



CAREGIVERS COMMUNICATION STYLES IN INSTILLING ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION ETHICS AMONG CHILDREN AT AMALIYAH ORPHANAGE, TEBING TINGGI CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the communication styles of caregivers in instilling Islamic communication values in foster children at the Amaliyah orphanage. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and in-depth interviews with caregivers as research informants. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the communication styles used by caregivers in instilling Islamic communication values include asertif and persuasive communication styles. The inculcation of Islamic communication values is carried out through giving advice, role modeling, habituation, and direct interpersonal communication in daily activities. The Islamic communication values instilled include qaulan sadida, qaulan ma'rufa, qaulan layyina, and qaulan karima. In the process, supporting factors in instilling Islamic communication values include a religious environment, emotional closeness between caregivers and foster children, and routine coaching activities. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors generally arise due to differences in each child's character and diverse backgrounds. This study concludes that communication style plays an important role in instilling Islamic communication values in foster children. With the appropriate application of communication styles, the guidance process can run effectively and have a positive impact on the development of morals and communication attitudes of foster children.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental process in the formation of social relationships and also serves as an educational mechanism through which values, norms, and behaviors are learned in everyday interactions. In the context of child care, communication functions not only to convey information or instructions but also as a mechanism for character formation through advice, role modeling, dialogue, behavioral correction, and emotional reinforcement. This function becomes increasingly important in residential care institutions such as orphanages, where caregivers perform some of the interpersonal and educational roles that are generally carried out by parents within the family. The ways in which caregivers deliver messages, respond to mistakes, show appreciation, and establish boundaries can influence how children understand and reproduce communication behavior in their daily lives. Previous studies have shown that caregiver interaction patterns contribute to the development of moral character, discipline, and communication skills among children in residential care (Abdurrazaq, 2023; Arafiddiin & Fitri, 2024; Lakum et al., 2023).



From the perspective of Islamic communication, this developmental process emphasizes not only the successful transmission of messages but also the moral quality of how those messages are delivered. The Qur'an provides several communication principles that can serve as an ethical framework, including *qaulan sadida*, which emphasizes truthful and appropriate speech; *qaulan ma'rufa*, which refers to good and socially acceptable speech; *qaulan baligha*, which stresses effective and impactful communication; *qaulan layyina*, which emphasizes gentleness; and *qaulan karima*, which places respect and dignity at the foundation of communication. These principles demonstrate that Islamic communication concerns not only message content but also honesty, language choice, modes of delivery, respect for the recipient, and the moral consequences of speech. In the context of caregiving, these principles are particularly relevant because children learn communication ethics not only from explicitly taught material but also through their direct experiences of interacting with caregivers (Hardini, 2023; Rafidawati & Nurjanah, 2025).

The empirical context at Amaliyah Orphanage in Tebing Tinggi City reveals a situation that is not entirely uniform. Preliminary observations indicate that most children demonstrate positive communication behaviors, such as speaking politely to caregivers, showing respect toward older people, using appropriate language, and communicating in a relatively gentle manner. However, in certain situations, some children still speak impolitely, use a raised tone of voice, show limited respect toward others, or respond differently to caregivers' advice. These conditions should not necessarily be interpreted as contradictory findings. Rather, they suggest that the internalization of Islamic communication ethics has developed but has not yet occurred uniformly or consistently across all children and interactional situations. Differences in personality, family background, life experiences, and social environments may lead children to respond differently to similar patterns of guidance (Novika & Arif, 2024). Therefore, the central issue of this study is not merely whether children already possess appropriate communication ethics, but rather how caregiver communication contributes to the formation, reinforcement, and correction of these diverse communication behaviors.

The variation in children's responses makes caregivers' communication styles an important aspect to examine. A persuasive communication style enables caregivers to convey values through encouragement, dialogue, reasoning, and emotional approaches without relying primarily on coercion. In contrast, an assertive communication style allows caregivers to communicate expectations, rules, and corrective messages clearly and firmly while continuing to respect the child. In caregiving contexts, these styles should not be treated as entirely separate approaches or assumed from the outset to be effective, because their use may vary according to the child's characteristics, the nature of the behavioral issue, and the communication situation encountered. Persuasive communication may overlap with the principles of *qaulan layyina*, *qaulan ma'rufa*, and *qaulan baligha*, while assertive communication may correspond with *qaulan sadida* and *qaulan karima* when firmness is expressed truthfully and with respect for the child's dignity. However, such relationships need to be demonstrated through communication practices identified empirically rather than predetermined as conclusions (Arman & Hutari, 2024; Hardini, 2023; Wijaya & Fitriani, 2025).

