Effective Youth Communication in Building Religious-Based Social Awareness

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of youth in building religious-based social awareness through effective communication. This study was conducted through community service activities carried out with the Islamic Broadcasting Communication (KPI) Student Association at the Nahdlatul Ulama Institute Tasikmalaya. The focus of the study includes the definition and concept of effective communication, the role of youth in socio-religious issues, integration of religious values in communication, communication strategies, media, and challenges faced. The methods used include group discussions, interactive counselling, and environmental and social studies. The results of the service showed that effective communication with a religious approach can increase understanding, involvement, and real action in solving social issues. Communication approaches that integrate the values of honesty, empathy and fairness strengthen messaging and create deeper emotional connections. Youth play a strategic role as a link between traditional and modern generations through the utilisation of digital media such as Instagram and TikTok, which allows for widespread and interactive dissemination of religious messages. Challenges faced, such as cultural resistance and different interpretations of religious values, can be overcome through collaboration with local communities and the involvement of community leaders as mediators.

Keywords: Effective Communication, Social Awareness, Youth, Religious Values, Community Service.

1.   Introduction

Youth are important assets in community development, especially in the context of spreading religious values that can raise social awareness. Their ability to communicate effectively is key in delivering moral and ethical messages that are relevant to current social issues. Youth have a strategic role in social development, including in addressing religious issues. Through effective communication, youth can deliver social and religious messages that are relevant to the needs of society. Effective communication not only includes technical aspects, but also the integration of religious values that can drive social change. In this context, the Islamic Broadcasting Communication Student Association of the Nahdlatul Ulama Institute of Tasikmalaya plays a role as an actor driving social awareness based on Islamic values.

Youth in this context, their ability to communicate effectively is needed to convey moral and ethical messages that are relevant to the social challenges facing society today (Putnam, 2000). However, challenges in conveying religious values and social awareness often arise due to a lack of understanding of effective communication techniques. This issue becomes even more complex when society is faced with rapid social changes, such as modernisation and digitalisation, which can shift traditional values. Youth need to respond to these challenges with communication approaches that are creative, relevant, and grounded in religious values to maintain social cohesion (Castells, 2015).

Effective communication plays an important role in creating social awareness, especially when religious values are the foundation. In Indonesia's heterogeneous society, youth are agents of change

who are able to voice important issues with relevant and contextualised approaches. This is even more important when social issues such as poverty, education, and health require cross-group collaboration. The Islamic Broadcasting Communication Student Association (KPI) at Institut Nahdlatul Ulama Tasikmalaya has an important role to play in this regard. As a community orientated towards Islamic values, they actively contribute to building religious-based social awareness through various communication activities and concrete actions in the community. This community service aims to address these challenges through training, discussions, and studies involving students and local communities.

One of the main challenges in conveying religious values in the community is the low social awareness of religious and social issues. The results of research conducted by Firdaus and Amin (2024) Young Indonesians face cultural transformation influenced by globalisation and technology, which leads to challenges in maintaining their cultural identity. Millennials are particularly affected, as they balance modernity with traditional values, which can lead to disorientation.

The following related issues, make the reason for the importance of community service activities. including the following: 1) Generation and Value Gap: The difference in perspective between the younger generation and the older generation is often an obstacle in conveying religious values. Youth need communication approaches that are more relevant to their current lifestyles, including the utilisation of digital media; 2) Social Fragmentation: In the context of an increasingly fragmented society, issues such as radicalism, intolerance, and shifting traditional values are challenges that must be addressed through effective communication based on Islamic values and 3) Lack of Effective Communication Training: Many youth, including students, do not have adequate communication skills to effectively convey religious messages. Training and capacity building are key needs in this ministry.

