

Dai Credibility through Public Speaking: An Analysis of Persuasive Communication

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Accepted: Dec 2025

Revised: Jan 2026

Approved: Feb 2026

Kata Kunci:

Kredibilitas

Da'i

Public Speaking

Komunikasi Persuasif

ABSTRACT

Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh kredibilitas dai yang tidak hanya didasari oleh kompetensi keilmuan dalam bidang agama, namun juga dibutuhkan skill atau keahlian lain yang dapat meningkatkan kredibilitas seseorang sebagai dai. Terlebih di era sekarang dimana konten dakwah dapat diakses dengan mudah dan siapa saja dapat membuat konten dakwah. Terkadang mad'u lebih memilih dai dengan kemampuan pengolahan bahasa dan public speaking yang bagus meskipun dengan latar belakang keilmuan yang kurang mumpuni. Oleh karena itu, dalam penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kredibilitas dai melalui public speaking dengan analisis komunikasi persuasif sebab dalam proses kegiatannya dakwah merupakan komunikasi persuasif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode library research, peneliti melakukan proses pengumpulan data dan analisis data baik dari jurnal, buku, artikel ilmiah dan sumber literatur lain yang relevan dengan topik yang dibahas. Keberhasilan dakwah sangat ditentukan oleh kemampuan dai dalam mengimplementasikan komunikasi persuasif, baik melalui retorika, pilihan kata ataupun sikap yang ditampilkan. Kredibilitas dai juga menjadi pengaruh diterima atau tidaknya pesan yang disampaikan, dan melalui kemampuan public speaking dalam melakukan komunikasi persuasif dapat meningkatkan kredibilitas seseorang sebagai dai.

Abstract: This study was motivated by the fact that a dai's credibility is not determined solely by competence in religious scholarship but also requires other skills that can enhance one's standing as a preacher. This is particularly relevant in the present era, when da'wah content is easily accessible and anyone can create da'wah-related content. At times, the mad'u tend to prefer dai who possess strong language mastery and public speaking skills, even when their scholarly background is less substantial. Therefore, this study aims to analyze dai credibility through public speaking within the framework of persuasive communication, since da'wah in practice is a form of persuasive communication. This study employs a library research method. The researcher collected and analyzed data from journals, books, scholarly articles, and other literature relevant to the topic under discussion. The success of da'wah is largely determined by a dai's ability to implement persuasive communication through rhetoric, word choice, and the attitudes displayed. Dai credibility also influences whether the message conveyed is accepted by the audience, and the use of public speaking in persuasive communication can enhance a person's credibility as a dai.

Keywords:

Credibility

Da'i

Public Speaking

Persuasive Communication

I. Introduction

Islam is a religion of da'wah, which means that every Muslim is obliged to actively engage in da'wah activities, as affirmed in the words of Allah SWT in Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 67 and Surah Ali Imran verse 104. Da'wah itself can be understood as a field of knowledge that possesses methods, structure, targets, and subject matter. Therefore, anyone who plays a role in disseminating

an idea should have a strong command of the appropriate ways or methods of delivering that idea so that the message conveyed receives positive feedback or response from the audience (Pattaling, 2013).

In essence, Islamic da'wah is an actualization of faith, manifested through a structured social activity aimed at influencing ways of thinking, attitudes, and behavior at both the individual and sociocultural levels as an effort to realize Islamic teachings in every aspect of life through specific methods. Considering the highly important function and role of da'wah, its understanding must be aligned with the provisions of the Qur'an, the Prophet's Sunnah, and the prophetic biography, all of which explain how Islamic da'wah should be conducted (Abdullah, 2020).

Da'wah activities cannot be separated from the presence of the preacher, or dai. Da'wah and dai are like two sides of a coin that complement each other and cannot be separated. The dai is one of the key factors determining the success or failure of the da'wah process. A dai functions not only as a communicator but also as a motivator and role model in daily life. This is because da'wah messages are not merely informational data, but contain values of belief, worship, and morality (akhlak) that require implementation in individual life (Slamet, 2009).

