

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN DA‘WAH

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Abstract

Da‘wah efforts need a particular approach. It is a need for preachers to deliver wisely the message of Islam to the people. In this relation, it is important for *da‘ī* (Arabic word for preacher) to have knowledge and skills of doing *da‘wah*. The present study highlights the application of communication skills in *da‘wah* to the community. There are three major elements of communication skills that need to be applied in *da‘wah* by the preacher namely: 1) The ability to deliver the messages clearly, effectively and confidently using oral medium as well as writing, 2) The ability to listen and respond actively, and 3) The ability to deliver clearly with confidence in accordance with the level of thinking of audience. In addition, these three major elements are discussed within the context of *uṣūl al-da‘wah* (the principles of Islamic *da‘wah*) namely *uslūb*, *manhaj*, *wasīlah* and *qaw‘id al-da‘wah* developed by al-Bayānūnī and Hamām Sa‘īd. This study is a qualitative research using content analysis research design. The data and findings presented in this paper come from secondary sources of information such as books, journals, thesis and dissertations and proceeding papers related to the subject. Thematic analysis was used in this study which emphasized identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of these within qualitative data. Several recommendations based on the conceptual study are made in order to meet the needs of *da‘wah* to the society. They are: i) Muslim preachers should integrate significantly

the basic principles of Islamic *da'wah* with contemporary communication skills, ii) They should comprehend topics of *da'wah* in accordance with current situation in order to attract people accepting the message of *da'wah* and iii) They should approach audience as their target group of *da'wah* based using psychological and communication skills. The study found that Muslim preacher needs to apply three aspects of communication while dealing with the people. The first is the ability to express and deliver the Islamic messages clearly, confidently and effectively. The second is the ability to apply active listening skill and also capable of giving appropriate response. The third is the ability to do a presentation with a clear and confident suitable with the level of the target group.

Keywords: *da'wah*, communication, Soft Skills, community, Muslim Preacher, *al-hikmah*

1. Introduction

The effectiveness of the *da'wah* workers in undertaking their task is the main factor in determining the success of *da'wah*. *Da'wah* workers whom undertakes the work of *da'wah*, or *da'i* in Arabic, have mental toughness, physical as well as spiritual strengths, besides possessing knowledge about how to form and diversify the methods as well as the approaches of their *da'wah* based on the diversity of their targets, are considered successful missionaries. The word *da'wah* originates from Arabic language meaning summon, call and invitation¹. *Da'wah* according to Abd al-Karim Zaydan means the call to Allah Almighty². The definition outlined by Zaydan is in line with the statement of the *Holy Qur'an* on Surah Yusuf, verse 108. Moreover, Muhammad al-Ghazali defines *da'wah* as a comprehensive programme which consists of all required knowledge in its folds that people are in need of them, so they understand the purpose of their life, and discover the milestones that make them guided human beings³. Based on these definitions, it can be summed up that *da'wah* calls people to the course of Allah Almighty in order to attain well-being in this worldly life and hereafter.

In addition to that, *da'wah* from the etymological perspective means to call or invite people to one objective or matter. *Da'wah* may also be specifically referred to as the call to truth, act on commands, avoid what is prohibited in order to attain happiness now and future as can be found in what Allah the Almighty says in Surah Yunus verse 25, where we can see that *da'wah* is also a form of obligation. Allah the Almighty says: “*Allah almighty invites (people) to the Abode of Peace and brings whom He wills to a straight path*⁴”. According to Al-Bayānūnī, the work of

da'wah is focused on calling others in the religion, worship, and offering love to God. *Da'wah* work is also an effort that requires the strife of energy, intellect and material in order to be able to achieve a specific objective⁵. It calls for determination on the part of *da'wah* workers to engage the target audience by using a particular method or approach. In the context of science of *da'wah*, it refers to a number of methods and theories on how to relay the messages of Islam to humanity, teaching and practicing them. In other words, science of *da'wah* is a combination of theories and practice in order to ensure *da'wah* can be carried out using to the right methods and strategies.

