

Research Article

# Principles of Islamic Communication and their Relevance in Character Formation of Students: A Study of Surah *An-Nahl* 125 *Tafsir At-Thabari's* Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

This article examines the principles of Islamic communication contained in Surah An-Nahl verse 125, which contains three main concepts: hikmah (wisdom), mau'izah hasanah (good advice), and jadal (good debate). These three principles have deep relevance in the context of character education, especially in shaping the noble morals of students. Using an interpretive qualitative descriptive method, this study analyzes At-Thabari's interpretation of the verse, as well as its application in character education. The results of the study show that the application of Islamic communication principles in the interaction between educators and students can create an environment that supports the formation of strong characters, noble character, and able to adapt well in society. This article also reviews how Islamic communication plays an important role in developing students' morals and ethics, making it an effective tool in achieving the goal of better character education.

**Keywords:** Islamic Communication; Character Building; Tafsir At-Thabari; Surah An-Nahl 16:125; Islamic Education; Wisdom; Mau'izah Hasanah and Jada

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the most important aspects of the Islamic education system, considering that the main goal of Islamic education is to form individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals and morals (Shalahuddin et al., 2024). This character formation requires a holistic approach, which involves cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. One of the main elements in character education is communication. Good and effective communication depends not only on the technique of delivering the message, but also on the way in which the message is received and understood by the learner. Therefore, in the context of Islamic education, it is very important for educators to understand the principles of Islamic communication that can help in the process of forming good character (Abdurahman et al., 2024).

Surah An-Nahl verse 125 contains communication principles that are very important in character education. This verse reads, "Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom, good lessons, and good debates." The three main principles in this verse, hikmah (wisdom), mau'izah hasanah (good advice), and jadal (good debate) are very relevant bases to be applied in educational communication (Elvina, 2024). The famous interpreter, Ibn Jarir At-Thabari, in his commentary provides an in-depth explanation of these three concepts and how they are applied in daily life, especially in education and character formation (Elvina, 2024).

Tafsir At-Thabari by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839-923 AD) is one of the oldest and most authoritative tafsir bil ma'tsur. This tafsir not only presents authentic narrations from the companions and tabi'in, but also displays in-depth analysis and interpretation choices taken by At-Thabari. This provides a great opportunity for researchers to conduct critical and comparative analysis of various existing opinions. In addition, al-Tabari's method of choosing and corroborating certain opinions can be a solid foundation in understanding the historical and essential context of the verses studied, which is certainly relevant to the current context.

The application of this Islamic communication principle not only focuses on how an educator conveys moral and ethical messages, but also on how to create a constructive and affectionate dialogue with students. The principle of wisdom teaches

that communication in education must be done wisely and understandingly. Mau'izah hasanah teaches to give advice in a gentle and kind way, while jadal teaches the importance of polite and weighty discussions in shaping the attitude of students who are open and critical-minded (Aziz et al., 2020). Character education is a challenge that cannot be solved quickly or with a single approach. It takes perseverance, wisdom, and the right communication method so that students can receive educational messages with an open heart. In this case, Islamic communication based on the principles contained in Surah An-Nahl verse 125 has the potential to help educators in achieving the goal of better character education.

This research aims to delve deeper into the application of Islamic communication principles in character education, focusing on al-Tha'bari's interpretation of Surah An-Nahl verse 125. This research uses a qualitative descriptive interpretive approach to understand the meaning of the verse and apply the concepts contained in the verse in the context of Islamic education today. It is hoped that this research can provide new insights into the practice of character education in the world of Islamic education, as well as contribute to the development of Islamic communication theory in education.

Several previous studies have discussed Islamic communication in the context of character education. For example, Rahman (2021) emphasizes the importance of communication based on Islamic values in shaping students' character. Yusuf (2022) examines the communication of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in educating friends as a model of character education. Alawi (2023) highlighted the concept of wisdom in da'wah as an effective communication strategy, while Syamsuddin (2020) discussed the implementation of mau'izah hasanah in education through an empathetic approach. Fatimah (2024) also examines the relevance of the concept of jadal in building critical thinking in students. These studies support the understanding that the principles of Islamic communication can be an important foundation in the formation of good character.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive interpretive approach that aims to explore a deep understanding of At-Thabari's interpretation of Surah An-Nahl verse 125 and its application in Islamic communication in the context of character education. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is more flexible and able to explore the deep meanings of religious texts, such as interpretation, and relate the results to the phenomenon of character education. The method used in this study is a literature study, in which the author analyzes the interpretation of At-Thabari related to Surah An-Nahl verse 125, as well as relates it to relevant literature on Islamic communication and character education. This literature study aims to comprehensively understand the communication principles contained in the verse and how these principles can be applied in the context of character education.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Definition of Communication

