

Impression Management of Islamic Preachers in Indonesia

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Keywords

preaching,
impression
management,
congregation,
preacher

Abstract

When delivering a presentation, a person will manage the impression that others have of him. In Indonesia, Islamic preachers also tend to their beliefs. Some preachers are well-liked by the congregation because of their ability to manage their image, whereas others are disliked or despised. Syafwan Diran is one notable Preacher in Padang, and his sermons are well-received by his congregation; thus, he is frequently invited to preach at events. This research explores the impression management performed by Syafwan Diran. It is qualitative research, with data gathered through observation and in-depth interviews with the informants. The results showed that Syafwan Diran managed his impression by presenting techniques created harmoniously when appearing in front of his congregation. He also has a reasonable manner and a commitment to preaching. Therefore, his preaching is well received and eagerly anticipated by his community.

Kata kunci

dakwah, impression
management,
jamaah, ustadz

Abstrak

Seseorang dalam melakukan presentasi ia akan mengelola kesan yang tumbuh pada orang lain terhadapnya. Para ustadz atau da'i dalam berdakwah di Indonesia juga melakukan pengelolaan kesan. Faktanya para ustadz dalam berdakwah disenangi karena kemampuannya mengelola kesan terhadap jamaahnya, di samping ada yang kurang disenangi bahkan dibenci jamaahnya. Ustadz Syafwan Diran merupakan salah seorang ustadz terkenal di Kota Padang, dakwahnya disenangi dan diminati jamaahnya, sehingga banyak permintaan berdakwah kepadanya dalam berbagai even. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali pengelolaan kesan yang dilakukan Ustadz Syafwan Diran dalam berdakwah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data observasi dan interview mendalam dengan Ustadz Syafwan Diran dan jamaahnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan, selama berdakwah ustadz melakukan pengelolaan kesan, yaitu menyajikan teknik atau metode yang diciptakan secara apik dan serasi saat tampil di hadapan jamaahnya. Ia berpenampilan dan berperilaku yang terkesan baik bagi jamaahnya, serta memiliki komitmen khusus dalam berdakwah, sehingga dakwahnya diminati dan dinantikan oleh jamaahnya.

Introduction

During interaction and communication, a person will perform an impression management strategy regarding other people's perceptions of him. Impression

management is a subset of the Dramaturgy theory of (Goffman, 1959), which assumes the world as a stage. The people on stage try to present themselves following the desired impression on the audience (Mulyana, 2010). Goffman's theory was inspired by Kenneth Burke's ideas, who emphasized that social behavior should be understood through social action. This social action is best analyzed through the lens of the 'drama' perspective, in which actors act out their roles in satisfying the audience (Mulyana, 2010). As a variant of symbolic interactionism, the dramaturgical approach frequently employs the concept of social roles in analyzing social interaction in the realm of theatre, namely socially formulated expectations played by characters in certain situations to project a particular image to the audience (Mulyana, 2010). Goffman further explains that influencing others is a show or performance (Mulyana, 2010). Some versions may elicit a specific response, while others are not. Impression management can be planned and created using verbal and nonverbal symbols and appearance-supporting settings.

Preaching (or *da'wah*) is an activity that encourages people to put Islamic teachings into practice. According to Munir & Ilaihi (2006), preaching can be carried out in various ways or methods to achieve a blessed life from Allah SWT. Ma'arif (2010) says that *da'i* or preachers spread religious messages and encouraged people to follow Islam's teachings. Meanwhile, Ilaihi (2010) defines *da'i* as people who preach orally, in writing, or by deed. Hasyimi, as cited in Aziz (2019), asserts that preachers are advisors, leaders, and givers of reminders and advice. Da'wah communicators or Islamic preachers must be able to explore the communicant's feelings and logic to easily package his messages so that they have strong calling power and leave a deep impression on one's soul (Sparta, 2003). The actual task of the Preacher or *da'i* is to persuade others or congregations to embrace Islam fully. Aristotle revealed: Persuasion is achieved because of the speaker's characteristics. When he speaks, we trust what he conveys (J. Rakhmat, 2011).

