



Six Communication Keys as the Foundation for Schools to Build Communication with the Community

Jakfar Sodik^{1*}

¹ Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: jsodik734@gmail.com

Abstract : This study aimed to find out the application of the six communication keys used by SDN Betek Taman 01 as the basis for building relationships with the community. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with a case study type. The location of this research was SDN Betek Taman 01. The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, and documentation. Data sources include the school principal, the vice public relations head, and two student guardians. Data analysis was carried out through three steps, namely; 1) data condensation; 2) data presentation; and 3) drawing conclusions and verification. To get the validity of the data is done by the process of triangulation of sources and techniques. SDN Betek Taman 01 realizes that educational institutions do not stand independently, so the community's existence must be the key to building a good image for the school. Of the six principles of communication (Qaulan Sadida, Qaulan Baligha, Qaulan Ma'rufa, Qaulan Karima, Qaulan Layyinan, and Qaulan Maysura) that have been applied, it explains that the school first establishes a reciprocal or two-way relationship with the school community as in educators and education staff, students, and parents of students. The six principles above represent the four values in communication: respect, cooperation and understanding, and modesty. These communication principles are also the key in upholding the dignity of humanity as a whole, educating humans constantly to respect and maintain respect for themselves and others.

Keywords : Communication Keys; Community; Relationship.

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INTRODUCTION

In Islamic perspective, human beings are considered as four-dimensional creatures: as creatures of Allah, as individuals, as beings living with others, and as beings living in the universe (Saputra & Marta, 2020). As social beings (living with others), humans cannot live in isolation and separate themselves from their communities (Tidjani, 2017). It is no wonder that it is often said that the essence of effective communication is communication aimed at achieving a balance between vertical and horizontal aspects or 'hablum minanas' and 'hablum minallah'. This balance manifests in communication that is informative, factual, educational, and beneficial for mutual gain (Perfetti & Ponziano, 2020).

One example of cultural integrity, ethics, civilization, and the measure of intelligence in a society can be seen in the structure of educational institutions. Schools, as one of the educational institutions, play a significant role as they represent the accumulation of a community's culture (Maunah, 2020). Schools are created with the involvement of the community, managed by the school community, and aimed at humanizing individuals within the community (Hakim, 2019). Schools and communities are interdependent social environments that cannot be separated. Schools serve as places of learning, while the community environment represents the implications of the teaching and learning process in schools (Sulhan, 2017). The purpose and methods of learning in schools are always linked to their usefulness in improving life and living in society. As one of the stakeholders in schools, the community supports and participates in improving education in schools (Subekti & Fauzi, 2018).

Schools and communities should maintain a continuous and close contact. Communication, in essence, is the primary vehicle for human life and the heart of all social relationships (Syawal et al., 2022; Dakir et al., 2022). Through communication, various social contacts and interactions occur, including interactions between individuals, groups, tribes, and even nations (Khorotunniswah et al., 2020). Therefore, schools must be adept at utilizing situational conditions, attention, communication style, and language to garner the maximum sympathy from the community or the public (Ariyanti et al., 2021).

The relationship between schools and communities has been formulated differently depending on the institution or organization making the formulation. The importance of the relationship between schools and communities is managed by the public relations department within the school (Muslimah, 2017). This relationship aims to provide mutual understanding between the school (leadership), the school community (teachers, staff, and students), and the community (parents, local residents), and other institutions outside the school (Ismail, 2018). Community involvement (participation) in educational institutions is deemed vital in advancing and maintaining the institution's reputation, making interactive communication necessary (Kosim & Akbar, 2019).

In this regard, the communication pattern implemented in SDN Betek Taman 01 follows the six communication keys mentioned in the Qur'an. This elementary school is not the only

educational institution in the Betek Taman Village. Therefore, the existence of community relationships from SDN Betek Taman 01's side must not be overlooked by the people of Betek Taman Village. While competition among educational institutions is normal, it becomes crucial when not accompanied by a school's efforts to build a positive image in the eyes of the community. From 2020 to 2022, SDN Betek Taman 01 relied solely on providing materials to students in online learning without knowing and identifying students' difficulties, improvements, and learning outcomes. Moreover, the school did not appreciate the efforts made by students and parents to participate in and complete online learning tasks. This situation has led some members of the community to lose interest in choosing SDN Betek Taman 01 as the appropriate educational institution for their children, preferring other educational institutions instead.

