

The Meaning of Muhammadiyah Organizational Communication Networks in the Film Buya Hamka Vol. 1: Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis of the Representation of Leadership and Da'wah Authority

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Abstract: The film Buya Hamka Vol. 1 (2023) is a cultural artifact that visually represents the dynamics of Islamic broadcasting and the manifestation of print communication technology in early 20th-century Indonesia. This study aims to examine the meaning of the Muhammadiyah organizational communication network, the representation of leadership, and the da'wah authority of Buya Hamka using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis approach. By dissecting the signification of denotation, connotation, and myth in key scenes and dialogues, this research reveals that the Muhammadiyah organizational communication network did not operate in a vacuum, but was closely intertwined with political communication strategies under the pressure of colonial regimes and the Japanese occupation. The analysis results show: (1) Denotatively and connotatively, Hamka's leadership is represented through the utilization of the Pedoman Masyarakat magazine as an instrument of "communication technology" and mass broadcasting to consolidate the organizational network across regions; (2) Hamka's da'wah authority is depicted as capable of mediating political tensions through elegant rhetoric and strategic lobbying; (3) The myth reproduced in this film asserts that the leadership of the ulama integrates media literacy proficiency with political communication flexibility. This article argues that Hamka's leadership model is an ideal prototype for Islamic organizational communication that is adaptive to media technology and the political constellations of its era.

Keyword: Organizational Communication Network, Roland Barthes Semiotics, Political Communication, Islamic Broadcasting, Buya Hamka Film.

Introduction

The progress of Islamic communication and broadcasting technologies develops through the active political changes and religious organizational shifts which operate throughout this field. In today's digital world, film serves as a strategic communication channel which creates entertainment while establishing visual power and presenting religious beliefs through its narrative content. Schmidt's research demonstrates how film and digital media establish Islamic authority boundaries while they create religious conversations that connect with political matters.¹ The modern Islamic organization Muhammadiyah uses different communication channels to expand its da'wah activities while maintaining its national and international social standing.²

Fajar Bustomi's film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* (2023) presents a cinematic representation that shows how the Muhammadiyah organization developed its communication network through leadership negotiations which occurred during the colonial and Japanese occupation periods.³ The study of organizational communication today studies communication networks as systems which operate between organizational leaders and their members through vertical channels. Organizations use their communication networks to construct their identity and legitimacy while establishing social power through different communication channels which they employ for their operations. The Muhammadiyah research demonstrates how communication technology functions as the fundamental element which organizations use to develop and share Progressive Islam principles through their unified communication infrastructure.⁴ From the perspective of digital public space, media functions as a discursive arena that enables the formation of collective identities, the exchange of ideas, and the contestation of religious authority.⁵ Therefore, *Pedoman Masyarakat* in the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* can be read not merely as ordinary print media, but as a strategic communication instrument that created an Islamic public space and strengthened Muhammadiyah's position in building the socio-political awareness of the community during the colonial period.⁶

¹ Leonie Schmidt, "Aesthetics of Authority: 'Islam Nusantara' and Islamic 'Radicalism' in Indonesian Film and Social Media," *Religion* 51, no. 2 (2021): 237–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2020.1868387>

² Viona Okta Savira, Nuraida, and Chairunnisah Putri Ayu Ningsih, "Analisis Komunikasi Organisasi pada Muhammadiyah dalam Film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* Karya Fajar Bustomi," *CONVERSE Journal Communication Science* 2, no. 3 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.47134/converse.v2i3.5200>

³ Schmidt, "Aesthetics of Authority."