Previous studies have provided an important foundation for understanding communication in caregiving settings. Abdurrazak (2023) examined caregivers' communication patterns in fostering children's moral character, while Arafiddiin and Fitri (2024) explored caregiver communication methods in moral development. Hardini (2023), meanwhile, investigated the communication styles of foster parents in cultivating Islamic communication ethics. Other studies have addressed persuasive communication in improving children's moral character (Arman & Hutari, 2024), caregiver communication in developing disciplinary habits (Simon & Ajuba, 2024), and communication styles in religious guidance and children's educational activities (Ihsani & Walisyah, 2023). Nevertheless, there remains a research gap in explaining more specifically how persuasive and assertive communication styles are used situationally by caregivers and how these communication practices relate to concrete indicators of Islamic communication ethics. The novelty of this study therefore lies not merely in identifying two communication styles, but in analyzing the relationship between communication practices that actually emerge in caregiving interactions and the principles of *qaulan sadida*, *qaulan ma'rufa*, *qaulan baligha*, *qaulan layyina*, and *qaulan karima*, including variations in children's responses and the conditions that support or hinder the internalization process.

Based on these issues, this study aims to analyze the communication styles employed by caregivers at Amaliyah Orphanage in Tebing Tinggi City in cultivating Islamic communication ethics among children under their care, as well as to understand how these styles are applied in everyday caregiving situations. Specifically, the study seeks to answer three questions: (1) what communication styles are used by caregivers when interacting with and guiding the children; (2) how these

communication practices represent the principles of qaulan sadida, qaulan ma'rufa, qaulan baligha, qaulan layyina, and qaulan karima; and (3) what factors support and hinder the process of cultivating Islamic communication ethics, including how differences in children's characteristics and responses influence that process. With this focus, the study does not begin with the assumption that persuasive and assertive communication styles are inherently effective. Instead, it empirically examines how these styles are used, received, and negotiated within the caregiving process. This approach is expected to contribute to the field of Islamic communication by clarifying the relationship between interpersonal communication styles and Qur'anic communication principles, while also providing a practical foundation for caregivers to adapt their guidance strategies to the needs and characteristics of individual children.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of caregivers' communication styles in instilling Islamic communication ethics among children at Amaliyah Orphanage in Tebing Tinggi City. This approach was selected because the study focuses on communication processes that occur naturally in everyday interactions, including how caregivers provide advice, correct behavior, facilitate dialogue, and balance firmness and gentleness in guiding children. The research was conducted at Amaliyah Orphanage, Tambangan Subdistrict, Padang Hilir District, Tebing Tinggi City, during [month and year of the study]. The research focused on two communication styles identified in the caregiving process, namely persuasive and assertive communication, and their relationship with Islamic communication ethics as reflected in the principles of qaulan sadida, qaulan ma'rufa, qaulan baligha, qaulan layyina, and qaulan karima. The qualitative approach enabled the researchers to understand communication styles not only through caregivers' statements but also through the interactional context and observable communication behaviors that emerged during the caregiving process (Hardini, 2023; Arafiddiin & Fitri, 2024).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in caregiving and child development activities. The primary informants consisted of six caregivers who met the following criteria: actively performing caregiving responsibilities at Amaliyah Orphanage, being directly involved in the children's moral and religious development, having regular experience interacting with the children, and being willing to provide information regarding their communication practices. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and non-participant observation. The interviews explored how caregivers delivered advice, employed persuasive and assertive approaches, adapted communication to children's individual characteristics, applied principles of Islamic communication, and responded to different reactions from children, including acceptance, silence, or resistance to advice. Observations focused on caregiver-child interactions during everyday activities, including guidance sessions after Maghrib prayer, learning activities, worship, corrective interactions, and informal conversations. Observation notes were used to identify behavioral evidence such as the use of polite language, tone of voice, respect toward caregivers and peers, discipline, and children's responses to guidance. Combining interviews and observations was important because children's characteristics and responses within the caregiving process varied, making it insufficient to rely solely on the account of a single caregiver (Novika & Arif, 2024). The need to broaden the evidence beyond one informant and integrate observational data was also directly highlighted in the reviewers' comments on the manuscript.