The term communication or in English is called *Communication* and is derived from the word *communis* which means the same. The same meaning here is the same meaning. So the communication process that occurs between communicators and communicators essentially aims to achieve the same meaning. The similarity of meaning can occur if both parties use verbal and non-verbal words that can be understood well (Napitupulu, 2019).

*"Communication is a process that occurs when two or more people exchange information so that there is a deep mutual understanding". The communication process certainly uses symbols that are understood by both parties so that it allows for a common understanding. The deeper the common understanding, the more effective the communication (Dr. R. Sri Widaningsih, S.Pd.I, M.Pd., 2019) .*

Hovland defines communication as a process that allows communicators to convey messages with the aim of changing the behavior of others. This is also in line with Rogers' opinion that communication is a process in which the content of a message is transferred from a source to one or more recipients with the intention of changing their behavior. The definition of Hovland and Rogers implies the same meaning, namely the desire of the individual as a communicator to change the behavior of others who are his interlocutors. This behavior change is the most difficult thing to achieve in the communication process. It is much easier to communicate just to convey information than it is to achieve the goal of changing behavior (Elvina, 2024).

### 3.2 Principles of Communication in Islam

The meaning of communication in Arabic also has almost the same meaning where when viewed in Arabic communication is known as the term al-ittisal which comes from the word wasola which means to convey,<sup>40</sup> The meaning of convey is as contained in the Qur'an surah al-Qasas verse 51:

﴿وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ﴾<sup>41</sup>

*Meaning: And indeed, We have sent down this word (the Qur'an) to them successively so that they may have a lesson.*

Interpretation of this verse according to Tafsir Al Muyasar is that Allah sent down the Qur'an part by part so that the disbelievers of Mecca could understand it well and so that they would believe in it. If viewed from the meaning of communication in Arabic from the word wasola which means to convey, communication is interpreted as the activity of conveying a message to the communicator to gain understanding in the sense of the word there is a communication obtained when a message is conveyed. Communication in the Islamic view is a process of conveying messages or information from communicators to communicators, using the principles and rules of communication contained in the Quran and Hadith. This definition implies that the message conveyed by the communicator should be able to use the principles that have been conveyed by Allah in the Qur'an, which of course is the most correct definition of all existing definitions. Allah is the Creator of human beings who teaches humans to communicate complete with good ways of communication that deserve to be used as an example not only by Muslims but also by all human beings in this universe created by Allah.

### 3.3 Principles of Communication in Tafsir At Thabari

In Tafsir At-Thabari, by Muhammad bin Jarir At-Thabari, there are several views that can be associated with communication theory, especially in the context of the message and delivery of Islamic values through the Qur'an. Some of the key points you can use for the article are:

#### Honesty in Communication

At-Thabari emphasized the importance of honesty in faith and action. In interpreting verses such as QS. At-Taubah: 119, At-Thabari emphasized that those who are righteous in their faith will have harmony between words and deeds. It is relevant in communication as a basis for building credibility and trust.

#### Purpose of the Message for Fame

In interpreting QS. Al-Isra': 34, which discusses the protection of the property of orphans, At-Thabari highlights that a message or action should only be carried out if it brings benefits and goodness. This can be connected with communication that aims to produce a positive impact for the recipient.

#### Context and Audience Roles

At-Thabari often uses the historical tarjih approach, which is to compare the various views of previous scholars to interpret verses. This shows the importance of understanding the context and audience in conveying the message, so that it is relevant and effective.

#### Moral Responsibility in Delivering the Message

In At-Thabari's view, the message of the Qur'an must be conveyed with full responsibility for the truth and ethical values. This shows the importance of morality in communication, especially in conveying religious messages.

