

NAVIGATING DIGITAL DA'WAH: HANAN ATTAKI'S APPROACH AND NAHDATUL ULAMA'S AUTHORITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

Hanan Attaki, founder of the Shift (a youth hijrah movement), pledged allegiance (bai'at) to Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), one of Indonesia's most prominent traditionalist Islamic organizations, sparking significant responses from his extensive social media following of ten million on Instagram and two million on YouTube, most of whom are young people. This paper aims to explore the new step of Hanan Attaki's da'wah and the religious authority of NU's Ulema through social media by examining shifts in Hanan Attaki's da'wah approach pre- and post-affiliation and investigating how his affiliation enhances the influence of NU's ulema mainly through his social media platforms, using Fajri Alatas' theory of religious authority. This study uses a qualitative method by analyzing content on the YouTube and Instagram accounts of Hanan Attaki using netlytic assistant. This paper argues that joining Hanan Attaki at NU is one of his da'wah strategies to spread da'wah across society, including the grassroots. At the same time, Hanan Attaki contributes to spreading the authority of NU ulema and its ideology among millennials through social media.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah; Hanan Attaki; NU; Religious Authority; Social Media

Abstrak

Hanan Attaki, pendiri *Shift* (gerakan pemuda hijrah), menyatakan *baiat* kepada Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), salah satu organisasi Islam tradisional terbesar di Indonesia. Langkah ini memicu respons yang signifikan dari pengikutnya di media sosial, yang mencapai sepuluh juta di Instagram dan dua juta pelanggan di YouTube, mayoritasnya adalah kalangan muda. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi langkah baru dakwah Hanan Attaki serta otoritas keagamaan ulama NU di media sosial dengan meneliti pergeseran pendekatan dakwah Hanan Attaki sebelum dan sesudah berafiliasi dan menyelidiki bagaimana afliasinya meningkatkan pengaruh ulama NU terutama melalui platform media sosialnya, dengan menggunakan teori otoritas keagamaan dari Fajri Alatas. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif melalui analisis konten pada akun YouTube dan Instagram Hanan Attaki dengan bantuan tools *Netlytic*. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa bergabungnya Hanan Attaki dengan NU merupakan salah satu strategi dakwahnya untuk menyebarkan dakwah ke berbagai lapisan masyarakat, termasuk masyarakat akar rumput. Pada saat yang sama, Hanan Attaki berkontribusi dalam memperluas pengaruh otoritas ulama NU dan ideologinya di kalangan generasi milenial melalui media sosial.

Kata Kunci: Dakwah Digital; Hanan Attaki; NU; Otoritas Keagamaan; Media Sosial

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has significantly transformed various societal practices, including religious communication and authority, mainly through the widespread use of social media platforms. This shift has facilitated the emergence of a new generation of Islamic clerics, or ulema, whose style of da'wah (Islamic preaching) differs significantly from previous generations (Cecep Sumitra, 2023; STEKOM, 2020). This phenomenon reflects a global trend where decentralization challenges traditional religious institutions, allowing charismatic individuals to gain influence without institutional backing. Globally, Christian evangelists use social media to bypass conventional church hierarchies while Buddhist influencers combine spiritual teachings with current tales to reach a larger audience. This shift underscores broader issues such as the globalization of religious discourse, where digital platforms facilitate the spread of ideologies across cultural and geographical boundaries, reshaping religious identities. These dynamics highlight the dual challenge faced by traditional institutions worldwide, maintaining doctrinal integrity while remaining relevant in digital spaces (Hassan, 2024; F. K. Lim & Sng, 2020).

Historically, clerics such as Aa Gym and Zainuddin MZ gained prominence through traditional media outlets like television and radio, which provided a centralized and controlled dissemination of religious messages. However, contemporary ulemas have taken advantage of the capabilities of digital technology, particularly social media, to reach broader and more diverse audiences, often without the gatekeeping mechanisms of traditional media. Figures such as Abdul Shomad, Oki Setiana Dewi, and Hanan Attaki exemplify this new wave of clerics who have embraced platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and other social media channels as their primary means of communication. Their methods of da'wah are not only accessible but also dynamic, utilizing a variety of content formats such as photos, videos, captions, and live broadcasts to engage followers. This shift in the medium of preaching has allowed for more interactive and personalized forms of religious instruction, enabling these clerics to build large online followings and exert significant influence over public discourse, particularly among younger generations (Attaki, 2023a; Dewi, n.d.; Somad, n.d.).

