

Communicator's Credibility in Persuasive Communication of Da'wah: A Study of the Pandawara Group Environmental Conservation Campaign Perspective Source Credibility Theory

A Zamzami Almufassir, Nuskiyatul Mu'tamiroh, Putri Afifah Fitrianingtyas, Zaina Maulani Fauziyah Latif, Ali Murtadho, Sulistio

Master's Program in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, Walisongo State Islamic University, Semarang, Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the credibility of the Pandawara Group as a communicator in persuasive communication of environmental da'wah by referring to the Source Credibility Theory and the da'wah bil hal approach. This study is motivated by the increasing environmental crisis in Indonesia and the strengthening of the role of non-formal communities that are able to mobilize public participation through digital media. The research method used was qualitative with a case study design, through non-participant observation of social media content, analysis of activity and campaign documentation, and review of relevant literature. The results of the study show that the credibility of the Pandawara Group is formed from the synergy of three main dimensions, namely expertise in environmental issues, public trust built through consistency of real action and transparency, and attractiveness born from the same identity and authentic communication style. The application of da'wah bil hal through direct action on environmental conservation has been proven to strengthen the effectiveness of persuasive messages, increase community participation, and encourage changes in pro-environmental attitudes. This study emphasizes that credibility based on real action is a key factor in the success of environmental da'wah.

Keywords:-communicator credibility, preaching bills, persuasive communication, Pandawara Group, environmental conservation.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental conservation in Indonesia is becoming increasingly urgent given the high rate of deforestation which reaches 7.27 million hectares nationally, as targeted in the FOLU Net Sink policy, which has the potential to exacerbate natural disasters such as flash floods and loss of animal habitats (Sink, n.d.). This study highlights the urgency of communicators' credibility in persuasive communication of da'wah, especially through the perspective of Source Credibility Theory, which emphasizes the elements of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic) to influence audience behavior in environmental issues (Bogoevska-Gavrilova, Irena; Ciunova-Shuleska, 2022). By integrating this theory with persuasive da'wah, where communicators such as community groups can become effective agents of change to encourage community participation in conservation, especially in the midst of the systemic failure of governments to protect forests. This is relevant because Indonesia experienced a gradual decrease in deforestation from 2016 to 2023 (Forest, 2024), but it remains dynamic and requires communication-based interventions to accelerate ecosystem recovery. Thus, developing a communication model that combines elements of da'wah with the theory of source credibility can be applied more widely to environmental campaigns in developing countries.

The flash flood disaster that hit Sumatra, especially Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra at the end of November, has killed more than 916 people and as many as 319 people are still being searched (Harnita, 2025), there are isolated areas due to damaged roads and cut off access. These floods are not only caused by

extreme weather, but also massive deforestation, as evidenced by the drift of thousands of logs from the upper reaches of the river, which signals illegal logging in hilly areas (Harnita, 2025). As a result, animal habitats were severely damaged, residents' homes were destroyed, and communities became the main victims, while the government's response was considered inadequate, with criticism of the delay in aid and even allegations of insults to victims (Akbar, 2025). This phenomenon underscores how crucial it is to protect the environment to prevent similar disasters.

In the midst of this situation, the Pandawara Group, as an environmental community that actively cleans rivers and promotes conservation (Pandawara Group), responded positively on social media, inviting the Indonesian people to jointly buy forests to keep them safe from illegal conversion. This invitation received an extraordinary response from netizens, reflecting the public's trust in Pandawara's credibility as an authentic and influential communicator in encouraging collective action. However, there was a different response from Yudha Sadewa, who is the son of Purbaya, quoted (H Kartika, 2025) from his Instagram, on Monday (8/12/2025) Sadewao wrote the thread "If this is the case, it will be much more chaotic. Is it managed by the government, is it bad, especially in community management?" Because according to him, this will trigger the occurrence of extortion, bribery and animal poaching, so if this happens, the bribery of forest conversion will have a direct impact on state financial losses, such as the one in Riau, where the estimated loss is ± IDR 5 billion (Aifadianis et al., 2023).

