

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF INDONESIAN COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS IN PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID 19 IN PEKANBARU CITY

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Abstract: The background of this research is the increasing spread of the Covid-19 in Pekanbaru City so that it makes people confused in dealing with these conditions, especially during the implementation of worship during a pandemic a strategy is needed from stakeholders, one of which is the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars (MUI) in Pekanbaru City. This study aims to describe the Communication Strategy of MUI in preventing the spread of the Covid 19 in Pekanbaru City. The research method used is a qualitative method and the form of research used is descriptive. The results of the study stated that the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus, namely: 1) making MUI the main communicator, motivator, and also a role model in preventing the spread of corona virus, 2) Then socializing the MUI Pekanbaru City “Appealing” in dealing with the spread of Covid -19 in the city of Pekanbaru, 3) Furthermore, the MUI of Pekanbaru City built cooperation with the government, the Covid-19 Task Force, the Police, Muballig, Imams and Mosque Management and community leaders to increase public understanding by conducting outreach to the Mosque, 4) Conducting seminars online through the mass media as well as providing groceries and business capital through collaboration with the Pekanbaru City government for the community and UKM (Small and Medium Enterprises) affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as a solution.

Keywords: Strategy, Ulama, Covid 19.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that has appeared in Indonesia since the beginning of 2020 has spread to various regions and regions in Indonesia, including Pekanbaru City, Riau Province. In Pekanbaru, the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak was quite massive and was even recorded as the city/district that had the most and highest cases in Riau Province. At the national level, Pekanbaru City is listed as a Red Zone and is also one of the areas with the highest cases in Indonesia. The following is data on cases of the Covid-19 outbreak in Pekanbaru City until 08 September 2021:

Data dapat berubah sesuai hasil verifikasi

NO	KABUPATEN/ KOTA	JUMLAH KASUS			JUMLAH KASUS SEMBUH			JUMLAH KASUS MENINGGAL		
		S/D 07 SEPTEMBER 2021	08 SEPTEMBER 2021	KASUS KUMULATIF	S/D 07 SEPTEMBER 2021	08 SEPTEMBER 2021	KASUS KUMULATIF	S/D 07 SEPTEMBER 2021	08 SEPTEMBER 2021	KASUS KUMULATIF
1	PEKANBARU	50497	64	50561	48207	152	48359	1211	2	1213
2	KAMPAR	8417	26	8443	7757	43	7800	365	2	367
3	PELALAWAN	3361	2	3363	3110	10	3120	174	0	174
4	INDRAGIRI HULU	6115	22	6137	5789	9	5798	187	1	188
5	INDRAGIRI HILIR	5367	16	5383	4988	20	5008	181	1	182
6	DUMAI	10111	14	10125	9717	17	9734	234	2	236
7	KEP. MERANTI	1950	2	1952	1814	8	1822	70	0	70
8	BENGKALIS	8632	13	8645	7957	29	7986	377	0	377
9	SIAK	9448	28	9476	8890	62	8952	283	1	284
10	KUANTAN SINGINGI	5487	6	5493	5201	20	5221	159	0	159
11	ROKAN HILIR	5185	15	5200	4748	43	4791	210	1	211
12	ROKAN HULU	5218	2	5220	4762	17	4779	330	3	333
13	LUAR PROVINSI RIAU	5118	18	5136	4801	32	4833	98	0	98
TOTAL		124906	228	125134	117741	462	118203	3879	13	3892

Figure 1.1. Data of Covid-19 Confirmed Cases 08 September 2021. Source: <https://corona.riau.go.id/>

Facing the large number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru City, various policies have been taken by the government in order to overcome the spread of the corona virus by implementing strict social distancing, especially in public places. Various efforts have been made, starting from implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) to implementing Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM). In implementing the PSBB, Pekanbaru City has implemented PSBB for the period April 17-30 2020. After time, a massive spread of Covid-19 was found, PSBB was then extended for the period May 1-14 2020 which was then extended again to May 15-28 2020 (RFS et al., 2021)

The Covid-19 pandemic will continue until 2021 is even more massive compared to 2020, which is marked by an increasing number of infected people and many victims until the implementation of the Implementation of Restricting Community Activities (PPKM) in Pekanbaru City. The implementation of PPKM in Pekanbaru City began in July 2021 and was tightened in August until it reached the implementation of Level 4 PPKM due to the increasing number of confirmed cases of covid in Pekanbaru City. In implementing this PPKM, various community activities are limited, including offices that are required to work at home or Work From Home (WFH) as much as 75 percent so that only 25 percent work in offices. Teaching and learning activities are carried out online, essential sectors can continue to operate 100 percent by setting operating hours and health protocols, and dining in restaurants (dine-in) is limited to only 25 percent and a maximum of 17.00 WIB, while take away is limited to 20.00 WIB. Congregational worship activities are limited and with strict health protocols. Furthermore, all public facilities are temporarily closed, all arts and cultural activities are closed, all seminars and meetings are closed and public transportation will be regulated by the local government for capacity and health protocols (Herispon, 2020)

Seeing this phenomenon, various attitudes emerge from the community in responding to the Covid-19. Some responded by self-isolating and preparing well, some others responded indifferently, and there were even people who thought that this corona outbreak was punishment from Allah for those who were wrongful even though the Covid-19 is in essence a disaster that can befall anyone without exception. And all of that has become Sunnatullah. As Allah confirms in His words Surah al-Baqarah verses 155-156:

"And we will certainly test you with a little fear, hunger, and lack of wealth, souls, and fruits. And give glad tidings to those who are patient, (that is) those who when calamity befalls them, they say "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un*" (indeed we belong to Allah and to Him we return)".

