Reciting Surah al-Kahf in the Month of Ramadan: A Case Study of Live Streaming on Instagram by Dompet Dhuafa Community Media

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Abstract: This article delves into the recitation of Surah al-Kahf on the live streaming Instagram account of the Dompet Dhuafa community during the Ramadan program. The practice of reading Surah al-Kahf is recommended as one of the Sunnah practices, particularly on Fridays, as established by the hadith of Prophet Muhammad. This phenomenon continues to evolve within society. The research adopts a library research approach and utilizes Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory to analyze the phenomenon of reading Surah al-Kahf. The aim is to assess the alignment of the intended message by the video producer with the message perceived by the audience. The research findings reveal two interpretative meanings, in accordance with Stuart Hall's theory of encoding. The first is the dominant position, where the informant advocates for the recitation of Surah al-Kahf as a Sunnah to be performed every Friday. The negotiated position, on the other hand, reflects the informant's belief that reading Surah al-Kahf is indeed a Friday Sunnah, but simultaneously holds a differing perspective. The intended message of the video producer, presenting the recitation of Surah al-Kahf during Ramadan through live Instagram streaming, effectively reaches the audience. This conclusion is drawn from the response of informants who incorporate the recitation of Surah al-Kahf as a regular practice on Fridays, extending beyond the month of Ramadan.

Keyword: Surah al-Kahfi, Live streaming, Dompet Dhuafa

Abstrak: Artikel ini membahas pembacaan Surah al-Kahfi dalam live streaming akun Instagram komunitas Dompet Dhuafa, yang menjadi programnya selama bulan Ramadan. Pembacaan Surah al-Kahfi merupakan salah satu amalan sunnah yang dianjurkan pada hari Jumat. Fenomena ini berdasarkan hadis Rasulullah SAW yang masih berkembang di tengah masyarakat. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian pustaka dan analisis fenomena pembacaan Surah al-Kahfi menggunakan teori encodingdecoding Stuart Hall untuk melihat kesesuaian pesan yang dimaksud oleh produser video dengan pesan yang ditangkap oleh penonton. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya dua makna penafsiran sesuai dengan teori Stuart Hall tentang encoding-decoding. Posisi dominan pertama adalah di mana informan menjadikan Surah al-Kahfi sebagai sunnah yang wajib dilakukan setiap Jumat. Posisi negosiasi, yakni informan meyakini bahwa membaca Surah al-Kahfi merupakan sunnah di hari Jumat, namun di sisi lain memiliki pandangan yang berbeda. Pesan yang dimaksud oleh produser video dalam pembacaan Surah al-Kahfi di bulan Ramadan melalui live streaming Instagram dapat tersampaikan dengan baik kepada penonton. Hal ini terlihat dari respon informan yang menjadikan pembacaan Surah al-Kahfi sebagai amalan rutin pada setiap Jumat, meskipun di luar bulan Ramadan.

Kata Kunci: Surah al-Kahfi, live streaming, Dompet Dhuafa

Introduction

The development of technology and communication media has significantly influenced society in obtaining and consuming information. Media has become a crucial necessity for society, and technological advancements in communication have led to numerous innovations, making the communication process more effective. A notable proof of technological progress is the emergence of various social media platforms designed for accessing information.\(^1\) Consequently, the current technological developments have not only brought about cultural changes in terms of social values but have also impacted religious values. One significant effect is the expansion and openness of religious knowledge due to the preference for internet-based platforms. This has led to an increase in the dissemination of information related to Islam on social media, particularly through figures like ustadz/ustadzah on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

Among the diverse religious content broadcasted on social media, the practice of reading Surah al-Kahf stands out as a ritual adopted by many as a Friday prayer, particularly in live streaming sessions on Instagram.² This article aims to analyze the phenomenon of reciting Surah al-Kahf via Live Streaming on the Dompet Dhuafa account during the month of Ramadan. The interest in this topic lies in its active nature in the cyberspace domain. The researcher seeks to determine whether there is alignment between the intended meaning conveyed by the video producer (Dompet Dhuafa community) and the audience's interpretation of the message conveyed through the recitation of Surah Kahf.