In addition, reviewed in terms of da'wah methods, pandawara is a group of people who indirectly apply the *bi hal da'wah* method, namely first setting an example of loving and protecting the environment by cleaning it directly (Aifadianis et al., 2023). This behavior is carried out by the pandawara because of their anxiety to see people who do not care about garbage, so that there is often a buildup of garbage downstream and resulting in flooding. As an environmentalist, Pandawara has also carried out #ONEDAYONETRASHBAG movements (Aifadianis et al., 2023). In addition, pandawara also continues to actively socialize and embrace all layers to jointly carry out social action against waste cleaning, which is now a crucial problem (Shabrina et al., 2023).

The literature on the credibility of communicators in persuasive communication of da'wah shows that the credibility of da'i as a communicator depends on communication skills, knowledge of religious values, and the ability to build trust, which can be seen from a strong ethos (Mardiana et al., 2025). In the context of environmental da'wah, the research emphasizes the importance of digital ethics to maintain the integrity of messages, where credibility helps to strengthen persuasive influence on audiences. In addition, persuasive communication theory as stated by Hovland highlights that qualified knowledge and da'i expertise strengthen its position as a credible source, so that da'wah messages are more effective in changing behavior, including in conservation issues (Prasetyo, 2019). This approach is in line with Source Credibility Theory, where the ethos element (communicator character) is key in interpersonal da'wah, helping to build empathy and trust to influence audiences without coercion. The literature also shows that persuasive strategies in digital da'wah, such as those carried out through social media, can increase community participation if supported by high credibility, as seen in local wisdom-based environmental campaigns.

Although the literature has discussed the credibility of communicators in persuasive da'wah in general, there is still a significant gap in its application to environmental conservation campaigns by non-formal communities such as the Pandawara Group, especially from the perspective of Source Credibility Theory. Many studies focus on traditional or institutional da'i, but lack explore how the credibility of digital community groups affects the effectiveness of persuasive messages amid environmental crises such as deforestation and flash floods in Indonesia. This shows that positive invitations such as joint ventures to buy forests can be a persuasive form of modern da'wah, where the credibility of the communicator is a determining factor in the community's response.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to deeply understand the credibility of the Pandawara Group as a communicator in persuasive communication of environmental da'wah by using the perspective of Source Credibility Theory and the concept of da'wah *bi hal*. This approach was chosen because

the Pandawara Group is a contextual, dynamic, and far-reaching contemporary social phenomenon, requiring a holistic assessment of communication processes, real actions, and public responses. The subject of the study is Pandawara Group as a communication actor, while the object of the research includes environmental da'wah messages, concrete forms of conservation actions, and community involvement in the campaigns carried out. Data were collected through non-participant observation of social media content and documented activities, analysis of documentation in the form of videos, campaign uploads, activity reports, and online media reports, and literature studies of books and scientific journals relevant to persuasive communication, digital da'wah, and communicator credibility. Data analysis was carried out thematically by categorizing findings based on the dimensions of expertise, trust, and attractiveness in Source Credibility Theory, then interpreted in the framework of da'wah bil hal to explain the relationship between real actions, communicator credibility, and the effectiveness of persuasive messages. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and theories to ensure the validity and consistency of research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pandawara Group Profile

Pandawara Group is a volunteer-based non-profit organization founded on May 5, 2022 in Bandung, West Java, by five young men born in 1999–2001. The name "Pandawara" is an acronym for "Pandawa" (five puppet figures that symbolize solidarity) and "Wara" (Sundanese which means "good"), so it literally means "five young men who bring goodness". This group was born out of mutual anxiety about repeated floods in the Kopo area, Bandung, which was triggered by the accumulation of garbage in rivers and sewers. In the early stages (May-July 2022), the activities were still spontaneous and not limited to cleaning micro waterways in the neighborhoods where the founders lived without public documentation. The first documentation was uploaded in August 2022 through the TikTok platform and immediately gained widespread attention.

