

Virtual Sufi Da'wah in Preserving Religious Harmony in North Sumatra

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Keywords

Sufi, tolerance,
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Abstract

This article discusses the virtual fragmentation of da'wah by Sufis in preserving religious harmony among the people of North Sumatra. Data were collected from observations, interviews, and documentation. The data is then described in depth using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model. The study suggests that Sufi Live is a virtual da'wah fragmentation of the harmony of the Sufi; Tuan Guru Batak (TGB) Ahmad Sabban Rajagukguk to revitalize two da'wah functions, namely the function of the treatise and grace. The role of the treatise is to direct social change in a civilized direction, and the role of grace is to establish religious harmony in North Sumatra. Da'wah themes of tolerance and harmony were delivered in polite language. Sufi Live Facebook delivers fragmented da'wah of religious harmony as a result of the assimilation of academic knowledge, Sufi life stories, and other social experiences that characterize TGB's life.

Kata kunci

Sufi, toleransi,
kerukunan beragama,
dakwah virtual

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang fragmentasi dakwah secara virtual oleh para sufi dalam menjaga kerukunan umat beragama di kalangan masyarakat Sumatra Utara. Data dikumpulkan dari observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Data tersebut kemudian dideskripsikan secara mendalam menggunakan model analisis interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Kajian menunjukkan bahwa Sufi Live merupakan fragmentasi dakwah virtual dari kerukunan sosok Sufi Tuan Guru Batak (TGB) Ahmad Sabban Rajagukguk untuk merevitalisasi dua fungsi dakwah yaitu fungsi risalah dan rahmat. Peran dari risalah adalah upaya untuk mengarahkan perubahan sosial menuju yang beradab, dan peran rahmat adalah untuk membentuk kerukunan umat beragama di Sumatra Utara. Tema-tema dakwah terkait toleransi dan kerukunan disampaikan dengan bahasa yang santun. Dakwah kerukunan umat beragama yang terfragmentasi disampaikan melalui Facebook Sufi Live, hasil dari asimilasi ilmu akademik, kisah-kisah kehidupan sufi, dan pengalaman sosial lainnya yang mewarnai kehidupan TGB.

Introduction

At the moment, the rapid advancement of information technology has encouraged the development of human communication systems (Roztocki, Soja, & Weistroffer, 2019). The ability of humans to save time and subdue space is at the heart of the communication revolution (Anwar, 2011). The communication revolution has ramifications for the emergence of a new social order known as the information society. Because they are cross-border, there are almost no more barriers to human communication. An internet network linked to computer devices connects an interactive communication network between two people. Human-to-human communication, primarily done offline, has also shifted dramatically to online communication. Human-to-human communication is becoming more interactive in virtual spaces, bringing together people from various cultures and beliefs. Users in virtual spaces discuss a wide range of topics, including religion, spirituality, economics, and politics (Maliki, Mustaffa, & Ali, 2019).

The birth of new media connected to the internet is one of the information technology products. Connectivity to the internet hastens the spread of limitless information. Globally and locally, the development of new media can provide significant benefits to human life. Because communication is borderless, new media has the potential to reduce the distance between countries and individuals around the world. Locally, the media can foster community knowledge while also stifling truth claims, paving the way for negotiations (Taufik, 2013).

The essential aspect of information technology progress is the encouragement of everyone to adapt to using new media in daily communication. In many countries, new media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube emerged in the late 2000s (Posetti, 2018). In fact, the three new social media platforms have become the primary means for everyone to disseminate information, express themselves, engage in cross-border dialogue, distribute messages, and even acquire knowledge.

Ralph (2013) mentions that the presence of new media has provided opportunities for everyone to engage in broader communication. Because this reality is an undeniable necessity, it is critical to reform the media and the method of delivering da'wah. In terms of media, preachers must adapt to new media that millennials are familiar with. Similarly, in terms of message delivery, it is no longer solely reliant on traditional conventional techniques such as face-to-face teachings in *perwiritan* and so on.