The verse above provides an understanding that humans or society will be tested with calamities, one of which is the existence of disease outbreaks, for example the corona virus that is currently endemic. The author sees that this is where the role of the ulama, especially the MUI, lies in increasing public awareness regarding the Covid-19 outbreak. MUI, which incidentally has the authority to issue fatwas and appeals to the public, especially Muslims, certainly has a significant role in relation to the phenomenon of the Covid-19 outbreak in order to increase public awareness in understanding the corona outbreak, so that people can behave well and encourage society to work together to break the chain of spread of this corona virus.

Likewise with the existence of government policies related to the implementation of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and the Implementation of Restrictions on Community Activities (PPKM) in Pekanbaru City, there are also several community responses to them. There are those who accept it well, there are also those who refuse and even oppose it. The author argues that the Indonesian Ulema Council has a role in this matter, how to convince people to accept and comply with these rules and policies for the benefit of many people. As Muslim society is ordered to obey its leaders (Aminah & Yazidah, 2018)

In addition, the commotion in the community due to the pandemic was also triggered by the emergence of various false information or hoaxes related to the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak. Hoax news about the pandemic that is spread on various social media makes people even more mistaken in understanding and responding to the dangers of the Corona virus, even causing panic and excessive fear that triggers uproar and chaos or new problems in society (Aula, 2020). A group of Indonesian people, including the City of Pekanbaru, are not selective in receiving incoming information regarding the Covid-19 outbreak and its dangers, but they broadcast it immediately without paying attention to whether the news is true or not. The community should first submit to the government, in this case the Indonesian Ulema Council, which has the authority to issue fatwas and appeals in order to identify the truth of existing news. This is stated in the Word of God, Surah an-Nisa' verse 83:

"And when news of peace or fear reaches them, they (immediately) broadcast it. (However) when they hand it over to the Messenger and Ulil Amri among them, surely those who want to know the truth (will be able to) know it (officially) from them (the Messenger and Ulil Amri). Had it not been for God's grace and mercy upon you, you would have followed Satan, except for a small part (among you) (Qur'an Surah an-Nisa' 83)

Seeing the phenomena above, it can be understood that the role of the MUI is very significant in overcoming the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak, especially in providing the right understanding to the community, so that people can also act correctly in responding to the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak. (Sayuti, 2021) If The community already understands well, of course they will be able to comply with government regulations and maintain their health in the context of realizing the benefit of the people and the pandemic will soon pass. The author sees that all the roles of the Indonesian Ulema Council will be well realized through proper communication, how the Indonesian Ulema Council's communication strategy in providing a good understanding to the public in an effort to overcome the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak is something that needs to be formulated. (Nurasyiah, Candra Wijaya , 2021)

A communication strategy can be interpreted as a communication planning guide by first formulating clear objectives that will be achieved and taking into account the conditions and situations of the audience (Effendy, 1992). More broadly, a communication strategy is a series of strategies or methods used in the process of communicating or conveying messages/information to other people, doing what the communicator or person conveying the message means (Anwar, 1994). The Covid-19 pandemic, otherwise known as the corona virus outbreak, first appeared in Wuhan, China in early December 2019. Over time, this virus has been declared a pandemic or global epidemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). (Bukhari, 2021) This is proven that in a short period of time, this virus spread and reached various parts of the world, both Asia, America to European countries. In Indonesia, this virus is also massively infecting Indonesian people. The latest data released from the official website regarding the spread of the corona virus in Indonesia has 6,731 confirmed cases, 5 active patients, 807 cases, 11,912 recovered patients, and 626 deaths (Triyani, 2020).

Communication Strategy

The word "strategy" comes from the Greek root word stratagos which literally means "general art" and turns into the adjective strategy which means "military skills" which has recently been adapted again into the modern business environment (Liliweri, 2010). Strategies are ways that are fundamental and fundamental in nature that will be and by an organization to achieve goals and various targets by always taking into account the environmental constraints that will definitely be faced (Jauch, n.d.). Strategy is a catalyst or dynamic managing element that allows an organization to achieve its goals, strategy is the overall conditional decision about what is implemented to achieve goals. (Sayuti, 2021) Strategy is often referred to as a strategy in missions, when the strategy is good, it can be predicted that the results will be good too (Damayanti, 2021). The strategy also enters several stages in the process, in outline the strategy according to (Anwar, 1994) has three stages, namely as follows: 1) Strategy Formulation, 2) Strategy Implementation, 3) Strategy Evaluation. According to (Salusu, 2015), there are several elements or elements in the strategy, which are as follows: 1) Goals and objectives, 2) Environment, 3) Internal Capabilities, 4) Competition, 5) Strategists, 6) Communication.