Mr. Rabidin, a parent, confirmed that it is true that during the pandemic, students and parents faced difficulties in accessing education. However, what is more unfortunate is that teachers never tried to ask whether students were experiencing difficulties in comprehension or the learning process. There was only material presented during the learning process without any reflection. From this situation, the researcher concludes that the communication and relationship between teachers and students, students with other students, and teachers with parents are not effective.

The number of students in the academic years 2020/2021 was 80 students, and in 2021/2022, it increased to 86 students. This has prompted SDN Betek Taman 01 to think critically about finding solutions to improve the school's image in the eyes of the community. One of the solutions offered by SDN Betek Taman 01 as an educational institution for the community is to establish relationships with the community based on the six communication keys mentioned in the Qur'an. The school chose the provisions of the Qur'an as the most authentic writing regarding the ethical and moral principles of communication. These six communication principles serve as the communication ethics in Islam, as explained by Jalaluddin Rakhmat. These principles are a social reflection of a Muslim in delivering speech. Effective communication will lead to good relevancy and understanding, creating harmony between the speaker and the listener, resulting in successful communication. Research from Ismatulloh (2017) also indicates that these six communication principles serve as the ethics of communication for Muslims, both in intrapersonal and interpersonal communication in daily interactions, in verbal and written preaching, and other activities. Furthermore, Marwah (2018) explains that the six communication patterns in the Qur'an guide communicators to use words or expressions that are good, beautiful, and accompanied by respect in accordance with ethics and etiquette, creating a sense of honor and dignity for both the speaker and the listener.

Several studies have indicated that these six principles of communication are effectively used in preaching activities. However, this research aims to highlight the importance of using the six communication principles in the school's ethical communication with the community.

Moreover, this study will emphasize the importance of bottom-up and top-down communication patterns between schools and the community to create a two-way or reciprocal relationship. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the application of the six communication keys used by SDN Betek Taman 01 as the foundation for building relationships with the community.

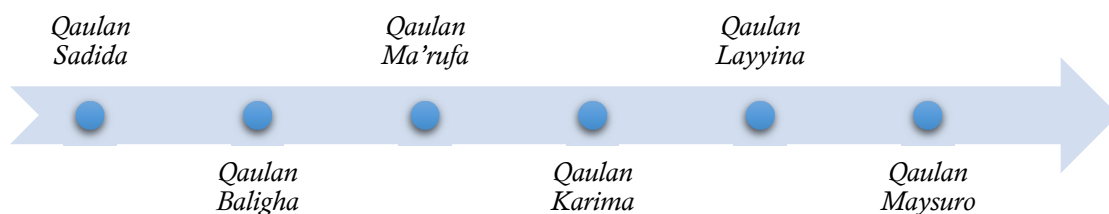
METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the communication practices implemented at SDN Betek Taman 01. The research was conducted at SDN Betek Taman 01, located in Betek Taman Village, Gading District, Probolinggo Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The research site was purposively selected because the school has actively developed communication strategies to strengthen relationships with parents and the surrounding community.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The participants were selected using purposive sampling and included the school principal, the vice principal for public relations, and two parents who were actively involved in school communication activities. These participants were considered capable of providing comprehensive information regarding the implementation of the school's communication practices. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, credibility was established through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentary evidence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Quran mentions communication as one of the innate characteristics of human beings. To understand how humans should communicate, the Quran provides key concepts related to it (Kisman, 2017). In various literature about Islamic communication, we can find at least six types of speech or discourse (qaulan) categorized as principles or ethics of Islamic communication. The six principles of Islamic communication mentioned in the Quran are (1) Qaulan Sadida, (2) Qaulan Baligha, (3) Qaulan Ma'rufa, (4) Qaulan Karima, (5) Qaulan Layyinan, and (6) Qaulan Maysura (Subekti & Fauzi, 2018).



Gambar: The Effective Communication in Qur'anic Perspective

Generally, this communication pattern is used in the context of preaching and government authorities. As a result, the communication between preachers and congregations or between the government and the public is linked with the concept of responsive, objective, and just communication (Abdussalam et al., 2020). In contrast, within the educational environment, sometimes only interpersonal communication concepts are applied without considering the types and styles of communication. This is in contrast to the policy of SDN Betek Taman 01, which aims to use the six communication principles from the Quran as the foundation for the school's relationship with the community. Therefore, to understand how SDN Betek Taman 01 processes and implements these six communication principles to establish good and proper communication with the school and external community, the following actions were taken:

1. *Qaulan Sadida*

Qaulan sadida is a form of communication that prioritizes honesty, stating the truth according to facts, accuracy, objectivity, and is non-manipulative, avoiding deception of the audience (Faizin & Sholehati, 2019). In terms of substance, Islamic communication must inform or convey the truth, factual information, honesty, and avoid lying or manipulating facts (Ma'sum, 2020). This is emphasized by SDN Betek Taman 01 in establishing communication and community relationships by emphasizing the values of honesty and transparency.