One form of da'wah innovation carried out through Facebook is the da'wah of Tuan Guru Batak Ahmad Sabban Rajagukguk (TGB). Further, TGB is a Sufi and *murshid* figure in the Naqshbandi Tariqa Serambi Babussalam, based in Jawa Tonga Village, Hatonduan District, Simalungun Regency. TGB was appointed *murshid* (The term of 'teacher' and is frequently used in Sufi orders) in place of his father, who passed away in January 2010. TGB, despite being a *murshid*, is a facebooker who has been

pursuing virtual da'wah through social media. Sufi Live was one of his Facebook pages, and he used it to spread the message of peace in North Sumatra.

The Sufi Live TGB Facebook account is fascinating to study for the following reasons: First, TGB is a Sufi figure concerned with preaching harmony and tolerance. The preaching of harmony is done offline and fragmented through a Facebook account entitled Sufi Live. Second, Sufi Live is one of TGB's strategies for bolstering the da'wah movement of peace and tolerance in North Sumatra. Its da'wah message has a broader reach and includes all groups. Third, the da'wah themes conveyed by TGB through Sufi Live are not about eschatological issues (afterlife) and *an sich* monotheism, but rather about nationalism, harmony, tolerance, and invitations to peaceful coexistence among religious communities.

The three key points raised above are why researchers look into the fragmentation of TGB harmony's virtual propaganda in greater depth. Martin Fishbein's theory of information integration, which explains how attitudes are formed by integrating new information with knowledge, was used to analyze the research problem. New information can change two aspects of a person's beliefs: valence and weight. The direction that determines whether a person will behave positively or negatively is called valence. If the information supports a person's beliefs, the outcome will be favorable. If, on the other hand, the valence is negative, the result is rejection. The weight is entirely dependent on the accuracy of the information. If only one piece of information is correct, the weight is increased. Moreover, if the information is incorrect, the weight will be reduced (Morissan, 2013). On the other hand, Jhon (2013) discovered that cognition and information obtained strongly influenced belief systems or individual attitudes changes.

Another theory about da'wah for peace (*ishlahiyah*) is explained as da'wah that is carried out with love and peace (Nurcholis, 2015). *Islahiyah* da'wah is referred to as conciliatory da'wah, able to prevent humans from conflicts in micro and macro contexts. Micro conflicts include those between individuals and families, whereas macro conflicts are those on a larger scale, such as those between ethnicities, religions, races, and groups (Gade & Don, 2015).

Virtual da'wah research, as well as studies of harmony da'wah, are not new in the field of study. A number of existing research works are worth mentioning. Among other things, Saefullah (2011) suggests that the dynamics of communication color the differences in the atmosphere between religious adherents. Smooth communication and mutual respect among believers will result in a harmonious, soothing, serene, and peaceful environment. On the other hand, communication traffic obstruction can cause the atmosphere to become increasingly tense. Despite the advancement of communication technology, Lestari (2017) believes da'wah must still be based on the needs of the community in order to unite a pluralistic human race. In addition, Zuhriyah (2012) suggests that inclusive da'wah must be driven by the Indonesian people in order

to achieve inter-religious harmony. Further, Risdiani dan Ramadhan (2019) explained virtual freedom is spreading uncontrolled da'wah information on social media results in the banality of religious behavior among religious people. Da'wah aimed at improving religious teachings' proper understanding can foster harmony and peace among religious people (Masmudin, 2018).

Even if the ideas of preaching harmony and nationality in the Indonesian context can be traced back, they were long initiated by Indonesian Muslim scholars. Nurcholis Madjid (Setiawan, 2019), Abdurrahman Wahid (Ihsani, Febriyanti, & Syakuuroo, 2021) following them were Azyumardi Azra (2016) dan Syahrin Harahap (2011). In general, they talked about inclusive Islam, which is based on divine theology and can bring harmony and peace to all aspects of life.

The findings of the researchers' work and the ideas of the Muslim intellectuals mentioned have colored the researchers' eagerness to discuss the recently inflamed theme of preaching harmony and nationality. This study approaches the subject from a different angle. The research aims to examine the fragmentation of TGB's virtual da'wah as a *murshid* of Naqshbandi Tariqa in preserving religious harmony in North Sumatra. At the same time, this study investigates the background of TGB, which is very concerned with spreading the message of harmony.

