

## CHOOSING THE BEST NEWSPAPER BASED ON ISLAMIC LEADERS' OPINION FOCUSING ON THEIR CHARACTERISTIC

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### **Abstract:**

The aim of the study is to describe types of newspaper characteristics that sought among Islamic religious leader in Medan city, Indonesia. This study uses qualitative methods. Newspapers characteristics are being looked for by Islamic religious leaders includes several aspects, including the profile of information seekers through newspapers, names and number of newspapers are being looked for, reasons for choosing newspapers, how to find (get) newspapers, the length of time used to search for information through newspapers, frequency of searching information through newspapers, when searching for information through newspapers, forms of information are being looked for, view on Islamic newspapers, and views on the reactions or responses of Muslims regarding Islamic newspapers. The result shows the way Islamic religious leaders do to obtain newspapers is to subscribe and buy. The time they use to read newspapers tends to be early in the morning, but there are also those that are late in the afternoon and at leisure time. The length of time they use to read newspapers is around half to one hour. Activities to access or read newspapers are carried out regularly every day. The information sought is about social, economic, political, cultural and religious. The form of information sought includes news, articles / opinions, and so on.

**Keywords:** newspaper; characteristics; Islamic Religious Leader; Medan; Indonesia

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Information seeking through newspapers is carried out by Muslims, especially among Muslim religious leaders in Medan city. The existence of Islamic religious leaders is so important. Islamic religious leaders are one of the main groups in the community. Islamic religious leaders have a very decisive function and role. Islamic religious leaders are people who are considered to master the knowledge of religion and apply their knowledge in the lives of people. The religious experience convinced the community. Islamic religious leaders are people who occupy a strategic and respectable position. They are considered to know many things, not only about Islam but also about various other problems faced by society in their lives and lives, such as economic, political, security, education and so on. Islamic religious leaders are used as role models and places to ask. According to Anwar Masy'ari, religious leaders also have the ability to provide guidance, direction and satisfactory information. There are four main characteristics of the Islamic religious leaders that he put forward, namely holy self and like to succumb, willing to sacrifice, connect relationships, and have tolerance and a broad view. Thus, Muslim religious leaders are required to have broad and capable insights and knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Islamic religious leaders really need information in carrying out their roles and responsibilities in carrying out activities in the community.

Medan City is the largest city on the Sumatra Island. The number of Muslims in Medan city reached 1. 402. 176 people (61.07% of 2.028,300 people). This data shows that Muslims are dominant Medan city. The society is plural in terms of religion, ethnicity, and culture. On the

one hand, sustainability is one of the assets that are owned and positive, but can also be positive. When it is not supported by one of the leaders including Islam in Medan city to manage it well. Bad cases that have occurred in Tolikara Papua and Aceh Singkil should not be repeated in Medan city. Regions that need a pluralistic society, harmony, mutual respect and support are very important to be established and built for peace and mutual peace. Therefore, Islamic religious leaders must deepen their religious knowledge and also provide various other knowledge that can be obtained through various means, obtained by accessing mass media including newspapers.

So far there has not been a clear discovery of search and use information through newspapers in meeting the information needs of Islamic religious leaders in Medan city. Whether the factors that become drivers are a problematic situation or anomalous state of knowledge or other factors. Because of that, it is very important to found related behavior. This study departs from the assumption that Muslim religious leaders in Medan city in their daily lives search and use information through newspapers in fulfilling their needs for information. They carried out these actions related to their existence as individuals and also their position as Muslim religious leaders. As individuals and moreover Islamic religious leaders are required to increase knowledge, broaden their horizons, and have sufficient and adequate information, not only concerning religion, but also various other aspects that develop in the community. Moreover, life in Medan city is so dynamic, its society is plural (plural) in various matters, especially culture and religion. This condition is of course also a particular challenge among Islamic religious leaders to be able to build and create a conducive climate, so as to create a life of people who are full of tolerance, mutual respect and mutual respect.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Communication and Information**

