Decoding Communication Dynamics: Communication Planning Snapshot for The Qur'an Illiteracy Eradication Program

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Abstract

The research delves into the Quranic illiteracy eradication program at the South Bulango Sub-District's Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), with a primary focus on providing a comprehensive overview of the implementation of communication planning for Quranic illiteracy eradication in South Bulango and the associated challenges. Qualitative research data were meticulously gathered through interviews with four key informants, direct observation of activities like "Character Guidance and Quran Guidance" at SDN 1 South Bulango, and the "Management of Quran Study Gardens." Additionally, a gathering of Quran teachers in South Bulango contributed to the data collection process. Documentary studies involved examining regulations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and various documents held by KUA South Bulango pertaining to the Quranic illiteracy eradication program and its communication planning. The subsequent analysis yielded two primary findings. Firstly, the executed communication planning encompassed various crucial aspects, including activity types, duration, target parties, human resources, "target binding strategies," and communication channels. Secondly, identified obstacles comprised a lack of understanding of communication planning stages, a limited number of counselors, unavailability of relevant written documents, and insufficient budgeting. These findings contribute novel insights into communication planning and its associated obstacles, underscoring its pivotal role in the success of the Quranic illiteracy eradication program. The implications recommend directing future efforts towards enhancing program planning and implementation to maximize effectiveness and generate a positive impact on the local community, guided by the profound understanding derived from this research.

Keywords: Communication planning*;* illiteracy eradication; Quran

A. Introduction

One of the virtues of reading the Qur'an is that the Qur'an will be an intercessor for its readers on the Day of Judgment (Marki, 2021). This is based on the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, "Read the Qur'an, for it will intercede for its readers on the Day of Judgment." However, reality shows that there are still many Muslims in Bulango Selatan District who cannot read the Qur'an.

Central Statistics Agency of Bone Bolango Regency, in 2019, show the total Muslim population in the district was 11,141 individuals (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Bone Bolango, n.d.). Unfortunately, according to the Islamic religious facilitator in Bulango Selatan District, 70 percent or approximately 7,799 individuals, of the total Muslim population in Bulango Selatan District cannot read the Qur'an.

Viewed from a broader perspective, the number of Muslims who cannot read the Qur'an is still quite high. The Indonesia Mengaji Foundation revealed that 65 percent of Muslims in Indonesia cannot read the Qur'an (Permana & Sasongko, 2022). The same figure is also indicated by the research conducted by the Quranic Higher Education Institutions *(PTIQ),* especially in remote or rural areas (Musfah, 2018). It is not surprising that the quality of Muslims in Indonesia is considered to be a minority, despite Indonesia being the country with the largest Muslim population in the world (Permana & Sasongko, 2022). The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (RISSC), in its report titled "The Muslim 500," 2022 edition, reveals that the Muslim population in Indonesia amounts to 231.06 million people (Fauziah, 2022). We believe that this situation serves as an important starting point for the eradication of Qur'an illiteracy in Indonesia.

The high rate of Qur'an illiteracy in Indonesia is caused by various factors. One of the reasons is the incorrect paradigm of parents' attitudes towards religion. Parents believe that reading the Qur'an is not more important than reading the Latin alphabet. They tend to prioritize choosing prestigious schools over selecting Quranic teachers or Qur'an Education Centers *(TPA).* Another cause of the high rate of Qur'an illiteracy in Indonesia is the shortage of religious facilitators (Fiddaroyni, Hurumi, Sobah, & Ansori, 2022; Musfah, 2018). The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia claims that this shortage is a result of the decentralization that has occurred in various regions of Indonesia ("Sekjen: Kemenag Kekurangan Penyuluh Profesional," 2018).