Akmalia (2020) provides a theoretical framework to understand the emergence of this new religious authority in Indonesia's public sphere. According to his research, three critical elements contribute to the new ulema's influence within the digital landscape: Instagram, Islamic websites, and audiovisual content on platforms like YouTube. Instagram, in particular, plays a central role, given its popularity among young Indonesians, making it a powerful tool for disseminating Islamic teachings in ways that are visually appealing and easily consumable. Furthermore, Islamic websites function as repositories of religious knowledge, offering another way to obtain religious information. The large number of Islamic videos on YouTube adds an audiovisual component to da'wah, appealing to audiences who prefer visual and auditory approaches to learning. Moreover, Purwaningtyas *et al.* (2020) discuss the role of social media in shaping identity, particularly among youth, emphasizing how it fosters what is referred to as a "fragmented self." This concept highlights the multiplicity of identities users present across various platforms. This digital shift also reflects broader trends in religious authority and how it is negotiated in the modern world. The decentralized structure of social media enables the democratization of religious discourse, in which authority is not limited to state-sponsored or institutionally sanctioned ulema but may also be claimed by anyone with a significant digital presence. As a result, the new ulema have not only adapted to the digital age but have also reshaped the dynamics of religious authority in Indonesia by utilizing the power of technology and social media to interact with and influence contemporary Muslim audiences.

A disruption within society has resulted from the development of religious authority in a different landscape due to the introduction of new media and contemporary communication methods. As Lim (2005) suggests, this technological shift has intensified the division and contestation between traditional and contemporary authorities, reshaping how religious messages are disseminated and received. One notable manifestation of this shift is the rise of new da'wah movements that rely heavily on social media, particularly appealing to young people. This trend is highlighted by the concept of *hijrah* (migration), which has been revitalized as a religious and social movement in recent years. Unlike the historical meaning of physical migration, *hijrah*, in this context, refers to

a spiritual journey or transformation that encourages Muslims to live a more committed life in conformity with Islamic principles. Hanan Attaki, a well-known social media preacher, has played a pivotal role in popularizing this notion of hijrah, especially among the youth. His influence is evident in the establishment of the youth hijrah movement known as SHIFT, which aims to inspire young Muslims to embrace piety and moral reform through digital engagement (Parhan, A, & Alifa, 2020).

Despite the fact that the hijrah movement spearheaded by Attaki faces limitations in its ability to penetrate broader segments of Indonesian society, particularly at the grassroots level. While SHIFT has received significant interest among urban, digitally literate youth, it has struggled to reach the majority of the population, notably those affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Islamic organization. According to research conducted by Ali *et al.* (2017) through the Alvara Research Center, NU's followers number approximately 79.04 million, many of whom reside in rural areas and maintain traditional religious practices. These grassroots communities, while significant in size, have not been as influenced by the digital da'wah movements due to a combination of socio-economic factors and differing religious orientations.

Recent Islamic studies have focused on various topics, including youth Islamicity, which encompasses issues related to Islamic advocacy, piety, identity, and politics. Scholars have particularly examined the da'wah strategies of Hanan Attaki. For instance, Sabrina and Hariyanti (Nur *et al.*, 2018) analyzed Attaki's role in establishing the hijrah youth movement community, SHIFT, in Bandung. Their study focused on the communication strategies, participation, and creativity of the hijrah youth, highlighting the movement's successful da'wah approach. Similarly, Parhan *et al.* (2020) explored Attaki's use of social media, particularly Instagram, demonstrating how his skillful management of digital platforms and his unique da'wah style have attracted a large following. In another study, Muthohirin *et al.* (2021) examined the fragmentation of religious authority due to the rise of new religious leaders utilizing digital platforms. Their research revealed that prominent social media preachers like Hanan Attaki and Felix Siauw significantly influence the hijrah movement among Indonesian Muslim youth.

Additionally, Akmaliah (2022) investigated the digital presence of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), focusing on the organization's efforts to address internal dynamics, leadership impacts at the grassroots level, and the challenge posed by new religious authorities who leverage social media to expand their influence. Syamsul Haq (2024) studied the increasing piety among urban Indonesian youth, attributing it to the impact of social media and popular religious figures such as Hanan Attaki. Haq's article highlights the complex relationship between rising piety, the commercialization of religion, and the modern context in which young urban Muslims practice their faith.

