



Sociology of Communication Nazir Mosque Study of Uncertainty in Sermon Schedules and Social Isolation of Preachers

Novry Rivaldy¹, Abdullah¹, Muniruddin¹

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

 novry3005233007@uinsu.ac.id *

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Abstract

Mosques serve not only as places of worship, but also as social and religious institutions with multidimensional roles. Mosque administrators hold strategic positions in maintaining communication between administrators, congregations, and other parties involved, including preachers who deliver messages during Friday sermons. This study aims to analyze the sociological dynamics of communication among the nazirs of Al Jihad Mosque in Medan, particularly regarding the unclear schedule of Friday sermons and the phenomenon of social isolation experienced by the khatibs. Ineffective communication between the nazirs and the khatibs has disrupted the delivery of sermons and weakened congregational participation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. There were six informants consisting of mosque administrators, preachers who had served or were serving at the mosque, and mosque congregants. The results show that the weak communication system and management structure of the mosque trigger serious problems in the delivery of sermons and reinforce the social isolation of the khatib, as evident in the decline in the quality of sermons, the strained relationship between administrators and khatibs, and the decline in congregants' trust in the management.

INTRODUCTION

Mosques not only function as places of worship, but also as social and religious institutions that play a multidimensional role. Mosques are centers of education, preaching, community development, and social communication for the Islamic community. The continuity of these roles is inseparable from the important role of a mosque administrator, who is responsible for managing and carrying out all religious activities within the mosque (Ali & Nasrillah, 2023; Awaluddin et al., 2024; Dalmeri, 2014; Hasan & Al Fajar, 2025; Masamah, 2020). The mosque administrator holds a strategic position in maintaining,

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communication between the management, congregation, and other parties involved, including the khatib who delivers the message of da'wah in the Friday sermon. Therefore, maintaining effective communication in the mosque is very important in order to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts, both among administrators and between administrators and congregants (Thadi & Mukhlizar, 2021).

From a sociological perspective, mosques serve as a medium of interaction that strengthens social bonds within the community through various religious and social activities (Awaluddin Hidayat et al., 2024; Febriyanto et al., 2025; Parhan Pauzi, 2025). One form of this interaction can be seen in the relationship between the mosque administrator, the preacher, and the congregation. However, communication practices in mosques also face obstacles, one of which is the lack of clarity in the scheduling of Friday sermons. This issue not only affects the smooth running of Friday prayers every week, but also has an impact on social relations within the mosque, especially between the nazir and the khatib.

The Friday sermon itself occupies a strategic position as a means of strengthening the morale and spirit of Muslims in facing life's challenges. A khatib, who is both a communicator and a mosque imam, needs a clear and systematic sermon schedule, including the themes to be delivered (Saleh et al., 2019). Without the right information, the message to be conveyed to the congregation will be hampered and may even cause confusion among the congregation. This also indicates the potential for communication distortion, which has implications for weakening coordination, trust, and social harmony in the mosque environment.

Initial findings in the field indicate that several mosques in the city of Medan, particularly the Al-Jihad Mosque, show a lack of clear communication between the mosque administrator and the preacher regarding the Friday sermon schedule. These problems include delays in scheduling, inconsistencies in sermon themes, and even the sudden absence of khatibs. This can have implications for the disruption of worship and social harmony in the mosque environment. In addition, another problem that arises in the field is the social isolation experienced by the khatibs. Most of the khatibs who come are only there to deliver the Friday sermon, without deeper involvement in social activities at the mosque and without deep social interaction with the congregation and mosque administrators, which can make them feel isolated. In fact, in an ideal community, good interpersonal communication and strong social relationships between individuals are essential to avoid feelings of alienation and to strengthen a sense of togetherness.

From a theoretical perspective, communication sociology explains that communication is not only a technical process of conveying messages, but also builds social interactions in society that give rise to a process of mutual influence. Within the framework of structural functionalism, society consists of interdependent parts, including religious institutions. In this case, communication plays a role in maintaining social order and stability. Communication between mosque administrators, such as nazir and khatib, is part of a system that must be organized and functional. When the communication structure does not run smoothly, for example, due to an unclear sermon schedule, the mosque's duties as a religious institution will be disrupted. Meanwhile, in symbolic interaction theory in communication sociology, interaction is an important variable in determining human behavior. Khatibs who do not build good relationships with their congregations have the potential to feel isolated. As a result, the khatib's social involvement decreases

and the messages conveyed feel less intimate and touching to the congregation.

