

Muhammadiyah Madiun City's Communication Strategy in Utilizing Digital Spaces

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital communication technologies has transformed the ways organizations interact with the public, including religious organizations. Digital space is no longer merely a medium for information dissemination but has become a strategic arena for organizational communication, identity construction, and public engagement. This study aims to analyze the communication strategies employed by Muhammadiyah of Madiun City in utilizing digital space as part of its organizational and da'wah activities. This research adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation of digital content managed by Muhammadiyah of Madiun City. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement and authority in managing the organization's digital communication. Data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model, emphasizing perspectives of organizational communication and digital communication. The findings indicate that Muhammadiyah of Madiun City has implemented an integrated digital communication strategy consisting of four main components: institutional informative communication, production and distribution of visual and audio-visual content, message adaptation based on Wasathiyah (Islamic moderation) values, and audience interaction and engagement strategies. Institutional informative communication strengthens transparency, accountability, and organizational credibility, while visual and audio-visual content enhances message attractiveness and outreach. Message adaptation based on Wasathiyah values reflects a value-based communication approach that promotes moderation, inclusivity, and contextual relevance. Meanwhile, engagement strategies foster dialogical communication and audience participation in the digital space. This study demonstrates that Muhammadiyah's digital communication practices represent an integration of organizational governance, Islamic values, and digital media strategies, positioning the organization as adaptive and relevant within contemporary digital society.

Keywords : Digital Communication, Muhammadiyah, Visual Content, Islamic Moderation, Social Media.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has fundamentally transformed the way organizations interact with their publics (Welch & Feeney, 2014). The digital space is no longer merely a medium for disseminating information; rather, it has

evolved into a strategic communication arena that shapes perceptions, identities, and social relationships between organizations and society (Khan, 2023). Social media, video-sharing platforms, and other digital channels enable communication that is fast, open, interactive, and transcends the boundaries of space and time (Chen, 2023). This condition requires organizations to have well-planned, adaptive, and value-based communication strategies so that the messages conveyed can be effectively received by increasingly diverse audiences.

In the context of social and religious organizations, the transformation of digital communication presents both challenges and opportunities (Schlag et al., 2025). Organizations are not only confronted with technical issues related to the use of digital media, but also with the dynamics of public communication characterized by discourse contestation, audience fragmentation, and the increasing critical capacity of digital society (Palau-Sampio & López-García, 2022). Therefore, organizational communication in the digital space cannot be understood merely as an activity of message delivery, but rather as a strategic process that involves message planning, media management, the selection of communication styles, as well as the strengthening of organizational identity and values in the eyes of the public (*Strategic Corporate Communication in the Digital Age*, 2021).

At the local level, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City operates within an urban society that has a relatively high level of access to and literacy in digital technology. Digital media has become one of the primary references for the public in obtaining information, shaping opinions, and assessing the presence and role of socio-religious organizations. In this situation, the success of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City is determined not only by the substance of the messages conveyed, but also by how those messages are communicated, packaged, and distributed through appropriate digital channels. In other words, the digital space requires Muhammadiyah of Madiun City to develop systematic communication strategies that are aligned with the characteristics of digital audiences.

Nevertheless, organizational communication in the digital space is also confronted with various challenges (Erlangga et al., 2020). The rapid flow of information, competition for attention (the attention economy), and differences in message interpretation on social media have the potential to weaken the effectiveness of organizational communication if they are not managed strategically (Yashan, 2024). In addition, limitations in human resources with digital communication competencies, a lack of long-term communication planning, and suboptimal coordination among organizational units can hinder message consistency and organizational

image in the digital space (Kaur & Kaur, 2021). This condition indicates that Muhammadiyah's presence in the digital space should not be understood merely as a spontaneous activity, but rather needs to be analyzed as part of a structured organizational communication strategy.

