

Fostering Harmony through Islamic Communication: A Case Study of FKUB Medan City

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Abstract. This study examines applying the Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) in Medan City to maintain harmony between religious communities. FKUB plays an important role in enforcing policies and technical guidelines in interfaith peace. Using Jalaluddin Rakhmat's theoretical approach, this study explores how Islamic communication principles help maintain harmony and transform differences of opinion into friendship in Medan. This study uses a qualitative case study method with data collection techniques through documentation, interviews, and observations. Documentation includes analysis of official documents and reports of FKUB activities. Interviews were conducted with FKUB members and administrators to gain in-depth insight into the communication strategies they use. Direct observation of FKUB activities was conducted to see the dynamics of interactions between religious communities. The results of the study show that FKUB upholds two main principles of Islamic communication: Qaulan Syadidan (true and appropriate words) and Qaulam Ma'rufa (good words). Qaulan Syadidan ensures communication-based on honesty and accuracy, while Qaulam Ma'rufa encourages the use of polite and good language. These two principles

have proven effective in creating constructive and harmonious dialogue in the diverse society of Medan City.

Keywords: *Principles, Communication, FKUB, Islam*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji penerapan konsep komunikasi Islam oleh Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) di Kota Medan untuk menjaga kerukunan antarumat beragama. FKUB berperan penting dalam menegakkan kebijakan dan pedoman teknis di bidang perdamaian antarumat beragama. Menggunakan pendekatan teori Jalaluddin Rakhmat, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana prinsip komunikasi Islam membantu menjaga harmoni dan mengubah perbedaan pendapat menjadi persahabatan di Medan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif studi kasus dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui dokumentasi, wawancara, dan observasi. Dokumentasi mencakup analisis dokumen resmi dan laporan kegiatan FKUB. Wawancara dilakukan dengan anggota dan pengurus FKUB untuk mendapatkan wawasan mendalam tentang strategi komunikasi yang mereka gunakan. Observasi langsung pada kegiatan FKUB dilakukan untuk melihat dinamika interaksi antarumat beragama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa FKUB mengusung dua prinsip utama komunikasi Islam: Qaulan Syadidan (perkataan yang benar dan tepat) dan Qaulam Ma'rufa (perkataan yang baik). Qaulan Syadidan memastikan komunikasi berdasarkan kejujuran dan ketepatan, sementara Qaulam Ma'rufa mendorong penggunaan bahasa yang sopan dan baik. Kedua prinsip ini terbukti efektif dalam menciptakan dialog konstruktif dan harmonis di masyarakat Kota Medan yang beragam.

Kata Kunci: *Prinsip, Komunikasi, FKUB, Islam*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia often faces conflicts rooted in religious sentiments, as seen in Poso, Maluku, and various other places. These conflicts are frequently triggered by social, political, and economic issues, which exacerbate tensions in society. Unfortunately, religion, which should be a source of peace, sometimes worsens the situation. Intolerance towards adherents of other religions is one of the main causes of these conflicts¹ This intolerance often arises from a narrow understanding of religious teachings and differing interpretations among various groups. The conflict can be exacerbated by political manipulation and economic interests that worsen social divisions. When certain groups exploit religious issues for political or economic gain, the situation can become increasingly complex and difficult to resolve. Therefore, efforts to ease conflicts must involve interfaith dialogue, education on tolerance, and measures to address the underlying social and economic injustices fueling the tensions. Society and leaders need to work together to promote better understanding and build bridges between different groups to achieve peace and harmony.

Naturally, humans tend to seek harmony because it allows them to operate without fear or anxiety. In this context, religion plays a crucial role, often considered more significant than other aspects of human life such as politics, economics, science, and technology. Religious texts are viewed as sources of comprehensive and ideal truth, making them a primary tool for finding salvation and enhancing individual dignity through

¹cantika zahara Kartini, Silvia anggraini, siti anasya, fitri nur ahmad, ade angelina fauziah, 'ANALISIS KONTEKS DAN PRINSIP KOMUNIKASI GENDER DALAM PERSPEKTIF UMAT BERAGAMA (ISLAM, KRISTEN, HINDU)', *AIL-ITTISHOL*, 5.6 (2024), 158–70.

closeness to God.² In this context, religious beliefs can influence personal and collective decisions, shaping social behavior and relationships between individuals. Additionally, religion provides community and emotional support that strengthens a sense of identity and belonging. By offering structure and meaning in life, religion serves as a source of stability amidst ongoing uncertainty and change, allowing individuals to feel more calm and directed in facing life's challenges.

