RISSING AUTHORITY: THE NEW OF USTAD AMONG URBAN MILLENNIAL MUSLIMS

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Abstrak

Studi ini fokus pada pertanyaan "Faktor apa yang mendorong munculnya otoritas keagamaan baru dikalangan muslim milenial urban?" Untuk menganalisis pertanyaan tersebut studi ini menggunakan pendekatan deskripstif kualitatif terhadap sejumlah ustad muda dan jemaah dari kalangan milenial urban yang aktif mengikuti kajian-kajian di masjid. Ustad muda dan jemaah tersebut diwawancarai secara intensif tidak terstruktur untuk mengeksplorasi data mengenai praktik, pengetahuan, dan pengalaman mereka dalam mempelajari maupun menjadi seorang pendakwah di kalangan muslim milenial urban. Temuan dalam studi ini memperlihatkan bahwa munculnya otoritas keagamaan baru dikalangan muslim milenial urban dipengaruhi oleh dua faktor dominan, yaitu; Pertama, faktor struktural berupa dukungan dari jemaah maupun pengurus masjid dalam bentuk fasilitas dakwah. Kedua, faktor kultural dari jemaah dan pengurus masjid yang lebih terbuka dalam menerima dakwah ustad muda.

Kata Kunci: *Rissing Authority, Ustad, Kaum muslim, dan Milenial urban.*

Abstract

Studies that have discussed this phenomenon have only focused on the adaptation and transformation of da'wah activities, so the emergence of young ustad among urban millennial Muslims has not been comprehensively discussed. This study focuses on the question, "What factors drive the emergence of new religious authorities among urban millennial Muslims?" This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to several young religious teachers and congregations from urban millennials who actively participate in mosque studies to analyse this question. The young ustad and the congregation were interviewed in an intensive, unstructured manner to explore data regarding their practices, knowledge, and experience in studying and becoming preachers among urban millennial Muslims. The findings in this study show that two dominant factors, namely, influence the emergence of a new religious authority among urban millennial Muslims; First, structural factors in the form of support from congregations and mosque administrators in the form of da'wah facilities. Second, cultural factors from congregations and mosque administrators who are more open in accepting young ustad's da'wah.

Keywords: *Rissing Authority, Ustad, Muslims, and urban Millennials.*

Introduction

The emergence of new religious authorities has become a trend and formed new patterns and da'wah activities among urban millennial Muslims. According to Arifianto (2020), this phenomenon does not only appear naturally but is influenced by various

complex and contextual factors. The wonder of the emergence of new religious authorities among urban millennial Muslims not least appears in urban areas with multiple characteristics (Solahudin & Fakhruroji, 2020). The complexity of the factors that influence the emergence of this new religious authority can be seen through the practices, knowledge, and experiences of new stands in conducting da'wah among urban millennial Muslims. Therefore, Fernando et al. (2022) said that a study that discusses and analyzes the dominant factors influencing the emergence of a new religious authority which is becoming a trend among urban millennial Muslims is a significant study to be conducted as a lesson learned. In line with that, Fakhruroji (2019) said that the emergence of new religious authorities had become a pattern, and the characteristics of da'wah are becoming more transformative, as is the emergence of new ustad among urban millennial Muslims.

The trend for the emergence of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims does not only appear naturally but is influenced by various complex and contextual factors. However, in the last five years, studies discussing the trend of da'wah among urban millennial Muslims have only focused on three contexts; First, studies that focus on discussing the direction of da'wah among urban millennial Muslims in the context of transformation (Kloos, 2019; Burchardt, 2019; Sabic-El-Rayess, 2020). Second, studies focus on discussing the trend of da'wah among urban millennial Muslims in the context of adaptation (Friberg & Sterri, 2021; Mihlar, 2019; Bennigsen, 2019). Third, studies focus on discussing the trend of da'wah among urban millennial Muslims in the context of practice (Thaib, 2020; Kloos, 2021; Rijal, 2020). The three contexts show that the trend for the emergence of new religious authority among urban millennial Muslims does not only arise naturally but is influenced by various factors (Wati et al., 2022). However, these studies only focus on recovery, adaptation, and shifts in worship values after the pandemic.

