

Strengthening digital Islamic activism: virtual ethnography of Bandung Hijrah Youth's WhatsApp engagement

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Abstract The Hijrah Movement in Greater Bandung represents a dynamic form of digitally mediated Islamic activism, where WhatsApp Groups (WAGs) play pivotal roles in dawah engagement. However, research on how digital platforms shape religious identity, trust formation, and communal accountability in online Islamic communities remains limited. This study examined how the hyper-personal model can explain the role of WAGs in fostering relational intimacy and sustaining collective identity within a movement. Using a qualitative virtual ethnography approach, including in-depth interviews and content analysis of WAG *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya*, this research investigates the mechanisms through which asynchronous communication, selective self-presentation, and feedback loops influence community engagement. Findings reveal that WAGs enhance perceived trust and belonging by enabling curated self-disclosure, reinforcing positive group norms, and facilitating collaborative decision-making. These digital interactions strengthen spiritual bonds and extend to offline initiatives such as charity programs and Dawah safaris, bridging digital and traditional religious mobilisation. The study advances the hyper-personal model by demonstrating its applicability to digitally mediated Islamic activism. It offers empirical evidence that digital platforms reshape authority structures, spiritual discourse, and social cohesion in contemporary Islamic communities. It also highlighted the potential risks of misinformation, echo chambers, and platform dependency. This research mainly contributes to Islamic studies, digital communication, and social movements, providing insights into the complex interplay between online and offline religious engagement.

Keywords: digital dawah; Hijrah movement; hyper-personal model; virtual ethnography

INTRODUCTION

The Hijrah Movement in Greater Bandung (Bandung, Cimahi, Bandung Regency, and Western Bandung) represents a contemporary religious transformation among urban youth in Indonesia (Abdurrahman, 2020b; Sya'adtul, 2020). Unlike traditional Islamic learning, which emphasises structured face-to-face teachings (*liqo*), this movement adopts digital platforms for dawah, driven by the rapid expansion of social media and computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Nasrullah, 2014; Meisyaroh, 2014). The rise of digital religious engagement raises critical questions about how online platforms shape Islamic activism, formation of trust, and community building in an era of digital disruption. This study examines how WhatsApp Groups (WAGs), particularly *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya*, facilitate dawah, mediate communal identity, and redefine religious authority within the Hijrah Movement.

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CMC has transformed religious engagement, providing a platform for asynchronous communication, selective self-presentation, and instant message exchange (Nasrullah, 2014; Meisyaroh, 2014; Cronjé & van Zyl, 2022). Among these platforms, WhatsApp has emerged as a dominant tool that allowed Islamic communities to sustain discussions beyond physical mosque spaces. The *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya* WAGs, established in 2017, serve as a focal point for dawah coordination among mosque activists across Bandung Raya. Unlike mainstream digital Islamic forums, this WAG prioritises systematic religious education through structured discussions, serialised themes, and coordinated outreach programs. This study focused on this specific group due to its distinctive strategy of mobilising urban youth through digital dawah while maintaining traditional Islamic learning frameworks (Fakhrurroji, 2017). However, questions remain: to what extent does WAG-based dawah influence religious authority and community engagement? How do members negotiate between digital connectivity and conventional dawah methods?

The shift from conventional to digital dawah is not without tensions. Historically, dawah relied on structured face-to-face study sessions (*liqo*), guided by scholars with recognised authority (Hajam, 2019). Digital platforms disrupt this structure, enabling individuals to access religious content independently without the direct supervision of ulama. Critics argue that the Hijrah Movement's reliance on digital platforms fosters fragmented religious interpretations, as urban youth engage with unverified religious content through WhatsApp, YouTube, and other digital media (Fansuri, 2023). Abdul Mu'ti, General Secretary of Muhammadiyah, warns that digital dawah often lacks scholarly oversight, making it susceptible to misinformation (CNN, 2019). This raises concerns about digital echo chambers and the potential dilution of Islamic knowledge.

Despite these criticisms, digital dawah has facilitated new forms of engagement, particularly among urban youth seeking alternative religious expressions beyond institutionalised Islam. The availability of digital tools has enabled religious communities to cultivate knowledge-sharing platforms that are more accessible, interactive, and adaptable (Addini, 2019). These communities often operate independently of traditional mosque-based learning structures, allowing individuals to engage in religious discussions without geographical constraints. While critics argue that this model lacks scholarly rigour, proponents highlight its inclusivity and ability to reach previously disengaged Muslim youths.