Based on this reality, a study of the communication strategies of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City in the digital space becomes both important and relevant. This research not only seeks to examine the forms of digital media usage, but also analyzes how Muhammadiyah of Madiun City designs its organizational communication strategies, manages value-based messages, selects the digital media it employs, and builds interaction with its publics. By adopting perspectives from organizational communication and digital communication, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Muhammadiyah of Madiun City positions itself, builds legitimacy, and strengthens its role amid the increasingly complex dynamics of the digital space. Academically, this research is expected to enrich the field of organizational communication studies, particularly in the context of religious organizations in the digital era. Practically, this study can serve as a source of reflection and strategic recommendations for Muhammadiyah of Madiun City in developing digital communication that is more effective, well-directed, and sustainable.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design (Colorafi & Evans, 2016). To examine the communication strategies of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City in utilizing the digital space. The qualitative approach is chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes, patterns, and meanings of organizational communication strategies within the context of a dynamic digital environment (Yashan, 2024). The research was conducted in Madiun City, focusing on digital communication activities managed by Muhammadiyah of Madiun City as a social and religious organization. The scope of the study is directed toward digital communication strategies that include message planning, content management, the selection of digital media, and patterns of organizational interaction with the public in the digital space.

The research subject is Muhammadiyah of Madiun City as an organization, while informants were selected purposively based on their authority, knowledge, and direct involvement in the management and implementation of the organization's digital communication. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to explore organizational communication strategies and

considerations; observations focused on communication activities across digital platforms; and documentation included digital content archives and relevant organizational documents. Data analysis was carried out using an interactive qualitative approach through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This analysis is grounded in organizational communication and digital communication perspectives to identify communication strategies and forms of organizational adaptation in the digital space. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Institutional Informative Communication Strategy

The Institutional Informative Communication Strategy refers to Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's efforts to utilize the digital space as a medium for delivering official organizational information to the public. This strategy positions digital platforms such as social media, websites, and messaging applications as formal communication channels that function to convey various forms of institutional information in a structured, consistent, and sustainable manner (Capriotti et al., 2024). Through this strategy, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City disseminates information related to da'wah and social activity agendas, leadership decisions, organizational work programs, and official institutional statements. The delivery of information is carried out using clear, concise, and easily understood language, enabling it to reach various segments of society amid the diverse characteristics of digital audiences.

In addition to functioning as a means of information dissemination, the institutional informative communication strategy also plays a role in building organizational transparency and accountability (Christensen & Cheney, 2015). Information openness through the digital space strengthens public trust in Muhammadiyah as a religious organization that is modern, professional, and responsive to the demands of digital society. In the context of organizational communication, this strategy demonstrates a transformation in the patterns of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's internal and external communication. The digital space is not only used as a tool for one-way message dissemination, but also as a means of strengthening institutional identity and social legitimacy in the digital public sphere (Lüders et al., 2022). Thus, the institutional informative communication strategy becomes an important foundation for building organizational image and expanding the reach of Muhammadiyah's da'wah in the digital society era.

In its implementation, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's institutional informative communication strategy emphasizes message consistency and clarity of information sources. All content published through digital media is constructed as an official representation of the organization, thereby possessing institutional legitimacy and distinguishing it from personal or non-official communication. This is crucial for maintaining organizational credibility amid the rapid flow of often unverified digital information. This strategy also demonstrates the standardization of messages and digital communication governance. The management of digital media accounts is carried out in a centralized or coordinated manner, with due attention to communication ethics, information accuracy, and the alignment of messages with the organization's values and policy guidelines (Nofiyanti & Fajrin, 2025). Thus, the digital space is utilized as an instrument for strengthening organizational governance communication.

From the perspective of public communication, the institutional informative communication strategy tends to adopt a one-way communication model oriented toward information dissemination (the public information model) (Sekarini & Wibowo, 2025). However, in the context of digital society, this one-way pattern is not entirely closed to audience responses. Feedback that emerges through comments or digital messages is still taken into consideration as evaluation material, even though it is not the primary focus of this strategy. This underscores Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's shift toward becoming a religious organization that is adaptive to the transformation of digital communication, without relinquishing its institutional character and foundational values. This strategy serves as an initial foundation before evolving into more dialogical and participatory communication strategies in the digital space.