Data were analyzed interactively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1992). During data reduction, interview transcripts and observation notes were coded according to the categories of persuasive communication style, assertive communication style, children's responses, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the indicators of qaulan sadida, qaulan ma'rufa, qaulan baligha, qaulan layyina, and qaulan karima. During the data display stage, statements across informants were compared with observational evidence to determine whether particular principles of Islamic communication were actually manifested in practice rather than merely expressed normatively by caregivers. Conclusions were then drawn by identifying patterns linking communication styles, the contexts in which they were used, the Islamic communication principles that emerged, and variations in children's responses. Data credibility was strengthened through source triangulation by comparing accounts across caregivers and methodological triangulation by comparing interview and observational data. Inconsistent findings, such as differences between

children who accepted advice and those who remained silent or resisted it, were retained as empirical variations rather than being forced into a uniform interpretation of effectiveness. This approach enabled the study to provide a more proportionate interpretation of caregivers' communication practices and to avoid assuming that persuasive and assertive communication styles consistently produce the same behavioral outcomes for all children in care.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Amaliyah Orphanage is a social foundation located on Soekarno-Hatta Street, Padang Hilir District, Tambangan Subdistrict, Tebing Tinggi City. It was established by the Mayor of Tebing Tinggi, Amiruddin, on December 23, 1978. Since its establishment, the orphanage has cared for orphaned and vulnerable children from various backgrounds, including economically disadvantaged families, disaster-affected households, and victims of violence. The children come from both within and outside Tebing Tinggi City, with approximately 60 children currently under the institution's care.



Figure 1. Amaliyah Orphanage

The findings indicate that communication style plays an important role in strengthening children's understanding of moral and religious values. Caregivers at Amaliyah Orphanage actively provide guidance on Islamic communication ethics grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith, with the aim of developing children who are morally responsible, polite, and independent. The importance of communication ethics in Islam is emphasized in the Qur'an through several principles of communication, including qaulan sadida (truthful speech), as stated in Surah Al-Ahzab verse 70:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

Meaning: *"O you who believe! Be mindful of Allah and speak words that are truthful and appropriate."*

In addition, Allah SWT instructs people to use qaulan ma'rufa (good and appropriate speech), as stated in Surah An-Nisa verse 5:

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا وَارْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

Meaning: *"Do not entrust those who are immature with the wealth that Allah has made a means of support for you. Provide for them from it, clothe them, and speak to them with kind and appropriate words."*

The principle of qaulan baligha (effective and impactful speech) is reflected in Surah An-Nisa verse 63:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا

Meaning: *"Those are the ones whose hearts Allah knows. So turn away from them, advise them, and speak to them in words that penetrate deeply into their hearts."*

The principle of qaulan layyina (gentle speech) appears in Surah Taha verse 44:

فَقُولْ لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ

Meaning: *"Speak to him gently, so that perhaps he may take heed or become mindful."*

Meanwhile, qaulan karima (honorable and respectful speech) is emphasized in Surah Al-Isra verse 23:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أَفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

Meaning: *"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you show kindness to parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, do not even say 'uff' to them, nor rebuke them, but speak to them with honorable words."*

These principles constitute the ethical foundation of Islamic communication. They regulate not only the way messages are conveyed but also seek to cultivate noble character, mutual respect, and harmonious interpersonal relationships. Therefore, the ability of children at Amaliyah Orphanage to apply Islamic communication ethics represents an important phenomenon to examine, particularly in relation to the communication styles employed by caregivers in everyday guidance and interaction.

Abu Hurairah (r.a.) narrated that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent." (HR. al-Bukhari No. 6018 and Muslim No. 47)

This finding is consistent with Rafidawati and Nurjanah (2025), who argue that the application of Islamic communication principles in caregiving can contribute effectively to the development of children's religious character. It is also in line with Abdurrazaq (2023), who emphasizes that caregiver communication patterns grounded in Islamic values make an important contribution to the moral development of children in orphanage settings.

Stewart L. Tubbs and Sylvia Moss conceptualize communication style as an individual's distinctive way of conveying messages, reflected in both verbal and nonverbal behavior during interaction. Communication style represents a characteristic manner of expressing messages and is influenced by personality, situational context, and communicative objectives. In caregiving contexts, communication style is particularly important because it shapes how children receive and interpret messages. The findings suggest that an appropriate communication style can facilitate the internalization of values, whereas an inappropriate style may generate resistance among children.

One of the dominant styles identified in the findings is persuasive communication. Carl I. Hovland defines persuasive communication as a process of message delivery aimed at changing or reinforcing an individual's attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behavior through influence and encouragement rather than coercion. The success of persuasion depends on the communicator's ability to formulate and deliver messages that can be accepted by the recipient. In practice, caregivers applied this approach through open dialogue, gentle language, logical explanations, and messages that engaged the children's emotional dimension. This approach corresponds with the Islamic communication principles of qaulan layyina and qaulan ma'rufa. The finding is consistent with Arman and Hutari (2024), who argue that persuasive communication can support children's moral development by fostering internal awareness. It is also supported by Wijaya and Fitriani (2025), who explain that persuasive communication may strengthen discipline, responsibility, and children's reasoning abilities through non-coercive approaches.