The phenomenon of digital dawah in Indonesia is not an isolated case, but is part of a broader global trend. While existing research explores Muslim youth engagement globally – such as Malaysia's digital Islamic studies (Salleh et al., 2016) and Australia's counter-narratives through media activism (Ali, 2022) – comparative analysis of Indonesia's urban Hijrah Movement remains limited. In Malaysia, Islamic studies educators integrate CMC to enhance religious engagement, while in Australia, young Muslims counter negative stereotypes through literature, music, and digital media. These international cases demonstrate how digital platforms are reshaping religious identity, discourse, and activism, emphasising a gap in existing research that this study seeks to answer, by investigating how *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya* shapes religious discourse, fosters trust among members, and sustains Islamic activism particularly through WhatsApp (Fakhrurroji, 2017; Wiktorowicz, 2004).

The selection of *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya* as a case study is deliberate, as it represents one of the most active digital Dawah communities in Bandung Raya. Unlike more general Islamic discussion forums, this WAG focuses on structured and thematic discussions that span multiple sessions. The members consist of mosque activists, preachers, and general participants who engage in digital and offline Islamic activities, providing context for this study to differentiate itself by analysing specifically the Hijrah Movement's digital engagement, which primarily serves as a preacher-led initiative or a broader social movement among urban Muslims (Setia & Dilawati, 2021; Hamdani & Aziz, 2024). Furthermore, this study assessed how digital platforms affect group cohesion, religious interpretation, and trust dynamics within the movement.

The increasing role of instant messaging in religious activism necessitates a deeper understanding of its implications. Meyrowitz (1997) underscores that CMC serves as a medium, language, and environment for effective message delivery. Among the most impactful forms of CMC in this movement is instant messaging, which has evolved significantly since the 1990s. Starting with paid chat services like Microsoft Internet Relay Chat (MIRC) and free platforms like 'I Seek You' (ICQ), and AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), instant messaging has transitioned to

smartphones through platforms such as BlackBerry Messenger (BBM), Line, Telegram, and the most prominent in Indonesia, WhatsApp (WA). Significantly, WhatsApp groups (WAG) accommodate up to 1,024 members, fostering virtual communities that enhance collective attachment and engagement (Meisyaroh, 2014; Cronjé & van Zyl, 2022). This shift exemplifies how digital platforms serve as more than just communication tools, but as instruments of religious transformation.

With this, the primary research question that guided this study is: how does WhatsApp-mediated dawah shape trust, religious authority, and communal identity in the Hijrah Movement's digital activism? Addressing this question contributes to a broader understanding of how digital media transforms religious mobilisation, navigating between traditional authority structures and contemporary participatory networks. This study integrates both the promises and pitfalls of digital dawah, situating the Hijrah Movement within the broader discourse on Islamic activism, social cohesion, and digital disruption in contemporary urban Indonesia (Ismail, 2018; Kahmad, 2011). By providing a nuanced analysis of *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya*, this research highlights how digital engagement redefines traditional dawah practices while fostering a sense of community among urban Muslim youth. Through this analysis, the study aimed at creating meaningful contributions to the growing scholarship on digital religion, media ecology, and Islamic activism in Southeast Asia.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach using virtual ethnography and an interpretative paradigm to analyse Islamic activism through computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Robardet, 2011). Hine's (2012) framework of 'ethnography in, of, and through the virtual' guided this study, positioning the internet as both a research tool and communication medium. The research team passively engaged with the WhatsApp Group (WAG) *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya* to observe communication patterns while occasionally seeking clarification to deepen contextual understanding. Data collection involved selecting WAG discussions based on relevance, thematic frequency, engagement level, and alignment with Islamic activism. However, messages unrelated to digital dawah were excluded. The analysis identified recurring phrases and engagement trends reflective of digital religious discourse.

Walther's (1996) Hyper-personal Model is applied to examine selective self-presentation, asynchronous communication, and feedback loops. Selective self-presentation is analysed through the construction of a religious persona, asynchronous communication through message timing and engagement, and feedback loops through interaction trends (e.g., replies, likes, and emojis). Thematic analysis categorised interactions under these components to assess their impact on religious discourse and community cohesion.