Method

Following the purpose of this study to examine the fragmentation of the virtual da'wah of the Sufis in sowing religious harmony in North Sumatra, this research was designed in the form of qualitative research. This study was designed in qualitative research to examine the fragmentation of the virtual da'wah of the Sufis in sowing religious harmony in North Sumatra. The focus of this research is to naturally observe and analyze TGB's virtual da'wah activities via a Facebook page called Sufi Live. As Kriyantono (2014) said, qualitative research focuses solely on understanding the actual object being studied following the formulation of the problem. Facts and information obtained on the field are reported fully, in detail, and systematically.

Data was gathered through repeated observations on the Sufi Live TGB Facebook page. In-depth interviews with key informants, including TGB, as the central figure and the *murshid* of Naqshbandi Tariqa, an actor or perpetrator of virtual preaching of harmony via his Facebook page Sufi Live. The virtual da'wah documentation presented on the Sufi Live TGB Facebook account is also used as study analysis material for data enrichment so that the inflamed themes of harmony are visible.

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model from Miles dan Huberman (2014). The analysis model employs three concurrent flows: first, data reduction was performed to sharpen the availability and needs of data following the research objectives. The information gleaned from interviews and observations is sorted and simplified to clear whether the information is relevant to the research objectives.

This reduction is also carried out in order to locate the data that is still required. Second, data is presented by grouping based on narrative needs. For instance, the interview narration differs from the observation narration in that it provides additional context for the available data. Third, concluding or carrying out verification following the research objectives.

The collected data was validated using the source triangulation technique. In this case, the sources are triangulated by comparing interview data with observational data. All valid data are thoroughly described (thick description) (Manzilati, 2017).

Results and Discussion

The emergence of the term TGB

TGB is not a made-up term or one bandied about for no reason. TGB already refers to the first *murshid* (master teacher), Allahu yarham Sheikh H. Abdurrahman Rajagukguk Qs. He is the founder and first *murshid* of the Serambi Babussalam Jawa Tonga, domiciled in Hatonduan District, Simalungun Regency. After the death of the first *murshid*, his son, Dr. H. Ahmad Sabban Rajagukguk, took over as *murshid* and was automatically dubbed TGB.

Three things underpin the mention of TGB when its historical roots are examined, namely: First, among the Sufis, a distinct tradition has taken root. Brunessen (2009) mentions that this peculiarity is related to remembrance, prayer, spiritual practice, and civility toward teachers. Sufi teachings practitioners uphold this civilization at the Serambi Babussalam. For a follower of the Naqshbandi Tariqa, addressing a *murshid* as Tuan Guru signifies *ta'zim* and civility.

Second, Tuan Guru is a particular title addressed to the teacher for students who practice the Naqshbandi Tariqa. When referred to as Tuan Guru, the title is addressed to the *murshid*. Montemaggi (2015) explains that this attitude is characterized by the sacralization of Sufi teachings, which are passed down from generation to generation and are regarded as legitimate traditions.

Third, Sheikh H. Abdurrahman Rajagukguk Qs comes from the Batak tribe. For a long time, he was concerned about practicing and developing the teachings of the Naqshbandi Tariqa, located in the heart of the Toba Batak ethnicity and Christian community. People around him referred to him as Tuan Guru Batak (TGB).

Salahuddin (2019) mentioned that the term TGB gained popularity with the emergence of TGB figures active in various activities such as preaching harmony, politics, social, religion, and nationality. TGB is active in filling scientific seminars in various government and private institutions and being a preacher and *murshid* of the association. The TGB is very active in promoting inter-religious harmony in North Sumatra.