In conflict resolution, it is crucial to find practical ways to improve interfaith relations. Steps such as interfaith conversations, and developing attitudes of tolerance, humility, and openness are essential. Creating constructive dialogue can help bridge gaps and enhance social cohesion, allowing religious groups to work together to foster a peaceful atmosphere.³ Thus, through collective efforts and a commitment to dialogue and cooperation, people can build a stronger foundation for interfaith harmony and prevent conflicts in the future.

In Medan City, religious institutions play a crucial role in educating the public and managing diversity. FKUB, for example, serves as a mediator to maintain interfaith harmony and promote values of tolerance. However, disparities in ideas and radical practices can lead to additional conflicts if not properly addressed. In this digital age, one way people connect is through various social media platforms. This indirectly affects the communication patterns between interfaith groups. However, uncontrolled statements on social media often trigger tensions

²Rita Tatalia and Muhammad Habibi, 'Penerapan Prinsip Komunikasi Islam Dalam Interaksi Sesama Mahasiswa Program Studi Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam Iain Pontianak', *Borneo : Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2.2 (2022), 136–47 <<https://doi.org/10.37567/borneo.v2i2.1251>>.

³Diny Fitriawati Samiaji, 'Analisis Komunikasi Antar Budaya Dan Agama Di Kampung Toleransi Gang Luna Kota Bandung', *Journal of Digital Communication and Design (Jdcode)*, 2 (2022), 133–41.

between religious groups. Therefore, to alleviate tensions and promote peace, the application of sound Islamic communication concepts is necessary.

The proliferation of social media and technological advancements have significantly changed the way people connect, especially across religious boundaries. Uncontrolled and widely disseminated statements often appear on social media, increasing the likelihood of conflicts between religious groups. Therefore, to alleviate tensions and promote peace among various religious communities in Medan City, concrete efforts are needed to practice Islamic communication concepts. Based on this background, this research aims to understand the principles of Islamic communication applied by the Forum Komunikasi Umat Beragama(FKUB).⁴

Radical ideas and practices among various ethnicities and groups depict a scenario of unrest occurring in Medan City. The lack of tolerance ideals instilled in the community, the inability to prevent conflicts, and other factors can exacerbate the conflict scenario. Extremist adherents may become divided and face issues when there are differing views or beliefs that do not align with expectations, which can also lead to additional conflicts..⁵ By adopting an inclusive and proactive approach, the community can better address the challenges of ideological disparities and radical practices, and build a safer and more harmonious environment in Medan City and its surroundings

⁴Muhammad Hilmy Aziz, 'Bias Budaya Minuman Beralkohol: Kajian Komunikasi Antar Budaya Perspektif Agama Dan Budaya', *Pawarta: Journal of Communication and Da'wah*, 1.2 (2023), 85–97 <<https://doi.org/10.54090/pawarta.273>>.

⁵Muhammad Muhammad and Nurlaila Nurlaila, 'Arus Top-Down Dan Bottom-Up Pada Gerakan Dialog Antar Agama Di Indonesia', *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 1.2 (2021), 159 <<https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v1i2.10659>>.

Islamic communication is one solution to the conflict. Muslims communicate with each other using the language of Islam. Islamic discourse mainly concentrates on the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the Qur'an teaches humans to carry out good communication patterns. Islamic communication invites people to follow the path of da'wah, which prioritizes religious and socio-cultural values, by utilizing the teachings and instructions found in the Qur'an and hadith. This Islamic communication also seeks to spread Islamic values and encourages people to pay attention to religious teachings.⁶

Previous studies have shown how FKUB uses communication techniques to maintain unity in Medan. Fauzi Wikanda (2020) explains FKUB's communication strategy in maintaining harmony by implementing Islamic communication norms. Toguan Rambe examines the function of FKUB in religious moderation through media and discussion. Faridah (2024) explores the role of FKUB management in improving harmony and moderation through work programs and interfaith dialogue. These studies highlight the importance of implementing Islamic communication in maintaining harmony in Medan City.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach and case study methodology to explore how Medan City, known for its multiculturalism and diversity, fosters tolerance and diversity through the FKUB forum. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation research. Observations involved attending and directly observing forum activities, while interviews with forum participants provided deeper insights into their views and experiences. Documentation research included analyzing

⁶Samiaji.