The term communication comes from the Latin Communis which means building togetherness between two or more people. Communication also comes from the root word Communico which means dividing (Cangara, 2013). According to Barelson and Steiner, communication is the delivery of ideas, emotions, skills, and so on, through the use of symbols, words, pictures, numbers, graphics, and so on (Rachmat, 2013). Meanwhile, according to Onong

Uchjana Effendy, he argues that communication is the process of conveying a message in the form of meaningful symbols, as a guide to thoughts and feelings in the form of ideas, information, beliefs, hopes, appeals and so on that is carried out by one person to another, either directly or face to face, or indirectly through various media with the aim of changing attitudes, views, or behavior (Nurdin et al., 2013)

Another term in Arabic to refer to the term communication is *ittishal* which places more emphasis on the meaning of the continuity of the message. In *ittishal*, if the message sent by the communicator arrives and continues on the communicant/communicate, then that is communication and there is no need for feedback or feedback (Harjani Hefni, 2017). Islamic communication has a main reference which is a way of life for Muslims so that with reference it will make Muslims able to communicate well and as for these guidelines, namely the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. These two main sources give the characteristics of Islamic communication. In addition to the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, books delivered by scholars and other disciplines have also contributed to the development of communication science in general and Islamic communication in particular.

A. Muis, Said that Islamic communication is a communication system for Muslims, in other words, an Islamic communication system that has *al-karimah* or ethics. Communication with morals *al-karimah* is based on the Qoran and the hadith of the prophet Muhammad SAW. Regarding the meaning of Islamic communication, briefly it can be defined that Islamic communication is the process of conveying messages between humans based on Islamic teachings (Harjani Hefni, 2017).

It can be understood that in the process of mass communication there are five elements which are called components or elements in the communication process according to (Soemirat & Ardianto, 2002), namely:

- a. Who: the communicator, the person who conveys the message in the process of mass communication, can be an individual or represent an institution, organization or agency.
- b. Say what (what is said): general questions, can be in the form of an idea, information, opinion, message and attitude, which is very closely related to the problem of message analysis.
- c. In which Channel (through what channel): the communication media or the media used to carry out communication activities.
- d. To whom: the communicant or audience that is the target of the communication. To whom the statement is addressed, is related to the problem of the recipient of the message. In this case, audience analysis is needed.
- e. With what effect: the results achieved from the effort to convey this general statement to the intended target related to this effect requires an analysis of the effects.

Islamic communication is a series of communication processes in order to convey messages that lead to Islamic principles and concepts based on the Qur'an and as-Sunnah (Marwah, 2021). In the Al-Quran, there are at least six types of speech or conversation styles (*qaulan*) which are categorized as rules, principles or ethics of Islamic communication, namely (1) *Qaulan Sadida*, (2) *Qaulan Baligha*, (3) *Qulan Ma' rufa*, (4) *Qaulan Karima*, (5) *Qaulan Layinan*, and (6) *Qaulan Maysura*.

AIDDA Theory (Attention, Interest, Desire, Descicion, and Action)

AIDDA's theory is called the A-A Procedure or From Attention To Action Procedure, put forward by Wilbur Schramm. According to Effendy in his book *Communication Science Theory and Practice* (2003:305), AIDDA is an acronym for the words Attention, Interest, Desire, Descicion, Action action/activity).

The description of the elements of this model is:

- a) Attention: a person's desire to seek and see something.
- b) Interest: The feeling of wanting to know more about something that makes it attractive to consumers.
- c) Desire: Will that arises from the heart about something that attracts attention.
- d) Decision: Trust to do something
- e) Action (Action): An activity to realize the belief and interest in something.

In the following, the researcher describes an overview of the AIDDA Theory Concept:

Onong Effendy in his book *Science, Theory and Philosophy of communication* (2000: 304), states that communication experts tend to share the opinion that in launching communication it is better to use an approach called the A-A Procedure or from Attention to Action Procedure. The A-A Procedure is actually a simplification of a process which is abbreviated as AIDDA.

A communicator will have the ability to change attitudes, opinions and communication behavior through an attraction mechanism if the communicant feels that the communicator is involved with him or the communicant feels that there is a similarity between the communicator and him, so that the communicant is willing to obey the message communicated by communicator. The attitude of the communicator who tries to equate himself with the communicant will cause the communicant to sympathize with the communicator.

Basically, a communication strategy is the best combination of all communication elements from communicators, messages, channels (media), receivers, and effects designed to achieve optimal communication goals. If everything can go well, the desired goals will be achieved and you will get feedback from the message by understanding and implementing a good strategy, of course effective and easy communication will be established in achieving the things you want.(Alfikri, 2022)

The Covid-19 Outbreak and Its Dangers

In the midst of the war against Covid 19 which was declared a global pandemic by WHO. As of 2019, various events due to this virus have made many people speculate that the complicated problem lies in the diversity we face in entering a new era at the level of life.