The administrators of the Al-Awwabin Mosque use a wheel communication pattern, with the head administrator as the center of information between administrators and congregants, as well as a circle communication pattern between members (Engkizar et al., 2018; Mutathahirin et al., 2020). Interpersonal approaches such as greeting each other and casual conversation also support effective communication, despite being constrained by the administrators' busy schedules. Interpersonal communication between administrators and congregants has a significant effect on the prosperity of the mosque. Mosques play a crucial role in building social cohesion through the dissemination of information and communication in the community. Effective communication used in sermons will strengthen the congregation's understanding of Islamic teachings and encourage the growth of piety in a tangible way.

These findings indicate that communication in mosques plays an important role in maintaining quality and strengthening social bonds among the congregation. However, there is still little research discussing the dynamics of communication between the nazir and the khatib in managing the sermon schedule and its impact on the khatib's social involvement. In fact, the relationship between the two is very decisive for the smooth running of Friday prayers, especially regarding the clarity of the sermon schedule and the khatib's social involvement in the life of the mosque. The lack of research in this field indicates a gap in studies, especially in the context of urban mosques with more complex social characteristics. The mosque administrator acts as a communication mediator between the congregation and the khatib, so the communication patterns that are formed will greatly determine the creation of harmony in the implementation of Friday prayers.

Thus, this study aims to identify the factors causing uncertainty in sermon schedules and map the social isolation issues experienced by khatibs. By understanding these issues, it is hoped that solutions can be found to improve communication in mosques, improve sermon schedule management, and enhance social relations between khatibs and congregations. The results of this study are expected to provide practical contributions to mosque management, such as better communication governance and khatib management. In addition, theoretically, it can enrich the insight into religious communication and Islamic social studies.

METHODS

This study uses qualitative research with a case study approach. This research was chosen because the issues studied are related to social interaction and communication that occur in mosques, thus requiring a deep understanding (Engkizar, Jaafar, Alias, et al., 2025; Faddhia et al., 2025; Khairunisa et al., 2025; Ummah et al., 2025). The researcher will attempt to explore the perceptions and experiences of the Nazir, khatib, and congregation regarding the issue of unclear sermon schedules and the social isolation of the khatib. The research was conducted at a mosque in Medan, namely Al-Jihad Medan Mosque (Engkizar, Jaafar, Masuwd, et al., 2025; Febriani et al., 2020; Oktavia et al., 2024). The location was selected purposively, considering that the mosque showed communication problems relevant to the research focus. The research data sources used in this study included primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews and field observations. In-depth interviews were conducted with 6 main informants who were selected purposively, consisting of mosque administrators, khatibs

who had served or were serving at the mosque, and mosque congregants (Htay et al., 2025; Okenova et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2024; Sabrina et al., 2024).

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner for 30-40 minutes and recorded with recording equipment with the permission of the informants. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from internal mosque documents, social media or mosque websites, and relevant literature. The data obtained was then analyzed using the Miles & Huberman (1994) model, which involved the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and preliminary conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, filtering, simplifying, and categorizing raw data from interviews, observations, and documents. The reduced data was then presented in the form of descriptive narratives and followed by conclusions. Meanwhile, to ensure data validity, source triangulation techniques were applied. In addition, this study also maintained research ethics, whereby during the data collection process, all informants were guaranteed confidentiality by assigning anonymous codes to each informant (Engkizar, Muslim, Mulyadi, et al., 2025; Istiqamah et al., 2024; Mustafa et al., 2025; Muthatahirin et al., 2025).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on findings in the field, it appears that the lack of clarity regarding the Friday sermon schedule is a consequence of weak communication and management systems in the mosque. The relationship between the Nazir and the khatib is still transactional rather than collaborative, creating social distance. As a result, the khatib feels socially isolated, and the quality of religious services to the congregation is affected. In addition, this problem arises due to the absence of a written scheduling system and the lack of involvement of the khatib in the mosque's social activities. Communication between the nazir and the khatib is also one-way, so that there are often sudden changes or omissions in the schedule notification. The analysis of the findings in the field revealed several main themes and sub-themes, which can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Thematic Findings