documents related to the forum's activities and Medan City's social and cultural context. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns and themes, revealing how interactions within the forum contribute to the growth of tolerance and the ideals of diversity in Medan City's society.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Principles of Islamic Communication

Six principles of Islamic communication are applied based on field observations, especially in the Medan City FKUB, including the application of Qaulan Sadida (True Statement, Don't Lie); Qaulan Baligha (Effective Speech); (good and polite speech from Qaulan Ma'rufa); Qaulan Karima, which deserves all respect; Qaulan Layina (good words); and Qaulan Maysura which uses simple language. Based on field observations, the National Unity and Political Institutions apply six principles of Islamic communication, including the application of Qaulan Sadida (True Statement, Don't Lie); Qaulan Baligha (Effective Speech); great and caring discourse from Qaulan Ma'rufa); Qaulan Karima, which deserves respect; Good words from Qaulan Layina; and Qaulan Maysura, whose language is straightforward.⁷

Furthermore, according to Jalaluddin Rakhmat, a communicator is a person who conveys a message to the listener in the field of communication science. This includes preachers and people who deliver sermons (tabligh). Regardless of whether the communication is based on scientific truth or not, it often conveys a broader message. The Qur'an

⁷Putri Anggria Ningsih Rangkuti and Rubino Rubino, 'Penerapan Prinsip Komunikasi Islam Badan Kesatuan Bangsa Dan Politik Dalam Menjalin Kerukunan Organisasi Kemasyarakatan Di Kota Binjai', *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal*, 5.6 (2023), 3573–81 <<https://doi.org/10.47467/reslaj.v5i6.1255>>.

gives Jalaluddin Rakhmat the following six communication ideas:

Muslims should speak according to the Quran, Sunnah, and their own expertise, known as *Qawlan Sadidan*. In addition, in Arabic, *Qawlan Balighan* means arriving, right on target, or completing the goal. "Baligh" in the context of *qawl* means speech or communication that is fluent, clear, and precise in meaning. The phrase *Qawlan Maysuran*, which means "easy," refers to the use of light, uncomplicated, and precise language so that it can be directly accepted by the *mad'u* without having to think about it first. Furthermore, *Qawlan Layyinan* means fighting for faith in Allah with good speech, a melodious voice, friendly behavior, and pleasant.

Qawlan Kariman emphasizes a polite and gentle approach, emphasizing levels and manners, in the idea of treating others with dignity rather than demeaning or swearing (Ilaihi, 2013: 176). Finally, *Qawlan Ma'rufan* is said to be words that please the soul and encourage obedience. Good words, when spoken in pairs, are words that can instill a sense of peace and calm in the listener (Ezpinoza Juanillo & Rupa Huayllapuma, 2018).

The Role of Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama in Medan

Since its establishment, the Medan City FKUB has been actively working together to monitor various community problems. The maintenance of harmony between religious communities in Medan City is greatly assisted by this organization. In helping its chairman fulfill his responsibility to maintain peace and prudence in the existing diversity, the FKUB always expects active participation from the community and its members. This effort is carried out starting from social activities

and interfaith dialogues to the socialization of the concept of moderation and religious tolerance.

The FKUB further describes the main objectives and functions of the FKUB in fostering harmony and moderation among religious communities in Medan City. In particular, Medan City is an important institution for maintaining peace. At the FKUB, religious leaders and representatives from various religious communities gather. In addition to encouraging and maintaining unity between various religious communities, the FKUB handles various problems and disputes that may arise between them.

In accordance with Chapter 8 Article 9 Paragraph 1 concerning the obligations of the Provincial FKUB and Paragraph 2 concerning the duties of the Regency/City FKUB, the main duties of the FKUB are to conduct discussions with religious leaders and community leaders, collect input from religious groups and community aspirations, determine policies of the Regent or Mayor based on input from the community and religious groups, socialize laws and regulations, regional regulations, and religious policies that support harmony between religious communities and community empowerment, and submit applications for the construction of special houses of worship for the Regency/City FKUB.

In this case, the goals and intentions of the Medan City FKUB are in line with the values of harmony, respect, and tolerance between religious communities without prejudice. To realize this, the Medan City FKUB organizes a number of non-violent religious events, one of which is a forum for interfaith dialogue. The monthly FKUB meetings are open to religious leaders and representatives of religious organizations who wish to get involved, exchange experiences, and strive to reach a

common understanding. By encouraging mutual respect and fostering stronger relationships between religious communities, this discourse also helps to clear up misunderstandings⁸.