The concept of persuasive da'wah requires a dai to establish a strong relationship with the mad'u so that the messages or teachings of Islam conveyed can be accepted by them. The indicator of success in persuasive da'wah is evident when the community or mad'u demonstrates a positive attitude and willingness to follow the Islamic teachings presented, resulting in significant change from less desirable behavior toward better conduct. Such success can certainly be achieved when the dai possesses a good, positive relationship and is able to inspire trust in the Islamic teachings being conveyed. A dai's ability to invite and influence the mad'u is an aspect of the dai's credibility as a preacher. A dai with high credibility is one who has competence in his or her field. However, in the current era, the credibility of a dai is no longer limited to mastery of da'wah material; it must also be supported by other soft skills that can enhance effectiveness in da'wah, namely public speaking skills.

Public speaking is the skill of speaking in public clearly, effectively, and engagingly. It can be said that public speaking can be used to change the world in a simple, nonviolent way (Aprilia, Feni, 2025). Public speaking and da'wah share the same purpose, namely to convey information, invite people to goodness, influence, and even entertain audiences. In carrying out da'wah activities, a dai requires techniques capable of exerting an effective influence on the public as the object of da'wah, including the use of public speaking and persuasive communication to influence others so that they accept and follow what is being conveyed.

Public speaking is highly important in persuasive communication because of its capacity to convince and influence the audience to accept certain views, ideas, or actions. In this context, the primary goal of persuasion is the objective of da'wah itself. Through public speaking, a dai can deliver messages clearly and systematically while building the emotional connection and credibility needed to motivate and inspire the audience to act in accordance with the Islamic teachings conveyed by the dai.

Considering the current phenomenon of digital preachers, social media users tend to prefer dai who employ a light communication style, attractive visuals, and sometimes pay less attention to the substance of the message delivered. If this is ignored, there is concern that Islamic values may be conveyed by individuals who are not competent in the field, yet due to strong public speaking skills, what is conveyed appears to be truth. Therefore, this scientific article further explains the credibility of dai through public speaking: an analysis of persuasive communication, with a focus on the role of public speaking in building dai credibility and the factors that determine the effectiveness of dai persuasive communication through public speaking.

II. Method

This scientific article employs a qualitative approach with data collection conducted through a literature review, or library research. Library research is a process involving the collection of library-based data, reading, note-taking, and processing reference materials or library sources (Taufiqurrahman, 2023). Library research is not merely an initial step in preparing a research framework or obtaining information, but rather a means of utilizing library sources to generate research data. In simple terms, library research limits the research activity to library collection materials alone without requiring field research (Zed, 2004). Accordingly, the researcher collected data by reading, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from various reference sources relevant to the topic of dai credibility through public speaking and persuasive communication analysis, including books, scholarly journals, and other literature.

III. Result and Discussion

A. *Theoretical Framework*

1) *Concept of Public Speaking*

Communication is a basic human need in everyday life, and public speaking, or speaking in public, is one form of communication competence that is highly needed. Public speaking can serve as a solution to various problems in social life caused by ignorance due to lack of information. Through public speaking, people become informed and are able to improve what needs to be done for a better life, both individually and collectively (Sihabuddin, 2024).

The definition of public speaking is very broad. One source state that public speaking is the skill of speaking in front of an audience clearly, persuasively, and effectively. It is not limited to that alone. Public speaking also includes the ability to speak confidently, organize thoughts systematically, use effective body language, and handle questions or responses from the audience (Andayani, Wuwuh, 2024). This ability is highly important in various contexts, including professional, academic, political, social, and even religious fields, such as the role of a dai.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines public speaking as “the act or skill of speaking to a usually large group of people,” meaning the act or skill of speaking to many people. Meanwhile, Wikipedia defines public speaking as “the process and act of speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner intended to inform, influence, or entertain a listening audience,” which means public speaking is a process of speaking to a group of people in a structured manner with the aim of conveying information, influencing, or entertaining (Pahrudin, 2020).

