The Impact of Clickbait News on Online Media Audiences from the Perspective of Islamic Communication: A Case Study of *PALTV.disway.id* Palembang

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Abstract: The phenomenon of clickbait news dissemination in online media has become a serious concern due to its potential influence on readers' mindsets and behavior, particularly within Muslim communities. This study aims to analyze the impact of clickbait news on readers of PALTV.disway.id in Palembang City from the perspective of Islamic communication. The research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, utilizing observation, in-depth interviews with active readers, journalists, and religious figures, as well as documentation analysis. The findings indicate that clickbait news frequently leads to information misunderstanding and a decline in the quality of readers' Islamic understanding, especially when headlines are not aligned with the content. From the perspective of Islamic communication, such practices contradict the principles of ṣidq (truthfulness), tablīgh (transparency), and amānah (trustworthiness) in information dissemination. Another finding reveals an increased level of skepticism toward media outlets that present Islamic issues, driven by the frequent use of provocative headlines unsupported by adequate content. This study highlights the urgency of integrity in Islamic journalism and the importance of media literacy within society. The integration of digital media analysis with Islamic communication principles constitutes the originality of this research. The results are expected to provide practical contributions for media practitioners, government institutions, and da'wah organizations in formulating more ethical communication strategies, as well as academic contributions to the development of Islamic communication studies in the digital era.

Keywords: Clickbait, Islamic Communication, Online Media, PALTV.disway.id, Readers.

Introduction

In the digital era, access to information occurs rapidly and on a massive scale. Technological advancements, particularly internet-based online media, have made Indonesian society increasingly dependent on digital platforms as primary sources of information. According to Siahaan, contemporary social life is closely intertwined with the internet

as a medium of communication and a source of information.[1] On the other hand, Aminudin Basir, Mohamad Sabri Haron, and Nik Yusri Musa emphasize that although the dissemination of information via the internet offers many benefits, the demand for rapid publication also gives rise to negative impacts, particularly in news consumed by the wider public with diverse social backgrounds and age groups.[2]

The scale of internet usage in Indonesia further underscores the urgency of this issue. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) for the 2023–2024 period shows that the number of active internet users reached 221.56 million out of a total population of 278.69 million, with an internet penetration rate of 79.5%, representing an increase of 1.4% compared to the previous period.[3] This progress has driven the transformation of communication media from print and broadcast formats to "new media," characterized by platform convergence and two-way interaction between media outlets and users.[4]

Within the framework of "new media," content circulates across platforms, and cross-format collaboration has become a common practice.[5] McQuail further argues that the main characteristics of new media include connectivity, interactivity, and open access, which position audiences simultaneously as producers and consumers of information.[6] Consequently, the phenomenon of citizen journalism has emerged, expanding public participation in content production while simultaneously challenging established standards of journalistic professionalism.[7]

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[1] Chontina Siahaan, Jeniati Artauli Tampubolon, and Nova Betriani Sinambela, "Diseminasi Informasi Melalui Media Online Sebagai Transformasi Media Konvensional," *Jurnal Signal* 9, no. 2 (2021): 322–24.

[2] Aminudin Basir, Mohamad Sabri Haron, and Nik Yusri Musa, "Kebebasan Media Komunikasi Menurut Perspektif Islam," *Jurnal Hadhari* 1, no. 2 (2009): 65–82.

[3] S Mufti Prasetiyo, Rehan Gustiawan, and F Rizzel Albani, "Analisis Pertumbuhan Pengguna Internet Di Indonesia," *BIIKMA: Buletin Ilmiah Ilmu Komputer Dan Multimedia* 2, no. 1 (2024): 65.

[4] Muhammad Hasyim and Burhanuddin Arafah, "Semiotic Multimodality Communication in the Age of New Media," *Studies in Media and Communication* 11, no. 1 (2023): 96–103.

[5] Martin Lister et al., *New Media: A Critical Introduction* (Routledge, 2008).

[6] Denis McQuail and Mark Deuze, "McQuail's Media and Mass Communication Theory," 2020.

