



HIJAB AS A SYMBOL OF COMMUNICATION AMONG FEMALE STUDENTS OF FDK UIN-SU (PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION ETHICS)

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Article Info

Article history:

Keywords:

Campus Da'wah,
Communication Symbol,
Islamic Communication Ethics,
Jilbab.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the meaning of the hijab as a symbol of communication among female students of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (FDK) at UIN-SU from the perspective of Islamic communication ethics. The use of the syar'i hijab in the campus environment is understood not only as a religious obligation but also as having social, cultural, and da'wah dimensions. The research method used is qualitative with a phenomenological approach, involving in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation with 6 informants who wear the hijab. The findings show that the syar'i hijab serves as a religious identity, a nonverbal medium of da'wah communication, a moral control tool, a symbol of solidarity, and a reminder of Islamic values. In conclusion, the syar'i hijab among FDK UIN-SU female students functions not only as a religious obligation but also as an important visual da'wah instrument in the academic environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Allah SWT says in the Quran surah Al-Ahzab verse 59:

Meaning: O Prophet (Muhammad), say to your wives, your daughters and the wives of the believers that they should spread their headscarves over their entire bodies. That is so that they may be more easily recognized so that they may not be harassed. Allah is forgiving and merciful.

According to [1], the headscarf is one of the important elements in the identity of Muslim women, in Islamic teachings the headscarf is not just clothing that functions as a cover for the aurat but also reflects obedience to religious orders and one's spiritual awareness. In the context of Islamic higher education, such as in the faculty of da'wah and communication at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (FDK UIN-SU), the headscarf is not only a religious symbol but also part of an academic culture that reflects the Islamic values of students who wear the headscarf often face various social dynamics both in academic relationships and in the off-campus environment [2].

In the Islamic context, the headscarf is not only seen as a sharia obligation to cover women's genitals, but also a symbol of communication that contains religious, social and cultural messages in the Muslim community. The headscarf becomes a nonverbal medium that represents the identity of a Muslimah and becomes a tangible

form of the values of religious morality that she adheres to. More than just clothing, the hijab contains messages of faith that can be interpreted by the wider community in daily social interactions.

Islamic communication ethics emphasizes the importance of messages conveyed not only through speech, but also through actions and appearances, including in the wearing of headscarves. In Islamic communication, visual symbols such as jilbab have a deep meaning because they are able to convey religious values, morality, and piety without having to be spoken verbally. Therefore, the use of hijab in the campus environment, especially among female students of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (FDK) UIN-SU, has a strategic role as a medium of da'wah communication as well as a symbol of religious identity [3].

In the modern era, the use of jilbab has experienced quite complex dynamics of meaning. Along with the development of Muslim fashion trends, the hijab is no longer simply used as a form of sharia compliance, but also becomes part of the social identity and lifestyle of Muslim women. This phenomenon can be seen in the campus environment, where female students wear various models of hijab with various colors and styles, which indirectly form social and religious messages in interactions between female students [4].

In the perspective of Islamic communication, symbols have an important role in conveying moral and spiritual messages to the audience. According to the theory of symbolic interactionism, the meaning of a symbol is determined by social interaction and people's interpretation of the symbol. The headscarf as a symbol of communication is not only a personal expression, but also part of a value system that lives in a particular social environment, including in the UIN-SU campus environment.

Historically, the use of the hijab in Muslim societies has been part of women's identity since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, with various interpretations and practices that develop according to their respective social and cultural contexts. In Indonesia, the headscarf has become a symbol of cultural resistance as well as a medium for da'wah in the face of modernization that is often contrary to religious values. Among students, the headscarf functions as a nonverbal communication tool to show piety, modesty, and respect for religious norms [5].

Facts in the field show that the motivation to wear hijab among FDK students is not entirely based on an understanding of sharia. Some wear the hijab because of academic demands, campus culture, or simply following Muslim fashion trends. This is in line with the findings of [6] which states that the hijab among young women is often worn more as a symbol of social propriety than as a spiritual commitment [6].

The phenomenon of wearing jilbab in FDK UIN-SU campus is quite interesting to study because it reflects the relationship between religious symbols, self-expression, and the values of Islamic communication ethics. On the one hand, FDK students are required to be role models in delivering da'wah and maintaining the value of Islamic morality. On the other hand, the influence of globalization and social media has helped shape a more flexible and fashionable hijab style among students [7].