Many researchers have discussed the topic of impression management from various perspectives, including the control of the impression of a preacher in preaching activities. Farhan (2014) investigated the preaching of Habib Hadi bin Muhammad al Habsyi in Probolinggo. The findings revealed that Habib Hadi bin Muhammad al Habsyi communicated his dramaturgy through verbal and nonverbal messages. Verbal messages were displayed through good words (*qoulun ma'rufun*) and the correct form of words (*qoulon sadidun*), a gentle approach, and straight speech. Habib Hadi bin Muhammad al Habsyi also used non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and touch. Muhyiddin (2013) investigated the rhetorical style of the Friday sermon. The findings revealed that using a specific language style when preaching is necessary because language is an effective communication tool. Sulaeman & Sulastrri (2018), in their research on the dramaturgy of the Preacher, argued that the Preacher plays a role on the front stage. A preacher is a dramaturg on the main stage. Chandra (2019) researched the

moral message in the Adhan Magrib show on RCTI. Saputra (2022) investigated the preaching marketing strategy through the use of da'wah terraces; the findings show that this strategy can touch young people across identities, be enjoyable for young people, and provide various forms of preaching activities. Preaching can also be done through drama, depending on the audience's willingness to adopt it following Islamic values. For example, Korean dramas can inspire young Muslim audiences in Pekanbaru to work hard and never give up (Rosidi, Imron & Masduki, Masduki, Triantono, DA, 2019).

Yanuar, Anisah, Sartika, & Rahman (2021) conducted another study on the impression management of female smokers in Banda Aceh. Women who smoke manage their image in the family and society by pretending to be non-smokers. Rinawati (2006) explored the dramaturgy of polygamy and found that the husband, as an actor managed the impression when he was in the front or backstage. He tried to improve his image by showing loyalty to his first wife. Impression management also occurs when people use social media, such as posting selfies on Facebook. According to Mala (2017), her research informants actively managed the impression of selfie photos on Facebook because they believed they were actors and Facebook was their stage. They must edit their photos to impress their fans. Pattipeilohy & Revolve, LM (2015) investigated Self-Image and Artist Popularity. The findings revealed that the better someone's impression management, the more likely he was to make a good impression. Artists prepared for performances by dressing up, controlling their emotions, practicing, and discussing with their team to make a good impression. On the other hand, Arindita, Nasucha, Arifah, & Lubna (2021) also revealed the practice of impression management in online communities. The online community made management impressions on the front stage using YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Meanwhile, backstage, they interacted with stakeholders, specifically mothers, who were thought to be the most active.

In the field of leadership, Rafdi & Harijati (2021) found that dramaturgy had a more significant influence on performance than leadership, though the effect was not significant. Based on these findings, it was interesting to note that dramaturgy helped improve work situations and employee performance. It corresponds to Rodiah (2007), who showed that her research respondent, Midwife Delima, managed her impressions by managing interpersonal and intrapersonal communication, both verbally and nonverbally. She used her mother tongue during interaction, greeted her patients, and used motivation in her verbal communication. Meanwhile, nonverbal communication was accomplished through body touch, competence, and efficient use of time. A. S. Ibrahim & Wahyuni (2013) discussed the construction of self in gendered language expression. The findings revealed the use of gender self-identity language among the participants created through social distance, physical stigma, self-concept, and statements of a group membership.

Syafwan Diran is a well-known preacher in Padang. He finished his undergraduate studies at the Da'wah Faculty of IAIN Imam Bonjol Padang in 1999. He

has been preaching for 31 years and has a reasonably busy preaching schedule. His lectures drew the attention of people from a variety of social backgrounds. It can take a long wait to invite him to preach because his schedule for the next two years is already fully booked.

This research contributes to the development of preaching communication, particularly conventional preacher communication, and it is expected to be considered for the field of preaching in general. To date, the discourse of preaching contact is always interesting to discuss. Notably, discussing conventional preacher communication is still an option for the congregation during the development of media technology so that traditional preaching also runs smoothly.

Method

This is qualitative research. According to Mulyana (2010), qualitative research is conducted in a descriptive manner or through unstructured or in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, case studies, and critical history, and emphasizes interpretation. As cited in Moleong (2002), Taylor opines that qualitative research is a method that generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Qualitative research seeks information and attempts to interpret the reality of social phenomena to reveal their meaning (Bungin, 2013). As a result, this research aims to provide a clearer picture of the impression management employed by Syafwan Diran. The findings are expected to describe the phenomenon objectively without intending to give an assessment or intervention to the subject. The data for this research were gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The informants of this research were Syafwan Diran and his recitation congregation, who were selected using the snowball sampling technique by first identifying the key informants in the regular recitation congregation and then following the key informants' instructions. If the data were deemed complete, the researchers stopped data collection. Collecting the data was destroyed when the data were considered complete. The researchers also observed while directly following the respondent preaching activities, then attended to the techniques he used to make an impression on his congregation. After that, the collected data were analyzed using an interactive model by Miles & Huberman (1992), which includes data reduction, data display, data analysis, and conclusion drawing and verification).