Coronavirus (CoV) is a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from mild to severe symptoms. There are at least two types of coronavirus that are known to cause diseases that can cause severe symptoms such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a new type of virus that has never been previously identified in humans. Corona virus is a zoonotic (transmitted between animals and humans). Research states that SARS-CoV is transmitted from civet cats (civet cats) to humans and MERS-CoV from camels to humans. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals but have not been proven to infect humans. Clinical

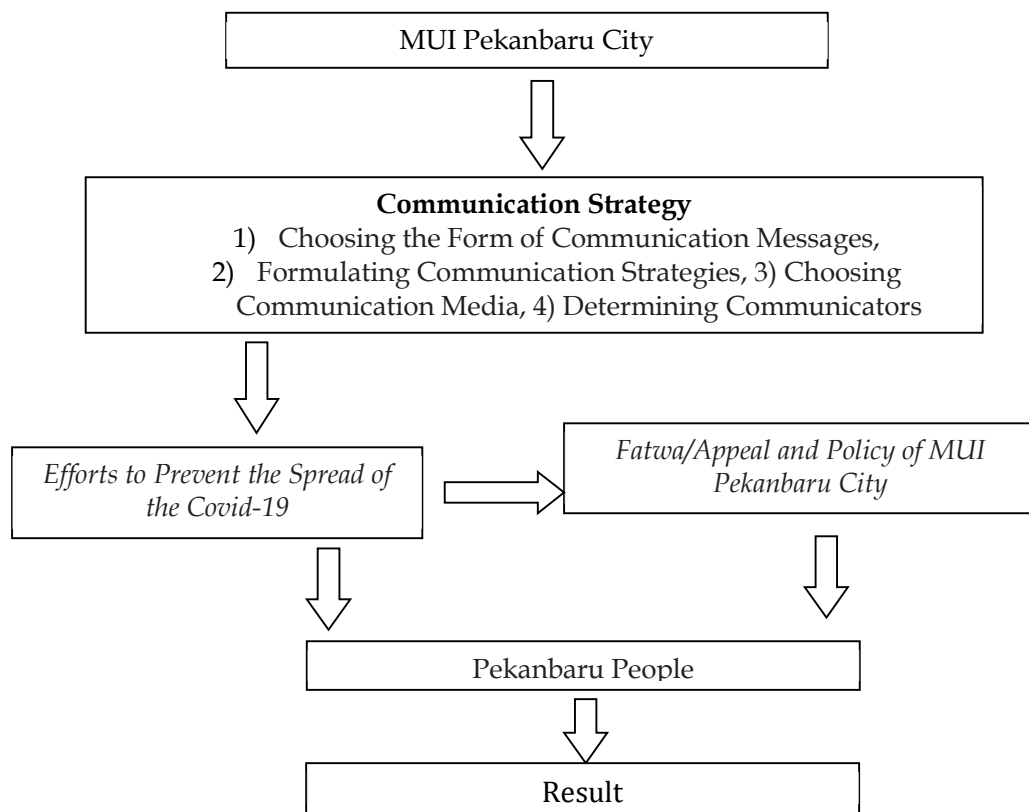
manifestations usually appear within 2 days to 14 days after exposure. Common signs and symptoms of coronavirus infection include symptoms of acute respiratory distress such as fever, cough and shortness of breath. In severe cases it can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death. On December 31, 2019, the WHO China Country Office reported a case of pneumonia of unknown etiology in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. On January 7, 2020, China identified pneumonia of unknown etiology as a new type of coronavirus (novel coronavirus, 2019-nCoV).

Covid in the Review of Islamic Sharia

In facing the problem of this pandemic, there is something that religion has taught its people, namely not to criticize the Corona Virus. The Prophet's words about how our attitude is in dealing with an illness so that everything that happens is still returned to Almighty everything. "Do not criticize the heat/fever because the heat will wash away the sins of the children of Adam." (HR. Muslim)

An illness, be it a fever or a virus, in this hadith it can be concluded that we should not denounce this virus, especially as it is now by making (memes) to ridicule or laugh at. Likewise, we should not look down on our brothers and sisters who are positive patients with Corona, moreover, to reject his corpse or his presence after recovery. What should be done is the opposite; we should be praying for them and giving them support. In conditions like this we should help each other, support and pray for each other.

Figure 2022 Research Thinking Framework



Source: Processed by Researchers 2022

RESEACRH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative descriptive research, namely research that produces data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior, with the aim of being able to describe the state of the research target according to what it is, as obtained in the study (Lexy J. Moleong, 2019) This research also has no calculations and is easier when faced with multiple realities, a method that directly presents the nature of the relationship between researcher and respondent, is more sensitive and more able to adapt to many sharpening influences along with the value patterns encountered. Researchers describe systematically, factually and accurately or construct interviews with research subjects, so the results of qualitative research do not intend to make generalizations and are also more flexible. Qualitative research is more intended to convey a description and or understanding of how and why a phenomenon or reality of communication occurs.

In this study, data were obtained directly from informants through interviews conducted with the management of the MUI Pekanbaru City, namely with leaders and staff in charge of these issues. The selection of informants has certain procedures in determining key informants or certain social situations that have a richness of information according to with the focus of research to be studied. According to Bungin, determining who the key informants are must go through several considerations, including (Bungin, 2013).

