

Persuasion Reconsidered: Islamic Epistemology, Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, and the Limits of Cialdini's Framework in Malaysian Da'wah

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500320>

Received: 06 May 2026; Accepted: 11 May 2026; Published: 30 May 2026

ABSTRACT

Effective da'wah communication is the cornerstone of successful Islamic propagation in Malaysia's diverse society. However, weaknesses in the communication approaches of local preachers remain an ongoing concern. This study evaluates the persuasive communication practices of preachers in Malaysia based on six persuasive communication principles of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, namely reciprocation, commitment and consistency, authority, scarcity, social proof, and liking, as framed by Robert B. Cialdini's (2009) theory of persuasive communication. This qualitative study employed semi-structured in-depth interviews with 13 informants comprising tullāb an-Nūr members and Said Nursi researchers in Malaysia. Data were analysed through deductive and inductive thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti, yielding 162 codes grouped into 40 categories. The findings reveal that these principles, when embedded within an Islamic epistemological framework, undergo a fundamental transformation that calls into question their universality and exposes the secular assumptions of mainstream persuasion theory. Specifically, the study demonstrates that Islamic da'wah reconfigures reciprocation as spiritually-disinterested giving, consistency as theological steadfastness (istiqāmah), and liking as communal-spiritual proximity (sohbah). On the basis of these findings, the study proposes an Islamic Persuasive Communication (IPC) Framework as a preliminary theoretical contribution towards an indigenised theory of Islamic communicative influence.

Keywords: Persuasive Communication, Da'wah, Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, Malaysia, Cialdini, Islamic Persuasive Communication

INTRODUCTION

How does a 20th-century Turkish scholar's approach to Islamic persuasion illuminate the limits of a secular Western theory of influence developed in the context of American marketing and consumer behaviour? This question sits at the heart of the present study. It reflects a broader intellectual concern: the growing tendency in Islamic communication scholarship to adopt Western theoretical frameworks without subjecting them to critical epistemological scrutiny, and the corresponding need to develop analytical categories that are adequate to the distinctive character of Islamic da'wah as a practice of religious invitation grounded in theological accountability.

Da'wah communication in Malaysia operates within a uniquely complex environment, characterised by religious plurality, state-managed Islamic institutions, and the pervasive influence of digital media, that makes it a

particularly productive site for examining how Islamic communicative practices interact with, and diverge from, Western models of persuasion.¹ The persistent challenges in Malaysian da'wah practice, including inadequate audience understanding, superficial communicative approaches, and the commodification of religious authority through celebrity culture,² point to an underlying theoretical deficit: the absence of a persuasion framework adequately grounded in Islamic epistemological values.

Badiuzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960) represents one of the most compelling cases in the history of Islamic da'wah for a sustained, principled engagement with this challenge. Recognised as among the most influential Islamic scholars of the 20th century,³ Said Nursi developed, through his magnum opus *Rasāil an-Nūr*, now translated into over 30 languages and studied in more than 70 countries⁴, a distinctive model of persuasive communication grounded not in strategic influence but in sincere invitation, rational argumentation, and spiritual exemplarity. The *tullāb an-Nūr* movement in Malaysia, which has implemented this model for more than 15 years across diverse social contexts, provides an empirically accessible window into how Said Nursi's approach operates in a contemporary Muslim-majority society.⁵

This study uses Robert B. Cialdini's six-principle framework of persuasive communication⁶ as an analytical lens through which to examine Malaysian da'wah practice, but its purpose is not simply to verify that Cialdini's principles are present. Its purpose is more theoretically ambitious: to demonstrate that when Cialdini's framework encounters Islamic da'wah, the encounter is productively dissonant, in that the Islamic context transforms these principles so substantially that the transformation itself becomes theoretically informative, pointing towards the contours of what might constitute an indigenised Islamic persuasive communication theory. Three research questions guide this inquiry: (1) How are the elements of reciprocity and commitment and consistency practised by preachers in Malaysia based on Said Nursi's model? (2) How are the elements of authority, scarcity, and social proof manifested in Malaysian da'wah? and (3) How is the element of liking expressed in local da'wah practice, and in what ways does the Islamic context reconfigure these principles beyond their secular formulations?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Da'wah Communication and Its Challenges in Malaysia

Da'wah in the Malaysian context involves the delivery of Islamic messages to a pluralistic society diverse in terms of ethnicity, culture, and religion. Da'wah communication is defined as a specialised form of communication in which the communicator conveys information drawn from or consistent with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, with the aim of encouraging society to perform righteous deeds.⁷ Zulkefli et al. explain that when communication is accompanied by ethics and religious values, it is formed as meaningful and effective da'wah communication.⁸

¹Nurul Atikah, S., & Zuraidah Juliana, M. Y., "Kesedaran Dakwah Islamiyyah Dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Islam Di Daerah Maran", *Global Journal of Educational Research and Management (GERMANE)*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2021), pp. 170-185.

²Kamaruddin, A., "Analisis Kualitatif terhadap Faktor Kegagalan Komunikasi Pembujukan dalam Konteks Pengucapan Awam", *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, vol. 33, no. 3 (2017), pp. 89-106; Samri, D., "PENGAPLIKASIAN TEORI RETORIK MODERN DALAM PENYAMPAIAN CERAMAH USTAZ KAZIM ELIAS", *Jurnal Bahasa*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2022), pp. 49-76.

³Mohamad Zaidin, M. et al., "Building a Personality by Installing Noble Values: Implementing Nursi's Thoughts in a Malaysia Context", *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, vol. 8, no. 11 (2018), pp. 437-444.

⁴Ahmad, H., & Qoys, A. J., *Mengarusutamakan Moderasi Di Tengah Pluralitas Bangsa Studi Pemikiran Said Nursi* (Jawa Timur: Akademia Pustaka, 2023).

⁵Norullisza, K., Shereeza, M. S., & Azrin, I., "Usaha dan Strategi Dakwah Badi' al-zaman Sa'id al-Nursiy dalam Pembangunan Insan", *Jurnal YADIM*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2022), pp. 10-23.

⁶Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, revised ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2009).

⁷Kamaruzzaman, "Epistimologi Kajian Dakwah Dan Ilmu Komunikasi", *Liwa'ul Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah Dan Masyarakat Islam*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2022), pp. 72-90.

⁸Zulkefli, A., S. Salahudin, S., & Rosmawati, M. R., *Komunikasi Dakwah*, 1st ed. (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2020).