Results and Discussion

Goffman, as cited in Mulyana (2010), says the act of communicating to influence other people is referred to as a "performance." Some of the performances may be designed to elicit specific responses. Impression management refers to a person's efforts in communication to form an impression in the minds of others. Impression management can be adapted to the situation, planned, and created spontaneously using

verbal and nonverbal symbols and settings to support the appearance. Mulyana (2010) says that the role is intended to be a socially defined expectation that an individual plays in a situation to project a specific image to the audience. The Preacher, as an actor, portrays the best version of himself in front of his congregation through various techniques or methods so that his audience accepts him because of his excellent impression. Impression management can be done in multiple ways or processes, either planned or unplanned when someone is presenting in front of others. Syafwan Diran uses techniques or methods that are neatly and harmoniously created when appearing in front of his congregation. The research findings are presented below:

Ability to Select Materials based on Congregational Conditions

Preaching material encompasses all aspects of life, covering worldly and hereafter matters as described in the Qur'an and Hadith. According to Sayyid Qutub, as cited in Ilaihi (2010), Islam is *aqidah*, *shari'a*, and *nizham*. Munir & Ilaihi (2006) argue that preaching content is Islam itself. The preaching material delivered by Syafwan Diran covers these three aspects, but it needs to be patterned based on these rigid groupings. In his preaching, he frequently discusses moral issues, wisdom, *ibrah* or parables, glory for those who do good, worship, friendship, and the realization that life is limited to death. The presentation of his preaching materials is applicative and contextual, and it is done well and harmoniously. These materials are presented in the form of parables and stories. For him, effective preaching can address various people's problems and challenges. It is because whenever he is invited to preach, he asks the organizer about the topic, the congregation's background, and the issues they encounter.

One of the congregation's favorites of Syafwan Diran's preaching is the presentation of his preaching, which is directly on the subject. He also provides an example of a common problem or event in the community. Sometimes he appears to ask a question his congregation (SW, 2021). In addition, he also frequently discusses grassroots topics, which occasionally emerge from his dialogue with the community and is presented in the congregation's language. There are even worshippers who comment: "There is no need for complicated language [in preaching]; what is important to us is that we understand [the material]. The language [he used] is easy to understand, and the description is comprehensible" (WP, 2021).

In his preaching, Syafwan Diran usually initiates a dialogue session with his congregation. He invites his community to ask questions or share an issue that needs to be discussed. Typically, he responds to questions from the audience immediately based on the evidence, and examples and parables accompany the answers. This was evident when he responded to a question from a congregation member who was having issues with neighbors. He expressed it with legends in a story:

"There was a woman who thought her life was better than other neighbors. She was arrogant and not afraid to insult others. Once, the woman got sick and had to be rushed to the hospital, and no one was at her home. Finally, she knocked

on a neighbor's door and asked for assistance. Luckily, the neighbor's husband was at home and drove this woman to the hospital. This woman frequently gossiped about her neighbors and even made fun of their lives when she was healthy. Fortunately, her neighbor was not vengeful”.

This story contains many valuable lessons. Through stories and anecdotes, he conveys religious messages. The example he provides in his preaching reflects his understanding of the problems faced by his congregation. As a result, he does not hesitate to delve deeper into the story to impress his community. Furthermore, he appears interested in learning about the issues that bother his congregation and need to be addressed during this dialogue session.

Capability to Select and Deliver Preaching Materials

Syafwan Diran is also skilled at presenting his preaching with unique competencies. This level of expertise is inherent in him when it comes to conveying religious messages to his congregation. One of these competencies is methodological competence, which is related to identifying preaching problems, identifying the object of preaching, and developing and implementing appropriate strategies (Salmadani, 2014). Syafwan Diran is a preacher with methodological competence. He developed various techniques and efforts to present his preaching. The following are research findings concerning his methodological competence:

First, the ability to preach in the congregation's language. Impression management can be accomplished through both verbal and nonverbal communication. As quoted by Mulyana (2010), Goffman asserts that impression management can be planned and created instantly using verbal and nonverbal symbols. For example, verbal messages are performed through language familiar to the congregation's ears. Using standard language during communication will make the other person understand the news more quickly and easily.

Syafwan Diran always preaches in the language familiar to his congregation. He uses simple language in preaching. At the beginning of his preaching, he will greet his community. This greeting intends to motivate his audience and condition them to face him to listen to the preaching. Then, he will direct the congregation to sit in the front, so the communities are not scattered.