These studies emphasize the transformative role of digital platforms in shaping religious authority and practices among Indonesian Muslims, particularly the youth. Moreover, this paper differentiates itself from previous research by aiming to explore the new step of Hanan Attaki's da'wah strategies and the influence of NU religious authority on social media, utilizing Fajri Alatas' theory of religious authority to address shifts in Hanan Attaki's da'wah approach after joining NU and how his affiliation enhances the influence of NU's ulema on social media. The study focuses on the contemporary issue of Hanan Attaki's public declaration of allegiance (*bai'at*) to NU, analyzing the shifts in his da'wah approach pre- and post-affiliation, mainly through his social media platforms. Additionally, the study examines the influence of NU's authority on millennials after Attaki's integration into the organization by analyzing his YouTube and Instagram accounts using the Netlytic assistant application.

This research argues that Hanan Attaki's decision to join NU reflects a strategic effort to broaden his *da'wah* approach to encompass various societal segments, including grassroots communities. Furthermore, Attaki's affiliation with NU enhances the promotion of NU's ulema authority and spreads its ideology among millennials through social media platforms.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach, which focuses on exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative data were gathered through observation and content analysis of Attaki's YouTube videos. The data were further analyzed using Netlytic (2023), which is a cloud-based social network and text analyzer that can identify communication networks from publicly accessible social media postings and automatically summarize textual data.

Moreover, the study's findings will be presented descriptively, with a particular focus on Attaki's da'wah strategies. The theoretical framework for this analysis is based on Fajri Alatas' (2021) theory of religious authority, which is termed 'articulatory labor.' Alatas stresses the role that articulatory labor plays in establishing and maintaining the existence of religious groups. It is a dynamic process that is influenced by the relationships that exist between religious leaders and their adherents, as well as the many networks and infrastructures that facilitate these relationships.

Furthermore, Attaki, whose da'wah style is in contrast with NU's religious leaders and who is perceived by the Nahdlatul Ulama Multipurpose Ansor Team (BANSER) as a Salafi-Wahabi has surprised many followers on social media with his sudden decision to join the NU membership. This paper will rely on the articulatory labor concept, analyzing Attaki's da'wah strategy, which consisting work in the development of Islamic communities that involves cooperation between various religious leaders and communities in addition to the mobilization of religious teachings. The way Islamic religious authorities work consistently allows them to influence how their communities evolve and how their faith is practiced.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Da'wah and Social Media

Da'wah is one of the methods utilized by several people or preachers to convey religious messages in several ways. One of the *da'wah* methods employed in this digital era is personal branding on social media (Nurjaman & Herlina, 2021). The purpose of *da'wah*, which utilizes the development of media and technology, is intensively carried out by preachers nowadays, considering that the developing cycle among young people is closely related to social media.

Social media has become an Islamic public sphere, and there is an increase in the number of popular preachers in Indonesia. The reason for this is the straightforward narrative on social media that is more accessible to the users, especially regarding religious issues. This is a displacement of the authority of the ulema carried out by a new arrival figure actively using social media, such as Abdullah Gymnastiar (Aa Gym), Quraish Shihab, and Lutfiah Sungkar, whose popularity has faded along with the new arrivals who are mastering new media, such as Khalid Basalamah, Abdul Somad, Adi Hidayat, and Hanan Attaki, who are more active on social media (Latifah & Romario, 2019).

In the digital age, the approach to *da'wah* (Islamic preaching) has undergone significant transformations, particularly in how religious leaders engage with their followers, especially on social media platforms. This shift reflects a broader trend in which preachers are becoming more creative and innovative in their methods, seeking to remain relevant by addressing contemporary societal issues and adapting to the cultural norms of their target audiences. Unlike traditional forms of da'wah that were largely delivered through face-to-face sermons or mass media, the digital space requires preachers to engage followers in ways that resonate with their everyday lives, using mediums and language that appeal to modern sensibilities. A notable example of this shift is Hanan Attaki, whose *da'wah* style has gained substantial popularity among youth audiences. Attaki's approach combines elements of modern youth culture, such as fashion and the use of slang language, with accessible and relatable religious messaging. His incorporation of slang and casual delivery of religious teachings reflects a conscious effort to align da'wah with the lifestyle and communication preferences of younger generations. This strategy has proven to be effective in reaching a broader and more diverse audience, particularly among urban, digitally-connected

youth.