⁴ Iman Sumarlan et al., "Integrating Technology in Organizational Communication to Advance Progressive Islamic Values: Insights from Muhammadiyah," *UNIMUS Web Conferences* 3 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.26714/uwc.v3.21-35.2025>

⁵ Mónica Andok, "Religious Filter Bubbles on Digital Public Sphere," *Religions* 14, no. 11 (2023): 1359, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14111359>

⁶ Tia Muthiah Umar et al., "National Fiqh Discourse in the Digital Public Sphere: A Case Study of TVMu's Dialektika Program," *Komunikator* 17, no. 2 (2025): 193–206

Hamka's profession as a cleric, journalist, and Muhammadiyah leader represents a leadership model that integrates religious authority with strategic communication skills through the media. Recent studies of organizational communication show that leadership in religious organizations is formed through a communication process that continuously builds the organization's identity, legitimacy, and institutional position in the public sphere.⁷ The first volume of *Buya Hamka* demonstrates through Hamka's portrayal that print media serves as a communication tool for organizations which helps them maintain their ideological beliefs and support their *da'wah* activities. The organization changes its communication approach from mass broadcasting to interpersonal communication and political lobbying when political power restricts access to public spaces. The political communication research about Muhammadiyah shows that organizations need to adapt their communication methods to control their public image during times of social and political change.⁸

However, film as a cultural product is never entirely free from ideological interests at work in its representational processes. Contemporary communication and media studies show that meaning in film is formed through a system of signs that actively constructs social reality, rather than merely objectively reflecting it.⁹ In Barthes' semiotic perspective, the representation of historical figures and events in films operates through a multi-layered process of signification that moves from denotative to connotative meaning until it produces myth as a form of naturalization of ideology in public consciousness.¹⁰ Therefore, the representation of Buya Hamka's communication network, leadership, and political authority in *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* can be understood as a discursive construction that reproduces a certain ideal image of Islamic leadership through the narrative and visual devices used by the film.¹¹

Barthes's semiotic analysis of media texts allows for the disclosure of how representations of leadership, authority, and communication strategies in films are constructed through a system of visual and narrative signs that operate at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth, so that complex political and *da'wah* practices can be

⁷ Iman Sumarlan and Ibrahim T. I. Ukka, "Public Relations to Foster Organization's Values and Identity: The Case of Muhammadiyah," *Komunikator* 16, no. 2 (2024): 172–84, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jkm.23747>

⁸ Sumarlan et al., "Integrating Technology in Organizational Communication"; Muhammad Nurul Yamin, "Between Norm and Practice: Dynamics of Muhammadiyah Political Communications," *Profetik: Jurnal Komunikasi* 17, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.14421/278v2y28>

⁹ Ella Afnira, "Mitos dalam Kampanye Politik: Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes pada Film *Our Brand Is Crisis*," *WEDANA* 9, no. 2 (2023): 291–301, <https://doi.org/10.25299/wedana.2023.12594>

¹⁰ Helga Pratama Sari, "Semiotika Roland Barthes pada Poster Film *Budi Pekerti* (2023)," *MIMESIS* 5, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.12928/mms.v5i2.9582>

¹¹ Sunaryanto, "Representasi Mitos dan Ideologi Perempuan dalam Film Televisi *Suara Hati Istri*," *Gandiwa Jurnal Komunikasi* 3, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.30998/g.v3i2.2622>

reproduced as forms of wisdom, legitimacy, and collective identity that are naturally accepted by the audience.¹²

Contemporary communication studies show that religious organizations not only function as social institutions that manage the internal relations of their members, but also play a role as political actors and producers of public discourse through the use of communication media, so that organizational networks, political communication, and religious broadcasting form an interconnected communication ecosystem in building influence, legitimacy, and social mobilization.¹³

To dissect the complexity of the representation of Muhammadiyah's communication network in the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1*, the research uses Roland Barthes's semiotic framework which views signs as both meaning creation tools and ideological transmission mechanisms. The Muhammadiyah logo and the organization's meeting room and the printing press and Hamka's clothing items serve as objective elements which establish organizational identity and leadership legitimacy and public da'wah authority.¹⁴ The analysis does not stop at the denotative level that explains what appears on the screen, but rather moves towards connotation and myth to reveal how the film builds the image of Muhammadiyah as an organization that has a strong, adaptive, and influential communication network in facing socio-political changes.¹⁵

The representation of Hamka in the film not only depicts the figure of a cleric, but also a political communication actor who manages power relations through persuasive and symbolic communication strategies. Various scenes showing Hamka's interactions with colonial authorities and the Japanese government can be read as a form of negotiation of meaning constructed through cinematic devices to highlight political wisdom and the ability to maintain the organization's sustainability. Within this framework, print media such as *Pedoman Masyarakat* is represented as a strategic communication instrument that not only disseminates Islamic ideas but also builds social awareness and strengthens Muhammadiyah's position in the public sphere. Therefore, this study seeks to uncover how the film reproduces the meaning of Islamic leadership, organizational identity, and political communication strategies through a system of signs that operate at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth.¹⁶

¹² Afnira, "Mitos dalam Kampanye Politik"; Sari, "Semiotika Roland Barthes pada Poster Film Budi Pekerti (2023)."