Furthermore, Ustadz Syafwan Diran's preaching language is simple. "... We immediately grasp what the preacher said. There is no need to discuss high-level issues; what is important is that we understand the messages of the preaching."(WP, 2021). Moreover, Syafwan Diran also presents his preaching with examples or parables that are easy to understand. It also reinforces his preaching material. These examples are drawn from actual events in the surrounding environment.

“We adore him... His preaching is focused on the subject at hand, and there is no need for lengthy lectures” (SW, 2021).

The language is simple and familiar to the ear, and thus makes his preaching presentation easy to accept and understand. The language packaging includes the most recent examples from around the congregation and contains nonverbal language. Aziz emphasizes that a preacher must be able to adapt their language to the audience (Aziz, 2019). This finding corresponds to the research finding by Rodiah (2007), which investigated Midwife Delima in the city of Bandung. The results revealed that Midwife Delima managed impressions through communication management, specifically through interpersonal and intrapersonal communication, both verbal and nonverbal language.

Syafwan Diran expects his congregation to pay attention to the religious messages he preaches (NS, 2021). He stated that preaching wastes time if people do not pay attention. As a result, a more serious effort is required to reach the congregation's hearts for them to be touched, listen and accept the messages conveyed.

It is critical in preaching to capture the hearts of the congregation or the general public. Natsir (2006) defines *mawaddah fil qurba* as an effort to build a bridge of hearts for the congregation to accept the preaching message. The ability to use the correct language is one element that makes up *mawaddah fil qurba*. It cannot be achieved solely through knowledge or argument; preaching requires a touch of heart-preaching from the heart so that both the preacher and the audience feel care for each other. Mulyana (2002) emphasizes the importance of content and relationship in communication. Syafwan Diran presents his potential in his preaching because he wants his preaching to be accepted and practiced by his audience. As a result, in his preaching, he thinks about delivering the subject and making his audience interested in preaching activities.

Second, the ability to identify the congregation. As cited in Mulyana (2010), Cooley compares this to "the looking-glass self." He mentions that how an individual establishes a role in interacting with the congregation is determined by his beliefs. Using this perspective, the preacher presents himself following the congregation's expectations of him. Furthermore, Bormann & Nancy C. Bormann (1986) explain that a preacher must be able to analyze both the audience to whom he will speak and the situation that surrounds him to know why and in what context the action is taken. Before preaching, Syafwan Diran analyzes and recognizes his congregation to meet their expectations.

In his preaching, Syafwan Diran encounters a variety of congregational groups. There are groups of children and adolescents, adults, and the elderly. The material variants and distractions presented in his preaching demonstrated his ability to deal with his congregation. He also applies different strategies when preaching in front of children and youth; preaching to this group is presented through humorous stories and prizes to participants who correctly answer his questions. Tips are usually given in IDR 5,000–

IDR 10,000 denominations for two to three sessions. The purpose of awarding this prize is to ensure that the congregation of these students listens to his preaching.

"It is a little difficult to deal with if the congregation is made up of children or students. So you will need tricks or strategies to deal with them" (NS, 2021).

When dealing with Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah (MDA) students, he employs other methods: involving and conditioning school teachers to monitor their students during lectures. Teachers are positioned behind the students' seats. This method is also regarded as effective in creating a calm and conducive environment for preaching. The ability to recognize the types of congregations and the ability to present messages based on the congregation's character makes Syafwan Diran a preacher who can control the condition of the community.

"He has many ways of dealing with children. As a result, the children can be calm while listening to his lectures. For this reason, he is frequently asked to preach at the school's commemoration of major Islamic holidays" (DM, 2021).

Storytelling is very appealing to children. As a result, storytelling is one of the preaching presentation techniques the Preacher uses when dealing with children or school students. The technique of presenting messages through stories is familiar in preaching activities. However, when Syafwan Diran tells the story, the children eagerly listen. He will hum parts of the story to get the children's attention. For example, the delivery of the prophet Muhammad SAW's birthday story will be interspersed with *Salawat*. "This idea immediately arises in my mind. Perhaps it is because I am used to dealing with children" (NS, 2020).

A different situation will arise when he interacts with other groups, such as the recitation group, in which he will present his preaching messages through *ibrah* or stories. His lecture usually includes exciting stories about domestic life, funny stories, and occasionally satire about domestic life. For example, he conveys the story of a harmonious family, a selfish husband, and the story of people who do not get along with their neighbors.