The emergence of new ustad trends among urban millennial Muslims is an exciting phenomenon to be explained and analyzed. Khan et al. (2020) said that socio-economic factors and various complex and contextual factors influenced the emergence of a new religious authority among urban millennial Muslims. In line with that, Habibi et al. (2022) also said that the emergence of new religious authorities has reduced the culture of religious preaching, as experienced by urban millennial Muslims. Nevertheless, studies that explain the emergence of new religious authorities among Muslims have not been

carried out comprehensively, especially those that analyze the factors that influence the emergence of new ustad trends among urban millennial Muslims—considering that there has not been a discussion regarding the emergence of a new ustad trend among urban millennial Muslims. So this study, in addition to responding to the shortcomings of the studies conducted, also analyzes the factors that influence the emergence of new ustad trends among urban millennial Muslims.

The trend for the emergence of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims does not only appear naturally but is influenced by various complex and contextual factors. Fernando et al. (2022) also said that emerging new religious authorities among urban millennial Muslims is a significant phenomenon to be carried out as a lesson learned. This context is an exciting phenomenon to be explained and analyzed to reflect on the factors influencing the emergence of the new ustad trend among urban millennial Muslims. Therefore, to explain and reflect on this phenomenon, this study also focuses on the question; What factors influence the process and formation of new ustad trends among urban millennial Muslims? In line with that, this study is also based on the argument that the emergence of new ustad trends among urban millennial Muslims does not only occur naturally but is also influenced by structural and cultural factors accommodated by congregations and mosque administrators. This context increasingly shows that urban millennial Muslims are more open to accepting a new transformation and religious authority in a more positive direction.

Method

This study was conducted amid the trend of new ustad emerging among urban millennial Muslims. Fernando et al. (2022) also said that the emergence of a new religious authority is a phenomenon that occurs massively among urban Muslims. However, this study only focuses on explaining and reflecting on the trend of new ustad among urban millennial Muslims. Accordingly, this study is also based on three contexts. First, the trend of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims is a contemporary phenomenon that has not been comprehensively considered in previous studies. Second, the trend of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims has complex and contextual characteristics, so it is essential to explain. Third, the trend of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims contains essential ideas and influences to reflect on to understand the factors that drive

the emergence of this phenomenon. These three contexts form the basis of this study to select the new ustad trend among urban millennial Muslims as the focus of discussion.

This study is a descriptive qualitative study based on primary and secondary data. The primary data in this study were obtained through observation and unstructured interviews conducted with new ustad who were active preachers at the Deresan Mosque, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, from March 4 to April 10 2023. The selection of informants in this study was focused on new ustad with an average age of under 50 years who are active as preachers among urban Muslim millennials. The interview questions were also focused on three contexts, including the experience of the new ustad in giving lectures to urban millennial Muslims. Second is the new ustad's experience in communicating with urban millennial Muslims—the third is the new ustad's experience interacting with mosque administrators. In line with that, the secondary data in this study were obtained through reading relevant websites, books, and journal articles.

The data analysis process was carried out through three stages of analysis, as previously done by Fernando et al. (2023) namely; First, reducing data is the process of rearranging the data obtained into a more systematic form based on the data trends. Second, verifying the data is concluded based on categorizing data that has been reduced. Third, displaying data describes data that has been classified and then displayed in the form of interview excerpts verified as essential findings in this study. Of the three processes, the next step is to analyze the data inductively as the basis for the interpretation of the data. Data interpretation techniques are carried out by restating the data according to urban millennial Muslims' ongoing conditions, attitudes, and socio-cultural context. The process and stages of this analysis make it possible to formulate a conclusion regarding the trend of new ustad among urban millennial Muslims.