¹³ Muhammad Nurul. "Between Norm and Practice: Dynamics of Muhammadiyah Political Communications." *Profetik: Jurnal Komunikasi* 17, no. 1 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.14421/278v2y28>

¹⁴ Iman Sumarlan and Ibrahim T. I. Ukka, "Public Relations to Foster Organization's Values and Identity: The Case of Muhammadiyah."

¹⁵ Iman Sumarlan et al., "Integrating Technology in Organizational Communication to Advance Progressive Islamic Values: Insights from Muhammadiyah"; Helga Pratama Sari, "Semiotika Roland Barthes pada Poster Film Budi Pekerti (2023)."

¹⁶ Sari, "Semiotika Roland Barthes pada Poster Film Budi Pekerti (2023)"; Sumarlan et al., "Integrating Technology in Organizational Communication to Advance Progressive Islamic Values: Insights

The current media landscape has changed how Islamic outreach (da'wah) activities operate through direct human contact into modern practices which use different forms of information technology for outreach purposes. The new method of distributing religious messages has changed both the power structures of authority and the way people share information and the methods Islamic knowledge is created in the community. Research conducted recently demonstrates that Muhammadiyah as a contemporary Islamic organization uses modern media technologies to change its outreach strategies which enables them to connect with more people while their religious messages stay relevant to ongoing social transformations.¹⁷ The film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* depicts printing press operations and publishing activities which function as a communication technology that enabled Islamic preaching to reach wider audiences while establishing a communication network for Muhammadiyah during the colonial period.

The development of communication technology demonstrates that media functions as more than a message delivery system because it serves as a space where people build public perceptions of religious authority and establish their credibility. Indonesian digital preaching research shows that media functions as a crucial element which determines Islamic storytelling while the industry encounters problems with its control systems and power dynamics and information falsification issues.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah's use of digital media demonstrates how communication technology is used to build moral authority, spread Islamic values, and maintain the organization's influence in an increasingly connected society.¹⁹ Therefore, the representation of Hamka in the film can be read as a semiotic construction of an Islamic communicator figure who is able to manage the media as an instrument of da'wah, maintain the cohesion of the organizational network, and face narrative battles amidst a stressful socio-political situation.

Research Method

This study uses a library research method by making the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* as the main data source which is analyzed in depth through a qualitative-interpretive approach. In library research, data is obtained from various written sources such as books, scientific articles, historical documents, and media artifacts relevant to the research focus.

from Muhammadiyah”; Sumarlan and Ukka, “Public Relations to Foster Organization's Values and Identity: The Case of Muhammadiyah.”

¹⁷ Muhtadi Murodi, Kamarusdiana, and Deden Mauli Darajat, “Shifting Dakwah Methods to Match Media Technology Transformation: The Case of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Al Washliyah,” *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 18, no. 1 (2023): 93–113, <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2023.18.1.93-113>

¹⁸ M. Kholilia, Ahmad Izudin, and Muhammad Lutfi Hakim, “Islamic Proselytizing in Digital Religion in Indonesia: The Challenges of Broadcasting Regulation,” *Cogent Social Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2357460>

¹⁹ Nuning Rodiyah and Rio Febriannur Rachman, “Media and Religion: Da'wah on the Role of Teachers on the Muhammadiyah Website,” *Dakwatuna: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam* 12, no. 1 (2025)

This method allows researchers to construct a comprehensive understanding through the process of collecting, selecting, interpreting, and synthesizing data to explain the phenomena studied contextually. Fadli explained that qualitative research aims to reveal phenomena holistically through non-numerical data analysis that emphasizes meaning, interpretation, and in-depth understanding of the research object.²⁰

