

COMMUNICATION STYLES OF ISLAMIC PREACHERS IN PREVENTING DRUG ABUSE AMONG MUSLIM ADOLESCENTS IN EAST SIANTAR DISTRICT

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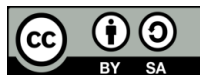
Keywords

*communication style;
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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the communication styles employed by da'i (Islamic preachers) in preventing drug abuse among Muslim adolescents in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City. The study is motivated by growing public concern over drug abuse, particularly methamphetamine, marijuana, and ecstasy, which has increasingly affected the social life, health, and moral development of adolescents. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The research informants consisted of community leaders and da'i who possessed an understanding of local social conditions and were actively involved in efforts to prevent drug abuse in Siantar Timur District. The findings indicate that the communication styles of da'i play an important role in raising awareness among adolescents and the wider community regarding the dangers of drug abuse. The communication approaches employed include religious sermons, moral counseling, open discussions, persuasive communication, and the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram. Da'wah messages were delivered by relating the dangers of drugs to religious values, health, morality, and the future of younger generations. Community responses to these communication efforts were generally positive, as reflected in their enthusiasm for attending religious lectures, asking questions, and supporting drug prevention initiatives. However, the study also identified several barriers, including limited public awareness of the urgency of drug-related risks, insufficient information regarding the negative consequences of drug abuse, and the perception that drug abuse occurs only within certain social groups. This study affirms that persuasive, contextual, and sustained communication by da'i can serve as an important strategy for strengthening drug abuse prevention among Muslim adolescents.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is a complex social problem because it affects health, morality, social relationships, and the future of younger generations. Drugs not only damage users' physical and psychological well-being but also disrupt family stability, social environments, and the overall quality of community life. In the context of adolescence, drug abuse is particularly concerning because adolescence is a transitional stage characterized by physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. During this period, adolescents are in the process of developing their identities, seeking peer recognition, and becoming increasingly susceptible to influences from their social environment. Consequently, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to deviant behavior, including drug abuse, when they lack adequate moral guidance, social supervision, and religious understanding (Sarwono, 2006; Santrock, 2011; Papalia, 2014).

From a socio-religious perspective, drug abuse is understood not only as a violation of the law but also as behavior that contradicts religious values and societal morality. Islam emphasizes the importance of protecting human intellect, life, and conduct from all forms of harm. Although the term



“drugs” is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur’an, substances that impair consciousness and cause dependence may be analogized to khamr because they produce intoxicating effects and impair human reasoning (Muhammad Khudori, 1988; Ahmad Wason Munawwir, 1984). Therefore, preventing drug abuse among Muslim adolescents cannot rely solely on legal measures but also requires moral and religious approaches capable of shaping adolescents’ awareness, values, and behavior.

Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City, is one of the areas facing growing concern over drug abuse among Muslim adolescents. According to accounts provided by community leaders involved in this study, the area has experienced an increase in drug use and distribution in recent years, particularly involving methamphetamine, marijuana, and ecstasy pills. This situation indicates that drug abuse has become a problem affecting both the social life and health of the community. Muslim adolescents, as part of the younger generation, occupy a particularly vulnerable position, as environmental influences, peer relationships, and limited awareness of the harmful consequences of drugs may encourage engagement in risky behavior. Accordingly, efforts to prevent drug abuse in Siantar Timur require the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including families, communities, government institutions, educational institutions, and religious leaders.

Communication plays an important role in delivering prevention messages to the public. In Islam, communication is closely associated with da’wah, namely the activity of calling people toward goodness and preventing wrongdoing. Da’wah communication refers to the process of conveying messages grounded in Islamic values with the aim of influencing the understanding, attitudes, and behavior of mad’u toward positive change (Wahyu Ilaihi, 2010; Zain, 2020). In the context of drug prevention, da’i hold a strategic position as religious communicators who can convey messages about the dangers of drugs through religious sermons, moral counseling, discussions, and the use of social media. Da’wah messages that connect the dangers of drugs with religious values, health, morality, and the future of younger generations have the potential to strengthen adolescents’ awareness and encourage them to avoid drug abuse.

The communication style of da’i is particularly important because the effectiveness of da’wah messages is determined not only by their content but also by the manner in which they are delivered to adolescents and the wider community. Communication style encompasses language choice, emotional approach, strategies for building interpersonal closeness, the use of communication media, and the ability to adapt messages to the characteristics and circumstances of the audience (Widjaja, 2000). Muslim adolescents require communication styles that go beyond conventional advice and instead adopt persuasive, dialogical, contextual, and accessible approaches. Da’i who are able to use simple language, provide concrete examples, create opportunities for questions and discussion, and utilize social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram are more likely to reach adolescents and the wider public effectively. Thus, the communication style adopted by da’i can serve as an important factor in strengthening the effectiveness of da’wah-based drug prevention efforts.