Theme	Subthema	Findings
Unclear sermon schedule	Causal factors	There is no written schedule, scheduling is done suddenly, there is a lack of coordination, and there is a dependence on one or two nazirs.
Social Isolation of the Khatib	Lack of interaction and participation	The preacher is only present during the sermon, does not participate in other activities, and is considered an outsider.
Impact on Da'wah and Social Life	Congregation satisfaction and trust	The congregation was disappointed and doubtful due to the absence or decreased quality of the sermon

		due to limited preparation
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Uncertainty of Sermon Schedule

The lack of clarity regarding the Friday sermon schedule is one of the main problems affecting the smooth running of worship activities and the quality of service to the congregation. Based on field findings, the scheduling of sermons has not been determined systematically, but only based on personal communication that tends to be sudden. Preachers often do not receive official or written notifications, resulting in absences or scheduling errors. They only rely on verbal communication, and sometimes only contact the preacher one or two days before Friday. As a result, preachers often find it difficult to prepare sermon material thoroughly, and there have even been cases of preachers not showing up without prior notice. This situation has an impact on congregants, who feel uncertainty and disappointment due to the inconsistent Friday sermon schedule. This was conveyed by informants as follows:

"We usually only contact the preacher who usually preaches here. Sometimes it's sudden. If he can't come, we look for a replacement, even if it's a bit rushed. There is no reminder system or official record, so sometimes the preacher also forgets or doesn't show up because he is unsure of the schedule. We have also forgotten to contact him. So on Friday, the preacher didn't come. We panicked looking for anyone who could replace him" (Informant).

Based on these statements, it can be seen that the management of sermon schedules has been unstructured or reactive and lacks a standard mechanism to prevent vacancies in khatibs. The admission of "forgetting to contact" indicates that there is a weak internal reminder system within the Mosque Welfare Agency. This issue is not merely administrative, but also shows that communication within the organization is informal, without a clear structure. This indicates the need for a clear organizational communication pattern, as stated, that a wheel or circle communication pattern can help facilitate the dissemination of information. Without a structured communication system, coordination will depend on only a few people and there is a risk of errors. A similar sentiment was expressed by one of the informants, a khatib.

"I usually receive information about the sermon one or two days in advance. If there are any changes, I sometimes only find out by phone, and even then it's late at night. When this happens, it's difficult for us to prepare relevant sermon material, especially if there is a specific theme from the mosque" (Informant).

This statement shows that communication close to the time of delivery does not give the preacher enough time to adjust the content of the sermon to the needs of the congregation. From an organizational communication perspective, this indicates a top-down, one-sided communication pattern, without room for negotiation or joint planning (Engkizar et al., 2024; Sri Fatmawati & Nur Arifah Hanafiah, 2022). This can reduce the quality of the material to be delivered. In fact, Friday sermon material should ideally be prepared carefully and be highly relevant to religious issues in the community (Azhari et al., 2023). In addition, this condition also shows that the relationship between the nazir and the khatib is limited to the need for weekly sermons. Harmonious interpersonal communication between the takmir and the

congregation is a major factor in maintaining the continuity of da'wah and the prosperity of the mosque. If communication with the khatib is done suddenly, this will affect the quality of the sermon and affect the trust and comfort of the congregation. Meanwhile, from the perspective of the mosque congregation, who regularly perform Friday prayers at Al Jihad Mosque, they admit to experiencing the impact of this issue, as conveyed by the informant as follows:

“Once, the sermon started late because the preacher didn't show up. In the end, he was replaced at the last minute, and the material felt disconnected. Over time, the congregation lost faith in the administrators' ability to manage the schedule” (Informant).