In the analysis process, this study applied qualitative analysis procedures systematically through data identification, grouping themes, interpreting meaning, and drawing conclusions. The method follows qualitative data analysis models which demonstrate that research requires organized data management practices to produce valid scientific results.²¹ In addition, the validity aspect of the research is maintained through theoretical triangulation and strengthening trustworthiness by comparing various library sources relevant to organizational communication, political communication, Islamic broadcasting, and Roland Barthes' semiotics²². The researchers aim to achieve a deep comprehension of how Muhammadiyah's communication network appears in the film "Buya Hamka Vol. 1" instead of creating statistical generalizations. The researchers used documentation methods to gather data for this study which required them to analyze the film "Buya Hamka Vol. 1" as the main visual document for their research. The researchers obtained supporting evidence from books scientific articles and historical documents that contained information about Muhammadiyah. In library research, documents function as both information sources and analytical materials which contain social and cultural and ideological elements that researchers can study through scientific methods. Morgan defines qualitative document analysis as a research method that enables researchers to examine texts and documents through the process of selecting and evaluating and interpreting and synthesizing data to achieve complete understanding of the research topic.²³ The researchers needed to record all scenes that displayed the organization's communication network and da'wah authority and political communication to ensure their analysis remained consistent throughout their study.

The researchers used Roland Barthes's semiotic framework to categorize and interpret the gathered data for their analysis process. In a document research approach, the analysis process focuses not only on the explicit content but also on the hidden meanings behind the representations. Sankofa asserts that document analysis provides a systematic procedure for interpreting documents through a critical reading of their

²⁰ Muhammad Rijal Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif," *Humanika: Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 1 (2021): 33–54, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075>

²¹ Andrea J. Bingham, "From Data Management to Actionable Findings: A Five-Phase Process of Qualitative Data Analysis," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231183620>

²² Rachel H. Adler, "Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Human Lactation* 38, no. 4 (2022): 598–602, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08903344221116620>

²³ Hani Morgan, "Conducting a Qualitative Document Analysis," *The Qualitative Report* 27, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>

context, meaning structures, and power relations.²⁴ In line with this, qualitative research positions the researcher as the main instrument tasked with interpreting data reflectively and contextually.²⁵ Thus, this study seeks to uncover how the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* represents Muhammadiyah's communication network through the construction of signs, symbols, and narratives constructed within the cinematic text.

The researchers applied Roland Barthes's semiotic framework together with organizational communication and political communication theories to analyze the study data. The analysis process was conducted through three steps which involved researchers showing the basic meaning and additional meaning and cultural interpretation of each scene that showed Muhammadiyah's communication network in the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1*. The researchers use this method to examine visual elements and spoken content because they want to uncover hidden social structures and ideological systems that exist beyond visible interpretations. The research quality in qualitative studies depends on how well researchers can establish ongoing connections between their empirical findings and the theoretical framework of their study. The interpretation process requires researchers to proceed through three systematic steps which include data organization and pattern identification and theme development that explains the research phenomenon.²⁶

The researchers classified all elements of Hamka's leadership and da'wah authority and political communication into specific analytical categories which are defined by organizational communication theory and semiotics. The research results gain credibility through theoretical validation because the study compares its findings to established academic literature. The transparency of analysis processes together with data accuracy and researcher reflexivity determines the credibility of qualitative research because these factors link to how researchers reach their research conclusions. Tracy explains that the quality of qualitative research is built through methodological rigor, analytical coherence, and a clear theoretical contribution to the field of study.²⁷ Adler stated that trustworthiness needs to be achieved through researchers documenting their entire research process while researchers assess all interpretations which came from the research process.²⁸ The research team created the research system with its specific construction.

Results and Discussion

Communication Network Structure: Community Guidelines Magazine as a Techno-Hub

²⁴ Nicole Sankofa, "Critical Method of Document Analysis," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 26, no. 6 (2023): 745–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2022.2113664>

²⁵ Fadli, "Memahami Desain Metode Penelitian Kualitatif."