Da'wah work, however, is not an easy task because it is a matter of changing the belief and understanding of a human being⁶. This is an agreement with the meaning of *da'wah* proposed by al-Bahi al-Khawli that the *da'wah* movement attempts to lift a person out from one environment and put him into another⁷. This is in line with the view presented by Abdul Ghafar who stated that *da'wah* work requires *da'wah* workers who are committed to carry out the effort full time and this is not an easy task⁸. This is due to the fact that *da'wah* workers must engage with the target group from all kinds of backgrounds, i.e. different beliefs, customs and levels of education and thinking. All these, require for a *da'wah* worker who to be wholly prepared in terms of knowledge⁹. The main challenge in an effective *da'wah* work is from the *da'wah* workers themselves where the way they present themselves and the approach that they use to interact with the target group play a crucial role. This is an accordance with the best approach that inspired from the holy verse in surah al-Nahl verse 125 that focuses on the approach of *al-hikmah* (inviting people with wisdom), *al-maw'izah al-hasnah* (beautiful preaching or good exhortation) and *al-mujādalah bi al-husnah* (arguing with people in the best of manners and most gracious)¹⁰.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Importance of *Da'wah*

Da'wah is an essential and the mission of all the prophets and messengers of Allah Almighty as stated in *The Holy Qur'ān*, Surah An-Nahl, verse 36. There are evidences from *The Holy Qur'ān* and al-hadith of the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaive wa sallam*) which emphasis on the importance of *da'wah*. In Surah Al 'Imran, verse 104, for example Allah Almighty command the Muslim to do *da'wah* by inviting people to *al-khayr* (Islam), *amr bi al-ma 'ruf* (enjoining the right) and *al-nahi 'an al-munkar* (forbidding the wrong). In another Quranic verse (*The Holy Qur'ān*, 3:110), the Muslims will be considered as the best nation

(ummah) if they are perform the duty of *da'wah*. Similarly, the hadith of the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) also concerns on the responsibility of propagating Islam. In one of his hadith, the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) is reported to as said¹¹:

“Convey from me, even if it is one verse.”

The Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) has also mentioned in another hadith on the importance of doing *da'wah* as the following¹²:

“Let one who is present (listening) convey to those who are not present”

The aforesaid of the Quranic verses and hadith of the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) clearly emphasize on the important of performing *da'wah*. The *Holy Qur'ān* further describes doing *da'wah* as the best word and deeds (The *Holy Qur'ān*, Surah Fuṣṣilat, verse 33).

Based on the evidences of the *Holy Qur'ān* and hadith of the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*), it can be concluded that *da'wah* is vital and a responsibility of every Muslim. Therefore, in order bring people to accept Islam as well as promoting well-being of humankind both in this worldly life and the life of hereafter, every Muslim should preach *da'wah* according to their capacity and knowledge they hold.

2.2. The Concept of Communication Skills in *Da'wah*

The process of *da'wah* takes place when *da'wah* workers communicate with the target group in order to convey the message of *da'wah*¹³. Thus, *da'wah* workers must use appropriate form of communication for the target group that is suitable for a communicator in order to influence and persuade the subject of their *da'wah* to accept the message of Islam stipulated by Islamic rules and regulations. In choosing an appropriate form of communication the *da'wah* workers have facilitated the understanding of the conveyed message¹⁴. *Da'wah* is not restricted to verbal communication. It can be non-verbal¹⁵. Non-verbal communication in *da'wah* work usually is associated with *da'wah bi al-hal*¹⁶.

Verbal communication happens when the *da'wah* workers use a specific language to convey the message of *da'wah* to the subject through verbal medium such as public speaking, sermon, dialogue and discussion.

This has been stated in the *Holy Qur'ān* where Allah Almighty says:

*"We did not send any messenger but (speaking) in the language of his people, so that he might clearly convey the message to them. So, Allah lets go astray whom He wills and lets find guidance whom He wills. And He is the Mighty, the Wise."*¹⁷

According to al-Qaraḍāwī¹⁸ that this Quranic verse does not only mention the type and medium of language of the communicator such as English and German, it focusses on the function and role of language in verbal communication. As an example, when a person communicates with the public they tend to use the colloquial language to suit the subject's level of thinking. In an effort to design a verbal communication guideline, Zulkefli and S. Salahudin proposed for the following to be taken as a procedure in verbal communications. The topic of conversation between the communicator and the subject should be about something good and beneficial. The communicator shoud refrain from saying things that are not beneficial. They are truthful in their words. They do not expose other people's weaknesses. They do not say bad things and look down upon others. They observe the ethics such as tolerance and forgiveness, when they disagree with others¹⁹.

Da'wah communication by using *bi al-hal* approach refers to the *da'wah* workers' effort to communicate with the subject by using an approach that is oriented towards expanding and developing a specific sector of the community such as economy and education. In this type of communication, the *da'wah* is conveyed in a silent manner by doing good deeds in the form of community activities and development until they are capable of influencing the target group. This method is more effective compared to conveying the message verbally, for example through talks and speeches. *Da'wah* workers act as an agent of change for the community in order to help them improve their quality of life in areas such as economy. Mohd. Yusof asserted that among the roles and functions of *da'wah* workers are to help the community to identify their needs, to get the support from the leader and members of community in carrying out community development project, to provide the necessary expertise to the members of the community, to motivate community members, to be their source of reference in ensuring that the project is properly implemented and to evaluate the planned or the project being implemented²⁰.