This condition creates a gap between the expectations of da'wah values carried out by FDK students and the practice of hijab that occurs in the campus environment. The hijab should be a symbol of strong and consistent da'wah communication in conveying moral messages and piety values. But in reality, the meaning of the hijab in the campus environment is still varied and tends to be pragmatic [8].

On the other hand, Islamic communication ethics requires a Muslimah to maintain consistency between the messages conveyed through visual symbols such as the hijab and religious behavior in daily life. FDK students as prospective preachers and Islamic communicators should be an example in applying dress ethics in accordance with Islamic law and moral values [9]. The discrepancy between the wearing of the hijab and daily behavior will cause communication dissonance that can damage the image of da'wah in the campus environment.

Some previous studies have examined jilbab in social, cultural, and religious perspectives in various environments.

1. [4] studied hijab as a social identity of Muslim women in the digital era. This study found that social media is the main means of forming a hijab identity among millennials, with hijab appearing more often as a lifestyle symbol than a religious symbol.
2. [10] in their research on hijab wearing in the campus environment found that hijab plays an important role in building a positive self-concept and increasing Muslim women's self-esteem. The results show that wearing hijab according to Sharia law can strengthen the religious identity of female students and increase moral commitment in daily life.
3. [11] discusses the meaning of hijab among university students, which has shifted into a symbol of urban middle class and modern fashion. This research highlights that hijab is not just a religious obligation, but a social identity and a symbol of Islamic pop culture.

Some of these studies focus on the dimensions of hijab motivation, self-concept, and social meaning of hijab in urban and rural areas. However, there is no research that specifically discusses hijab as a communication

symbol in the perspective of Islamic communication ethics in an Islamic campus environment, especially at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (FDK) UIN-SU. In fact, the FDK environment, which in fact produces prospective da'wah communicators, has strong potential to become a role model in the use of religious symbols. In addition, there have not been many studies that explore how the meaning of the hijab among FDK students is not only a religious obligation, but also as a medium for campus da'wah communication.

This research offers novelty in Islamic communication studies by positioning the hijab not only as a sharia obligation or a symbol of religious identity, but as a symbol of nonverbal da'wah communication that has strategic meaning in the academic environment, especially at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (FDK) UIN North Sumatra. In contrast to previous research that focuses more on aspects of hijab motivation, self-concept, or hijab fashion trends among Muslim women in both urban and rural areas.

This research examines in depth the role of hijab as a visual communication media in the perspective of Islamic communication ethics. The hijab is positioned as a da'wah message that can convey the value of morality, piety, and the ideal image of Muslim women in the campus social space without the need to be expressed verbally. The focus on the FDK campus environment is important because so far there have not been many studies that examine how religious symbols such as the hijab are interpreted and used by da'wah students in their communication practices, both personally and in the context of religious activities, student organizations, and social relations in the academic environment.

Based on the above background, this research aims to find out how FDK UIN-SU female students interpret the hijab as a symbol of communication in the perspective of Islamic communication ethics. In addition, this study also aims to determine the factors that influence the motivation of female students in wearing the hijab, as well as how the impact of hijab symbolization on social interaction and da'wah in the campus environment.

This study is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic communication studies, especially in understanding the role of nonverbal communication symbols in contemporary da'wah in the academic environment. In addition, the results of this study can be a recommendation for the campus in formulating policies and strategies for da'wah based on Islamic communication ethics to build a culture of syar'i dress among FDK students.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological type with the aim of deeply understanding the meaning of the hijab as a symbol of religious communication among female students of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication of UIN North Sumatra. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore social reality from the perspective of informants, as well as understand the symbolic meaning behind the practice of hijab carried out by female students in their daily lives.

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication of UIN North Sumatra, which is one of the faculties with the characteristics of female students with pesantren backgrounds, religious communities, and da'wah organizations. This location was chosen because it is relevant to the research context that highlights the role of religious symbols in the practice of student da'wah communication. The research was conducted for one month, from March 19 to April 19, 2025.

Data sources in this research consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted directly to hijab-wearing female students who are active in campus da'wah organizations and general students from various study programs in the FDK environment. In addition, secondary data were obtained through literature review of books, journal articles, and previous research results related to Islamic communication symbols, hijab, campus da'wah, and communication ethics.

Data collection techniques used three main methods, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The interviews were conducted directly to 6 informants consisting of 6 female students who wear hijab. The interview guideline is semi-structured, allowing researchers to explore the experiences, views, and meanings built by informants related to jilbab. Observation is done by directly observing the nonverbal communication

behavior of female students in the campus environment, especially in religious activities, organizations, and daily interactions. Meanwhile, documentation is used to collect photo archives, videos, and data related to campus da'wah activities and dress code at FDK UIN-SU.