On the other hand, this research also found that Syafwan Diran's colleagues frequently adopted his preaching techniques, and some even directly asked about the method he practiced. "Sometimes my colleagues asked me for tips on how to deal with young people so that they are not making noise during the preaching because it confuses them" (NS, 2021). Some of his colleagues even deliberately followed him in preaching to learn more about his preaching strategy or technique. In an interview, he once said that he was happy when he could share his experience with others. "If it is good, just try it," he said to the researchers.

"I purposefully followed him in his preaching because I wanted to learn what methods he used so that many congregations were satisfied with him" (NM, 2021).

Syafwan Diran's effort to identify his congregation is consistent with the belief of Bormann & Nancy C. Bormann (1986) that a speaker should focus on the audience

and analyze their situation. Regarding preaching activities, the preaching activities carried out should receive a positive response from the congregation. The reference following the hadith of the prophet Muhammad in upholding preaching: "*Speak to humans according to the level of their respective intelligence*" (HR. Muslim) as quoted by Hs & Fachruddin (1978). So, before preaching, he analyzes to fully understand the audience and make it easier to choose and present his preaching.

Third, interspersing preaching with humor or jokes. Humor serves many purposes. Herbert V. Prochnow, as quoted by Aziz, claims that humor is the best way to attract, retain, and strengthen the audience's attention (Aziz, 2019). Humor can be helpful for various reasons, including providing a pleasant distraction, keeping audiences from becoming bored, keeping thoughts from wandering all over the place, and making the public's state of mind responsive. Humor allows us to adapt and overcome fear, enabling us to control our challenges (Mulyana, 2008). Syafwan Diran's preaching presentation is also spiced up with humor or jokes. His sense of humor can help him deliver his message in a way that his congregation will accept and like.

Syafwan Diran's preaching sessions are almost always peppered with jokes. The jokes appear in the form funny stories, and he occasionally displays funny behavior or marks, causing the community to laugh and smile.

Syafwan Diran is well-known for his jokes, which he uses to convey religious messages, "This is his unique characteristic; even as he stood up, he made us laugh, and just looking at him will make us smile." He is famous for his jokes, so he is invited to preach everywhere because many people enjoy his preaching" (KJ., 2020). One of the jokes discovered by the researchers during their research is as follows:

"This is a story about a family where all members are deaf. The child was shepherding goats in the forest when someone passed by, reprimanding him, "There are many goats. Who owns this?" The child ran home on the spur of the moment, where he discovered his mother sewing. Then he told her that someone was going to buy their goat. His mother was furious, accusing her son of abusing her stitches, which she thought were excellent, and was about to inform her husband of this. When her husband arrived, he immediately responded that someone else released the water from his rice field, causing his rice field to dry out."

He then reviewed the story, emphasizing the moral messages. He said that when we disagree with other people, we can easily convey misleading information, causing fights and hatred in the neighborhood (NS, 2021). Syafwan Diran is also observed to be amusing and comedic while delivering religious messages. For example, when he explains the incorrect technique of wearing a skullcap that prevents the forehead from touching the place of prostration, he demonstrates it in action with a humorous expression, and his cap is worn left and right, which covers half of his face.

Humor or joke can lift one's mood and alleviate boredom. It can also help to break the ice, warm the atmosphere, and make the conversation less monotonous (I. S. Ibrahim, 2007). Humor or jokes in Syafwan Diran's preaching aim to balance profound messages and attract attention so that the congregation readily accepts the message. Furthermore, jokes are a distraction, so the preaching becomes more varied. As he said in an interview:

"It will not be appealing to them if we only convey Islamic messages. Jokes can be useful in preaching at times. This is my strategy. This occasionally catches their attention"(NS, 2020).

Humor has become part of Syafwan Diran's preaching, but it does not contradict the preaching principles. The mood presented is appropriate for the messages conveyed and does not violate moral ethics, which could jeopardize the Preacher's dignity. As pinpointed by Mutia (2022), the content of Islamic preaching usually includes an entertaining element of humor. This is supported by Wandu (2020) that humor in preaching can be used as long as it does not violate the rules of the Qur'an or Hadith.

As a result, Syafwan Diran's ability to explore preaching methods is influenced by his ability to combine local and global trends. The findings of this research are similar to the results of the study by Masduki, Muzakki, Rosidi, & Hartono (2022), which found that the struggle of Salafi preaching at Hang Radio in Batam was more flexible because transnational and local elements influenced it, besides, Syafwan Diran also commits to preaching. Ustaz Syafwan Diran is constantly striving to improve his methodological competency in preaching autodidactically so that his preaching is readily accepted and practiced by his congregation. The Dumai Mubaligh Association enhances self-development through religious meetings and strengthens knowledge and skills through training and formal education (Hartono, Masduki, Rosidi, & Romadi, 2020).