[7] Gushevinalti Gushevinalti, Panji Suminar, and Heri Sunaryanto, "Transformasi Karakteristik Komunikasi Di Era Konvergensi Media," *Bricolage: Jurnal Magister Ilmu Komunikasi* 6, no. 01 (2020): 83–99.

This transformation has had a direct impact on news production practices. Whereas in the era of conventional media profits were generated through subscriptions and institutional reputation, in online media competition has shifted toward virality and web traffic. News items with sensational or clickbait headlines have thus become a primary strategy for attracting clicks.[8] The pressure to be the fastest and most widely read has the potential to encourage the neglect of journalistic ethical codes, with excessive emphasis placed on headline appeal rather than on the accuracy and completeness of content.[9] Maharani and Pasandaran demonstrate that the speed of publication can increase the risk of inaccuracies in news content, ultimately undermining media credibility. This condition is further exacerbated by low reading interest and limited information verification practices among readers.[10]

Clickbait represents a form of media adaptation to the demands of digitalization. Munger argues that clickbait strategies deliberately employ clichéd, exaggerated, and highly expressive language to stimulate audience curiosity and encourage user engagement.[11] The use of sensational expressions such as "wow" and "oh my goodness," along with conspicuous punctuation, constitutes a distinctive feature of clickbait that exploits readers' emotional responses.[12] n the city of Palembang, this practice is also evident in local online news portals, including PALTV.disway.id, which is part of the regional digital media ecosystem. Along with the increasing consumption of online news, clickbait has become increasingly significant as it influences how the public understands social issues. Rahmatika demonstrates that misleading headlines can shape erroneous perceptions and obscure the substantive truth of an event.[13]

From the perspective of media economics, clickbait headlines do

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[8] Hery Setiawan and Wuri Handayani, "Gatekeeping Konten Viral Media Sosial (Studi Kasus Harianjogja. Com, Jogja. Tribunnews. Com, & Suarajogja. Id)," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 5, no. 4 (2022).

[9] Winda Kustiawan et al., "Manajemen Media Online: Online Media Management," *Jurnal Ilmiah Teknik Informatika Dan Komunikasi* 2, no. 2 (2022): 13–17.

[10] Zahra, "Kurangnya Minat Baca," ruangbimbel.co.id, 2025, https://ruangbimbel.co.id/kurangnya-minat-baca.

[11] Kevin Munger, "All the News That's Fit to Click: The Economics of Clickbait Media," *Political Communication* 37, no. 3 (2020): 376–97.

[12] Fitri Rufaidah, "Persepsi Pengelola Media Tentang Clickbait: Studi Deskriptif Pada Media Online Di Kota Bandung" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023).

[13] Nurisma Rahmatika and Guntur Prisanto, "Pengaruh Berita Clickbait Terhadap Kepercayaan Pada Media Di Era Attention Economy," *Avant Garde* 10, no. 2 (2022): 190.

contribute to increased traffic and advertising revenue.[14] However, its impact on public trust and the potential for misinformation is also substantial.[15] Thus, clickbait is not merely a technical problem of journalism, but also an issue of communication ethics with implications for the quality of the public sphere and the formation of public opinion, particularly at the local level, such as in Palembang.

From the perspective of Islamic Communication, clickbait practices contradict the fundamental principles of information dissemination, which require honesty (ṣidq), transparency in conveying messages (tablīgh), and responsibility (amānah). Islam also mandates tabayyun (verification/clarification), as emphasized in Qur'an Surah al-Ḥujurāt, verse 6:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا إِن جَآءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌۢ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوٓا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًۢا بِجَهَٰلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَٰدِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

"O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with some news, verify it carefully, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and then become regretful for what you have done."

In addition, Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah, verse 42, prohibits the mixing of truth and falsehood for particular interests:

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

"And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know it." (Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2:42)

Ibn Kathir's tafsir emphasizes that this verse constitutes a strong warning against all forms of information manipulation.[16] In the context of digital journalism, including local media outlets such as PALTV.disway.id, clickbait practices potentially violate these principles by prioritizing headline appeal over the clarity and accuracy of informational meaning.

