The Ethics of Social Media Communication in the Perspective of the Al-Qur’an

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Abstract: This article will discuss the ethics of social media communication which is becoming a concern in the world. There is much negative news that is raised both in groups and individually. Reporting or account accounts on social media that are used not to attack each other in the form of provocation, forming opinions that cause defamation, sending pornographic content, and so on. This writing method uses Library Research by referring to several primary and secondary sources, namely the Qur'an, books, and journals. From this research, it is said that being a Muslim when communicating on social media is very dangerous if it is not accompanied by the right communication ethics, especially on social media. The rules in the Qur'an become a guide for Muslims to implement the correct and beneficial application.

Keywords: Ethics, Al-Qur’an, Social Media
A. Introduction

Human is a social being that need to interact with others to fulfill their life needs. This is one of nature and gifts given by God to humans. In everyday life, everyone cannot be separated from the world of communication, from waking up to going back to sleep. Communication activities can use various existing media, such as non-electronic or conventional and electronic communication media.

Communication technology that makes it easier for humans cannot be separated from social media now as a communication tool as well as a means to channel self-expressiveness. The rapid development of information and communication technology has significantly impacted human life in terms of social interaction, which is now more dominated by social media via smartphones.

Social media seems to have become an addiction for the people of Indonesia. People cannot be separated from their smartphones for almost 24 hours now. People often use social media from young to old, such as Facebook, Twitter, Path, YouTube, Instagram, Line, and Whatsapp. Because social media provides easy means of interaction and socialization so that friendship is maintained without being hindered by time and place, but now it is being misused. Social media tends to spread hoax news, pitting one another against each other, online backbiting, bullying on social media, and not infrequently also providing inappropriate comments, reporting SARA issues, and sharing video or photo content containing pornography. With so many social media phenomena, such as hoax information, it is difficult for many recipients to distinguish between fake and true news.

M. Zia Al-ayyubi emphasized that social media contains various kinds of negative content aimed at attacking certain groups or individuals, such as statements that have provocative values, fake news (hoaxes), hate speech, issues of race, religion, and between groups (SARA) (Nazaruddin & Alfiansyah, M., 2021).

The use of social media as a means of communication must pay attention to ethical elements so that there are no losses for certain parties and lead to acts of violating the law. Communicating through social media and in person has something in common, which of course, must pay attention to the norms and rules made legally and the teachings of the Al-Qur'an. However, not all users apply these ethics in using social media. Social media is used to express anger, hatred, insults, and cyberbullying.

Social media users can post anything freely, even forgetting that social media is a public space that other users will see. In this case, social media users can assume that their actions are reasonable. However, if this is not in accordance with the values, norms, and teachings of the Al-Qur'an, then it is considered unethical. Islam has provided procedures for communicating well and strongly condemns people who speak bad words.

This article aims to describe and analyze the application of communication ethics in using social media in Indonesia. This article is expected to add insight into the body of knowledge on the ethics of Al-Qur'an-based social media for users and is expected to help provide information and understanding about the importance of good ethics in the real world and cyberspace.
B. Research Method

This research focused on the ethics of social media based on the Al-Qur’an. This study uses a qualitative approach to the type of Library Research, where this research collects materials for research data obtained from books, journals, articles, and social media accounts related to the discussion of this research (Oei, I., 2005: 38). Then added several interpretations for the completeness of the data because this research is from the perspective of the Al-Qur’an, so several interpretations must be included to strengthen the data. Furthermore, data triangulation was carried out in this study, and after that, the data were presented descriptively.

C. Discussion

1. Social Media Communication Ethics

Etymologically, the term ethics comes from the Greek "ethos." The Greek word "ethos" in the singular has many meanings, such as the usual place of residence, customs, morals, character, expression, attitude, and way of thinking. The next term is akhlak (Arabic), which means morals, and ethics means the science of morals (Nurdin, I., 2017: 1). It can be understood in the explanation of Q.S Al-Qalam verse 4:

وَإِنَّكََ لَعَلَى َ خُلُق َ عَظِيم َ

Meaning: “And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Therefore, ethics means the science that discusses the good and bad deeds of humans as far as can be understood by the human mind or the rules of behavior and human customs in association with each other and confirms what is right or wrong.

Communication is essentially the similarity of meaning to what is being discussed. The similarity of language used in a conversation does not necessarily lead to the similarity of meaning. In other words, understanding the language alone does not necessarily understand the meaning conveyed by that language. This means that effective communication must, at a minimum, contain the same meaning between the two parties involved, and the most important thing is that other people are willing to accept an understanding or belief and perform an act or other activity as a result of the communication.