Based on my observation and analysis of Hanan Attaki's followers reveal that his social media-based da'wah appeals most strongly to those in their late twenties and early thirties. These followers, mostly comprised of people aged 26 to 35, appear to be highly engaged, most likely owing to the relatability of his material, which addresses topics relevant to this group, such as personal growth, relationships, and spirituality. Additionally, younger followers aged 15–25 have a notable presence, indicating that his approachable style and use of digital platforms appeal to the youth. These insights highlight Hanan Attaki's da'wah techniques' adaptability in addressing varied demographics, particularly millennials, using digital platforms. Furthermore, most followers acknowledged a great alignment between his preaching style and the interests of young people, underlining his excellent approach to using relevant issues and current communication techniques. This highlights how his incorporation of culturally and socially relevant elements has successfully connected with younger audiences, reflecting a growing trend of adapting religious messaging to align with modern societal norms.

Da'wah Strategy of Hanan Attaki

Hana Attaki, whose full name is Tengku Hanan Attaki, was born on December 31, 1981, in Aceh, Indonesia, and pursued his primary education at the Ruhul Islam Islamic Boarding School in Banda Aceh. Subsequently, he continued his academic journey at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, where he specialized in Qur'anic interpretation at the Faculty of Ushuluddin. Upon completing his studies at Al-Azhar University and relocating to Bandung with his family, Hanan Attaki engaged in various roles, including teaching at SQT Habiburrahman and Jendela Hati, working as the managing director of Rumah Qur'an Salman ITB, and founding Shift Pemuda Hijrah. His public speaking and preaching have gained considerable popularity in Indonesia, particularly among the youth, due to his approachable and compelling delivery, which resonates strongly with his audience (Habiburrahman, 2023).

Hanan Attaki's da'wah, akin to other forms of digital da'wah, involves a process of interpersonal interaction. His capacity to engage youth through the youth hijrah movement illustrates the role of interpersonal attraction in drawing many young individuals into his da'wah activities. According to Octaviani (2022), an analysis of Hanan Attaki's da'wah platform reveals that the factors contributing to the appeal of his digital da'wah are significant predictors of success or failure in interpersonal connections. Octaviani further notes that Hanan Attaki established the Shift community, which functions as a platform for young people embarking on the hijrah journey. Additionally, Attaki's contemporary style is particularly resonant with young audiences, distinguishing him from other preachers.

Hanan Attaki is widely recognized for his preaching, which focuses on themes such as love, *ta'aruf* (Islamic courtship), and early marriage. He maintains an active online presence across various social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, where he has amassed a substantial following. Attaki's public appearances are characterized by a youthful, casual style, often featuring shirts, batik, or t-shirts paired with jackets. A notable aspect of his appearance includes his frequent use of a beanie-type hat and box-framed glasses. Moreover, he frequently shares engaging activities popular among young people, such as horseback riding, archery, ice skating, surfing, and rafting, which contribute to the appeal of his content among millennials.

According to Romhan (2019), Hanan Attaki's followers predominantly consist of young individuals with shared Islamic organizational affiliations and ideologies, including groups such as the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Association (KAMMI), Campus Da'wah Institutions (LDK), and Hizb al-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). This shared organizational background may contribute to the perception of Attaki as aligned with Salafi-Wahhabi thought. Additionally, some young people are drawn to Hanan Attaki's preaching due to the sense of solace and practical solutions in addressing issues related to failed romantic relationships. However, Hanan Attaki's commitment to joining Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) sparked outrage among his social media followers. The reactions were divided, with some expressing regret and others providing support. This diverse range of followers, based on my observation, reveals that followers of Hanan Attaki generally view his decision to

affiliate with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) positively. A significant portion of followers expressed strong support for this affiliation, indicating their recognition of its importance and alignment with their perspectives on religious leadership. Many followers highlighted their appreciation for his integration into NU, seeing it as a meaningful step in his religious and social contributions. Overall, the findings suggest that Hanan's association with NU has been met with predominantly favorable responses, reflecting an alignment with the values and expectations of a substantial part of his followers.



Figure 1.