Since then, Pandawara Group has grown to become one of the largest social media-based environmental movements in Indonesia. Core Members Until 2025, the core composition will still consist of five people, namely: Muchamad Ikhsan Destian, Rafly Pasya Pasya, Mochamad Agung Permana, Gilang Rahma Tridianto, Muhammad Rifqi Sadulloh. The five members do not receive salaries and run the organization collectively collegially without a rigid hierarchical structure.

Main Activities and Programs

Pandawara Group carries a holistic approach that includes three main pillars: (1) direct cleanup actions, (2) environmental education and literacy, and (3) structural prevention. As of December 2025, the organization has carried out cleanups in more than 221 locations in 27 provinces, collecting and transporting more than 1.3 million kilograms of waste (Pandawara Group, 2025).

Featured programs include:

1. Jaga Bhumi (River Adopt Program): river adoption by local communities accompanied by the installation of trash barriers and the formation of a team of young volunteers.
2. Pancaranta: an awareness campaign about beach pollution.
3. Manahrassa: development of community-based waste management infrastructure.
4. Jaganadara & Ajaraksa: a formal and non-formal environmental education programme for students and undergraduates.

In addition to domestic activities, Pandawara Group has also carried out cross-border actions, including cleaning up the Saigon River (Vietnam, 2024) and Batu Rakit Beach (Malaysia, 2024) within the framework of the ASEAN "Creator Contribution" campaign, as well as a comparative study of waste management to Denmark (2025–2025) with the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia. By the end of 2025, their latest initiative includes raising community joint funds for the purchase of forests to prevent land conversion into oil palm plantations or industrial estates, in response to floods and landslides in Sumatra (Pandawara).

Impact and Position in Scientific Studies

The success of Pandawara Group has made it one of the important case studies in the field of environmental communication, digital activism, and youth-led environmental movement in Indonesia. Their approach that combines field action with social media content production (ecomedia activism) has proven effective in changing people's behavior and mobilizing public participation in waste management issues.

Pandawara Group is a real example of the application of *da'wah bil hal* (*da'wah* through real actions) in the context of environmental conservation in Indonesia. They spread the message of kindness through real actions, not just words or lectures. Evidence of real action that can be used as an example is that the main activity of Pandawara is to clean rivers, beaches, and waterways full of garbage. This physical action directly shows the importance of protecting the environment, providing concrete examples that can be seen and followed by the community, like the example given in *da'wah bil hal*.

They always prioritize deeds, with an action-based approach. The moral message of cleanliness and environmental responsibility is conveyed through their shovels, garbage sacks, and hard work, not through formal orations. The purpose of *da'wah bil hal* is to awaken self-help and inspire them to build themselves and benefit the surroundings. The Pandawara action proved effective in mobilizing thousands of volunteers to take part in mass clean-up activities, demonstrating success in mobilizing collective awareness. Although the term "*da'wah*" is Islamic in nature, the actions of the Pandawara Group uphold the universal values of kindness and responsibility towards nature, which are relevant to all people regardless of religious background.

On December 4, 2025, Pandawara Group uploaded an informal statement on their official Instagram account which read, "Again daydreaming... suddenly I thought what if the Indonesian people jointly bought forests so that they would not be converted," as a direct response to the flash floods and landslides that hit the Sumatra region (Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra) at the end of November 2025.

This initiative was born out of anxiety over the worsening environmental damage, where floods accompanied by drifting logs become evidence of deforestation and land conversion into oil palm plantations or industrial estates. Although it started as a spontaneous idea with no mature plan, the post went viral, garnering more than 2 million likes and hundreds of thousands of shares in a matter of days, and sparking a national discussion about community participation in forest conservation.

Pandawara Group then inaugurated the fundraising through a digital platform, with an initial target of purchasing 1,000 hectares of vulnerable forest land in Sumatra, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) and the National Land Agency (BPN) to ensure transparency and legality of the process.

The public response to this initiative has been overwhelming, with total donations reaching more than Rp5 billion in less than ten days (as of December 11, 2025), which ranges from small contributions from ordinary netizens (ranging from Rp5,000–Rp100,000) to large commitments from public figures. Among them, singer Denny Caknan contributed IDR 1 billion, while Chef King Abdi contributed IDR 500 million, bringing the total of the two alone to IDR 1.5 billion. Support also came from other celebrities such as Atta Halilintar, Vidi Aldiano, Ria Ricis, and Denny Sumargo, as well as civil society organizations such as Gejayan Calling who called for similar collective action.