Religious facilitators, whether in functional, honorary, or volunteer roles, play a central role in the spread of Islam, facing significant challenges due to the extensive scope of educational materials and the diversity of target communities. The educational materials encompass aspects of monotheism (Tawhid), jurisprudence (Fiqh), and moral ethics (Akhlak), while the target communities of religious facilitators include rural and urban areas, remote regions, and specific target groups with diverse backgrounds.The backgrounds

of these target groups are also diverse, encompassing differences in age, education, economy, social status, religious sects, and religious organizations (Basit, 2014; Fahrurrozi & Munir, 2021; Hilman, 2021; Nurkholis, Istifianah, & Rahman, 2020; Sukardi & Mansur, 2020).

Religious facilitators are expected to provide solutions to the issue of high Quranic illiteracy rates in Indonesia, especially in the South Bulango Sub-District of Bone Bolango Regency. Local religious facilitators believe that the lack of parental attention to their children's ability to read the Quran is one of the main causes of high Quranic illiteracy rates in the South Bulango Sub-District. If this continues to be neglected, there is a fear that future generations will truly experience Quranic illiteracy. However, the Quran was revealed as guidance and a confirmation of previously revealed scriptures concerning monotheism (Tawhid), containing teachings about unchanging Islamic laws throughout time.(Permana & Sasongko, 2022; Sari, Assyakurrohim, Karoma, & Astuti, 2023).

Religious facilitators have a strategic role in community life. They are not only preachers but also guides and community builders (Firdayuni, 2018; Makmun & Faizal, 2021; Rachmadhani, 2015). the condition of a community with Quranic illiteracy should be a serious concern for religious facilitators. A tangible manifestation of this serious concern is the implementation of various community guidance and development programs aimed at eradicating Quranic illiteracy in the South Bulango Sub-District. Communication planning plays a crucial role in achieving the goals of the program, involving various elements that form a cohesive communication unit, including the communicator, message, audience, media, and effect.(Ayuwangi, 2019; Dewi & Hadiwijaya, 2016; Nurhadi & Kurniawan, 2017; Sahputra, 2020; Surahmi & Farid, 2018; Yohana, 2018; Yohana & Rumyeni, 2019).

In addition, previous theories have stated that there are several fundamental principles of communication planning, namely: 1) Intentional effort; 2) Written in documented form; 3) Application of communication science and art; 4) Systematic and continuous development; 5) Achievement of objectives within a specific timeframe; 6) Achievement of objectives by allocating resources such as funds, tools and equipment, human expertise, and programs; 7) Involvement of various communication elements, including source, message, media, target audience, and effects or changes; and 9) Requires evaluation or measurement of outcomes. These nine fundamental principles of communication planning indicate that communication planning serves as a guide for program implementation. In other words, communication planning is a working document or blueprint that needs to be regularly updated according to needs. Communication planning explains how to disseminate messages. The disseminated messages must be timely and targeted, using appropriate communication channels (Cangara, 2014).

Previous research findings also note that a lack of human resources, time, and budget can be significant obstacles in the planning and implementation of

communication programs. Limited human resources can result in an excessive workload for the communication team, hindering their ability to design and execute effective communication strategies. Limited time can restrict opportunities for thorough message preparation, while budget constraints may limit the selection of optimal media or communication channels (Asiatun, 2020; Fadli, 2022; Jabani, 2015; Nugroho & Marantika, 2019; Syarif, Roem, & Arif, 2021; Wijaya, 2015).

This research aims to comprehend the communication planning and challenges involved in the communication planning of the Quranic illiteracy eradication program conducted by religious facilitators in South Bulango District. The research findings provide novel insights into various aspects of communication planning and its obstacles not previously addressed in studies. The results of the research also strengthen the understanding of the significance of communication planning in the Quranic illiteracy eradication program. Therefore, this study is anticipated to contribute value to the advancement of knowledge, particularly in the fields of communication and Islamic broadcasting. Additionally, it is hoped that this research will be beneficial for religious facilitators and all parties involved in efforts to eliminate Quranic illiteracy in Indonesia.