Although drug abuse, adolescence, and da’wah have been widely discussed in socio-religious studies, research that specifically examines the communication styles of da’i in preventing drug abuse among Muslim adolescents within the local context of Siantar Timur District remains limited and requires further scholarly attention. Such research is important because each locality has distinct social conditions, peer interaction patterns, communication challenges, and adolescent characteristics. Against this background, this study aims to analyze the communication styles employed by da’i in preventing drug abuse among Muslim adolescents in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City. It also seeks to identify the forms of prevention messages, communication media, community responses, and barriers encountered by da’i in communicating drug prevention messages. In doing so, this study is expected to contribute to the development of da’wah communication studies, particularly by advancing communication strategies for preventing deviant behavior among Muslim adolescents.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of the communication styles employed by da’i in preventing drug abuse among Muslim adolescents in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City. A qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on the meanings attached to social phenomena, experiences, and communication practices carried out by da’i within the context of community life. Through this approach, the researchers sought to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the process of delivering da’wah messages, the forms of interaction between da’i and the community, and the responses generated by

drug abuse prevention efforts. The descriptive method was used to portray the phenomenon as it naturally occurred in the field without manipulating the object under investigation (Adlini et al., 2022; Jailani & Fauziah, 2022).

Research data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with informants who possessed relevant knowledge and were directly involved in drug abuse prevention efforts in Siantar Timur District, as reflected in the manuscript through interviews with community leaders and local da'i. Observations were undertaken to understand the social conditions of the community and the implementation of da'wah activities within the context of drug prevention, while documentation served as supporting data in the form of documents, field notes, and references relevant to the study. The manuscript does not explicitly specify the number of informants or the techniques used to select them; therefore, this information should be added by the authors to ensure methodological transparency in qualitative research.

Data were analyzed descriptively by interpreting the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to identify the communication styles employed by da'i, the communication media used, community responses, and the factors supporting and hindering drug abuse prevention efforts. Data interpretation was directed toward understanding the relationship between da'wah communication practices and efforts to develop Muslim adolescents' awareness of the dangers of drugs. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, data were compared across sources and interpreted in relation to the concept of da'wah communication, thereby generating a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Nevertheless, the original manuscript does not provide a detailed explanation of the data analysis procedures or the techniques used to establish data trustworthiness. These aspects should therefore be elaborated in the revised article to meet established standards for reporting qualitative research.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Forms of Drug Abuse in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City

The findings indicate that drug abuse in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City, constitutes a serious social problem with direct consequences for the lives of Muslim adolescents. Drug abuse does not merely occur as an individual form of deviant behavior but has developed into a community-level problem associated with peer relationships, weak social control, and the increasing circulation of illicit drugs within the local environment. This situation demonstrates that adolescents occupy a particularly vulnerable position because they are undergoing psychological, social, and moral transitions. During this stage, adolescents tend to seek personal identity, require acceptance from peer groups, and are more susceptible to influences from their social surroundings. Drug abuse among Muslim adolescents in Siantar Timur should therefore be understood as a multidimensional problem involving individual, familial, societal, and religious dimensions (Sarwono, 2006; Santrock, 2011; Papalia, 2014).

This condition was explained by Mr. Dahlan, a community leader in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City, who stated:

"Over the past few years, Siantar Timur District has faced serious problems related to drug abuse. We have observed that drug use and distribution among Muslim adolescents in Siantar Timur have continued to increase. This problem is highly concerning because it affects both the social conditions and health of our community. Based on reports from residents and the relevant authorities, several types of drugs are frequently found in Siantar Timur, including methamphetamine, marijuana, and ecstasy pills. Methamphetamine has become the primary concern because of its severe effects and its extremely high potential for dependence." (Dahlan Nainggolan, 2023)

Interpretively, this finding suggests that drug abuse in Siantar Timur cannot be separated from the social conditions that make adolescents vulnerable to environmental pressures. From the perspective of adolescent development theory, adolescence represents a period characterized by identity exploration and increasingly intensive relationships with peer groups. When adolescents are situated in social environments that are permissive toward drug use, their likelihood of experimenting with and becoming involved in drug abuse may increase. Santrock (2011) explains that adolescence is a

transitional stage characterized by physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes and therefore requires appropriate guidance and support. Similarly, Papalia (2014) emphasizes that adolescent development involves emotional and social changes that can substantially influence decision-making processes. Accordingly, the patterns of drug abuse observed in Siantar Timur can be interpreted as resulting from the interaction between adolescents' developmental vulnerabilities and exposure to an unfavorable social environment.