Related word for skill is *maharah* in Arabic²¹. Gergers defined skill as one's capability to do something based on experience and continuous learning in order to solve certain problems, produce useful information, facilitate others by providing helps using certain techniques²². The

Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia defined skill as the soft skills related to non-academic cognitive elements such as positive values, leadership, team work, communication and life-long learning²³. Meanwhile, Vasantha Kumari defines soft skills as a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes, and social graces that make someone a good employee and compatible to work with²⁴. Sally, Ramlee and Alhamzah, on the other hand, argued that soft skills consist of six basic elements namely basic skills, skills related to human values, skills related to thinking capacity, skills related to human personality, skills related to business, and skills related to society engagement²⁵. Therefore, it can be concluded that the term soft skills, which is also known as process skills, generic attributes or transferable skills, do not have a single definition. The general descriptions of these skills include communication skills, life-long learning, team work, leadership, creative and critical thinking skills.

Communication skills refers to one's ability to clearly deliver an idea in an effective and confident manner both in writing or oral presentation, to be an active and a good listener and give a good feedback, to confidently give a good presentation²⁶. Therefore, this article will discuss the manner which *da'wah* workers can apply their communication skills in doing *da'wah*. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the skill:

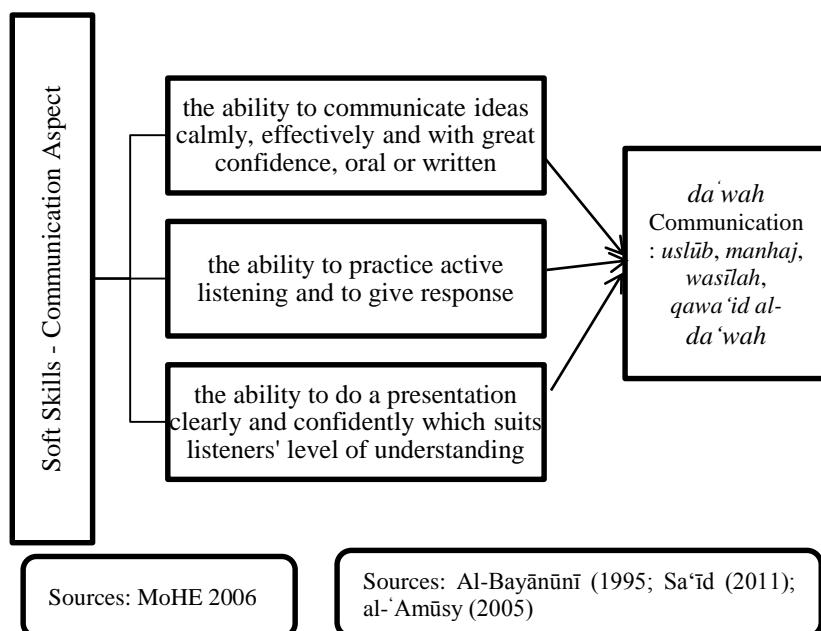


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of *Da'wah* workers' Communication Skills

3. Methodology

This study is a qualitative research using content analysis research design. The data and findings presented in this paper come from secondary sources of information. The information was gathered using document analysis from literature books, journals, thesis and dissertations, proceeding papers, and magazines related to the subject. Thematic analysis was used in this study which emphasized identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of these within qualitative data.

4. Result and Discussion

Da'wah communication is synonymous with Islamic communication. Zulkefli and S. Salahuddin suggest that the concept of Islamic communication as a process to disseminate or relay message and information using communication principles and methods as outlined in the *Holy Qur'an* and *al-hadith*²⁷. In the context of *da'wah*, the communication process that takes place involves the dissemination of information related to Islam in order to influence the *da'wah* target or *mad'ū* so that they will accept the faith, have the knowledge, and practice the teachings of Islam, disseminate and defend the truth of the teachings. Meanwhile Rizki et al. suggests that the scope of *da'wah* communication is focused on an effective and organized *da'wah* effort in order to achieve a specific goal suitable with the target group and the *da'wah* limited worker's ability²⁸. The result of the communication process that takes place is seen from the wisdom in combining the theoretical aspect, implementation, and evaluation of the *da'wah* effort carried out by the *da'wah* workers.