Result and Discussion

The trend for the emergence of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims certainly does not just emerge and develop but has been influenced by various factors. This context was also confirmed by Aula (2022), who also said that various factors, not least, influenced the emergence of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims. Two essential findings and discussions in this study show these factors.

New ustadz among urban millennial Muslims: Structural factors

The phenomenon of new ustad among millennial urban Muslims is a trend that is happening massively. Azizah & Rahman (2022) further said that the existence of new ustad does not only appear in the imagination in cyberspace but also in the real world, which is influenced by structural factors. According to Darojatun & Alawiyah (2021), the trend of new ustad among urban millennial Muslims has not only appeared in urban Muslim groups. This context can be seen through statements from informants below:

> "Here, apart from being supported by the management of the mosque and its congregation, the da'wah facilities are well supported, right? This mosque is in the city. So anyone who wants to study can come here, even though there are provisions from the management for those who want to lecture here, but that is normal. It is different in the villages." (HS, 45).

> "Di sini selain didukung oleh pengurus masjid nya dan jemaah nya, juga fasilitas dakwah nya di dukung dengan baik, kan ini masjid nya berada di kota. Jadi siapapun yang ingin belajar bisa disini, walaupun ada ketentuan-ketentuan dari pengurus bagi yang ingin ceramah disini, tapi itu normal-normal saja. Beda sama di kampung-kampung." (HS, 45).

From the story told by the informant with the initials HS (45) as the new ustad, it can be reflected that structural factors can dominantly influence the existence of the new ustad in a more positive direction. This structural factor can be seen through the statement, "Here, apart from being supported by the management of the mosque and its congregation, the da'wah facilities are also well supported", indicating a form of support that the new ustad gets structurally in his da'wah process. In line with that, Surani et al. (2021) also said that mosque empowerment is an essential context in the da'wah process and is a form of structural commitment which is very important in bringing out preachers as regeneration in the future. This context can be seen through the mosque's involvement in facilitating young ustad to carry out the da'wah process online during times of crisis. As told by the informant below:

> "During the first pandemic, as new ustadz, mosque management often allowed us to carry out da'wah activities online via Zoom. Maybe because we adapt more quickly to technology so that more opportunities are given to us. Moreover, students dominate students who participate in the recitation, making it easier." (RAL, 49).
> "Sewaktu pandemi dulu, kami sabagai ustad baru memang sering dikasih kesempatan oleh pengurus masjid untuk melakukan aktivitas dakwah secara

online melalui zoom. Mungkin karena kami lebih cepat diberadaptasi dengan teknologi, sehingga kesempatan lebih banyak diberikan kepada kami. Apalagikan yang ikut pengajian juga di dominasi oleh kalangan mahasiswa, jadi lebih mudah." (RAL, 49).

The opportunity mosque administrators give new ustadz to carry out da'wah during the Covid-19 pandemic era is also a form of structural support that new ustadz receive. According to Suryawati & Rusadi (2021), this context is also influenced by social structures that change massively in the digital era, so using digital platforms in preaching has given rise to new authorities, which are becoming trends. A statement from an informant with the initials RAL (49) that "The mosque management has facilitated us in preaching. There is a zoom recitation." is a form of structural support that the new ustad gets in preaching during a pandemic. In other words, structural support in the form of facilities from mosque administrators has become a factor influencing the existence of new ustad among urban millennial Muslims. This context is also in line with what the informant said below:

> "The main thing is that we, as new preachers in this mosque, are always welcomed and facilitated by the mosque management if we want to learn and preach. Yes, even though there are conditions, through this facility, we can develop as young preachers in this mosque and be accepted by the congregation, especially for student congregations near here." (RA, 38).
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> "Pokok nya kami sebagai pendakwah baru, di masjid ini selalu diterima dan difasilitasi oleh pengurus masjid jika ingin belajar dan berdakwah. Yaaa walaupun ada ketentuannya, tapi melalui fasilitas ini kami bisa berkembang sebagai pendakwah muda di masjid ini, dan diterima oleh jemaah khususnya bagi jemaah mahasiswa dekat-dekat sini." (RA, 38).

