

Prophetic Communication Ethics and Oversharing in Social Media: Reinterpretation of Hadith Falyaql Khayran Aw Liyaşmut in Al-Ḥaḍārah Wa Al-Tsaqāfah Perspective

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ABSTRACT

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The rapid development of social media has fundamentally transformed society's communication patterns and given rise to the phenomenon of over-sharing—the tendency to excessively share personal information in digital public spaces without adequate ethical consideration. This article examines the phenomenon of over-sharing as a contemporary ethical challenge in communication and proposes a reconstruction of prophetic communication ethics based on the hadith “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent” as a normative framework for building a responsible digital communication culture. Using a qualitative-thematic approach (*al-Dirāsah al-Mawḍū'īyyah*), this study analyzes the hadith in relation to the phenomenon of over-sharing from the perspective of al-Ḥaḍārah wa al-Tsaqāfah. The study's findings reveal four relevant principles of prophetic communication ethics: (1) selectivity of information (*dabt al-lisān*); (2) protection of privacy (*hifz al-khuṣūsiyyah*); (3) social responsibility (*al-mas'ūliyyah al-ijtimā'iyyah*); and (4) the pursuit of the common good (*tahqīq al-maṣlahah*). These four principles demonstrate that prophetic communication ethics is not merely a guide for individual morality, but a civilizational framework for building an ethical, selective, and responsible digital communication culture.

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Introduction

The development of digital communication technology over the past two decades has brought about fundamental changes in the patterns of social interaction in modern society. (Azzaakiyyah, 2023) Social media no longer functions merely as a means of exchanging information, but has evolved into a space for identity representation, emotional expression, and a means of individual social legitimization in the virtual public sphere. (Gu & Gao, 2025) This transformation has given rise to a new communication pattern characterized by an increasing intensity of personal information sharing in the digital public sphere, a phenomenon known in contemporary communication studies as “over-sharing.” (Agger, 2012) This phenomenon is a cultural symptom related to the transformation of communication ethics in digital society—namely, a shift in communication orientation from need-based communication toward self-expression-based communication that tends to lack ethical control. (ibn Abī al-Dunyā, 1987)

The culture of *oversharing* has the potential to cause various serious social

implications: the normalization of the dissemination of unproductive information, the blurring of boundaries between private and public spaces, increased social conflict in digital spaces, and a decline in ethical sensitivity in interpersonal communication. (Malik, 2024) This situation indicates that the rapid development of communication technology is not always accompanied by adequate development of ethical awareness in communication; therefore, a normative ethical framework is needed to guide digital communication practices so that they remain oriented toward the public good. (al-Māwardī, 2006)

In the Islamic tradition, communication ethics is an integral part of prophetic teachings that possess both moral and civilizational dimensions. One fundamental principle is reflected in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad Saw.:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or let him remain silent"

This hadith explicitly links the quality of a person's communication to the quality of their faith. From an Islamic ethical perspective, this hadith is regarded as a universal principle in regulating human communication because it encompasses all forms of verbal interaction that have the potential to bring benefit or harm to social life. (Şaqr, n.d.) Al-Nawawī emphasizes that this hadith is a fundamental principle in guarding one's speech from all forms of speech that do not bring benefit. (al-Nawawī, 1392) In line with this, al-Ghazālī explains that most social ills stem from uncontrolled communication. (al-Ghazālī, n.d.)

Several contemporary hadith studies have demonstrated efforts to reactualize hadith in addressing modern social problems. (A. Y. Haq, 2023) Furthermore, most studies on Islamic communication ethics in the social media era still position hadith as a guide for individual morality. No one has yet comprehensively examined it as a prophetic framework for communication ethics in interpreting digital cultural phenomena such as *over-sharing* from the perspective of civilization and culture (*al-ḥaḍārah wa al-tsaqāfah*). This article aims to fill this gap with two main objectives: (1) to analyze the phenomenon of *over-sharing* as an ethical challenge in communication in the social media era; and (2) to reinterpret the hadith "*falyaql khayran aw liyaşmut*" as a prophetic framework for communication ethics in building a digital communication culture oriented toward social welfare.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using the *al-Dirāsah al-Mawḍū'iyah* method (thematic hadith study) combined with *digital* communication culture analysis. The thematic method was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive exploration of the meaning of hadith by collecting, classifying, and analyzing narrations related to the topic of communication ethics, thereby yielding a more complete understanding of the normative dimensions of prophetic communication. The primary data sources for this study are the hadith texts contained in *the Ṣaḥīḥain* along with their commentaries. Secondary data sources include contemporary literature on social media, digital communication ethics, and studies of Islamic communication culture. The analysis is conducted through three systematic stages: (1) *takhrīj al-ḥadīth*—tracking and verifying the isnād and matn of the hadith in the primary sources; (2) semantic analysis (*taḥlīl al-ma'nā*)—examining the meaning of the hadith linguistically and contextually by referring to classical *commentaries*; and (3) normative re-actualization—linking the findings of hadith analysis to the phenomenon of *over-sharing* within the framework of *al-ḥaḍārah wa al-tsaqāfah* through constructive dialogue between the Islamic intellectual heritage and contemporary digital communication studies.