The following are three aspects of communication skills that need to be comprehended by the preachers:

1. The ability of a *da'wah* worker to express an idea, relay the *da'wah* message to the *mad'ū* made up of people in the most elucid, effective and confident manner through a certain medium either spoken or written. Allah Almighty says in surah Yusuf verse 108 translated as follows:

*"Say you: "This is my Way: I do invite unto Allah Almighty – on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes – I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah Almighty! And never will I join gods with Allah Almighty"*²⁹

The word "*Baṣīrah*" in this verse according to Ibn Kathir means clear or precise argument by means of sure knowledge and firm evidence, so that that make noble people who seek it able to differentiate between the truth (*al-haqq*) and falsehood (*al-baṭil*)³⁰. Thus it indicates that for a *da'wah* worker who wants to carry out the *da'wah* work using either the

spoken or written communication medium must state the *da'wah* message in a clear and precise manner based on sure knowledge and firm evidence³¹. The message brought does not cause confusion among the *mad'ū*. This is precisely in line with the definition of *da'wah* from science of *da'wah* or *'ilm al- da'wah* that is discussed by the scholars who specialized in the area of *da'wah*. The discussion about *da'wah* as an offshoot in Islamic studies discipline makes it possible to translate the word “*baṣīrah*” as found in verse 108 of surah Yusuf.

Ghalwash on the other hand, emphasizes on science of *da'wah* that tackles the aspect of delivery (*al-nashr*) which requires for certain skills so that the *da'wah* message on ‘*aqīdah*, *shari'ah* and *akhlāq* can be delivered to the *mad'ū* successfully³². In the context of *da'wah*, the mastery in delivering the message is defined and refers the aspects of *wasīlah* (approach) and *uslūb da'wah* (conveying of contents with specific methods).

The definition of science of *da'wah* also takes into consideration what one understands of the message from verse 125 of surah al-Nahl that outlines three main *asālīb* (methodologies) in carrying out *da'wah* work namely *al-ḥikmah* (inviting people with wisdom), *al-maw'izah al-hasana* (beautiful preaching or good exhortation) and *al-mujādalah bi al-husna* (arguing with people in the best of manners and most gracious). Based on these *uslūb*, science of *da'wah* is connected to the usage of the *uslūb* in an accurate and fair manner with the objective to convince the audience of the *da'wah*. It is closely related to the people targeted for the *da'wah*, i.e. the recipient message in the process of *da'wah*. Therefore, understanding the target audience of *da'wah* is crucially important so that the *da'wah* process can take place in an orderly manner and the message to be relayed can be understood well. In communication process the target audience of *da'wah* is the recipients who are the target of a message and these recipients are made up of individuals, small groups, an organization or a group of people. Thus, the question about *mad'ū* is usually grouped into several categories such as gender, age group, religious belief, religious practice and social as well as economic status³³. *Da'wah* workers need to identify these classifications because the *mad'ū* who become the recipients of the *da'wah* message relayed through communication medium come from various backgrounds. The interpretations of the message received by the recipients are varied according to their ways of thinking and understanding³⁴

In the context of *da'wah* in the field, the *da'wah* workers must first identify which group of people that has the potential to be the recipients of the *da'wah* message as there are different background of people in the society. Therefore, in delivering *da'wah* the preachers must learn and understand the backgrounds of the people like their languages, cultures,

religion or beliefs³⁵. In terms of communication, specific communication skills can be utilized to understand the target audience's culture, practices, taboo and language or dialect which in turn can close the communication gap between the *da'wah* workers and the *mad'ūr*³⁶. This will also ease the task of the *da'wah* workers to explain the *da'wah* message clearly according to the *da'wah* topic. Thus, they make full use of the knowledge about the languages and dialects of the people in order to be able to approach them.

It is very clear when the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) took care of those differences in his mission in terms of several conditions based on (1) commandments variation according to people variation (2) differing in his rulings and questions' answering according to the submitted cases, (3) different attitudes and behaviours depending on the people who deal with, (4) variation of orders and assignments to his followers according to their personal differences and abilities, and (5) acceptance of some individuals to an event or behaviour may not be acceptable to the other individuals regarding their different circumstances³⁷.

The following two of *ahādīth* indicate such condition:

1. *Ubaidillah Ibn Abdillah narrates: A Bedouin once urinated in the mosque. The companions noticing him shouted at him in rebuke. The Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) said: 'Leave him and wash away the urine with a bucket of water, for verily you have been sent to make things easy for people and not to make behind him. While the prayer was taking place the Bedouin said: O Allah Almighty! Have mercy on me and Muhammad (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) and not on anyone other than us' When the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) finished leading the prayer he turned around to the Bedouin and said: 'You have constricted the abundant'*³⁸.