²⁶ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Can I Use TA? Should I Use TA? Should I Not Use TA? Comparing Reflexive Thematic Analysis and Other Pattern-Based Qualitative Analytic Approaches," *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* 21, no. 1 (2021): 37–47, <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12360>

²⁷ Sarah J. Tracy, "Qualitative Quality: Eight 'Big-Tent' Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 10 (2010): 837–51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>

²⁸ Adler, "Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research."

At the denotative level, the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* repeatedly shows Hamka's activities in the Pedoman Masyarakat editorial room as the center of production and distribution of organizational information. The combination of printing press equipment, article manuscripts, and correspondence activities which appear in different scenes establishes visible proof of a functioning Muhammadiyah communication system that operates in an organized manner. From the perspective of organizational communication, the media managed by the organization not only serves as a tool for disseminating messages, but also as a mechanism for forming collective identity and coordinating institutional activities. Research on Muhammadiyah organizational communication shows that the sustainability of organizational identity is highly dependent on the ability to manage communication flows in a structured manner through various media that function as a link between the center of the organization, members, and the wider community.²⁹ The Pedoman Masyarakat in the film functions as a strategic communication center which supports the spread of modernist Islamic concepts while it simultaneously develops organizational unity.

Hamka's journalistic work exists at both the connotative level and the mythological level because it demonstrates his dedication to creating an Islamic public sphere which functions independently from colonial history through his work as a journalist. Print media in the film is constructed as an instrument of da'wah (Islamic outreach) capable of connecting various elements of Muhammadiyah through the exchange of ideas, dissemination of knowledge, and the formation of collective consciousness. Research findings on Muhammadiyah's da'wah media indicate that the media plays a crucial role in constructing religious discourse while strengthening the organization's legitimacy in the public sphere.³⁰ In addition, the media also has the ability to sanctify leader figures and build symbolic narratives that are then accepted as part of society's collective identity.³¹ Within Barthes's semiotic framework, Hamka's representation as an intellectual, journalist, and organizational leader reproduces the myth that mastery of communication technology and literacy is the main foundation for the success of da'wah and the sustainability of modern Islamic organizations amidst political pressure and social change.³²

Dynamics of Interpersonal Communication in Organizational Structure

An analysis of the organizational meeting scenes in the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* shows that the organizational communication patterns depicted do not rely entirely on

²⁹ Iman Sumarlan et al., "Integrating Technology in Organizational Communication to Advance Progressive Islamic Values: Insights from Muhammadiyah."

³⁰ Tia Muthiah Umar et al., "National Fiqh Discourse in the Digital Public Sphere: A Case Study of TVMu's *Dialektika* Program."

³¹ Mihai Coman, "Media and the Sacralization of Leaders and Events: The Construction of a Religious Public Sphere," *Open Theology* 9 (2023): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2022-0230>

³² Coman, "Media and the Sacralization of Leaders and Events"; Umar et al., "National Fiqh Discourse in the Digital Public Sphere: A Case Study of TVMu's *Dialektika* Program."

formal hierarchical structures. Although Hamka is depicted as having a strategic position within the organization, various meeting scenes demonstrate the existence of open and participatory dialogue between leaders and members of the organization. The visual composition uses character alignment which appears mostly parallel to display how people interact during their communication process while showing that informal communication networks serve as essential tools for creating group unity and sharing knowledge. Recent studies have shown that informal communication plays a crucial role in strengthening relationships among organizational members which results in increased belongingness and enables members to coordinate their activities without needing to use formal communication channels.³³ According to Barthes's semiotics Hamka demonstrates inclusive leadership through his listening skills and his active engagement with others as he creates an environment that embraces different viewpoints.