As the most populous province in Indonesia, the research examined the entire conversation from 124 members in the WhatsApp Group (WAG) 'Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya' (see Table 1.1 in Supplementary File, Page 19), then conducted in-depth interviews with six (6) specific informants as the leaders of the WAG (see Table 1.2, Page 20). These specific informants also represent Greater Bandung (including four (4) regions and regencies), with each region/regency represented by at least one mosque activist in the WAG. These Six (6) key informants were selected for in-depth interviews based on a saturation point approach that ensured sufficiency of data. Representing different regions in Bandung Raya, this research included mosque activists and preachers to capture both leadership and grassroots perspectives which placed strong ethical practices as a priority. The WAG members were informed of the study's purpose, and explicit consent was obtained from key informants. Reflexivity journals documented researcher interactions to mitigate bias.

Data collection spanned mid-2023 to mid-2024, which included transcriptions of digital interactions and interviews. Thematic coding and grounded theory principles guided the analysis, refining emerging themes related to digital dawah. The triangulation techniques involved in this study is a cross-verification of WAG interactions with interviews, independent coding by multiple researchers, and integration of virtual ethnography, interviews, and document analysis to enhance validity. By incorporating explicit selection criteria, analytical frameworks, ethical considerations, and triangulation techniques, this study systematically examined WhatsApp-mediated dawah and its role in fostering communal identity, and the negotiation of religious authority in CMC contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Common patterns of Islamic activism in the Hijrah Movement (Interaction dynamics and information openness)

The research team observed a recurring pattern in the Islamic activism of the Hijrah Movement that begins with establishing interaction frameworks and ensuring information transparency. This process involved studying members of WhatsApp Groups (WAG) associated with *dawah* communities and mosques aligned with the Hijrah Movement, particularly those deemed stable and prosperous. The goal was to analyse the congregations' conditions, traits, and preferences, especially their level of acceptance and familiarity in using information communication technology (ICT) devices. Most observations were conducted at Al-Lathif Mosque in Cihapit, Bandung City, and Al-Murabbi Mosque in Surya Sumantri, Bandung City. These case studies were essential as several informants had expressed stagnation within their respective mosque-based communities (DKM), highlighting the need to explore successful strategies in revitalising mosque activities aligning with the Hijrah Movement's framework.

The findings of this study emphasised that youth were a crucial audience for *dawah*. This insight was implemented by creating professional WhatsApp content (including text, photos, and videos) tailored for each DKM's respective WAG. At the same time, this content was also shared in the WAG Kopdar Masjid Bandung Raya (as seen on below Figure 1), which initiated active engagement among its members. These two (2) WAGs were designed to facilitate a collaborative and interactive system for content creation and distribution, ensuring all members could participate in discussions and interactions rather than following a one-way communication model dominated by admins.

Professional content creation was categorised into three (3) types: *dawah* narratives, *muamalat* (rulings governing commercial transactions), and Islamic activism. Similarly, photos and videos were grouped into these three (3) major categories. *Da'wah* narratives were most frequently divided into three (3) main groups: information on study schedules (referred to as '*pengajian*' (Quran recitation) in the hijrah movement) organised by mosque members, and *taushiyah* (advice, reflection, invitations) to practice Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and authentic hadiths.

Muamalat content (texts, photos, and videos) generally involved offers of goods or services, mostly related to *dawah* activities, such as selling religious books, Qur'an manuscripts, Islamic clothing, and other similar items. The last type of content which received the most attention in the study was Islamic activism. This included online calls for direct involvement in activities to achieve real community goals, particularly donations and real actions for building worship facilities or other mosque programs. Most of this content was created directly by WAG Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya members, although a small portion was merely forwarded WA content to encourage Islamic activism.

The three (3) types of content (*da'wah* narratives, *muamalat*, and Islamic activism) were typically in the form of e-posters with WhatsApp (WA) specifications, square in shape, JPG format, and bright in colour to facilitate sharing with other WAG contacts. Some uploaded only one e-poster as it covered all information, while others added additional narratives before or after sending the e-poster. In some cases, the researchers also observed uploads that did not relate to the three general content categories, such as sending *pantuns* (Riau Malay poems), land certificates, and unrelated hotel inquiries.

With respect to the dissemination techniques, some began with the dissemination of photo/video content first, followed by the text (caption) content, which provided additional information. For instance, if the e-poster photo/video only contained basic information, such as the day, time, preacher, lecture title, and social media accounts, the caption provided more details, including explanations of the lecture title/preacher, the current social background necessitating the lecture, contact numbers, and requests to spread the content. However, some members/admins reversed the order by sending text content as an introduction first, followed by the e-poster/video.