The phrase “lack of trust” indicates a decline in public trust, which, if not addressed immediately, can have an impact on the participation and involvement of congregations in mosque activities. Trust is an important social capital in religious organizations. If this trust weakens, congregations tend to become indifferent and may even seek out other mosques that are better managed.

On the other hand, one of the mosque administrators added that the uncertainty of the sermon schedule also causes administrative problems, particularly in terms of the khatib's honorarium. Sudden changes or last-minute scheduling often cause financial records to become messy, making them appear unprofessional. In organizational communication studies, this condition reflects weak coordination between departments, which causes obstacles in the form of unclear Friday sermon schedules.

In addition, one of the mosque youth representatives revealed that the administrators' lack of openness to the innovations they proposed further exacerbated the problem. The mosque youth had the desire to create a digital-based sermon scheduling system so that information could be accessed more quickly and transparently by the congregation. However, senior administrators still adhere to the old ways, limiting the younger generation's room for maneuver. In fact, according to, the use of information technology, such as social media and communication applications, can increase the effectiveness of information dissemination and congregational participation. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted, several main factors causing the ambiguity shown in the figure were revealed.

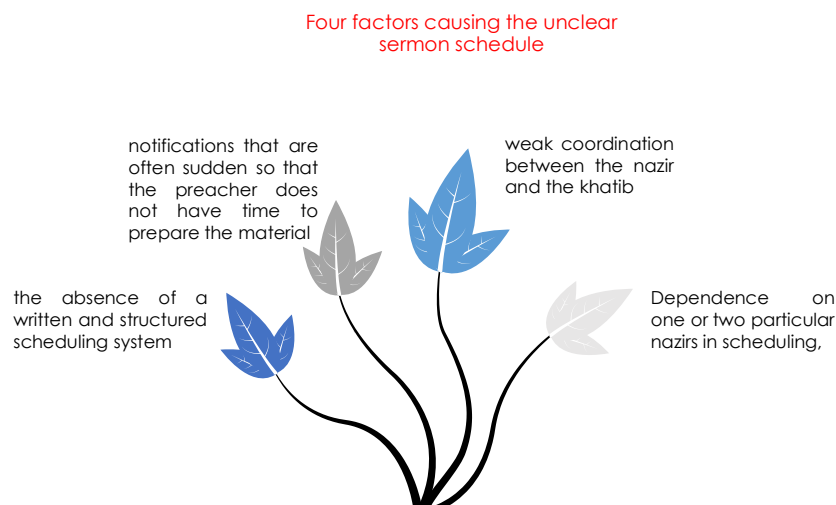


Fig 1. Factors causing discrepancies in sermon schedules

The issues that arise at Al Jihad Mosque can be viewed through the lens

of structural functional theory in communication sociology, which states that organizations are social systems composed of interdependent parts (Aprilia & Juniarti, 2022). Based on this theory, the mosque functions as a religious social organization that requires collaboration between administrators, preachers, and congregations. Scheduling sermons is an important part of ensuring that Friday prayers run smoothly. If the communication and scheduling systems do not work properly, it will cause an imbalance in the implementation of worship, which will lead to a decline in the congregation's trust in the administrators.

The unclear schedule of sermons at Al Jihad Mosque not only indicates technical management issues, but also reflects the dynamics of social communication within religious organizations. The communication pattern that has been established also reflects a lack of feedback in one-way communication. In communication, feedback is an important element to ensure that communication is successful or not. The lack of feedback from the khatib and the congregation to the administrators causes scheduling problems to recur without any definite improvement. This is because the social relationship between the administrators and the khatib tends to be transactional, limited only to the assignment of sermons, rather than collaborative. From a sociological perspective on communication, this condition shows weak social cohesion in the mosque, so that the flow of information is not reciprocal and collective knowledge is difficult to form. If there is no communication between members of an organization, then the organization will find it difficult to develop and may even experience internal conflict.

