



Communication and religious mission problems

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Abstract *The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze communication problems faced in religious missions, as well as to formulate recommendations to improve the effectiveness of communication in this context. This research also aims to explore how a more inclusive and adaptive communication approach can help in bridging cultural differences and reducing conflicts that arise in religious missions. Communication problems in religious missions are not only limited to cross-cultural contexts but also occur in internal communication between members of religious organizations. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings among members, resulting in friction and conflict that is detrimental to the mission as a whole. It is obtained that the implementation of innovative and adaptive communication strategies, religious mission organizations can reach a wider audience and convey religious messages effectively.*

Keywords *communication; religious; problems*

1. Introduction

Communication plays an important role in every aspect of human life, including in the context of religious missions (Dean, Moreau, Russell, & Scheuermann, 2022); (Njoku, 2017). Religious missions aim to spread religious teachings and form a solid spiritual community. However, in its implementation, there are various communication challenges that can hinder the effectiveness of the mission (Afita & Hartiwingsih, 2022); (Clampitt, 2016). Communication problems in the context of religious missions include misunderstandings, cultural differences, and conflicts that arise due to differences in perspectives and religious values.

Globally, the phenomenon of religious pluralism is becoming more prominent, creating space for interaction between various religious groups. In this context, cross-cultural communication is becoming increasingly important to understand and respect differences. However, many religious missions are trapped in communication practices that are insensitive to cultural differences (Karanam, Srinivas, & Krishna, 2020). This can lead to tensions, conflicts, and even violence between different religious groups. For example, in many cases, religious missions in regions with strong local beliefs are often faced with rejection or opposition from local communities, who feel that their beliefs and practices are threatened by those missions.

This interaction between religious groups creates a variety of diverse social

dynamics (Lestari, Nasution, Ramadhani, Hidayat, & Nasution, 2024). One of the impacts is an increase in tolerance and understanding among adherents of different religions. In a pluralistic environment, individuals tend to learn to appreciate differences, which in turn can reduce the potential for conflict between religions. Forums of interfaith dialogue, joint social activities, and collaborative efforts to solve social problems often emerge as part of this interaction.

However, the phenomenon of pluralism is also not without challenges. In some cases, differences in beliefs can trigger tension or conflict (Krismiyo & Kii, 2023). The idea of exclusivism owned by some groups can be an obstacle to the creation of harmony. Therefore, a wise approach is needed in managing interactions between religious groups. Interfaith education and the promotion of intercultural dialogue are some of the efforts that can be made to minimize conflicts and increase understanding and tolerance (Faturachman, Hutasoit, & Hosnah, 2024).

Furthermore, religious pluralism also contributes to social and economic development. In many cases, interfaith collaboration can lead to more inclusive social projects that benefit the wider community (Faturahman, 2018). For example, in tackling the problem of poverty, different religious groups can come together to provide assistance and support to people in need regardless of religious background.

Communication problems in religious missions are not only limited to cross-cultural contexts, but also occur in internal communication between members of religious organizations. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings among members, resulting in friction and conflict that is detrimental to the mission as a whole. Lack of clarity of messages, inability to listen, and lack of openness in communication can create significant obstacles to achieving mission goals (BAGUS, 2024).

This study aims to analyze the communication problems faced in religious missions, as well as identify the factors that contribute to these problems. With a better understanding of these challenges, it is hoped that more effective solutions can be found to improve communication in religious missions. This research will also explore the importance of adaptive and responsive communication strategies to diverse social and cultural contexts.

In the context of this research, it is important to look at several previous studies that have addressed the issue of communication in religious missions. For example, research by (Al Hasany et al., 2024) shows that the proper use of language and symbols can improve the understanding and acceptance of religious messages among different audiences. Other research by (Kosasih, 2019) highlighting the role of social media in modern religious missions, where more open and participatory communication can help address some of the problems of traditional communication.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to develop a more sensitive and

inclusive communication approach in religious missions. By improving understanding of existing communication challenges, religious organizations can formulate better strategies to reach out to and engage diverse communities. In addition, this research is expected to contribute to the development of cross-cultural communication theories and religious missions, which can be used as a guide for practitioners in the field.