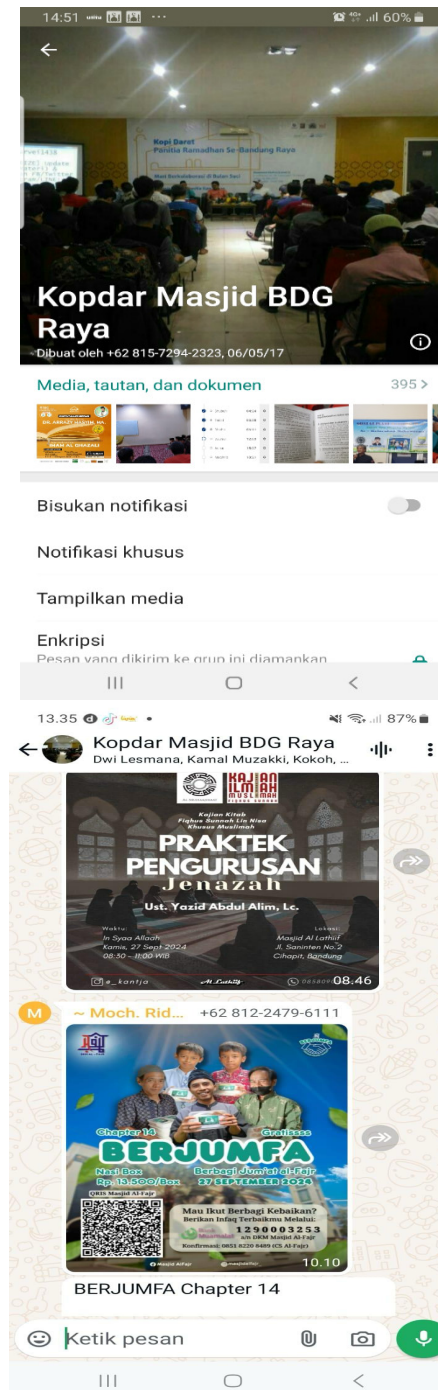


Figure 1. Display in Profile & Homepage of WAG Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya
Source: Author Documentation (2024)

The interaction patterns and aspects of information transparency were formed through a process of observing, imitating, and modifying successful hijrah movements to produce content (texts, photos, and videos) in internal DKM WAGs and organising WAGs to follow a two-way process to foster intensive interaction, these situations relevant with the hyper-personal model (Walther, 1996), how the Hijrah Movement leverages WAG to create carefully crafted, professional content (e.g., e-posters, captions, and videos) that enhances selective self-presentation and facilitates idealised perceptions of *dawah* activities. By encouraging two-way interactions and fostering personalised engagement, these WAGs capitalise on asynchronous communication and feedback loops, strengthening relational intimacy and a sense of community among members. This also underscores the premise that preachers must leverage technology spaces for community da'wah. Preachers must play a role in preaching supported by

technological means, especially to Muslims who utilise information and communication media (Castrawijaya, 2023).

On the other hand, using technology also creates social relations, as da'wah activities are related to social interaction, such as the relationship between da'wah actors and partners. Dawah institutions, social groups, and social processes involve social interaction, requiring people to develop and shape behaviour and social dawah (Khotimah & Amaluddin, 2022).

Technology in dawah, as represented by CMC through WAG Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya, further proves the internet's capability to penetrate the Muslim community (Kuswana & Pauzian, 2023). The internet has created a forum for discourse that allows people to seek knowledge, face identity crises, have spiritual experiences, and spread religious values without solely relying on certain authorities. Due to this significant role, if not widely implemented and optimally used by preachers, the flow of da'wah will slow down and become stagnant. The impact of information globalisation, marked by advances in communication technology, correlates with the readiness of preachers to utilise social media and deliver da'wah (Ritonga, 2019). The hijrah movement community in WAG Islamic activism is an example of a da'wah community in Bandung Raya that is ready and has utilised ICT advantages. They mobilise Islamic activism resources (Wiktorowicz, 2004) by observing and developing a hijrah movement to encourage interaction patterns and information transparency tailored to the audience's character in a CMC medium (Abdurrahman, 2020a).

Capitalising on these resources also manifests the concept of the public sphere, a medium that connects layered networks and distances as a forum for expressing aspirations and discussion without barriers (Habermas, 1991). With the advancement of ICT, the public sphere has evolved into a virtual public sphere, emphasising inclusive, egalitarian, and effective participation in discussions, replacing conventional public spaces. The virtual public sphere introduces new democratic processes by involving everyone and fostering various movements through diverse interactions and rapid information dissemination (Nasrullah, 2012). These concepts justify the two-way WAG approach in many hijrah movements in Bandung Raya, treating all members from mosque/da'wah communities equally, inclusively, and effectively.

