

Communication Strategy of Start FM Panyabungan's Ramadan Blessings Islamic Broadcast to Increase the Attractiveness of Broadcast Programs

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the communication strategies implemented by Radio Start FM Panyabungan to enhance the appeal of its Islamic religious programs, particularly the Ramadhan Berkah program. The program is held during the month of Ramadan as a means of conveying religious messages and spiritual guidance to the community through radio. The study employed qualitative methods with data collection techniques including interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants in this study consisted of broadcasters, program producers, and active listeners. The data obtained were then analyzed to determine the communication strategies used in program implementation. The results indicate that the success of the Ramadhan Berkah program is supported by several communication strategies, including presenting material that is appropriate to the community's needs, using simple and easy-to-understand language, involving resource persons with religious competence, and utilizing social media and direct interaction with listeners during the broadcast. In addition, determining the broadcast schedule to coincide with important times during Ramadan, such as before breaking the fast and during the pre-dawn meal, also increases public interest in listening to the program. The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of appropriate communication strategies can increase listener interest in Islamic religious broadcasts while strengthening the role of radio as a medium for disseminating Islamic values that is adaptive to the development of digital technology. It is hoped that this research can be used as a consideration for broadcasting institutions in developing more effective and popular Islamic preaching programs.

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Introduction

Communication is a crucial element in conveying information, including in da'wah activities. To ensure the message is well-received by the listener or audience, an appropriate, clear, and modern communication strategy is required. In today's digital era, technological advances and the increasing use of smartphones have changed the way people obtain information. Various digital media have become the primary means of communication and knowledge acquisition, so da'wah activities

must also adapt to these changes. From an Islamic perspective, the importance of communication can be understood through Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 31.

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝٣١

Meaning: And he taught Adam the names of all (things), then he showed them to the angels, saying, "Tell me the names of all these (things), if you are right! (QS. Al-Baqarah verse 31)(Indonesia, 2020)

This verse explains how Allah SWT taught the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) the names of objects. This verse demonstrates that conveying knowledge requires an appropriate method so that it can be understood and passed on to others. Therefore, communication strategies play a crucial role in effectively conveying religious messages to society, especially in the era of modernization.(Nazhan, 2025).

From the perspective of communication strategy theory, the success of communication is determined by the communicator's ability to plan messages, choose the right media, and understand audience characteristics (Efendy 2007). Amidst the rapid flow of information, the public is often confronted with various content that lacks educational value(Fadilah, 2023). This condition makes da'wah media play a crucial role as a means of disseminating information containing positive and Islamic values. One media that has survived and is close to the community is radio. Radio is a type of communication media that uses sound waves as a means to convey information to the public or listeners(Alfala, 2023).

Panyabungan has a Muslim majority population, with 99.46% being Muslim. Christianity accounts for 0.54%, with Protestantism at 0.49% and Catholicism at 0.05%. Panyabungan City was designated the capital of Mandailing Natal Regency from 1999 to 2018.(“Catalog: Mandailing Natal,” 2023).Panyabungan City, the capital of Mandailing Natal Regency, has a predominantly Muslim population. This situation indicates a significant need for media capable of delivering religious information and education on an ongoing basis. In this situation, Radio Start FM exists not only as an information and entertainment medium, but also as a means of preaching, striving to meet the community's spiritual needs. One of the religious programs broadcast by Radio Start FM is the Ramadhan Berkah Da'wah Program. This program, held during the month of Ramadan, presents various Islamic materials tailored to the community's needs. In addition to radio broadcasts, this program is also supported by the use of social media such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram to reach a wider audience(S Mutmainah et, 2022).

The existence of the Ramadhan Berkah Dakwah program is interesting to study because it demonstrates local radio's efforts to maintain its existence amidst digital media competition(Alfala, 2023). Radio Start FM not only relies on conventional broadcasts, but also utilizes digital platforms to expand the reach of da'wah and increase interaction with audiences (Ara Siregar, Wednesday, April 16, 2025). However, the level of public engagement on digital platforms is still not optimal, so an effective communication strategy is needed to maintain the program's appeal. Based on this phenomenon, this study is important to conduct to determine the communication strategy implemented by Radio Start FM Panyabungan in increasing the appeal of the Ramadhan Berkah da'wah broadcast program. This research is expected to contribute to the development of da'wah communication strategies, especially in local radio media that adapt to the development of digital technology.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to understand the communication strategies implemented by Radio Start FM Panyabungan to increase the appeal of its Ramadhan Berkah preaching broadcast program. This approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth overview of the phenomena studied based on conditions occurring in the field by collecting, processing, and explaining various phenomena encountered. (Fiantika, 2022).

