CORRELATION BETWEEN QURANIC PREACHING METHODS WITH COMMUNICATOR’S CREDIBILITY AMONG THE NEW MEDIA USERS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Communicators refer to the Muslims who convey Islamic messages for the benefits to mankind. Every Muslim individual bears the responsibility as an Islamic communicator and needs to equip themselves with da’wah method known as Quranic preaching methods for the communication process to be effective. Quranic preaching methods encompasses the three basics of preaching outlined in the Quran, namely wisdom, good instruction and arguing with the best manner. Furthermore, Islam also emphasises some of the characteristics of a quality communicator such as trustworthy, fair, trustworthy, adopting good methods, truthful and responsible so that the communicator is seen as a credible person. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the Quranic preaching methods elements and their relationship with communicator’s credibility. The results of the study found that all three Quranic preaching methods elements and communicator’s credibility factors have high Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeding $\alpha > 0.7$. In addition, the Pearson correlation between Quranic preaching methods and communicator’s credibility also recorded a strong relationship of $\alpha > 0.6$. The good instruction element showed a higher correlation coefficient value than two more elements, so it was concluded that the good instruction element was the most significant compared to the other two. This is likely because the respondents are members of the public, in line with the opinion of scholars who deem members of the public are more suitable to be preached through the good instruction method.

Index Terms— Communicator’s credibility, Quranic preaching methods, Islamic communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

An Islamic communicator is a Muslim who conveys the message to the recipient, either individual or community with regards to the information, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs according to the Islamic teachings for the benefit to mankind. In general, da’wah can be communicated in various ways, including via oral, situational, non-verbal and written messages. Nevertheless, this paper focuses more on the communication practice through writing, which refers to the message that is delivered from the source (preacher) to the recipient (receiver) in written manner [1].

A Muslim writer also needs to master Islamic knowledge to spark inspiration with Islamic values in people (Siren 2013). In the context of da’wah communication, a communicator should equip himself with knowledge and methods to attract the interest of the recipient so that the message conveyed can be for the benefit to mankind. This includes the path of da’wah journey, the characteristics of preach, methods of da’wah and some other guidance and guidelines to become a productive communicator [2].

Since the communication of da’wah is a significant and noble thing, then it must be carried out based on the Quran and Sunnah before considering other interpretations or opinions. Ethical practices explicated by the Quran, Sunnah and the pure Imams have indeed illuminated the way to perfection for mankind, by practicing which, Truth perfection can be achieved [3]. In Holy Quran, Allah outlined three methodologies of preaching or Quranic preaching methods so that the effective Islamic communication is realised [4]. Allah says in the Holy Quran which means:
“ Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.”

(Pointed Al-Nahl 16:125)

Logically, God Almighty will not simply ordain by any decree without the presence of operational concept and basis. Therefore, this verse has become the heart of the discussion on the methodology of da’wah, with regards to the means, method or approach in conveying the message of da’wah and applicable at all times and places [5] & [6]. The verse has been addressed or accountable to the Prophet Muhammad and to his people [7]. Ulama’ convey their knowledge in a specific and in-depth manner, in accordance with their respective fields of expertise, while the public invites each other to good deeds and forbids from evil in accordance with their level of knowledge [8]. Quranic preaching methods encompasses the three basics of Islamic preaching outlined in the Quran, namely wisdom, good instruction and arguing with the best manner.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

New media is deemed as more dominant than the traditional media, in fact social networking has been very popular in today’s culture and followed by many [9]. Due to the advent of the internet, people have changed the way they communicate [10]. We are now facing post-truth era which too much truth will become a lie and vice versa [11]. Furthermore, the complexity of information disseminated through new media can lead to confusion and affect the information validity. Even a Muslim who do not have a solid foundation of Islam encounter issues in verifying information. Although the communicator intentions are good, that is to spread the messages of Islam, but there are risks that the misunderstanding of some verses from the Quran spread through this new media can tarnish the reputation of Islam. In addition, the credibility of Islamic communicators should be re-evaluated so that the da’wah outreach activities keep thriving [5]. Da’wah in the post-truth era requires the credibility of a competent preacher to bring people back so that they are not lulled by the flow of technological development [11]. At the same time, the preacher who are guided through the Quran should emphasize the method of da’wah outlined in the Quran when da’wah is carried out. Therefore, the objective of this study to analyses the elements of Quranic preaching methods and their relationship with communicator’s credibility.

Quranic Preaching Methods

Muslims believe that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith. Islam through revelation has laid down the principles required to shed light on the identity of Islam as the most perfect and unique in terms of external and internal aspects. Therefore, it is not surprising if the main principles of manners and morals in Islam all are outlined in the Quran, including the means to encourage people to do good deeds and turn away from evil [12]. According to surah Al-Nahl verse 125, the communicator of Islam is encouraged to apply three ways, namely wisdom, good instruction and arguing with the best manner.