The development of da'wah in the digital era has also received scholarly attention. Anshar found that online da'wah delivery through platforms such as YouTube significantly affects the receptiveness of the Muslim community, demonstrating that da'wah communication approaches must be adapted to the medium and contemporary context.⁹ Nevertheless, recent studies continue to reveal various weaknesses in da'wah communication practices in Malaysia. Nurul Atikah and Zuraidah Juliana found that the level of da'wah awareness among local Muslim society has yet to reach a satisfactory level.¹⁰ Khairul Azhar explains that the use of inappropriate approaches in relation to the level and position of the da'wah audience is likely to undermine the achievement of da'wah objectives.¹¹ Ibtisam and Berhanuddin add that judgmental and condemnatory delivery has diminished the value and dignity of preachers in the eyes of the community.¹²

Burhanuddin et al. emphasise that preachers must adopt a da'wah approach that is appropriate to the audience.¹³ Nor Raudah and Nurul Husna stress that preachers must master various communication methods appropriate to the diverse backgrounds of different audiences.¹⁴ Taufik and S. Salahudin explain that da'wah through new media demands more dynamic and adaptive communication capabilities.¹⁵ In this context, Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's da'wah approach is seen as a model with the potential to meet these needs.

Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and His Da'wah Model

Badiuzzaman Said Nursi was a Turkish scholar born in 1877, and is among the most influential da'wah figures in the history of modern Islam. He was awarded the title "Badiuzzaman," meaning "the wonder of the age," by his teacher in recognition of his extraordinary intellectual prowess.¹⁶ Said Nursi's magnum opus, *Rasāil an-Nūr*, was produced with the primary aim of preserving the faith of society and addressing the ideologies of secularism and atheism that were spreading throughout Turkey at the time.¹⁷ Wan Rashidah Hanim explains that Said Nursi's method of writing in the *Rasāil an-Nūr* reflects his wisdom in choosing the approach most readily accepted by various segments of society.¹⁸

What distinguishes Said Nursi's da'wah approach is his use of persuasive communication that avoids confrontation and opts for flexibility, gentleness, and gradualism.¹⁹ Ichwansyah explains that Said Nursi trained himself and his followers to spread da'wah with persuasive elements and rational argumentation rather than coercion.²⁰ Muhammed Ali, in his study of methods of advocacy and communication in the *Rasāil an-Nūr*, found

⁹ Anshar, M., "Content Analysis and Audience Receptions of Online Da'wah on YouTube Social Media", *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2024), pp. 173-187.

¹⁰ Nurul Atikah & Zuraidah Juliana, "Kesedaran Dakwah Islamiyyah", pp. 170-185.

¹¹ Khairul Azhar, M., "Cabaran Dakwah Terhadap Golongan Non Muslim Di Malaysia", *Jurnal Maw'izah*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2019), pp. 14-22.

¹² Ibtisam & Berhanuddin, "Pendekatan Pengurusan Kemahiran Pendakwah", pp. 496-506.

¹³ Burhanuddin, Amnah Saayah, & Sayuti, "Pendekatan Dakwah untuk Cabaran Masa Depan", pp. 23-33.

¹⁴ Nor Raudah, S., & Nurul Husna, M., *Komunikasi Dakwah Dalam Kepelbagaian Masyarakat* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2022).

¹⁵ Taufik, M. S., & S. Salahudin, S., *Komunikasi Dakwah & Media Baharu* (Melaka: Penerbit KUIM, 2021).

¹⁶ Mohamad Zaidin et al., "Building a Personality by Installing Noble Values", pp. 437-444.

¹⁷ Muhammad Faiz, O., *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi dan Gerakan Dakwah Pasca Uthmaniyah* (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2017).

¹⁸ Wan Rashidah Hanim, W. I., "Sketsa Pemikiran Badiuzzaman Said Nursi dalam Metode Da'wah bi al-Kitabah: Analisis Kitab Risalah al-Nur", *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2015), pp. 1-18.

¹⁹ Thameem Ushama, "Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Methodology for Da'wah: An Overview of Certain Principles", *Jurnal Usuluddin*, vol. 47, no. 2 (2019), pp. 1-24.

²⁰ Ichwansyah, T., "Pemikiran Dan Aktivisme Dakwah Badiuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960)", *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2018), pp. 93-115.

that Said Nursi's approach integrates rational argument with emotional appeal in a balanced manner.²¹ Raudlotul Firdaus et al. further confirm that this approach is capable of forming a sound mind among readers.²²

In Malaysia, Mohamad Zaidin et al. found that Said Nursi's da'wah approach is highly relevant to the Malaysian plural society context.²³ The study by Norullisza et al. confirms that the *tullāb an-Nūr* movement in Malaysia has received recognition from various religious departments and academic institutions, demonstrating the compatibility of Said Nursi's da'wah approach with the local customs and Islamic tradition of Malaysia, which adheres to the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* orientation.²⁴

Cialdini's Theory of Persuasive Communication

Robert B. Cialdini, in his book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, presents six universal principles of persuasive communication that have been empirically tested across diverse contexts. Originally developed within the context of marketing and business communication, scholars have subsequently extended these principles to various fields, including digital communication, education, social communication, and da'wah.²⁵ The six Cialdini principles are: (1) *Reciprocation*, meaning the natural human tendency to return a kindness received; (2) *Commitment and Consistency*, meaning the tendency to remain consistent with prior commitments; (3) *Authority*, referring to following individuals with recognised credibility and expertise; (4) *Scarcity*, referring to the increased perceived value of limited or unique things; (5) *Social Proof*, referring to following the actions or beliefs of respected groups; and (6) *Liking*, referring to the tendency to be influenced by those one likes or shares similarities with.²⁶

In the da'wah context, Samri emphasises that elements of persuasive communication are essential to ensure that da'wah has a profound impact on the audience.²⁷ Aini et al. found that emphasis on persuasive communication characteristics is key to the success of da'wah.²⁸ Fauzi and Aini further demonstrate that the application of persuasive communication in da'wah practice significantly influences the knowledge, emotions, and behaviour of the target audience.²⁹ Kamaruddin explains that understanding and strategy in persuasive communication are essential to ensure that the da'wah delivery process becomes smoother and more effective.³⁰

Research Gap

Although various studies exist concerning da'wah communication in Malaysia and Badiuzzaman Said Nursi from diverse perspectives, several important gaps remain in the existing literature. First, no empirical study has systematically examined the integration of Said Nursi's da'wah communication model in the contemporary Malaysian context based on field data. Second, the use of Cialdini's theory of persuasive communication as an analytical tool in assessing local da'wah practices has not yet been widely explored in scholarly research. Third,

²¹Muhammed Ali, E.-Y., "Methods of Advocacy and Communication in the Risale-i Nur", *Journal of Risale-i Nur Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2022), pp. 1-10.