In Indonesia language (etymology), the word or term komunikasi is a translation of English that is communication, and the word comes from Latin, namely communicates which means sharing or belonging together. Still related to this also mentioned that the term communication comes from Latin, namely communication which comes from the word communis means the same, in the meaning of the same word meaning, which is the same meaning about something. In terms of terminology, many of the definitions put forward by experts are in accordance with their point of view or review. According to Onong, communication is the process of delivering statements by someone to others. Teddy Mulyana said that communication is a process to share meaning through verbal and nonverbal behavior. Anwar Arifin defines communication as messages and actions of humans in a social context with all aspects. Thus, communication covers all types of messages and is carried out by humans without recognizing differences in religion, race, ethnicity and nation. Meanwhile, according to Sasa Djuarsa Sendjaja, communication is a process of forming, delivering, receiving and processing messages that occur in a person and / or between two or more people with a specific purpose. Joseph A. DeVito suggests communication refers to actions, by one or more people, who send and receive messages that are distorted by noise (noise), occur in a certain context, have a certain influence,

and there is an opportunity to make feedback. Arni Muhammad in his Communication Organization said that communication is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between the sender and the recipient of the message to change behavior. Meanwhile, according to Stephen W. Littlejohn quoted by Sasa Djuarsa said as follows: "Communication as a Social Science. Communication involves understanding how people behave in creating, exchanging, and interpreting messages. The free translation is as one of the social sciences, it deals with understanding how people behave in creating, exchanging and interpreting messages."

In an effort to understand the term information, some experts formulate an understanding of information in a variety of contexts. Among them Fisher (1986) which classifies various views on the concept of information into three variations. First, the use of the term information to show facts or data that can be obtained during the action of communication takes place. When we talk to our interlocutors, while reading newspapers, magazines, books, leaflets, banners, billboards, or when we listen to the radio or watch television, that's when some of our data and facts are absorbed and stored in our memories. Collecting data and facts such as journalists do in gathering information and explanations from news sources, or a detective who collects evidence about crime, are other examples of information seeking. In this first view, information is conceptualized as a physical quantity that can be moved from one point to another, from one medium to another, from one person to another.

## **2.2 Religious Leaders**

A religious leader is someone who is recognized by the people or the community as a formal religious leader. This recognition arises because of various factors, such as intelligence or knowledge, position, descent, and so forth. In the Islamic religious community, a person can be regarded as a Islam religious leader if he masters the knowledge of religion and applies his knowledge in the life of society, as well as convincing religious experience for the community. A religious leader besides having to have religious knowledge he must also be a role model for the people in his environment, especially in matters of worship and ritual, and be able to overcome any religious problems that are posed to him.

This statement is in line with what Wajihuddin Al-antaqi said that a religious leader is one who is at the forefront. They are able to move the people. Some of the characteristics that must be possessed include: (1) Educator (2) Standard of living does not exceed the limit (3) Taqwa, worship and morality are examples (4) Commitment to the people and not divide (5) Attitudes and actions are in harmony with speaking (6) Prioritizing what happens to followers and (7) Being aware of the tricks and practices of treason or destruction of the people. According to Anwar Masy'ari, a religious leader must also be able to provide guidance, direction and satisfactory information. There are four main characteristics of the religious leaders put forward by Anwar, which are sacred and like to give in, be willing to sacrifice, connect relationships with fellow human beings, and have tolerance and a broad outlook.

Religious leaders are also informal leaders in their communities, and generally they are not appointed by the government, but are appointed by the will and agreement of the local community. Therefore, in the mechanism of social-religious relations, religious leaders occupy

a position as leaders in their communities, especially in social-religious matters and also sometimes in matters of local customs.

### **2.3 Mass Media-Newspaper**

The terms "mass media" and "mass communication" are short for "media of mass communication". Both terms are actually used for the same purpose. Many understandings of mass communication provided by experts, including Jalaluddin Rachmat summarizes some definitions of mass communication as a type of communication aimed at a number of dispersed, heterogeneous and anonymous audiences through print or electronic media so that the same message can be received simultaneously and moment. "Can" words in this definition emphasize the notion that the actual number of recipients of mass communication at a given moment is not essential.