The literature exploring the reading of Surah al-Kahf falls into three major trends, with the first focusing on the business sector. Dwi Elok Fardah examines the "Preksu" social media account, which incentivizes free food for those who read Surah al-Kahf on Fridays, aiming to encourage the continuation of the recommended sunnah.³ The second trend involves the tradition of reading Surah al-Kahf in Islamic boarding schools, as

¹ Feby Anggela dan dkk, *Urgensi Komunikasi Dalam Ilmu Sosial* (Bengkulu: CV. Sinar Jaya Berseri, 2023), 142.

² Evi Fitriana and Muhamad Khoiri Ridlwan, "NGAJI ONLINE: Transformasi Ngaji Kitab Di Media Sosial," *ASANKA: Journal of Social Science And Education* 2, no. 2 (2021): 205, https://doi.org/10.21154/asanka.v2i2.3238.

³ Dwi Elok Fardah, "Promo Makanan Gratis Dengan Membaca Surah Al-Kahfi Setiap Hari Jumat (Resepsi Atas Akun Media Sosial Preksu)," *MAGHZA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 7, no. 2 (2022): 140, https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v7i2.4420.

studied by Imam Ma'arif Hidayat and Mahfud Alfaozi at the Miftahul Huda Rawalo Islamic boarding school. Their findings reveal that reading Surah al-Kahf is a generational tradition, not formally programmed but consistently practiced by caregivers, administrators, and students.⁴ The third trend, explored by Nugroho, focuses on the reception of Surah al-Kahf's reading in Kuwarisan hamlet, Kebumen. Nugroho identifies two forms of reception: functional, where the Surah is not just read but also understood, and exegesis, involving a deeper study of the Surah's meaning.⁵

Despite these trends, there is a gap in scholarly focus on studying the reading of Surah al-Kahf within the scope of Live Streaming on social media, using Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory for analysis. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the congruence between the intended message of the video producer and the audience's interpretation, employing Stuart Hall's three positions: dominant, negotiated, and oppositional. This qualitative library research collects data from various literary sources such as scientific books, documents, manuscripts, scientific journals, and related thematic data. The research design aligns with qualitative methodologies, emphasizing audience opinions and utilizing Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory as an analytical tool to evaluate message alignment.

Overview of the Dompet Dhuafa Community

Dompet Dhuafa was established on July 2, 1993. This community emerged from the dedication of journalists from the Republika General Daily who were inspired to assist others in 1993. Subsequently, this date was designated as the founding day of the philanthropic and humanitarian organization Dompet Dhuafa a year later. The establishment of the foundation was formalized through Deed No. 41 on September 14,

⁴ I M Hidayat and M Alfaozi, "Kajian Living Qur'an Tradisi Membaca Surah Al-Kahfi Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Miftahul Huda Rawalo Banyumas," *JIQSI - Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an Dan Studi Islam* 1, no. 1 (May 25, 2023): 1–14, https://ejournal.stiqmiftahulhudarawalo.ac.id/index.php/jiqsi/article/view/3.

⁵ Sapta Wahyu Nugroho, "Resepsi Kajian Surat Al-Kahfi di Dusun Kuwarisan, Kebumen (Studi Living Qur'an)," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 5, no. 1 (2022): 90, https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v5i1.2659.

⁶ Chan-ting CHEN, "The Application of Stuart Hall's Encoding-Decoding Model of Communication in Bilingual/Foreign Language Professional Course Teaching," *DEStech Transactions on Economics, Business and Management*, no. emba (May 17, 2019), https://doi.org/10.12783/dtem/emba2019/29331; Stuart Hall et al., "Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Culture Studies 1972–79," in *Encoding/Decoding* (Taylor & Francis, n.d.), 117–27.

1994, before Notary H. Abu Yusuf, SH, and was officially announced in the Republic of Indonesia Official Gazette No. 163/A. YAY.HKM/1996/PNJAKSEL.