Rulli Nasrullah (2014) even describes the virtual public sphere as a critique of Jürgen Habermas's public sphere concept, involving private people developing critical/limited debate arenas against regulations. While the public sphere focuses on providing public space for bourgeois society to discuss realities broadly, the virtual public sphere emphasises equal yet effective participation in discussing realities, replacing conventional public spaces. In this context, WAG Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya effectively meets the demand for a medium that facilitates creative participation, real-time interaction, interactive user feedback, communication around media content, and access to content (information) anytime and anywhere.

Common patterns of Islamic activism in the Hijrah Movement (Evolution of created content)

In crafting the content, the dissemination strategy prioritised educational and systematic *tarbiyah* (Islamic education) over large-scale *tabligh akbar* (Big Ceremonies) events. This approach was adopted because *tarbiyah* content is considered more impactful for the Hijrah Movement community, fostering sustained public engagement compared to the more transient effects of grand *tabligh akbar* gatherings.

This emphasis was evident in numerous WhatsApp Group (WAG) posts, where mosque activists focused on delivering consistent, sequential, and substantive *dawah* material. The selected content was often thematic and serialised, spanning dozens of sessions, to maintain depth and continuity rather than changing topics weekly. Additionally, the research team discovered that informants, for example in West Bandung Regency, not only conducted multiple thematic sessions but also systematically documented their *dawah* videos. These videos were uploaded sequentially to YouTube after each session, eventually forming curated playlists, such as a 24-episode series on *Ummahatul Mu'minin* (Mothers of the Believers, the wives of Prophet Muhammad SAW from Khodijah, Aisyah, Saudah, etc) which 2,25 K view per video/approximately total view 54K. The YouTube links were subsequently shared in the WAG Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya to extend the reach of *tarbiyah* content from mosque congregations to the broader community as displayed on Figure 2.

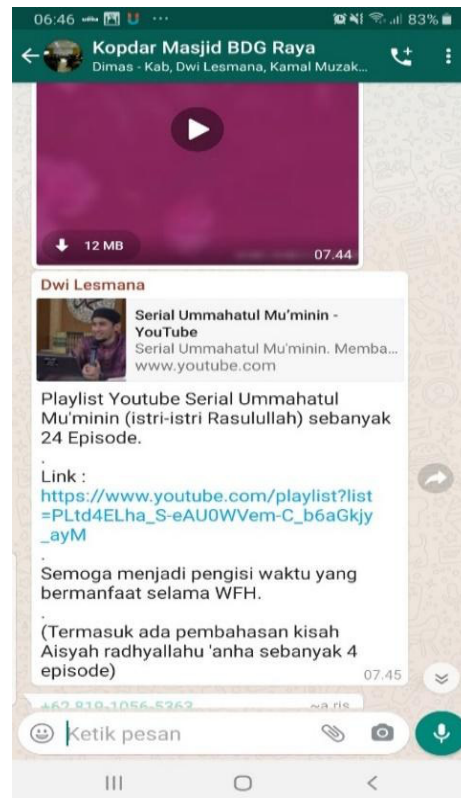


Figure 2. Tarbiyah Content in WAG Documented on YouTube
Source: Author Documentation (2024)

The strategy of developing follow-up texts within the framework of Islamic activism means that the average *da'i* (preacher) invited by activists in these groups needs to explore a branch of Islamic knowledge deeply. The speakers are not typically the prominent, sensational, and easily digestible *tabligh akbar* style preachers, but rather those with a serious, substantive approach that is often lacking in humour. Generally, these *da'i* are predominantly graduates from the Middle East or hold at least an Lc (Licentiate, equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in Indonesia) due to their high tendency towards *tarbiyah* dawah. However, while receiving positive responses, this method also faced some resistance, as observed in informants from Cimahi, for another example, where the weekly *tarbiyah* sessions were seen to conflict with the existing programs designed by senior DKM administrators. The resistance observed stemmed primarily from differences in madhhab orientation between the senior DKM administrators and the younger activists organising the *tarbiyah* sessions. The DKM leadership, composed mainly of older congregations affiliated with *Persatuan Islam* (Persis), adhered to a more purist interpretation of Islam, prioritising doctrinal purity and established religious structures. In contrast, the younger activists, who had studied in the Middle East, embraced a more inclusive approach, respecting diverse Islamic traditions rather than strictly adhering to Persis teachings. The preference for continuous *tarbiyah* texts manifests the strategy that conveying Islamic *da'wah* should provide education tailored to the background of the *da'wah* objectives. This ensures the effectiveness of the teachings given to the target, such as using theory and practice in teaching and learning (Jusup, 2023). Two determinants drive this. First, the proliferation of spiritual cyberspace movements (Zaleski, 1999) allows public discourse and opinion from any part of the world to be easily accessed with just a computer, laptop, or smartphone with affordable internet data. This has sparked interest in digital spaces for public opinion, leading to social change. Second, a social movement must be based on three commonalities: collective nature, collective interests and goals, and collective actions to realise them; movements are based on common interests and goals, and movements seek change outside established institutions (Nur Hasanah, 2017). So, three motivations of a social movement fit with what the hijrah movement community does with the development of *tarbiyah* texts in the global spiritual cyberspace movement.