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani writes in his commentary of the above hadith, in his great *Fath al-Bārī*, that Muslim must be gentleness with an ignorant person and to teach him what is necessary without any harshness since that which he did is not out of willful disobedience³⁹.

2. *Abu Umamah al-Bahili related that a young man came to the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) and said: "O Messenger of Allah Almighty, give me leave to fornicate (to commit zina)". The companions quickly surrounded him and began to chide him, warning from speaking in such a*

way. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Let him come close”. The youth came near the Messenger of Allah Almighty and sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke to him saying: “Do you wish the same for your mother? The youth said: ‘No! By Allah Almighty, O Messenger of Allah Almighty, may Allah Almighty make me your ransom.’” “Nor do people wish the same it for their mothers”, said the Prophets (ﷺ) “Do you wish the same for your daughter?” asked the Prophet (ﷺ). “No! By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, may Allah make me your ransom”, replied the youth. “Nor do people wish it for their daughters”, said the Prophet (ﷺ). “Do you wish the same for your sister?” asked the Prophet (ﷺ). The youth replied again” No! By Allah Almighty, O Messenger of Allah Almighty, may Allah Almighty make me your ransom”. “Nor do people wish it for their sisters”. Said the Prophet (ﷺ). “Do you wish the same for your paternal aunt?” asked the Prophet (ﷺ). “No! By Allah Almighty, O Messenger of Allah Almighty, may Almighty Allah make me your ransom”. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Nor do people wish it for their paternal aunts”. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: “Do you wish the same for your maternal aunt?” “No! By Allah, O Messenger of Allah Almighty, may Allah Almighty make me your ransom”, said the youth. The Prophets (ﷺ) said: “Nor do people wish it for their maternal aunts.” Then the Messenger of Allah Almighty placed his hand on him and prayed: “O Allah Almighty, forgive his sin, purify his heart and help him preserve his chastity”.

The narrator of this al-hadith says thereafter the youth was never again distracted by such thoughts through the blessings of the Messenger of Allah’s supplication⁴⁰.

The *da’wah* workers can also communicate with the *mad’ū* orally. This approach is also known as *al- da’wah bi al-lisān*. This type of communication involves a kind of *da’wah* delivery process from the source of the message (i.e. the *da’wah* workers) and the recipient of the message (i.e. the *mad’ū*) who are the orang Asli by using certain language medium via certain oral communication channel such as lecture, dialogue, briefing, discussion etc. This method of delivering the *da’wah*

is also the *Sunnah* of the Prophets who were Allah's Messengers sent to their respective peoples as mentioned in surah Ibrahim verse 4 where Allah Almighty says:

"We sent not a Messenger except (to teach) in the language of his (own) people, in order to make (things) clear to them. Now Allah Almighty leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases: and He is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom."

According to Ibn Kathīr that verse indicates that Allah Almighty is Kind and Compassionate with His creation by sending His Messengers to them from them and speaking their language⁴¹. Meaning that, every prophet was sent with the language of his people, so that they are able to understand the Message that the Messengers were sent with. In this case, al-Shawkāni argues that the addressee will easily understand what the prophet says because their ability speak in the people language. If the prophet do not able to speak and communicate with the language of his people, they do not know what he is saying and even do not understand what is addressing them with until they learn that language for a long time⁴². This is very important to make clear to them what Allah Almighty commanded them to implement the *Shari'ah* that He legislated for them.

Al-Qaraḍāwī, on the other hand, when commenting about the above verse, says that that the word "*lisān*" does not only refer to meaning and language spoken by an individual according to the specific geographical areas such as English, German and Russian but more to the accurate language usage that suits the individual's (the person whom we speak to) level of IQ and his or her status in the society⁴³. This refers to the function of language in oral communication. As a result, *da'wah* workers while delivering *da'wah* message must choose a suitable language skill when communicating with people. *Da'wah* worker must show a good character while dealing with the target of *da'wah*. In addition, *da'wah* workers must ensure that the topic of conversation between him or her and the target of *da'wah* (*mad'ū*) must be about something that leads to a positive aspects. The *da'wah* worker must avoid from talking about something that has no advantage, must not lie throughout the conversation, must not disclose other people's weaknesses or anything that is embarrassing to anybody, must not mock and belittle other people and must always observe the right conduct when exchanging arguments⁴⁴.