Subjects who became informants in this research can be seen in the following table:

Table 1.1. Research Informants

NO	Informant Category	Position and Name	Information
1	Administrator MUI Pekanbaru City	Chairman MUI Pekanbaru City (Prof. H. Ilyas Husti, MA)	Interview regarding MUI's views regarding Covid-19 and how the MUI Pekanbaru City communication strategy is in an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru City
		Secretary MUI Pekanbaru City (H. Hasyim, MA)	
		Chairman of Fatwa Commission MUI Pekanbaru City (Ustadz Alfiandri, MA)	
		Chairman of Research and Development Commission MUI Pekanbaru City (Ustadz Dr. Elfiandri, M.Si)	
		Plenary Mosque Administrator Pekanbaru City and Chairman Pekanbaru City Period 2022-2026 (Prof. Dr. Akbarizan, MA)	
2	Muballigh, Administrator Mosque, Imam Masjid as Communicator	Muballigh MUI Pekanbaru City as main communicator in socialize appeal about Covid-19 (Ustadz Dr. Lukmanul hakim, MA)	Interview related to the communication strategy of preachers, mosque administrators and mosque imams as communicators in disseminating the Pekanbaru City MUI's appeal as an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru city
		Plenary Imam Masjid Tuah Karya Village, Subdistrict. Tuah Madani, Pekanbaru City (Ustadz Habib)	
		Administrator Masjid Ikhlas Tabek Gadang Village, Subdistrict. Binawidya, Pekanbaru City (Ustadz Marianus)	
3	People UKM affected Covid-19	Person UKM at Jl. Soebrantas, Pekanbaru (Mother Kemala)	The interview related to his views regarding the Pekanbaru City MUI's appeal in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars, commonly abbreviated as MUI, is one of the institutions of Muslim intellectuals as a forum that brings together scholars from various groups in order to establish friendship and create Islamic *ukhuwah*, so that its emergence has a considerable influence on the existence of Islam in Indonesia. In addition, MUI is also a collection of ulemas who are members of the largest Islamic community organizations or mass organizations in Indonesia, which include Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Along with its development, the MUI also emphasized its existence as a fatwa institution for the government and the wider community (Insya, 2020).

The MUI is a forum or assembly that brings together Ulama, *Zu'ama* and Indonesian

Muslim Scholars to unite the movements and steps of Indonesian Muslims in realizing shared goals as well as a Non-Governmental Organization representing Ulama, *Zu'ama*, and scholars Muslims in Indonesia to guide, foster and protect Muslims throughout Indonesia, for this reason the MUI was organizationally formed in stages starting from the central level to the sub-district level.

The MUI at the central level was established on 17 Rajab 1395 H, coinciding with 26 July 1975 and is domiciled in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. With 5 (Five) main roles, namely: 1) As the Heir of the Prophet (*Warasat Al-Nabiya*); 2) As Giver of Fatwas (*Mufti*); 3) As Guides and Servants of the *Ummah (Ri'ayah and Khadimal Ummah)*; 4) *As Islah and Tajdid movements*; 5) *As Amar Ma'ruf Nahimunkar*

Then, the MUI Riau Province was formed based on the Ulama Conference, leaders of religious organizations, heads of Islamic boarding schools and Muslim scholars throughout Riau Province on April 20, 1975 and was decreed by the General Chairperson of the Central MUI on February 2, 1976. Over time, So on July 15, 1958, the MUI Pekanbaru City was formed based on the Deliberation of the Ulemas, leaders of religious organizations, the heads of the Islamic Boarding School and Muslim Scholars of the City of Pekanbaru.

The Role of MUI Pekanbaru City in Preventing the Spread of Covid-19

MUI's role in preventing the spread of Covid-19 is driven by its authority in explaining and rectifying public understanding and conveying information to the public effectively because it can use religious idioms that are understood by the community through da'wah messages, issuing fatwas, suggestions and recommendations. So that through a religious approach like this, the government's call to implement health protocols and practice social distancing will be easily accepted by the public. In addition, MUI has an organizational structure spread across various regions of Indonesia, ranging from the lowest level, namely the sub-district and district/city levels, regional (provincial) to central or national levels. So that it is easier to synergize mitigation against the corona outbreak (Saputera, 2022).

Likewise, the Pekanbaru City has a role and contributed to efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Hasyim, General Secretary of the MUI Pekanbaru City said:

“Apart from the Pekanbaru City Government, we as a religious institution and are indeed authorized to respond to phenomena that occur in society, especially related to community religious activities, so we also play a role in assisting the government in dealing with this corona virus problem because the impact is also on the Muslim community, and also has an impact on the religious activities of the community. Education and enlightenment with a religious approach is urgently needed in this regard, so that people can behave properly against this dangerous corona outbreak. MUI's authority in providing advice and issuing appeals and fatwas related to the corona outbreak and its prevention, is a rarity needed in efforts to accelerate the handling of Covid-19 "(Hasyim, Interview, Monday, 23 November 2021)

The role of the MUI as a religious institution and association of scholars in dealing with Covid-19 has at least three main roles, namely reducing the chaos of the people (motivator), mouthpiece of pandemic information (communicator) and as a role model (idol). These three roles have a significant influence in a religious society in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

The role of the MUI Pekanbaru City as a motivator is oriented towards providing responses and education related to Covid-19 as a disaster and a dangerous disease that must be prevented from spreading. This role is in order to provide enlightenment, motivate the public to remain calm and accept the situation well and take appropriate precautions in order to reduce public confusion and fear of the corona outbreak. Elfiandri also said:

"Yes, many people are panicking and confused by the massive spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru City, to be precise from 2020 to 2021, not even a few whose behavior exceeds reasonable limits. And many don't believe or believe this is a contagious disease, so they don't want to implement health protocols as recommended by the government and health authorities. So, this is where the MUI Pekanbaru City role is, reducing the atmosphere of panic in the community, by providing enlightenment, education and motivation to rise from the slump caused by the pandemic, through letters of appeal, direct responses that can be used as a guide for the community in acting against the epidemic" (Elfiandri, Interview, Wednesday, 25 November 2021)