Based on the definitions above, public speaking can be understood simply as the ability or potential possessed by a person to speak before the public or an audience in order to convey information, ideas, and similar messages using effective and easily understood language so that the messages delivered can be received by the wider audience. The above definition of public speaking shows that many benefits can be obtained from mastering it. Among them is increased self-confidence, because when a person feels comfortable speaking in public due to strong public speaking skills, self-confidence naturally increases. This can have a positive impact on life, including personal and professional relationships. In addition to increasing self-confidence, public speaking can also help someone become a better communicator. One’s credibility as a communicator will be higher when that person has good public speaking skills. Another benefit is that it opens up many opportunities, since people with good public speaking skills are generally more appreciated and are often a determining factor in career advancement.

Quoting the book *Dasar Public Speaking*, several important points explain why a communicator or public relations practitioner needs to study public speaking: Influence. The ability to speak effectively and in public makes it possible for someone to influence and motivate others. A person who is capable of conveying messages effectively and with confidence will be able to make the message more acceptable to the audience. This would be very different if a communicator lacked strong public speaking skills, because the message conveyed would appear unclear and therefore

be difficult for the audience to accept and be influenced by it. Communication skills. Through public speaking, one can develop communication skills, including the ability to speak clearly, convincingly, and persuasively. These skills are useful for someone whose goal is to invite others or the audience to act or believe in the messages conveyed (Sudi, 2023).

In addition, public speaking contributes to the development of self-confidence, leadership, career advancement, social relationships, and self-expression. It strengthens confidence and courage in expressing opinions and ideas. It also supports leadership development, since speaking confidently and influencing others are qualities sought in effective leaders. Furthermore, public speaking is a valuable asset for career growth. It also helps build strong social relationships with others and makes it easier for individuals to interact and communicate in various social situations. Public speaking likewise provides a space for a person to express ideas, opinions, and experiences to others, enabling knowledge sharing, inspiration, and emotional connection (Sudi, 2023).

Considering how important public speaking skills are, this is in line with the purpose of public speaking itself. Public speaking has specific objectives according to the needs of the speaker, such as conveying information, which is its most basic purpose. Ordinary words delivered through proper public speaking techniques can change a person's perspective or behavior. Influencing the audience is another objective of public speaking. In addition to being required to process information so that it becomes easier to understand, a public speaker must also be able to make the audience interested in listening to the topic until the end. Another purpose is controlling the situation, as speaking skills can be used to manage the atmosphere and surrounding conditions. The next purpose is to entertain or please the audience (Andayani, Wuwuh, 2024). However, this objective is conditional, depending on who the public speaker is. If the speaker is a comedian, then the goal is to entertain the audience with jokes. But this will be different if the message is delivered by a preacher or dai. In that case, the purpose is to convey Islamic teachings and values to the audience.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that public speaking is very important, especially for someone who has the responsibility to convey messages to an audience and hopes that the audience will be willing to act on or believe in the truth of those messages. In the religious field, for example, a dai conveys Islamic teachings with the hope that the audience will follow the message delivered so that a better change occurs within society or the audience.

2) *Communicator Credibility*

Human beings are communicators capable of communicating remarkably with others. A person uses logic when stating opinions, defending them, refuting them, or accepting other opinions. In addition to logic, a person also uses psychological or emotional aspects when communicating with others. A person's ability to send messages to others is one of the important factors in effective communication. Communication can be said to be successful if a communicator can create a change impact on the communicant in accordance with the communicator's purpose in delivering the message. This is related to the credibility of the communicator.

Referring to one of the communication theories, namely source credibility theory developed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, the attributes of the communicator, including expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, largely determine how messages are received and processed by the audience. This theory also emphasizes that the more credible the source, the more easily the audience is influenced. Thus, a person's credibility plays an important role in persuading the audience to make decisions.

