

# **Group Communication from an Islamic Perspective in Disseminating Development Innovations at the Communications and Informatics Service of North Sumatra Province**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to examine group communication in an Islamic perspective. This type of research is a qualitative descriptive study. Data collection techniques are carried out by means of interviews, observations, and documentation, then processed and analyzed qualitatively with the first step of reducing, presenting the data, and then drawing conclusions. The results of this study found that Islamic communication carried out by the North Sumatra Communication and Information Office was to identify all opportunities and obstacles, develop plans or a series of activities in achieving goals by consensus and mutual deliberation in accordance with Islamic principles. The organization of Islamic communication in groups is carried out by dividing and detailing all tasks or jobs that must be carried out by each employee at Kominfo North Sumatra.

**Keywords:** *Communication, Group, Innovation, Development, Islamic*

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the social interactions of living things on this earth is communication. Communication is needed to interact from one individual to another. Communication as said (Effendy 1984), defines that communication is divided into two points of view. Namely in the language (etymology) and terms (terminology). The word communication is called in English communication. So, if there are two people involved in communication, communication will occur as long as there is a common meaning of what is being said. In terms, Effendy defines communication in accordance with what he quoted from Devito, communication is an activity carried out by one or more people in conveying and receiving messages that are distorted from disturbances in a context that causes effects and feedback occurs (Effendy, 2002). There are also those who explain that communication is a process of delivering energy from the senses to the brain, in the event of receiving and processing information in the process of mutual influence between various systems of people's lives.

According to (Dance, 1967) as quoted (Rahmat, 2001), states that communication is an attempt to generate a response through verbal symbols when the verbal symbols act as stimuli. In the daily life of fellow social beings, this form of communication can be realized through group communication. The desired target is to be able to share the delivery of information and messages to many groups to support development. Then the formation of information characteristics simultaneously according to the desired message. The Department of Communication and Informatics of North Sumatra Province is one of the institutions that involves the form of communication through Islamic communication in terms of disseminating information. This is done in order to strengthen the dissemination of development information in North Sumatra Province.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research is field research with a qualitative descriptive approach. Descriptive as quoted by Rahmat from Isaac and (Michael, 1984) is a way of systematically describing certain facts or characteristics in a factual and accurate manner. According to Basuki (2006), qualitative research is a research process to understand human or social problems by creating a comprehensive and complex picture presented in words, reporting detailed views obtained from resource persons, and carried out in natural settings. Furthermore (Jalaluddin, 1964) suggested that natural research is called a naturalistic setting because the focus of research is on observation and the natural atmosphere.

The focus of this qualitative research is aimed at the forms of communication carried out by the Department of Communication and Information of North Sumatra Province. The data collection was carried out in this study. First, in-depth interviews (in-depth interviews). Interviews were conducted with the Head of the North Sumatra Communication and Information Office and journalists. Second, observation (observation). Routine observation of forms of communication carried out by the North Sumatra Communications and Information Office. While the third, documentation, by tracking daily communication activities. Other data are taken from documentation in the form of pictures, news, and other supporting documentation. Supporting documentation is additional data to strengthen this research. The data obtained were then analyzed according to the context of the type of qualitative research based on qualitative research methods.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Group Communication in Islamic Perspective**

Humans as social beings, certainly cannot be separated from the relationship between one another. Associating with other human beings is closely related to communication activities. Communication is an early form of social interaction. The existence of social contacts and social relationships that are formed are so extensive and provide many benefits for human life starting from the establishment of communication. Living together can be realized because of good communication and able to create peace and the common good. This is corroborated by the fact of the success of the Prophet Muhammad. in building the history of civil society civilization.

In addition to the consistent application of the principles of the Qur'an, the success of the Prophet Muhammad in building the people of Medina, is an indication of his expertise in integrating social, religious and cultural values approaches of the local community. Because the three of them are an inseparable unit in building a civilized society. As emphasized by Imtiaz Hasnain, that one aspect of the Islamic perspective on communication is its emphasis on social, religious, and cultural values. This aspect, said Hasnain, also distinguishes the Western communication approach from Islamic Communication. Because Western communication in general, underestimates the social function of communication and ignores the role of social and cultural structures (Hasnaini, 1993). This opinion is corroborated by Majid Tehranian, who argues that communication theories developed by Western communication experts emphasize empirical aspects and ignore normative and historical aspects. The theory produced through this approach is believed by some to be very premature universalism and naive empiricism. In such a context, Majid Tehranian, explained that this approach has different implications in the context of the life of other communities that have different backgrounds, so that from an Islamic perspective, communication must be developed through an Islamic world-view which in turn becomes the principle of formation of Islamic communication theory (Tehranian, 1993).