The novelty of this research lies in the emphasis on the importance of cross-cultural communication in religious missions, as well as the application of a more responsive communication approach to complex social contexts. By digging deeper into the relationship between communication and religious missions, this research will provide new insights that can help religious organizations adapt to the challenges of changing times.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze communication problems faced in religious missions, as well as to formulate recommendations to improve the effectiveness of communication in this context. This research also aims to explore how a more inclusive and adaptive communication approach can help in bridging cultural differences and reducing conflicts that arise in religious missions.

The benefits of this research will not only be felt by religious organizations, but also by the wider community involved in cross-cultural interactions. By improving communication in religious missions, it is hoped that a more harmonious relationship will be created between various religious groups, thereby strengthening social harmony and peace in society.

The implications of this study are significant, especially in the context of increasing tensions between various religious groups around the world. By understanding the communication challenges that exist and formulating appropriate strategies, religious missions can contribute to efforts to build a more inclusive and peaceful society. In addition, this research will also provide a basis for further research on cross-cultural communication and its role in a broader social context.

Against this background, this research will provide valuable insights into the communication problems faced in religious missions and offer recommendations to address these challenges. Through a more inclusive and adaptive approach, it is hoped that religious missions can be more effective in achieving their goals, as well as contributing to the formation of a more harmonious and peaceful society.

The purpose of this writing is to explore how effective communication is in conveying religious mission messages to people who have diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, what are the obstacles faced by preachers and missionaries in establishing effective communication with the communities they serve. Then, how are the communication strategies implemented by religious mission organizations to overcome challenges in the spread of religious teachings in the

current digital era.

2. Method

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method (Saleh, 2017); (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The type of data used in this study is qualitative data, which is categorized into two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Data sources are obtained through library research techniques which refer to available sources both online and offline such as: scientific journals, books and news sourced from reliable sources. These sources are gathered based on discussion and linked from one piece of information to another. The data collection techniques used in this study are observation, interviews and research. This data is analyzed and then conclusions are drawn.

3. Result & Discussion

The effectiveness of communication in conveying the message of religious missions to people who have diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Differences in culture, language, and religious values in different communities often pose significant challenges for missionaries to convey their religious message effectively. Here are some important points to note:

Cultural Context in Religious Communication

Effective religious communication depends on a deep understanding of the local culture in which the religious message is conveyed (AR, Said, & Siagian, 2023) People with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds have different perspectives and ways of thinking, which can influence the way they accept or reject religious messages. Therefore, before conveying a message, it is important to understand the cultural context that prevails in the community.

For example, in societies with strong collectivist values, such as in many Asian and African communities, messages that emphasize togetherness, unity, and cooperation will be more receptive than more individualistic ones. This shows that religious messages must be adjusted to local cultural norms and values so as not to cause rejection.

Use of Appropriate Language

Language is one of the most important elements in conveying religious messages effectively. The use of language that does not match the audience's background can create misunderstandings and make the message difficult to receive. In cross-religious and cultural contexts, missionaries are often faced with the challenge of adapting the use of language that is not only technically understood, but also emotionally and contextually. In addition to word choice, tone and way of delivery are also important in creating effective communication. Missionaries must

be sensitive to the ways of communication used by local communities, including whether they are more receptive to direct communication or prefer a less confrontational approach.

Dialogical Approach in Conveying Messages

In the context of a multicultural society, a dialogical or two-way approach is essential to ensure that communication is participatory and inclusive. Rather than using a monological approach where religious messages are only conveyed unilaterally, a dialogical approach allows for mutual communication. This approach provides an opportunity for the audience to express their views, thus creating a space for discussion and reflection together (Riska, 2021).