The statement made by an informant with the initials RA (38) that "Through this facility, we can develop as preachers in this mosque and be accepted by the congregation" is a statement that structural support is the dominant factor for the emergence of new religious authority among urban millennial Muslims. Fernando et al. (2022) also said that in the digital era, the emergence of new religious authorities is not only influenced by the figure of the preacher himself but is also dominantly influenced by massive structural support from mosque administrators and the congregation community. In line with that, the emergence of the new religious authority by Fernando et al. (2022) occurs due to the dominant influence of the more accommodative urban Muslim religious structure, so that

it can provide opportunities for young preachers to emerge and develop as new authorities among urban millennial Muslims.

New ustadz among urban millennial Muslims: Cultural factor

The new ustad trend is a phenomenon that has emerged and developed among urban millennial Muslims that is happening massively. According to Fuad (2020), this phenomenon not only forms a religious movement but can also form a new culture in the da'wah procession for urban Muslims. In the view of Verolyna & Syaputri (2021), the emergence of a new ustad trend among urban millennial Muslims is influenced by massive technological developments and by the culture of urban millennial Muslims, who tend to be more open. This context can be seen through the statement made by the young preacher below:

> "We as preachers are relatively new and young. Here we are well received by the congregation and the mosque management. Maybe because most of them come from students, they are more receptive to the new ustad. Some people do not give a place for young ustadz for various reasons. Nevertheless, here the congregation is more open." (RAL, 49).

> "Kami sebagai pendakwah yang tergolong baru dan berusia muda ini, disini kami diterima dengan baik oleh jemaah maupun pengurus masjid nya. Mungkin karena mereka kebanyakan berasal dari kalangan mahasiswa jadi lebih dapat menerima ustad baru. Kan ada juga orang-orang yang tidak ngasih tempat buat ustad muda karena alasan macam-macam kan. Tapi disini jemaah nya lebih terbuka gitu." (RAL, 49).

The emergence of new ustad among urban millennial Muslims, in Awwaliyah's view (2019), is not only influenced by the process of religious moderation but also influenced by very dynamic cultural factors so that the existence of new preachers can be accepted as an authority among urban millennial Muslims. This context can be reflected through the expression of the informant with the initials RAL (49) that "We as young preachers, here we are well received by the congregation and the mosque administrators. Maybe it is because most of them come from students," is a phrase that indicates that the existence of the new ustad can be accepted and developed well because it is influenced by cultural factors from the congregation and the mosque's administrators. The influence of cultural factors on the emergence of new ustad trends among urban millennial Muslims can also be seen through the experiences shared by the informants below:

> "When I am here studying with the mosque congregation, it is very comfortable because they come from students, so their minds are open. So that the reception of young ustad like us is quite good. This means that the characteristics of students are different from other congregations, not fanatics. As long as it suits their needs, it is acceptable. We can also make the mosque a place to study together." (RA, 38).
> "Kalau saya disini belajar bersama-sama jemaah masjid ini nyaman sekali, karena mereka berasal dari kalangan mahasiswa jadi fikirnya sedikit kebuka. Sehingga penerimaan terhadap ustad muda seperti kami cukup baik. Artinya karakteristik mahasiswa kan berbeda dengan jemaah lainnya, tidak fanatik. Selagi sesuai dengan kebutuhan mereka yaaa diterima. Kami pun bisa menjadikan masjid sebagai tempat belajar bersama." (RA, 38).