Since the implementation of the new normal, SDN Betek Taman 01 held an open meeting with parents for the 2022/2023 academic year and an evaluation meeting at the end of the academic year. Firstly, the annual meeting was held on July 20, 2022, to discuss the new normal policy, the school's curriculum, and the announcement of class guardians for each class. To maintain transparency of information between teachers and students, and teachers and parents, during the annual meeting, it was announced that each class has the right to form a support group to facilitate student learning in school, the Merdeka curriculum was introduced as a continuation of the emergency curriculum during the pandemic, and the amount of the School Operational Assistance (BOS) fund for the 2020-2021 academic year was announced, which was transformed for pandemic learning purposes.

Secondly, the open meeting for the evaluation of learning at the end of the 2022/2023 academic year could only be held after a long period of experiencing the pandemic. During this meeting, the school principal, teachers, and class guardians interacted directly with parents to review their child's learning progress and achievements at school. The principal of SDN Betek Taman 01 expressed gratitude to the parents for their cooperation in the students' learning process and emphasized the importance of being responsive to their child's educational progress.

The research observed that the school's invitation to parents, who are considered external to the school community, allowed them to witness their child's educational

achievements and contribute cooperatively to their child's education. As mentioned by Sari et al. (2022), parents must be the primary stakeholders in the community to evaluate, collaborate, and be the recipients of academic services (Mulenga & Marbàn, 2020). Therefore, it is evident that parents play a crucial role in determining the quality of educational institutions.

2. *Qaulan Baligha*

Qaulan balighan, is the principle of communication that is appropriate, clear (communicative), articulate, and has a clear meaning. Qaulan Baligha means using effective, targeted, communicative, easily understood, straight-to-the-point language, without being convoluted or verbose (Ikhwan, 2018). SDN Betek Taman 01 instructs its educational staff to communicate in a targeted manner and in accordance with the criteria of the community. The speaking style and messages conveyed should be adjusted to the level of intellectual ability of the community and use language that is understood by them. The communication style and choice of words used when interacting with the local residents of Desa Betek Taman in a rural area should be different from when communicating with scholars.

The school community, as mentioned above, includes several categories of people, such as the school administration (principal/school head), the school community (teachers, staff, and students), the parents and the local community, and external institutions beyond the school. The language style used by the school varies for each category of the community. Communication within the internal school community typically uses the Indonesian language or polite Madurese as a form of formality in the workplace and to show mutual respect. Meanwhile, the school has accustomed its students to using the Indonesian language, which allows them to become familiar with the national language from an early age. SDN Betek Taman 01 also requires students to interact and communicate in the school environment using the Indonesian language. On the other hand, when communicating with the community outside the school, the school adapts its language style to match that of the particular community. However, the majority of the language used is polite Madurese and Indonesian for parents who find it challenging to express themselves in polite Madurese.

These actions taken by SDN Betek Taman 01 are consistent with Rakhmat's opinion (in Roziqin & Rozaq, 2018) that there are two important aspects to consider for effective communication: first, the content should match the characteristics of the audience; second, the content should touch the hearts and minds of the listeners. This demonstrates the strong connection between the speaker's expertise in delivering the message in a manner that is easily understood, as the communicator's personality can influence the effectiveness of the message.

3. *Qaulan Ma'rufa*

Qaulan ma'rufan is a principle of socializing and inviting to goodness. Discussions or debates conducted in a good manner usually exemplify qaulan ma'rufa, ensuring that the discussions do not lead to division among the community (Ma & Fathoni, 2018). Qaulan

Ma'rufa means speaking with kindness, using appropriate expressions, politeness, using indirect language (non-offensive), and avoiding hurting or offending others' feelings. Qaulan Ma'rufa also implies conversations that are beneficial and promote goodness (maslahat) (Sinduwiatmo, 2018).

In the context of communication, SDN Betek Taman 01 must be cautious in observing and even reading the situation and conditions of the community. This type of communication is conveyed with politeness and respect, upholding the dignity of the community as human beings who are honored. This type of communication is essential, considering that the community's conditions are highly heterogeneous in terms of education, social status, economic environment, occupation, and place of residence. Each individual has their own mindset and behavior, including how they respond to the messages conveyed. As stated by the head of SDN Betek Taman 01, the school does not demand that all students have gadgets for the learning process, but it can be followed up with interactive personal communication with students who do not have access to gadgets or the internet. The school also conditions that there is no tuition fee for students, but they are encouraged to provide voluntary contributions once a week to support the school's facilities and infrastructure.