Appearance in Preaching

Syafwan Diran's impression management is also related to his appearance when preaching. According to Goffman, the stage comprises the personal front and the setting, which includes performing equipment. The private act involves verbal and nonverbal communication shown by the actor, such as the way of dressing, speaking style, intonation, facial expressions, and so on. Mulyana (2010) stated that impression management could be planned and emerge spontaneously.

First, maintaining a neat and harmonious appearance. According to Goffman in Mulyana (2010), we try to control our appearance and habits' influence on others so that people see us the way we want to be seen. Dressing neatly and harmoniously is part of this effort. Rakhmat proposes the term appearance, which refers to preaching that must be considered to create the desired impression (Jalaluddin Rakhmat, 2011).

Ustadz Syafwan Diran always looks neat. He always wears matching costumes and is visually appealing. He wears *koko* and *batik*, complemented by a cap that matches his clothes. He said: "neat and tidy performance is an important point for me" (NS, 2021). He also shared that he always asks his family members about his clothing style whenever he preaches. A member of the recitation group once said in our interview, "He always maintains his appearance by keeping it neat and tidy, as well as stylish. As you can see, it fits him, and it creates good vibes" (SW, 2021). He once stated, "Preacher should watch their appearance because they will be role models for others, including how they dress "(NS, 2021).

Preachers typically have a clean and neat appearance and dress in *koko* or *batik* that matches their pants. The Preacher's compatibility and neatness in dressing are also an attraction and an example for others. The colors and patterns of his clothes are also tailored to the nature of the event in which he is participating. In addition to the previously mentioned elements, the congregation's enjoyment of the Preacher's manner of dress is an element of its attraction. Furthermore, it is discovered in this research that the wife plays an essential role in supporting his appearance while preaching.

Shafwan Diran argues a neat and harmonious appearance is one of the essential dimensions that pique the congregation's interest in his preaching. It is consistent with W. & Maulida (2020), which state that clothing style is significant for the perception of others because it can make a person appear attractive. Pattipeilohy (2016) proclaims that impression management can be accomplished by maintaining appearance, controlling emotions, practicing and discussing to make a positive impression, and making the most preparation before performing so that the more excellent the opportunity to make a good impression. Similarly, Arindita et al. (2021) reveal that the online community performs impression management on the front stage through YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp to obtain a positive impression.

Second, maintaining a friendly and gentle attitude. Behaving well is included in the competence of the preacher, as explained in Q.S. 3:159, "*It is out of Allah's mercy that you 'O Prophet' have been lenient with them. Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have certainly abandoned you*". Salmadanis (2014) argues that the preacher's competence includes being friendly and polite.

Regarding this friendly attitude, Syafwan Diran usually meets the organizer who invited him when he arrived at the venue. He raises his hand for a handshake and sometimes hugs to show closeness. Similarly, he also greets his congregation with a greeting that is familiar to his congregation's ears. Beginning with a greeting, if the congregation's response is less enthusiastic, he will repeat the greeting with a typical joke.

One aspect of Syafwan Diran's friendliness is his ability to get along with his audience. It is found in the interview with his congregation.

"We have become a family. We invite him to celebration events, whether as a family or as our teacher" (WR, 2021).

"We always try to respect and appreciate one another. We feel close to him. When we meet, we shake hands and hug each other" (SF, 2021).

When Syafwan Diran was about to leave the venue, the congregation accompanied him outside the room while begging him to come to the future event. This shows that he is loved and respected by his audience.

This is in line with research findings by Sulaeman & Sulastrri (2018) that preachers in Ambon City perform dramaturgy on the front stage by familiarizing themselves with their congregations. It also corresponds with Rodiah (2007), who reveals that the Midwife Delima manages her impressions by controlling her verbal and nonverbal communication strategy. Thus, Syafwan Diran has an excellent ability to present his preaching because he possesses some methodological skills. As Mulkan (1996) mentioned, the preaching movement necessitates substantive and methodological competence, which cannot be separated from substantive competence.