Results and Discussion

1. Over-Sharing from the Perspective of Digital Communication Culture

Over-sharing is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary digital communication culture, emerging as a logical consequence of information technology developments that have expanded the scope of human interaction. (Ren, 2024) In the context of digital communication, this phenomenon refers to the tendency of individuals to share personal information excessively in virtual public spaces without considering the boundaries of social communication ethics, the relevance of the information, or its long-term impacts. (Agger, 2012)

Social media no longer functions merely as a means of information exchange but has evolved into a space for the construction of social identity, enabling individuals to openly present their self-representations before a virtual public. (Scolere et al., 2018) This condition means that the disclosure of personal information is no longer understood as a limited communicative act but as part of an individual's social existence strategy within the digital space. This shift in orientation indicates a paradigm shift from interpersonal communication toward performative communication oriented toward social recognition. (Calafell, 2020)

From a sociological perspective on communication, the development of social media has blurred the boundaries between private and public spaces. Information that was previously confined to the private sphere can now be easily accessed by the general public without adequate social control mechanisms. (Liu et al., 2022) This situation has the potential to raise various ethical issues, as excessive openness regarding personal information can undermine an individual's moral integrity and disrupt the stability of social relations within society. (Nasrullah, 2015) Research by Shabahang et al. indicates that *over-sharing* on social media is significantly predicted by social anxiety, attention-seeking behavior, and social media addiction. These findings suggest that *over-sharing* is not merely an individual behavior but a cultural phenomenon reflecting the transformation of social values in modern digital life. (Shabahang et al., 2022)

From an Islamic perspective, maintaining boundaries between private and public spaces is an essential part of social communication ethics. Scholars emphasize that one form of a Muslim's communicative wisdom is the ability to share information proportionately according to social needs and the public good. (al-Andalusī, 1404) Al-Māwardī asserts that safeguarding personal secrets (*ḥifẓ al-sirr*) is part of a Muslim's moral responsibility in building healthy and harmonious social relationships. (al-Māwardī, 2006)

Furthermore, from the perspective of *al-ḥadārah wa al-tsaqāfah*, the phenomenon of *oversharing* serves as an indicator of shifts in the value structure of societal communication. A society's communication patterns reflect the quality of the civilization it has built, as communication plays a strategic role in shaping the nature of social relations and the stability of collective life. (Achiței & Nistor, 2023) Therefore, this phenomenon must be interpreted as an ethical challenge to civilizational communication that requires the reconstruction of a normative framework grounded in prophetic communication values.

1. Analysis of the Hadith *Falyaqul Khayran Aw Liyaṣmut* as a Foundation for Communication Ethics

a. *Takhrīj* and Status of the Hadith

The hadith that is the focus of this study reads:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or let him remain silent"

This hadith is a fragment narrated by (al-Bukhārī, 1422, no. 6475), (Muslim, n.d., no. 47) and several other hadith scholars. With a strong chain of transmission through the Companion Abū Hurairah, ra., this hadith has the status of *ṣaḥīḥ* and is among the hadiths that possess universal significance in regulating the social behavior of Muslims.

b. Semantic Analysis and Normative Content

Linguistically, the wording of this hadith links communicative activity to faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment. This linkage indicates that communication in Islam is not understood as a neutral social activity, but rather as a moral act with theological consequences. (al-Nawawī, 1392) The use of the imperative form in the phrase *falyaqul khayran aw liyaṣmut* indicates a firm normative demand in regulating a Muslim's communicative behavior. (al-Ṭūfī, 1998)

The word "*khayran*" in this hadith does not merely signify goodness in the sense of individual morality, but encompasses all forms of communication that provide social benefit and do not cause harm in community life. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī explains in *Fath al-Bārī* that "*khayran*" includes every utterance that brings benefit to oneself or others, whether of a worldly or otherworldly nature. (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1379) Meanwhile, silence (*al-ṣamt*) in this hadith is not interpreted as a passive attitude, but as a form of active self-control when communication has the potential to cause negative effects. (al-Munāwī, 1356)