The role of the MUI Pekanbaru City as a communicator in preventing the spread of Covid-19, refers to providing information to the public regarding the condition of Pekanbaru City and its impact due to the corona outbreak and the right way to deal with it. Hashim says:

"Yes, the MUI Pekanbaru City plays a role in providing information to the public regarding the development of the corona outbreak and the latest conditions in Pekanbaru City due to the pandemic. Starting from cases of corona outbreaks such as the number of confirmed viruses to the impact they have had. Then we provide the right way and strategic steps for the community to act in dealing with the outbreak through letters of appeal and direct communication. So that people can be more alert and know how to behave, so that the acceleration of handling the spread of the epidemic can be realized properly. In other words, the MUI Pekanbaru City acts as a communicator mouthpiece in an effort to prevent the spread of the corona in Pekanbaru" (Hasyim, Interview, Monday, November 23, 2021).

Finally, the MUI of Pekanbaru City plays a role as a figure or role model in preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus which refers to an attitude of supporting government policies in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Besides that, be an example in properly implementing health protocols wherever and whenever. As Ilyas Husti said:

"The MUI Regional Leadership for the City of Pekanbaru fully supports the programs and policies of the Pekanbaru City Government regarding Actions to Prevent Corona Virus Transmission, starting from implementing Social Distancing, health protocols, Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), Restrictions. We take this stance in order to show that the MUI as a religious institution labeled by the government also plays a role as an example for the community in preventing the spread of Covid-19. Pekanbaru City MUI also emphasizes on every administrator to always implement health protocols which include wearing masks, washing hands, keeping distance and staying away from crowds anywhere and anytime, so that they can be an example for the community, and the community can comply with health protocols" (Ilyas Husti, Interview, Monday, November 23, 2021)

MUI as an association of religious leaders in preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus

generally plays a role as a messenger of da'wa and moral messages regarding the corona outbreak and its dangers, providing enlightenment and motivation as well as being an example and supporting the movement for implementing health protocols, in order to influence people's behavior in comply with health protocols and jointly overcome the spread of the corona virus and accelerate the handling of the transmission of the corona outbreak in the community. In other words, the main role of the MUI in preventing the spread of Covid-19 is as a communicator in the communication process both between the government and the community.

The MUI Pekanbaru City has carried out its role in preventing the spread of the Corona virus as a form of effort to assist the Pekanbaru City Government in preventing corona transmission in Pekanbaru. These roles include motivator, communicator and role model in preventing the spread of corona. These three roles are inseparable from the communication process, and the MUI Pekanbaru City is the main communicator.

MUI Pekanbaru City Communication Strategy in Preventing Covid-19 Transmission.

Based on the general and specific findings in this study, as described above, the authors analyze and discuss them based on the AIDDA theory. AIDDA is an acronym for the words Attention, Interest, Desire, Decision and Action. In AIDDA theory, the process of implementing a communication strategy begins with arousing attention as the beginning of successful communication. The attention that appears will give birth to interest or interest. Interest will encourage the growth of desire or desire (Desire) to carry out communication activities. The next stage will produce a decision (Decision) in the form of communication messages and so on, and finally bring action (action) as the process of implementing communication.

Likewise, the implementation of the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19, according to the author's observations, is also in line with AIDDA theory. In this case, the process of implementing the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 also started with attention, interest, and desire that prompted decisions to be born and finally triggered actions.

a. Attention

The communication strategy process for the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 also started from an aspect of concern. In this case, the MUI Pekanbaru City pays attention to the problem of the corona outbreak which is rife in Pekanbaru, which requires efforts to prevent its transmission coupled with the attitude of some people who do not care about Covid-19 as a dangerous disease due to a lack of understanding of Covid-19. Seeing this, the MUI Pekanbaru City has shown its concern for this phenomenon and encouraged its interest in taking part in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 through the communication process as Attention is an attitude of attention to something that exists or happens and becomes the initial driver of the communication process. Attention to cases and people's attitudes regarding the Covid-19 pandemic in Pekanbaru is driving the communication strategy process of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru city.

b. Interest

Interest is a feeling of wanting to know more deeply and want to be involved further about something that is of concern. Attention to the problem of the Covid-19 pandemic in Pekanbaru City has sparked the interest of the MUI Pekanbaru City as a religious institution that has always received attention from the public, especially in terms of issues of worship

implementation, the MUI of Pekanbaru City has become one of the references eagerly awaited by the community with Thus to carry out a communication strategy process as an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19. In this case, the issue of the Covid-19 pandemic is not only the responsibility of the government and health workers, but the MUI Pekanbaru City as a religious institution authorized to issue fatwas and appeals also plays a role in this matter. Based on this, the MUI Pekanbaru City is interested in playing a role in preventing the spread of Covid-19 as a motivator, communicator and also a role model for the community which is a form of communication process.

c. Desire

Desire is a stage in the communication process that arises after attention and interest in something. Desire is a will that arises from the heart about something that attracts attention. In this regard, the MUI Pekanbaru City has the desire or willingness to take a direct part in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru through its role as a motivator, communicator and role model. The willingness of the MUI Pekanbaru City arose out of concern for the condition of the community due to the Covid-19 pandemic and interest in playing a further role in overcoming the transmission of Covid-19. This will is realized in the form of a communication strategy based on its role as a communicator in preventing the spread of Covid-19 in order to educate the public and provide enlightenment.