To date, the continuous trust and active involvement of the public have guided Dompet Dhuafa in confronting global challenges. Commencing with the donation initiative, Dompet Dhuafa persists in delivering the trust of donors and muzaki (those who give alms) to mustahik or beneficiaries. From 1993 to 2021, the generosity of Dompet Dhuafa's donors has positively impacted over 24 million individuals. Dompet Dhuafa not only implements effective programs to empower others but also expands its service network. Currently, Dompet Dhuafa operates in six service offices, 31 domestic branches, and five overseas branches. Additionally, Dompet Dhuafa is developing 157 service zones in 32 provinces and collaborating with 29 strategic partners in 21 countries. The overarching goal of this expansion is to provide solutions to national challenges that cannot be tackled in isolation, such as resource scarcity, necessitating collective unity and collaboration across all levels to address various issues of inequality within the country.

As concerns about social inequality heighten, the rapidly changing era compels us to act swiftly to meet the needs of our less fortunate brothers and sisters globally. Embracing the principles of EASY and BLESSED, Digital Dompet Dhuafa endeavors to connect various entities within a positive ecosystem. In addition to the donation drive program for those in need, Dompet Dhuafa also offers other online kindness programs, such as lectures and recitations of Surah Al-Kahf every Friday night, which are integral parts of Dompet Dhuafa's initiatives, particularly during the month of Ramadan.⁷

Practice of Reading Surah al-Kahf through Live Streaming by Dompet Dhuafa

Surah al-Kahf, literally translated as "cave," is historically referred to as the Ashhab Al-Kahf surah. Comprising 110 verses, it is part of Juz 15 and the beginning of Juz 16. Surah al-Kahf is categorized as a Makkiyah surah, revealed in Mecca. Its name is derived from the account of a group of young men who, in order to preserve their faith, chose self-imposed exile from authorities, eventually sleeping in a cave for 309 years. This surah is the 18th out of 114 in the Quran.

Surah al-Kahf holds numerous virtues. The Prophet emphasized its significance when recited on Fridays. To accrue rewards, Muslims are encouraged to utilize this

⁷ Dompet Dhuafa, "Link On Bio - Portal Donasi Dompet Dhuafa," https://donasi.dompetdhuafa.org/, n.d., https://donasi.dompetdhuafa.org/linkonbio/.

special day. According to Ahmad Aliudin's research, "Surah Al-Kahf has numerous virtues and is more virtuous when recited on Fridays," signifying an additional reward compared to regular days.

Reading Surah Al-Kahf is one of the programs organized by Dompet Dhuafa during the month of Ramadan. Prior to the event, administrators distribute brochures detailing information such as the time, venue, presenters, and moderators. This serves as a promotional effort to encourage the general public, particularly those using social media, to participate. The activity takes place every Friday night at 20:30-21:35 WIB following the terawih prayer.

The live stream, hosted on Instagram, features a designated speaker leading the recitation of Surah al-Kahf. Before commencement, the speaker advises viewers against commenting during the event, urging them instead to have a Quran on hand for a collective recitation from the beginning to the end. The recitation is then guided by the Ustad. Following the completion of Surah al-Kahf, the program proceeds with a religious discourse related to the holy month of Ramadan. Its aim is to enhance faith, piety, and the quality of worship throughout this sacred month.

The purpose of reading Surah Al-Kahf for the Dompet Dhuafa Community

Alfred Schutz, in his phenomenological theory, explains that human actions acquire specific meanings through past experiences and interactions with others, shaping the interpretation of these actions. Therefore, it is crucial to consider one's knowledge base to comprehend the meaning behind words and deeds, or in other words, the motivations behind someone's actions. 10

In an interview with the administrator of the Dompet Dhuafa community account regarding the purpose of reading Surah al-Kahf during the month of Ramadan, he expressed:

⁸ Ahmad Aliudin, "Salat Jum'at Virtual di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 (Diskursus Ulama Fikih Kontemporer)" (Tesis Program Pascasarjana UIN Alauddin Makassar 2022, 2022), 35.