²²Raudlotul Firdaus, F. Y., Dhiya'ul Hafidh, F. Y., & Muthi'ul Haqq, F. Y., "Kajian Analisis Dari Risalah Nur Oleh Imam Badiuzzaman Said Nursi Untuk Pembentukan Minda Yang Sejahtera", *Jamalullail Journal*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2023), pp. 42-63.

²³Mohamad Zaidin et al., "Building a Personality by Installing Noble Values", pp. 437-444.

²⁴Norullisza, Shereeza, & Azrin, "Usaha dan Strategi Dakwah Badi'al-zaman Sa'id al-Nursiy", pp. 10-23.

²⁵Mirawati, I., "Pemanfaatan Teori Komunikasi Persuasif Pada Penelitian E-Commerce Di Era Digital", *Medium: Jurnal Ilmiah Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Islam Riau*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2021), pp. 58-80; Muhammad Krisno et al., *Tugas Komunikasi Persuasif, Konsep-Konsep Psychology of Persuasion* (Yogyakarta: Universitas Mercu Buana, 2018).

²⁶Cialdini, *Influence*, pp. 1-320.

²⁷Samri, "Pengaplikasian Teori Retorik Moden", pp. 49-76.

²⁸Aini, Z., Don, A. G., Mokhtar, A. I., & Fauzi, N. U. A., "Strategi Komunikasi Pemujukan Pendakwah Dalam Penyampaian Mesej Islam Kepada Masyarakat Orang Asli Di Selangor", *4th International Conference On Islamiyyat Studies 2018* (2018), pp. 476-488.

²⁹Fauzi, N. U. A., & Aini, Z., "Aplikasi Perubahan Terhadap Pengetahuan, Emosi Dan Tingkah Laku Komuniti Orang Asli Melalui Pemujukan Dalam Komunikasi Dakwah", in M. I. Ahmad et al. (eds.), *Isu-Isu Kontemporari Dalam Pengajian Islam* (Bangi: Penerbit FPPI, KUIS, 2020), pp. 62-70.

³⁰Kamaruddin, "Analisis Kualitatif terhadap Faktor Kegagalan Komunikasi Pembujukan", pp. 89-106.

and most critically, the existing literature has yet to interrogate whether Cialdini's secular psychological framework, when applied to Islamic da'wah, remains intact or is substantially transformed by Islamic epistemological values, and whether such transformation might in fact reveal the limits rather than the reach of secular persuasion theory.

This third gap is arguably the most significant. Recent scholarship in *Al-Jāmi'ah* has demonstrated that Islamic intellectual traditions entail fundamentally different epistemological assumptions that cannot be fully captured by secular modern frameworks, specifically assumptions that bear directly on how religious knowledge, authority, and human agency are understood.³¹ The tendency in existing da'wah communication scholarship to adopt Western theoretical frameworks without subjecting them to critical epistemological scrutiny risks what might be described as an uncritical theoretical dependency, specifically the unreflective importation of secular models into Islamic scholarly discourse, where their embedded assumptions about human motivation and communicative purpose may distort as much as they illuminate. This study therefore endeavours not only to fill the empirical gaps identified above, but to make a theoretical contribution by examining how the Islamic da'wah context reconfigures, challenges, and in certain respects appears to exceed the explanatory capacity of Cialdini's original framework, and by proposing, on the basis of this analysis, a preliminary Islamic Persuasive Communication (IPC) Framework as an alternative theoretical foundation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design using the multiple case study method. This design was selected as appropriate given that the study aims to understand the experiences, perceptions, and practices of informants in depth concerning persuasive communication in the Malaysian da'wah context.³² The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to obtain a rich and holistic picture of the phenomenon under study, which cannot be measured quantitatively alone.³³ Furthermore, this design is suitable for the interpretive nature of the study, which seeks to understand the social reality of informants within their natural context.

Research Participants

A total of 13 informants were selected through purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques.³⁴ All informants are individuals with direct authority and expertise on Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and the *Rasāil an-Nūr*, drawn from two main groups: *tullāb an-Nūr* members who actively conduct da'wah activities through organisations such as Hayrat Foundation Malaysia (HAYRAT) and Malaysia Turkish Cultural Association (MTCA); and academic researchers of Said Nursi from institutions including IIUM, USIM, UiTM, UniSZA, and HELP University.

The selection criteria for informants were: (1) possessing in-depth knowledge of Said Nursi and the *Rasāil an-Nūr* for at least five years; (2) being actively involved in da'wah activities in Malaysia; and (3) being willing to share experiences and views openly during the interview. All informant information was kept confidential, with participants referred to as Informant 1 through 13 to ensure anonymity. A brief profile of the informants is presented in Table 1.

³¹Omar Mokhtari, "The Epistemological Reading of Religious Knowledge in the Thought of 'Abd al-Karīm Soroush", *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 62, no. 2 (2024), pp. 409-437, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2024.622.409-437>.

³²John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (California: SAGE Publications, 2018).

³³Matthew B. Miles & A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1994).

³⁴Michael Q. Patton, "Developmental Evaluation", *Evaluation Practice*, vol. 15, no. 3 (1994), pp. 311-319.

Table 1: Brief Profile of Research Informants

Label	Category	Position	Institution / Organisation	State
Informant 1	Tullāb an-Nūr	Madrasah Director	Madrasah Dar El Zahraa	Perak
Informant 2	Academic Researcher	Director, Research Institute	Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA)	Terengganu
Informant 3	Tullāb an-Nūr	Da'wah Officer	Hayrat Malaysia	Selangor
Informant 4	Tullāb an-Nūr	Chief Executive Officer	Hayrat Malaysia	Selangor
Informant 5	Academic Researcher	Senior Lecturer, Academy of Islamic Studies	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	Kedah
Informant 6	Tullāb an-Nūr	Da'wah Officer	Malaysia Turkiye Cultural Association (MTCA)	Selangor
Informant 7	Academic Researcher	Senior Lecturer	HELP University	Kuala Lumpur
Informant 8	Tullāb an-Nūr	Manager	Malaysia Turkiye Cultural Association (MTCA)	Kuala Lumpur
Informant 9	Academic Researcher	Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Islamic Studies	Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA)	Terengganu
Informant 10	Academic Researcher	Deputy Dean, Faculty of Quranic Studies	Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)	Negeri Sembilan
Informant 11	Tullāb an-Nūr	Religious Teacher	Akademi Sheikh Daud Al-Fathani	Selangor
Informant 12	Academic Researcher	Director, Nursi Research & Training Centre	International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)	Kuala Lumpur
Informant 13	Academic Researcher	Religious Advisor	Office of the Menteri Besar Negeri Sembilan	Negeri Sembilan

The total of 13 informants was considered adequate as data saturation had been achieved, as no new themes or significant information emerged in the final interviews. This is consistent with the principle of qualitative research that emphasises depth of data over sample size.³⁵

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted between 2023 and 2024. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow the researcher to use prepared guiding questions while affording informants the freedom to develop their responses more openly and in depth.³⁶ The interview protocol was constructed and validated by three experts in the field of da'wah communication and Said Nursi studies prior to use, and confirmed through a pilot study involving two informants.