TGB: The central figure of the moderate Sufi

TGB is a Sufi figure, a murshid of the Naqshbandi Tariqa in North Sumatra who delivers the message of harmony both offline and online. TGB is also a murshid who is often visited by leaders from various circles, both Muslim and non-Islamic. TGB serves these figures in the associations they lead without discriminating against their religion. All of these conditions are based on divinity (tawhid). As he explained;

Our Naqshbandi Tariqa remembrance huts and assemblies are the homes of the people visited by many figures and stand above all groups. So in carrying out the haul of Sheikh Abdurrahman Rajagukguk Qs, we deliberately raised the themes of humanity and divinity. As in the 11th haul, for example, the theme that was carried out was "By practicing the first precept, Belief in One God, let us take care of diversity with love." "We want to interpret that divinity is the basis of unity and harmony because we were all created by the One God (Rajagukguk, 2020).

Based on this information, the preaching of harmony carried out by TGB is driven by the spirit of monotheism that has been practiced so far. The practice of monotheism does not necessarily make TGB an exclusive person, but on the contrary, it is more inclusive and moderate. The teachings of monotheism surround TGB and the Sufis they lead. TGB showed an inclusive and moderate attitude by not discriminating against people who came and invited him. As represented on the Figure 1, TGB often receives guests from non-Muslim religious leaders to celebrate, even from the observations made.



Source: Facebook account of Serambi Babussalam Simalungun

Figure 1. TGB Receives Guests from Ephorus HKI at Serambi Babussalam, Jawa Tonga

In addition to receiving guests from non-Muslim figures, TGB is also very diligent in attending traditional festivities (*horja*) and deaths that occur to non-Muslims. TGB is often asked to give religious and humanitarian advice at these events. The attitude described by TGB indicates the practice of monotheism (divinity), which does not reflect the dichotomy between the nobility of customs and the glory of religious teachings. Harahap (2011) termed this attitude as unwillingness to separate customs only because of religious differences. TGB's unwillingness to discriminate among

followers of different religions is an entity of awareness of the practice of monotheism (divinity) that creates creatures with diversity. This is what Belanger (2019) termed the correct practice of religion. Belanger explained that religious understanding and spiritual practice could make a person moderate, fanatical, or extreme. Someone who understands this nature as a friendly and loving representation of God will be a person who loves peace and cares for others.

The attitude of awareness, moderation of thinking, and being inclusive, as shown by TGB, certainly really needs to be developed. Moderate attitude and openness in accepting differences and seeing differences as God's creation can encourage tolerance with followers of other religions. Such an attitude is essential to land the da'wah mission in a position of mercy and grace. Landing da'wah on the two missions aims to avoid *clashes amid* a plural society.

If plurality is recognized as *sunnatullah*, horizontal conflicts will be avoided. Beckford (2013) mentioned that pluralism refers to ideological or normative beliefs that encourage mutual respect in a different cultural system. Cultural differences will not prevent peaceful coexistence if religious pluralism includes tolerance. Instilling a pluralistic understanding as *sunnatullah* to the broader community, of course, is one of the responsibilities of the preachers (da'i). The contribution of da'wah to knit and maintain peace and harmony is an absolute consideration in the implementation of da'wah. Al-Buthi (2012) states that preaching peace and religious moderation and maintaining interaction with non-Muslims is Islamic morality. Arabi (2017) explained that the desire to instill a sense of love and affection in the heart of mad'u is the essence of da'wah, which culminates in harmony.

Sufi Live: Fragmentation of TGB Da'wah Seeds Harmony through Facebook

The utilization of communication technology that has given rise to new online media and social media is a significant demand to be answered in facilitating the dissemination of da'wah messages. As mentioned by Kgale (2018), the presence of Facebook also provides a substantial opportunity for the spread of religious teachings. Cheong (2016) also notes that new media becomes a virtual space that can expand religious understanding, thus giving rise to digital religion. For Americans, said Brubaker (2017), *Facebook* is not only for seeking entertainment accessing information but also for fulfilling the needs of religious spirituality.

Relevant to some of the views mentioned above, there are at least three reasons to use *Facebook* as a medium for spreading Islamic da'wah. *First*, Facebook has its charm because it can combine users in a reasonably broad network without demographic, social, economic, and cultural restrictions. According to Ibrahim (2018), *Facebook can revive a sense of community* through the virtual world when community life in cyberspace begins to fade. *Second*, the dissemination of da'wah information can be quick, up to date, easily accessible, and enjoyed by all groups as long as the person

concerned has a connected internet network. *Third*, the preachers can communicate interactively as long as the preachers make friends with other *Facebook users*.