According to Onong Uchjana Effendi, communication is the process of conveying a message by someone to another to inform or to change attitudes, opinions, or behavior, either directly orally, or indirectly through the media. From this understanding, Onong Uchaja concludes communication as follows (Muslimah, 2016):

a. Message
b. Message Delivery
c. Message Submission
d. Selection of means or media
e. Message Recipient
f. Response, effect, or influence

From some of the above understanding, it can be understood that communication is a social process that is very basic and vital in human life. It is said to be fundamental because every human being, both primitive and modern, wishes to maintain an agreement regarding various social rules through communication because each individual can communicate with others who can establish credibility in carrying out their lives.

Meanwhile, Islamic Communication is the process of conveying Islamic messages using the principles of communication in Islam. Then Islamic communication emphasizes the elements of the message, such as treatises or Islamic values, and the way (how), in this case, about the style of speech and the use of language (rhetoric). Islamic messages conveyed in Islamic communication cover all Islamic teachings, including aqidah (iman), sharia (Islam), and morals (ihsan). The Islamic messages conveyed are referred to as da’wah. Dakwah is work or speech to influence people to follow Islam (Cartono, Meilawaty, & Muntazah, 2020).

Based on the understanding stated above, it can be concluded that Islamic communication ethics is a way of communicating that is in accordance with moral values in assessing the right or wrong of a person's behavior conveyed by containing Islamic elements directing humans to the benefit of the world and the hereafter in the form of human relations with God (faith), human beings and the universe.

Etymologically, social media is composed of two words, media and social. Media is defined as a communication tool. While the word social is defined as the life of society, every individual takes action that contributes to society (Setiadi, 2014).

After understanding each of these words, it can be concluded that social media is a communication tool used in social processes. The term media has actually become known since 1980, when the use of media and ways of communicating began to change with the presence of technology. The existence of the media has also contributed to changes in the social, technological, and cultural fields.

The presence of the media is expected to develop productivity, education, and creative industries further, evidenced by the transformation of various forms of media in various fields, such as photography, journalism, film, and others. Several technologies categorized as new media are often identified as digital technologies. Usually, these technologies have characteristics that can be manipulated, are networked, are densely interactive, and tend not to choose. According to Feldman, the characteristics of the media include:

a. Media is easy to manipulate. This often gets a negative response and becomes a debate because the media allows everyone to freely manipulate and change various data and information.

b. Media is networkable. This means that the contents contained in the new media can be easily shared and exchanged between users via the available internet network. We can call this characteristic an advantage because new media allows everyone to be connected quickly and provides solutions to distance and time constraints between users.
c. Media is compressible. The contents in the media can be reduced in size so that the capacity can be reduced. This makes it easy to save the content and share it with others.

d. The medium is solid. We only need a small space to store content in new media. For example, we only need one PC connected to the internet to store information from all over the world on that PC.

e. The media is impartial. The contents in the new media are not in favor of anyone and are not controlled by just a few people. That's why the media is often referred to as a very democratic media because media capitalization is no longer valid. Everyone can be a producer and consumer simultaneously, and every user can be active there.

Social media is actually a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the web. Through social media, it is possible to create and exchange user-generated content.

a. The message conveyed is not only for one person but for many people, for example, messages via SMS or the internet.
b. Messages are delivered freely, without having to go through a gatekeeper
c. The message conveyed tends to be more than other media

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that social media is a place for networking online. However, many use it wrongly, such as spreading hate speeches and fake news. Social media can have positive and negative impacts. The negative impact is not only felt in online media. Even the commotion can carry over to the real world.

According to Thurlow, the ethical concept of social media is termed Netiquette. Netiquette is a convention of norms that are philosophically used as a guide for rules or standards in the communication process on the internet. It can be interpreted as internet ethics as well as a social behavior that applies in online media, which is divided into several parts:

a. Communication ethics
b. Copy – Paste and Copyright
c. Cyberbullying
d. Hoax
e. Illegal Content
f. Pornography Crime

Thurlow's concept is referred to from the cybernetic tradition, which is one of the 7 communication traditions in the way of viewing communication as a link to connect separate parts in a system, including computers and other electronic devices.