Each interview session lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was conducted at locations comfortable to and chosen by informants, including offices, *dershane* centres, and online via Zoom. All sessions were audio-recorded with written consent and fully transcribed within 48 hours. Ethical research approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) prior to data collection.

³⁵Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 5th ed.

³⁶Sharan B. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988).

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using a dual thematic analysis approach, both deductive and inductive, as proposed by Braun and Clarke.³⁷ Deductively, six main themes were established based on the six Cialdini principles as the initial analytical framework. Inductively, the researcher read and re-read all transcript data to identify patterns, themes, and meanings that emerged naturally from the data, using ATLAS.ti version 22 for coding, categorisation, and visualisation.

The analysis process involved three main phases: open coding (assigning code labels to units of meaning), axial coding (grouping related codes into categories), and selective coding (linking categories to main themes). This process yielded 162 codes, 40 categories, and 12 sub-themes organised under six main themes.

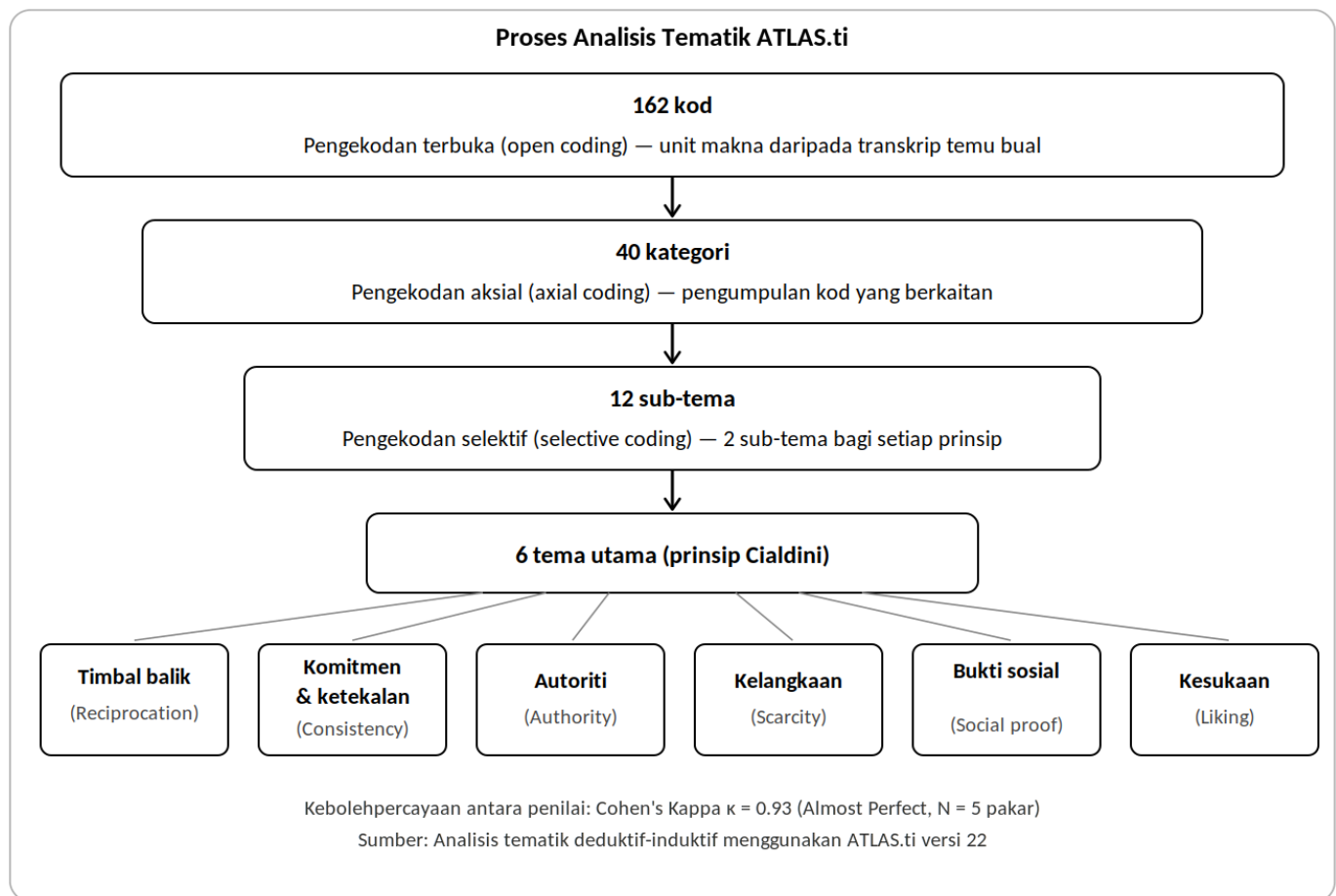


Figure 1: Thematic analysis process using ATLAS.ti (162 codes, 40 categories, 12 sub-themes, 6 themes)

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, several strategies were employed: data triangulation (comparing interview findings with previous studies and documentary sources), expert validation by two external experts, peer examination by a research colleague, and calculation of Cohen's Kappa index, which yielded a satisfactory inter-rater reliability value above 0.7.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and analyses the study's findings based on the six Cialdini persuasive communication principles, with Badiuzzaman Said Nursi as the primary reference model. The analysis goes beyond descriptive documentation to identify the ways in which the Islamic da'wah context, particularly the Malaysian context, in

³⁷Braun, V., & Clarke, V., "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2006), pp. 77-101.

terms of how it reconfigures, extends, and in some cases fundamentally challenges the assumptions embedded in Cialdini's original secular framework. For each principle, the empirical findings are presented first, followed by a critical analytical discussion of the principle's theoretical implications for Islamic persuasive communication.

The Principle of Reciprocation: From Transactional Exchange to Spiritual Giving

The principle of reciprocation refers to the natural human tendency to return a kindness received.³⁸ In Cialdini's original formulation, this principle operates as a mechanism of social exchange, specifically a psychological debt incurred by receiving a gift or favour that compels the recipient to reciprocate. In the da'wah context, however, the findings of this study reveal a fundamentally different motivational structure, one that cannot be fully explained by social exchange theory alone.