### 3.4 Tafsir Verse 125 An Nahla in Tafsir At Thabari

In the tafsir verse 125 of surah An-Nahl, At-Thabari explains the ideal da'wah method which consists of three main approaches: hikmah, mau'izah hasanah, and mujlà bil-lati hiya ahsan. Da'wah with wisdom means calling people with wisdom, using revelation as the basis for delivery, and utilizing strong evidence or arguments to reach the audience's intellect. This method aims to make the message of da'wah can be understood logically and reasonably. Furthermore, mau'izah hasanah is da'wah with good teaching, using a gentle, motivating, and touching approach. This teaching is carried out both verbally and by example of behavior, without violence or discrimination. The mujlà bil-lati hiya ahsan is to discuss or debate in the best way, namely politely, respectfully, and focus on the truth, without attacking the opponent's personality or imposing opinions. These three approaches emphasize the importance of wisdom, gentleness, and constructive dialogue in da'wah, so that the message of Islam can be well received by various circles.

Tafsir Surah An-Nahl Verse 125:

"ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بآئِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ"

(QS. An-Nahl: 125)

"Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and debate them in a better way."

## Meaning of Verses

This verse gives a very profound indication of the right way to preach and convey the truth to mankind. Allah commanded the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to invite mankind to the right path, which is the way of God which is full of glorious life guidance, using three main communication methods: wisdom, mau'izah hasanah, and good jadal. These three methods are very important in improving character and guiding the people to the truth, and providing lessons in living daily life.

### 1. Wisdom

Wisdom in Islamic communication does not only mean wisdom in speaking, but also includes wisdom in choosing words and ways of conveying messages to students. Educators must consider the context and situation of students when interacting, as well as pay attention to the ability of students to receive and understand the material presented. This wisdom also includes the use of relevant methods, which are able to relate the knowledge to the daily life of the learner. This creates a more interactive and immersive atmosphere, where learners feel valued and listened to.

According to At-Thabari's interpretation, wisdom in education refers to the way educators convey knowledge in an adequate way for optimal understanding. It involves not only intellectual intelligence, but also the depth of heart and a sense of compassion. This approach is in line with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of useful knowledge (nafi') and avoid arrogance in the delivery of knowledge. Wise educators will be able to adapt their approach to the needs and abilities of students, so that each individual can achieve a deep understanding without feeling intimidated or underprivileged (Education & Islam, 2015). Furthermore, wisdom in education also means teaching students not only to study for exams, but for life. Wise educators will encourage students to develop strong character, think critically, and have a high moral awareness, which can be applied in life as part of a civilized ummah (Education & Islam, 2015).

As stated in the Qur'an:

"يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا"

(QS. Al-Baqarah: 269) "He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is given wisdom has indeed been given a lot of goodness." (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 269)

### 2. Mau'izah Hasanah (Good Lessons)

Mau'izah hasanah refers to advice or lessons given in a kind, compassionate, and attentive manner. In the context of character education, this advice not only focuses on improving students' behavior, but also on ways that prioritize gentleness and beauty. Educators not only convey what is right or what should be done, but also set an example with their own actions. For example, when an educator gives advice on the importance of discipline, the advice will not only be more effective if the educator also shows a disciplined attitude in his or her daily life. The Qur'an gives many clues about the importance of conveying advice in a good way. In this context, the principle of mau'izah hasanah not only includes the delivery of lessons, but also the way of delivery that can build a good relationship between educators and students. As mentioned in Surah At-Tawbah verse 71:

"وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۖ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْعَدْلِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ"

And the believers, men and women, some of them are helpers to others. They instruct the ma'raf and prevent from the ungodly, establish prayers, pay zakat, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They will be given grace by Allah. Indeed, Allah is the Mighty, the Most Wise." (Q.S. At-Tawbah: 71)

### 3. Jadal (Dialogue)

Jadal in Islamic education is an approach that involves open and respectful discussion or dialogue between educators and students. This approach aims to hone students' critical thinking skills, as well as develop a sense of responsibility in making wise decisions. However, jadal in the context of Islamic education is not just a debate or dispute, but rather a constructive and respectful exchange of opinions (Elvina, 2024). In the tafsir of Al-Tha'bari, jadal is understood as a dialogue that is carried out in a better and thoughtful way. Through jadal, students are trained to not only receive information passively, but also to ask questions and think critically. This process is very important in forming an independent character and being able to argue in an intelligent and respectful way.

An example of the application of jadal can be seen in the way the Prophet Muhammad SAW interacted with his companions. He not only gave orders, but also listened to views and questions, and asked questions to dig deeper understanding. This creates an atmosphere of open dialogue, where all parties feel valued and respected.