Communication approach through written medium should also be utilized by the *da'wah* workers in disseminating the *da'wah* message to the community. References used are usually booklets that contain basic religious knowledge such as basic *fard 'ayn* or fundamental teaching in

Islam⁴⁵. The messages of *da'wah* should contain materials which are suitable to various sectors of the society. Therefore, Asmadi Abd Rahman and Ramlan Mustapha have recommended that a more effective method should be established to raise the understanding of Islam among the people. This includes the type of book of reference in teaching and learning process⁴⁶. In this case, the wisdom of a *da'wah* workers to guide and teach the people are vital. This statement is in line with al-Bayānūnī's opinion that is by saying that *uslūb al-hikmah* (wisdom and excellent approach of *da'wah*) gives focus on the principle of *taqdīm al-aham 'ala al-muhim*, that is prioritizing something that is of utmost importance compared to other important things according to the science of priority jurisprudence (*fiqh al-awwaliyyāt*) in determining the success of *da'wah*⁴⁷.

Charles Osgood says that communication happens when a system or a source tries to influence another system or its target, and this is done by manipulating a few symbols that can be transmitted through the medium that connects them. When this is connected to *da'wah*, the missionary can influence the *mad'ū* to accept and be convinced by the *da'wah* message delivered using the psychological approach until they can follow the message willingly⁴⁸. As a result of this, when *da'wah* workers possess effective communication skills, they fulfill the concept of persuasion in their communication and they are able to highlight the change-of-attitude element (internal element) and physical behaviour (external element) on the part of the recipients of the message⁴⁹. In addition to that, persuasion ends when the recipients understand and adhere to the content of the message, and this is as a result of the effort taken by the *da'wah* workers.

Among the practical methods in the field is the method of *al-ta'līf qabl al-ta'rīf* that is an effort to attract and soften the hearts of the target audience before introducing the general concepts of the Islamic teachings. This method is effective for *da'wah* worker who communicate in a *da'wah bi al-hāl* (conducting *da'wah* work through development programs and preaching Islam through the action or behaviour)⁵⁰.

An example of *da'wah bi al-hāl* that implemented at the period of the Prophet (*Sal Allāh-u- 'alaihe wa sallām*) is based on al-hadīth narrated by Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj that the companion of the Prophet (*Sal Allāh-u- 'alaihe wa sallām*) namely Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh reported that the Messenger of Allah Almighty never said: "No" to anyone who asked him for something. Anas ibn Mālik (*Radi Allāh 'anhu*) reported: Never was the Messenger of Allah Almighty (*Sal Allāh-u- 'alaihe wa sallām*) asked for anything by someone who was about to accept Islam but that he gave it to them. A man came to him and asked for alms, so he gave him a number of sheep (so large that they filled the space) between two mountains. So the man returned to his people and told them: "O my

people, embrace Islam, for Muhammad (*Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Sallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) gives lavishly like someone who does not fear any poverty.” Some people would embrace Islam only for worldly gains, but Islam soon became dearer to them than the whole world and all what is in it.

Suleiman, Aini and Ismail, for example, highlight the *da’wah* efforts carried out by the *da’wah* workers from the Department of Islamic Religious Affairs Negeri Sembilan Malaysia, who use the approach of *da’wah bi al-hāl* when carrying *da’wah* work to the orang Asli at the state of Negeri Sembilan Malaysia. Among the activities that carried out are social visits, sports events, feasts and solidarity work. The interaction between the missionaries and the orang Asli through these activities strengthen the relationship and bridge the communication gap between them⁵¹. The approach used is more friendly and congenial rather than hostile and harsh that drives the target audience away. This is because the approach that is not based on love and affection can widen the communication gap between the two sides as reminded by Allah Almighty in surah Āl ‘Imrān verse 159. That effort, however, must be in accordance with what Allah Almighty has outlined, and He states it clearly in surah al-Anfāl verse 63.

Allah Almighty says in the *Holy Qur’ān* that

“and He has united their (believers) hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allah Almighty has united them. Certainly He is All-Mighty, All-Wise” (al-Anfal: 63).

According to Wahbah al-Zuhayli⁵² this verse make us clear that Allah Almighty made the believers one united nation by guiding them with the true faith. It is impossible to human kind to unite their heart and hand to hand moving together or forgetting any fight between them by gathering material thing all over the world material and spending them without having Almighty Allah’s guidance.