The communication principles of SDN Betek Taman 01 are based on the success of Prophet Muhammad SAW as the most perfect role model in preaching. He knew and understood the psychology of the people he dealt with, so he knew when to speak and when to remain silent, when to be firm and when to be gentle. The success of the Prophet's preaching in advancing society was marked by four factors, including careful reasoning, precise and thoughtful speech, and noble character (Kholil et al., 2022).

4. *Qaulan Karima*

Qaulan kariman is the principle of building good relationships and practicing etiquette in communication. Qaulan Karima means noble speech, accompanied by respect and reverence, pleasant to hear, gentle, and courteous (Ariyanti et al., 2021). Noble speech must be used when communicating with both parents or teachers as the second parents in school. Islam forbids raising one's voice at them or using words that may hurt their feelings. Qaulan Karima should be used especially when communicating with parents or individuals who deserve respect. In the context of journalism and broadcasting, Qaulan Karima means using polite language, avoiding rudeness, vulgarity, and avoiding "bad taste," such as disgust, repulsion, fear, and sadism (Zamroni et al., 2022).

SDN Betek Taman 01 adopts this communication principle to handle and establish relationships based on mutual respect and appreciation. The community becomes a significant indicator in determining the institution's image, so the communication pattern should always be maintained as a partner in the academic world. The Head of Public Relations at SDN Betek Taman 01 emphasizes that good communication is not judged by the low position or rank of a person but by their words. Many people fail to communicate

effectively with others because they use incorrect words that have the potential to demean others. Demeaning others is equivalent to giving them a bad image. This is what leads to strained relationships between individuals. Feeling that their words are not respected, the interlocutor tends to discontinue the conversation and suddenly distances themselves, carrying feelings of disappointment. What was once a positive relationship turns into resentment merely because of a word.

The concept of Qaulan karima implies a fundamental principle in the ethics of Islamic communication, with SDN Betek Taman 01 highlighting this principle as a form of respect. According to Yanti & Reflianto (2019), communication in Islam should treat others with full respect. According to Amir (in Kosim & Akbar, 2019), others are valued for their dignity and integrity as human beings. Dialogue partners are recognized as individuals, not just tolerated, even if their views differ. The rights of others are acknowledged in their individuality and personal opinions, helping to enhance their potential to become who or what they want to be. Meanwhile, Sulhan (2017) states that dakwah through qaulan karima can be used when dealing with mad'u or elderly targets, and the speech used should be noble, polite, respectful, without lecturing, and without requiring explosive rhetoric, as they are easily offended.

5. *Qaulan Layyina*

Qaulan layyinan in this context refers to the communication principle that emphasizes persuasive solutions with gentle, non-provocative, and dignified words that do not degrade others' dignity (Ariyanti et al., 2021). Qaulan Layyina means gentle speech, with a pleasant voice, and full of kindness, so it can touch the heart (Kosim & Akbar, 2019). In Tafsir Ibnu Katsir, it is mentioned that layina means using words of satire, not straightforward or blunt words, let alone rude ones. The heart of the communicator (the person being communicated with) will feel touched and their soul moved to accept the communicator's message. Thus, in Islamic communication, harsh words and a loud, high-pitched tone (intonation) should be avoided as much as possible (Khorotunniswah et al., 2020).

Islam teaches using gentle communication with anyone. SDN Betek Taman 01 instructs all students to communicate politely with teachers and parents at home as a form of respect. SDN Betek Taman 01 also conveys several points regarding the cooperation that should be built between teachers and parents for the success of students' learning and achievements at school, and this communication should be gentle, avoiding violence and disputes. By using gentle communication, not only does a feeling of friendship penetrate the child's heart, but they also strive to be a good listener. The command is to use soft and gentle words. Most children feel afraid when their parents speak with a high tone, glaring eyes, and accompanied by harsh words like disrespectful child, stupid child, foolish child, ungrateful child, and so on. Such harsh attitudes and words should not be encouraged as they are not educative. However, instead of being futile, it is better to educate with a gentle approach.

Educating a child gently is more likely to achieve success compared to using violence, as violence will create a stubborn personality in the child.