Source credibility theory assumes that the communicator's credibility affects persuasive ability toward the audience. This is consistent with Aristotle's theory. Aristotle complements this by stating that there are three elements that support a person in persuading an audience: logos, pathos, and ethos.

Logos (logical argumentation and concrete evidence) refers to the communicator's ability to present data, facts, and coherent reasoning. A communicator who includes concrete evidence when presenting arguments and clear logic in explanations will more easily convince the audience. The

next element is pathos, which literally means emotional management and empathy. Emotional appeal is one of the most important aspects in building closeness and audience engagement. Communicators who can evoke positive emotions such as hope, pride, or empathy have been proven to be more effective in building emotional bonds. However, communicators must remember that if pathos is used disproportionately and without supporting data, it may cause skepticism from the audience. Therefore, communicators must be careful in using pathos when conveying messages so that persuasive communication can take place. The final element is ethos (credibility and character as the foundation). Ethos is an important element in building audience trust. Public communicators generally agree that the credibility and integrity of the communicator are the main assets for successful persuasion (Silvia Huri, 2023).

John P. Kotter stated that one of the causes of organizational change failure is the leader's inability to convey vision directly and convincingly to subordinates, which is related to the leader's public speaking ability. This shows that public speaking is a core competence, not merely an additional one. A leader is a communicator who carries out persuasive communication with subordinates.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that a communicator is someone who delivers speeches or messages to an individual or a group with the intention that the message be approved and acted upon by the communicant who hears it. Communicator credibility is the audience's sense of trust and respect toward the communicator, influenced by the communicator's ability to deliver messages, scholarly integrity, and the skills they possess. Communicator credibility affects the persuasive process directed at the audience. The more credible a communicator is, the greater the chance that the audience will be persuaded.

3) *Persuasive Communication*

Communication is a process of interaction between one individual and another, or between individuals and groups. Persuasion, or persuasive communication, is an effort to influence the audience's thoughts, actions, and judgments. According to Maulana and Gumelar, persuasive communication is understood as a communication ability that can persuade or influence others. More comprehensively, Burgon and Huffner define persuasive communication as a communication process aimed at influencing the thoughts and opinions of others so that they follow the communicator's views and desires, resulting in changes in attitudes, beliefs, and opinions in accordance with what the communicator conveys. There is no element of coercion in persuasive communication (Masruroh, 2020).

Based on the explanation above, it is clear that persuasive communication is an interaction between the communicator and the audience in which the purpose is to persuade or influence the audience so that they believe in and even follow the message conveyed by the communicator. Thus, the audience becomes willing to change their thoughts, actions, and beliefs according to the message delivered.

The functions of persuasive communication, according to Simons, are divided into three: control, consumer protection, and knowledge. The control function is related to change, and change will only occur if persuasion is able to control or direct that change. The protection function means that an invitation to goodness made without coercion can protect individuals, groups, organizations, and society from the traps of persuasion used by irresponsible actors. The knowledge function means that studying persuasive communication provides insight into the role of persuasion in society and the psychological dynamics of persuasion (Salim, 2022).

As explained above, it is clear that the purpose of persuasive communication is to invite or influence the audience to take action as conveyed by the communicator. To achieve this purpose, there are several persuasive communication techniques that can be used: a) Association technique: delivering the message by associating it with an object or event that is currently attracting public attention. b) Integration technique: a persuasive communication technique in which the communicator tries to unite themselves with the audience, one way being through verbal

expressions such as using the word “we” instead of “I,” which implies that what the communicator fights for is the audience’s interest, not personal interest (Rahman, Deni, 2020). c) Reward technique (pay-off technique): influencing others by offering something beneficial or promising certain expectations. d) Fear-arousing technique: a method used to instill fear or describe bad consequences. This technique is the opposite of the reward technique, which promises rewarding, while this one shows punishment. e) Red-herring technique: in persuasive communication, this term refers to the communicator’s art of winning a debate by avoiding weak arguments and redirecting attention to the intended issue. This technique is commonly used when the communicator is under pressure. f) Arrangement technique: the message to be delivered is carefully structured so that it is easier to understand, making the audience more likely to follow the suggestion. This technique is known as the art of arranging messages with appealing appeals (Rahman, Deni, 2020).