Members of the House of Representatives and environmental experts such as Hatma Suryatmojo of Gadjah Mada University praised the movement as an innovative form of disaster mitigation, despite criticism that the initiative was a sharp satire on the government's failure to manage natural resources. This case is the most up-to-date empirical evidence of the Pandawara Group's high level of public trust and digital mobilization capacity, where an informal statement born from a "daydream" can be converted into nationwide collective action in a matter of days.

This movement strengthens Pandawara's position as the most influential non-state actor in environmental conservation issues in Indonesia, while demonstrating the potential of ecomedia activism in changing social

behavior and mobilizing resources in a bottom-up manner. In addition, this initiative opens up opportunities for further study on the legality of collective land purchase by civil society, in accordance with the Constitutional Court Decision Number 35/PUU-X/2012 concerning people's rights to natural resources, as well as the challenges of its implementation such as the prevention of legal disputes and post-purchase land management.

Analysis of the Credibility of Pandawara Group Communicators in Environmental Conservation Campaigns

The credibility of the communicator is one of the key factors in determining the effectiveness of persuasive communication. Based on the Source Credibility Theory put forward by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, communicators' credibility can be analyzed through three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Winoto, 2016). In the context of environmental da'wah carried out by the Pandawara Group, these three dimensions interact with each other and strengthen each other in creating an optimal persuasive effect.

Pandawara Group's Expertise Dimension

Expertise is the audience's perception of the communicator's abilities and knowledge in a certain field. Pandawara Group demonstrates their expertise through several important aspects. First, they have a good technical understanding of environmental problems, especially waste management and river pollution. This can be seen from the way they identify the source of pollution, sort the types of waste, and explain the ecological impact of the waste found. They are able to identify different types of pollutants such as plastics, organic waste, and microplastics, as well as explain their impact on river ecosystems and public health.

Second, their expertise is reflected in a systematic and organized work methodology. In every cleaning action, Pandawara uses the right equipment and according to work safety standards. The division of tasks is carried out efficiently with specific roles ranging from waste collection, sorting, transportation, to documentation. This structured approach shows that they have planning and knowledge of best practices in environmental conservation.

Third, their communication ability to convey technical information in an easy-to-understand way strengthens the perception of expertise. They are able to translate complex issues such as water pollution and the impact of microplastics into a simple narrative that can be digested by the general public, without compromising the substance of the environmental da'wah message. The consistency and continuity of their actions in various locations also adds to the credibility of their expertise, showing that their expertise is not only theoretical but based on real experience in the field (Nasas & Pradipta Dirgantara, 2024).

Trustworthiness Dimension of Pandawara Group

Trust reflects the audience's perception of the communicator's honesty, integrity, and goodwill. Pandawara Group builds public trust through total transparency in their every action. They documented the entire cleanup process in its entirety, from the initial condition of the polluted river, to the cleaning process, to the final result, without any misleading manipulation or editing. This transparency creates the perception that Pandawara is an honest and trustworthy communicator.

Consistency between words and deeds is an important aspect of trust. Pandawara not only talks about the importance of protecting the environment, but consistently shows commitment through real actions. They go directly into the field and do work that is often dirty, strenuous, and dangerous. This consistency shows their integrity and sincerity of intentions on environmental issues (Sukmono et al., 2024).

The absence of explicit commercial motives also builds trust. Even though they are content creators who get monetized, the main focus is always on the mission of the environment. They do not hard-sell products, do not solicit donations aggressively, and do not exploit environmental issues solely for financial gain. Their humility in positioning themselves as part of a larger movement, rather than as a lone hero, dispels the impression of arrogance and makes the audience feel that the Pandawara are comrades in the struggle.