The research was conducted at Radio Start FM, located on Jalan AMD Lama, Kota Siantar Village, Panyabungan District, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra. The location was chosen based on Radio Start FM's role as a local media outlet actively broadcasting religious programs and information to the public.

The research data sources consist of primary data, secondary data, and supporting data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with the Director of PT Radio Start FM, Khairudin Paslah Siregar, and Nur Ismi Desita, Program and News Manager. Secondary data were obtained from Radio Start FM staff and several active listeners of the Ramadhan Berkah program. Supporting data came from radio documents, scientific literature, and Radio Start FM's official social media accounts.

Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted by directly observing broadcasting activities and the implementation of Islamic outreach programs on Radio Start FM. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain in-depth information regarding the communication strategies implemented and listener responses to the programs. Documentation, including interview recordings, activity photos, and other related documents, supplemented the research data.

Data validity was tested using source triangulation techniques, which compare information obtained from various sources and relevant documents. This technique was used to ensure the validity and consistency of the research data. Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed descriptively to illustrate the communication strategies used by Radio Start FM to increase the appeal of its Ramadhan Berkah da'wah broadcast program.

Results and Discussion

Based on research conducted at Radio Start FM Panyabungan, it is clear that communication strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the appeal of broadcast programs, particularly the "Ramadan Berkah" (Blessed Ramadan) program. As a local radio station established in 2007, Start FM continues to strive to maintain its presence amidst the development of digital technology and increasingly fierce media competition. The various communication strategies implemented aim not only to maintain listenership but also to improve program quality to maintain public interest.

The first strategy implemented by Radio Start FM is to keep up with developments in digital technology. Currently, people access information more through the internet and social media than through conventional media. This situation has encouraged Radio Start FM to adapt by utilizing various digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and radio streaming services. This step is taken so that radio broadcasts can be enjoyed not only by people within the transmitter's range, but also by listeners outside the area and even abroad (Ismi Desita, July 15, 2025). The use of digital media has proven to have a positive impact on the

dissemination of broadcast program information. Listeners who cannot listen to the broadcast live can still access the broadcast material through the radio's social media. Thus, the existence of digital media functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a content distribution medium that can expand audience reach (Rani, 2013).

In addition to keeping up with technological developments, Radio Start FM also pays attention to the content or themes of its programs. Themes relevant to the needs and conditions of society are one of the main factors in attracting listeners. During the month of Ramadan, for example, Radio Start FM presents various programs with an Islamic nuance, one of which is the "Ramadan Berkah" (Blessed Ramadan) da'wah program. This program discusses various topics related to fasting, zakat, morals, interpretation of the Quran, hadith, and religious issues frequently faced by the community (Khoiruddin Faslah Siregar 2025). The selection of themes that are appropriate to the momentum of Ramadan makes this program feel closer to the lives of listeners. The material presented is not only theoretical, but also provides practical guidance that can be applied in everyday life. This is what makes listeners feel that the program provides real benefits for them. This strategy proves that the process of da'wah communication depends not only on the content of the message, but also on how the message is packaged and delivered to the audience (Yuliani, 2021).

The next strategy is to present competent and credible speakers in their fields. Based on research findings, Radio Start FM specifically selects speakers with strong academic and religious backgrounds. Most of the speakers are lecturers at Islamic universities, religious figures, and well-known scholars.

The presence of competent sources adds value to broadcast programs, as exemplified by the Source Credibility Theory proposed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley. This theory explains that the audience's level of trust in a message is greatly influenced by the communicator's expertise and trustworthiness. (Funny et al., 2024) Listeners feel more confident in the information conveyed because it comes from a source with expertise in the field. Furthermore, the speaker's ability to convey material in simple, easy-to-understand language makes the message of da'wah well-received by a wide range of people. The speaker's credibility is also one reason why listeners remain loyal to the Ramadhan Berkah program.

Program promotion through social media is also a key part of Radio Start FM's communication strategy. Before a program airs, the radio station first disseminates information about the broadcast schedule, the topics to be discussed, and the speakers. This information is published through the radio station's various social media accounts. This promotional strategy has proven effective because it increases public awareness of the program. Listeners can learn about the broadcast schedule in advance, allowing them to make time to watch the program. Furthermore, regular promotions also help build a closer relationship between the radio station and its listeners.