B. Methods

This research employs a qualitative method with interviews approach as the primary data collection technique. The process begins by formulating exploratory research questions focusing on a deep understanding of the communication planning in the Quran illiteracy eradication program conducted by religious facilitators in Bulango Selatan District. The interview questions are designed to address the "how" and "what" aspects, aligning with the qualitative framework.

Careful selection of informants is based on their ability to provide in-depth and clear information regarding communication planning and its obstacles. Four key informants are involved, including the Head of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Bulango Selatan District, the District Head of Bulango Selatan, and two Islamic religious facilitators at KUA Bulango Selatan. The interview process takes place at different times and locations, adhering to the schedule and availability of informants.

Interviews with the Head of KUA occurred at the KUA office in early September 2022, the District Head at the District Office in late October 2022, and interviews with Islamic religious facilitators in Bulango Selatan were conducted at KUA in early September and November 2022, with additional sessions via WhatsApp calls in mid-December 2022 and mid-January 2023. The data from these interviews are systematically documented in a table to provide a structured overview of the research process and timeline.

These four informants were chosen because they are considered capable of providing in-depth information and explanations regarding the communication planning of the Qur'an illiteracy eradication program and its obstacles. Our interview with the Head of the KUA in Bulango Selatan District took place at the KUA office in early September 2022. The interview with the District Head of Bulango Selatan occurred at the District Office in late October 2022. Interviews with Islamic religious facilitators in Bulango Selatan were conducted at the KUA in early September and November 2022, and through WhatsApp calls in mid-December 2022 and mid-January 2023. This is evident in the following table:

Interviewee	Interview	Name	Occupation	Day, Date	Time	Place
1	Interview I	Irfan Mointi	Head of the KUA in Bulango Selatan District	Friday, September 9, 2022	09:00 WITA	Office of the KUA Bulango Selatan
2	Interview I	Sunaryo Usman	Islamic Religious Facilitator Non-Civil Servant KUA Bulango Selatan	Friday, September 9, 2022	14:00 WITA	Office of the KUA Bulango Selatan
3	Interview I	Parmin Azis	District Head of Bulango Selatan	Friday, October 28, 2022	09:00 WITA	Office of the District Head of Bulango Selatan
4	Interview I	Atin Bilaleya	Islamic Religious Facilitator Non-Civil Servant KUA Bulango Selatan	Friday, November 4, 2022	09:00 WITA	Office of the KUA Bulango Selatan
2	Interview II	Sunaryo Usman	Islamic Religious Facilitator Non-Civil Servant KUA Bulango Selatan	Thursday, December 15, 2022	14:00 WITA	WhatsApp Call
2	Interview III	Sunaryo Usman	Islamic Religious Facilitator Non-Civil Servant KUA Bulango Selatan	Friday, January 13, 2023	09:00 WITA	WhatsApp Call

Table 1: Research Informants

In addition to interviews, we also collected research data through the

observation method. We observed the activities of *"Bimbingan Karakter dan Bimbingan Al-Qur'an"* at SDN 1 Bulango Selatan and the gathering of Qur'an teachers *(guru ngaji)* as part of the *"Manajemen Pengelolaan Taman Pengajian Al-Qur'an."* We also observed discussions in three WhatsApp groups: *"Guru Ngaji Bulsel," "Santri Angkatan I,"* and *"Rumah Qur'an NQ Angk.2."* Research data were also gathered through the documentation study method. Documents related to regulations from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the Qur'an illiteracy eradication program and various written documents held by the KUA in Bulango Selatan District related to the Qur'an illiteracy eradication program and communication planning were included in the study.