Ricard West and Lynn H. Turner proposed the concept of media ecology (Meisyaroh, 2014), substantively stating that the public cannot avoid instant messaging. Its presence as a medium always encompasses the entire existence of individuals in communication and every action taken by society daily. Instant messaging is a combination of technology, techniques, modes of information delivery, and communication codes to play the main role of communication in life, which is interpersonal communication. Hence, we cannot escape from media (including CMC in the form of WAG) in our lives because media encompasses the entire existence of society. Aware of their 'imprisoned' position, the members of the WAG Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya utilise the instant messaging CMC medium as new media to produce creative and informative texts. This is done so that all elements can access and process the dominant narratives developed by a community. Especially in the current era of disruption, it is essential for civil society components to maximise new media for collegial, productive purposes (Ridho, 2018). The application of the hyper-personal model in the Hijrah Movement's use of WhatsApp and YouTube is evident in how these platforms enable selective self-presentation, asynchronous communication, and feedback loops that reinforce engagement. For example, preachers within the WAG Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya strategically curate their online presence by sharing serialised and thematic tarbiyah content, such as the 24-episode *Ummahatul Mu'minin* series, which allows for carefully structured religious messaging that deepens audience connection. This aligns with Walther's (1996) concept of idealised perceptions, as asynchronous communication on WhatsApp enables preachers to refine their messages, ensuring that they appear knowledgeable, authoritative, and dedicated, fostering a sense of spiritual intimacy among members. Similarly, media ecology theory underscores how digital platforms shape religious discourse; the movement's strategic use of instant messaging and YouTube exemplifies how communication technologies become an inescapable part of religious engagement, allowing for broader dissemination beyond traditional mosque settings. A comparative analysis with other religious movements, such as Salafi groups using Telegram for rigid doctrinal discussions or Christian evangelicals leveraging Facebook Live for interactive sermons, highlights the Hijrah Movement's distinctive approach—prioritising structured, thematic learning over spontaneous, emotionally charged outreach. This distinguishes their strategy as one that integrates systematic education with digital mobilisation, ensuring long-term religious engagement rather than transient mass gatherings.

Common patterns of Islamic activism in the Hijrah Movement

The influence of the Hijrah Movement on internet culture is evident in how the Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya community has adapted its offline collaborative practices into online activities within its WhatsApp Group (WAG). These offline habits were established before the creation of the WAG and were characterised by frequent sharing of resources among hijrah activists, such as contact details of *dawah* speakers, coordination for mosque cleaning initiatives (*BBM*), and tips for organising religious programs like *Sanlat* (short-term Islamic boarding schools).

The community's offline synergy was further solidified during an offline gathering on May 22, 2017, which led to the establishment of the Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya WAG. This platform allowed members who had successfully organised *Sanlat* programs to share their expertise and resources with other WAG members. Collaborative efforts also extended to programs such as *Berbagibuka.com*, which distributed 62,000 food boxes in its first year with the support of volunteers known as *Ifthar Rangers*. Additionally, the WAG facilitated initiatives like the Imam Muda Salman program, redistributing more than 10 young imams from larger mosques to smaller ones in need.