d. Decision

Decision is the belief to do something. The attention, interest and willingness of the MUI Pekanbaru City in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 resulted in a decision. The decision in question is in the form of an appeal to the MUI Pekanbaru City which contains attitudes, views and guidelines for worship for the community during a pandemic in order to provide enlightenment to the community as an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This appeal is a form of communication message from the MUI Pekanbaru in preventing the spread of Covid-19. This appeal was stated in the MUI Pekanbaru City No: 02/MUI-PBR/III/2020. This appeal is a decision of the MUI Pekanbaru City in the context of participating in efforts to prevent the transmission of the corona in Pekanbaru.

e. Action

Action is an activity to realize belief and interest in something. In this regard, the MUI Pekanbaru City disseminated an appeal regarding Covid-19 as a form of implementation or action in the communication process. The actions taken are in the form of implementing a communication strategy in the form of outreach, showing exemplary, holding online seminars and becoming a resource person in electronic media, carrying out direct communication by collaborating with various parties, and supporting the Pekanbaru City government's policies regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. All actions taken are part of the efforts of the MUI Pekanbaru City to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

In addition to the above, the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 is also seen as a form of implementing a charismatic strategy in the communication process. The charismatic strategy is to emphasize the existence of a communicator who has extraordinary influence on followers or communicants, not because of tradition or authority but because of followers' perceptions, the communicator appears as a role model and role model in life, he has extraordinary confidence, has a vision, and is able to express vision clearly, have great communication skills, willing to make self-sacrifice, take personal

risks. In this case, the existence of communicators is highly respected, valued, loved, obeyed, and they are very loyal and have high hopes for their presence (Tajiri, 2020)

Likewise, in the implementation of the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19, it is also seen as a charismatic communication practice. In this case, the author argues that the MUI Pekanbaru City, preachers, mosque administrators and mosque imams throughout the city as communicators are role models for the community. Its presence greatly influences people's understanding and attitude in dealing with the Covid-19 problem. The MUI Pekanbaru City is here as a figure who provides enlightenment to the public and is a role model in implementing health protocols and efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19. As with the MUI Pekanbaru City, the preachers and imams of mosques have the ability to communicate, have scientific expertise, can be trusted by the community and are able to adapt ways that are easily understood and accepted by the community in the process of disseminating appeals related to the pandemic as an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru.

More than that, the practice of the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19, the author also sees that in its implementation it applies the ethics and principles of Islamic communication, especially in the form of messages conveyed. The implementation of ethics or principles of Islamic communication in the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing Covid-19, especially in the form of messages conveyed includes the principles of *Qaulan Sadida*, *Qaulan Baligha*, *Qaulan Ma'rufa*, *Qaulan Layyina*, and *Qaulan Maysura*.

a. *Qaulan Sadidan* means correct speech, speech, or words, both in terms of substance (matter, content, and message) and editorial (grammar). *Qaulan Sadidan* emphasizes conveying messages or information that is correct, factual, honest, not lying, nor does it manipulate or manipulate facts. The message contains good and true words. In this regard, the communication message of the MUI Pekanbaru City which is contained in the MUI Pekanbaru City appeal No: 02/MUI-PBR/III/2020 concerning the Covid-19 Pandemic and its application to the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 leads to the use of good and true words. This was marked by a message in the form of an appeal issued by the MUI Pekanbaru City based on actual data from the Department of Health and the Covid task force team as well as information from the Pekanbaru City Government regarding the Covid-19 case in Pekanbaru. Likewise, the views and attitudes of the MUI Pekanbaru City which were conveyed in the form of an appeal were based on the verses of the Koran and Islamic views regarding disease outbreaks. As the MUI Pekanbaru City makes Surah al-Baqarah verses 155-156 as the main reference and basis for attitudes, views and messages conveyed in the context of preventing the transmission of Covid-19 (Field Observation) Thus, it can be understood that the *Qaulan Sadida* principle in Islamic communication has been practiced by the MUI Pekanbaru City in an effort to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 by referring to messages that are actual, good and true based on data and sources of the Qur'an as the basis mainly.

b. *Qaulan Baligha* means precise, straightforward, eloquent, and clear in meaning. *Qaulan Baligha* means using words that are effective, right on target, communicative, easy to understand, straight to the point, and not convoluted or wordy. In order for

communication to be right on target, the style of speech and message conveyed should be adjusted to the level of intellectuality of the communicant and use language that is understood by them. In this case, the message conveyed by the Pekanbaru City MUI in the appeal No: 02/MUI-PBR/III/2020 regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic and on the practice of the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing Covid-19 leads to the use of words that baligh. This was marked by the contents of the message conveyed by focusing on the attitude and views of the MUI Pekanbaru City regarding the Covid-19 issue, so that it was straightforward, clear and precise. The message conveyed is also based on conditions and pays attention to who is the target. Likewise in practice, the communication strategy that is carried out is communicative. As the MUI Pekanbaru City acts as a communicator in various ways, both socialization, becoming a resource person in various mass and social media, communication through written messages leads to efforts on how the target community can understand, accept and obey in carrying out appeals as an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru (Field Observation, Monday, 23 November 2022)

Thus, it can be understood that the MUI Pekanbaru City applies the principle of *Qaulan Baligha* in messages delivered in the form of appeals and in the practice of communication strategies used in conveying messages based on straightforward, clear and easy-to-understand words so that people can easily accept them and can carry out and comply with the appeal properly.