Following the opinion above, when talking about communication from an Islamic perspective, it certainly cannot be separated from the Qur'an, Hadith and the history of the

Prophet Muhammad because it is an Islamic world-view. Because Islamic scholarship is always based on the study of the Qur'an, Hadith and the history of the Prophet. From the point of view of Islamic studies, it is understood that the communication process is also described when Allah taught Prophet Adam the names of all objects (Tehrani, 1993). The teaching process carried out by Allah swt. to Adam, is an event of transmitting information. So it is emphasized in Surah Ar Rahman, that the one who teaches humans to communicate is Allah swt (Surah Ar Rahman). These two verses indicate that the main source who is the communicator in Islamic studies is Allah SWT.

In the Qur'an there are many verses that contain the meaning of conveying information or the editorial arrangement indicates the delivery of information or communication. The word qaul, qala in its various forms is interpreted by words. The word khabar in its various derivations is interpreted with information, or informing. The word naba 'with its various forms is also interpreted as news, or preaching. The term al ittisal which is derived from the word wasala means to convey (Kholil, 2007). This term is found in the Qur'an surah Al Qasar verse 51. The words balligh (deliver), bassir (kabarkanlan) are other terms in the Qur'an that describe communication activities. On that basis, it can be emphasized that the Qur'an is very much about communication.

One form of communication that humans do and is called in the Qur'an is group communication. Even in practice, group communication has been carried out by the Prophet Muhammad by forming halaqah-halaqah which not only functions as a place for studying Islamic sciences, but also as a forum for Islamic broadcasting (Sunanto, 2003). The terminology of group communication can be seen from the editorial of the verse that uses the sentences yes ayyuhannas and yes ayyuhalazina amanu. As stated in Surah Al Baqarah verse 61.

And (remember), when you said: "O Musa, we cannot be patient (withstanding) with just one kind of food. So ask your Lord for us, that He may bring us out of what the earth grows, namely its vegetables, cucumbers, garlic, fennel beans, and onions." Moses said: "Would you take the lowly one in place of a better one? Go to a city, you will surely get what you ask for." Then contempt and humiliation was poured on them, and they received the wrath of Allah. It (happened) because they always denied the verses of Allah and killed the Prophets which was not justified. That (happens) because they always do disobedience and transgress limits (QS. Al Baqarah).

The verse above describes the process of dialogue between Prophet Moses and the Children of Israel. The interesting thing about the dialogue is that the priority in group communication is the face-to-face process. In addition, it has a known purpose. Prophet Musa as a communicator, knew the goals that his people wanted and his people also knew what they wanted. The verse above is a small part of the picture of group communication described in the Qur'an. There are many other verses that explain the process of group communication.

As the philosophical foundation of Islamic communication, it is understood from the above verse that Islamic communication does not only emphasize the benefit of the communicator, but also emphasizes the benefit of the communicant. This means that communicators and communicants both have a goal in order to create the common good. This goodness is not only limited to this world, but also to the hereafter. Therefore, in Islamic communication, a communicator is required to avoid lies that may harm the communicator. This can be seen from the language of the Qur'an which is silent from lies in inviting humans to the right language (qowlan sadida) so that it leaves an imprint on the human soul.

Based on the description above, it can be understood that the Islamic communication developed by the early thinkers of this study aims to make Islamic communication an alternative communication, especially in upholding human values that are in accordance with

the nature of human creation. The suitability of communication values with the dimensions of the creation of human nature, is expected to provide benefits to human welfare on the surface of the earth. So the main basis of Islamic communication is the Qur'an and Hadith, so that in this perspective Islamic communication is referred to as a process of delivering or exchanging information using the principles and methods of value communication based on the Qur'an and Hadith.