Their response to criticism and suggestions also builds trust. They respond openly and constructively, not defensively or shy away from difficult questions. Openness to dialogue and receiving input shows that they are genuine communicators with no hidden agendas. Collaboration with government agencies, academics, and environmental organizations helps increase public trust by providing external validation of their credibility.

The absence of explicit commercial motives also builds trust. Even though they are content creators who get monetized, the main focus is always on the mission of the environment. They do not hard sell products, and the donations collected are managed transparently through the official pandawara group website (e.g. via the /donate/amount page for action operations and campaigns such as "Joint Venture Buy Forests") without aggressive requests. They do not exploit environmental issues solely for financial gain. Their humility in positioning themselves as part of a larger movement, rather than as a single hero, removes the impression of arrogance and makes the audience feel that the Pandawara are comrades in arms (Rahman, 2024).

Pandawara Group's Attractiveness Dimension

Attractiveness in the context of communicator credibility includes several elements: similarity (similarity with the audience), likeability, and familiarity (familiarity). Pandawara Group has appeal because of the similarity factor with their target audience, especially millennials and Gen Z. They are young people who look casual, use everyday language, and are active on the same social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The relaxed and non-rigid communication style makes the audience feel that Pandawara is a "person like us" who does extraordinary things (Nurfiyadi & Pribadi, 2024).

Likeability is built from their genuine and relatable personalities. They show a humanistic side such as exhaustion, frustration, or joy when they see the results of the cleansing. This authenticity makes the audience like them as authentic and down to earth individuals. In the context of Muslim-majority Indonesian society, the approach of environmental da'wah that is in line with Islamic teachings on cleanliness and responsibility as a caliph on earth makes their message resonate with the values of the audience (Natasari, 2024).

The aesthetic of the content they produce is also part of the appeal. Pandawara uses good cinematography techniques with dynamic shooting, attractive color grading, and professional editing. The before-after visualization of the river conditions provides a strong and memorable visual satisfaction. Storytelling in each content creates an interesting narrative arc with a conflict-struggle-resolution structure, making the audience emotionally invested in the journey shown.

Their active interaction with the audience on social media also adds to the appeal. Pandawara responds to comments, shares user-generated content from inspired followers, and creates a sense of community through a direct donation channel on the pandawara group's official website, where the public is invited to contribute to real actions such as forest conservation. They are also an inspiration because they prove that ordinary young people can make significant changes without waiting for the government or large organizations (Ismi Hafizhah & Yulianti, 2025).

The Third Synergy of the Credibility and Effectiveness of Persuasive Communication of Da'wah

The success of Pandawara Group in moving society cannot be explained from one dimension of credibility alone, but from the synergy of the three dimensions that work simultaneously and reinforce each other. The interaction of these three dimensions creates a strong persuasive effect in their da'wah communication. The expertise dimension provides a cognitive foundation for persuasion by creating legitimacy in the message of environmental da'wah. The audience receives information as valid knowledge, not just an opinion. The trust dimension provides an affective foundation that creates emotional bonds and reduces psychological resistance to persuasive messages. The attractiveness dimension facilitates a process of social identification in which audiences adopt values, attitudes, and behaviors through social learning mechanisms (Supriadi et al., 2023).

This synergy produces several important persuasive effects of da'wah, including;

1. Increase public awareness about the environmental crisis. Credibility makes the message receive widespread attention and be taken seriously. Viral content reaches audiences who may not have been previously exposed to environmental issues.
2. Attitude change from apathy to caring for the environment. Expertise provides a strong argument, trust makes audiences receptive, and appeal makes audiences adopt a pro-environment stance as part of their social identity.
3. Concrete behavioral change. Many individuals and communities were inspired to take similar actions in their respective areas. Behavior change ranges from simple actions such as not littering to complex actions such as organizing communal cleanup actions or advocating for environmental policies.
4. The viral effect and amplification of messages on social media. High credibility makes content not only watched but also shared massively, creating exponential growth in awareness and engagement.
5. Legitimacy of the digital da'wah approach and da'wah bil hal (da'wah through deeds). Pandawara proves that da'wah does not always have to be verbal lectures but can be through useful real actions.
6. Increased sense of empowerment and self-efficacy among audiences who believe that they are also capable of contributing to social change (Naufaldhi, 2024).