One example of offline and online synergy is the collaboration between Rumah Amal Salman ITB (Bandung Technological Institute) and Masjid Lautze 2, which was initiated through the WAG. Rumah Amal allocated IDR 25 million monthly to support new Muslim converts by providing meals and transportation allowances for their participation in routine Sunday activities, including Tadabbur Al-Quran and Tahsin Al-Qur'an. Each participant received IDR 75,000 for transportation and lunch, attracting consistent attendance of around forty (40) people per session. Another example is the facilitation of monthly lectures in Bandung, where the WAG brought popular young scholars like Ustadz Adi Hidayah (UAH), Dr. Agus Setiawan, and Ustadzah Oki Setiana Dewi. International preachers, such as Sheikh Ahmad Abdul Nashir from Palestine, were also invited, expanding the reach of *dawah* activities.

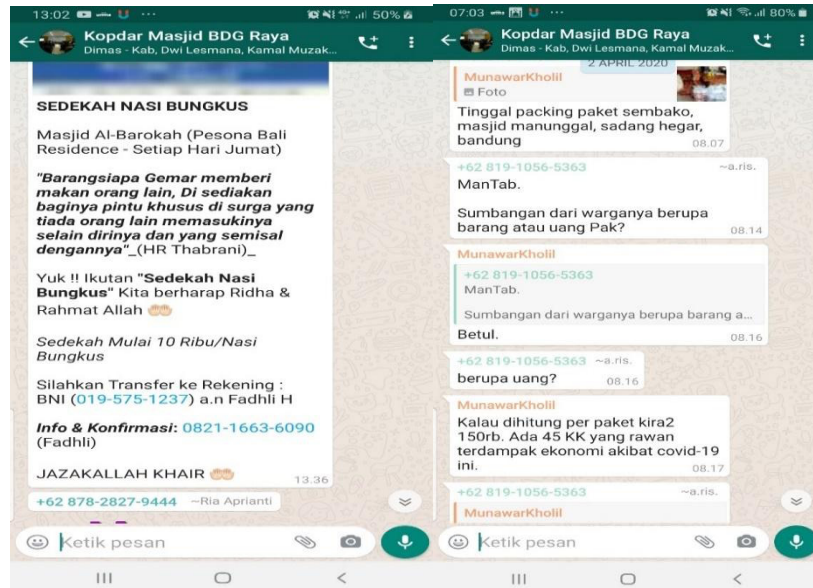


Figure 3. (Left) Islamic activism calling for Friday Barakah (Right) Islamic activism distributing basic necessities
Source: Author Documentation (2024)

In addition to coordinated programs, some informants initiated independent programs inspired by Islamic activism in the WAG. Masjid Lautze 2 launched *Nasi Jumat Berkah*, distributing meals after Friday prayers (as seen on Figure 3), including three hundred (300) food boxes and additional snacks provided weekly. Manunggal Mosque in Sadang Serang, Bandung, implemented a charity program during the COVID-19 pandemic, distributing essential food packages. In Bandung Regency, the hijrah movement conducted monthly *dawah* safaris involving motorcycle tours to remote areas, such as Gambung, Cipelah, and Rancabolang. These tours culminated in Islamic lectures to engage communities with diverse religious influences.

Another notable offline habit transformed into online practice is the rigorous financial reporting by hijrah activists. Post-program financial reports, including text and diagrams, are shared within the WAG to maintain transparency and accountability. This practice has become a standard in the Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya WAG, ensuring detailed reporting for all internal and collaborative programs and fostering trust among donors and participants. These efforts demonstrate how the Hijrah Movement effectively bridges offline and online *dawah* initiatives to sustain its impact on the community.

The Hijrah Movement's adaptation of offline synergies into online practices within the Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya WAG exemplifies the hyper-personal model by leveraging the unique affordances of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to enhance engagement and relational intimacy (Walther, 1996). Through carefully crafted and systematically shared content, such as financial reports and *dawah* programs, the WAG fosters selective self-presentation and asynchronous communication, reinforcing trust and community attachment among participants.

The continuation of the transition from offline community habits to online practices aligns with the concept of computers as 'persuasive communication technologies.' This indicates that computers, as part of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), can enhance individual capabilities or simplify tasks, as informed communicators utilise these technologies collectively (Ma'arif, 2010). The persuasive power emerges because computer-mediated communication (CMC) and WhatsApp Groups (WAG) are new media bridging the boundaries between personal and public communication. Additionally, these platforms exhibit unique characteristics, including reciprocal communication (interactivity) rather than unidirectional communication, a plethora of available information and cultural offerings, a greater array of genuine choices, enhanced control for recipients/users, and decentralisation (Ibrahim, 2014). As a new media, CMC is not owned, controlled, or managed by a single entity. Instead, it operates as an intentionally interconnected computer network functioning based on mutually agreed protocols, thus facilitating global communication at an affordable cost. Consequently, the transition from offline to online habits becomes swift and straightforward.