A dialogical approach also allows for a deeper understanding of how the audience interprets the message conveyed. When audiences feel heard and valued, they are more likely to receive religious messages in a more open way. For example, like an ustadz who may not have this happened in big forums, for example when an ustadz kunkun is giving a greeting at a Maulid event, for example in schools or where the questions that arise will certainly not be too personal, only general, but if maybe at his home or with his friends or even the organizing committee after the event is over, suddenly want to ask that, right? For example, sorry ustad, I want to ask about doing A, whether it is permissible or not, etc., now if an ustad opens a discussion room for worshippers, it adds more value to the effectiveness of communication.

Choosing the Right Communication Media

The media used in conveying religious messages also affects the effectiveness of communication. In societies of different backgrounds, preferences for certain media can vary. In today's digital era, social media, video, and online platforms are very effective tools to reach a wider audience, especially among urban people or the younger generation. However, in societies that are more traditional or have limited access to technology, more conventional media such as radio, television, or even face-to-face approaches may be more effective.

A study by Kosasih (2019) shows that social media provides a dynamic platform for the spread of religious missions, as it allows the message to reach a wider audience in a relatively short time. Additionally, social media also facilitates direct interaction between missionaries and audiences, which can improve the effectiveness of communication.

Empathy and Openness in Communication

The effectiveness of communication in cross-religious and cultural contexts depends not only on technical aspects such as language and media, but also on the quality of relationships built through empathy and openness. Missionaries must show respect and openness to cultural and religious differences in society (Putri, 2019)

Empathy plays a crucial role in creating an emotional bond between

missionaries and audiences. By showing understanding and sensitivity to the needs, challenges, and concerns of the community, religious messages can be conveyed more persuasively and better received.

Challenges in Delivering Cross-Cultural Messaging

Although various communication strategies can be implemented, challenges remain in conveying religious messages to diverse communities. Some common challenges include cultural incomprehension, resistance to new ideas that are considered contrary to local traditions, as well as a lack of religious literacy among audiences that leads to misinterpretations of religious messages.

To address these challenges, missionaries need to make continuous efforts to deepen their understanding of the local culture, involve community leaders in the messaging process, and make adjustments to the delivery methods used.

Collaboration in Interfaith Missions

The effectiveness of interfaith communication can also be improved through collaboration between mission organizations of various religions or beliefs. Interfaith cooperation in social or humanitarian projects often creates a more harmonious atmosphere and opens up opportunities for interfaith dialogue. By working together on issues that touch on common interests, such as poverty alleviation or disaster relief, mission organizations can demonstrate that their mission is for the good of society as a whole.

The effectiveness of communication in conveying the message of religious missions to people with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds is highly dependent on the missionary's ability to understand the cultural context, use appropriate language, apply a dialogical approach, choose the right media, and show empathy and openness (Telaumbanua & Butarbutar, 2022). By addressing cross-cultural challenges, religious messages can be conveyed in a more inclusive and acceptable way to audiences of different backgrounds.

What are some of the obstacles that preachers and missionaries face in establishing effective communication with the communities they serve?

In carrying out their duties, preachers and missionaries often face various obstacles that can affect the effectiveness of their communication with the communities they serve. The following are some of the main obstacles that are often faced:

Cultural Differences and Local Values

One of the main obstacles to effective communication is cultural differences and local values among the communities served. Each culture has unique norms, traditions, and values, which can influence how religious messages are received. Preachers and missionaries need to understand the cultural context in which they

interact to avoid misunderstandings or rejection of the message being conveyed.

Resistance to New Ideas

Some communities may have resistance to new ideas or changes that are perceived as contrary to long-standing traditions or beliefs. For example, the introduction of new teachings or practices that are inconsistent with local norms can lead to distrust or rejection from the local community. Preachers and missionaries need to build trust and clearly explain the purpose and benefits of the religious message they are preaching.