From the state-of-the-art perspective, numerous studies have

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[14] Rahmatika and Prisanto.

[15] Cevi Mochamad Taufik, Suhaeri Suhaeri, and Ira Lusiawati, "Taktik Media Mendulang Clickers Melalui Teknik Clickbait," *Jurnal Audience: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 6, no. 2 (2023): 184–93.

[16] Shafiyyurrahman Al-Mubarakfuri and Abu Ihsan Al-Atsari, "Shahih Tafsir Ibnu Katsir," 2011.

examined clickbait in relation to click behavior, reader psychology, and media industry strategies. However, research that situates clickbait within the ethical framework of Islamic Communication—particularly through case studies of local media—remains relatively limited. This research gap is significant, given that local media maintain close socio-cultural ties with their audiences and play a substantial role in shaping public perceptions at the community level. Therefore, the integration of digital communication studies with Islamic ethical values constitutes a distinctive theoretical contribution of this research, differentiating it from previous studies that have tended to focus primarily on technical or quantitative aspects of user behavior.

Conceptually, this study positions clickbait as a communicative practice that influences readers' meaning-making processes, as reflected in three main domains: (1) understanding of news content, (2) perceptions of media credibility, and (3) ethical judgments based on the principles of ṣidq, tablīgh, and amānah in Islamic Communication. This framework aligns with a qualitative case study approach, which emphasizes in-depth exploration of readers' experiences, interpretations, and responses, as well as contextual analysis of news production practices within a single media entity, namely PALTV.disway.id.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study is explicitly directed at addressing the following questions: how clickbait practices are characterized in news published by PALTV.disway.id; how such practices affect readers' understanding and perceptions in the city of Palembang; and how these practices are evaluated from the perspective of Islamic Communication ethics. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the impact of clickbait news on readers of the online media outlet PALTV.disway.id through a qualitative case study, while also assessing its conformity with the principles of Islamic Communication as an ethical foundation for information dissemination in the digital public sphere.

Literature Review

This literature review situates the present study within a broader academic context while identifying empirical and conceptual gaps that remain to be addressed. The phenomenon of clickbait in online media constitutes a strategy designed to capture readers' attention through provocative, sensational, or ambiguous headlines in order to increase clicks and site traffic, often at the expense of information quality and

journalistic credibility. Systematic studies indicate that clickbait practices have become a global trend in digital media research, with research trajectories encompassing clickbait detection, semantic techniques in headlines, psychological effects on audiences, and the relationship between clickbait and the credibility of news content.[17]

The study by Syafieq, Wahid, and Ayuni, entitled The Use of Clickbait in News Headlines to Attract Readers' Interest, employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine clickbait strategies in capturing readers' attention. The findings indicate that while clickbait strategies are effective in increasing clicks, they also pose risks to information quality and negatively affect readers' perceptions of the media.[18] This study is relevant to the present research in that both examine the phenomenon of clickbait in online media; however, they differ in focus. The former places greater emphasis on the strategies and motivations underlying the use of clickbait, whereas the present study concentrates on its impact on readers' perceptions of credibility and trust from the perspective of Islamic Communication, including an evaluation of such practices based on the principles of ṣidq (honesty), tablīgh (truthful dissemination of information), and amānah (moral responsibility).

In a quantitative study, Salsabila, Yulianti, and Puspitaning Ayodya found that clickbait headlines on IDN Times have a significant effect on the level of trust among Generation Z in Gresik Regency, with an influence rate of 27.7%.[19] This finding underscores that clickbait affects not only click rates but also readers' attitudes and trust toward the media. While the study is parallel to the proposed research, it differs in terms of population and media context, thereby reinforcing the need for contextual studies that take local cultural and ethical values into account.

Through a qualitative study on journalists' perceptions of clickbait practices, Robianes identifies ethical concerns arising from the use of clickbait in journalism, particularly those related to

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[17] Daniel Jácobo-Morales and Mauro Marino-Jiménez, "Clickbait: Research, Challenges and Opportunities–A Systematic Literature Review," *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies* 14, no. 4 (2024): e202458.