The film portrays Hamka's leadership through a connotative representation which relies more on his ability to persuade others than his use of formal power. Hamka uses strategic communication to handle political pressure and organizational conflicts because it helps him achieve ideological balance when facing changing situations. Research on leadership and internal communication shows that leadership effectiveness is greatly influenced by the leader's ability to build dialogic communication relationships, create communication satisfaction, and foster trust within the organization.³⁴ In addition, strategic communication that is carried out consistently also plays a role in increasing organizational resilience when facing crises or external pressure.³⁵ Therefore, this film reproduces the myth of the figure of the cleric as a communicator who does not rely on verbal domination or coercive power, but rather interpersonal intelligence, the ability to build trust, and strategic communication skills to maintain the stability of organizational networks amidst a political situation full of uncertainty.³⁶

Network Adaptation Under Political Pressure (Japanese Era)

When the narrative of the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* enters the period of the Japanese occupation, the representation of Muhammadiyah's communication network undergoes significant changes. While previously organizational communication was built through

³³ Thomas Koch and Nora Denner, "Informal Communication in Organizations: Work Time Wasted at the Water-Cooler or Crucial Exchange among Co-Workers?" *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 27, no. 3 (2022): 494–508, <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-08-2021-0087>

³⁴ Patrick D. Thelen, "Leadership and Internal Communication: Linking Servant Leadership, Communication Satisfaction, and Employee Advocacy," *International Journal of Strategic Communication* 15, no. 5 (2021): 440–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2021.1984919>

³⁵ Young Kim, "Building Organizational Resilience through Strategic Internal Communication and Organization–Employee Relationships," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 49, no. 5 (2021): 589–608, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2021.1910856>

³⁶ Koch and Denner, "Informal Communication in Organizations"; Kim, "Building Organizational Resilience through Strategic Internal Communication and Organization–Employee Relationships"; Thelen, "Leadership and Internal Communication."

print media that enabled the widespread dissemination of information, in the repressive situation the communication network is shown to be more limited, personal, and full of caution. This shift is visualized through the use of dim lighting, closed meeting rooms, and selective interactions, which semiotically signify a state of uncertainty and threats to the organization's survival. The organizational communication perspective demonstrates that organizations need to develop resilient communication systems which enable them to handle external environmental changes. Kim explains that organizational resilience is highly dependent on the effectiveness of internal communication and the ability to maintain relationships between members when the organization faces pressure or crisis.³⁷ The film presents changes in communication patterns which serve as strategic adaptations that help the organization survive under strict political limitations.

Hamka uses his negotiation skills to negotiate with Japanese authorities which serves³⁸ as a strategic communication method that maintains organizational ideological principles through flexible communication methods. The film shows Hamka as a leader who can assess developing political conditions while he changes his communication methods to protect the Muhammadiyah network's ongoing operations. Strategic communication studies indicate that organizations that are able to survive crises are those that can balance value consistency with the ability to adapt to environmental changes. In addition, adaptive communication also functions as a resilience mechanism that enables organizations to maintain legitimacy, coordination, and collective identity despite facing strong external pressures.³⁹ Within Barthes' semiotic framework, this representation constructs the myth that ideal da'wah leadership is not only determined by the courage to convey the truth, but also by the ability to read the political constellation and manage communication strategically in order to maintain the sustainability of the organization and the mission of Islamic da'wah.⁴⁰

The Authority of Da'wah as a Semiotic Construction: Between Charisma and Competence

Buya Hamka's da'wah authority in the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* is represented as a combination of intellectual capacity, communication skills, and social recognition. Denotatively, Hamka is depicted with calm gestures, a neat appearance, and measured speech when delivering advice in both public and private spaces. Connotatively, these signs represent a model of da'wah authority based on exemplary behavior, literacy, and

³⁷ Arden C. Roeder and Ryan S. Bisel, "Managing Disruption(s) at Work: A Longitudinal Study of Communicative Resilience and High-Reliability Organizing," *Communication Monographs* 91, no. 1 (2024): 56–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2023.2242918>

³⁸ *ibid*

³⁹ Øyvind Ihlen and Magnus Fredriksson, "Organizational Communication and Resilience in Times of Crisis," *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 28, no. 1 (2023): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-09-2022-0108>

⁴⁰ Ihlen and Fredriksson, "Organizational Communication and Resilience in Times of Crisis"

persuasion. Studies on religious authority show that the legitimacy of religious leaders stems not only from Islamic knowledge but also from their ability to build trust and convey religious values relevantly to the community.⁴¹

From Barthes's semiotic perspective, the repetition of signs in the form of argumentative rhetoric, the ability to link Islamic teachings to social issues, and the depiction of Hamka as a primary reference in decision-making form the myth of the authoritative modernist cleric. The religious communication approach explains that the influence of religious leaders is largely determined by the effectiveness of their message delivery and audience acceptance.⁴² Moreover, contemporary Islamic authority is increasingly shaped by the relationship between knowledge, social legitimacy, and intellectual capacity.⁴³ Therefore, this film builds the myth that Buya Hamka's authority was born from his ability to synthesize Islamic teachings with social reality in a communicative and argumentative manner.