The study found that preachers in Malaysia practise this element through three main categories: engaging approaches, compelling personality and *mad'ū*-oriented strategies, and obstacles encountered. In terms of engaging approaches, informants emphasised the importance of using analogies, illustrations, and psychological approaches as effective elements of reciprocation. Informant 11 explained:

"That is the preparation of our preachers regarding the approach of bringing analogies, giving illustrations, proverbs and so on. Examples of such analogies will bring people closer to what is to be conveyed. We need to intensify this further, for example, analogies from the Malay world and others." (Informant 11)

This was supported by Informant 6, who noted that lecturers and students from leading Malaysian universities "find Said Nursi's method highly engaging, logical and effective, and subsequently practise it as preachers." Informant 7 stressed the importance of psychological knowledge:

"Preachers need to know psychology. Yes, there is the knowledge of psychology, and it is applied during da'wah delivery. They need to learn about it. Because da'wah requires the knowledge of psychology to attract an audience." (Informant 7)

Informants 3 and 4 added that *tullāb an-Nūr* groups in Malaysia train their preachers through Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes incorporating aspects of communication psychology. This is consistent with the findings of Aini et al. and Fauzi and Aini.³⁹ In terms of preacher personality, sincerity (*ikhlas*) was identified as the core of the element of reciprocation. Informant 2 explained that the sincerity of a preacher manifests in "not pursuing popularity or publicity, his only intention being *lillahi ta'ala* [for the sake of Allah]." Informant 12 summarised that "sincerity is the bottom line in our da'wah."

What is theoretically significant here is the inversion of the reciprocity logic. In Cialdini's model, the preacher-as-persuader strategically gives in order to receive, such that reciprocation is instrumental.⁴⁰ In the Islamic da'wah context, by contrast, the value of *ikhlas* (sincerity, acting solely for the sake of Allah) fundamentally reconfigures this dynamic: the preacher gives with no expectation of return from the *mad'ū* whatsoever. The anticipated "return" is not social but divine, that is, reward from Allah. This represents what may be termed *spiritually-disinterested giving*, a mode of reciprocation that is paradoxically non-reciprocal at the social level, yet deeply purposive at the theological level. This finding extends Cialdini's framework by revealing a distinct Islamic variant of reciprocation, one grounded not in social obligation but in *niyyah* (divine intention). Obstacles to the principle, including egotism and disputes among preachers, further confirm that where *ikhlas* is absent,

³⁸Cialdini, *Influence*.

³⁹Aini et al., "Strategi Komunikasi Pemujukan Pendakwah", pp. 476-488; Fauzi & Aini, "Aplikasi Perubahan Terhadap Pengetahuan, Emosi Dan Tingkah Laku Komuniti Orang Asli", pp. 62-70.

⁴⁰Cialdini, *Influence*, pp. 17-56. In social exchange theory, reciprocation functions as a mechanism of mutual obligation rooted in perceived indebtedness. See also Gouldner, A. W., "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement", *American Sociological Review*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1960), pp. 161-178.

the Islamic reciprocity model collapses into a conventionally transactional one, consistent with Burhanuddin et al.'s findings.⁴¹

The Principle of Commitment and Consistency: From Cognitive Dissonance to Theological Steadfastness

The principle of commitment and consistency refers to the tendency of a person to remain consistent with a commitment already made.⁴² Cialdini attributes this tendency to the psychological discomfort of inconsistency, whereby people prefer to appear coherent to themselves and to others, a dynamic linked to the reduction of cognitive dissonance.⁴³ In the da'wah context, this principle is observed through five categories: the value of preacher commitment, social responsibility, government support, the use of social media, and constraints encountered.

Committed preachers in Malaysia demonstrate characteristics such as sincere da'wah, thorough preparation, self-funding, and continuous participation in da'wah training. Informant 1 shared:

"Even though it is far from my home to the madrasah, about 20 minutes away, and there are many other matters to attend to, it is the concern for the generation, the love for students, that makes us go and do da'wah." (Informant 1)

Social responsibility as a driver of commitment was also emphasised. Informant 6 explained that "da'wah is not only for imams and ustaz, it is for everyone, including *tullāb an-Nūr*." This is aligned with the findings of Rafiuddin et al.⁴⁴ Government support, particularly JAKIM's recognition, was identified as a critical factor in ensuring the consistency of da'wah in Malaysia. Informant 3 stated that *tullāb an-Nūr* da'wah in Malaysia has been conducted for 15 years without any complaints because it is "consistent with the Qur'an and Sunnah and the thinking of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*." Social media was also identified as a primary tool for ensuring the consistency of da'wah delivery, supported by Anshar's findings.⁴⁵

The theoretical distinction worth noting here is that Cialdini's consistency mechanism is essentially externally driven, sustained by the social pressure of appearing consistent to others. The Islamic concept of *istiqāmah* (steadfastness), by contrast, is theologically anchored: the preacher's consistency is driven by accountability to Allah, not by social expectation or reputational self-interest.⁴⁶ This means that Islamic commitment and consistency is, in principle, more durable and more internally motivated than Cialdini's original framework accounts for, and it can persist even in the absence of social reinforcement, as evidenced by Informant 1's description of continuing his da'wah activities despite logistical inconveniences. The finding therefore points to a need to supplement Cialdini's socio-psychological account of consistency with a theological account when applied to religious persuasion contexts.

The Principle of Authority: A Tri-Layered Structure of Islamic Religious Legitimacy

The principle of authority refers to the tendency of society to follow individuals who possess recognised qualifications, expertise, and endorsement.⁴⁷ Cialdini's treatment of authority focuses primarily on perceived expertise and legitimacy markers such as titles, credentials, and uniforms.⁴⁸ The Malaysian da'wah context

⁴¹Burhanuddin, Amnah Saayah, & Sayuti, "Pendekatan Dakwah untuk Cabaran Masa Depan", pp. 23-33.

⁴²Cialdini, *Influence*.

⁴³Cialdini, *Influence*, pp. 57-113. The consistency principle operates through the mechanism of cognitive dissonance reduction, as originally theorised in Festinger, L., *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

⁴⁴Rafiuddin, M. Y., Mohd Ali, M. D., & Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi, W. R., "Peranan Pusat Islam Sebagai Nadi Penyebaran Dakwah Islam: Cabaran Dan Cadangan Penyelesaian Masa Kini", *E-Proceeding Seminar Antarabangsa Islam Dan Sains (SAINS 2022)* (2022), pp. 180-187.

⁴⁵Anshar, "Content Analysis and Audience Receptions of Online Da'wah", pp. 173-187.

⁴⁶Muhammad Faiz, *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi dan Gerakan Dakwah Pasca Uthmaniyah*; Vahide, *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi*.

⁴⁷Cialdini, *Influence*.

⁴⁸Cialdini, *Influence*, pp. 208-236. See also Milgram, S., *Obedience to Authority* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), whose landmark studies demonstrated the profound influence of perceived authority on human behaviour.

reveals a more complex, multi-layered structure of authority that extends beyond Cialdini's binary of expertise and trustworthiness.