[18] Risa Dwi Syafieq, Achmad; Wahid, Abdul; dan Ayuni, "Penggunaan Umpan Klik Pada Judul Berita Untuk Menarik Minat Pembaca" (Universitas Islam Kalimantan Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjary, 2018), https://repository.uniska-bjm.ac.id/352/.

[19] and Beta Puspitaning Ayodya. Salsabilla, Laili, Tri Yulianti, "Pengaruh Judul Clickbait Pada Media Online IDN Times Terhadap Tingkat Kepercayaan Gen Z Di Kabupaten Gresik," *Seminar Nasional Hasil Skripsi* 1, no. 1 (2022): 486–89.

professionalism and moral responsibility.[20] Although the focus is on journalists as the producers of news, this study supports the argument that clickbait raises significant moral questions. It therefore provides a theoretical foundation for the present research to assess readers' perspectives on such practices and their conformity with the ethical principles of Islamic Communication.

International literature also reinforces these findings. Studies analyzing clickbait in international media outlets such as The Guardian, The New York Times, El País, and Público indicate that clickbait strategies characterized by incomplete and sensational information increase readership but diminish information quality and audience trust.[21] Moreover, experimental studies employing the Persuasion Knowledge Model have found that emotionally charged clickbait headlines are often perceived as manipulative tactics, leading to negative evaluations of the news source's competence and credibility.[22]

From a theoretical perspective, Framing Theory is crucial for understanding how media not only convey facts but also "frame" news through sensational headlines. Framing influences readers' interpretations and the structure of their understanding of the news they consume, particularly when there is a significant discrepancy between headlines and content. Framing studies on clickbait indicate that such framing strategies can lead to disinformation and biased perceptions among online readers.[23] In addition, Ethical Media Theory underscores the moral principles and ethical values that should guide media practices, particularly with regard to accuracy, fairness, and social responsibility. Studies addressing media ethics in the era of clickbait highlight the dilemmas faced by journalists and the consequent erosion of public trust when traditional journalistic values are sacrificed in

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[20] Hilmi Ananda. Robianes, "Persepsi Wartawan Mengenai Penggunaan Clickbait (Umpan Klik) Pada Judul Berita Di Media Siber: Studi Deskriptif Pada Anggota Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia Di Kabupaten Purwakarta" (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2021), https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/39161/.

[21] Kate Scott, "'Deceptive' Clickbait Headlines: Relevance, Intentions, and Lies," *Journal of Pragmatics* 218 (2023): 71–82.

[22] Prithwiraj Mukherjee, Souvik Dutta, and Arnaud De Bruyn, "Did Clickbait Crack the Code on Virality?," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 50, no. 3 (2022): 482–502.

[23] & Vinisa Nurul Aisyah. Fausta, S. N., "Analisis Framing Berita Clickbait Pada Okezone.Com Dan Detik.Com: Kasus Pembunuhan Oleh Ferdy Sambo.," *KOMUNIKA* 11, no. 2 (2024): 125–135, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22236/komunika.v11i2.14884.

pursuit of clicks.[24]

Other relevant studies address the concept of the attention economy, which explains how digital media employ clickbait as a commodity to capture audience attention for commercial gain, while simultaneously creating tensions with journalistic ethical codes. Such strategies often sacrifice standards of accuracy and informational integrity in favor of attracting clicks and advertising revenue, thereby potentially undermining public trust in the media.[25]

Although numerous studies have been conducted, significant conceptual and methodological gaps remain—particularly the lack of research that integrates empirical analysis of the impact of clickbait on readers with the value-based framework of Islamic Communication and contemporary media theories such as Framing Theory and Ethical Media Theory. Existing studies largely focus on technical aspects, journalists' perceptions, or consequences for media institutions themselves. In contrast, this study seeks to address these gaps by centering on the psychological and social impacts of clickbait on online media audiences, while evaluating such practices through the lens of Islamic communication ethics, specifically the principles of ṣidq, tablīgh, and amānah. Accordingly, this research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the literature on Islamic Communication and digital journalistic ethics in the era of online media.