The Reel Video on Attaki's Instagram (Source: Instagram @hanan_attaki, posted on June 17, 2023)

Meanwhile, an analysis of Hanan Attaki's Instagram posts following his affiliation with NU reveals that he continues to actively share da'wah content that largely mirrors his previous material. For example, his involvement in outdoor activities such as rafting, horseback riding, surfing, and climbing, alongside discussions on familiar themes like love and romance in Islam, remains a central focus. However, certain posts reflect subtle changes in his appearance, as he is now frequently seen wearing traditional Indonesian attire, including a peci and sarong. Additionally, several posts feature visits to his teachers, who are prominent NU ulema. In Hanan Attaki's Instagram post (Attaki, 2023a) depicted in Figure 1, the accompanying caption addresses the theme of

destiny and certainty in life, including the concept of finding a life partner, using language tailored to resonate with a younger audience. The caption reads: "How do you achieve certainty? It's uncomfortable to be left in uncertainty. Certainty in life, certainty in obtaining sustenance, certainty in finding a soul mate... watch the full discussion on Hanan Attaki's YouTube channel." The post is further tagged with hashtags such as #hananattaki, #pemudahijrah, and #shift.

In another post, as shown in Figure 2, Hanan Attaki is depicted visiting one of his teachers, a respected NU ulema. The accompanying caption reads: "Today's blessing, having the opportunity for *tabarruk* and gaining wisdom from KH @habibsyarifmuhammad, the head of the Assalam Bandung Foundation... Despite the brief encounter, I deeply felt the blessings: receiving a *wirid ijazah* (certificate for devotional recitations), being taught valuable insights on *da'wah*, and hearing stories about righteous figures from the time of his father and teachers, Māshā Allāh..."



Figure 2.

The Reel Video on Attaki's Instagram (Source: Instagram @hanan_attaki, posted on May 22, 2023)

(Kisah hidup UHA dari guru ke guru) (Attaki, 2023b) The graph shows that 127 users stated the word “NU,” meaning that the word “NU” was the first most discussed by the followers on that post.

The Authority of NU's Ulema Through Social Media

The traditional religious authority adapts to the digital era, following worldwide trends in the transformation of religious leadership. In Indonesia, NU ulema uses social media platforms to demonstrate its relevance to younger, adept with technology, comparable to attempts by religious leaders throughout the world to overcome generational and cultural gaps. This situation represents a broader decentralization of power, in which traditional organizations must compete with rising influencers who engage audiences using digital platforms. Globally, this trend is similar to the emergence of independent religious figures in Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism who earn credibility through online activity rather than institutional affiliation. While such platforms make religious discourse more accessible, they also put traditional hierarchies under pressure to stay competitive in an increasingly networked society (Andok, 2024).

The development of new media, as well as the emergence of new religious authorities, have introduced significant challenges to the establishment of traditional religious authority. The use of a digital platform with its unique characteristics has the potential for broad and profound effects. The substantial presence of Indonesian internet users within the population amplifies their influence. According to Turner (2007), citing data from the Indonesian Internet Provider Association (APJII, 2020), there were 196.7 million Indonesian internet users out of a total population of 266.91 million in 2020. This figure has climbed by about 10% from 2019, when there were 171.17 million internet users out of a total population of 264.16 million.

Today, the development of new media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and other communication platforms has positioned the user as both a producer and a consumer. These platforms offer a variety of user experiences based on the kind of interaction used. As long as each user can influence their followers with engaging content, this communication structure develops new authority in various fields. The more interesting the content that users publish, the more opportunities they have to increase their impact by significantly expanding their followers. This framework helps public figures while also allowing regular individuals to become micro-celebrities (Senft, 2008). Regarding religious affiliations, the predominant preference is aligned with Islamic revivalist movements, although there is also representation from traditionalist modernist Islam. Notable figures include Hanan Attaki of the Shift Movement, Felix Siauw, associated with Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), and proponents of the Salafi Movement, who contribute through various media channels such as websites, radio, and YouTube content. Conversely, from the traditionalist and modernist Islamic perspectives, prominent figures include Abdul Somad and Adi Hidayat (Akmaliah, 2022).

These situations undermined the religious authority of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as new religious leaders penetrated NU's grassroots level and influenced the direction of their religious teachings, resulting in many NU followers aligning with these new leaders. This shift has led to a perceived threat among NU adherents. According to Akmaliah (2020), The sense of threat among NU members was assessed through three case studies. The first was the Salafi group's rejection of Khalid Basalamah as the Islamic preacher in Islamic teaching in East Java (Lamongan, Sidoarjo, and Surabaya). The second was Felix Siauw's rejection of Islamic teaching at Semarang and Jakarta. The third is Hanan Attaki's rejection of his Islamic teaching in Central Java. The majority of the NU's grassroots members reject them because of their religious orientation, as the Islamic revival with the Salafi Wahhabism doctrine.