In discussing the definition of communication, there are many different types and points of emphasis raised. But, from many understandings there are common threads or similarities to each other's definition. Basically, mass communication is communication through mass media.<sup>1</sup> Mass media that are meant like a product of modern technology such as newspapers, radio, television and film. This needs to be emphasized, because there are also media that are often referred to as mass media even though they are not mass media but traditional media, such as angklung, gamelan, ludruk, ketoprak, puppets, and others. According to Mc Quail, mass media is an industry that changes and develops, it able to create jobs, goods and services. Mass media often acts as a vehicle for cultural development and becomes a dominant source for the community to obtain images of social reality. This shows that mass media has the ability to attract the attention of audiences simultaneously.

As a mass communication channel, mass media has certain functions such as providing information to the public, helping audiences to arrange agendas, persuading the public, entertaining and connecting one community er with other community. This indicates that there is a significant influence from mass media in forming a society that receives media exposure. The influence can form opinions, add knowledge to changes in attitudes and behavior of the community. Human life cannot be separated from mass media. Starting from wake up until sleep time, you cannot escape from exposure or expose yourself to the mass media. It can be seen from the interest of individuals or the community in accessing various information through mass media. Along with the developments that occur and the progress achieved in the field of communication and information technology is so rapid.

### **III. RESEARCH METHOD**

In the context of this study qualitative method was used by emphasizing interpretive and naturalistic analysis of a phenomenon under study. The justification of research with a qualitative approach was based on social processes, meaning making, and understanding.

This study was intended to understand the behavior of a person, in this case the Muslim religious leaders. According to Louis, to understand a person's behavior a qualitative study

design was needed. This study could understand problematic situations and their understanding in depth. This could be done because qualitative studies prioritize processes rather than results, more contextual than specific variables, and more inventive than confirmation. Social phenomena related to this would be analyzed in natural settings, then interpreted based on the meaning given by the informant. Qualitative studies were more suitable to use when dealing with the reality of a field that was of many meanings and complex. The researcher wanted to describe the behavior of Islamic religious leaders in searching and using information through newspapers. Therefore, a study of a phenomenon needs to be done by analyzing the context surrounding it. This was suitable for a qualitative approach. This method was believed to be appropriate because the aim was to find search behaviour and use of research subject information.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

Newspapers characteristics are being looked for by Islamic religious leaders in this study means the characteristics of the newspaper that are sought. This includes several aspects, including the profile of information seekers through newspapers, names and number of newspapers are being looked for, reasons for choosing newspapers, how to find (get) newspapers, the length of time used to search for information through newspapers, frequency of searching information through newspapers, when searching for information through newspapers, forms of information are being looked for, view on Islamic newspapers, and views on the reactions or responses of Muslims regarding Islamic newspapers.

The results of the study on the above had been mentioned in the research findings. Starting from Prof. Dr. H. Lahmuddin Lubis, M.Ed, who stated that Harian Waspada was the sought newspaper. How to get a subscription newspaper. The time that was used to access information through newspapers is in the morning. The frequency of finding information through regular newspapers every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was around half to one hour. The types of information sought are social, political, cultural and religious. Form of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others. The Islamic newspaper Harian Waspada. It was recommended that State Islamic University of North Sumatra developed a comprehensive Islamic media.

The response of Muslims if there is an Islamic newspaper is not easy, but if they want to fight together, they certainly can. H. Asmuni, M.Ag recommended the requested newspapers namely Harian Waspada and Harian Kompas. The reason for choosing both because it was more complete. How to receive newspapers with results. The time used to access information through morning and evening newspapers. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was routine every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was about half an hour. The type of information sought were social, political, cultural or religious. News, articles, opinions, and other news. There is no Islamic newspaper, but the Islamic is one, namely Harian Waspada that publishes on Friday. Suggestions related to Islamic media were that the newspaper did not need to use Islamic labels, the important thing is the content used Islamic values. H. Maratua Simanjuntak quoted the newspaper sought as Harian Waspada.

How to receive newspapers from results. The time used to access information through the morning newspaper. Frequency of searching for information through newspapers every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was about half an hour. The type of information sought were social, political, cultural or religious. Form of information sought were news, articles / opinions, and other. There is Islamic newspapers namely Harian Waspada which are published locally in Medan and Republika which are published nationally in Jakarta.