It also the same for *al-Taysīr Lā al-Ta’sīr* approach, as it is also an effort to ease, not to burden, and the *da’wah* workers can use it as a guide when communicating with the target group. While communicating, *da’wah* workers must speak using language that is easy to understand and suit their level of understanding, whilst not proposing ideas which they have difficulty to digest. In line with that, Nur Damia finds that orang Asli (indigenous people in Malaysia) for example, prefer *da’wah* workers who explain about the religious teachings using visual language although it is a challenge on the part of the *da’wah* workers especially when it comes to explaining about matters concerning ‘*aqīdah* which is mainly a

matter of *sam'iyyāt* (Islamic teaching especially in the theology, such as angles, paradise and hell, that cannot be described by human senses and can be only known through the *Holy Qur'ān* and al-Hadith)⁵³.

2. The *da'wah* workers has the ability to apply active listening skill and capable of giving appropriate response.

A good communication between the source and the recipient starts with the listening. This means that communication is not just sharing of ideas and thoughts between the source and the recipient but it also involves the way how to listen to the ideas. Thus, humans should listen more than they should speak. One's mastery of the listening skills makes listening a crucial skill in a communication process because 80% of humans find it necessary for them to communicate only after listening to messages sent. Because of that, in order to become a good communicator, one has to be a good listener⁵⁴. Through the listening activities, the process of giving feedback takes place either through verbal or other means.

A *da'wah* worker needs to be a good listener when communicating with the orang Asli. In verse 18 of surah al-Zumar, Allah Almighty compliments those who listen and pay attention to what others have to say. According to Danial Zainal Abidin among the qualities of a good listener are⁵⁵:

1. Those who listen intently when others are speaking and never cutting in or interrupting.
2. Those who understand the message relayed.
3. Those who recall facts presented.
4. Those who ask in order to get clarification.
5. Those who avoid confrontations when discussing.
6. Those who pay attention and show interest in what people are saying.
7. Those who can just ignore the elements that can disrupt the communication process when the communication is in progress.

Based on these qualities, *da'wah* workers must possess high level of patience when interacting with the *mad'ū*. Even though what is said by the *mad'ū* might invite some unpleasant consequences where missionaries must not let themselves having negative thoughts about them. This is because the *mad'ū* have an exclusive position according to Zaydān who says that the right of the *mad'ū* is to be approached, not approaching or in Arabic known as *ya'tī, wa lā yu'tā*. Therefore, *da'wah* workers must entertain every question asked even though is so basic and simplistic in their mind⁵⁶. Communication interruptions such as level of

IQ and language usage which are not the same between the preachers and *mad'ū* do not stop the *da'wah* workers to entertain the questions posed.

It is clear when The Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) gave different advice to different individuals, who asked for them, depending on their character. There were many people asked the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) to give them advice whether limited or unlimited that would bring them closer to paradise and keep them away from the Hell-fire. He gave them different answers. To some he said "*You should worship Allah Almighty, associating nothing with him, you should perform the Prayers, pay the zakah regularly, and keep good relations with relatives*", and to others he said "*Fear Allah Almighty wherever you are, and follow up a bad deed with a good one and it will wipe it out, and behave well towards people*", to others he said "*Say: I believe in Allah, and thereafter be upright*". These Prophet's (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaihe wa sallam*) answers firmly indicates that he took into consideration the condition of the people seeking the advice, and gave each of them what he needed most. He communicated with them rightly based on their background in terms of level of their thinking and so on. Similarly, he dealt with the questioners the same way a doctor would deal with his patients, giving each the kind of medicine he needs most.

During communication with the people through the mediums of lecture, talk, dialogue and others, *da'wah* workers do not only receive feedback from the audience about the *da'wah* message they deliver, but they also have to respond to the questions posed by them. In the communication process, feedback refers to the reaction of the recipient towards the message relayed by the source⁵⁷. This process of communication actually suits the 'Dialogue Model' that focuses on the process of communication that requires the speaker and listener to act together actively in forming the meaning⁵⁸. In this process too, the speech and conversation are the communication pattern that requires the same assumption between the speaker and the recipient so that an understanding can be achieved. They further added that this theory is suitable to be used when the missionaries are delivering an impromptu message to the *mad'ū*, without a careful preparation, but with the objective to send a message that is light and simple for the *mad'ū* to understand⁵⁹. The message delivered can be weaved together with the entertainment elements like *nasyid* (a song with Islamic elements sung in a group), humor element as well as the story-telling element.

3. The *da'wah* workers have the ability to do a presentation that is clear and confident suitable with the level of the audience.