- c. *Qaulan Ma'rufa* means good words, appropriate expressions, polite, using satire (not harsh), and not hurting or offending. *Qaulan Ma'rufa* also means talks that are useful and cause goodness (*maslahat*) and pleasant talks. In this case, the application of *Qaulan Ma'rufa* to messages in the form of appeals conveyed by the MUI Pekanbaru City and to the practice of communication strategies in conveying messages lies in the aspect of the usefulness of the message and the efforts made. As the message in the form of an appeal and the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the transmission of Covid-19 provides benefits to the community as a communication target, which can be a guide for the community in accepting and being kind in dealing with the problem of the corona outbreak. The messages conveyed and the efforts made by MUI Pekanbaru City provide enlightenment to the public, thereby helping and facilitating the community and guiding the community on how to behave in the midst of the widespread spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru (Field Observation, Monday, 23 November 2022)

Thus, it can be understood that the usefulness of the message in the form of an appeal and the efforts of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 as a guide and example for the public in accepting and acting on the issue of Covid-19 is a manifestation of the application of the principles of Islamic communication *Qaulan Ma'rufa*.

- d. *Qaulan Karima* means noble speech, accompanied by respect and exaltation, pleasing to the ear, gentle and polite. This principle or ethics emphasizes that in carrying out the communication process one must put forward a good, noble style of language without having to make the listener feel hurt or abused so that communication that is built with mutual respect is mutually pleasing to one another. The application of the *Qaulan Sadida* principle in the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 is marked by the form of messages conveyed in the form of gentle, not harsh expressions and statements and their implementation is directed at all

community groups and also at non-Muslim communities. So that these efforts create readiness to respect each other and an attitude of unity in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 together and all parties.

- e. *Qaulan Layina*, means talk that emphasizes how the communicant (the person with whom the communication is invited) will feel touched and his soul will be moved to receive our communication messages. Thus, in Islamic communication, harsh words and loud and high-pitched voices (intonations) are avoided as much as possible. In this case, the communication strategy of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 is always trying to make the community as a communicator touch their hearts, so they want to accept and carry out appeals in the context of preventing the spread of Covid-19.
- f. *Qaulan Maysura* means easy speech, which is easy to digest, easy to understand, and understood by the communicant. Other meanings are words that are fun or contain things that are uplifting. In this case, the communication messages and communication strategies of the MUI Pekanbaru City in preventing the spread of Covid-19 lead to easy-to-understand message content and strategies that are carried out in ways that are in accordance with the needs of the community as communicants so that they are easily understood and well received.

When viewed from an Islamic theological perspective, the communication strategy of the Pekanbaru City Council of Indonesian Ulemas in preventing the spread of Covid-19 belongs to the category of progressive Islamic theology. In this theology it is usually reflected in various attitudes such as thinking about other people and looking for ways to help those who are affected, making knowledge, skills and talents possessed can be utilized by people in need, adapting to current conditions and focusing on anticipating the future, empathizing with oneself and others, being grateful and appreciating others, maintaining a happy emotional state and spreading hope, looking for ways to adapt to new changes, and being calm, patient, maintaining friendship, and giving birth to various creations and innovations.

The implication of the Covid-19 pandemic issue is showing very productive behavior to build synergy and collaboration to take joint action to overcome this pandemic. Various fundraising efforts, online seminars and assistance to affected groups as well as various efforts to build awareness of mistakes in managing nature and the environment are a series of efforts to correct an unfair system and build a more just system.

The MUI Pekanbaru City has made various efforts to show its role in preventing the spread of Covid-19 through implementing communication strategies in various ways. The strategies carried out are a portrait of the Pekanbaru City MUI's concern for the Covid-19 pandemic issue by providing enlightenment in the form of an appeal containing views, attitudes and guidelines for worship so that they can educate the community as a joint effort in preventing the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru City.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this study which have been described above, several conclusions can be drawn regarding how the MUI Pekanbaru City strategy in efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru, including: Implementation of the MUI Pekanbaru City Communication Strategy in preventing the spread of Covid-19 is inseparable from the process delivery and dissemination of messages related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The form of

the MUI Pekanbaru City communication message in an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 is in the form of an appeal contained in the MUI Pekanbaru City Appeal No: 02/MUI-PBR/III/2020. The appeal contains the views and attitudes of the MUI Pekanbaru City towards Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) and Guidelines for Worship during the Covid-19 Pandemic. This appeal is a reference for the community in dealing with the spread of Covid-19 and a guide in dealing with the transmission of Covid-19 in Pekanbaru. The MUI Pekanbaru City Communication Strategy in disseminating appeals related to the Covid-19 pandemic as an effort to prevent its spread is carried out in various ways based on the goals to be achieved. The strategies undertaken include: socialization strategy with the aim of providing information; exemplary strategy with a motivator goal; strategy for online seminars and becoming a resource person in electronic media for educational purposes; direct communication strategy by collaborating with various parties with the aim of disseminating information; and strategies to support government policies with the aim of cooperating with the Pekanbaru City government.

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