitters of dakwah messages is an emerging dynamic that prior research has largely overlooked. Previous studies have focused on how preachers construct dakwah narratives (Ibnu Kasir & Syahrol Awali, 2024; Nasution et al., 2024) and how audience preferences influence their engagement with religious content (M & Tasruddin, 2025). However, many researchers have neglected the active role of social media audiences in sharing religious content they receive from digital dakwah sources. This active audience engagement, as observed in Ustadz Hanan Attaki's WhatsApp Channel, reveals a new dimension in dakwah practice that merits further exploration.

### **From Dakwah bi al-Lisan to Dakwah bi at-Tadwin: Actualizing Ustadz Hanan Attaki's Religious Message Dissemination Model via WhatsApp Channel**

The shift in dakwah models through the use of WhatsApp Channel has transformed the delivery of religious messages from oral to written forms. This transition is shaped by the differing technical infrastructures provided by each platform used by da'i (preachers) as tools for conveying their messages. Writing has become a new medium in digital dakwah, offering broader accessibility and greater control over the narrative (Maulana & Sumarlan, 2023). The transition in message delivery reflects the preacher's adaptation to the available information technologies. Stuart Hall (1997) underscores this dynamic, arguing that the production of media messages is influenced by the technical infrastructure available during production, which in turn shapes the form and discourse of the message. The technical features of WhatsApp Channel determine the structure of religious communication employed by Ustadz Hanan Attaki.

This shift to written messages introduces a delivery format distinct from conventional sermons. The data reveals two key mechanisms of message dissemination used by Ustadz Hanan Attaki through his WhatsApp Channel. First, religious messages are presented in a structured and conceptual format. Information related to Islamic teachings is delivered thematically with accessible language that resonates with the audience. The message format is systematic, typically beginning with an engaging introduction, followed by the core message containing information or exhortation, and concluding with a call for reflection or action.

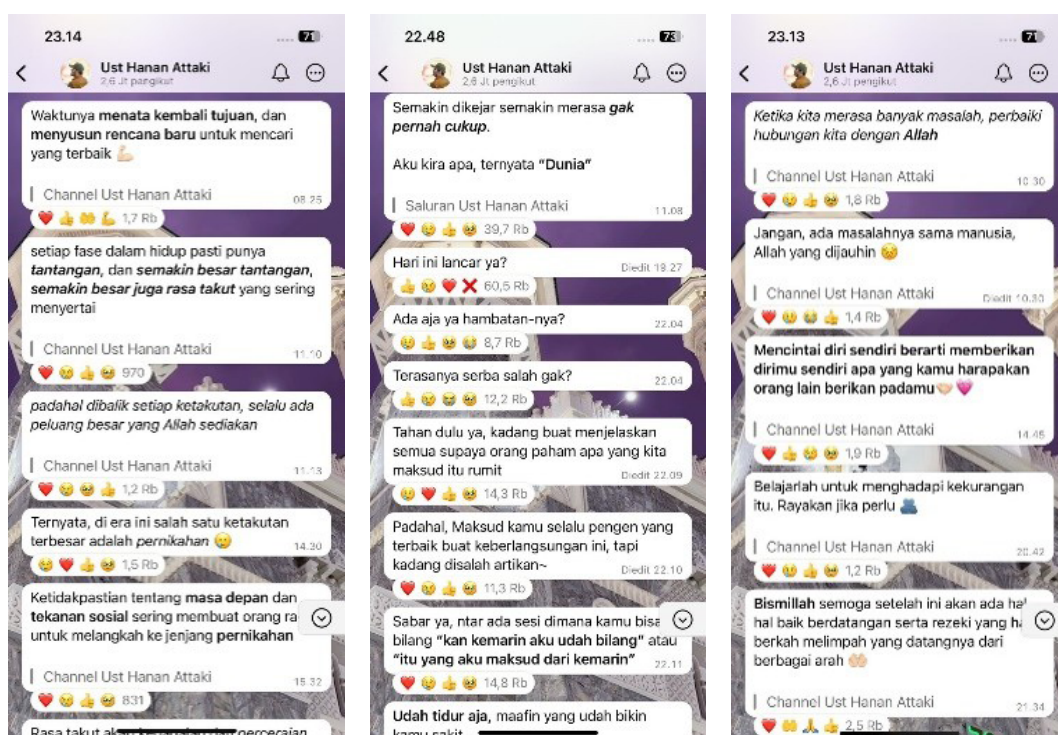


Figure 4. Message control with a structured scheme

This structured format is supported by the use of casual, friendly, yet respectful language. The communication style within the WhatsApp group is informal, helping younger audiences feel more comfortable and connected to the message.

Second, spiritual motivation messages are enhanced through the use of motivational images, short tausiyah audios, and brief religious video lectures. These supporting media enrich the message and capture audience interest, encouraging deeper reflection. Visual and audio content also reinforce the core message and increase its memorability.