Political Communication: Diplomacy in the Vortex of Power

A political communication analysis of this film shows that Hamka is positioned as a figure capable of transforming politics into an arena for dialogue and negotiation. In various scenes depicting his interactions with colonial and Japanese military authorities, Hamka is not depicted as taking a frontal oppositional stance, but rather prioritizing a communicative approach oriented toward achieving long-term goals. This strategy demonstrates his ability to build trust and maintain organizational legitimacy through a moderate image that remains consistent with the values he champions. In this way, political communication serves as an instrument for maintaining social influence while opening up space for collaboration without diminishing the organization's identity.⁴⁴

From a semiotic perspective, the use of language in Hamka's political dialogues reflects his skill in adapting messages to the context of power he faces. His careful choice of words demonstrates the practice of strategic ambiguity, a communication strategy that allows a message to be accepted by those in authority without diminishing the primary meaning intended to be conveyed. Through this representation, the film constructs a narrative that effective Islamic leadership requires the ability to read political situations, manage public perception, and maintain a balance between idealism and pragmatism.

⁴¹ Ahmad Faisal, Mustaqim Pabbajah, Irwan Abdullah, Nova Effenty Muhammad, and Muh. Rusli, "Strengthening Religious Moderatism through the Traditional Authority of Kiai in Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2150450>

⁴² Paul A. Djupe and Jacob R. Neiheisel, "The Religious Communication Approach and Political Behavior," *Political Psychology* 43, no. S1 (2022): 165–94, <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12848>

⁴³ Asif Mohiuddin, "Knowledge, Power and Changing Perceptions of Islamic Authority in Muslim Societies," *Religion and Theology* 28, nos. 1–2 (2021): 105–14, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15743012-bja10016>

⁴⁴ Parker Bach, Carolyn E. Schmitt, and Shannon C. McGregor, "Let Me Be Perfectly Unclear: Strategic Ambiguity in Political Communication," *Communication Theory* 35, no. 2 (2025): 96–106, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtaf001>

Therefore, leadership is not understood solely as a firm adherence to principles, but also as the ability to articulate those principles in complex situations.⁴⁵

Reconstruction of Communication Technology as a Tool of Authority

This film presents media as a crucial element in the formation and dissemination of da'wah authority. Although the story centered on the use of print magazines during Hamka's reign, the narrative is retold through the medium of digital cinema, reconstructing the experience of religious communication for today's audiences. The emphasis on media production activities, from scriptwriting and editorial management to distribution, demonstrates that communication technology is not merely a technical tool, but rather part of a mechanism that strengthens the legitimacy and influence of da'wah in the public sphere. From the perspective of the mediatization of religion, this representation demonstrates that religious authority develops along with the ability to utilize media as an instrument for disseminating values and shaping socio-religious meaning.⁴⁶

In addition to showcasing the role of media in da'wah (Islamic outreach), the film also builds Hamka's image as a leader adaptable to developments in communication technology. The character is depicted as being able to utilize modern communication devices and channels to expand the reach of religious messages and strengthen relationships with the community. This depiction aligns with the concept of digital leadership, which emphasizes the importance of a leader's ability to integrate technology into social influence and decision-making processes. Through this narrative construction, the film emphasizes that the effectiveness of da'wah rests not only on spiritual authority and intellectual capacity, but also on the ability to optimize communication technology as a means of social transformation and the dissemination of religious ideas.⁴⁷