The data analysis technique in this study used qualitative descriptive analysis. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is done by selecting relevant data that is in accordance with the focus of the research, then the data is presented in the form of a narrative description that connects the meaning of the hijab, communication ethics, and campus da'wah activities. Furthermore, the researcher draws conclusions from the

results of the analysis to get a complete picture of the meaning of the hijab communication symbol among FDK female students.

For data validity, this research uses source triangulation and member check techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various informants, observation results, and documentation, while member check was carried out by asking for confirmation of interview results to informants to ensure the validity of the information. In addition, the research data was compared with the results of relevant previous studies to strengthen the external validity of the research.

Table 1. The following is a table of research informants' initials:

Informant's initial	Age	Description
F	22 years old	KPI student
L	22 years old	KPI student
R	22 years old	PMI student
E	23 years old	PMI student
P	24 years old	BPI student
S	25 years old	MD student

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Definition of Jilbab

Etymologically, the word "jilbab" comes from the Arabic "jalaba" which means to close, protect, or cover something from view. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), the shar'i jilbab is defined as a woman's head covering cloth that covers the hair, neck, and chest. While in the perspective of sharia, jilbab means loose clothing, not transparent, does not form curves, and reflects simplicity and modesty, which covers the entire body of Muslim women except for the face and palms, which is used when outside the home or in the presence of non-mahram men.

Quraish Shihab (2021) explains that the jilbab is not just a symbol of clothing, but part of a religious commandment that has spiritual and social dimensions. Its main function is to protect women's honor, distinguish Muslimah's identity, and become a form of self-subservience to Allah SWT. In line with this, [12] states that the hijab is a divine provision that aims to maintain women's chastity and show their privileges as honorable individuals before society [12].

In the contemporary context, the definition of jilbab has shifted. [13] reminds the importance of interpreting the hijab according to the sharia text, which is loose clothing, not transparent, not tight, and not provoking attention. She rejects the concept of "hijab fashion" which merely makes the hijab an accessory without spiritual meaning. Therefore, in a campus da'wah environment such as FDK UIN -SU, the shar'i hijab is an important part of the expression of religious values and collective identity [13].

Definition of Jilbab in Islam

The hijab in Islamic law is not just a cultural choice, but a religious commandment that is mandatory for every Muslim woman. This is confirmed in QS. Al-Ahzab verse 59:

Meaning: O Prophet (Muhammad), tell your wives, your daughters and the wives of the believers that they should spread their veils over their entire bodies. That is so that they may be more easily recognized so that they may not be harassed. Allah is forgiving and merciful.

This verse emphasizes that the hijab is not just ordinary clothing but also a direct command from Allah SWT that must be carried out by every Muslim woman. In addition, jilbab also has a deeper meaning, namely as an identity and a form of protection for Muslim women. In practice, the use of jilbab is often influenced by various factors including religious understanding, social environment, and individual self -concept.

Definition of Hijab According to Hadith

In the hadith narrated by Abu Dawud, the Prophet Muhammad said:

Aisha r.a. reported that Asma' bint Abu Bakr entered the Prophet's house wearing a thin dress, and the Prophet turned away from her and said: "Asma, when a woman reaches the period of menstruation, no part of her body should be seen except this and this. He pointed to her face and hands. He pointed to her face and hands [Abu Dawud's Hadith is said to be mursal, but al-Albani says it is authentic].

Definition of Islamic communication ethics

Islamic Communication Ethics is a set of values, principles, and norms that govern the way a Muslim interacts, conveys messages, and builds relationships with others based on Islamic teachings. In the perspective of Islamic communication ethics, communication is not only related to what is delivered, but also how it is delivered and the purpose of the communication. [14] explains that the principles of communication in Islam include the value of honesty, politeness, and the aim to provide benefits and uphold noble morals. In this concept, communication is not only seen as a technical process of exchanging information, but also a means of worship

and moral responsibility. The main principles of Islamic communication ethics include honesty (sidq), clarification (tabayyun), trustworthiness, and avoiding lying, gibah, nanimah, and slander.

According to [15], communication in an Islamic perspective cannot be separated from the ethical dimension because every message conveyed will be accounted for before Allah SWT. A Muslim is obliged to guard the tongue, ensure the truth of the message, and convey it in a polite manner and not hurt the interlocutor. This principle is in line with the command in QS. Al-Hujurat: 12 about the prohibition of mocking, prejudice, and gossip in social interactions [15].