Various previous studies and community services have shown the importance of religious value-based communication in building social awareness, as follows: First, Putnam's (2000) study, in his book Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, highlights the importance of social cohesion in the face of societal fragmentation. This cohesion can be strengthened through communication based on relevant moral and religious values. Second, Castells (2015)'s study in Networks of Outrage and Hope emphasises the role of social media in driving social change, especially when the messages conveyed have universal and profound values. Third, Rockenbach et al. (2015) Participation in interfaith activities encourages pluralism orientation among youth, improving their ability to communicate effectively across different religious backgrounds and social statuses.

The KPI Student Association of the Nahdlatul Ulama Institute Tasikmalaya as the object of community service, previously focused on the education of religious values to rural communities through counselling and training activities. In this activity, the lecturer acts as a facilitator who delivers material through interactive discussion and simulation methods. The results showed an increase in community understanding of the importance of religious values in everyday life. In addition, similar activities have also been carried out by other youth communities in various regions. For example, research by Ratmiati et al. (2023), Students use social media, particularly Instagram and WhatsApp, to share Islamic teachings and moral messages. A study found that 100% of students have social media applications, with 94% actively sharing dakwah content and the 'Pages For You' feature on platforms such as Instagram plays an important role in exposing students to religious content, with 78% receiving it regularly.

Community service carried out by the KPI Student Association of the Nahdlatul Ulama Institute Tasikmalaya is relevant to the theme of strengthening religious value-based communication. This activity is designed to: 1) Improve students' communication skills, especially in delivering religious

messages; 2) Increase community awareness of social issues through an inclusive and participatory approach; 3) Utilise social and digital media to reach a wider audience.

The purpose of this study is to train the communication strategies used by youth in conveying social religious issues, analyse their role in promoting religious values, and disseminate the challenges faced in the implementation of such communication. This service is expected to make a real contribution in building a society, especially youth who are more socially aware and based on religious values.

2. Methods

Community service is a form of contribution that can be made by individuals or groups to improve the quality of life of the community. In this context, there are several methods that can be applied to solve problems faced by the community. These methods include Focus Group Discussions, Interactive Counselling, and Environmental and Social Studies.

Figure 1. Community Service Activity

The photo above was taken during the community service activity and the following is a further explanation of each method: First, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a method used to explore community problems or needs in depth. This method involves a group of people who have similar experiences or views to discuss certain issues. FGDs aim to capture ideas, opinions, or aspirations of the community that may not be revealed in surveys or other research methods. In FGDs, the moderator plays an important role in facilitating the discussion and ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to speak.

By asking open-ended questions, the moderator can dig deeper into the problems faced by the community. The results of this discussion can be used to formulate solutions that are more appropriate and relevant to the needs of the community. According to Krueger (2014), FGDs can help in understanding the social and cultural contexts that influence people's views on an issue. Thus, this method not only collects data, but also provides greater insight into existing social dynamics.

Second, interactive extension is a method that provides education or training based on community needs with a dialogical approach. In this method, participants are not only passive listeners, but also actively ask questions and share experiences. This approach allows for a more dynamic and constructive exchange of information. Interactive counselling can be conducted through various forms

of activities, such as workshops, seminars or trainings. In each session, the facilitator can start by providing basic information on the topic and then open the floor for discussion. In this way, participants can raise questions or problems they face, and the facilitator can provide appropriate solutions. According to Hill et al. (2023), interactive training, combined with sensory extension devices, allows users to connect physical experiences with abstract concepts, increasing understanding and engagement. This approach promotes active participation, encouraging participants to explore and understand complex phenomena.

Third, environmental and social studies is a method that utilises open spaces to make direct observations of the needs of people and their environment. This method aims to understand the social and environmental conditions that affect people's lives. In this study, the service team can make direct observations in the field, observe social interactions, and record problems faced by the community. In addition, interviews with community leaders or stakeholders can also be conducted to gain a broader perspective. The results of this study can be used to formulate more targeted programmes or interventions. According to Bird et al. (2023), these projects encourage young people to develop rigorous criteria for evaluating environmental decisions, thus promoting active participation in community service initiatives.