Conformity with local *uruf* represents the foundation of acceptance of a preacher's authority. Informant 4 explained:

"A preacher who has a doctrinal school (mazhab) and local customs compatible with local uruf is easily accepted. Like Said Nursi himself, who is very close to Malaysian society. Because Said Nursi follows the Shafi'i school of law, the Ash'ari creed, and adopts the approach of Imam Ghazali. This is very close to Malaysian society." (Informant 4)

Informant 12 summarised that the *Rasāil an-Nūr* "can unite the Muslim community in Malaysia because it is compatible with local *uruf*." Informant 10 stressed the authenticity of knowledge, stating that "preachers from this group must also learn from those who have authority, and must consistently check what they intend to deliver." The most apparent weakness identified was preachers exceeding their areas of expertise, particularly in social media. Informant 2 cautioned that "when we are able to comment on every field, that is what is dangerous, when it is not within our actual expertise, it will create *fitnah*."

These findings reveal that authority in Malaysian Islamic da'wah operates across three distinct but mutually reinforcing layers: (1) *scholarly-religious authority*, derived from recognised credentials and the guidance of qualified scholars; (2) *institutional-state authority*, conferred through JAKIM endorsement and official recognition; and (3) *cultural-customary authority*, established through compatibility with local *uruf* and the dominant *mazhab*.⁴⁹ This tri-layered model represents a significant theoretical expansion of Cialdini's unidimensional account of authority. It suggests that in Islamic contexts, authority is not merely a cognitive heuristic, that is, a mental shortcut for determining who to trust, but rather a socially and theologically embedded relational category. The compatibility of Said Nursi's *Shafi'i-Ash'ari* orientation with Malaysian Islamic tradition is therefore not merely a contextual coincidence, but a deliberate alignment of theological authority with societal norms, making it a model case of what might be termed *contextually-embedded religious authority*.

The Principle of Scarcity: From Manufactured Limitation to Authentic Spiritual Distinctiveness

The principle of scarcity refers to the human tendency to value something that appears limited, rare, or unique as more precious and attractive.⁵⁰ In Cialdini's framework, scarcity is typically a strategically deployed or even artificially manufactured perception, whereby a communicator creates or amplifies the appearance of limited availability to enhance the desirability of a message or offer.⁵¹ The findings of this study reveal a conceptually important departure from this understanding in the context of Islamic da'wah.

The study found that every preacher in Malaysia needs to possess their own unique strengths and qualities as an element of scarcity that makes them distinctive and sought after by the *mad'ū*. Informant 2 elaborated:

"Every preacher has his own strengths, and he must utilise those strengths. If someone is capable in terms of oratory, he is skilled at drawing people through his oratory, then use it for Islam. Perhaps another person is through his appealing appearance, which can draw people closer. Use it." (Informant 2)

Elements of scarcity identified among preachers in Malaysia include a friendly and humble demeanour, high perseverance in facing da'wah challenges, willingness to serve voluntarily without expecting reward, and a tendency to descend to the field rather than merely delivering lectures from a podium. Informant 13 explained that "every preacher has his respective strengths and must use those strengths... whatever Allah has given us as strengths, we use."

⁴⁹Norullisza, Shereeza, & Azrin, "Usaha dan Strategi Dakwah", pp. 10-23; Mohamad Zaidin et al., "Building a Personality by Installing Noble Values", pp. 437-444.

⁵⁰Cialdini, *Influence*.

⁵¹Cialdini, *Influence*, pp. 237-271.

These findings point to a conceptually significant distinction between what Cialdini terms *manufactured scarcity* and what this study identifies as *authentic spiritual distinctiveness*. While Cialdini's scarcity operates through external perception management, the scarcity valued in Malaysian da'wah is not constructed but genuinely inherent, rooted in the unique spiritual character, moral exemplarity, and authentic presence of the preacher.⁵² This resonates with Said Nursi's own model, in which intellectual and spiritual uniqueness was never performed but emerged organically from deep personal conviction and scholarship. Unlike Muhammed Ali's finding that Said Nursi employed scarcity through the form of unrivalled intellectual argumentation,⁵³ the Malaysian context reveals that authentic scarcity is more embodied and relational, expressed through physical presence in the field and genuine moral character. This distinction carries important implications for da'wah training: it suggests that effective da'wah does not require artificial self-promotion, but rather the cultivation of genuine, God-given strengths.⁵⁴

The Principle of Social Proof: Institutional-Religious Endorsement as a Uniquely Malaysian Mechanism

The principle of social proof refers to the tendency of a person to follow the actions or beliefs of others, particularly respected groups or the majority of society.⁵⁵ Cialdini's treatment of social proof emphasises the behaviour of similar others as the primary cue, as people follow the crowd, particularly when uncertain.⁵⁶ The Malaysian da'wah context, however, reveals a more institutionally mediated form of social proof, one in which state religious authority plays a constitutive role.

Recognition by official Islamic bodies constitutes the strongest social proof for preachers in Malaysia. Informant 4 stated that "if in Malaysia it is recognised by the higher authorities, JAKIM for example, then the da'wah can be continued, because we have authorisation and so on." Informant 3 added that his organisation had conducted seminars with JAKIM and state religious departments, and these had been "accepted by Malaysia." The influence of *Rasāil an-Nūr* as strong social proof was also manifested through the existence of *dershane* centres across Kelantan, Kedah, Johor, Melaka, and Perak, and the organisation of Said Nursi seminars at local universities. Informant 12 stated that participants in his classes at IIUM come from 30 countries, and "all of them, and their response is very positive."

Social media also plays a role as a platform for building social proof in the digital era.⁵⁷ However, concerns were raised about preachers produced in an "instant format" through reality television, who subsequently disappear from the da'wah path when their popularity wanes, demonstrating the risks of building social proof on popularity rather than substance, consistent with Zulkiple and Muhammad Faisal.⁵⁸

These findings reveal a distinctively Malaysian form of social proof that may be characterised as *institutional-religious social proof*, one that combines the endorsement of the state Islamic establishment (JAKIM) with the communal validation of the *ummah*. This differs substantially from Cialdini's majority-behaviour model: rather than inferring correctness from the behaviour of numerical majorities, Malaysian Muslim communities defer to the judgement of *authoritative Islamic institutions*, which serve as designated gatekeepers of religious legitimacy. This suggests that in societies with strong state religious institutions, social proof operates through a vertical rather than horizontal mechanism, flowing from religious authority downwards to the community, rather than laterally among peers. This represents a contextually specific modification of Cialdini's social proof principle with important implications for Islamic communication theory in Muslim-majority states.