SDN Betek Taman 01 sometimes encounters stubborn children who refuse to follow the instructions of teachers or parents. The refusal occurs not because the child is incapable of doing it but because the instructions are given using harsh and abusive communication. As stated by Mrs. Hosnawiyah, by giving instructions gently, without being emotional or using derogatory language, the child willingly complies with the instructions. Even though the child may feel tired at that time, they make an effort to obey their parents' commands. On the other hand, when communicating with the school's community, such as parents or guardians, if there is someone who does not cooperate well with the school or does not support school activities, the school usually approaches the parents directly to discuss and find the best solution without sarcasm or emotions involved.

Qawlan layyina is an ethical communication approach balanced with good attitude and behavior, being gentle, without emotions and insults, or, in communication terms, it involves balancing verbal and non-verbal messages. When related to dakwah (preaching), qawlan layyina can be applied by the da'i (preacher) with a gentle approach when facing the mad'u (target audience) so that the message conveyed can be quickly understood (Ismail, 2018).

6. *Qaulan Maysuro*

Qaulan maysuran means communication that is easily digested and understood by the audience, or in other words, when communicating using words that please or bring joy to others (Syawal et al., 2022). Another meaning is pleasant words or containing joyful elements. For verbal and written communication, Ariani (2017) suggests using simple, concise, and accurate language for ease of understanding. The term "qaulan Maysuraa" can be found in the Quran. It is one of the guidelines for communicating with easily understood and soothing language. "Maisura" is rooted in the word "yasara," which etymologically means easy or appropriate. Meanwhile, "qawlan maysura," according to (Nurhasanah & Suherman, 2022), is more accurately interpreted as pleasant speech being speech that makes things difficult. If qawlan ma'rufa contains guidance through good words, qawlan maysura contains joyful elements through easy or appropriate words.

SDN Betek Taman 01 applies this principle by establishing two aspects of communication, meaning the school not only conveys the content but also defines social relationships with the community. The same content can either familiarize SDN Betek Taman 01 or alienate them, leading to either friendship or animosity. The second dimension of this communication is often referred to as meta-communication (how the message is interpreted). So, in this communication principle, SDN Betek Taman 01 does not allow or leave room for rumors, hoaxes, or miscommunication about the school's academic processes. Therefore, SDN Betek Taman 01 takes action by creating group associations for

each class so that all information about the school is transparently and easily accessible, and there is reciprocal communication between teachers and parents.

Qaulan Maysura essentially refers to the content of the message delivered by the communicator, which is conveyed voluntarily and easily understood without second thoughts. It involves using simple, easy, accurate language that contains what is needed. Therefore, effective communication can promote joy and build good social relationships. In dakwah (preaching), the da'i can use Qaulan Maysura as a technique to ensure that the message is received by considering the target audience (Mad'u) before delivering the message (Ismatulloh, 2017).

SDN Betek Taman 01 recognizes that educational institutions do not stand independently, and the existence of the community is the key to shaping the school's good image. The six (6) principles mentioned above represent four values in communication, including respect, cooperation, mutual understanding, and modesty. This aligns with the opinion of Antar Venus (in Muslimah, 2017) regarding communication values, which must be considered when communicating with others.

Communication is a reflection of a person's ability to build relationships, so the quality of someone's communication can be observed through their interaction with the broader community. The Quran is the main source of behavior and a reference for life because it contains various rules of life, from urgent matters to even the simplest things. These communication principles also become the key to upholding the dignity of human beings, educating them to always respect and preserve their own and others' dignity. This way, a harmonious society can be realized. Another benefit is to educate people to always think positively so that their lives become more productive, and their energy is not wasted on uncertain matters (Kosim & Akbar, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that SDN Betek Taman 01 has successfully implemented Islamic communication principles as the foundation for building effective relationships with its stakeholders. The application of the six principles of *Qaulan Sadida*, *Qaulan Baligha*, *Qaulan Ma'rufa*, *Qaulan Karima*, *Qaulan Layyinan*, and *Qaulan Maysura* fosters reciprocal communication among educators, administrative staff, students, parents, and the wider community. These principles embody the core values of respect, cooperation, mutual understanding, and humility, which collectively contribute to strengthening trust, enhancing community engagement, and promoting a positive institutional image.

The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on school public relations by demonstrating how Islamic communication principles can be operationalized as a strategic framework for community engagement in primary education. Practically, the study provides guidance for school leaders seeking to establish sustainable partnerships with parents and local communities through ethical and culturally grounded communication practices. However, this

study was limited to a single public primary school, and the findings may not be generalizable to other educational contexts. Future research is recommended to examine the implementation of these communication principles across different educational institutions and cultural settings to further validate and expand the proposed communication framework.

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