3. Results and Discussion

The community service results show that effective communication in the context of socio-religious issues can increase community involvement, especially youth, in community development initiatives. This finding is consistent with previous research which states that a religious values-based communication approach strengthens message delivery and creates a better emotional connection with the audience (Hafizh et al., 2023). Successful communication requires clarity of message and adaptation to local values, such as honesty, empathy and fairness, as described by Schramm (1971). This strategy is relevant in delivering religious messages that promote social change.

Youth, as agents of change, have an important role in connecting traditional and modern generations through digital media. This is in line with Wijayanti and Harlis' (2024) research, which emphasises the importance of using social media such as Instagram and TikTok in spreading religious messages widely and interactively. This approach also adds a dimension of inclusivity in communication, allowing young audiences to be more engaged. Challenges such as cultural resistance and different interpretations of religious values came to the fore in the dedication. This is in line with the findings of Hess (2023), who noted that faith-based communication often faces barriers from certain groups. The solutions found in this service involve collaboration with local communities and the involvement of community leaders as mediators to defuse conflicts and improve communication effectiveness.

The case study of Masjid Al-Jihad in Medan (Soemitra, 2014) provides an example of the success of religious institutions in community empowerment. The mosque utilised a strong communication strategy to run a poverty alleviation programme. This experience is relevant to the findings of the dedication, where a community-based approach helps to overcome structural barriers in socio-religious communication. Critical analysis of the literature and the results of this service highlight the need for innovation in communication strategies, such as combining digital technology with traditional values. With the right approach, socio-religious communication is not only a means of delivering messages, but also a sustainable community empowerment platform.

Table 1. Results of Service on Effective Communication

Communication Aspects	Key Findings	Related Strategy
Youth Involvement	Increasing participation in socio-religious issues	Utilisation of social media such as Instagram and TikTok
Socio-religious Values	Strengthening emotional connection with audience	Integration of honesty, empathy and justice values
Challenges	Cultural resistance and different value interpretations	Community collaboration and local mediators
Case Study	The success of the poverty alleviation programme at Al-Jihad Mosque	Community-based communication strategy

The table above presents a summary of the results of community service in the aspect of effective communication related to socio-religious issues. The explanation of each column is as follows: 1) Communication Aspects: Identifying key elements of effective communication, such as youth engagement, integration of socio-religious values, challenges, and case studies; 2) Key Findings: Summarises the main outcomes of the community service, such as how youth play a role in increasing participation or strengthening emotional connection with the audience through religious values; and 3) Related Strategies: Mention the approaches used to overcome problems or improve communication effectiveness, such as the utilisation of social media and community collaboration.

3.1. Fundamental understanding of the Definition and Concept of Effective Communication

Effective communication is the process of delivering a message that successfully achieves the goals desired by the communicator, by ensuring that the message is received and understood by the communicant in accordance with the original intent. In the context of community service, effective communication involves the ability to convey information that can motivate and move the community towards positive change. 'Communication strategies based on Islamic values can increase effectiveness, credibility, and harmony in communicating (Hafizh et al., 2023). Effective communication is defined as the process of delivering messages that can be received and understood properly by the recipient (Schramm, 1954). In the context of social religion, this communication is clarity of message and conformity with Islamic values.

Community service on socio-religious value-based effective communication shows significant results in increasing community involvement, especially youth, in community development initiatives. This finding is consistent with previous research stating that a religious values-based communication approach strengthens message delivery and creates a better emotional connection with the audience (Hafidz et al., 2023). Successful communication requires clarity of message and adaptation to local values, such as honesty, empathy and fairness, as described by Schramm (1954). This strategy is relevant in delivering religious messages that promote social change.

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groups. The solutions found in this service involved collaboration with local communities and the involvement of community leaders as mediators to defuse conflicts and increase communication effectiveness.

In an atmosphere of devotion, participants showed enthusiasm, especially in discussions that addressed Islamic values relevant to everyday social challenges. Participants noted that the use of digital media in message dissemination was helpful in reaching a wider audience, but they also emphasised the importance of a face-to-face approach to build closer personal relationships.