H. Syafaruddin, M.Pd said that the newspapers sought were Harian Waspada, Harian Analisa, dan Harian Republika. Harian Waspada was chosen because it was local or regional. Harian Analisa because it was emotionally close to the journalists. While Harian Republika because it had a national reputation and information about Islam was quite dense. The way to get a newspaper is to buy or subscribe. The time used to access information through was in the morning. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was about half an hour. The types of information sought were social, political, cultural and religious. Form of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others. The view of the Islamic newspaper nationally was the Harian Republika because it contained a lot about Islamic values. Whereas locally there was no. Therefore, Islamic newspapers that are of a local nature need to be remade or added. Support from Islamic institutions, especially the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) is very necessary.

Dr. H. Ahmad Zuhri Lc, MA said that the newspapers sought were Harian Waspada, Harian Analisa, Harian Tribun, and Harian Bola. While the way to obtain the newspaper was by buying. The time used to access information through newspapers in the morning and leisure time. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was about half an hour. The types of information sought were social, political, cultural and religious. The form of information sought were news, articles / opinions, and others. An Islamic newspaper is called Harian Waspada. Whereas newspaper of Islami does not yet exist. If you want it to be made, it is important that the substance, not the casing.

Dr. H. Muhammad Sofyan, Lc, MA stated that the newspapers sought were Harian Waspada, Harian Tribun dan Harian Mimbar Umum. The three daily newspapers were more neutral. While the way to get a newspaper was by buying them. The time used to access information through the morning newspaper. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was about half an hour. The types of information sought are social, political, cultural and religious. Form of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others. Islamic print media have not been able to compete with liberal newspapers such as Tribun newspaper. If there is an Islamic newspaper, the response of Muslims will be positive. They will buy and do charity.

Dr. H. Arifinsyah, M.Ag stated that the newspapers sought were Harian Waspada, Harian Analisa, and Harian Sinar Indonesia Baru (Sib). The reason was that the information and news varies and develops. Then, the events and information there were representations of religion. While the way to get a newspaper was by buying them. The time used to access information

through newspapers was in the morning. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was routine every day. The time spent searching for information through a newspaper was around one hour. The types of information sought are social, political, cultural and religious. Forms of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others. The Islamic newspaper reports already exist, but It had not been maximized and was not professional enough. If there is, the appearance of Islamic newspaper must be interesting. News must be actual and reliable. Bring to reveal the truth. During this time the existence of Islamic print media was less attractive.

Dr. H. Azhar Sitompul, MA stated that the newspaper sought was Harian Waspada. Because the news or information could be trusted. How to get an alert newspaper, by buying. The time used to access information through the morning newspaper. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was about half an hour. The types of information sought were social, political, cultural and religious. The form of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others. The news of Islam was very lacking. Therefore, it was necessary to hold the Islamic newspaper. Muslims will respond positively if there is an Islamic newspaper.

Dr. H. Zainal Arifin, MA stated that the newspaper sought was Harian Waspada newspaper. How to get a newspaper that was in the office. The time used to access information through newspapers was in free time. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was every day. The time spent searching for information through newspapers was about half an hour. The types of information sought were social, political, cultural and religious. Form of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others.

Dr. H. Ardiansyah, M.Ag stated that the newspapers sought were Harian Waspada, Harian Analisa and Harian Republika. How to get a newspaper that was buying or subscribing to them. The time used to access information through newspaper was in the morning. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was every day. The time spent searching for information through a newspaper was around one hour. The types of information sought were social, political, cultural and religious. Forms of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others. Letter of Islamic newspaper wa very good and needed to educate and develop children's morals. H. Fahrurrozy Pulungan, SE stated that the newspapers sought were Harian Waspada, Harian Kompas, and Harian Pos Metro. Because Harian Waspada newspaper was more preached about Islam. Harian Kompas as a comparison of national news and community. Harian Pos Metro to find out events and incidents of crime. The way to get a newspaper buy buying them. Time used to access information through newspapers in the morning and evening. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was routine every day. The length of time used to find information through a newspaper was about one hour. The types of information sought were social, political, cultural and religious aspects. Forms of information sought were news, articles / opinions, and others. In North Sumatra there was no Islamic newspaper. If there is an Islamic newspaper, then first, its vision must show that it is an Islamic newspaper. Secondly, the form of news presentation is more on Islamic news. The name of the

newspaper does not have to be Islamic, but rather national. The response of Muslims is believed will be good.