Research Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, focusing on an in-depth analysis of the impact of clickbait news on online media audiences from the perspective of Islamic Communication on the PALTV.disway.id portal in the city of Palembang. Qualitative research aims to understand the meanings underlying social phenomena based on participants' perspectives. According to Imam Gunawan, qualitative research is an approach that explains quality, values, and meaning through language or words.[26] The data generated consist of verbal descriptions of the research subjects' experiences,

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24 Habib Ur Rahman, "Media Ethics in the Era of Clickbait Journalism: Ethical Dilemmas and Solutions in Online Media," *Journal of Social Sciences Review* 3, no. 4 (2023): 11–20, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.54183/jssr.v3i4.392.

25 Frila Nurfadila, Uud Wahyudin, and Kismiyati El Karimah, "Penggunaan Clickbait Pada Tajuk Utama Berita Dalam Perspektif Etika Jurnalisme," *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendikia* 1, no. 9 (2024): 5379–86.

26 Imam Gunawan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Teori Dan Praktik* (Bumi Aksara, 2022).

perspectives, and responses.[27]

The descriptive nature of this study means that the researcher does not conduct hypothesis testing or statistically examine causal relationships, but rather depicts phenomena as they occur. Burhan Bungin explains that descriptive research aims to systematically and factually present a phenomenon or event. Accordingly, this study is directed at elucidating how readers interpret clickbait headlines, their impact on trust in the media, and their conformity with the principles of Islamic Communication, such as ṣidq (honesty), tablīgh (truthful dissemination), and amānah (moral responsibility).

The approach used in this study is phenomenological, which focuses on understanding the meaning of individuals' subjective experiences of a phenomenon. Rakhmat explains that the phenomenological approach aims to reveal the essence of experiences as perceived by the participants.[28] In this context, the researcher explores readers' experiences when interacting with clickbait news headlines, including aspects such as perceptions, emotions, feelings of being deceived or satisfied, and the implications for trust in the media.

This approach also encompasses two groups of experiences, namely:

1. Readers as consumers of news, and

2. Journalists/Editors as producers of headlines and news content.

Thus, the clickbait phenomenon is understood not only from the perspective of message reception but also from the editorial considerations involved in digital journalism practices.

To enrich the analysis, this study integrates Attention Economy Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory. Attention Economy Theory explains that audience attention is a scarce resource contested by the media,[29] This drives the use of sensational headlines. Meanwhile, Agenda-Setting Theory explains how the media influence public perception by emphasizing certain issues. Integrating these theories with the perspective of Islamic communication ethics allows this study to address a research gap that has largely focused on the technical aspects of

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[27] Rachmat Kriyantono and S Sos, *Teknik Praktis Riset Komunikasi* (Prenada Media, 2014).

[28] Jalaluddin Rakhmat, "Metode Penelitian Komunikasi, Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya," *Ruslan, Rosady*, 2003.

[29] Rakhmat.

clickbait rather than its ethical and psychological implications for Muslim audiences.

The study was conducted in the city of Palembang, focusing on active readers of the online media PALTV.disway.id and editorial staff residing in the area. Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and online (via video call), depending on the availability of informants.

The field research lasted for three months, from August to October 2025, encompassing the stages of informant identification, primary data collection, news content observation, and verification of findings (member checking).

This study utilized two types of data sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with seven informants who held different roles within the PALTV.disway.id news portal ecosystem. The informants consisted of four active readers, two citizen journalists who had previously submitted news to the portal, and one media editor. The relatively small number of informants was selected in accordance with the characteristics of phenomenological research, which emphasizes the depth of experience rather than statistical generalization. Nonetheless, this limitation in the number of informants is acknowledged as a constraint on broader phenomenological generalization.

Secondary data were collected from literature, journals, books, scholarly articles, as well as documentation of headlines and clickbait news content on the PALTV.disway.id portal. Secondary data served as a theoretical foundation and a triangulation tool to strengthen the findings obtained from the field.