Al-Nawawī explains that this hadith contains a command to speak only on matters of clear benefit, whereas communication that is doubtful or lacks public interest is recommended to be avoided because it has the potential to cause moral and social harm. (al-Nawawī, 1392) Al-Ghazālī in *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* asserts that most human corruption stems from an inability to guard one's tongue, as uncontrolled communication can lead to social conflict, damage an individual's honor, and weaken one's spiritual quality. (al-Ghazālī, n.d.) Therefore, the principle of *qaul al-khayr aw al-ṣamt* serves as a crucial instrument in maintaining social harmony within Muslim communities. (al-Syādzilī, 1423) Furthermore, communication in Islam not only demands the truthfulness of information but also considers the moral and social impact of every utterance. (Tanjung & Abdullah, 2025) Thus, Islamic communication ethics are built upon the principles of prudence, respect for individual dignity, and the protection of social harmony within society.

c. The Dimensions of *al-ḥaḍārāh wa al-tsaqāfah* in the Hadith

Within the framework of *al-ḥaḍārāh wa al-tsaqāfah*, this hadith not only regulates individual communication behavior but also serves as the foundation for the formation of an Islamic communication civilization based on moral responsibility. Ibn Khaldūn, in *al-Muqaddimah*, asserts that the quality of a society's communication reflects the quality of its civilizational value system. (ibn Khaldūn, 2004) This perspective indicates that the internalization of prophetic communication values carries civilizational implications that transcend mere individual ethical guidelines.

Furthermore, classical scholars positioned the regulation of communication as the primary foundation for the formation of social ethics in Islam. This is evident in the wording of hadiths that link communicative activities to faith in Allah and the Day of Judgment – a connection indicating that communication in Islam is not understood as a neutral social activity, but rather as a moral act with both theological and social consequences. The principle of *qaul al-khayr aw al-ṣamt* is thus part of an integrative Islamic communication ethics system with civilizational implications. (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1379)

2. Reconstruction of the Four Principles of Prophetic Communication Ethics

Based on an analysis of hadith and its contextualization regarding the phenomenon of *over-sharing*, this study identifies four principles of prophetic communication ethics that can serve as an operational normative framework in digital communication culture:

a. The Principle of Information Selectivity (*Ḍabṭ al-Lisān*)

The first principle is an individual's ability to consider the benefits of a piece of information before sharing it with the public. This principle stems from the tradition of verbal restraint (*ḍabṭ al-lisān*), which regards caution as an indicator of a Muslim's moral maturity. (ibn Abī al-Dunyā, 1987) This principle aligns with the Prophet's hadith:

كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ

"It is enough for a person to be considered a liar if he recounts everything he hears." (Narrated by Muslim).

This hadith highlights the obligation to verify and filter information before sharing it with others, ensuring that communication does not become a vehicle for spreading lies, slander, or invalid information. (Ibn al-Malak, n.d.) In the context of social media, *ḍabṭ al-lisān* is operationalized through the following questions: Does the information to be shared have clear benefits for the audience? Does the information have the potential to cause negative consequences for oneself or others?

b. The Principle of Protecting Privacy (*Hifz al-Khuṣūṣiyyah*)

The second principle is the awareness of maintaining boundaries between personal and public information in the digital space. This principle is in line with the words of the Prophet, pbuh,

إِنَّ مِنْ أَشْرَّ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ الرَّجُلُ يَفْضِي إِلَى امْرَأَتِهِ وَتَفْضِي إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يَنْشُرُ سِرَّهَا

"Indeed, among the worst of people in the sight of Allah on the Day of Resurrection is a man who has sexual relations with his wife and then reveals her bedroom secrets." (Narrated by Muslim, no. 1437).

The secrets referred to in this hadith are hidden faults that should not be disclosed. Such faults are a trust that must be safeguarded and kept hidden. (Ibn al-Jawzī, n.d.) Al-Māwardī emphasizes that safeguarding personal secrets (*hifz al-sirr*) is part of the moral responsibility in building healthy social relationships. (al-Māwardī, 2006) Excessive disclosure of personal information has the potential to undermine the stability of social relationships because information that should remain in the private sphere is transferred to the public sphere without adequate ethical consideration. (al-Ghazālī, n.d., p. 3:125)

c. The Principle of Social Responsibility (*Al-Mas'ūliyyah al-Ijtimā'iyyah*)

The third principle is the awareness that every form of communication has social consequences that can affect the stability of community life. Digital communication is not merely understood as an activity of personal expression, but as part of the collective construction of a society's communication culture. (Puluhulawa et al., 2026) Communication that does not consider its social impact has the potential to foster an unhealthy communication culture within digital society. (Liliweri, 2011) The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned of the dangers of words spoken without consideration and responsibility. In a hadith, he said:

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ، مَا يَتَّبِعُنَّ مَا فِيهَا، يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي النَّارِ، أَبْعَدَ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ

"Indeed, a servant may utter a word without considering its consequences, and because of that word, he is cast into Hell as far as the distance between the east and the west." (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim).