From the perspective of Source Credibility Theory, the Pandawara Group case confirms that the three dimensions of credibility have an equally important role and must be built simultaneously to achieve maximum persuasive effectiveness. This case study also shows the relevance and applicability of Western communication theory in the context of contemporary Islamic da'wah in Indonesia. More importantly, this case underscores the importance of authenticity in building credibility in the digital era where audiences are increasingly critical and skeptical (Setiawan & Arviani, 2024).

Integration of Da'wah Bill Hal with the Credibility of the Communicator

The concept of da'wah bil hal (da'wah through real deeds) is very closely related to the three dimensions of credibility built by the Pandawara Group. Da'wah bil hal is a da'wah method that emphasizes concrete actions and exemplary actions as a medium of message delivery, in contrast to oral da'wah bil which relies on verbal lectures. In the context of the Pandawara Group, da'wah bil hal is a philosophical foundation that strengthens and legitimizes their credibility as environmental communicators (Kholis et al., 2021).

Da'wah Bil Hal as a Manifestation of Expertise

The da'wah approach carried out by the Pandawara Group directly demonstrates their expertise in real action. Unlike communicators who only talk about environmental conservation theory, Pandawara demonstrates their technical competence through hands-on practice in the field. Each river cleanup video is visual evidence of their expertise in identifying environmental issues, organizing teams, and executing solutions effectively. Da'wah through this act creates social learning that is more powerful than just verbal instruction. The audience not only hears about how to clean the river, but sees firsthand how it is done correctly. The demonstrative aspect of da'wah bil makes knowledge transfer more effective because it involves visual modeling that can be imitated by the community (Hakis et al., 2024).

Da'wah Bil Hal as Proof of Trust

The dimension of trustworthiness is greatly strengthened by the da'wah approach bill. In the Islamic tradition, da'wah bil hal is considered the most authentic form of da'wah because it reflects the consistency between words and deeds. Pandawara Group not only invites the community to care about the environment (da'wah bil olan), but they themselves go directly to do dirty, heavy, and tiring cleaning. This consistency eliminates the audience's skepticism that often arises towards communicators who are just "talkative" with no real action. Da'wah bil hal is proof of their integrity and sincerity of intentions (niyyah). In the perspective of Islamic communication ethics, honesty (sidq) is not only measured by words but especially by the conformity between words and deeds. Pandawara Group meets these standards perfectly through their commitment to concrete actions. Furthermore, da'wah bills that are done consistently and sustainably show that their environmental mission is not just a trend or personal branding strategy, but a long-term commitment. Public trust is built

because the audience witnesses dedication that is proven over time, not empty promises (Zuliansyah & Jatmika, 2025).

Da'wah Bil Hal as a Source of Inspirational Attraction

The attractiveness of Pandawara Group is greatly strengthened by the inspirational dimension of their preaching. Seeing young people who are willing to get dirty cleaning the river creates emotions of admiration and respect from the audience. Da'wah bil hal transforms communicators from mere informants to role models that can be identified and imitated. In the context of millennials and Gen Z who tend to be skeptical of rhetoric and value authenticity more, da'wah bil hal provides concrete evidence that is more persuasive than words. The audience not only likes Pandawara as entertainers or educators, but respects them as true activists who "walk the talk". This example creates a deeper emotional connection than just superficial likeability.

Furthermore, the da'wah bills that Pandawara did inspired a ripple effect (chain effect) where the audience was motivated to do similar actions. Many individuals and communities later formed environmental cleanup groups in their respective areas, inspired by the concrete example given by Pandawara. This shows that da'wah bil hal not only creates awareness but also real behavioral change (Reka Gunawan & Abdul Muhid, 2022).