⁹ Maurice Natanson, "The Phenomenology of Alfred Schutz," *Inquiry* 9, no. 1–4 (January 1966): 147–55, https://doi.org/10.1080/00201746608601455; Ruslan Rasid, Hilman Djafar, and Budi Santoso, "Alfred Schutz's Perspective in Phenomenology Approach: Concepts, Characteristics, Methods and Examples," *International Journal of Educational Research & Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (April 7, 2021): 190–201, https://doi.org/10.51601/ijersc.v2i1.18.

¹⁰ Destira Anggi Zahrofani and Mohammad Alwy Amru Ghozali, "Kajian Living Qur'an: Tradisi Pembacaan Surah Al-Kahfi Di Pondok Pesantren Putri Al-Ibanah," in *Proceeding of The 2nd Conference on Strengthening Islamic Studies in the Digital Era*, vol. 2 (IAIN Ponorogo, 2022), 80.

"This program is part of Dompet Dhuafa's efforts to promote the spread of Islam, particularly encouraging young people and the broader community to adopt the practice of reciting Surah al-Kahf as a Friday Sunnah. The aim is for individuals to maintain consistency in this practice independently, extending beyond the month of Ramadan."

The reading activity of Surah al-Kahf by the Dompet Dhuafa community is based on the hadith of Prophet Muhammad:

Mean: "Abū Sa'id reported the Prophet as saying, "If anyone recites sūra al-Kahf (Qur'ān, 18) on Friday, light will shine brightly for him till the next Friday." Baihaqī transmitted it in [Kitāb] al-Da'awāt al-kabir."

The Dompet Dhuafa community's commitment to fastabiqul khirot is evident, as reflected in their programs, videos, and photos posted with positive societal impacts, particularly on social media. Additionally, there is a notable enthusiasm from social media users who actively support the Dompet Dhuafa Community account, as evidenced by the 235 thousand followers it has garnered.

Applying Encoding and Decoding Theory to the Reading of Surah al-Kahf in Dompet Dhuafa's Instagram Live Streaming

Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding theory categorizes the audience's interpretation of meaning into three positions: dominant, negotiated, and oppositional. The dominant position occurs when the audience's understanding aligns with the sender's intention, the negotiated position involves alternative interpretations, and the oppositional position results in conflicting meanings.¹²

Regarding the participants' meanings after engaging in the Instagram live streaming of Surah al-Kahf reading, variations in interpretation arise due to intentionally constructed messages allowing diverse understandings. These differences underscore the potential meanings derived from encoding and decoding.

213

¹¹ Sunnah.com, "Mishkat Al-Masabih 2175 - The Excellent Qualities of the Qur'an - كتاب فضائل - Sunnah.Com - Sayings and Teachings of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم)," n.d., https://sunnah.com/mishkat:2175.

¹² Sos. Farid, Ahmad Salman M, *Menguasai Seni Komunikasi Publik (Panduan Praktis Untuk Mahasiswa Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam)* (Yogyakarta: K-Media, 2023), 32.

Dominant Position

- Scene 1: Reading Surah al-Kahf carries the meaning that there are numerous advantages, including beautifying the recitation of the Al-Qur'an. The informant continues the practice of reading Surah al-Kahf outside the month of Ramadan.
- *Scene 2:* Reading Surah al-Kahf means it is a recommended practice on Fridays, and the informant continues this routine even outside Ramadan, considering it a habitual practice before participating in Dompet Dhuafa's live streaming.
- *Scene 3:* Reading Surah al-Kahf signifies the ability to avoid slander, especially in the easily spread realm of cyberspace.
- *Scene 4:* Reading Surah al-Kahf is a recommended practice, prompting the informant to do it every Friday.

Negotiated Position

- *Scene 1*: Reading Surah al-Kahf is considered a recommended practice, but the informant reads only the first 10 and last 10 verses.
- *Scene* 2: Although the informant acknowledges the practice as a Friday sunnah, busy situations may lead to forgetting to read it.