One of the most influential persuasion strategies in communication is Aristotle’s rhetorical triangle. According to Aristotle, the communicator’s credibility in persuading the audience is influenced by the ability to attract the audience’s attention in three different areas: logos, ethos, and pathos. Logos refers to the logical evidence used by the communicator in the arguments presented to the audience. Pathos is related to the emotions evoked in listeners. In this aspect, the communicator’s language ability is crucial to success. Aristotle argued that the audience can be attracted when their emotions are stirred. The audience’s perspective changes when they are influenced by feelings of happiness, pain, hatred, or fear. Ethos refers to the character, intelligence, and goodwill perceived by the audience. Aristotle believed that persuasion is more likely to occur when the speaker is qualified, trustworthy, and credible (Rindu Kinasih, 2025).

Logos, ethos, and pathos can serve as alternative strategies for communicators so that messages delivered to the public can be received and believed as truth. The strategy described by Aristotle above shows that communicator credibility influences the success of persuasive communication.

4) *Dai Credibility*

Credibility means being trustworthy and perceived as competent by the receiver. Credibility is also understood as a set of communication perceptions regarding the characteristics of the communicator (Faldiansyah, 2022). Based on this definition, credibility is a perception held by the communicant toward the communicator; therefore, it is not inherent in the communicator. In addition, credibility is related to the communicator’s characteristics, which are referred to as components of credibility. The rise and decline of communicator credibility can be altered by the communicator themselves.

A dai, or preacher, is a Muslim man or woman who has the ability and sincerity to convey Islamic teachings and values to the public with the intention of inviting them toward goodness. When the word credibility is paired with the word dai, it means the trust of the target audience in the preacher or dai, seen from their expertise and personality, thereby creating positive perceptions and recognition in building public trust.

Quoting James McCroskey, the credibility of a communicator, in this case a dai, can derive from: 1) competence, namely the communicator’s or dai’s mastery of the topic being delivered; 2) character, which shows the communicator’s or dai’s personality. If a dai demonstrates good behavior or character, this can increase his or her credibility as a preacher; 3) intention, which indicates whether the values in the message conveyed have a good purpose or not; 4) personality, related to whether the communicator has an attractive personality; 5) dynamism, which shows whether what is conveyed is interesting or instead boring (Fajrie, 2016).

The credibility of the dai as explained above is also called source credibility. Source credibility contains a person’s perception of the source delivering the message, which means credibility can change or be changed. A person’s credibility can change if the communicant, topic, or time changes. In the context of da’wah, dai credibility is influenced by the perception of the target audience. The target audience assigns a credibility label to the preacher or dai based on several aspects such as competence, attitude, personality, knowledge, and ability to deliver da’wah (Rohmah, 2018).

B. Public Speaking as a Factor of Dai Credibility

Awareness of the importance of public speaking has existed in human civilization for centuries. Public speaking was practiced by the ancient Greeks and Romans in the development of rhetoric, particularly when democratic political systems were applied there. This skill was taught in schools because it was needed for political meetings and court proceedings at that time. (Rohmah & Rahmawati, 2019). Public speaking skills are essential when presenting ideas, discussing issues, and delivering reports to others. The ability to speak publicly becomes increasingly important when an individual acts as a leader or, in the religious sphere, as a dai who conveys the values of Islamic teachings to society. As a skill of speaking before large audiences and conveying messages that can be understood and trusted by listeners, public speaking plays an extraordinary role in life, including the following (Sihabuddin, 2024):

Self-development. If a speaker or communicator possesses strong public speaking skills, there will be no fear when asked to speak before an audience. In da'wah practice, a dai as a communicator of Islamic teachings will be able to deliver messages effectively and provide satisfaction to the target audience if he or she has the confidence to speak in public. However, if a dai lacks the courage to convey Islamic teachings before an audience, the intended objectives are unlikely to be achieved optimally. This is because the audience may perceive a dai who cannot speak publicly as lacking credibility.