The Following Table Presents The Demographic Characteristics Of The Informants Involved In This Study:

Code	Informant Role	Age	Gender	Highest Education	Media Access Frequency
R1	Active reader	21	Male	High School	Daily
R2	Active reader	22	Female	Bachelor's	3–4 times/week
R3	Active reader	23	Male	Bachelor's	Daily
R4	Active reader	35	Female	High School	2–3 times/week
R5	Active reader	27	Male	Bachelor's	2–3 times/week
R6	Active reader	22	Female	Bachelor's	2–3 times/week
R7	Active reader	27	Male	Bachelor's	Daily (work-related)
R8	Active reader	35	Female	Bachelor's	Daily

Data were collected using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, media content observation, and documentation, as described below:

First, In-depth Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore readers' subjective experiences and journalists' editorial considerations regarding the use of clickbait headlines. Each interview lasted between 45 and 75 minutes and was recorded with the informants' consent. This method enabled the researcher to obtain rich and detailed data on informants' perceptions, motivations, and personal experiences.

Second, Media Content Observation. Observations were carried out on the headlines and content of news articles on the PALTV.disway.id portal during the research period. The purpose was to identify clickbait patterns, forms of sensationalism, and discrepancies between headlines and content. This technique helped the researcher understand the editorial practices and framing strategies employed in reporting.[30]

Third, documentation. Documentation, in the form of screenshots of news articles, was used as visual evidence and as material for content analysis. The analysis focused on headline structure, word choice, and news framing, thereby enhancing the validity of data obtained through interviews and observation.[31]

The interviews involved eight readers, conducted either face-to-face or online, with durations ranging from 45 to 80 minutes. Face-to-face interviews typically lasted longer, reflecting the more interactive and detailed discussions. Online interviews, while slightly shorter, provided flexibility for participants and ensured that data could still be gathered in depth. The summary of informants and interview duration is presented below:

Code	Role	Interview Method	Duration
R1	Reader	Face-to-face	60 mins
R2	Reader	Online	50 mins
R3	Reader	Face-to-face	75 mins

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[30] Mhd Panerangan Hasibuan et al., "Analisis Pengukuran Temperatur Udara Dengan Metode Observasi," *Jurnal Garuda Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 1, no. 1 (2023): 8–15.

[31] Yusuf Abdhul, "Metode Observasi: Pengertian, Macam Dan Contoh," *Deepublish Store*, 2022.

Code	Role	Interview Method	Duration
R4	Reader	Online	45 mins
R5	Reader	Face-to-face	70 mins
R6	Reader	Online	60 mins
R7	Reader	Face-to-face	80 mins
R8	Reader	Online	60 mins

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.[32]

Data reduction involved reviewing interview transcripts and observation notes to focus on key themes such as psychological impact, trust in media, and the relevance of Islamic communication ethics.

Data display was achieved by organizing the data into thematic narratives and comparative matrices among informants, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and shared experiences.

Conclusion drawing and verification were carried out through iterative reading of the data, triangulation of sources, and confirmation with informants (member checking), ensuring the validity and reliability of the interpretations.

Ensuring Data Validity, to ensure the rigor of the study, the criteria of credibility, confirmability, and dependability were applied in accordance with Moleong's framework.[33]

Credibility was achieved through source triangulation (readers, journalists, and editors), methodological triangulation (interviews, observation, and documentation), and member checking.

Confirmability was maintained by preserving an audit trail, systematically storing transcripts, and documenting raw data, ensuring that findings were grounded in evidence rather than researcher bias.

Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of the research process, allowing other researchers to retrace the

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[32] J Miles, M.B, Huberman, A.M, dan Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis, A Methods Sourcebook, Edition 3. USA: Sage Publications. Terjemahan Tjetjep Rohindi Rohidi* (Jakarta: UI-Press, 2014).

[33] Lexy J Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021).

procedures and verify the study's findings.