The results of this study provide new insights into how effective communication can improve the quality of management at Al Jihad Mosque. The proposal to compile a written and long-term schedule for sermons will create order in the mosque environment, while also providing certainty to the congregation. In addition, the use of technology such as social media or communication applications to disseminate important information to administrators, preachers, and congregants of the Al Jihad Mosque. By creating a WhatsApp group or using social media platforms, information about sermon schedules or sudden changes can be disseminated immediately, reducing delays and confusion. Thus, a seemingly simple issue, such as sermon scheduling, becomes an important issue in communication management, organizational management, and social solidarity within the mosque.

Social Isolation of Khatib

The issue of social isolation experienced by khatibs is one of the themes found in this study. Based on interviews with mosque administrators, it appears that social interaction between khatibs and administrators is limited. Khatibs usually only attend Friday sermons, deliver their sermons, and then immediately leave the mosque without participating in other social or religious activities at the mosque. This situation has resulted in minimal social ties between the khatib and the congregation, so that the role of the khatib is seen more as a technical executor of the sermon rather than an integral part of the mosque congregation. This was conveyed by the informant as follows:

Regarding social relations with the khatib, Nazir stated that the khatib only comes when it is time for the sermon and does not participate in other social activities or recitations. They only come for the sermon and then go straight home. We also do not have any regular activities with them. Perhaps they also feel separated from the administrators. Nazir realizes the need for improvement and plans to form a small team specifically to manage the schedule and communication of sermons, as well as to

open a space for friendship with the khatibs (informants).

In this regard, another informant also said:

“Here, I only come for the sermon. I have never been invited to management meetings or social events. So, I don't feel like I am part of the mosque structure. Communication is also rare, usually only two or three days before the sermon”
(Informant).

This understanding is formed and reinforced through repeated symbolic interactions, such as one-way communication patterns from administrators to preachers without any opportunity for input or feedback. This is in line with Blumer's view that social meaning arises from human interactions with one another (Husin et al., 2021). When communication is one-way and rigid, the opportunity to build new meaning together is lost. As a result, the khatib's involvement in da'wah activities or congregational guidance outside of sermons remains low, and social solidarity in the mosque environment weakens.

Many imams in Aflaj do not attend regular mosque group meetings, do not check on their condition, and do not play a role in deepening the spirit of love and solidarity among mosque groups. Similarly, mentions that at the Qryah Tayyibah Mosque, the imam or khatib plays a crucial role in coordinating religious and educational activities at the mosque. The social isolation experienced by the khatib not only affects the quality of the sermons delivered, but also the congregation's view of the mosque's management. If the congregation sees a strained relationship between the administrators and the khatib, they tend to doubt the unity and solidarity of the mosque's management. This emphasizes the importance of social networks, trust, and mutually beneficial norms to strengthen social collaboration for the common good. When the khatib is positioned as a figure separate from the administrators and congregation, the mosque loses one of its important sources of social capital.

This study highlights the need to involve khatibs in social activities at mosques beyond delivering sermons. By inviting khatibs to participate in other mosque activities, such as religious lectures or management meetings, better social relationships can be formed. Khatibs who feel valued and involved in the social life of the mosque will be more committed to delivering more meaningful and profound sermons, as well as interacting better with the congregation. Thus, strengthening social relationships between preachers, administrators, and congregations can be an important solution to overcome the problem of social isolation that has been identified.

Impact on Da'wah and Social Life at Al Jihad Mosque

The phenomenon of unclear sermon schedules and minimal social interaction with preachers has had a number of significant impacts on the da'wah activities and religious social life of the congregation. Based on interviews with administrators, preachers, and congregants, five main interrelated impacts were identified, ranging from a decline in the quality of sermons to potential internal tensions within the mosque management. First, a decline in the quality of sermons. The lack of preparation time has resulted in sermons that are general, repetitive, and fail to address the realities of the congregation. Effective public communication depends on preparation, contextual relevance, and emotional engagement. As stated by the informant as follows:

“Sometimes the content of the sermon is something we have heard many times before. It's not that it's bad, but we feel that the sermon does not address the issues currently

facing the local community” (Informant).

This is in line with the view that public communication always involves audience considerations and requires audience analysis. In the context of preaching, the weak planning of sermons at Al Jihad Mosque indicates a systemic internal coordination problem. When scheduling is not done in a structured manner, the quality of the preaching message also declines. As a result, the role of sermons as a medium for raising public awareness becomes weak.