C. Results and Discussion
C.1. Communication Planning

The research findings highlight eight crucial aspects of the communication planning process for the Quranic illiteracy eradication program conducted by non-civil servant Islamic religious facilitators in Bulango Selatan District. Firstly, the initial meeting plays a pivotal role in determining the program's key areas, with a specific focus on eradicating Quranic illiteracy. The duration and target audience are meticulously defined during the planning phase, aligning with the program's objectives. Noteworthy is the identification of key collaborators, including lecturers from the State Islamic Institute Sultan Amai Gorontalo and functional facilitators from the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, enhancing the program's depth and quality. An innovative "target-binding strategy" is implemented, particularly in the "TPQ" activities, ensuring consistent participation. Communication channels, predominantly WhatsApp groups and phone calls, are instrumental, although face-to-face interactions are prioritized over virtual means. The findings underscore the program's success in balancing technology and direct engagement, with a nuanced personal approach and a keen emphasis on sustained audience participation. In summary, these results depict a comprehensive and structured approach in the planning and execution of the Quranic illiteracy eradication program, culminating in effective strategies for addressing this issue within the community. The flow of communication planning for the eradication program of Quranic illiteracy discussed above can be illustrated through the following diagram:
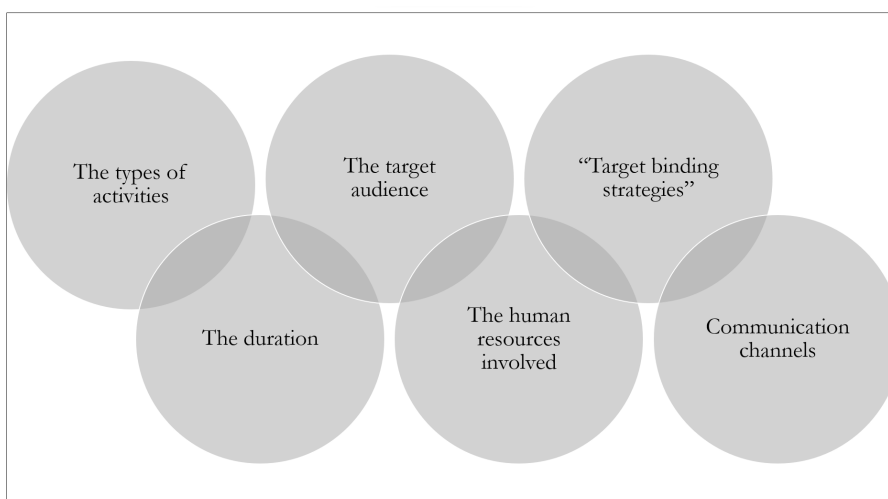
Diagram 1: Communication Planning

The aspects observed in this research finding do not fully meet the fundamental principles of communication planning that have been previously formulated. The planning process carried out by the Islamic religious facilitators at the Office of Religious Affairs *(KUA)* in Bulango Selatan District is an intentional effort. Unfortunately, it is not documented in written form. The research findings also indicate that communication planning is not conducted systematically. However, some stages of communication planning can be identified, such as determining the duration, resources, and media. Similarly, the eighth fundamental principle of communication planning (source, message, media, target audience, and effects or changes) is evident in these research findings.

We believe that through effective communication planning, Islamic religious facilitators at the Office of Religious Affairs *(KUA)* in Bulango Selatan District can determine who will speak to whom, when, and through which media. This will greatly help improve communication effectiveness and avoid communication errors that could harm the organization, in this case, the Office of Religious Affairs in Bulango Selatan District. Furthermore, communication planning assists in clarifying objectives and the intended message. By having clear objectives, the conveyed message will be more easily understood by the target audience of the program to eradicate illiteracy in Quranic studies, thus enabling the desired objectives to be achieved. Moreover, with a well-designed communication plan, the success and effectiveness indicators of the communication process become measurable. This aids in evaluating the success of the communication program and making necessary improvements if required.

From the obtained research findings, the researcher discusses them within the framework of communication science, providing an in-depth examination of these findings. This discussion delves into the implications of the research results, connecting them with concepts and theories in the field of communication science. It aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the

significance and relevance of the findings within the communication science framework.