Da‘wah workers who present certain religious messages to the *da‘wah* target who follow the religious classes that are conducted, use certain strategies based on the objective of the presentation. According to Zulkefli and S. Salahuddin, before giving a speech, a *da‘wah* worker must in the first place determine the type of speech he or she wants to make. In relation to that, the *da‘wah* worker must know the objective of the *da‘wah* speech to be delivered⁶⁰:

1. A speech to consolidate the attitude and belief of the audience, or
2. A speech to change the attitude and belief of the audience, or
3. A speech to motivate the audience to do something or take a certain action, or in other words to influence their behaviour.

The first objective can be used when the *da‘wah* workers want to convey religious teaching to the people who have a positive idea and attitude towards the real Islam. That is why when they hear the explanation and presentation of the preachers, their belief and faith increase. This is probably because the people who have been approached have long reverted to Islam and are eager to learn about and practice the religion. So, because of this they are able to resist the temptations or distractions from those who try to persuade them to leave and abandon the belief that they have held on to. One of the elements that always try to lure them is the *da‘wah* of other religions. Based on these criteria, the *da‘wah* workers can turn these revert into *da‘wah* cadre who will do *da‘wah* work to their own people.

Da‘wah workers can use certain strategies to convey the *da‘wah* message if the second objective is considered. This is useful when doing *da‘wah* work to the people who have not yet converted to Islam. This is because they have not yet grasped the Islamic worldview that they have come into contact with and thus they have skewed understanding about it. Therefore, the *da‘wah* workers can explain to them the accurate version of it with full and clear explanation.

It was reported on the authority of a man from “*khath‘am*” (the name of an Arab tribe), who said “I come to the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*) while he was sitting among a group of his companions. I said: “You are the one who claims to be the Messengers of Allah Almighty? He said: “yes”. I said: “O Messenger of Allah Almighty, which deed is the most beloved to Allah Almighty?” He said: “Belief in Allah Almighty”. I said: “O Messenger of Allah Almighty What next?” He said “keeping good relations with your kinship”. I said: “O Messenger of Allah Almighty What next?” He said: “Then enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong⁶¹”

The presentation of the *da'wah* workers message must suit the level of thinking of the *mad'ū*. Thus, it is crucial to identify their thinking level by looking at their level of education, exposure to progress and development, social-economic status and others. In the context of a discipline of communication, *da'wah* workers must take into consideration the topical framework and the scope of experience and knowledge that can be shared together with the people or *da'wah* target⁶². It also involves a collective style and method of thinking that is seen from the level of economy, social status, and the language medium used. The wisdom of the *da'wah* workers to coordinate the same reference framework with the people is in line with the *da'wah* method called *mukhātab al-Nās 'alā qadr 'uqūlīhim*, or "Talk to people according to their level of thinking"⁶³. If a *da'wah* workers communicates with the people without taking into consideration their level of thinking through the same reference framework and a suitable communication medium, there will be disruptions in the process of communication. This is in line with the statement of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud (*Radi Allah 'anhu*) as narrated by 'Ubaidullah bin 'Abullah bin 'Utbah that says (meaning) "You will never narrate a *Hadith* to the people that beyond their grasp, except that will be a source of *fitnah* (confusion) for some them"⁶⁴".

5. Conclusion

Da'wah needs certain skills and approaches that can influence *mad'ū* (those of called). Communications skills considered as an important *da'wah* approaches which should be possessed and implemented by Muslim preachers. Therefore, in elucidating the messages of Islam, *da'wah* workers must communicate with the people using various media and strategies. This requires them to master an effective communication skills so the message of Islam can be propagated clearly and effectively. The failure to apply effective communication skills will cause the Islamic message about cannot be transferred well to the intended audience. A meaningful interaction between the *da'wah* workers and the people can take place through a process of communicating even though it might happen in an informal and casual situation. By combining the *da'wah* principles with the communication elements, a meaningful interaction between the two parties (preachers and people or societies) can be fully realized. This is partly, due to the communication skills are the basic requirement for the attainment of other skills. Communication skills are part of the nature of any person who does not want to live in isolated.

This study found that there are three major elements in *da'wah* skills need to be implemented in the field by *da'wah* workers namely: i) The ability to communicate ideas calmly, effectively and with great

confidence, in form of verbal or written ii) The ability to practice active listening and to give response wisely iii) The ability to present the message clearly and confidently by considering listeners' level of understanding.

It is therefore can be summed up that the aspect of communication can be enhanced through specific trainings in ensuring the communication process takes place in an organized manner and it is hoped that positive effects can be achieved. Thus, *da'wah* workers must equip themselves with the effective communication skills in order to achieve their *da'wah* objectives to bring people to surrender to Allah Almighty.

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