Based on the author's analysis, these three reasons are closely related to the fragmentation of propaganda carried out by TGB virtually. TGB chose *Facebook* as one of the alternative media for delivering da'wah which he gave the title *Sufi Live* and managed it directly. Da'wah for harmony through the *Sufi Live Facebook account* is fragmentation of TGB's virtual da'wah in sowing tolerance and harmony among religious believers in North Sumatra. TGB reproduces the messages of preaching peace delivered offline and packaged in written form, distributed *online to the public through the Sufi Live Facebook account*. TGB carries out virtual da'wah through the Sufi Live Facebook account on an ongoing basis with the motivation of worshipping Allah SWT. As he explained;

Social media and cyberspace are the seed fields for words that bear the fruit of alms Jariah while in the barzah realm for a Sufi. So from this remembrance (spiritual) Markaz, we never get tired and stop sowing harmony and peace. Building togetherness, painting beauty, and drinking blessings are the ideals of every human being who has common sense and inner purity. Becoming a Sufi does not mean leaving the worldly aspects. A Sufi can't leave his worldly affairs while there are scattered fields of good deeds for him (Rajagukguk, 2020).

The da'wah carried out by TGB as a murshid is a da'wah that is always adaptive to the development of information technology. If you pay attention, the Sufi Live Facebook account themes don't just talk about monotheism, worship, and love for the afterlife. The themes presented cover social issues, poverty, harmony, nationality, and the invitation to live side by side in peace. The da'wah themes presented are beautifully packaged with soothing Sufi languages, far from hate speech, conflict, and hostility. *On the Sufi Live Facebook account*, almost no da'wah content that ignites the SARA conflict is found. The dissemination of the themes of proselytizing harmony through *Facebook Sufi Live* is an effort to foster collective awareness about the importance of real peace among religious communities. Not only for the Naqshbandi Tariqa congregation but wider for all *followers* who are Muslim and non-Muslim. Such an attitude is called Galtung (Galtung, 2015) to foster positive peace by weakening the sources of violence.

Promoting a sense of peace, harmony, and tolerance through *Facebook*, as TGB did, is very urgent for the preachers to display. Because the rapid flow of information causes many conflicts that smell like racial, intolerant, and hateful conflicts through *Facebook*, this happens because the dissemination of information on *Facebook* is the right of everyone. It does not need to go through the editorial desk. The literacy abilities of *Facebook users are also not the same*, so posting *hateful online* messages that spark conflict and hostility is considered a regular thing. Such a fact is described by Al Rawi (2016) to a group of Muslim *Facebook users* who spilled their hateful expressions with the sentence, "*Oh God, I ask you to transform those adulterous infidels into filthy pigs*"

on their Facebook. The phrase expresses *online anger* among Muslims against the film *Innocence of Muslims*, which is considered insulting to Muslims and the Prophet Muhammad. As Iswandi on (Syahputra, 2018) also describes the religious anger poured out by Muslim *Facebook users* against the ban on the call to prayer, which ended with the burning of temples and temples in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra. Similar conditions have occurred in many countries, including the recent explosion of religious anger among Muslims due to President France's insults to the Prophet Muhammad, leading to tensions between France and Indonesia.

The spread of hate messages through *Facebook* so very quickly stimulates its users. The attitude described is undoubtedly hazardous in creating harmony and peace. That is why the preachers need to pay attention to the packaging of the da'wah message conveyed through *Facebook media*. Invitations to practice religious teachings communicated through *Facebook must* provide vital energy for individuals and collectives in creating peace. Hoover (2021) explained that correctly articulated religion and its adherents could contribute positively to social actions. TGB through *Facebook Sufi Live* has provided an exemplary da'wah that stirs up religious teachings so that religious teachings become suggestions and motivations to merge fanaticism and extremism to realize the common good. Creating a harmonious and peaceful North Sumatran society is part of the goal to be recognized by TGB da'wah. Such da'wah motivation is called Syamsuddin (2016) with da'wah that encourages doing good, not only for himself but also for everyone.