C.1.1 Program Focus

The decision to concentrate on eradicating Quranic illiteracy serves as a manifestation of the agenda-setting theory, as introduced by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. This theory posits that the media, in this case, the communication planning of the program, influences public attention by emphasizing specific issues. By focusing on Quranic illiteracy, the facilitators strategically guide community awareness and prioritize it as a crucial concern.

C.1.2 Communication Planning

The meticulous planning of the program format, duration, and target audience aligns with Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory. This theoretical framework suggests that successful adoption of an innovation, such as the Quranic illiteracy eradication program, relies on careful planning and management of the diffusion process. The structured communication plan ensures effective implementation and acceptance within the community.

C.1.3 Identification of Involved Parties

The engagement of external resources resonates with network theory, emphasizing the role of social networks in communication. By incorporating insights from lecturers and functional facilitators, the communication network surrounding the Quranic illiteracy eradication program becomes more diverse and enriched. This external input enhances the program's effectiveness by tapping into a broader range of expertise.

C.1.4 "Target-Binding Strategy" Method

The implementation of the "target-binding strategy" method finds support in Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. This theory posits that individuals learn by observing others, and the savings group combined with TPQ activities creates a social environment conducive to consistent participation and learning among Quranic teachers. This method is an innovative application of social learning principles in an educational context.

C.1.5 Utilization of Communication Channels

The emphasis on face-to-face communication and the supplementary use of WhatsApp groups align with the media richness theory by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel. This theory contends that face-to-face communication provides a higher level of information richness, fostering a deeper understanding and connection. The strategic use of WhatsApp groups complements face-to-face interactions, demonstrating a balanced approach to communication channels.

C.1.6 Duration and Time Frames

The adjustment of program duration to suit the characteristics of the target audience corresponds with the uses and gratifications theory. This theory suggests that media users are not passive consumers but actively choose media that gratify their needs. Adapting the program duration to the availability and preferences of elementary school children and Quranic teachers aligns with this user-centric approach.

C.1.7 Involvement of External Resources

Incorporating lecturers and functional facilitators as resource persons aligns with the collaborative communication theory. This theory emphasizes the synergistic collaboration of various stakeholders to achieve common goals. The involvement of external experts enriches the program by tapping into different perspectives and expertise, contributing to a more holistic approach.

C.1.8 Limited Use of Social Media

The decision not to utilize popular social media platforms like Facebook as communication channels can be understood through the media richness theory and the diffusion of innovations theory. While these platforms offer wide reach, the preference for more direct, face-to-face communication indicates a focus on the richness of information exchange and the controlled diffusion of the program within the community.

In summary, these eight findings underscore the comprehensive and theoretically grounded approach taken in the communication planning of the Quranic illiteracy eradication program. The integration of various communication theories provides a nuanced understanding and a solid foundation for effective planning and implementation.

C.2. Barriers to Communication Planning

The research findings indicate that not all parties involved in the communication planning of the program understand the proper stages of planning. Communication planning tends to be focused on one facilitator who is considered to have a more comprehensive understanding of the flow of communication planning for the eradication of illiteracy in the Qur'an program at the Office of Religious Affairs in Bulango Selatan District.

The research findings also show that a restriction of human resources, specifically facilitators, is a barrier to communication planning. This constraint has an influence on the small number of schools targeted in the *"Bimbingan Karakter dan Bimbingan Al-Qur'an"* activities, which is one element of the Qur'an illiteracy eradication campaign. The lack of written papers pertaining to the Qur'an illiteracy eradication campaign and communication planning complicates the communication planning process even more. The absence of these documents is due to the facilitators' belief that written records are unnecessary in communication planning. Documents pertaining to program timetables, for example, are judged superfluous. They feel that ignoring such problems is not a big concern.

Budget constraints also pose a hindrance to the communication planning of the Qur'an illiteracy eradication program at the Office of Religious Affairs *(KUA)* in Bulango Selatan District. The *KUA* in Bulango Selatan District does not have a budget to fund this program. We found that this constraint is overcome through donations from various parties within the *KUA,* village governments, and district governments, as well as the community of Bulango Selatan District. This solution is proposed to ensure the implementation of various activities related to the Qur'an illiteracy eradication program in Bulango Selatan District.