From the story and experience of the informant with the initials RA (38) as the new ustad, it can be reflected that cultural factors are the dominant factors influencing the emergence of new ustad trends among urban millennials. Fernando et al. (2022) also said that the existence of the new ustad was primarily determined by cultural factors that became the basis for the congregation's behaviour, so the prevailing values and norms strongly influenced the existence of the new ustad among urban millennial Muslims. As Najib & Habibullah (2020) say, religious trends among millennial Muslims are not only influenced by the social construction of the community. However, they are also influenced by cultural factors that are believed in society regarding values, norms, and beliefs symbolically. This context can be seen through the experiences of the new preachers below:

> "The congregation's culture here is more open, so anyone who wants to learn to be a preacher can as long as they do not go astray, given the opportunity. You do not need to graduate from a pesantren; as long as you want to study, the congregation here can accept, even be supported you to advance as a new preacher; that is why earlier the understanding of the congregation was open, maybe because students dominated it." (HS, 45).

> "Budaya jemaah di sini lebih terbuka, sehingga siapapun yang ingin belajar menjadi pendakwah bisa asal tidak melenceng, selau dikasih kesempatan. Tidak perlu harus tamatan pesantren, asal mau belajar jemaah disini dapat menerima, bahkan didukung untuk maju bagi pendakwah baru, karena itu tadi pemahaman jemaah nya terbuka, mungkin karena di dominasi mahasiswa." (HS, 45).

The cultural support obtained by new preachers is one of the essential factors that cause the existence or non-existence of new preachers among urban millennial Muslims. As stated by an informant with the initials HS (45), "The congregational culture here is

more open, so anyone who wants to learn to be a preacher can as long as they do not stray, they are always given the opportunity." In the view of Irfan & Wilkinson (2020), this context can only occur because of the dynamic cultural factors of the community so that urban millennial Muslims can accommodate the existence of new ustad as a positive activity. Thus, the dominant influence of kultur among urban millennial Muslims is the dominant factor for the emergence of new religious authorities, thus forming trends and even new cultures in learning and teaching religious values to Muslims (Murphy et al., 2020).

Conclusion

This study highlights two significant findings regarding the emergence of new religious authority among urban millennial Muslims; First, the emergence of a new religious authority among urban millennial Muslims is not least influenced by the structural factors of the congregation and mosque administrators. This structural factor can be seen through the moral and material support the congregation and mosque management provided to new ustad who want to learn to be preachers. Second, the emergence of new religious authorities among urban millennial Muslims is not least influenced by cultural factors from congregations and mosque administrators who are more open. This cultural factor can be seen through the acceptance and opportunities given by congregations and mosque administrators who are more accommodating to new ustad who want to learn to be preachers. These two findings show that the emergence of a new religious authority has not only become a trend but has also shaped da'wah patterns and activities to be more accommodating among urban millennial Muslims.

In general, empirical discussions about da'wah activities among urban millennial Muslims only emphasize the content, practice, and orientation of practised da'wah, so the discussion of the phenomenon of the new ustad trend among urban millennial Muslims has not been carried out comprehensively. Therefore, the empirical findings in this study reflect that the trend of the emergence of new ustad among urban millennial Muslims does not only occur naturally but has been influenced by two critical factors, namely, structural and cultural factors. This context makes this study different from studies that have discussed the phenomenon of da'wah among urban millennial Muslims. It is hoped that the empirical findings in this study can become a lesson learned for conceptual development regarding da'wah activities among urban millennial Muslims.

This study also has limitations in the data collection process, which only focuses on the scope of the urban millennial Muslim community, which only exists in one mosque area. Therefore, this study has not investigated this phenomenon in the more macro context of the urban millennial Muslim community with various knowledge and meanings in choosing preachers. However, it is hoped that the limitations of this study will serve as a reference for further studies, especially for studies that wish to explain and analyze the reception of urban millennial Muslims to the emergence of new ustad who is becoming a trend, by comparing the urban millennial Muslim community in three mosques. Thus, knowledge about the emergence of new ustad, which becomes a trend, can be explained more comprehensively.

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