⁵²Muhammed Ali, "Methods of Advocacy and Communication in the Risale-i Nur", pp. 1-10; Vahide, *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi*.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 1-10.

⁵⁴Vahide, S., *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi: Author of The Risale-i Nur* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2011).

⁵⁵Cialdini, *Influence*.

⁵⁶Cialdini, *Influence*, pp. 116-166.

⁵⁷Anshar, "Content Analysis and Audience Receptions of Online Da'wah", pp. 173-187; Mohd Noor, Suyurno, & Mohd Sairi, "Elemen Kinesik, Kronemik, Paralinguistik dan Artifaktual dalam Dakwah", pp. 234-250.

⁵⁸Zulkiple & Muhammad Faisal, *Budaya Populer dan Peranannya kepada Generasi Muda Islam*.

The principle of liking refers to the tendency of a person to be more easily influenced by individuals they

The Principle of Liking: From Individual Attractiveness to Communal-Spiritual Proximity

like, are familiar with, or share similarities with.⁵⁹ Cialdini identifies several factors driving liking: physical attractiveness, similarity, familiarity, association, and complimenting.⁶⁰ In the Malaysian da'wah context, the findings reveal a communal-relational model of liking that goes considerably beyond Cialdini's primarily dyadic and individual-focused account.

A deep understanding of the needs and interests of the *mad'ū* is the core of the liking principle in Malaysian da'wah. Informant 11 emphasised the importance of the fellowship element (*sohbah*) in approaching young people:

"Preachers need to have the element of sohbet. Young people do enjoy hanging out. People like relaxed gatherings, people like casual conversations. Even if what the preacher conveys is heavy in content, when delivered in a relaxed and easy manner, people quite like it." (Informant 11)

Informant 6 shared the experience of *tullāb an-Nūr* in Malaysia, which organises various attractive activities for university students, including Turkish food feasts, group sports activities, free Qur'an reading programmes, and prize competitions. Informant 3 explained the opening of *dershane* centres near educational institutions:

"We open the dershane close to schools, high schools, secondary schools, universities. So as to be with them, to live with them. Do not be far from them, descend with them, live with them, eat with them. What they think, we can understand." (Informant 3)

Awareness of current technological trends was also key to implementing the liking principle.⁶¹ Informant 10 commended the consistency of Malaysian preachers in adapting to technological developments: "In the past 10 years, our preachers are increasingly creative in line with the times, and they are up to date in using this da'wah mechanism." However, Informant 8 cautioned that "in Malaysia, preachers need to know their audience, need to delve into the *mad'ū*. Yes, liking is somewhat lacking. We only make general assumptions; we do not know our *mad'ū* in depth."

Theoretically, the *sohbah* tradition and *dershane* strategy represent what this study terms *communal-spiritual proximity*, a distinctive Islamic form of liking grounded not in the dyadic individual-to-individual attractiveness that Cialdini emphasises, but in the creation of a shared spiritual community, physical co-presence, and lived experience. Where Cialdini's liking is largely about the persuader's personal appeal, the Islamic da'wah model foregrounds the relational and communal dimensions of trust-building: the preacher is liked not primarily because of personal charisma, but because he is *present*, *proximate*, and *invested* in the life of the community. This reflects Said Nursi's own lifelong practice of remaining close to the *mad'ū* even during periods of exile and hardship.⁶² Informant 8's caution, meanwhile, signals an unresolved tension: despite these communal strategies, deep individual understanding of the *mad'ū* remains insufficient, a gap that points to the need for a more personalised approach within the communal model, consistent with Nurul Atikah and Zuraidah Juliana.⁶³

Theoretical Synthesis: Towards an Islamic Persuasive Communication (IPC) Framework

Taken together, the findings across the six principles reveal a pattern that carries substantial theoretical significance. When applied within the framework of Islamic da'wah, Cialdini's six secular psychological principles do not simply operate as described in the original theory, as they are fundamentally reconfigured by

⁵⁹Cialdini, *Influence*.

⁶⁰Cialdini, *Influence*, pp. 167-207.

⁶¹Tüzün, "Risale-i Nur: The Concept and How to Benefit From It"; Vahide, *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi*.

⁶²Vahide, *Badiuzzaman Said Nursi*.

⁶³Nurul Atikah & Zuraidah Juliana, "Kesedaran Dakwah Islamiyyah", pp. 170-185.

an Islamic epistemological framework that exposes the cultural contingency and secular assumptions embedded within Cialdini's original formulation. This process of reconfiguration is not incidental but systematic, mediated by three overarching Islamic values that consistently emerge across the data and that together constitute what this study terms the *Islamic Persuasive Communication (IPC) Framework*:

First, *divine intentionality (niyyah/ikhlas)*: across all six principles, the motivational foundation shifts from social-psychological gain, such as avoiding dissonance, appearing consistent, and gaining liking, towards a theologically grounded intention of serving Allah. This transforms each principle from a tool of social influence into an act of worship (*ibadah*), a reframing that is not merely additive but epistemologically transformative. Where Cialdini's framework treats persuasion as an ethically neutral technology of influence, Islamic da'wah embeds it within a moral-spiritual accountability structure that fundamentally constrains and redirects the practitioner's goals. Persuasion in this framework is not instrumentally rational, but spiritually purposive.

Second, *institutional-religious authority (JAKIM/mazhab)*: the Malaysian institutional context introduces a mediating layer, specifically state religious endorsement combined with classical juridical alignment, which Cialdini's horizontally peer-oriented model appears ill-equipped to accommodate. This vertical, institution-to-community flow of legitimacy invites a reconsideration of the assumption that persuasion operates primarily through dyadic or small-group social dynamics. In Muslim-majority societies with strong state religious institutions, the architecture of social influence may be structurally different from the individualistic, market-derived contexts from which Cialdini's theory emerged.

Third, *communal-spiritual proximity (sohbah/dershane)*: across the principles of liking, reciprocation, and commitment, the findings point to the importance of physical presence, shared spiritual community, and lived co-experience as the irreducible medium of da'wah persuasion. This is not a contextual variation of Cialdini's dyadic liking principle, constituting a qualitatively different relational model in which influence flows from communal participation and spiritual companionship rather than from the calculated cultivation of personal appeal.