Commitment in Preaching

Syafwan Diran is dedicated to preaching. As a result, he is popular among his congregation. This commitment is outlined in the following section:

First, he is unconcerned about the amount of money he receives. Preaching is an obligation for all Muslims, as stated in Q.S. 3: 104 *"Let there be a group among you who call 'others' to goodness, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil—it is they who will be successful"*. This verse implies that Muslims are responsible for preaching based on their abilities. There are various points of view on the responsibility of preaching. Some argue that it is the duty of those who can carry out responsibilities to preach. In contrast, others opine that preaching is the responsibility of every Muslim adjusted to his capabilities. For example, those unable to carry out preacher duties can do it by helping implement preaching.

One of Syafwan Diran's commitments in is that he does not look at the amount of money he receives. To him, every Muslim must preach to the best of his ability. Preaching is part of his job. As a result, he does not charge a fee for his preaching. This is consistent with the perception of one of his congregation members, who stated, "He never inquired about the amount of payment he would receive. The first thing he inquired about was the time, the location of the event, the congregation, and the topic to be discussed" (RA, 2021). Others also mentioned, "He would grant it if someone asked him to be a preacher in an event. He also made no distinctions between religious and ideological groups. He believes that if society needs religious knowledge, he has no reason to reject it" (RD, 2020).

Syafwan Diran is a well-known preacher in Padang, but this does not limit him to preaching only to upper-class groups, and he does not discriminate between

worshippers. He lectures from small recitation groups like family recitations to large-scale recitations. He was even asked to appear on programs on local and national television stations such as TVRI of West Sumatra and TV One. He is also frequently invited for a *Tabligh Akbar* outside of West Sumatra. He said "If I can, I will make no excuses to refuse. Even if there is no committee to organize transportation for preaching outside of the city, I will manage it myself. It is not uncommon for me to drive myself to a preaching location" (NS, 2021).

Preaching encompasses all aspects of human life to follow Allah SWT's instructions. "*Invite them to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner*" (QS. 16:125). Syafwan Diran is committed to preaching. He will grant preaching requests as long as it does not conflict with the previously established schedule. He is frequently asked for *Tabligh Akbar*. The following is the congregation's responses to the ease with which this preacher can be contacted: "He makes us proud of him because he is open to being invited anywhere. He has no say over where he preaches. Meanwhile, some preachers refuse to be invited to small villages and remote areas" (SF, 2021).

Mulyana & Solatun (2007) explain that mass media can multiply influence. Including increasing the number of requests for preaching to the preacher if he has become successful in the media, such as by appearing on national TV. This popularity does not affect Syafwan Diran. He adheres to the principle that he will never decline an invitation to preach due to financial constraints. The Preacher's role is to provide community guidance and services. This is consistent with Hasymi in Aziz (2019) that preachers serve as advisors, leaders, and reminders. Natsir also mentions that a preacher warns or calls people to follow the path of goodness (Natsir, 2006).

Second, he arrives at the preaching location on time. One of his commitments is that he gets used to being on time to attend an event every time he preaches. His congregation refers to him as a punctual preacher. He said in an interview, "This has become my commitment. If the event begins at 07.30 a.m., I will arrive at the venue before that time. To set a good example for others, we must first set a good example for ourselves" (NS, 2021). One of his commitments is to be punctual. He has always been on time for a scheduled events. He will notify the invitee to satisfy the congregation if he is late due to unforeseen circumstances. When questioned about the reason, he stated as follows:

"It is difficult to gain public trust. When we break our commitments, society's respect for us dwindles. Second, if the event does not start on time, it may interfere with subsequent activities. For example, we have another agenda; if the first event is postponed, it will impact the next event, either for my agenda or other congregations. Third, I should wait rather than be waited on" (NS, 2020).

The Preacher should be a role model for the congregation in all aspects, including discipline. If this discipline issue can be applied to preaching, it will benefit

other people's lives, and vice versa. For example, delaying an event will affect the event's completion time. This has an impact on subsequent event, which will also be disrupted. Islamic teachings instruct their servants to keep the time. As mentioned in QS.103: 1-3, "*By the time, indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience*". He continued, "If we can be disciplined and punctual in other matters, we can certainly do it in preaching. We are the ones who plan and implement it, so we must be committed to ensuring that the event runs as planned" (NS, 2021). His determination to discipline is an example and a valuable lesson for the community. This includes preserving the dignity and self-esteem of the preachers.

Furthermore, this is an example of the congregation consistently enforcing time discipline. One of the goals of preaching discipline is to increase the congregation's trust in the preacher. Rakhmat (2011) emphasizes that one component of the Preacher's credibility is the element of trust, precisely the impression of communication-related to character, such as honesty, sincerity, politeness, punctuality, and so on.