The da'wah spirit developed by TGB through the *Sufi Live Facebook account* parallels the terminology of the da'wah spirit, which is referred to by several experts from the Qur'an. For example, Aziz (2017), Arabi (2017), Fatoni (2019), in principle, provide an understanding that da'wah is an activity carried out to invite, call upon, and convey Islamic teachings in wise and loving ways. Wisdom means delivering da'wah with a clear scientific basis, and ingenious means carrying out da'wah based on sound logical considerations. Wisdom, in principle, does not impose one's will on others and lovingly means respecting human values so that the person being preached feels safe, comfortable, protected, so they are voluntarily willing to practice the teachings of Islam as a way of salvation to achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter.

Wisdom in preaching can be captured from the messages of virtual da'wah of harmony and tolerance, which TGB fragments through *Sufi Live Facebook*. The message from the fragmentation of the virtual da'wah of peace conveyed by TGB seems impressive and teaches that da'wah, full of civility and humanism, is very urgent to sow inter-religious harmony. The TGB also enforces this;

The da'wah spirit built from the Serambi Babussalam Islamic boarding school is a civilized da'wah and upholds human values. The concept that was made was brotherhood; although in principle they differ in belief, all of them are creatures of God who must also be glorified from the human side. Different religious choices cannot be avoided because it is *sunnatullah*. If the differences in religious

preferences are realized with complete monotheism as *sunnatullah*, then the differences will be beautiful. The choice to be hostile to fellow creatures of God because of religious differences makes it essential to avoid and contradict the *sunnatullah* (Rajagukguk, 2020).

Da'wah that upholds the values of civility and humanity means da'wah that is packaged based on universal divine and humanitarian ethics. Such da'wah can be realized based on awareness of the importance of establishing social interactions based on compassion and human values. As cited by Muliadi dan Baharuddin (2021) from Nasr, harmony transforms humans' moral values based on compassion, love, peace, justice, human rights, and responsibility.

In the context of the *discourse* of harmony da'wah, of course, humanist da'wah is da'wah that can reconcile and provide comfort for all humankind. This point becomes very important because, in the end, the da'wah of harmony is a da'wah that sticks to the goal of the Islamic teachings that are *rahmatan Lil 'Alamin*. Of course, the meaning of *rahmatan Lil Alamin* is inclusive, including giving a sense of security, peace, prosperity, harmony, and far from conflict. Harahap (2011) explained the spirit of preaching harmony aligns with Abdullah Yusuf Ali's view in interpreting several related verses, including Surah Al Baqarah verse 256, Surah Yunus verse 99, Surah Ali Imran verse 110. Surah Al Baqarah verse 256 as a religious prohibition against coercion. Surah Yunus verse 99 shows that there is no forcing faith to anyone and in any form. Verse 110 of Surah Ali Imran gives a clear message that the best people are the people who base all their actions based on faith and avoid damage.

The fragmentation of TGB's da'wah that emerged through *Sufi Live's Facebook* parallels the view of Harahap (2011), who in his idea states that in a pluralistic society, it is very, very important to raise awareness to build an inclusive, tolerant and moderate attitude. As the results of interviews conducted with TGB, there are three reasons behind the spirit of proselytizing harmony that he inflamed through the *Sufi Live Facebook account*. *First*, this earth created by Allah is inhabited by various tribes, religions, and cultures, so that diversity must be believed to be *sunnatullah*. *Second*, it is based on the life experience that since childhood, being raised amid the majority of the population being Christian, and the wonderful experience of living in harmony, harmony, and peace becomes the spirit of preaching harmony, which is very important to sow and invigorate. *Third*, the theological doctrine and the practice of monotheism provide inner awareness that pluralism is a *sunnatullah* that must be adequately maintained.