Table 2. Results of Service on Effective Communication

Communication Aspects	Related Strategy	Participant Response
Youth Involvement	Utilisation of social media such as Instagram and TikTok	'Communication through social media is very helpful in disseminating information quickly, especially in understanding and studying religious social issues'
Socio-religious Values	Integration of honesty, empathy and justice values	'Religious value-based messages are easier to accept, because the connection of various social activities that exert costs, thoughts and energy is returned to Allah SWT'
Challenges	Community collaboration and local mediators	'We often face challenges in uniting views amidst various perspectives.'
Case Study	Community-based communication strategy	'The community approach is very effective in solving problems.'

The table summarises the results of community service that focuses on effective communication in a socio-religious context. The table as a whole shows that socio-religious value-based effective communication can be a powerful tool to empower communities and face social challenges with relevant strategic approaches.

3.2. The Role of Youth in Communicating Socio-Religious Issues

Youth have a strategic role as agents of change in society. The energy, creativity, and idealism of youth make them a driving force in spreading religious values that can increase social awareness. According to research, 'youth have an important role in various aspects of life, including in nation building, social, education, and religion' (Widodo & Latifah, 2024). Youth play a role as a liaison between the community and religious leaders. They utilise their religious knowledge and communication skills to deliver social messages in an inclusive manner. Youth have a role as a bridge between traditional and modern societies. They are able to convey socio-religious issues in relevant ways, such as through digital media and community events (Abdullah, 1975).

Youth act as agents of change in society, especially in spreading religious values that raise social awareness. Their energy, creativity and idealism are the driving force in delivering moral and ethical messages that are relevant to current social issues. According to Lubis et al. (2023), youth play an active role in building religious tolerance through regular activities involving various religious communities, such as merkebbas and Halal Bihalal, which effectively overcome differences and promote harmony.

In the community service conducted by the Islamic Broadcasting Communication Student Association of Tasikmalaya Nahdlatul Ulama Institute, the atmosphere of the activity showed high enthusiasm from the youth. They were actively involved in focus group discussions to explore problems and needs in depth in the community. The interactive counselling provided allowed participants to ask questions and share experiences, creating a constructive dialogue. In addition, environmental and social assessments conducted in open spaces provided a first-hand understanding of the needs of the community and their environment.

The community response to this activity was very positive. They felt that the involvement of youth in delivering religious messages with relevant approaches and using digital media facilitated understanding and acceptance. This is in line with the findings of Lubis et al. (2023) who emphasised the importance of the role of youth in building tolerance through activities that involve various religious communities.

The community's view of the role of youth as a bridge between tradition and modernity is also very positive. They see that youth are able to convey social religious issues in relevant ways, such as through digital media and community events, which makes the message more easily accepted by various groups. This shows that the integration of religious values in communication carried out by youth is effective in increasing social awareness and building tolerance between religious communities. The results of the service show that youth have great potential as agents of change in society. By utilising their energy, creativity, and idealism, as well as through effective communication strategies, youth can contribute significantly in spreading religious values that increase social awareness and build tolerance among religious communities.

3.3. Integration of Socio-Religious Values in Communication

Integrating religious values in communication can strengthen the message conveyed and increase acceptance by the community. Values such as honesty, justice and compassion can be the foundation for building effective communication. 'The right communication strategy in conveying messages to youth, for example, can make the messages conveyed well received and understood and try to make quality activities, scheduling the right activities, fostering morals' (Supriadi, 2021). Religious values such as justice, empathy and brotherhood in every communication. This helps to create a strong emotional connection with the audience.

Integrating religious values in community service communication has shown significant results in increasing community acceptance and participation. Values such as honesty, justice, and compassion become the foundation in building effective communication. According to Rahayu and Supriadi (2021), the right communication strategy in delivering messages to youth can make the message well received and understood, and encourage quality activities and moral development.