2. Use of Social Media Based on the Al-Qur’an

As social beings, socializing with other people has become a necessity, but a Muslim must be polite in socializing, both directly and by using social media. A Muslim must be able to guard his feelings so that he does not get carried away by emotions and take care of the feelings of others. A Muslim must be able to distinguish what is appropriate and inappropriate
to convey. Personal privacy and the privacy of others must also be respected and upheld. Don't let social media be used for lying by making hoax news, bad/dirty words such as swearing, arrogance, fun, showing off, envy, belittling certain people or groups, pitting against each other without respecting the feelings of other people/other groups for the sake of satisfaction. Therefore, social media, which is supposed to be a fun means of communication, can plunge its users into hostility and evil. The available facilities make it easy for users to socialize and should be used as best as possible with mutual respect for one another because what we do in this world will be accounted for and accounted for in this world and the hereafter. In accordance with the word of Allah SWT in QS. Al-Isra' verse 36:

وَلَا تَقْفَُ مَاَ لَيْسََ لَكََ بِهَِ عِلْمََ إِنََّ السَّمْعََ وَالْبَصَرََ وَالْفُؤَاَكُ كُل َ أُولَ ئِكََ كَانَ عَنْهَُ مَسْئُولًَ

Meaning: “And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned.” (QS. Al-Isra': 36)

In Tafsir al-Misbah, it is explained that QS. Al-Isra' verse 36 instructs humans to do the actions that Allah commands and avoid actions that are not in line with it and not follow anything of which there is no knowledge. Apart from that, Allah also forbids people to speak about what they do not know, claim to know what they do not know, and claim to listen to what they do not hear. Hearing, sight, and heart will be questioned, and held accountable for how the owner uses them. On the one hand, the guidance of the verse prevents humans from various bad things, such as accusations, prejudice, lies, and false testimony. On the other hand, humans must also use hearing, sight, and the heart as tools to gain knowledge (Shihab, 2009: vi).

The Al-Qur'an also mentions communication as one of human nature. To know how humans should communicate. The Al-Qur'an provides keywords (key concepts) related to it. Humans express themselves, form social interaction networks, and develop their personalities through communication. Communication experts agree with psychologists that communication failure is individually and socially fatal. Socially, communication failure hinders mutual understanding, inhibits cooperation, inhibits tolerance, and hinders the implementation of social norms of the Al-Qur'an.

Al-Qur'an mentioned several keywords about negative communication. As explained in the Al-Quran, there are several keywords. At the same time, it also hints at the importance of being careful, introspective, and literate about social media, as well as wise guidelines prioritizing ethics rather than mere lust. These guidelines can be described as follows.

**a. Delivering Honesty**

Convey information correctly, do not fabricate facts, and refrain from disseminating certain information on social media with uncertain facts or truth. This term is called 'qaul zur,' meaning bad words or false testimony. Included in this category include beautifying a lie or 'tazyin al-kizb.' People who are always honest are called shiddiq and one way to heaven. As for people who like to lie, they are called al-kizb or kadzdzab, and woe to those
who like to lie because they will only plunge themselves into sinful acts that lead to hell (Nazaruddin & Alfiansyah, 2021).

Meaning: “That [has been commanded], and whoever honors the sacred ordinances of Allah - it is best for him in the sight of his Lord. And permitted to you are the grazing livestock, except what is recited to you. So, avoid the uncleanness of idols and avoid false statement”. (QS. Al-Hajj: 30)

Lying is the source of all evil. Therefore, the Shari'ah forbids it and threatens the perpetrators with punishment. This is because lying holds great dangers and many evils. These vices include damage to the perpetrator's reputation, the fall of the perpetrator's honor, loss of morals, and weak trust. If there is news from the mass media, social media, or from someone to check the truth before sharing it with other people, this action can cause backbiting and even slander against other people, causing commotion and chaos over the published news. A Muslim must stay away from ignorant and careless actions, which can harm himself and others.

b. Avoid Namimah

Namimah is bringing news to a certain party with the intention of pitting that party against another party. Namimah can also mean provocation for a specific purpose. A Muslim should be careful when getting news through social media and not rush to share news whose truth is unknown. Therefore, as a Muslim, before sending news, you must examine the facts (truth) or facts with initial information so that slander, backbiting, kidzb do not occur. Being careless and giving attributions that spread in the public domain can result in pollution, as in the ITE Law (Aksin, 2016). QS. Al-Hujurat verse 6 confirms that:

بيَأَيَّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ جَاهِلَةَ فَاسِقٍ يُنْفِقُ فَتِينَانَ يُنْفَعَهُ بِهَا فَتَصِيبُوا أَنَّ تُصِيبُوا قُوَّةً بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتَصِيبُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلُّتمُ تَادِينَ

Meaning: “O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.” (QS. Al-Hujurat: 6)

Referring to Al-Magraghi's interpretation of this verse, if the data of a news item is from a wicked person, they must first filter the truth of the news. The nature of a believer is always to be observant and thorough when getting information rather than without regrets appearing in the end.