Results and Discussions

Results

Positive and Negative Impacts of Clickbait News

This study aims to explore the impact of clickbait news on readers' understanding and attitudes toward the online media PALTV.disway.id in the city of Palembang from the perspective of Islamic Communication. The main focus is on how clickbait headlines influence readers' perceptions, particularly among university students and young professionals, and how they respond to news content that does not always align with the expectations created by the headlines. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method, reinforced through in-depth interviews, direct observation, visual documentation, and a review of Islamic Communication principles as an analytical perspective.

Clickbait news often provokes mixed reactions. On one hand, this technique is considered effective in attracting attention and increasing digital interaction. On the other hand, clickbait can reduce media credibility if the content does not match the headline, especially for content conveying religious symbols and messages.

Observations of PALTV.disway.id revealed that several articles employ sensational clickbait-style headlines, particularly in Islamic-themed content. One observed example is:

Figure 1. Screenshot of Clickbait News 01
"Subhanallah! This Discovery in the Qur'an Amazes Western Scientists"

Interviews with eight informants yielded varied responses. The researcher categorized these responses into two main trends: positive and negative impacts on readers.

a. Positive Impacts

Several informants acknowledged that clickbait headlines could stimulate interest in Islamic content and encourage further exploration of knowledge through online media.

R2 (24 years old), an Islamic university student, stated: "I am very interested and motivated to explore deeper, especially about the relationship between science and Islamic teachings."

R1 (21 years old), a beverage shop employee, said: "I feel more open to spiritual values that bring peace in life." R1 also hopes that media can continue using creative approaches as long as they do not deviate from educational and religious values.

R3 (23 years old), a communication student, expressed: "I feel more motivated and curious because it gives me a new perspective."

Another example:

Figure 2. Screenshot of Clickbait News 02
"Few People Know! These Simple Acts Can Erase Major Sins"

b. Negative Impacts

However, some readers felt deceived due to inconsistencies between the headline and the actual content of the online news.

R5 (27 years old), a freelancer, stated: "The article content often does not match the headline, so I am skeptical about the media's credibility."

R4 (35 years old), a housewife, assessed that overly bombastic headlines can be misleading: "I feel the articles are not accurate or substantial enough, which makes me doubt the media."

From the perspective of Islamic Communication, the use of clickbait may violate the principle of tablīgh (conveying the truth) if the content does not align with the headline and misleads readers. This is a crucial note for developing a media ethic grounded in Islamic values in the digital sphere.

Clickbait headlines that employ an emotional approach also attract attention, for example:

Figure 3. Screenshot of Clickbait News 03
"Viral! The Story of a Korean Convert Brings Netizens to Tears"

This headline combines elements of virality and emotion, which demonstrably affect readers psychologically and affectively.

R6 (22 years old), a student at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, admitted: "This story makes me appreciate life journeys more and understand the meaning of faith."

R7 (27 years old), a private employee, said: "The story is amazing and reminds us that guidance can come to anyone."

R8 (35 years old), a housewife who enjoys reading religious stories, commented: "The headline is attractive, and the content provides better understanding."

From the perspective of Islamic Communication, clickbait news can be assessed based on the principles of ṣidq (honesty), amānah (trustworthiness), and tablīgh (accurate dissemination). Provocative or misleading headlines that are not supported by relevant and truthful content clearly violate these principles. However, when used to draw attention to content rich in educational and spiritual value, clickbait headlines can function as a contextual medium for dakwah (Islamic outreach) in online media.

Based on interviews, documentation, and observations, it can be concluded that clickbait news on PALTV.disway.id has a dual impact. For some readers, clickbait headlines serve as an effective gateway for delivering positive and religious messages. For others, particularly when the content does not match the headline, it generates disappointment and decreases trust in the media. From an Islamic Communication perspective, balancing headline appeal with informational honesty is a key principle in online media content production.

Readers' Perceptions of Clickbait Headlines by PALTV.disway.id

To understand readers' perceptions of clickbait headline practices by PALTV.disway.id, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with eight informants from diverse social backgrounds, including students, private employees, housewives, and general readers actively accessing digital news. Informants were purposively selected based on their habits in accessing online news, particularly PALTV.disway.id, which is known for using sensational headlines to attract audience attention.