Wisdom is interpreted in many ways by the scholars. Among them are defined putting something important in its place, being just in decision making, adopting the highest quality culture in working, every action is backed up by excellent intellect and virtue as well as successfully mobilising good and mitigating damage in society [5]. In addition, a wise person has the wisdom of knowledge of what is spoken or conveyed, the person practices the knowledge, is capable of being impartial and has a noble character, intellectual and acts according to the Quran and Sunnah [13].

A good instruction is expressed as being forthcoming, yet soft and subtle and easy to understand in speech [14]. Besides, the good instruction is a speech that is conveyed in a courteous, prudent and clever way, that portray the speaker’s sincerity and touch the soul of the recipient [15].

Meanwhile, arguing with the best manner is summarized as a good debate, argument or discussion based on factual evidence and solid interpretation to find the truth and the common ground that is deemed ‘Truth’ in many issues involving aspects of faith and life practices. In the meantime, a preacher should keep emotions under control by not offending the opponent [16] & [5].

Communicator’s Credibility

According to the Islamic perspective, a communicator upholds the most significant position in communication. Islam emphasises several characteristics of quality communicators such as truthfulness, humility, kindness, justice,
honesty, sincerity, Truth intentions, truthfulness of the message conveyed, verification of the source of the message and accuracy [17]. Also, Islam emphasises on the morality of the communicator, which refers to the fair nature of a communicator of information. This coincides with what Allah SWT says in the Quran:

“O you who have faith! Be maintainers, as witnesses for the sake of Allah, of justice, 1 and ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair. Be fair; that is nearer to God wariness, and be wary of Allah. Allah is indeed well aware of what you do. And be mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Aware of what you do.”

(Al-Maaidah 5:8)

Moreover, Allah forbids the believers to make friends with those who are hypocrites by divulging them all the secrets of the believers and all the matters prepared for Islam, this is highlighted in the Quran which means:

“O believers! Do not associate closely with others who would not miss a chance to harm you. Their only desire is to see you suffer. Their prejudice has become evident from what they say—and what their hearts hide is far worse. We have made Our revelations clear to you, if only you understood.”

(Ali Imraan 3:118)

In the context of the credibility of a communicator, a preacher is forbidden to disclose the positive or the negative things about ourselves to those who are hypocrites and untrustworthy. It is feared that this will affect the original intention and purpose of da’wah if the parties involved manipulate the information provided. As a result, the preacher is regarded as less credible.

As a Muslim preacher, one needs to emphasize to “speak to people according to their respective levels of intellect (level of thinking)”, in fact this is a good method to be applied by the presenter to have a better-quality communication [18]. In the meantime, a Muslim preacher must equip himself with the values of faith to achieve success, as highlighted by Allah in surah Al-Mukminun which means:

“Successful indeed are the believers: those who humble themselves in prayer; those who avoid idle talk; those who pay alms-tax; those who guard their chastity; except with their wives or those bondwomen in their possession, for then they are free from blame, but whoever seeks beyond that are the transgressors; the believers are also those who are Truth to their trusts and covenants; and those who are properly observant of their prayers. These are the ones who will be awarded. Paradise as their own. They will be there forever.”

(Al-Mukminun 23: 1-11)

Not only that, Islamic communicators should be aware that they have social responsibilities and benefits that need to be shared with society in accordance with the words of the Prophet:

“Whoever is able to benefit his brother then let him do so.” [19]

(Hadith Muslim, No. 2193)

Furthermore, Allah reminds a believer to verify the truth of something before believing and spreading it to others in the Quran which means:

“O you who have believed! If there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

(Al-Hujuraat 49:6)

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on new media users and it is conducted in two phases, one is the construct development while another to statistically analyse the relationship between Quranic preaching methods and the credibility of the communicator using a quantitative approach. The first item, Quranic preaching methods is treated as an independent variable while the credibility of the communicator as the second item is treated as a dependent variable. The constructs of these two variables refer to the main sources of the Quran and the Sunnah. In addition, da’wah books from the past and contemporary scholars are also referred to in identifying the item. Islamic communication books and past research manuscripts are also used as reference to produce the perfect instrument.
After that, the instrument was submitted to several reference experts, they are Dr Zulkifli Aini, Prof. Madya Dr Che Zarrina Sa’ari, Dr Abdul Rauf Ridzuan dan Dr Mohd Sobhi Ishak. Each of them has expertise in the field of Islamic communication, Islamic thought, quantitative social research as well as sociological theory of media and religion in Malaysia.

In the second phase, 49 statements were produced from 8 items (3 are Quranic preaching method elements and other 7 are communicator’s credibility elements) schedules as a set of constructs in a questionnaire form. A total of 247 Muslims in Malaysia aged between 20-30 years were selected as respondents for the study. The rationale for selecting this age group as respondents is because those within this age range is the largest internet user in Malaysia, which is up to 43.5% [20]. Furthermore, these young people are the most likely to use new media to communicate da’wah, either to spread or receive the messages [21]. Therefore, this group implicitly is the most suitable individuals to be measured in terms of their level of adoption of Quranic preaching methods as well as their credibility.