Another factor contributing to the transformation of habits among the supporters of Islamic activism in Bandung Raya is the role of WAG as a manifestation of Web 3.0, which emphasises human cooperation. This follows the progression from Web 1.0, which focused on individual recognition (human cognition) within a network, to Web 2.0, which revolved around interpersonal communication (human communication) within networks of individuals (Nasrullah, 2015). The final stage of this general pattern of Islamic activism represents a tangible depiction of the Web 3.0 phase, where CMC, in the form of group instant messaging, becomes both a medium and facilitator for mosque activists, congregants, communities, and prospective donors to collaborate (human cooperation), particularly within the Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya and, more broadly, for all mosque and da'wah activists wherever they may be.

Simultaneously, the emergence of this new social movement is indeed grassroots in nature, stemming from the activities conducted by the masses with varying degrees of solidarity, and is focused on non-class expressions that reflect broader societal shifts in contemporary times (Nur Hasanah, 2017). This situation is clearly illustrated by the diverse social statuses of the majority of da'wah activists within the Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya, particularly as they are not affiliated with established religious organizations such as MUI (Indonesian Ulama Council), DMI (Indonesian Mosque Council), and BKPRMI (Indonesian Youth Mosque Communication Body). This computer-based persuasive social program is designed entirely from the ground up, reflecting the aspirations and conditions of a mosque or da'wah community, rather than being directed by elite religious leaders or authorities associated with MUI, DMI, or BKPRMI. Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya, as a component of civil society, employs adjustments and compromises that are more focused on social and economic issues. The characteristics of civil society-based da'wah emphasise community participation, positioning the community as the subject in managing their social groups, thereby preventing monopolisation and government intervention. Civil society in Da'wah maintains a degree of independence in managing its social groups (Khotimah & Amaluddin, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of WhatsApp Groups (WAGs) in the Hijrah Movement, such as WAG *Kopdar Masjid BDG Raya*, can be explained through the hyper-personal model, which highlights the ways in which selective and strategic communication fosters intimacy, trust, and collective identity. Features of computer-mediated communication (CMC)—such as asynchronous messaging, selective self-presentation, and positive feedback loops—enable dawah leaders and mosque activists to craft and disseminate substantive content, from *tarbiyah* lessons to financial reports, reinforcing accountability and shared purpose within the community. This structured communication process allows members to engage in meaningful, interactive participation, bridging offline and online synergies to expand the reach of Dawah initiatives. This model also presents challenges, such as potential misinformation, reduced scholarly oversight, and conflicts with conventional religious authorities.

The application of the hyper-personal model explains how WhatsApp Groups enable deeper trust and collective identity in religious communities by allowing members to selectively present themselves and engage in positive feedback loops, strengthening community ties and digital dawah efforts. However, while WhatsApp Groups offer significant benefits, they are not without limitations. The hyper-personal model suggests that asynchronous messaging and selective self-presentation can heighten relational intimacy. Yet, these same mechanisms may also contribute to misinterpretations, the formation of echo chambers, and the risk of misinformation. Additionally, computer-mediated communication (CMC) theories suggest that WhatsApp Groups are an extension of religious mobilisation, demonstrating how asynchronous messaging and interactive participation bridge offline and online networks, expanding dawah reach while ensuring engagement and accountability. CMC theories highlight how digital spaces facilitate engagement, but they may also exclude less tech-savvy individuals or create privacy concerns regarding sensitive religious discussions. The reliance on WhatsApp as the primary platform for dawah raises questions about platform dependency, information accuracy, and inclusivity.

Future initiatives should complement WhatsApp Groups with additional digital tools that enhance moderation, accessibility, and security. Platforms such as Telegram (for larger group capacity and stronger privacy controls) or Facebook Groups (for broader public outreach and multimedia engagement) could address some of these challenges. WAGS members should receive digital literacy training, especially encouraging active participation in verifying religious claims, which could reduce misinformation risks. Moreover, future research should conduct comparative studies to analyse how different computer-mediated platforms influence religious discourse, engagement patterns, and community cohesion across diverse demographics. By recognising both the strengths and potential drawbacks of WhatsApp Groups, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of digital dawah in the Hijrah Movement, while also encouraging the exploration of more inclusive and sustainable online religious engagement strategies.

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ENDNOTE

Appendix and Supplementary Files of this Paper can be accessed via link : <https://s.id/5XvRJ> or QR Code below.