Furthermore, FKUB also acts as a mediator in inter-religious disputes. When inter-religious disputes endanger unity, FKUB always acts as a mediator and uses tactics aimed at producing mutually beneficial solutions. Thus, by preventing disputes from getting worse, FKUB helps maintain peace in society. The goal of the Medan City Government is to create a prosperous and dignified city. In addition, FKUB Medan City also organizes various events such as a national conference on religious moderation, harmony sports, harmony youth programs that help young people in this city, or Generation Z, express their creativity on social media and harmony speeches among young people in this city. The wives of the FKUB Medan City administrators who actively participate in these activities are a special women's section formed as an effort to increase togetherness. FKUB Medan City and the Medan City Government jointly provide permits for the establishment of houses of worship, but each establishment of a house of worship must take care of the completeness of the documents and submit them to FKUB Medan City. More than 19 activities involving the general public, traditional leaders, and religious leaders have been organized by FKUB Medan City.⁹

⁸Dita ; Ritonga Muhammad Husni Khairiza, 'Pola Komunikasi Forum Kerukunan Antarumat Antarumat Beragama Di Kota Medan', *Reslaj*, 5.6 (2023), 3283–95 <<https://doi.org/10.47476/reslaj.v5i6.1047>>.

⁹Muhammad Aidil Pratama, 'Dakwah Multikultural , Toleransi Beragama Dan Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) Di Kota Medan', 5.2 (2024), 711–28.

Implementation of Islamic Communication Principles of FKUB in Medan City

In this study, the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) used two different concepts of Islamic communication: *qaulan sadidan* and *qaulan ma'rufan*. Muslims must behave in accordance with the knowledge known as *qaulan sadidan*, the Qur'an, and Al-Sunnah. The translation of "*qaulan ma'rufan*" includes "beneficial conversation," "giving knowledge," "enlightening thinking," and "problem-solving demonstration."¹⁰

All structures used in an organization or foundation to carry out tasks related to organizing, which must be done together or individually, are included in the management category. While FKUB management is a process used by the FKUB Chairperson and FKUB members to achieve goals through a series of actions in order to realize harmony and compliance. Based on observations and discussions of its founders, FKUB Medan City is still working hard to find imbalances and advance important organizations.

FKUB is able to carry out its duties as a maintainer and guardian of harmony between religious communities in Indonesia. The Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Religion collaborated to form FKUB which only consists of sub-districts and does not have territorial boundaries at the sub-district level, based on Joint Decree Number 9 and 8 of 2006. In an analytical interview with the Head of FKUB Medan City, it was conveyed as follows: "FKUB is the right hand of the Medan City Government in realizing harmony between ethnicities and cultures in Medan City." All administrators and members of

¹⁰Dediek Kurniawan, 'Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (Fkub) Dalam Penanaman Sikap Tasamuh Masyarakat', *Pendidikan Multikultural*, 5.1 (2021), 1 <<https://doi.org/10.33474/multikultural.v5i1.10317>>.

FKUB Medan City learn about their various religious conventions through this platform, which also prioritizes tolerance.¹¹

The consolidation produces positive results such as mutual trust, respect, and gratitude. To foster harmony and peace in the city, the idea of Islamic communication FKUB must be taught to all religious communities in Medan City. Thus, children can greet each other, be polite when talking, and speak well.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the application of Islamic communication principles within FKUB Medan City significantly fosters interfaith harmony. The six principles—Qaulan Sadida, Qaulan Baligha, Qaulan Ma'rufa, Qaulan Karima, Qaulan Layina, and Qaulan Maysura—are effectively implemented, showcasing the organization's commitment to honest, effective, polite, and understandable communication. FKUB Medan City, through various activities and initiatives, plays a crucial role in maintaining peace and facilitating interfaith dialogue. The application of these principles reduces conflict and enhances harmony by promoting tolerance, mutual respect, and deep understanding among different religious communities. FKUB's efforts in organizing interfaith dialogues and religious moderation conferences reinforce its role as a mediator and advocate for peace, contributing positively to a harmonious and

¹¹Teguh Agum Pratama and Nursapia Harahap, 'Peran Komunikasi Interkultural Dalam Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Pada Masyarakat Kota Medan (Analisis FKUB Di Medan)', *Jurnal Indonesia : Manajemen Informatika Dan Komunikasi*, 5.2 (2024), 2081-95
<<https://doi.org/10.35870/jimik.v5i2.819>>.

peaceful society.

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