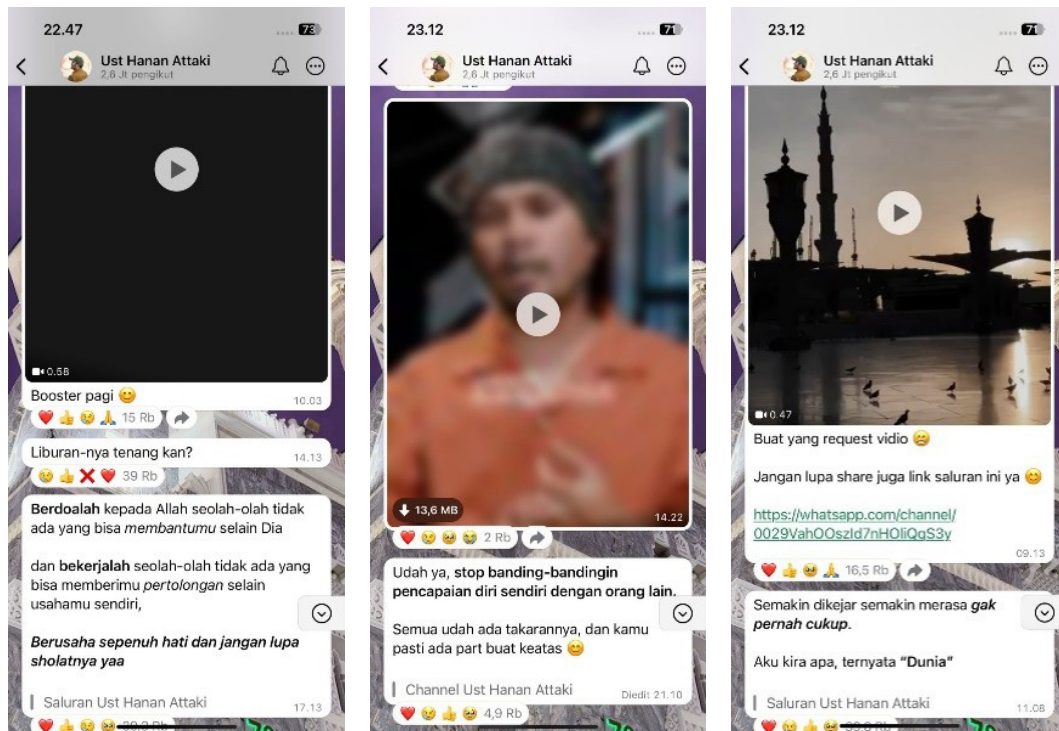


Figure 5. Message reinforcement with supporting media

These media supplements serve to strengthen narrative delivery, creating a memorable dakwah model through flexible and accessible engagement with group members. The tendency to frame messages as written narratives reflects an effective form of dakwah, emphasizing greater control over content. This advantage highlights the benefit of written messages, which allow for wider and faster dissemination. Robert P. Holley (2023) claims that written messages enhance message control by enabling regulation of both format and content. This message control is key to preserving authenticity and is often complemented by visual media such as videos for better understanding. The inclusion of visual aids accelerates audience comprehension by engaging their visual perception (Al-Gunaid et al., 2021). This mechanism underscores the strength of delivering religious messages in written form via WhatsApp Channel.

The transition to written dakwah through messaging platforms leads to concise and meaningful content. This style of message construction is vital for condensing typically lengthy verbal dakwah into short, impactful narratives. The effectiveness of concise messages, shaped by the affordances of the medium, becomes a strategic strength in avoiding distortion (Walsh, 2021). The inclusion



of videos and images enhances message clarity and establishes WhatsApp Channel dakwah as a viable alternative for digital religious outreach. Spicer and Coleman (2022) assert that visual media serve as vital tools for simplifying complex ideas in digital communication, particularly on social platforms. This model represents a new conception of dakwah bi at-Tadwin, merging textual messaging with visualization through images and videos.

## Conclusion

Using digital media—particularly WhatsApp—as a tool for dakwah bil tadwin by Ustadz Hanan Attaki demonstrates significant effectiveness in reaching a wide and diverse audience. The structured one-way communication approach offers key advantages in maintaining message consistency, minimizing the risk of information distortion, and ensuring narrative control aligned with Islamic values. The combination of inspirational content, multimedia formats, and the privacy features of WhatsApp creates a personalized and immersive dakwah environment capable of fostering a value-based religious community. This strategy proves that dakwah in the digital era can be conducted in a relevant and innovative manner while remaining anchored in the essence of Islamic teachings, thereby contributing positively to the audience's religious understanding and practice.

However, this study has several limitations that should be noted. The research method is limited to content analysis, without incorporating experiments or quantitative surveys that could offer a more objective measurement. Additionally, this study focuses specifically on the context of Ustadz Hanan Attaki's dakwah, thus limiting its findings' generalizability to other digital dakwah models. Future research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across various social media platforms to better understand the strengths and challenges of each medium in the context of digital dakwah. Furthermore, quantitative approaches could be employed to assess the impact of digital dakwah on audience attitudes and behavioral changes in a more measurable way. In-depth exploration of audience interactivity within digital dakwah communities is also needed to provide broader insights into the effectiveness of media-based dakwah in building more inclusive and sustainable religious communities.

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