Quraish Shihab also explained in the interpretation of Al-Misbah that this verse is a guide on how to behave with humans. The first thing to describe is the attitude towards the wicked by examining the truth of the information in various ways. Human life and its interactions must be based on known and clear things. Humans themselves cannot reach all
the information. Therefore, he needs another party who is honest and has integrity so that he only conveys the truth and vice versa. News must be filtered/corrected for its truth so there are no wrong steps in responding to information or news (Shihab, 2009: 588).

According to the author, this verse is a clear guide for carrying out communication activities, especially on social media, so that users can prevent and reduce the development of hoax news in Indonesia.

c. Avoid Sukhriyah

Sukhriyah means demeaning or making fun of others. Making fun of, belittling others, swearing at, or committing acts of contempt can breed hatred. The characteristics of cyberspace are very free and seem to be without boundaries reaching all levels of society and age levels without exception. Children and even toddlers can access cyberspace. This condition allows everyone to take negative actions that can harm other parties, both personally and in groups, with an anonymous mode or addressed/mentioned directly or openly, thereby triggering provocation and pitting one against the other (flaming and trolling). For this reason, social media users need to be careful and polite in speaking on social media (Nazaruddin & Alfiansyah, 2021).

By making fun of other people, berating, insulting face to face, and even worse, by sharing it on social media, which has a wider impact, it can actually reveal one’s own disgrace. That person likes to berate, insult, does not have manners, and is uncivilized because the things that are shared reflect his identity. As the word of Allah SWT in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 11:

بيَّنِيهَآ اللَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسَخَّرُوا قُوُّمَۢ مِنْ قُوُّمِكُمْ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِنْ نِسَاءٍ أَنْ يَكُنُّ خَيْرًا مِنَّهُمْ وَلَا تَنَذَّرُوا اِلَّهَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَا تَنَذَّرُوا بِالْاَيِّامِ الْحَرِيقَةِ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ مِنْ أَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْفَضَّ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَآمَنَ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Meaning: “O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one’s] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.” (QS. Al-Hujurat verse 11)

Social media, with its very free characteristics, allows for many negative actions towards other parties in an anonymous mode, thus triggering provocation and trolling (flaming and trolling). For that, social media users must speak words in verbal and nonverbal forms.

An example of this is the case of a female doctor from Nagai Kapau, Tilatang Kaman District, Agam Regency, West Sumatra, who uploaded hate speech on her personal Facebook account. Where the doctor really idolized Ustadz Tengku Zulkarnain. Previously the doctor had made several comments on posting news links. He admitted to giving directions to other Facebook users not to make fun of Ustadz Tengku Zulkarnain’s death.
Many comments making fun of Ustadz Tengku Zulkarnain caused the perpetrator's frustration. In the end, the doctor uploaded it on his Facebook social media account with the following caption:

“Innalillahi wa innaillahi rojiun. Hopefully, husnul khotimah. Why did all the clerics who opposed the PKI regime die of Covid and were affected after being swabbed? Don't worry that the coronavirus will be smeared on the swab stick. So that this vocal ustadz die from the corona (not suuzon, the problem is that we are dealing with the communists who are willing to do various ways to smooth their goals),” he wrote, Monday (10/5/2021)

From that tweet, he gave a statement about the death of an ustadz, and the doctor suspected that all the scholars who died were caused by the coronavirus after being swabbed. This, of course, will cause uproar and hatred for people who read the post.

d. Avoiding Negativity on Social Media

Every Muslim should avoid uploading or sharing photos or videos with vulgar poses or pornographic content, exaggerating joy, complaining, and praying on social media. In everyday life, it is common for someone to upload photos or videos, but it seems as if they only exaggerate beauty and good looks or success that emphasizes cheerfulness and wants to be praised. Such things should be avoided, especially if what is uploaded is vulgar content showing nakedness.

Complaining on social media will not provide benefits and will not change anything, especially if it's just because you want to be pitied. It will certainly make other people think of the person who posted as someone who gives up easily, doesn't have confidence, and isn't grateful for what God has given. This is as explained in the Al-Qur'an surah Al-Ma'arrij verses 19–21:

\[
\text{إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ حُلْقَ هُنَّانًا} \ 9 \ (إِذَا مَضَى السُّوءُ جَرَّوُا} \ 20 \ (إِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخُبْرَةُ} \ 21 \ (مِثْلَهُا}.
\]

Meaning: “Indeed, mankind was created anxious. When evil touches him, impatient. And when good touches him, withholding [of it].” (QS. Al-Ma'arrij: 19–21)

Every Muslim should avoid praying on social media because it is not certain that the owner of social media will grant the prayer that is said. Moreover, praying on social media just because you want to be considered a humble and pious person. Such activities will not change anything, and there will be no benefit. Therefore, humans pray to Allah SWT with humility and sincerity. According to the author's observations, many group accounts on Facebook currently provide bad content containing pornographic elements. This is where the account names a film, but the content provided is not a film according to the account name but pornographic videos.