In Scene 1, the first part of the informant's perspective is in the dominant position. The informant views reading Surah al-Kahf on Fridays as a sunnah with numerous merits, enhancing the recitation of the Al-Qur'an positively. This view is supported by an Instagram user, @khuurin, who expressed, "I always read and try to read it because of the fadhilah in it, masyaallah, and more enthusiasm, istiqomah reading al-Kahf because it can improve the recitations of the Al-Qur'an." ¹³

In Scene 2, the first part of the informant perceives reciting Surah al-Kahf as mandatory, part of the informant's life routine performed every Friday, even before joining Dompet Dhuafa's al-Kahf reading program in Ramadan. This perspective is reinforced by Hidayatulfadilah's Instagram account, stating, "Before I joined the Dompet Dhuafa program, I had already done reading al-Kahf every Friday." ¹⁴

In Scene 3, the first part of the informant sees the reading of Surah al-Kahf as a means to escape slander, especially in the realm of social media. An interviewee, Sintha Wulan S's Instagram account, mentioned, "I still apply it to this day because one of the

¹³ Aini, Dompet Dhuafa Live Streaming Participant, Interview 21 May 2023.

¹⁴ Hidayatulfadilah. Live Streaming Participant Dompet Dhuafa, Interview 21 May-28 May 2023.

lessons from this letter is to stay away from slander, especially as we live in an era where slander is easily spread through cyberspace." ¹⁵

In Scene 4, the informant remains in the dominant position, believing that reciting Surah al-Kahf is a mandatory practice every Friday. This belief is supported by the opinion of the Instagram account balqisf-06, stating, "Until now, I still read Surah al-Kahf every Friday." ¹⁶

In Scene 1, the second part of the informant believes that reading the entire Surah al-Kahf is a recommended practice, but acknowledges that various narrations allow reading only the first ten and last ten verses, each with its own advantages. The informant, therefore, holds a negotiated position. This perspective is supported by an Instagram user, @ocii-sr, who stated, "After following the live streaming with Dompet Dhuafa, I still applied it, but only the first 10 verses and the last 10 verses because I had heard that there is a history that recommends reading the first 10 verses and the last 10 verses of Surah al-Kahf." ¹⁷

In Scene 2, the second part of the informant positions themselves in a negotiated position, reading Surah al-Kahf every Friday but adapting to the available time. An informant from Rahayuera238's Instagram account mentioned, "I often read it, but there are times when there are a lot of activities that I forget to read." ¹⁸

Based on interviews, researchers found two interpretations of meaning in line with Stuart Hall's theory regarding encoding and decoding in the live streaming of Surah al-Kahf by Dompet Dhuafa in Ramadan: dominant position and negotiated position. The oppositional position was not identified in the reading of Surah al-Kahf. The producer's (encoding) intended message, inviting the public, especially young people, to practice the Friday sunnah independently of Ramadan, aligns with the captured message by the audience. Despite differing views among informants in Scene 1 and Scene 2, the negotiators still carry out the practice of reading Surah al-Kahf on Fridays. This indicates successful conveyance of the producer's intended message to the audience.

¹⁵ Sintha Wulan, Dompet Dhuafa Live Streaming Participant, Interview 21 May-22 May 2023.

¹⁶ Fitri, Dompet Dhuafa Live Streaming Participant, Interview 21 May-22 May 2023.

¹⁷ Rosi, Dompet Dhuafa Live Streaming Participant. Interview 21-25 May 2023.

¹⁸ Rahayu, Dompet Dhuafa Live Streaming Participant, Interview 21 May-25 May 2023.

Conclusion

From the live streaming of the recitation of Surah al-Kahf on Instagram conducted by the Dompet Dhuafa account during the month of Ramadan, it becomes apparent that two interpretive meanings can be identified based on Stuart Hall's theory of encoding. The first decoding is the dominant position, wherein the informant establishes Surah Al-Kahf as a Sunnah that must be observed every Friday. The negotiated position, on the other hand, reflects the informant's belief that reading Surah al-Kahf is recommended on Fridays, but concurrently holds a different perspective. The intended message by the video producer in reciting Surah Al-Kahf during Ramadan via Instagram live streaming seems to be effectively communicated to the general audience. This assertion is supported by the responses of informants who have incorporated the practice of reciting Surah al-Kahf into their routine on Fridays, even beyond the confines of the month of Ramadan.

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