### **Development in Islamic Perspective**

When referring to the goals of Indonesia's national development, it can be understood that development aims to create a just and prosperous society, materially and spiritually equitable based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. This means that development aims to prosper society both physically and mentally. His standard of living has improved, and that is definitely better in the future. So development is understood as an effort to make changes for the better. In the view of Islam, the change is synonymous with the term change (*taghyir*). But the affirmation of Islam in the *taghyir* is the achievement of a balance between material and spiritual physical development. This is mentioned by Allah swt. in Surah Ar Ra'du verse 11.

For humans there are angels who always follow him in turn, in front and behind him, they guard him by Allah's command. Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. and if Allah wills evil for a people, then no one can reject it; and there is no protector for them but Him (Surah Ar Ra'du).

In the verse above, Allah swt. He expressly states that the condition of a people will not change, as long as they do not change the causes of their decline. This verse encourages humans to make changes, and changes can only be made if humans carry out development. So in the view of Islam, the expected development is development that provides a change from one situation to a better state. Because that is a need that humans are looking for. The development that is aspired and wants to be moved is development that does not conflict with the nature of human events. This is closely related to the word of Allah swt. in surah as-Sajadah verses 7-9.

Who made everything he created the best and who started the creation of man from the ground. Then he made his descendants from the humble essence of water. Then He perfected and breathed into it His (creation) spirit and He made for you hearing, sight and hearts; (but) you are very little grateful (Q.S. as-Sajadah). The verse above explains that humans are made of two elements, namely body and spirit. Thus, it can be understood that development must be in accordance with the nature of human events, namely the development of physical (physical) and spiritual (spiritual) aspects. These two aspects of development must be balanced in order to create a complete human being. Physical development includes development needed by the human body, namely housing, equipment, health, communication tools, transportation and so on. While spiritual development includes mental development, soul, attitudes and emotions in humans themselves.

The verse above also provides an understanding that development in an Islamic perspective is a just development. Islam's siding with justice and balance, both the balance between physical, material and spiritual development is the main characteristic of Islamic development. These characteristics as well as the foundation of the philosophy of development in Islam. Quraish Shihab explains the main principles that form the basis of development, namely monotheism, *rububiah* (divinity), *caliphate* and *tazkiyah* (purification) (Shihab, 1992).

Referring to the opinion above, it can be understood that the development of Islam includes both physical and spiritual aspects, both material and spiritual. Thus, the objectives of Islamic development are: first, to build human resources that drive development that makes changes on the surface of this earth on the basis of faith and piety. Second, it aims to improve the quality of life which includes various aspects, such as improving the quality of oneself in

terms of morals, morals and attitudes, improving the quality of life necessities such as economic, social, political and so on. Improving the quality of life in a country starts from individuals, families and communities to the largest scope, namely the state. This is very much in line with Indonesia's national development goals.

### **Press Meetings as a Channel for Development Information**

Communication media can be classified into four types, namely: (a) interpersonal media, namely direct interpersonal communication media (farmers) with one another privately informally or often referred to as direct conversation, word of mouth. (b) group media, namely communication that takes place between several people in a group which usually involves an audience of more than 15 people, for example meetings, meetings, study together and others. (c) public media, namely communication activities involving an audience of more than 200 people. (d) mass media, that is, if the audience is scattered without knowing where they are. Mass media is a tool used to convey messages from sources to audiences (recipients) using mechanical communication tools such as newspapers, radio and television.

In disseminating information, the press has a significant role because the press has a very broad reach, and its targets are very heterogeneous. The press plays an important role in the process of disseminating information, because it is through the media that new ideas emerge from sources to members of the public. as stated by Effendy that the press is a social institution or community institution which is a subsystem of the government system in the country where it operates, together with other subsystems (Effendy, 2006). The press is a social institution that carries out journalistic activities, covering all mass communication media, such as radio, television and films that function to disseminate information, news, ideas, thoughts of a person or group of people to others. In a narrow sense, the press is classified as publishing products that go through the printing process, such as daily newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines, which are better known as print media (Rachmadi, 1990).