The dominance of Islamic revival on the internet platform is concentrating Indonesian Muslims in urban areas and affecting those in rural areas. This rural area, in particular, is the basis of the NU's people, making them feel considerably threatened. NU has responded to the Islamic revival in two ways, principally through the official and cultural networks. Officially, NU rebranded its organization as Islam Nusantara (Islam of the Archipelago) (Akmaliah, 2022). Concerning cultural networks, NU established NU online, collaborated with the other young NU people by making cyberwarrior training, and began to encounter religious radicalism on Indonesian social media. For instance, cyberwarrior accounts consist of memes and digitally altered images of *Kiai* and

Ulema. In a specific Instagram post from the account @ala_nu, four NU *Kiai* or ulema are depicted positioned in front of a fortress, symbolizing their role as its guardians and their responsibility for ensuring Indonesia's security. Social media users portray these religious figures as authentic and inspirational 'stars' whose guidance is especially valued during challenging times. The *Kiai* and ulema function as a countermeasure against radical ideologies, fostering a sense of 'fandom' among users and encouraging particular behaviors (Schmidt, 2018).

Throughout one of Hanan Attaki's YouTube content entitled "UHA's life story from teacher to teacher" (Kisah hidup UHA dari guru ke guru), he included a list of NU preacher's account links as recommended teachers in his YouTube description. This is demonstrated by his inclusion of NU ulema in his YouTube content, as illustrated in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5.

Hanan Attaki's Content Related to Ulema of NU
(Source: YouTube Hanan Attaki, Posted on May 16, 2023)

The video offers a list of recommended educators, highlighting five notable figures, each accompanied by links to their Instagram profiles. This structure not only enhances the credibility of the content by associating it with respected figures in the community but also serves as a resource for viewers seeking further engagement with these educators.

Furthermore, One of the NU Ulema and the first person recommended by Hanan Attaki on his YouTube channel is KH. Marzuki Mustamar is a senior figure within NU who has had a significant influence in East Java and strengthened NU's programs in the region. As the head of Sabilurrosyad Gasek boarding school, KH. Marzuki plays a pivotal role in guiding students, advancing Islamic education, and disseminating the teachings of NU among younger generations. His intellectual contributions include the notable work of *Al-Muqtaṭafāt lil Ahl al-Bidāyāt*, written in Arabic, which has garnered considerable attention for its well-argumentation, particularly against allegations by Salafi-Wahhabi groups that often label NU's religious practices and traditions as *bid'ah* (innovation in religious practices), reflecting NU's core mission to maintain a moderate and culturally integrated form of Islam (Bruinessen, 1996; Bush, 2009; Salam, 2018).

The involvement of *Kiai* Marzuki as the figure who received Hanan Attaki's *bai'at* (pledge of allegiance) underscores his central role in guiding Attaki's da'wah even before Attaki's formal affiliation with NU was declared. *Kiai* Marzuki's mentorship reflects a strong teacher-student bond, in which he serves not only as an advisor but as a gateway for Attaki to understand and integrate NU's teachings more profoundly. This relationship aligns with NU's traditional *guru-murid* dynamic, where mentorship extends beyond knowledge transfer to shaping spiritual and ideological alignment within NU's doctrinal frameworks (Van Bruinessen, 1994).

Halal bi halal (Eid al Fitr reconciliation gathering) and *haul* (commemoration of the death) events in Malang, which served as the setting for this pledge, gathered various NU figures from different regions, including Nadirsyah Hosen and KH. Anwar Zahid demonstrated the collective support of the NU community for Attaki's decision. The *bai'at* process, which occurred without coercion, as stated by *Kiai* Marzuki, indicates that Attaki's decision to join NU was motivated by personal



Figure 6.

The Reel Video was posted on KH. Marzuki's Instagram

(Source: Instagram @ngaos_abah, posted on May 12, 2023)

Islamic Boarding School. 1. Prof Dr. H. Nadirsyah Hosen, LL.M., M.A., Ph.D (Rais Syuriah PCI NU Australia-New Zaeland) @nadirsyahhosen_official. 2. KH. Anwar Zahid (Caretaker of Sabilunnajah Islamic Boarding School, Bojonegoro @abahanza_official. 3. Ustadz Hanan Attaki (Founder of Shift Pemuda Hijrah) @hanan_attaki FOLLOW US!, Instagram: @ngaos_abah @kiai_ku @ponpes_sabilurrosyad_weru @ponpesbetek @ponpes_sabros5 @huffadz_gasek @gasekmultimedia @ponpesgasekid @gm.cinema @mediasantrinu @pondokjatim”