During the implementation of the service programme, the atmosphere was very conducive. Participants showed high enthusiasm in following each session, especially when religious values were mixed in the material presented. This is in line with the findings of Puspitasari (2023) who emphasised the importance of communication ethics in the Qur'anic perspective, especially related to honesty and justice, in building harmonious relationships with audiences.

The response from the community was very positive. They felt that an approach that promotes religious values is more relevant and touches the spiritual aspect, thus encouraging better behavioural changes. In addition, the participants' views on the importance of communication based on religious values increased, which was reflected in their active participation in discussions and group activities. The results of this service show that the integration of religious values in effective communication can strengthen the message conveyed and increase community involvement. This supports the importance of a values-based approach in community service programmes to achieve more significant impact.

3.4. Communication Strategies in Contributing to Socio-Community Issues

Communication strategies that are relevant for youth in delivering religious-based social messages include persuasive approaches, the use of easy-to-understand language, and the utilisation of information technology. A persuasive approach can improve religious understanding in youth. This is because 'using straightforward language helps de-mystify religious concepts, making them more accessible to younger audiences' (Wijayanti & Harlis, 2024). The strategies used include persuasive

approaches, experiential narratives, and the use of motivational rhetoric. These approaches are effective in raising public awareness and action on social issues.

The integration of religious values in communication by youth plays an important role in increasing the acceptance of the message by the community. Values such as honesty, justice, and compassion are the cornerstones in building effective communication. A persuasive approach that uses straightforward and easy-to-understand language can de-mystify religious concepts, making them more accessible to young audiences.

The utilisation of information technology, particularly social media, has become an effective means for youth to deliver religious-based social messages. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok allow for wide and interactive dissemination of messages, reaching a wider and more diverse audience. However, challenges in this communication remain, such as different interpretations of religious values and resistance from certain groups. Therefore, it is important for youth to continuously improve their digital literacy and communication skills, as well as understand the social and cultural context of the intended audience.

Communication strategies that integrate religious values with persuasive approaches and the utilisation of information technology can increase the effectiveness of socio-religious messages by youth. This is in line with previous research findings that emphasise the importance of relevant and adaptive approaches in da'wah communication in the digital era.

3.5. Media and Communication Channels in Action

The utilisation of social media and digital platforms is an effective means for youth to spread religious messages. The use of technology, such as social media and mobile applications, can be used to spread religious messages, conduct online classes, and interact with a wider audience. 'Utilising platforms such as Instagram and TikTok allows young people to spread religious messages widely and interactively' (Wijayanti & Harlis, 2024). 'Encouraging face-to-face interaction alongside online communication can strengthen understanding and foster community bonds' (Maryani et al., 2024). The utilisation of social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp became the main channel. In addition, direct discussion forums are also conducted to strengthen personal relationships with the community. The use of social media by youth in spreading religious messages has shown significant results in various community service programmes. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp are used to deliver engaging and interactive religious content, thus reaching a wider and more diverse audience. 'This is in line with findings showing that social media can be an efficient and effective tool to spread Islamic teachings more widely, provide a space for religious discussions, and build spiritual awareness' (Putra & Akbar, 2025).

A service atmosphere that utilises social media tends to be more dynamic and responsive. The interaction is not only one-way, but allows for dialogue between the messenger and the audience. This strengthens understanding and fosters closer community ties. In addition, 'the use of social media such as Instagram makes it easier for preachers to deliver da'wah messages, and for millennials, this platform facilitates access to information or da'wah messages delivered by preachers or da'wah actors' (Faridah et al., 2022). Responses from the public, especially the younger generation, to the use of social media as a means of da'wah are generally positive. They feel more connected and motivated to explore religious teachings through content that is presented creatively and relevant to everyday life. Research shows that 'social media has great potential in enriching adolescents' religious knowledge, but it is important for adolescents to choose credible sources and for parents and educators to provide assistance in using social media wisely' (Luthfia, 2025).