In implementing the Ramadhan Berkah Da'wah program, Radio Start FM also implements interactive communication. Listeners are given the opportunity to submit questions, comments, and input via telephone, WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media platforms. According to McQuail (2011), modern mass media is no longer one-way, but rather provides a space for audiences to provide direct feedback. Although the level of listener participation is not yet very high, this effort shows that radio is striving to create two-way communication with its audience. The interaction that occurs during the broadcast benefits both parties (L Rofidah and A Muhid, 2022). Listeners can get

direct answers to their questions, while the radio can understand the listeners' needs and expectations regarding the broadcast program. Thus, the quality of the program can be continuously improved according to the audience's wishes.

The results of this study also reinforce the findings of several previous studies, which stated that the use of digital media can increase the effectiveness of preaching. Research conducted by Alvia found that the use of social media in preaching activities can expand audience reach and increase community involvement.(Ramadani, 2024). Similar findings were also put forward by Sulasih, who stated that integration between conventional and digital media is an effective strategy in maintaining the existence of broadcasting institutions in the era of digital transformation.(Sulasih, 2025)Therefore, the strategy implemented by Radio Start FM can be seen as a form of local media adaptation to changes in people's behavior in accessing information.

In addition to the various strategies implemented, this study also identified several inhibiting factors facing Radio Start FM. One major obstacle is limited human resources. The limited number of employees increases the workload. Furthermore, the radio station faces difficulties in finding resource persons who have the free time to regularly provide programming. Another obstacle is limited broadcast facilities and equipment. In today's digital era, audio and visual quality are crucial factors in attracting audience attention(Sari, N. K., & Putra, 2023). Therefore, improving these facilities is a necessity that must be continuously pursued so that radio can compete with other increasingly developing media. Lack of listener interaction is also a challenge. Most listeners tend to simply listen to the material presented without responding or asking questions. This situation requires broadcasters to be more active in fostering a discussion atmosphere to keep broadcasts engaging and avoid monotony(Azzahra et al., 2025).

In addition to inhibiting factors, there are also supporting factors that contribute to the success of Radio Start FM's communication strategy. The most prominent supporting factors are the presence of streaming radio and social media. Through streaming services, radio broadcasts can be accessed by people in various regions without being limited by the transmitter's range. The presence of social media also makes it easier for radio to disseminate information, promote programs, and build interactions with listeners.

The research results showed that listeners responded positively to the Ramadhan Berkah program. They believed it broadened religious insight, enhanced understanding of Islamic teachings, and motivated them to better practice their religious practices. The variety of speakers each day was also considered a strength of the program, as it provided diverse discussions and prevented boredom.

Overall, the communication strategy implemented by Radio Start FM in its "Da'wah Ramadhan Berkah" program can be said to be working well. This success is evident in the positive response from listeners, the consistency of program implementation, and the radio station's ability to utilize digital technology to expand its broadcast reach. Despite various challenges, Radio Start FM continues to evaluate and improve continuously to improve the quality of its broadcast programs and remain relevant to the community's needs.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research that has been conducted regarding the communication strategy for broadcasting Islamic preaching in the Ramadhan Berkah program on Radio Start FM Panyabungan, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Ramadhan Berkah Islamic preaching program is one of Radio Start FM's flagship programs, attracting listeners during the month of Ramadan. In its implementation, Radio Start FM employs various communication strategies tailored to the needs and characteristics of the community. These strategies include selecting themes relevant to community life, presenting different speakers daily, providing listeners with opportunities to interact, and utilizing digital media and streaming services to expand the broadcast's reach. Through these strategies, the Ramadhan Berkah program serves not only as a means of conveying religious information but also as a medium for education and spiritual guidance for the community. The presence of this program demonstrates that radio still plays a vital role in conveying Islamic preaching messages and providing benefits to listeners, especially in areas with strong religious communities.
2. In implementing the Ramadhan Berkah program, Radio Start FM also faced several obstacles. The most frequently encountered obstacle was limited human resources, both in terms of the number of broadcasters and the availability of competent and free-time speakers to fill the broadcasts. Furthermore, there were still technical constraints such as inadequate internet network quality and broadcast facilities. Differences in background, age, and level of understanding of listeners also posed challenges in delivering Islamic preaching material so that it could be accepted by all levels of society. Nevertheless, Radio Start FM continues to strive to overcome these obstacles by conducting regular evaluations and utilizing developments in digital technology. In general, the communication strategy implemented in the Ramadhan Berkah program can be said to be quite successful in increasing the appeal of the broadcast program and maintaining listener interest. The results of this study are expected to provide input for radio managers and other parties involved in Islamic preaching through mass media.

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