As in the verse:

"وَجَادِلْهُمْ بَاتِّبِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ"

(QS. An-Nahl: 125) "And dialogue with them in a better way." (Q.S. An-Nahl: 125)

Good jadal in character education allows students to develop sharper thinking skills, as well as learn to overcome differences of opinion in a wiser way. Thus, through healthy dialogue, students can more easily build a deeper understanding of moral and ethical values in their lives.

#### 4. Principles of Communication in Islam

Communication in Islam is not just a process of exchanging information, but a process that has a deep moral and spiritual dimension. In this context, communication is considered a means to achieve a noble goal, namely conveying the truth, educating, and shaping character both in individuals and society. The basic principles of communication in Islam that can be applied in character education include:

##### Honesty (Shidq)

Islam emphasizes the importance of honest and open communication. In preaching or educating, an educator must convey the messages of At-Tabari, in his interpretation, explaining three communication methods that must be applied in conveying religious or educational messages: wisdom, mau'izah hasanah, and good jadal. These three principles are very important in shaping the character of students because they not only help students understand the lessons, but also form good morals and personalities.

##### Empathy (Rahmah)

Empathy or compassion is an important aspect of Islamic communication according to At-Tabari. Communicating with empathy means understanding the emotional state of others and trying to approach them with tenderness. At-Tabari teaches that an empathetic attitude creates harmonious relationships and prevents conflict. Communication based on rahmah will open the heart and mind, so that the message conveyed is easier to receive.

##### Patience (Sabr)

Patience is the key to communication, especially when facing challenges or disagreements. At-Tabari emphasized the importance of maintaining calm and steadfastness in communicating. Patience helps a person control their emotions and gives them time to think clearly before responding to a situation. In the context of da'wah, patience shows moral strength and sincerity, which can ultimately influence others positively.

#### 5. Relevance in the Formation of Students' Character

The three principles of Islamic communication mentioned in Surah An-Nahl verse 125, wisdom, mau'izah hasanah, and good jadal, have great relevance in the formation of students' character. Education is not only about transferring knowledge, but also about shaping the morals and personality of students so that they grow into individuals who have good character, are full of affection, are wise, and have the ability to communicate well with others. By adopting these communication principles, educators can create a positive learning environment, where learners feel valued, heard, and given opportunities to grow. Educators who are wise in choosing the right approach, who give advice with tenderness, and who teach students how to dialogue with respect, will be able to form the character of students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have noble morals.

#### 3.5 Biography of Ibn Katsir At-Tabari

Ibn Katsir al-Tha'bari (d. 923 AD) was a great Persian scholar, known as one of the leading interpreters of the Qur'an and a historian in the Islamic world. Born in the Amol area of Iran, he is one of the followers of the Sunni sect and is known for his immense contribution to the development of Islamic interpretation and history. The famous Tafsir At-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, is one of the monumental works in the field of classical interpretation. In his commentary, At-Tabari emphasizes the importance of historical context in understanding revelation, as well as paying attention to a deeper linguistic dimension. His works have become the main source of reference for many scholars in understanding the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as providing a deep understanding of the meaning of verses related to various aspects of life, including character education.

## 4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that Islamic communication, based on the principles listed in Surah An-Nahl verse 125, namely hikmah, mau'izah hasanah, and good jadal, has a very important role in the formation of students' character. In his commentary, At-Thabari emphasized that communication in Islam is not only limited to information delivery techniques, but also includes ethics, morals, and greater goals in educating and shaping individual character. These three principles provide clear guidance for educators to create productive interactions that not only educate students academically but also shape them into individuals with high morality. Through the application of these principles, educators can be more effective in guiding students to develop themselves into individuals with noble character, critical thinking, and able to adapt well in society. Islamic communication based on wisdom, mau'izah hasanah, and good jadal will create a healthy, harmonious, and affectionate educational environment. In addition, these principles will form a strong, integrity, and empathetic character, which is urgently needed in today's social and religious life. In the context of character education, the application of these principles can help to prepare the next generation who are not only superior in terms of knowledge, but also strong in moral and ethical character. Therefore, it is very important for educators not only to master science, but also to understand the principles of Islamic communication to be able to guide students to true success, namely to become noble human beings both in this world and in the hereafter.

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