The pinnacle of the film's construction of meaning is evident in Hamka's representation as a leader capable of bringing calm when society faces uncertain situations. Through various visual elements, such as restrained expressions, soft lighting, and scene compositions that contrast with the surrounding conflict, the film constructs Hamka's image as a figure who provides a sense of security for the people. This representation aligns with studies of crisis leadership that emphasize the importance of a leader's ability to maintain psychological stability, manage tension, and provide clear direction when the social and political environment is in an uncertain state. Thus, Hamka's

⁴⁵ Ina von der Wense and Olaf Hoffjann, "They Are Always Ambiguous When They Don't Know How It Will Turn Out: Dissemination, Practices, and Ethical Assessment of Strategic Ambiguity," *Journal of Business Communication* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/01968599231216702>

⁴⁶ Erus Effendi, Roro Sri Rejeki Waliyajati, and Dody S. Truna, "Reconfiguring Religion in the Digital Era: A Conceptual Framework for the Mediatization of Religion in Indonesia," *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 6, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v6i2.32996>

⁴⁷ George C. Banks, Shelley D. Dionne, Marianne Schmid Mast, and Hiroki Sayama, "Leadership in the Digital Era: A Review of Who, What, When, Where, and Why," *The Leadership Quarterly* 33, no. 5 (2022): 101634, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2022.101634>

authority stems not only from his religious capacity, but also from his ability to bring calm and hope amidst the crisis.⁴⁸

From an organizational communication perspective, Hamka is portrayed as a leader who functions as a boundary spanner, an individual who connects the organization's internal interests with the complex dynamics of the external environment. His role in managing media, building communication networks, and establishing relationships with various social actors demonstrates his ability to translate organizational values into language acceptable to diverse groups. The film then shapes the myth that effective leadership does not arise solely from personal charisma, but from the ability to build connectivity, manage the flow of information, and maintain organizational legitimacy amidst socio-political change. In the contemporary context, this representation makes Hamka a model Islamic communicator capable of integrating moral authority, communication skills, and adaptability to a constantly changing environment.⁴⁹

Conclusion

This research shows that the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* represents the Muhammadiyah organization's communication network as an adaptive, dynamic system integrated with political communication strategies in the face of socio-political pressures during the Dutch colonial period and the Japanese occupation. Using Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, it is found that the printed media *Pedoman Masyarakat* (Community Guidelines) is presented not only as a means of disseminating information but also as a strategic node connecting the organization's network, building collective identity, and strengthening the legitimacy of Muhammadiyah's *da'wah* in the public sphere. At the mythical level, the film constructs the idea that mastery of communication technology and media literacy are essential foundations for the sustainability of modern Islamic organizations.

Furthermore, the representation of Buya Hamka's leadership in the film is constructed through a combination of moral authority, communication skills, and adaptability to changes in the political environment. Hamka functions as a strategic communicator who uses political communication for organizational purposes while maintaining *da'wah* principles. The communication practices shown in the study enable people to evaluate situations while they handle public image and they create an equilibrium between their idealistic and practical activities. The film demonstrates through its dual presentation that communication technology serves as a crucial tool which establishes *da'wah* authority for Hamka who leads as an Islamic leader who embraces modern media

⁴⁸ Charlotte Förster, Caroline Paparella, Stephanie Duchek, and Wolfgang H. Güttel, "Leading in the Paradoxical World of Crises: How Leaders Navigate Through Crises," *Schmalenbach Journal of Business Research* 74, no. 4 (2022): 631–57, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41471-022-00147-7>

⁴⁹ Lotte Keij and Hans van Kranenburg, "How Organizational Leadership and Boundary Spanners Drive the Transformation Process of a Local News Media Organization," *Journalism* 24, no. 10 (2023): 2162–80, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849221105721>

and new communication methods. The research presents a theoretical framework which shows that the effectiveness of da'wah organizations during crisis situations depends on three essential components which include media literacy and flexible political communication methods and authentic moral leadership. The film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* reproduces the myth of the ideal Islamic leader as a figure capable of acting as a boundary spanner between the organization and the external environment, maintaining social stability during crises, and utilizing the media as an instrument for establishing influence and legitimacy. The film represents Buya Hamka's life history to the audience while it uses a symbolic story to demonstrate how organizations should communicate and Islamic leaders should lead their organizations during current da'wah public communication challenges.

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