Beyond its effects on individuals, drug abuse also disrupts the broader social order of the community. The findings indicate that drug abuse can damage social relationships, increase the potential for criminal behavior, reduce the quality of family life, and place additional pressure on healthcare facilities due to the heightened risks of overdose and other drug-related health problems. These conditions demonstrate that drug abuse is not exclusively a medical or legal issue but also represents a social communication problem, as communities require continuous access to information, education, and awareness-building initiatives. From a communication perspective, prevention messages need to be delivered clearly, repeatedly, and in ways that are relevant to the lived realities of the community in order to foster collective awareness. Effective communication can help community members understand the dangers of drugs, recognize indications of drug abuse, and take preventive measures at an early stage (Deddy Mulyana, 2005; Kholil, 2007).

The findings also reveal that the people of Siantar Timur District have strong expectations regarding the eradication of drug abuse through collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Ustadz Idris Pandapotan stated:

"As residents of Siantar Timur District, we hope that immediate action will be taken to eradicate drug abuse so that conditions in our community can improve. Our expectation is, of course, that drug abuse can ultimately be eliminated from our district. We want to create a safe and healthy environment for our younger generation. Achieving this goal requires strong cooperation among the authorities, the community, and all relevant stakeholders. In addition, education and public awareness regarding the dangers of drugs must be continuously strengthened so that the community becomes more responsive to this threat."

This quotation emphasizes that drug abuse prevention cannot be undertaken through isolated or partial efforts; rather, it requires collaboration among religious leaders, government institutions, law enforcement agencies, families, educational institutions, and the wider community. In this context, da'wah communication occupies a strategic position because it integrates moral messages, religious values, and social awareness within a unified process of community education and consciousness-building.

From the perspective of da'wah communication, drug abuse among Muslim adolescents represents a form of social wrongdoing that must be prevented through the principle of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar—enjoining what is right and discouraging what is wrong. Da'wah communication does not merely function to convey religious prohibitions but also seeks to foster awareness, transform attitudes, and encourage more positive forms of behavior. Wahyu Ilaihi (2010) explains that da'wah communication is a process of conveying Islamic messages to mad'u so that they are able to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in their everyday lives. Therefore, in the context of Siantar Timur, messages concerning the dangers of drugs need to be connected with religious values, health, adolescents' future prospects, and social responsibility. Da'i should not merely communicate that drug use is religiously prohibited; they also need to explain its tangible consequences for human intellect, morality, family life, and adolescents' social well-being.

Thus, the patterns of drug abuse identified in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City, reveal a serious problem involving health, moral, social, and religious dimensions. Methamphetamine, marijuana, and ecstasy pills were among the drugs found within the community, with methamphetamine constituting the primary threat because of its strong addictive effects. These findings suggest that drug abuse prevention cannot rely solely on legal enforcement but must also be strengthened through persuasive, contextual, and sustained social and da'wah communication. The role of da'i is particularly significant because they are able to communicate preventive messages through religious language that is familiar and meaningful to Muslim adolescents. When da'wah messages are combined with family education, community supervision, and broader social collaboration, drug abuse prevention efforts are more likely to contribute to the creation of a safer, healthier, and more religiously supportive social environment for younger generations.

Da'i Communication in Preventing Drug Abuse in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City

The findings indicate that communication by da'i plays an important role in preventing drug abuse among Muslim adolescents in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City. Da'i function not only as conveyors of religious teachings but also as social communicators who provide moral education, raise public awareness, and guide adolescents away from deviant behavior. In the context of drug prevention, da'wah messages are directed toward developing an understanding of the harmful effects of drugs on health, morality, adolescents' future prospects, and the stability of the social environment. This finding demonstrates that da'wah communication serves as a strategic means of connecting religious values with the social problems encountered by the community.

The findings are further supported by an interview with Ustadz Idris Pandapotan, who stated:

"The role of a da'i is extremely important in preventing drug abuse within the community. As Islamic preachers, we have a responsibility to provide religious and moral guidance to the public, including education about the dangers of drugs. We use various communication methods to convey prevention messages to the community. I frequently deliver sermons in mosques and other public spaces, discussing Islamic teachings regarding drugs and their negative effects on health and morality. In addition, we also use social media, such as WhatsApp groups and Instagram, to share information and prevention tips with a wider audience." (Ustadz Idris Pandapotan, 2023)

This statement indicates that communication by da'i operates through two principal channels: direct communication through religious sermons and community counseling, and digital communication through social media. These two channels broaden the reach of da'wah messages by engaging both congregants who participate in face-to-face religious activities and members of the community who are active users of digital media.