Third, he can play the role of muezzin and imam. When it is time for prayer where he preaches, Syafwan Diran does not hesitate to call for prayer and leads the prayer. "As muezzin and imam, he has a beautiful voice and recitations that calm the heart," one of the worshipers said. When the researchers confirmed, Syafwan Diran told, "This is what the congregation misses about me, not just my preaching." The congregation is delighted to hear his adhan and to have him lead the prayer. When we listen to his voice and recitation, it brings us comfort. "His adhan is very moving, as is how he leads the prayer" (SF, 2021).

Those in the congregation who heard the melodious adhan were astounded. This prompted the women from a woman's organization who was holding a meeting near the prayer room to turn to the source of the voice "Who is making the call to prayer? His adhan is breathtaking. Let us postpone our meeting and pray instead". Another respondent said: "His voice is excellent, whether he is proclaiming the adhan or becoming an imam. His voice soothes our hearts. It is another positive side of him"(RS, 2021), (AD, 2021).

Preaching activities in Padang frequently coincide with fard prayer times. As a result, the congregation will request Syafwan Diran to make adhan. This is also one of the attractions for his audience. The call to prayer sounds melodious, and he can bring some rhythms to it that his congregation enjoys, such as the rhythm of the Nabawi Mosque's call to prayer (adhan Medina). His skills are an integral part that contributes to the impression created, and it also demonstrates that he is a person who makes a positive impression on his congregation.

"At the time, I tried to imitate the Adhan Medina and practiced it in a well-known mosque in Padang. The congregation who heard my adhan came to the mosque, curious about who had made the call to prayer. Because many

congregations in the mosque neighborhood have already finished the pilgrimage, they are well acquainted with the rhythm of the adhan" (NS, 2021). It is supported by the statement of the congregation "There are many people who are already on the pilgrimage in our residential complex, so when we hear adhan Medina, it feels like we are in the City of the prophet as well" (SF, 2021).

So, the congregation's impression of Syafwan Diran is formed not only by his ability to present himself while preaching but also by other potentials that he exhibits, which has very positive implications for his preaching. His commitment to upholding the message of preaching is apparent, particularly in the light of the Preacher's character and personality. It is in line with Natsir (2006) that the public's assessment of the Preacher is influential and can even be decisive for the congregation's acceptance of the content delivered. Salmadanis (2014) emphasizes that the Preacher must always have and maintain good morals. Their personality will always be emulated by others and serve as role models. As a result, the success of preaching is also heavily influenced by the Preacher's personality, which should be friendly, polite, and committed to upholding preaching activities. This is consistent with (Pratiwi, Siska & Masduki, 2021), who states that Islamic leadership is the solution to the Banda Aceh leadership crisis because Islamic leadership is focused on improving worldly life and achieving the afterlife. This means that the Preacher's behavior must adhere to Islamic guidelines.

Thus, Syafwan Diran's impression management is apparent when he presents himself in preaching. His impression management is a symbiotic relationship between the preaching and the self-impression he makes during, before, and after preaching. This impression stems from his ability to provide harmonious preaching, which appeals to the congregation, and his friendly attitude and behavior. This impression management is also evident when he calls for prayer and serves as the imam after completing his preaching.

Conclusion

Impression management is an aspect of preaching that the *da'i* or Preacher must demonstrate to make the activity appealing. Impression management is a skill that every Preacher must have; in fact, it is a critical factor in his success when interacting with his congregation. Impression management can include techniques chosen by the Preacher based on the characteristics of the community and their ability to innovate their preaching methods. Furthermore, it is linked to self-appearance and personality. Syafwan Diran's preaching techniques have become part of him. Some ways are planned ahead of time and presented unexpectedly, such as when dealing with an unexpected audience. Impression management aims to make preaching activity appealing to the congregation so that it does not become boring, as well as to create a relaxed impression to attract audiences of all ages.

This research contributes to the development of science, particularly in the result of Islamic preaching, specifically in building the credibility of the *da'i* or Preacher so that his preaching is more credible and in demand by the public. This research is expected to contribute to preachers' knowledge base by allowing them to learn lessons they can apply in the future.

The findings of this research still have gaps that further investigation, such as research into the digitalization of Islamic preaching, can fill. Future researchers can assess the credibility of preachers and the validity of sermons delivered through social media. Given the nature of preaching on social media, which can be done by the account owner as long as he is connected to an internet network, it is difficult for the audience to know the Preacher's personality. The Preacher's personality is part of the Islamic preaching itself.

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