B. Visual and Audio-Visual Content Production and Distribution Strategy

The visual and audio-visual content production and distribution strategy represents Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's effort to optimize the digital space as a new media-based communication medium that emphasizes the power of visuals, narrative, and audio-visual technology (Yang et al., 2025). This strategy is grounded in the awareness that digital society audiences tend to be more responsive to messages delivered through visual and audio-visual formats than through text alone (Mitina, 2024). In the production stage, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City develops various forms of visual content such as digital posters, infographics, and photographic documentation of activities, as well as audio-visual content in the form of short da'wah videos, coverage of organizational activities, and live broadcasts of lectures or religious

studies. This content is produced by considering message simplicity, visual strength, and the alignment between da'wah messages and the characteristics of the digital platforms used.

Content distribution is carried out through various social media platforms and official digital channels of the organization, such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, each of which has distinct audience characteristics and media consumption patterns (Gao, 2025). Platform selection is not uniform, but rather tailored to communication objectives, audience segmentation, and the format of the content produced. This strategy demonstrates media awareness in the communication practices of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City. From a communication perspective, this strategy functions not only as a means of conveying da'wah messages, but also as an instrument for meaning-making and strengthening organizational image (Busro et al., 2025). Visual and audio-visual content allows the organization to convey Muhammadiyah's values in a more contextual, emotional, and easily received manner by heterogeneous digital audiences. Moreover, the strategy of producing and distributing visual and audio-visual content contributes to increasing the organization's reach and visibility in the digital public sphere. Through widely documented and disseminated content, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City is able to expand the influence of its communication while simultaneously affirming its existence as a religious organization that is adaptive to developments in communication technology.

C. Wasathiyah Value-Based Message Adaptation Strategy

The Wasathiyah value-based message adaptation strategy is Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's communication approach in formulating and conveying da'wah messages in the digital space by emphasizing the values of moderation, balance, and inclusivity (Apriliana, 2025). This strategy is grounded in the awareness that the digital space is inhabited by audiences with diverse social and cultural backgrounds and varying levels of religious understanding; therefore, da'wah messages need to be adapted to remain relevant and broadly acceptable (Baidawi et al., 2025). In practice, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City adjusts the language, narrative, and style of message delivery without altering the substance of the Islamic values upheld by the organization. Religious messages are packaged in a communicative, persuasive, and contextual manner, while avoiding diction that is exclusive, confrontational, or potentially capable of triggering polarization in the digital public sphere. In this way, Wasathiyah values are present not only as message content, but also as a communication approach.

This strategy also reflects social and cultural sensitivity in Muhammadiyah of Madiun

City's digital communication. The religious and social issues addressed are adjusted to the local community context as well as to the dynamics of current issues in the digital space. Message adaptation is carried out by considering timing, momentum, and social situations so that the messages conveyed remain relevant and achieve effective reach. From a communication perspective, the Wasathiyah value-based message adaptation strategy indicates a shift from normative-doctrinal da'wah communication toward value-based communication (Tanjung & Abdullah, 2025). This approach enables Muhammadiyah of Madiun City to build an image as a moderate, dialogical Islamic organization that is capable of interacting constructively with digital society. The Wasathiyah value based message adaptation strategy thus becomes an important instrument in maintaining a balance between religious identity and the demands of modern communication (Baidawi et al., 2025). This strategy strengthens the position of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City as an adaptive, inclusive, and relevant actor in religious communication within the context of digital society.

D. Strategi Interaksi dan Keterlibatan Audiens (Engagement Strategy)

The audience interaction and engagement strategy represents Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's communication approach in utilizing the digital space as a two-way communication arena that enables dialogue between the organization and its audiences (Kazanskaia, 2025). This strategy is based on the understanding that the effectiveness of communication in the digital media era is determined not only by message delivery, but also by the level of audience participation and engagement with the messages conveyed (Rouabehia, 2025). In its implementation, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City utilizes various interactive features available on digital platforms, such as comment sections, direct messages, sharing features, and live streaming. These features are used to respond to audience questions, address feedback, and build dialogical conversations. Through this mechanism, the organization no longer positions the audience as passive recipients, but rather as active subjects of communication who play an active role in the digital communication process.