Al-Quran Surah Al-Hujurat verse 12

Meaning: O you who believe, avoid many prejudices! Verily, some prejudices are sins. Do not find fault with others and let none of you backbite another. Do any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you feel disgusted. Fear Allah, for Allah is Oft-returning, Most Merciful.

[16] emphasizes that good communication in Islam is that which brings maslahat, avoids damage, and is delivered with wisdom and good advice. Islamic communication must also be based on hablun minannas, namely maintaining good relations between fellow human beings with ethics, manners, and human values.

Islamic Communication Ethics in the Perspective of the Hijab

Jilbab in Islamic communication ethics is not only an aurat protector, but also a visual communication medium that conveys moral messages, piety, and politeness. As a visual symbol, the headscarf is part of a nonverbal message that must be supported by verbal behavior and actions that are in accordance with Islamic values. Islamic communication involves consistency between the message conveyed with appearance and action. A Muslimah who wears a headscarf must maintain adab in speech, be polite, and display behavior in accordance with sharia. This is reflected in the concept of "qaulan balighan" (polite and targeted speech) which is a basic principle in Islamic interaction.

The hijab in a campus da'wah environment such as FDK UIN-SU is an effective visual da'wah message. Students who wear syar'i headscarves indirectly convey messages about sharia values and exemplary behavior to other students. Therefore, hijab in Islamic communication ethics becomes a nonverbal da'wah instrument as well as a moral control tool in campus socialization.

The Meaning of Jilbab as a Symbol of Communication

a. Jilbab as Religious Identity

Jilbab in the context of FDK UIN-SU campus is understood by female students not only as a sharia obligation, but also as a symbol of religious identity that signifies their attachment to Islamic teachings. Based on the results of interviews with informant F, she stated that the hijab she wore was a symbol of submission to Allah SWT as well as a marker that she was part of the religious community of campus da'wah. "When I wear a syar'i headscarf, people can immediately tell that I am a da'wah student, not just an ordinary student," she said during the interview.

According to her, Jilbab is not only an aurat protector but also a visual message about the values she believes in. This is supported by Islamic communication symbol theory which states that visual symbols such as clothing have social and religious meanings that can build perceptions of the surrounding environment. On the FDK campus, students who wear the syar'i headscarf are often positioned as a representation of religious students, so that the symbol is not only a personal identity, but also a means of legitimizing the identity of the da'wah group [17].

b. Jilbab as a medium of da'wah communication

The syar'i headscarf also functions as a nonverbal da'wah communication medium. Informant L, stated that without the need to speak, the syar'i hijab they wear conveys messages about moral values, ethics, and Islamic law. Informant L said, "I feel that this hijab is a silent da'wah. People see me wearing the syar'i hijab, it already conveys the message that covering the aurat is obligatory and beautiful." This phenomenon reinforces the concept of Islamic communication ethics, which emphasizes the importance of symbolic media in conveying moral messages subtly without being verbal [18].

The syar'i hijab worn by campus da'wah students is often a means of religious dialogue. Some informants said that the syar'i hijab often provokes questions from other students who have not worn the syar'i hijab. "There are classmates who ask, why did I choose a long hijab, from there I can start explaining the arguments and wisdom, said informant R. This proves that the communication symbol in the form of a headscarf can be an entrance to a polite and contextual da'wah conversation.

c. Jilbab as a Moral and Social Control Tool

The function of the hijab as a moral control tool can be seen from the statement of informant E, who admitted that by wearing the syar'i hijab, they felt more careful in their behavior. "When I wear the syar'i hijab, I feel ashamed if I say harsh words, joke excessively, or post inappropriate things on social media," said Informant E. This shows that the hijab symbol becomes an internal moral control tool as well as social control because the campus environment also gives more expectations to the wearer.

This concept is in line with the theory of Islamic communication ethics which states that every religious symbol not only conveys messages to the audience, but also becomes a moral reminder for the owner of the symbol itself. Informant L added that the syar'i hijab worn made her reluctant to hang out in bad places, because she realized that her identity as a da'wah activist was attached to the hijab she wore. This symbol automatically becomes a social brake for its owner to maintain Islamic adab and ethics.

d. Jilbab as a Symbol of Da'wah Student Solidarity

In the FDK UIN-SU campus environment, the syar'i hijab is also a symbol of solidarity among da'wah students. Informant P, stated, "If you meet someone wearing the syar'i hijab, even though you don't know them, it's immediately like a brother. There is an unwritten code of conduct between us." This solidarity is formed through the same visual symbol, which binds da'wah students in a community of value.