Second, there is social and psychological isolation for khatibs. When khatibs do not feel socially appreciated, they can experience boredom and a decline in their enthusiasm for preaching, and even feel isolated from the congregation. This shows that social relationships are not only symbolic, but also affect the quality of preaching. It emphasizes that social capital, which enables individuals and communities from various backgrounds to engage in cooperative networks with a high level of trust (Baycan & Öner, 2023). If preachers are only considered technical implementers without social involvement, then the social capital that is important for the sustainability of preaching will weaken. This condition can also affect preaching, because one of the keys to successful preaching is emotional closeness and social connection between the preacher and the congregation.

Third, there is a lack of trust among congregants toward the mosque. The lack of transparency in managing sermon schedules and selecting preachers has led to negative perceptions among congregants. Some congregants even question the integrity of the administrators. emphasizes that public participation only grows when communication is conducted honestly, openly, and accountably. Closed communication in public mosques can erode congregants' trust and weaken support for da'wah programs. A study by (Sopyan et al., 2025). confirms the importance of an adaptive role for digital technology in supporting transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in village development, as well as in the mosque environment. Meanwhile, (Maolana et al., 2024). found that documenting activities through social media strengthens socialization and increases the mosque's interaction with the public.

Fourth, the loss of the collective value of da'wah. When da'wah is only managed administratively and individually, the collective value of da'wah as a form of social worship is neglected. The process of social awareness (conscientization) can only occur if communication is dialogical and participatory, not top-down. Dakwah with minimal participation risks producing dry lectures that are far from the spirit of empowering the congregation. This shows that the quality of dakwah is not only assessed from the content of the material presented, but also from the way communication is managed or how the material can provide space for participation by the congregation.

Fifth, there is potential for internal tension. Imbalances of power and communication can create internal conflict within the mosque structure. Religious organizations that lack a functional division of authority and communication will be prone to disorganization. Decisions that can only be made by a few senior administrators without involving all parties increase the risk of division within the religious organization, thereby increasing the risk of division within the organization. In the context of the Al Jihad Mosque, an exclusive communication pattern can cause internal divisions and hinder the mosque's role as a religious and social institution.

From a structural functional theory perspective, a mosque can be seen

as a social system consisting of several important parts, such as administrators, preachers, and congregations, each of which has a role to play in maintaining the continuity of the system. However, if one of these components, in this case the preacher, is not socially connected and communication is poor, then there will be disruption within the mosque. This can be seen in weakened social cohesion, declining quality of preaching, and reduced congregational participation in mosque activities. Thus, these impacts confirm that the issue of internal communication in mosques is not merely a technical problem, but is very important for the continuity of preaching and the social life of the mosque. Ignoring this issue risks weakening the function of the mosque as a center of worship, a center for community development, and a driver of religious social activities.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that communication between the nazir and the khatib faces various structural and cultural barriers that negatively impact the effectiveness of preaching and social life in the mosque. Unclear sermon schedules, one-way communication, a lack of dialogue forums, and social isolation of the khatibs indicate a weak religious organizational communication system that should be open and participatory. The impact of this situation includes a decline in the quality of sermons, weakened social ties between administrators and khatibs at Al Jihad Mosque, and a loss of trust among some congregants in the mosque's management. Sociologically, this indicates the need to improve the communication structure and reorganize social relations in the management of da'wah. Here are some recommendations: First, Nazir should implement an open and written communication system, including the preparation of a structured sermon schedule at Al Jihad Mosque. Second, a communication forum should be established between the khatib, nazir, and congregation for regular evaluation and feedback. Third, the mosque's organizational capacity in managing information, social engagement, and professionalism in preaching should be improved. Fourth, with the right sociological communication approach, Al Jihad Mosque can become a dynamic and inclusive center of socio-religious civilization. This study shows that internal communication issues in mosques are not merely technical matters, but are important for the sustainability of mosques and religious social spaces. These findings can serve as practical guidance for mosque administrators to improve communication systems, while also contributing academically to the study of sociological communication.

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