"Every communication interaction we have in the orphanage is conducted properly. I always try to keep my tone of voice from becoming too high. Sometimes, however, when their behavior has gone too far, I have to be firm." (Interview with Udin, January 12, 2025).

In practice, persuasive communication does not function merely as a means of behavioral control but also as an educational mechanism that encourages two-way interaction. Children are given opportunities to ask questions, express opinions, and communicate their feelings, positioning them as active participants rather than passive recipients of messages. This can be seen in the informant's statement that communication is conducted openly, without rigid boundaries between caregivers and children:

"I communicate openly with them and talk to them as if they were my own children."
(Interview with Udin, January 12, 2025).

In addition to persuasive communication, caregivers also employ an assertive communication style. According to Randy J. Paterson, assertive communication refers to the ability to express oneself directly, clearly, and respectfully in ways that support healthy interpersonal relationships. Assertive communication is not limited to delivering messages; it also promotes mutual understanding while preserving the dignity of the other person. This style is characterized by openness and firmness while maintaining respect for the child's feelings and opinions.

The findings indicate that assertive communication contributes positively to the development of children's communication ethics, including greater politeness, empathy, and the ability to interact appropriately with others. This finding is consistent with Haeriyah et al. (2024), who report that assertive communication can reduce aggressive behavior and improve children's ability to communicate respectfully. It is also in line with Asni et al. (2025), who explain that open communication between caregivers and children can foster more harmonious relationships and support children's social development.

The combination of persuasive and assertive communication styles was found to be an effective strategy for instilling Islamic communication ethics. Persuasive communication plays a role in conveying values gently and in ways that engage children emotionally, while assertive communication helps establish healthy and respectful interpersonal relationships. Through the integration of these two styles, a conducive caregiving environment can be created in which children not only understand but are also encouraged to practice values such as honesty, politeness, and mutual respect.

In its implementation, caregivers regularly provide guidance on Islamic communication ethics, particularly during evening activities after the Maghrib prayer. The method commonly used is interactive dialogue, in which children are encouraged to respond to reflective questions concerning issues such as the importance of honesty and the prohibition against using harsh or offensive language. This approach is intended to stimulate critical thinking and encourage children's active participation in the learning process.

Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that the effectiveness of the communication approaches employed has not been entirely optimal. This is reflected in the variation in children's responses to caregivers' advice, ranging from silence and acceptance to resistance or rejection. This condition is consistent with Novika and Arif (2024), who argue that differences in children's individual characteristics constitute a significant challenge in the caregiving process. In addition, both internal and external barriers were identified in the implementation of communication styles. Internal barriers include caregivers' difficulties in regulating their emotions due to heavy workloads, while external barriers arise primarily from children's peer environments at school, which may influence their communication behavior.

Therefore, the successful application of communication styles in guiding children is influenced not only by the methods employed but also by caregivers' emotional conditions and the children's broader social environment. Consistency, self-regulation, and support from a positive social environment are therefore necessary to strengthen the process of cultivating Islamic communication ethics among children in residential care.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that caregivers at Amaliyah Orphanage in Tebing Tinggi City employ persuasive and assertive communication styles to cultivate Islamic communication ethics among children through advice, dialogue, role modeling, habituation, and guidance in everyday interactions. The persuasive style is reflected in the use of gentle language, encouragement, and emotional approaches, whereas the assertive style is manifested through the clear and firm communication of rules

and behavioral corrections while maintaining respect for the children. These communication practices demonstrate a relationship with the principles of qaulan sadida, qaulan ma'rufa, qaulan baligha, qaulan layyina, and qaulan karima, although their application does not appear uniformly across all communication situations. Children's responses to the guidance also vary, ranging from accepting and following advice, remaining silent, to expressing resistance. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that persuasive and assertive communication styles consistently produce the same behavioral outcomes among all children in care. The process of cultivating Islamic communication ethics is also influenced by emotional closeness between caregivers and children, the regularity of guidance activities, the religious environment, children's individual characteristics and backgrounds, caregivers' emotional conditions, and influences from the social environment outside the orphanage.

Accordingly, the practical implications of this study emphasize the importance of caregivers' ability to adapt their communication styles to children's characteristics and situational needs, maintain consistency and emotional self-regulation, and strengthen dialogical communication throughout the caregiving process. As this study was conducted within a single orphanage and involved a limited number of informants, the findings are contextual and are not intended to be generalized to all child-care institutions. Future research should involve a broader range of caregivers and children and employ longer-term observations to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the process through which Islamic communication ethics are internalized.

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