So, in addition to complying with laws in Indonesia, ethics that are not written but have been agreed upon by the wider community or customs need to be respected as for the unwritten ethics such as a collection of etiquette, manners, values/norms and rules that are
created from the process of interaction between people. In principle, the ethics of communicating on social media is a combination of thinking, acting, and behaving that refers to the rules of law and norms that apply in society and are expressed in the form of actions and words.

e. Benefits of Social Media for a Muslim

Social media is part of a system of relationships, connections, and communication. Using social media can also take advantage of it. Everyone will get different benefits from using their own media. We get various benefits when using social media. This depends on someone who uses it, whether it gets good benefits or bad benefits. Here are some of the benefits of social media:

1) Means of Silahturahmi

As social beings, humans need interaction with other humans, both those around them and those far from them. Current interaction activities tend to be more active on social media than in person, even with people who live around them because interaction can be done anywhere. This is as explained in QS. An-Nisa’ verse 1:

\[
\text{يا أهلها الناسُ اللَّهُوا رَيْثُكمُ الَّذِي خَلَقُوكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ واحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالٌ كَثِيرٌ وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ بِالَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالَّذِي كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا}.
\]

Meaning: “O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.” (Q.S An-Nisa’: 1)

Hospitality activities are important and mandatory activities for a person because humans are social beings who need communication with others. Therefore, the human relationship with God and the human relationship with each other must always go hand in hand. Thus, a person will be guarded and watched over by Allah, his sustenance will be expanded, his life will be extended, he will be given guidance, and he will enter heaven if he continues to maintain ties of friendship.

2) Means of Preaching

Someone in communication nowadays is more active or prefers to communicate using social media rather than communicating directly, even though sometimes the subject matter discussed is trivial or unimportant. This is because communication using social media can involve many people who can be invited to chat or join the chat being discussed even though they are far apart. In addition, the subject matter can also be accessed at any time and discussed again with someone who just happened to see the chat in their social media history. Thus, the method of preaching by using social media is seen as an effective alternative to preaching.
3) Means of Information

Social media has inherent and universal properties, which make it much more powerful than traditional media. The characteristics of social media include wider access/reach, interactive, fast delivery, and long-lasting, where information published on social media will still be available even though it has long passed. These characteristics make social media the right tool to communicate information. Thus, social media is a medium that makes it easy for someone to give or get information easily. One piece of information conveyed by a person can be accessed by many people at the same time, even though they are located in remote locations.

As a Muslim, you should convey information through social media. Information should be conveyed properly, correctly, and wisely. The information received must first be reviewed for accuracy so that you feel sure about the truth of the information. This is as described in QS. Al-Furqan verse 56 that:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكََ إِلََّ مُبَش ِرًاَ وَنَذِيرًاَ

Meaning: “And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a bringer of good tidings and a warner.” (QS. Al-Furqan: 56)

4) Means of Doing Business

The development of social media can change people's behavior, including buying and selling transactions. One can easily meet life's needs without having to come directly to the seller's place. This behavior is likely to be used in an online business field. On the other hand, buyers can save time and money for shopping, especially for busy people who do not have free time to shop. Positive things like these can uphold Islamic law. This is as explained in QS. An-Nisaa verse 29 states that:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْثِمُوا أَمْوَالَكُمُ بِمِنْكُمْ بِإِخْبَارٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهَا تَبَادٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ نَفْعَ الشَّيْءِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مَعَ الْحَمْدِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَحِيمٌ رَحِيمٌ

Meaning: “O you who have believed, do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly but only [in lawful] business by mutual consent. And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful.” (Q.S. An-Nisaa: 29)
D. Conclusion

Communication ethics is a benchmark or consideration of right and wrong for communication actions that lead to effective communication. Social media is used as a means of online social interaction on the internet. With social media, personal privacy is reduced, and crime is added in cyberspace. In addition, social media has positive benefits, one of which is friendship facilities, propaganda facilities, information facilities, and business facilities. Islam always regulates good communication procedures and strongly condemns people who use their tongues with bad words. Therefore, it is appropriate for social media users to be more aware of the importance of ethics in communicating using social media. There are several references and guidelines for using social media by conveying correct information, avoiding namimah (turning one against the other), avoiding sukhriyah (demeaning or making fun of), and avoiding negative things (forms of writing containing SARA or pornographic content).
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