Drs. H. Ulumuddin Siradj stated that the newspapers sought were Harian Waspada, Harian Analisa and Harian Tribun. The reason for the three is because the news is written actual and weighted. How to get a newspaper that is buying. The time used to access information through the morning newspaper. The frequency of finding information through newspapers was every day. The time spent searching for information through the newspaper was about half an hour. The types of information sought were social, political, cultural and religious. Forms of information sought news, articles / opinions, and others. Letter news of Islam / Islam was a good idea. Letter news of Islam must provide information about the circumstances and existence of the Muslims. Muslims strongly hope for the presence of the Islamic / Islamic newspaper.

Based on the description above related to the newspaper characteristics sought among Islamic religious leaders is seen that they generally access or read the Harian Waspada newspaper. The reason was because of its reliable information, the news were actual and weighty, more complete, has a reputation, the information varies, neutral, local and regional, there was a representation of religion, and more about Islam, especially on Fridays. In addition to accessing the Harian Waspada newspaper, Islamic leaders also access other newspapers for various reasons. Among them are Harian Analisa because the news published was actual and weighty and emotionally there was closeness with the journalists. Harian Republika because information about Islam was solid and had a national reputation. Harian Kompas because the information was more complete and could be used as a comparison to national and regional news. Harian Tribun because it was neutral, actual and weighty information. Harian Sinar Indonesia Baru (Sib) because there was religious representation in its information. Harian Bola because it could entertain sports enthusiasts. Harian Pos Metro because of knowing events and criminal acts that occurred.

Thus, based on the explanation as stated above, it could be seen that Islamic religious leaders access or read more than one newspaper. The average is 2-3 newspapers a day. Thus, the results of studies that are often heard reveal that foreign people such as Japan, Singapore, and Malaysia one person accesses or reads 2-3 or more newspapers, while an Indonesian one newspaper is accessed or read by around 40 people does not apply in the context of research this. In other words, that among Islamic religious leaders, it did not happen because they also read on average 2-3 newspapers. This means that there are exceptions for Islamic religious leaders as the results of this study. This situation which is a fact is certainly a good thing. Because there are still groups or communities of people who are literate about information through the media, especially newspapers. That's because their background is strategic. In terms of education, they are made up of groups of educated people, even with doctorates with professors. In terms of professions, they are lecturers, religious teachers, and various other additional tasks, including being a Muslim (Islamic) leader. Thus, it is very important and a necessity for them to continue increasing knowledge, broaden their horizons, and follow the latest developments that occur through various sources, including through printed mass media newspapers.

The way in which Islamic religious leaders do to obtain newspapers is to subscribe and buy. The time they use to read newspapers tends to be early in the morning, but there are also those that are late in the afternoon and at leisure time. The length of time they use to read newspapers is around half to one hour. Activities to access or read newspapers are carried out regularly every day. The information sought is about social, economic, political, cultural and religious. The form of information sought includes news, articles / opinions, and so on.

## V. CONCLUSION

Regarding the newspaper characteristics which sought among Islamic religious leaders generally access or read the *Harian Waspada* newspaper. The reason for this is because it can be trusted, actual and weighty, neutral, local and regional, much to say about Islam, and so on. In addition to the *Harian Waspada* newspaper, Islamic religious leaders also access other newspapers for their own reasons. Among them are *Harian Analisa* due to actual and weighted news, *Harian Republika* because the information about solid Islam and has a national reputation, *Harian Kompas* because the information is more complete and can be used as a comparison of national and regional news, *Harian Tribun* because it is neutral, its information actual and weighty. *Harian Sinar Indonesia Baru (Sib)* because there is religious representation, *Harian Bola* because it can entertain, and *Harian Pos Metro* because it can find out events and criminal acts that occur. Based on the opinion as stated above, it can be seen that among Islamic religious leaders access or read more than one newspaper. The average is 2-3 newspapers a day.

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