This engagement strategy also functions as a means of strengthening social and emotional relationships between Muhammadiyah of Madiun City and its congregants as well as the wider community. Prompt responses, courteous language, and openness to differing viewpoints are key elements in maintaining the quality of interaction in the digital space. This approach is in line with the organization's values, which emphasize a soothing and inclusive form of da'wah. From the perspective of organizational communication, the audience

interaction and engagement strategy reflects a shift from a one-way communication model toward a dialogical and participatory communication model (Cho et al., 2014). Feedback obtained from the audience is not viewed merely as a response, but also as a source of evaluation for improving content, message delivery methods, and the organization's digital communication policies.

In practice, Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's audience interaction and engagement strategy does not focus solely on increasing the quantity of audience responses, but also on the quality of interactions cultivated in the digital space. Interactions that are managed ethically, politely, and argumentatively form part of the organization's efforts to maintain a conducive communication climate amid the dynamics of debate and polarization that often emerge in digital media. This strategy also reflects selectivity and moderation in interaction management. Muhammadiyah of Madiun City applies certain communication boundaries when responding to comments or discussions that are provocative, non-constructive, or potentially conflict-inducing. Thus, engagement is not understood as unlimited involvement, but rather as a communication process that remains grounded in the organization's values, ethics, and da'wah objectives.

In addition, audience engagement is utilized as an instrument of organizational learning. Responses, critiques, and aspirations expressed by the audience are analyzed to understand the communication needs of digital society, while also serving as a basis for designing subsequent content and communication strategies. This indicates that the digital space functions as a medium for continuous reflection and evaluation for the organization. From a strategic communication perspective, this engagement strategy strengthens the social legitimacy of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City in the digital public sphere. Openness to dialogue and a willingness to interact actively create perceptions of the organization as responsive, inclusive, and closely connected to the community. Such perceptions contribute to increased public trust and the sustainability of da'wah communication in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that Muhammadiyah of Madiun City has undertaken a transformation of its organizational communication strategy by utilizing the digital space in a planned, adaptive, and value-based manner. The use of digital media is not understood merely as a technical means of delivering religious messages, but rather as a

strategic communication space that plays a role in building organizational identity, legitimacy, and relationships with digital society. This study shows that the digital communication strategy of Muhammadiyah of Madiun City is realized through four main strategies: institutional informative communication strategy; visual and audio-visual content production and distribution strategy; value-based message adaptation strategy grounded in Wasathiyah values; and audience interaction and engagement strategy. These four strategies complement one another and form a digital communication ecosystem that is oriented not only toward information dissemination, but also toward meaning-making, the reinforcement of moderation values, and the development of dialogical communication with the public.

The institutional informative communication strategy serves as a foundation for building organizational transparency, accountability, and credibility in the digital public sphere. Meanwhile, the strategy of producing and distributing visual and audio-visual content enables Muhammadiyah of Madiun City to convey religious messages in a more contextual, engaging, and media-consumption-oriented manner that aligns with the patterns of digital society. The Wasathiyah value-based message adaptation strategy demonstrates the organization's ability to maintain a balance between religious identity and the demands of inclusive and moderate modern communication. Furthermore, the audience interaction and engagement strategy strengthens the dialogical dimension of organizational communication while opening spaces for participation and continuous organizational learning. This study affirms that Muhammadiyah of Madiun City's digital communication represents an integration of the values of Progressive Islam (Islam Berkemajuan), organizational governance, and digital communication practices. These findings enrich the study of religious organizational communication by showing that digital da'wah can be understood as a form of strategic communication that is contextual and responsive to the dynamics of digital society. Looking ahead, strengthening human resource capacity, long-term communication planning, and digital content innovation present both challenges and opportunities for Muhammadiyah of Madiun City in developing more effective and sustainable digital communication.

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