Influencing the surrounding world. Changes that occur in an individual or a group often begin with ideas or messages delivered by others. Da'wah is a persuasive communication process in which a dai seeks to influence the audience to follow the teachings of Islam conveyed during da'wah. Therefore, if a dai has public speaking skills, it becomes easier to influence the audience to accept and implement the message being delivered, which may later result in changes in behavior, thought, or belief.

Career advancement. Da'wah is a noble activity because, through it, a dai strives to disseminate Islamic teachings. Da'wah is an obligation for every Muslim, and in its implementation one is not allowed to expect material reward from other human beings for the Islamic values being conveyed. Public speaking skills have a significant impact on a dai, as credibility as a preacher can be assessed through public speaking ability. Unconsciously, when a dai possesses good credibility in the eyes of the audience, audience trust increases, which in turn contributes to the dai's popularity.

Based on the explanation above, it can be understood that public speaking is a skill that must be possessed by a communicator, in this case a dai. Dai credibility can be built through public speaking ability. Therefore, in addition to competence in religious knowledge, there is an important aspect that influences dai credibility in the eyes of the audience, namely the ability to convey messages to the audience, the use of expression, and body language, all of which are integrated into one skill known as public speaking.

C. Persuasive Communication in Da'wah

As social beings, human beings cannot be separated from communication activities, both verbal and nonverbal, in order to obtain information and generate cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects. This is especially true in activities intended to convey specific messages, such as da'wah, which therefore requires communication. The occurrence of cognitive, affective, and behavioral change in da'wah is influenced by the dai's ability to use appropriate communication techniques. One of these techniques is persuasive communication.

In the context of da'wah, persuasive communication is understood as communication oriented toward the psychological dimension of the target audience, with the aim of awakening their awareness to accept and implement the values of Islam conveyed by the dai. Thus, persuasive communication is used by the dai to influence the communicant or target audience in cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Hariyanto, 2017).

According to the Qur'an, da'wah is conducted bil hikmah, meaning calling and persuading others by considering sociological and psychological factors. One appropriate da'wah approach that takes sociological and psychological aspects into account is persuasive communication. This is evident in the effects produced by persuasive communication, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes in the communicant or target audience. Therefore, communication based on the principle of hikmah, as mentioned in the Qur'an, can also be understood as persuasive communication in the field of communication studies (Fauzi, 2023).

Da'wah is not merely a process of conveying messages containing Islamic teachings from a dai to the target audience or mad'u, but something far more complex. Da'wah is a persuasive activity in which the dai seeks to invite, persuade, and call the mad'u so that understanding, attitude, better relationships, action, enjoyment, and motivation emerge, eventually encouraging the mad'u to perform acts of goodness as conveyed by the dai to the audience.

The success of persuasive communication in da'wah is influenced by the communicator's, or dai's, understanding of the beliefs and convictions held by the communicant or mad'u, as well as the conformity of the message with reality or existing facts. Through the right approach, da'wah messages will be more easily accepted and implemented by the mad'u, thereby increasing the effectiveness of persuasive communication (Ibrahim, 2024).