The findings also show that community responses to communication by da'i tend to be positive. Community members demonstrated enthusiasm in attending religious lectures, asking questions, and engaging in discussions about how to identify signs of drug abuse and how families could be protected from drug-related risks. Such responses indicate that communication by da'i is received not only as religious advice but also as practical information relevant to the needs of the community. Nevertheless, the study also identified several barriers, including limited understanding among some members of the community regarding the urgency of drug-related risks, inadequate knowledge of the harmful consequences of drug abuse, and the perception that drug abuse occurs only within certain social groups. These obstacles require da'i to adopt communication styles that are more contextual, accessible, and closely connected to the everyday realities of the community.

Theoretically, communication by da'i in drug abuse prevention can be understood as part of da'wah communication aimed at transforming the understanding, attitudes, and behavior of mad'u. Da'wah communication is not merely the transmission of religious messages; rather, it is a process of influencing audiences so that they can understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in their everyday lives (Wahyu Ilaihi, 2010). In the context of Siantar Timur District, da'wah messages concerning drug abuse function as an expression of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, namely encouraging adolescents toward positive conduct while preventing them from engaging in behaviors that may harm themselves and their social environment. Accordingly, communication by da'i encompasses educational, persuasive, and preventive dimensions because it seeks to develop awareness before adolescents become involved in drug abuse.

The communication style of da'i can also be analyzed through the concept of communication style as the manner in which messages are delivered in accordance with the communication context, audience characteristics, and intended objectives. Communication style encompasses language choice, intonation, emotional closeness, the use of examples, and the communicator's ability to establish relationships with the audience (Widjaja, 2000). In this study, da'i employed persuasive and dialogical communication styles through religious sermons, open discussions, and the delivery of moral messages linked to the everyday realities of adolescents. This approach is important because adolescents should not merely be presented with prohibitions; rather, they need to be encouraged to understand the religious, social, and health-related reasons for avoiding drugs. Through a dialogical communication style, da'wah messages become more accessible and acceptable because community members are given opportunities to ask questions, express their concerns, and seek solutions collectively.

The use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram demonstrates the adaptation of da'wah communication to technological developments. In a digital society, da'wah messages are no longer confined to mosques or face-to-face forums but can be disseminated through media that are faster, broader in reach, and more interactive. Social media enables da'i to reach adolescents who are more accustomed to digital communication while simultaneously strengthening the dissemination of drug prevention information among families and the wider community. From the perspective of Islamic communication, media function as channels for conveying messages and should be used responsibly to promote goodness and prevent social harm (Kholil, 2007; Zain, 2020). Accordingly, digital da'wah strategies are increasingly relevant for expanding the effectiveness of drug abuse prevention communication in Siantar Timur District.

The effectiveness of communication by da'i in preventing drug abuse largely depends on their ability to connect religious messages with the concrete experiences of the community. When da'i explain the dangers of drugs through the interconnected perspectives of religion, health, morality, family life, and adolescents' future prospects, da'wah messages become more meaningful and practically applicable. This finding indicates that prevention communication should not remain purely normative but must be framed in ways that are relevant to the actual problems experienced by the community. Barriers such as limited public awareness and the perception that drugs do not constitute an immediate threat can be addressed through sustained educational activities, the presentation of real-life cases, family dialogue, and collaboration among religious leaders, government institutions, schools, and community members. Thus, communication by da'i serves as an important instrument for fostering collective awareness and strengthening the moral resilience of Muslim adolescents against drug abuse.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reflects that the communication styles of da'i play an important role in preventing drug abuse among Muslim adolescents in Siantar Timur District, Pematangsiantar City. The findings demonstrate that drug abuse is not merely a legal and health-related issue but also a moral, social, and religious problem that requires persuasive, educational, and sustained communication approaches. Da'i serve as da'wah communicators who deliver preventive messages through religious sermons, moral counseling, open discussions, and the use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram. The messages conveyed do not merely emphasize the religious prohibition of drugs but also explain their consequences for morality, health, family life, adolescents' future prospects, and social well-being. Positive community responses indicate that da'wah communication employing accessible language, concrete examples, and dialogical approaches can foster collective awareness of the dangers of drugs. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including limited understanding among some members of the community, insufficient information regarding the consequences of drug abuse, and the perception that drugs do not represent an immediate threat to their everyday lives. Therefore, preventing drug abuse requires collaboration among da'i, families, communities, government institutions, and educational institutions so that da'wah messages do not remain merely normative advice but develop into a broader social movement capable of strengthening the moral resilience of Muslim adolescents.

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