The obstacles in the communication planning of the Qur'an illiteracy eradication program discussed above can be illustrated through the following diagram:
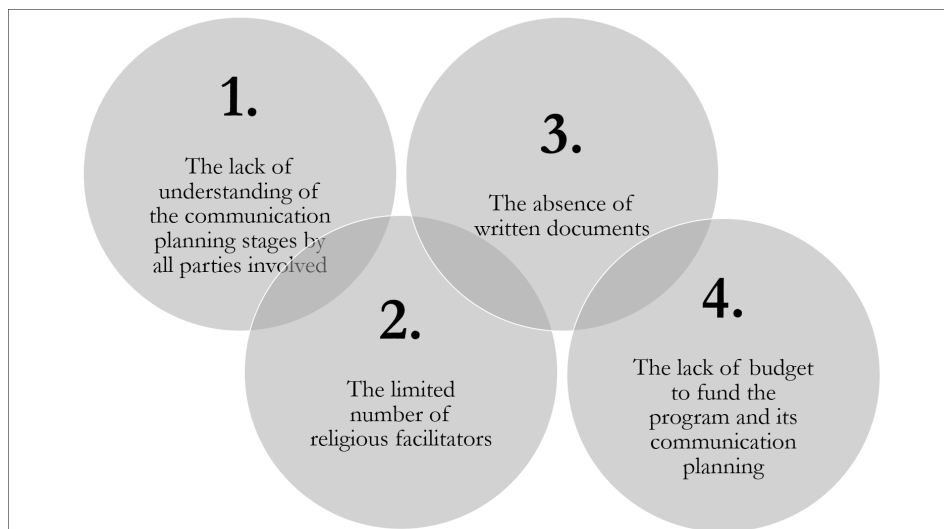

Diagram 2: Communication Planning Obstacles

It is undeniable that a lack of human resources, time, and budget can hinder the planning and implementation of communication programs. We believe that it is necessary for Islamic religious facilitators at the *KUA* of Bulango Selatan District to ensure the availability of sufficient resources to carry out effective communication programs. Furthermore, another obstacle to communication planning is a lack of understanding of the target audience. If the Islamic religious facilitators at the *KUA* of Bulango Selatan District do not understand this, the designed communication program may be ineffective or even detrimental. Additionally, without measuring or evaluating the success of the communication program, it will not be known to what extent the program has been successful or what needs to be improved in the future. Lastly, a lack of creativity in planning communication programs can hinder the appeal of the messages conveyed to the target audience. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that the communication team has the freedom and support to create creative and innovative programs.

D. Conclusion

The communication planning for Illiteracy Eradication programs led by Islamic religious facilitators involves several systematic steps, encompassing the selection of activities, determining duration, identifying target participants, specifying human resources involved, formulating target binding strategies, and choosing appropriate communication channels. In the context of the illiteracy eradication program for Quranic recitation at the KUA of Bulango Selatan District, various obstacles hinder effective communication planning. These obstacles include a lack of understanding of communication planning stages among all involved parties, a limited number of available religious facilitators, the absence of written documents related to the program and communication planning, and inadequate budget allocation for program and communication planning.

The research findings present novel insights into the diverse aspects of communication planning and the obstacles encountered, particularly within the context of the Quranic illiteracy eradication program, a topic not extensively explored in prior studies. In conclusion, the study underscores the critical significance of communication planning, urging against its oversight. In light of these findings, the implications emphasize the importance of addressing all identified challenges, with a primary focus on prioritizing communication planning. By implementing actions based on these research findings, institutions can refine their communication strategies and achieve more favorable outcomes in various organized programs. Consequently, this research contributes to advancing knowledge, specifically within the realms of communication and Islamic broadcasting.

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