According to the author's analysis, other reasons that are pretty strong are used as arguments why TGB is so passionate about preaching harmony, namely: *First*, TGB's desire is powerful to change the pejorative view of the Sufis. The latter has been identified with only caring about eschatological issues (afterlife). This is closely related to the results of the interview with TGB;

Sufistic life does not mean exile in caves. Sufis are not avoiding humans. A Sufi certainly has an interest in the world. But a Sufi is not to fill his heart with excessive love for the world. A Sufi has a moral responsibility of humanity and divinity to save his brother from enmity and chaos. Sufis teach tenderness to others pass on grace and peace so that if there is a Sufi who does not carry out his humanitarian duties, he is the same as someone who dies before death (Rajagukguk, 2020).

The information above strengthens the argument that TGB wants to straighten out the negative labeling that has been aimed at the Sufis. TGB changed the view that so far identified the Sufis as exclusive; their attitude was *zuhud*, preferring *khalwat* (suluk confining themselves in mosquito nets), more concerned with the afterlife, less concerned about other people. TGB shows that Sufis are not like those labeled negative. TGB paved the way and entered into *da'wah*, which discussed broader themes of the benefit of the people, such as economics, politics, harmony, peace, concern for all creatures created by Allah SWT. Caring for others is shown through charity activities for the poor and compensation for people of different religions. As he did when in Ramadan, TGB also conducts a humanitarian gathering outside of Muslim community as presented on Figure 2 in the following part.



Sumber: Facebook Account of TGB Ahmad Sabban E. Rajagukguk

Figure 2. TGB Conducts Break Fasting with Non-Muslim Communities at Persulukan Serambi Babussalam

It is also worth paying attention to the *da'wah* themes delivered by TGB through *Sufi Live*. The theme shows TGB's desire that everyone who practices religion correctly and loves God should internalize that love for everyone on this earth. This is by the information submitted by TGB;

It is peculiar that monotheism and the signs of a Sufi have reached *makrifah*, then he will love Allah and all His creatures. All must be loved, whatever the belief

and religion, even to the lowest creatures such as animals. If he does not love His creatures, it will not be possible for a Sufi practitioner to worship Allah because, in principle, the universe and all of His creations are the images of Allah SWT (Rajagukguk, 2020).

TGB's invitation to live in harmony, love, and care for one another is instilled by TGB to others and the Sufi community he leads. The disciples who are pious in their religion are strictly forbidden to scold others in the name of religion. For TGB and its followers, love for God must manifest in love for creatures. This thinking is almost the same as Casanova's (2019) view, concluding that religion must merge from the personal level to the general level in a plural society to contribute and solve human problems.

Second, the preaching of harmony initiated by TGB is very closely related to the assimilation of three components within itself, namely the assimilation of academic experience (knowledge), the practice of Sufi teachings, and social experience. Academically, Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral degrees are completed by TGB at the same scientific concentration, namely Islamic Broadcasting Communication. Apart from being a murshid, TGB is an academic who actively teaches on various campuses and is a resource person at seminars on harmony and nationality. The assimilation of these three components can be described as in the Figure 3.

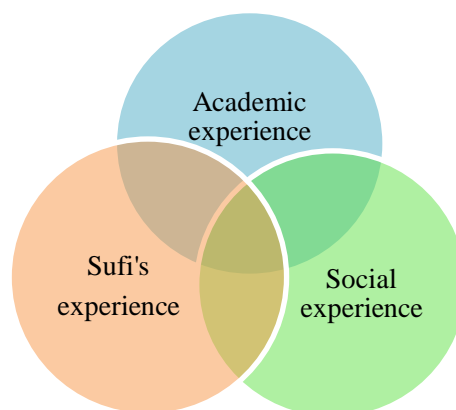


Figure 3. Assimilation of components of experience and practice

The assimilation of the three components described above is the main factor that encourages the growth of the spirit of the Da'wah movement of harmony that TGB carries out by utilizing technological developments, such as making the title *Sufi Live* on its *Facebook account*. The fragmentation of TGB's da'wah through *Facebook* is a practice of da'wah for Sufis that adapt to modernization that no one can ignore. Even the preachers who want to ensure that their da'wah reaches many people are required to adapt to the development of communication technology.