Persuasive communication in da'wah is carried out systematically using the AIDDA formula (Attention, Interest, Desire, Decision, Action) as the foundation for its implementation. Based on this formula, persuasive da'wah communication begins with an effort to attract attention (attention). This effort is carried out through an appealing speaking style and body gestures that capture the audience's attention. This attention stage requires the dai's public speaking ability. Once the audience's attention has been obtained, the next step is to generate interest (interest). Persuasive communication is conducted by taking into account the social and psychological conditions of the mad'u; therefore, in the stage of generating interest, the dai will seek to understand the mad'u's situation and condition. After interest has been established in the mad'u or audience, the next stage is to arouse desire. Persuasive communication and the dai's public speaking ability determine whether the process of arousing desire (decision) in the mad'u is successful or not. The dai will make invitations, appeals, or persuasion through a speaking style that may include emotional appeals. If the mad'u develops a desire toward the message conveyed by the dai, the mad'u will be able to make a decision in the form of action based on the message conveyed by the dai (action) without coercion from anyone.

Thus, this is the process of persuasive communication in da'wah. The success of da'wah is directly proportional to the successful application of persuasive communication, and in the implementation of persuasive communication, the dai's public speaking skills play an important role, because if the dai lacks the ability to speak before an audience, the message conveyed will not be received optimally by the mad'u.

In addition, the dai's speaking style continues to evolve and become more varied in response to the times and changing trends. It is not surprising that every dai has his or her own style of da'wah, as a form of effort to attract the mad'u to the values of Islamic teachings and encourage them to follow them. Speaking style, or the art of language, is part of da'wah rhetoric. As Aristotle stated, rhetoric is a tool of persuasion that can be used by the dai, with the aim of persuading listeners to consider three rhetorical proofs: logic (logos), emotion (pathos), and ethics/credibility (ethos). Therefore, rhetorical theory provides guidance for composing an effective persuasive speech by using the available instruments of persuasion (Kustiawan, Winda, Erwan Efendi, 2023).

Da'wah has a noble purpose, and becoming a preacher is not an easy task. In addition to possessing competence in religious knowledge, a preacher is also required to be able to convey Islamic teachings effectively, to have good public speaking skills, and to possess strong rhetorical ability so that the message conveyed can be accepted by the audience and actualized in action. Through rhetoric and public speaking, persuasive messages are more likely to be realized because,

besides dai credibility being seen from scholarly capacity, communication ability before an audience and rhetorical skill are also of concern to the audience.

D. Discussion

Building the credibility of a dai requires time and space. In theoretical terms, beyond mastering Islamic knowledge, persuasive communication skills are also necessary, especially in the digital era, where anyone can position themselves as a dai merely by arranging religious messages into systematic words.

We know many preachers who are not only credible in terms of scholarly expertise, but also possess distinctive and effective communication and public speaking styles, which make their credibility as preachers unquestionable. One example is Gus Iqdam, or Gus Muhammad Iqdam Khalid. As shown in the study by Bagus Ahmad Faozan, Gus Iqdam's credibility is built not only through his intellectual capacity but also through the da'wah rhetoric he uses and his unquestionable public speaking ability, enabling persuasive communication to occur through the SMCR persuasive communication model and the systematic heuristic model. It is therefore unsurprising that his congregations are very large and come from almost all social groups.

In addition to Gus Iqdam, there is also Ustad Hanan Ataki, who is popular among young people because of his relaxed communication style and explanatory narratives packaged in language that is easier to understand. The same applies to Ustad Abdul Somad, Ustad Adi Hidayat, Gus Baha, and Gus Kautsar, whose da'wah content is undeniably appreciated by audiences from various backgrounds. Persuasive communication, packaged with an effective speaking style and public speaking ability that is accepted by the mad'u as part of a dai's credibility, has made their da'wah popular and the Islamic messages they convey readily received by the public.

However, in the process of da'wah, challenges and opportunities inevitably arise, especially because da'wah is itself a form of persuasive communication. Beyond the challenge for dai to develop public speaking and persuasive rhetoric skills, the following are some of the challenges faced by dai in the digital era:

Social media distraction. One of the greatest challenges in da'wah today is distraction from non-religious content, hoaxes, and misleading information. The vast variety of information, which is relatively easy to access but not properly verified, can distort religious understanding and divide the ummah. In fact, it is not uncommon to find da'wah content delivered by individuals who lack scholarly credibility in religious matters, yet rely only on attractive language processing that appeals to audiences, and such dai often gain more followers. In many cases, what they convey should first be examined further for its truth by credible religious authorities.