This principle indicates that communication in Islam is always situated within a framework of both theological and social responsibility. Thus, every word spoken or published carries a dimension of accountability before Allah as well as before society.

d. *The Principle of the Orientation Toward the Public Good (Taḥqīq al-Maṣlahah)*

The fourth principle is to make social benefit the primary parameter in digital communication activities. This principle is the core of the normative message of the hadith “*falyaqul khayran aw liyaṣmut*,” which establishes the value of benefit as the ethical standard for a Muslim’s communication. (Ibn al-Azraq, n.d.) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُ

“Among the signs of a person’s good Islam is abstaining from what is of no benefit” (al-Tirmizī, 1975, no. 2317), (Ibn Mājah, n.d., no. 3976)

In the context of digital communication, every comment and post shared on social media, if not oriented toward the common good and benefit, is also something that should be avoided as a Muslim. From this perspective, communication is no longer understood merely as an activity of conveying information, but as an instrument of civilization-building that serves to maintain social harmony in society. (al-‘Asqalānī, 1379)

3. Relevance and Implications for Muslim Communication Culture in the Digital Age

The four principles above demonstrate that prophetic communication ethics hold strong relevance to the challenge of *oversharing* in the social media era. The tendency to excessively share personal information in digital public spaces often occurs without considering the value of the public good in communication. (S. U. Haq & Kwok, 2024) Consequently, communication, which should serve as a means to strengthen social relationships, has the potential to cause interpersonal conflicts and weaken the quality of ethical communication within digital society. (McKee, 2013)

From the perspective of *al-ḥaḍārah wa al-tsaqāfah*, the reconstruction of prophetic communication ethics has broader implications for the development of a digital society’s communication culture. The quality of a society’s communication is directly linked to the quality of the civilization it builds. The following table summarizes the mapping of the challenges of *over-sharing* against relevant prophetic communication principles:

Tabel 1. Mapping the Challenges of Over-Sharing and the Principles of Prophetic Communication Ethics

The Challenge of Oversharing	Principles of Prophetic Communication Ethics
Excessive personal information in the public sphere	<i>Ḍabṭ al-Lisān</i> (Selectivity of Information)
The Blurring of the Line Between Private and Public Spaces	<i>Ḥifẓ al-Khuṣūṣiyyah</i> (Protection of Private Space)
Communication without consideration of social impact	<i>Al-Mas’ūliyyah al-Ijtimā’iyyah</i> (Social Responsibility)
Communication based on self-expression without benefit	<i>Taḥqīq al-Maṣlahah</i> (Public Interest Orientation)

The internalization of these four principles has strategic implications for the formation of a civilized Muslim communication culture in the digital age. A society’s

communication culture is a reflection of the value system that forms the foundation of its civilization. (ibn Khaldūn, 2004) Therefore, the application of prophetic communication principles in the digital space serves not only as a guide for individual ethics but also as an instrument for building a more selective, responsible, and socially beneficial collective communication culture among Muslim communities in modern life.

Furthermore, the formation of a collective awareness that freedom of expression on social media must always be accompanied by moral responsibility is one of the most important implications of the internalization of prophetic communication ethics. Digital communication is no longer understood as a space for unlimited expression, but as a space for social interaction that demands ethical maturity and spiritual awareness from its users. (al-Māwardī, 2006) Thus, the re-actualization of the hadith *falyaqul khayran aw liyašmut* serves not only as a solution to the phenomenon of *over-sharing* but also as part of a strategic effort to build a Muslim society's communication civilization oriented toward social welfare.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the phenomenon of *over-sharing* in digital communication culture is a symptom of the transformation of societal communication values that needs to be addressed with a strong normative ethical framework. An analysis of the hadith "*man kāna yu'minu billāh wa al-yaum al-ākhir falyaqul khayran aw liyašmut*" shows that prophetic communication ethics contain four relevant and operational principles to be applied in the context of digital communication: (1) selectivity of information (*dabt al-lisān*); (2) protection of privacy (*hifz al-khuṣūsiyyah*); (3) social responsibility in communication (*al-mas'ūliyyah al-ijtimā'iyah*); and (4) orientation toward the public good (*taḥqīq al-maṣlahah*).

From the perspective of *al-ḥadārah wa al-tsaqāfah*, this hadith functions not only as an individual moral guide but also possesses a significant civilizational dimension in shaping the collective communication culture of Muslim society. Communication built upon the principle of social public interest, as taught in the Prophet's ﷺ hadith, will strengthen social stability and foster a more civilized character in societal communication.

This study has theoretical implications in the form of strengthening the position of prophetic communication ethics as a relevant analytical framework in contemporary digital communication studies; as well as practical implications regarding the importance of integrating prophetic communication values into Islamic-values-based digital literacy programs, especially for the Muslim youth. Further research is recommended to examine the implementation of these principles in the context of specific social media platforms, as well as the development of a digital literacy model based on prophetic communication ethics.

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