Lack of Understanding of Religious Language or Terms

In some cases, especially when communicating with people with diverse levels of religious literacy, preachers and missionaries may face difficulties in explaining complex religious concepts or using terms that are not well understood by the audience. Choosing the right language and delivering it clearly are key to ensuring that religious messages can be well understood by all segments of the community.

Media and Technology Challenges

In today's digital era, the use of media and technology is important in conveying religious messages. However, not all communities have access or proficiency in using social media or other digital technologies. Preachers and missionaries need to adapt their communication strategies to the resources and media preferences available in the communities served.

Tension or Conflict in the Community

Internal tensions or conflicts within the community can be a serious obstacle to effective communication. For example, differences of opinion or disputes between groups in the community can affect the acceptance of the religious message conveyed. Preachers and missionaries need to build communication strategies that are able to mediate and build mutual understanding to overcome conflicts and strengthen unity in the community.

Time and Resource Limitations

Missionaries are often faced with limited time and resources to deliver a comprehensive religious message to the communities they serve. Sometimes, this can hinder efforts to build strong and sustainable relationships with society. Efficient resource management and the selection of the right communication strategy are key in overcoming these obstacles.

Insensitive or Inappropriate Communication Approach

The inability to adopt a communication approach that is sensitive to local needs and contexts can lead to religious messages being ineffective or even offensive to the

communities served. Preachers and missionaries need to constantly update and adjust their approach based on feedback from the public and community leaders to ensure the message conveyed is relevant and well received.

In establishing effective communication with the communities they serve, preachers and missionaries are faced with a variety of obstacles that include cultural differences, resistance to change, limited understanding of religious language or terminology, media and technology challenges, tensions within the community, limited time and resources, and inappropriate communication approaches. Overcoming these obstacles requires a deep understanding of the local context, appropriate communication strategies, and a commitment to building strong and sustainable relationships with the communities served.

How are communication strategies implemented by religious mission organizations to overcome challenges in the spread of religious teachings in today's digital era.

In today's digital era, the spread of religious teachings faces unique challenges. People are increasingly connected globally through the internet and social media, but also increasingly diverse in the way they receive and process information. Religious mission organizations need to implement effective and relevant communication strategies to convey religious teachings to a wide and diverse audience. The following are some of the strategies used by religious mission organizations to overcome challenges in the digital age:

Utilizing Social Media Effectively

Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, has become the main platform for spreading religious teachings in the digital era. Religious mission organizations use social media to spread religious messages through content that is easily accessible to various community groups. Short videos, online lectures, infographics, and inspirational quotes are often used to capture the attention of audiences, especially young people who are very active on social media.

The beauty of social media is its ability to reach a wide audience quickly and interactively. For example, live streaming on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram allows audiences to participate directly in religious talks or discussions. Religious mission organizations also use online commentary, messaging, and discussion features to interact with audiences personally, increasing a sense of engagement and closeness.

Using Innovative Multimedia Content

In addition to text and images, the use of multimedia content such as videos, podcasts, and interactive animations is an important strategy in the spread of

religious teachings. Multimedia content is more eye-catching and easy to understand for audiences who prefer a visual or auditory format to a long-text read.

Video lectures, documentaries, and religious education series are effective ways to explain complex religious teachings. Religious mission organizations use platforms like YouTube to publish video content that can be accessed at any time by a global audience. In addition, podcasts that discuss religious topics in a discussion or interview format allow the audience to listen at any time, for example while traveling or doing daily activities.

Personalization Approach in Digital Communication

Communication personalization strategies are becoming important in the digital age where audiences increasingly expect messages that are relevant to their interests and needs. Religious mission organizations can use data analytics to better understand their audience, including content preferences, frequently searched topics, and interactions with digital platforms. Based on this data, religious messages can be tailored specifically according to the interests or problems faced by each audience group.

The personalization approach can be done through personalized newsletters, content recommendations on religious apps or websites, to direct messages that provide spiritual guidance according to the audience's circumstances or questions.