This becomes a challenge for credible dai, both in terms of scholarship and other supporting skills, to suppress inaccurate information conveyed by non-credible preachers and incorrect Islamic teachings that may lead to division among religious communities.

Social and cultural change. Social and cultural change requires people to adapt to new perspectives and lifestyles. Rapid transitions sometimes make individuals unable to control themselves, so that, without realizing it, their behavior or actions follow current styles or trends that are contrary to Islamic values. Such phenomena are unavoidable challenges for a dai. Therefore, as communicators in the field of da'wah, dai must possess credibility both in religious knowledge and in persuasive communication in order to influence audiences and encourage them to follow the Islamic messages conveyed.

Technological and media advancement. In addition to providing benefits in various aspects of life, the advancement of technology and media also affects da'wah, both positively and negatively. Technology and media can be used to disseminate religious content, but on the other hand, some actors exploit them to spread hoaxes, hatred, sectarian division, and even deviant teachings under the name of religion. This serious challenge must be confronted by dai through content that presents truth as creatively as possible and uses persuasive language that attracts the audience.

As noted above, dai must be skilled in reading situations and conditions so that these may be turned into opportunities for da'wah. Take technological advancement, for example. Conventional da'wah was known for sermons delivered from pulpit to pulpit, mosque to mosque, or surau to surau. Today, however, da'wah can be carried out anywhere and at any time through the internet. In addition to being flexible in implementation, da'wah is now easily accessible to anyone from anywhere. Thus, technological progress can be utilized by dai to disseminate Islamic teachings more broadly and creatively. One way to suppress non-credible da'wah content is through the personal branding of credible dai, both in terms of scholarly knowledge and other supporting skills. Dai with strong personal branding can increase credibility and trust in the eyes of the public; moreover, it distinguishes them from other dai, especially non-credible ones, and enables them to expand their networks and discover new da'wah opportunities.

As public figures in the field of da'wah, dai must be able to prepare themselves to become highly credible preachers. In this way, the challenges they face can be addressed effectively. One important way to do so is through strong public speaking and persuasive communication skills. These two skills must be possessed by dai in order to convey Islamic teachings to the public properly.

IV. Conclusion

Da'wah is a persuasive communication process in which the dai, as a preacher, conveys information or da'wah messages to the public. Da'wah has a noble purpose, and becoming a preacher is not an easy task. In addition to possessing competence in Islamic scholarship, a preacher is also required to be able to convey Islamic teachings effectively, to have strong public speaking skills, and to possess adequate rhetorical competence so that the message conveyed can be accepted by the audience and actualized in action. Through rhetoric and public speaking, persuasive messages are more likely to be realized because, besides dai credibility being seen from scholarly capacity, the audience also pays attention to communication ability before the public and the dai's rhetorical competence.

Therefore, dai credibility can be established through strong public speaking ability. Persuasive communication is the core of the process of delivering messages aimed at influencing, changing attitudes or behavior, and encouraging audiences to act. In practice, persuasive communication is an essential foundation in various communication activities, including public speaking and da'wah. Public speaking is not merely the ability to convey information, but also the ability of a speaker, in this case a dai, to influence listeners or audiences so that they understand, accept, and are even motivated by the message being delivered. At this point, the principles of persuasive communication, such as the use of appropriate language, attractive delivery style, and the ability to build credibility, play a central role. Likewise, in da'wah, the main goal is not only to convey Islamic teachings, but also to touch the hearts and minds of the mad'u so that they are willing to practice these values in everyday life. The success of da'wah is highly determined by the dai's ability to implement persuasive communication, whether through rhetoric, word choice, or the attitude displayed. Dai credibility also influences whether a message is accepted, and the ability to use public speaking in persuasive communication can enhance a person's credibility as a dai.

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