The IPC Framework proposed here is not simply a synthesis of these three dimensions, but a conceptual argument: it holds that secular persuasion theory, including Cialdini's, may be epistemologically insufficient when applied to religious communication contexts where the purpose, ethics, and relational structure of persuasion are shaped by theological commitments. The Framework does not reject Cialdini's empirical observations, but it problematises their claim to universality and invites a more epistemologically reflexive approach to persuasion theory, one that takes seriously the possibility that different civilisational traditions may generate genuinely distinct models of communicative influence.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PERSUASION THEORY

The findings of this study invite a more fundamental interrogation of the epistemological premises that underlie mainstream persuasion theory. Cialdini's framework, like much of Western social psychology, was developed within a tradition that privileges individual cognitive processes, secular motivations, and market-derived notions of influence. Its six principles assume a persuader who strategically deploys psychological levers to produce desired responses in an audience whose decision-making is governed by cognitive heuristics rather than by theological conviction or communal obligation. It is a framework, in short, that presupposes a secular, individualistic, and instrumental model of the human agent.

The Malaysian da'wah context, filtered through Said Nursi's model, presents a fundamentally different anthropology. The preacher (*dā'ī*) in this tradition is not a strategic persuader deploying psychological tools; he is a witness (*shāhid*) to divine truth, whose persuasive power derives not from technique but from the sincerity of his relationship with God. The audience (*mad'ū*) is not a subject of cognitive manipulation, but a fellow seeker of truth whose spiritual disposition makes him responsive to authentic commitment and genuine compassion. Persuasion, in this framework, is not a practice of influence but a practice of *invitation* (*da'wah* itself, in its etymological sense), and its success is ultimately attributed not to the communicator's skill but to the grace of God (*hidāyah*).

This epistemological divergence carries significant implications. First, it suggests that persuasion theories developed within secular Western contexts may not be straightforwardly applicable to Islamic religious communication without risking a category error, potentially reducing a theologically grounded practice to a set of psychological techniques and thereby misrepresenting its essential nature. Second, it raises the question of whether the growing application of Western communication frameworks to Islamic da'wah contexts, a trend evident in the literature reviewed in this study, is enriching da'wah scholarship or inadvertently narrowing its theoretical foundations by importing secular assumptions about human motivation and communicative purpose. Third, and most constructively, it opens a space for the development of an indigenised Islamic communication theory that draws on the rich tradition of Islamic rhetorical and pedagogical thought, from Qur'anic *uslūb* to the *hikmah*-based discourse of scholars such as Said Nursi, as a legitimate and generative foundation for theorising persuasive communication in Muslim contexts.

The IPC Framework proposed in this study is offered as one contribution to this broader project. It does not claim to be a complete theory, but rather a conceptual bridge, demonstrating that the encounter between Cialdini's principles and Islamic da'wah practice is productively dissonant, revealing the limits of the former while pointing towards the distinctive contours of the latter. Scholarship within *Al-Jāmi'ah* itself has long engaged with the epistemological distinctiveness of Islamic thought, as evidenced, for instance, in studies examining how Said Nursi's rational engagement with prophethood resists reduction to purely secular philosophical categories.⁶⁴ The present study extends this tradition of critical inquiry into the domain of communication theory, suggesting that the value of the cross-framework analysis undertaken here lies not primarily in confirming that Cialdini's principles are present in Malaysian da'wah, but in demonstrating *how* and *why* they are present in a form so substantially transformed as to constitute, in essence, a different practice of persuasion altogether.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has evaluated the persuasive communication practices of preachers in Malaysia based on the six principles practised by Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, through Cialdini's (2009) theoretical framework. The findings demonstrate that all six persuasive communication principles are applied by Malaysian preachers, particularly those among the *tullāb an-Nūr*, albeit at varying levels of implementation. More significantly, and this is the study's principal theoretical claim, the application of these principles within an Islamic da'wah framework does not constitute a simple replication of Cialdini's model. It constitutes a substantive transformation of it: a transformation so thoroughgoing that it calls into question whether "persuasion," as understood within Western social psychology, and "da'wah," as practised within the Islamic tradition, are in fact the same kind of activity.

The study's key empirical findings may be summarised as follows. The principle of reciprocation is practised through a model of spiritually-disinterested giving, where the preacher's generosity is directed towards Allah rather than motivated by social obligation. Commitment and consistency is sustained by theological steadfastness (*istiqāmah*) rather than cognitive dissonance reduction alone. Authority operates across a tri-layered structure of scholarly-religious, institutional-state, and cultural-customary legitimacy. Scarcity manifests as authentic spiritual distinctiveness rather than manufactured limitation. Social proof operates through institutional-religious endorsement (JAKIM) rather than majority-behaviour imitation. Liking is enacted through communal-spiritual proximity (*sohbah/dershane*) rather than individual attractiveness or dyadic similarity.

These findings collectively ground the Islamic Persuasive Communication (IPC) Framework proposed in this study. The IPC Framework advances the argument that persuasion in Islamic da'wah is not epistemologically neutral, but rather a theologically embedded practice whose principles, purposes, and relational dynamics are shaped by Islamic values of sincerity (*ikhlas*), accountability to God, and communal spiritual formation. In proposing this framework, this study does not seek merely to add an Islamic case study to the existing body of persuasion research. It seeks to demonstrate that the encounter between Islamic da'wah and Western persuasion theory is productively dissonant, and its value lies precisely in revealing the cultural and epistemological limits of mainstream persuasion theory, and in pointing towards the need for an indigenised Islamic communication

⁶⁴Fauzan Saleh, "Is Prophethood Superfluous? Conflicting Outlook on the Necessity of Prophethood between Badiuzzaman Said Nursi and Some Muslim Philosophers", *Al-Jāmi'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1 (2015), pp. 205-224, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2015.531.205-224>.

theory that takes the theological dimensions of da'wah seriously as objects of scholarly analysis, not merely as contextual background noise.

The practical implications of these findings are clear. For da'wah institutions and preacher training programmes, the IPC Framework suggests that effective persuasive communication in the Islamic context cannot be achieved by instrumentally adopting Western influence techniques. It requires the cultivation of genuine *ikhlas*, sustained scholarly authority, and deep communal engagement, qualities that cannot be manufactured through technique but must be formed through character. For Malaysian da'wah institutions specifically, the findings validate the strategic alignment of *tullāb an-Nūr*'s approach with state religious structures (JAKIM) while also identifying areas, particularly the depth of individual *mad'ū* understanding, that require further attention.

Future research is recommended along several lines. Comparative studies across different Muslim-majority contexts, such as Turkey, Indonesia, and Egypt, which would test whether the IPC Framework's three dimensions hold beyond the Malaysian case or require contextual modification. Longitudinal studies examining whether the communal-spiritual proximity model (*sohbah/dershane*) produces more enduring persuasive effects than digital da'wah strategies would address a critical practical question. Most ambitiously, a systematic engagement with the classical Islamic rhetorical tradition, particularly Qur'anic *uslūb* and the *hikmah*-based epistemology of scholars such as Said Nursi, as the foundation for an indigenised theory of Islamic persuasive communication would represent a significant contribution to both da'wah studies and the broader field of intercultural communication theory.

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