Experts' views also support the utilisation of social media in da'wah. They emphasise the importance of appropriate communication strategies, such as the use of easy-to-understand language and persuasive approaches, to increase the effectiveness of religious messaging. In addition, 'a combination of online and face-to-face interaction is recommended to strengthen understanding and build stronger community ties' (Ummah, 2023). The results of services that utilise social media as a means of da'wah show that this strategy is effective in increasing religious awareness and understanding among the younger generation. However, it should be noted that the content delivered must be credible and accompanied by appropriate assistance to ensure that the messages received are in accordance with the correct teachings. Thus, the utilisation of social media can be a strong complement to da'wah and religious education efforts in this digital era.

3.6. Challenges in Communication and Case Studies

Challenges faced by youth in communication include different interpretations of religious values, resistance from certain groups, and limited access to technology. 'Youth often face multiple interpretations of religious values, which can lead to confusion and conflict in communication. Religious institutions can emphasise strict understandings, having the effect of limiting young people's ability to express themselves freely within their communities' (Hess, 2023). 'Communication of social environmental issues with youth is often met with scepticism, as traditional channels may not resonate with younger audiences, leading to resistance from both sides' (Komarova, 2022). 'Ethical challenges arise in community settings where homeless or street-involved youth use social media, highlighting the need for guidance in digital literacy' (Ford, 2018). Challenges faced include cultural resistance, different interpretations of religious values, and lack of resources. Case studies are needed to show that through collaboration with communities, these challenges can be gradually overcome.

Youth need to learn by conducting case studies that show that appropriate communication strategies can improve community welfare and participation in development activities, as found in research on mosques. For one, studies on 'mosques can serve as important institutions for community empowerment in Muslim-majority countries, as demonstrated by the case study of Masjid Al-Jihad in Medan, Indonesia. The mosque implements programmes that effectively address poverty and community development, showcasing the potential of religious institutions in social initiatives' (Soemitra, 2014). The integration of religious values in youth communication plays an important role in delivering effective social messages. Values such as honesty, justice, and compassion become the foundation in building communication that can be accepted by the wider community. A persuasive approach using straightforward and easy-to-understand language helps to de-mystify religious concepts, making them more accessible to young audiences. In addition, the utilisation of information technology, such as social media and mobile applications, enables the dissemination of religious messages in a broad and interactive manner.

Further case studies show that mosques can serve as important institutions for community empowerment. For example, 'Jogokariyan Mosque in Yogyakarta plays an active role in local economic development by encouraging community participation in economic and social activities' (Saputra & Agustina, 2021) and 'Al-Akbar Mosque in Surabaya acts as a driver of the MSME system to strengthen the economy of the people' (Nanda, 2021). The programmes implemented by these mosques are effective in addressing social and economic problems, demonstrating the potential of religious institutions in social initiatives.

However, the challenges faced by youth in communicating religious values are many. Different interpretations of religious value views can lead to confusion and conflict in communication. Resistance from certain groups, especially those with a strict religious understanding, can limit young people's

expression in their communities. In addition, limited access to technology is also an obstacle in spreading religious messages through digital media. To overcome challenges in communicating religious values, collaboration with communities is key. Through persuasive approaches, the use of easy-to-understand language, and the utilisation of information technology, religious messages can be effectively delivered to youth. In addition, encouraging face-to-face interaction alongside online communication can strengthen understanding and foster community bonds. Thus, the integration of religious values in youth communication can improve community welfare and participation in development activities.

4. Conclusion

The community service conducted shows that youth have great potential in building social awareness based on religious values. Effective communication is key in building religious-based social awareness. Effective communication carried out with a participatory approach and relevant media is able to bridge the gap between socio-religious issues in society by youth. The role of youth is very strategic in delivering messages with relevant and integrative approaches. The use of FGD methods, interactive counselling, and social studies provide positive results in raising public awareness.

Suggestions for further studies to address the shortcomings of this study are as follows: 1) improve communication training for youth in delivering socio-religious messages; 2) encourage collaboration between local communities and educational institutions to support programme delivery; and 3) expand the use of technology to reach a wider audience.

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