After that, data from the questionnaire recorded in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to be analysed using Cronbach’s Alpha and Pearson correlation to determine the relationship between Quranic preaching methods variables and communicator’s credibility. Before all items were analysed, the reliability of the instrument for construct validity was determined by the factor analysis method. As a result, there are some items that are discarded and amended to create the best construct. Cronbach’s Alpha analysis is used to determine the internal consistency of an item construct and becomes an indicator of a subitem while the correlation analysis reflects how close the relationship between variables [22].

### IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at the end of 2017</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>55.9%</th>
<th>62.5%</th>
<th>77.3%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>138</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the age and gender distribution of the respondents. Majority of respondents are individuals aged 19 to 20 years, amounting to 55.9%. 77.33% of the total respondents were female while the rest were male.

#### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>No. Item</th>
<th>Alpha (α) Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quranic preaching methods</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguing with the best manner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicator’s Credibility</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithful</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 displays the outcome of the alpha correlation coefficient analysis for the Quranic preaching methods elements. The six items analysed for wisdom produced Cronbach’s Alpha of α = 0.789. A total of 10 items were analysed for good instruction items and its Cronbach’s Alpha was α = 0.912. Meanwhile, arguing with the best manner reached the Cronbach’s Alpha of α = 0.824 with 3 items. In terms of the communicator’s credibility elements, the items for trust and Truth showed Cronbach’s Alpha of α = 0.901 and α = 0.912, respectively. Items for faithful showed α = 0.905 while six items for reliable showed α = 0.883 with. Then, items for just reached Cronbach’s Alpha of α = 0.892. In total, the three elements of Quranic preaching methods have 19 items to be analysed while the five elements of communicator’s credibility are split into 30 items, each of them showed the Cronbach’s Alpha that exceeds 0.7. These findings indicate that the level of internal consistency for the items used in the study instruments is excellent.
Pearson correlation was used as the correlation analysis in this study. The results of the analysis demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between Quranic preaching methods and the identity of Muslim preacher, as highlighted in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3
The relationship between good instruction and communicator’s credibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good instruction</th>
<th>Communicator’s credibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicator’s credibility</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the results of the correlation analysis between elements of good instruction and communicator’s credibility. There was a very strong relationship with the correlation coefficient of \( r = 0.782, P = <.000 \). This means that the messages that are disseminated in a clear and persuasive manner is a crucial factor in determining the credibility of a communicator. In the meantime, the messages conveyed using an analogy, representation or light humour which are solely intended to stimulate the mind of the recipient is a part of the good instruction element that catalyses the communicator’s credibility [23] & [24].

Table 4
The relationship between wisdom and communicator’s credibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wisdom</th>
<th>Communicator’s credibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicator’s credibility</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows the results of the correlation analysis between elements of wisdom and communicator’s credibility. The study found that there was a strong relationship between the two variables with correlation coefficient value of \( r = 0.665, P = <.000 \). A communicator who is wise in composing speech, conveying a message politely and gently will establish strong credibility. [25] & [24]

Table 5
The relationship between elements of arguing with the best manner and communicator’s credibility
Table 5 proves that there is a strong relationship between the elements of arguing with the best manner and communicator’s credibility with the correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.612$, $P = <.000$. Therefore, The credibility of Islamic communicators is also influenced by the ability to keep their emotions and anger under control at social pages [23] & [26].

V. IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The good instruction elements reflect a higher correlation coefficient than the wisdom and arguing with the best manner elements. This is because all respondents in this study are members of the public. The views of Muhammad ‘Abduh in his commentary as follows:

“Most of members of the public are not able to think rationally and in depth, so it is difficult for them to perceive the high level of comparison or resemblance. They can be preached by means of good instruction al–hasanah, that is, with persuasion, good advice and education as well as simple and easy-to-understand teachings that do not burden the listeners” [27].

In addition, the view that the members of the public are regarded as middle class, because they are yet to reach the level of hukama’ (scholars) but they are not in the group who opposes the spread of da’wah. Therefore, the approach of good instruction is more suited for the community who are not able to describe and interpret the teachings of Islam on their own. However, this does not mean that each method is only for a certain group of people, instead, all communicators can utilise all the method, given the diverse nature of human beings [28] & [29].

The same thing has also been practised in this study. Although it is proven that the good instruction approach is more effective because respondents are the members of the public, but the elements of wisdom and arguing with the best manner also are also working. This may be due to the nature that is ingrained in the respondents as communicator, in which everyone has their own behaviour and feelings.

This study suggests for future researchers to apply the Quranic preaching methods variables and the communicator’s credibility variables into different types of community. It is possible that cultural differences and the level of religious practice influenced the results of the study [30].

VI. CONCLUSION

Looking at the results of the correlation analysis, it is concluded that there is a strong relationship between the Quranic preaching methods variables and the communicator’s credibility variables. The credibility of a speaker is the measure of success in da’wah [31]. Furthermore, any individuals who are committed in da’wah activities must preserve their credibility by being faithful, besides having a good communication skill.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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