Use of Dedicated Online Apps and Platforms

In addition to social media, religious mission organizations also create or use special online applications and platforms designed to teach religious teachings. The app allows users to access scripture, take religious classes or training online, listen to lectures, and participate in community discussions. Some apps even have interactive features such as live question-and-answer sessions with religious leaders.

The use of online platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams also allows the implementation of religious classes, group discussions, and seminars that can be attended by audiences from various countries. With features such as breakout rooms in this application, participants can discuss in small groups to get a more personalized experience.

Collaborative and Participatory Strategies

One of the important strategies in facing challenges in the digital era is a collaborative and participatory approach. Religious mission organizations not only act as messengers, but also involve the audience in the process of spreading religious teachings. This can be done by inviting the audience to share religious content, participate in religious challenges or campaigns on social media, and participate in digital-based charity programs.

For example, digital charity campaigns disseminated through social media allow audiences to contribute directly by donating funds online, sharing information with others, or volunteering in religious mission activities held online or offline.

Provides Easy and Affordable Access

In the digital age, it is important for religious mission organizations to ensure that their content is accessible to everyone, both in terms of technology and language. By creating user-friendly websites and apps, religious mission organizations can make it easier for audiences from different backgrounds to access religious teachings. Additionally, it is important to ensure that the content provided is translated into multiple languages or accompanied by subtitles in order to reach a diverse global audience. Providing access to content for free or at a very affordable cost is also an important strategy so that all levels of society can take part in the spread of religious teachings.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology

Some religious mission organizations are beginning to utilize Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to strengthen interaction with audiences. For example, AI-based chatbots are used to answer common questions related to religion, provide spiritual advice, or help users search for specific information on religious sites or apps. This chatbot provides instant responses and is available 24/7, so it can serve the audience quickly and effectively. In addition, AI is also used to analyze trends in religious topics that are in demand in the digital world. With this understanding, religious mission organizations can create more relevant and timely content to disseminate to audiences.

Overcoming the Challenges of Hoaxes and Misinformation

One of the big challenges in the digital era is the spread of hoaxes or misinformation related to religious teachings. Religious mission organizations need to be active in addressing these challenges by providing clarification and correct information through their official channels. This includes creating factual and accessible content that can straighten out misinformation or slander circulating on social media. By positioning themselves as a trusted source of information, religious mission organizations can increase their credibility and build trust among digital audiences (Abdurrahman & Badruzaman, 2023)

To face the challenges in spreading religious teachings in the digital era, religious mission organizations need to implement adaptive and innovative communication strategies. By leveraging social media, multimedia content, personalization approaches, custom applications, and AI technology, organizations can deliver religious messages more effectively and efficiently. In addition,

participatory collaboration with audiences and strategies to combat misinformation are also key in creating relevant religious communication in the digital age.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, it was concluded that in the increasingly complex and dynamic digital era, religious mission organizations face significant challenges in spreading religious teachings to culturally and religiously diverse communities. However, through the implementation of innovative and adaptive communication strategies, religious mission organizations can reach a wider audience and convey religious messages effectively.

The use of social media, multimedia content, special applications, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology are the main solutions in overcoming these challenges. Through a personalized approach and participatory collaborative strategies, religious mission organizations can interact more closely with audiences, creating relevant and engaging communications. Additionally, organizations also need to ensure that their content is accessible to everyone, by providing easy, affordable, and multilingual access.

Challenges such as cultural differences, resistance to new ideas, and the spread of misinformation can be overcome with a responsive, transparent, and dialogue-based communication approach. Thus, religious mission organizations can not only better convey religious teachings, but also contribute to the building of harmonious relationships in an increasingly diverse society.

The implementation of the right communication strategy allows religious mission organizations to overcome obstacles and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital era, so that religious messages can continue to be accepted and understood by the global community today and in the future.

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