Moreover, the post about Hanan Attaki's *bai'at*, which included Attaki's Instagram account, gained 7,731 likes, the most ever received by the Instagram account @ngaos_abah. In addition, Attaki's influence on social media in promoting the ideology and authority of NU ulema is also evident in Figure 7, which features content posted by the Instagram account @nuiesme.id. This content emphasizes the importance of

awareness and genuine desire (CNN Indonesia, 2023). This reinforces NU's image as an inclusive and adaptive religious organization, welcoming not only new followers from among the youth but also figures with large followings on social media (Aufadhuha, 2015). By embracing contemporary leaders who resonate with the youth, NU not only revitalizes its image but also strengthens its position within the religious sphere, showcasing its capacity to engage with modern challenges while remaining rooted in traditional values (Fealy, 2017).

Kiai Marzuki's Instagram account has been active since January 2018 and consistently posts da'wah content, including advice from Islamic scholars, messages of nationalism, videos of classical text studies (kitab kuning), greetings for Islamic holidays, and various da'wah activities across Indonesia (KH Marzuki Mustamar, 2024). This Instagram account also featured the *halal bi halal* event that marked Hanan Attaki's *bai'at* to join NU on May 11, 2023, as illustrated in Figure 6 with the caption:

“Halal Bi halal 1444 H and Haul of the Founders of Sabilurrosyad Gasek Islamic Boarding School, Thursday, May 11, 2023, at Sabilurrosyad Gasek



Figure 7.

The Reel Video was posted on nuiesme.id's Instagram (Source: Instagram @nuiesme.id, posted on May 12, 2023)

selecting a teacher by showcasing the names of prominent Ulema from the archipelago (all of them are NU's Ulema), with Hanan Attaki serving as the presenter by the caption:

“Don't choose the wrong teacher! Check out Gus Hanan Attaki's explanation @hanan_attaki #nuisme #pemudannahdlatululama #ustadzhananattaki #hananattaki #nderekkyai #nahdlatululama #foryou”

Overall, Figures 6 and 7 illustrate a mutual collaboration between two distinct figures of religious authority in promoting their respective influence and authority within their communities through social media, in line with the concept of ‘articulatory labor’ as proposed by Fajri Alatas.

The combination of high viewership and curated recommendations suggests a successful outreach strategy aimed at fostering educational connections within the audience. At this point, this paper argues that amid NU's efforts to regain the support of youth followers on social media, the involvement of a new, youth-oriented figure who is actively engaged in these platforms may enhance NU's influence. Consequently, Hanan Attaki plays a significant role in promoting the authority of NU's ulema and its ideology among millennials.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant impact of Hanan Attaki's decision to join Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) on his *da'wah* approach and the authority of NU's ulema within the digital landscape. Attaki's integration into NU has not only expanded his reach among various societal segments, particularly the grassroots community. However, it has also allowed him to leverage social media effectively to promote NU's teachings. Moreover, this study underscores the dynamic interplay between emerging religious figures and established organizations in navigating the complexities of digital *da'wah*. Attaki's role exemplifies how new media can amplify religious authority and facilitate the dissemination of traditional values among millennials, ensuring the relevance of NU in a rapidly evolving religious landscape.

The findings indicate that while Attaki's style of preaching remains largely consistent before and after his affiliation with NU, the strategic endorsement of traditional religious authority has fostered a more inclusive narrative. His ability to resonate with young audiences through relatable content has reinforced NU's presence in contemporary Islamic discourse, bridging the gap between traditional and modern practices. Hanan Attaki's contribution to the spread of the authority of NU Ulema and its ideology among millennials is potentially going to strengthen NU's influence. Hanan Attaki's style of *da'wah* has not changed after joining NU, and he still actively engages in social media to spread his *da'wah* message. This framework helps public figures while also allowing regular individuals to become micro-celebrities. This paper argues that the joining of Hanan Attaki to NU is one of his *da'wah* strategies relying on the concept of ‘articulatory labor’ termed by Fajri Alatas’ which involves collaboration between different religious leaders and communities, to spreading his *da'wah* across society, including the grassroots. In addition, Hanan Attaki contributes to spreading the authority of NU ulema and its ideology among millennials through social media.

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