Da'wah Bil Hal in the Islamic Theological Context

From an Islamic theological perspective, the da'wah of the things that the Pandawara Group does is in line with the principle that deeds are the most real worship. The concept of caliph fil ardh (leader on earth) who must protect and preserve Allah's creation is manifested through the action of environmental cleansing. Every act of cleaning the river can be understood as a form of environmental jihad (jihad bi al-bi'ah) which is the collective obligation of the ummah. The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) states that "Cleanliness is part of faith" (An-nazhafatu minal iman), which makes cleanliness a legitimate religious practice. The Pandawara Group, although it does not explicitly use religious framing in every content, still embodies these Islamic values in practice. This approach makes their message resonate with Muslim audiences without coming across as patronizing or exclusive.

Da'wah bil hal also reflects the concept of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (commanding good and preventing evil) in a constructive form. Instead of just criticizing the bad behavior of people who litter, Pandawara shows the way of kindness by giving real examples. This positive approach is more effective in changing behavior than verbal criticism which often causes defensive resistance (Aqillah et al., 2024).

The Effectiveness of Da'wah Bill Things in the Digital Era

In the context of digital communication, da'wah bills that are documented and disseminated through social media create a unique form of persuasion. Videos of river cleansing become powerful visual testimonies, different from just texts or audio lectures. Audiences don't need to "believe" in the narrative because they can see firsthand the visual evidence of the transformation of the environment. The "before-after" content format that Pandawara often uses is a visual representation of da'wah bil things that is very persuasive. The dramatic transformation of a dirty river into a clean one video creates visual and emotional satisfaction that encourages engagement and sharing. The virality of this content shows that da'wah bills, when packaged well in digital format, have the potential for exponential reach. Furthermore, the ongoing documentation of their actions creates a verifiable track record. Audiences can see the consistency of their preaching bill from video to video, month to month, which strengthens their credibility cumulatively. Each new piece of content adds legitimacy to their reputation as credible communicators.

The virality of this content shows that da'wah bills, when packaged well in digital format, have the potential for exponential reach. For example, recent donation campaigns such as "Joint Venture Buy Forests" directed through pandawara. group have succeeded in gathering massive support from the community. Furthermore, the ongoing documentation of their actions creates a verifiable track record. Audiences can see the consistency of their preaching bills from video to video, from month to month, including reports on the use of donations on

the official website pandawara. group, which strengthens their credibility cumulatively. Each new content adds legitimacy to their reputation as credible communicators (Natasari, 2024).

Theoretical Implications: Expanding Source Credibility Theory

The case of Pandawara Group shows that Source Credibility Theory can be expanded by including the dimension of "da'wah bil hal" or "action-based credibility" as an important component, especially in the context of persuasive communication in Muslim society. Credibility is not only built through expertise, trust, and attributional appeal, but also through concrete demonstrations of the values communicated.

In this framework, preaching bills of things serves as a meta-dimension that integrates and strengthens the three classical dimensions of credibility. Expertise is validated through real action, trust is proven through consistency of action, and attractiveness is enhanced through inspirational examples. This credibility model that takes into account the action-based component is more relevant for the context of contemporary da'wah which demands high authenticity and accountability from communicators (Ab Kadir et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, this article concludes that Pandawara Group has a very high level of communicator credibility in persuasive communication of environmental da'wah, which is built through the synergy between expertise, trust, and attractiveness as described in Source Credibility Theory. Pandawara's expertise is reflected in the technical understanding and direct practice of managing environmental issues, public trust is built through consistency between messages and real actions and transparency of activities, while attraction arises from the similarity of identity with the audience, authentic communication style, and the ability to build emotional closeness through digital media. These three dimensions reinforce each other so that the message of environmental da'wah conveyed is not only cognitively accepted, but also able to touch affective aspects and encourage changes in people's attitudes

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that the da'wah approach applied by the Pandawara Group is a key factor in strengthening the credibility and effectiveness of persuasive communication in the digital era. Da'wah through real actions of environmental conservation has proven to be more convincing than verbal da'wah alone, because it presents an example that can be seen, verified, and imitated by the community. These findings not only expand the application of Source Credibility Theory in the context of contemporary Islamic da'wah, but also show that real-action based credibility is an effective strategy for non-formal communities in mobilizing public participation and building collective awareness of environmental issues in Indonesia.

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