The fragmentation of the da'wah carried out by TGB can be called the modernized da'wah of the Sufis so that the task of *prophetic* prophethood can reach virtual spaces that are a trend of modern society. The fragmentation of TGB's preaching of harmony

from *offline* to *online* is a polarization of the Sufi da'wah movement influenced by openness and the desire to make peace and coexist with all God's creatures. This kind of da'wah attitude is called neo-Sufism, namely the perspective of practicing Sufi teachings that can balance the interests of the world and the hereafter, which are actualized with the present context. (Azra, 2016)

Third, the fragmented propaganda of TGB harmony through Facebook Sufi Live is a da'wah principle based on the information and experience it has gained so far. TGB is a Sufi figure who is active in the harmony movement in North Sumatra. Undeniably, self-disclosure with other groups and openness in accessing various information and experiences can encourage the formation of an attitude that then affects beliefs. Fishbein in Morrisan (2013) and Jhon (2013) with information integration theory. Fishbein and John assert that cognition and new information strongly influence the belief system or individual attitudes.

The new information can change two things Fishbein called valence and weight. Valence is the direction that determines whether a person will be positive or negative. If the information supports the belief, then the direction will be positive. On the other hand, if the valence is negative, rejection happens. Regarding the weight of Fishbein's words, it depends on the truth of the information. Recipients of information will consider it essential and give high importance to one piece of information if useful to them. On the other hand, if the information is inaccurate and there is no benefit, the recipient considers it weightless and unimportant.

In the author's view, the fragmentation of TGB's da'wah through Sufi Live's Facebook is not just to preach harmony and peace. TGB also wants to reconstruct its identity as a preacher of harmony who is active online in North Sumatra and, at the same time, wants to maintain its existence as a moderate Sufi figure. This is very parallel with Maliki (2019) and Lane (2019). In principle, someone uses social media not only because they want to exist, but one's expression on social media is influenced by the desire to present themselves in public spaces.

The virtual da'wah pattern of TGB harmony, fragmented through Facebook Sufi Live, is certainly not a model of the da'wah movement born and appeared out of nowhere. The birth of the TGB pattern of preaching harmony is closely related to the situation and conditions surrounding it. TGB, as a murshid, has shown the importance of fertilizing the da'wah movement of peace through the use of social media. Facebook as a platform is an alternative strategy for spreading Islamic da'wah peacefully. Facebook should be used to discuss sharing spiritual experiences and discussing religious teachings. Kgatle (2018) mentioned that Facebook is the leading choice for South African churches to spread religious education to the public. This happens because the public can access religious services quite easily through smartphones in the hands of users. Fragmenting the TGB harmony propaganda through Facebook Sufi Live is undoubtedly an important part that preachers must apply in revitalizing the two main

functions of da'wah, namely the function of peace and grace. Problems are meant to guard social change towards a better collective life. Graceful implies an effort to implement Islamic teachings to realize the harmony of human life, which is full of peace, prosperity, and happiness.

Conclusion

This study proves that the fragmentation of the virtual preaching of harmony carried out by TGB through *Facebook* is a strategy for disseminating messages of peace that are carried out *offline*. Da'wah messages *offline* are reproduced in excellent language and disseminated to the broader community. The inflamed themes of da'wah are not related to eschatological issues but are more comprehensive than that, including social, economic, poverty, harmony, peace, and nationality matters. The preaching of harmony fragmented through a *Facebook account* shows the correct internalization of monotheism. TGB also confirmed that the da'wah of the Sufis is a way of universal devotion to God to bring people closer to Him based on the values of harmony and peace, as taught in the Qur'an.

The fragmentation of the virtual propaganda of TGB harmony through Sufi Live seeks to erode the pejorative view that has been synonymous with the esoteric life of the Sufis, choosing the attitude of *zuhud*, seclusion, *suluk* (closing oneself in mosquito nets). In the end, the preaching of harmony initiated by TGB was driven by the strong assimilation between the three elements that united him as the central figure of the Naqshbandi Tariqa murshid, namely the assimilation between academic experience, the practice of monotheism, and social practice.

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