If you pay attention, you can see that there is a gap in information between people who are already developed and those who are not. Inequality in the communication system is mainly due to the centralization of the press in big cities, while rural communities still rely on face-to-face interpersonal communication as a communication system. Given that people in their daily lives have many limitations, among others, education, limited time, the press or mass media can help disseminate the information needed by the community. To attract public interest, information can be conveyed according to the situation and condition of the community. For this reason, the media created must have the following characteristics:

a) simple, easy to understand and familiar, (b) attractive, (c) impressive accuracy, (d) use language that is easy to understand, (e) invites the target to pay attention, remind, and accept the ideas put forward. To facilitate the dissemination of this information, it can be done in various ways, for example by holding a press meeting.

According to (Effendy, 2006) the idealism inherent in the press is described in its implementation, in addition to broadcasting information it also educates, entertains, and influences. These functions can be explained as follows: Fungsi menyiarkan informasi (*to inform*).

Broadcasting information is the first and foremost function of the press. Readers subscribe to or buy newspapers because they need information about various things on this earth, about events that occur, other people's ideas or thoughts, what other people do, what other people say, and so on;

a. Function to educate (to educate)

The second function of the press is to educate. As a means of mass education (mass education), newspapers and magazines contain writings that contain knowledge so that the

audience of readers increases their knowledge. This educational function can be implicit in the form of articles or editorials. Sometimes serialized stories or pictorial news also contain an educational aspect;

b. Entertaining function (to entertain)

Newspapers and magazines often cover things that are entertainment in nature to encourage hard news and high-quality articles. The content of newspapers and magazines that are entertainment in nature can be in the form of short stories, serials, picture stories, crossword puzzles, corners, caricatures, not infrequently news containing human interest, and sometimes editorials. Although this loading contains entertainment, it is solely to relax the tension of the mind after the readers are faced with heavy news and articles.

c. Function to influence (to influence)

This fourth function, namely the function of influence, causes the press to play an important role in people's lives. Of course this feared newspaper is an independent newspaper, which is free to express opinions, free to exercise social control, not a newspaper that carries "his masteris voice". The influencing function of newspapers is implicitly found in editorials and articles.

According to Onong Uchjana Effendy, a press meeting is a meeting with journalists organized by a community leader, political figure, government leader or institution and so on with the hope that statements can be broadcast to the public (Effendy, 1989). The press meeting is understood as the most formal form of interaction between institutions or agencies. Some say that another term for this press conference is press conference. Regardless of the term, press meetings or press conferences are often held at times of specific issues. For example, in certain circumstances or when certain announcements will be issued, press meetings are often held. Press meetings are usually held to convey detailed information, and this is done at the initiative of the institution or agency concerned. So it is usually seen that in press meetings a question and answer session is held by giving journalists the opportunity to ask questions about the issues being discussed. Press conferences are one of the channels for disseminating development information. If it is said that communication is the process of disseminating information, then one of the channels of development information that is often used by the government and the private sector is the press.

In development communication activities, the provision of communication forums such as press conferences, coffee mornings and public meetings, becomes a channel that allows the process of disseminating information and interaction between the government and the community. Therefore, the communication forum mentioned is a major part of the development communication model. The provision of a communication forum for the establishment of an intensive communication between the government and all elements of society in the development process is a very vital requirement. Through this forum, the government can convey/spread development messages, as well as hear various inputs and feedback from the public on the messages conveyed/distributed. Communication forums, as conducted by the North Sumatra Communications and Information Office, are used to formulate common problems, find solutions to problems faced by the community, as well as become a media for conflict resolution at the local level. Thus, development communication will be more effective if it can utilize local groups as communication forums that are regularly attended by residents, and residents have strong ties to these groups.

The benefits of press meetings can help in disseminating new information issued by the relevant agency or institution, so that the public can know it, understand it, and even provide support if the information submitted is useful. Press meetings can also build a positive image of the agency or institution. Even press meetings can establish a relationship with journalists or the press. Journalists or the press are the spearhead of information broadcasting, because it is through them that information enters the media which then disseminates it more

widely to the public. According to Oemar Hamalik, there are four categories of information dissemination processes, namely:

- a. Dissemination in the form of publications or publications using certain media, such as monthly magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, posters, periodic reports and other forms of promotion.
- b. Long-distance communication using the help of electronic media, such as telephone, fax and others.
- c. Direct communication forums through face-to-face interaction communication activities, by means of lectures and questions and answers, reader guidance, seminars and others.
- d. Information services for the community in various effective ways, such as information service centers, public relations, libraries and others (Hamalik, 1993).

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