This finding is in accordance with [19] which states that religious symbols in the Muslim student community act as a unifying tool and bind group identity. In addition, informant P, said that this solidarity facilitates the coordination of da'wah, organizing studies, and mass mobilization of religious activities. "We support each other, reprimand each other if someone starts to slack off, because this jilbab is not just a cloth, but a symbol of the struggle for campus da'wah," he said [20].

e. Jilbab as a Visual Reminder of the Value of Da'wah

In addition to being a message to others, the headscarf also serves as a personal reminder for FDK students. Informant S, admitted that when wearing a syar'i headscarf, there is a feeling of more shame to do immoral things. "When I wear the headscarf, it feels hard to commit sin, there is a sense of shame, remembering Allah," she said. The symbol of the headscarf becomes an internal control tool that psychologically restrains the wearer from committing acts that are contrary to sharia.

In Islamic communication ethics, religious symbols do have a performative function, which is able to influence individual behavior according to the values they symbolize. This is evident from the statements of several informants who said that the syar'i hijab made them more enthusiastic about praying on time, diligently participating in studies, and being active in campus da'wah activities. Thus, jilbab is not only a message for others, but also for oneself [21].

Jilbab in Islamic Communication Ethics in Campus Environment

a. Visual Ethics Symbol in Nonverbal Communication

In Islamic communication ethics, visual symbols such as the hijab have an important role as a medium for conveying moral and religious messages. Based on the results of interviews with FDK UIN-SU informants, the headscarf is not only a sharia obligation, but also a visual communication message that is immediately visible to others before verbal messages are conveyed. "Jilbab syar'i is a direct message without sound. People who see her have already judged that she is a Muslimah who maintains the sharia".

This concept is in line with the theory of Islamic communication ethics which states that nonverbal communication has the power to convey moral messages more effectively, because it is directly captured visually and creates a quick perception in social interactions. Therefore, FDK students who wear the syar'i headscarf have an ethical responsibility to maintain compatibility between the visual messages conveyed and verbal and nonverbal behavior in everyday life [22].

b. Means of Building a Religious Self-Image.

The syar'i hijab for FDK students is also an important instrument in building a religious self-image in the campus environment. Informant S mentioned that by wearing the syar'i hijab, she felt more confident in showing her identity as a da'wah activist. "I don't need to talk too much about da'wah, my hijab already shows my value," she said. This shows that the hijab functions as a tool to build a religious image of a Muslimah in campus socialization.

In addition, the syar'i hijab in the FDK environment is also a parameter of a student's morality. Informant L admitted that students wearing syar'i hijab are often more trusted to hold the mandate of da'wah organizations. [23] states that religious symbols that are displayed consistently are able to shape the religious image of individuals in religious communities, because social perceptions of these symbols are very strong among the campus da'wah community.

c. Moral Messages in Social Interaction

Shari'i hijab-wearing students at FDK UIN-SU also understand their hijab as a moral message in every social interaction. Informant E, said that when wearing the shar'i hijab, there is a feeling of shame if you have to say rude or joke excessively. "We realize that this hijab is not a toy, there is a moral burden," she said. This strengthens the performative theory in Islamic communication ethics which states that visual symbols can control the behavior of the symbol owner, because there is a moral burden on the message it carries [24].

Informant P, added that students wearing syar'i hijab often serve as a reminder for classmates to maintain manners, for example, not joking excessively in the classroom or in the campus mosque. This moral function strengthens the role of the hijab as a symbol of regulating

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the syar'i hijab among female students at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (FDK) UIN-SU serves not only as a religious obligation but also as an effective symbol of visual da'wah communication. This research shows that the syar'i hijab plays an important role as a religious identity that signifies loyalty to Islamic teachings, as well as a nonverbal da'wah communication medium that silently conveys moral, ethical, and religious values. In addition, the syar'i hijab also functions as a tool for personal moral control, a symbol of solidarity among da'wah students, and a reminder of Islamic values applied in daily life. This finding reinforces that the hijab is not merely a religious obligation, but also plays a strategic role in da'wah communication within academic settings. Therefore, visual symbol-based da'wah strategies, such as the hijab, can be an effective tool for conveying moral messages and strengthening Islamic identity among students, especially in the campus environment. With a deeper understanding of the function of the hijab symbol, campus authorities and da'wah organizations can formulate more effective approaches to using the hijab as a communication medium that supports da'wah activities and character development among students.

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