The purpose of these interviews was to explore how readers interpret and respond to provocative headlines, whether they find them helpful in discovering relevant Islamic information or experience disappointment due to mismatches between the headline and the news content. The analysis also draws on Information Gap Theory and Expectation–Decision Theory to explain the psychological drivers behind clicking headlines and the impact of expectation gaps on perceived media credibility.

a. Clickbait 01: "Subhanallah! This Discovery in the Qur'an Amazes Western Scientists"

This headline combines religious and modern scientific elements with emotional phrasing. According to researcher documentation, the article received high traffic, demonstrating the effectiveness of clickbait in attracting Muslim readers.

R2 (22 years old) stated: "The headline sparks curiosity and motivates me to study religion further." For her, the headline reinforces the harmony between Islam and science.

Conversely, R5 (27 years old) commented: "The headline is sensational, but the content is ordinary, so I trust it less." This indicates a gap between expectations and content reality.

R4 (35 years old) added: "If it involves religion, it should be handled more carefully, as it could mislead." This perspective emphasizes the importance of ethics in Islamic content.

b. Clickbait 02: "Few People Know! These Simple Acts Can Erase Major Sins"

This headline addresses a religious theme that evokes curiosity and spiritual hope.

R3 (23 years old) said: "Headlines like this make me want to read and try the practice."

R1 (21 years old) added: "The content matches the headline and is beneficial, so this kind of clickbait is acceptable."

This finding suggests that, from an Islamic Communication perspective, clickbait can function as a medium of tablīgh if the content remains truthful and useful.

c. Clickbait 03: ""Viral! The Story of a Korean Convert Brings Netizens to Tears"

This headline relies on strong emotional and viral elements.

R6 (22 years old) stated: "This story makes me more grateful for guidance."

R7 (27 years old) said: "The headline matches the content and remains inspiring."

R8 (35 years old) mentioned: "I wouldn't have read it without the headline, but the content is excellent."

This indicates that clickbait with a balance between headline and content can actually enhance readers' religious understanding.

Overall, the use of clickbait headlines by PALTV.disway.id produces diverse effects depending on the alignment between headline and content, as well as readers' backgrounds:

1. Positive Impact: Religious-themed clickbait headlines that align with the content can enhance spiritual motivation, broaden Islamic knowledge, and serve as a tool for digital dakwah.

2. Negative Impact: Mismatches between headlines and content lead to feelings of deception, reduce media credibility, and may violate Islamic Communication ethics.

From the perspective of Islamic Communication, clickbait strategies must prioritize the principles of ṣidq, amānah, and tablīgh, ensuring that media not only pursue clicks but also convey truthful, responsible, and beneficial information to the audience.

Discussion

In the rapidly evolving digital era, journalistic practices have undergone significant paradigm shifts. One of the most striking phenomena in this transformation is the widespread use of clickbait headlines—sensational titles designed to attract attention and drive audience clicks. This phenomenon is also evident in local online media such as PALTV.disway.id, which frequently employs exaggerated religious-themed headlines to capture readers' attention.

As previously noted, headlines such as "Subhanallah! This Discovery in the Qur'an Amazes Western Scientists!" function not only as clickbait but also reflect changes in the way religious messages are conveyed within the framework of contemporary Islamic Communication. Such headlines appear to adapt to the fast-paced, emotional, and instantaneous media consumption patterns of modern audiences.

One of the key findings of this study is the emergence of a form of digital dakwah (Islamic outreach) based on emotional appeal, a hallmark of many religious clickbait articles. This phenomenon has rarely been examined in depth in the academic literature, particularly in local contexts such as Palembang. Through in-depth interviews, the third informant, Siti Rohana, illustrated readers' ambivalence toward such content:

"I enjoy reading it because it sparks curiosity, but if the content is ordinary, I end up discouraged."

This statement reflects the tension between emotional attraction to provocative religious headlines and disappointment due to the mismatch between headline and content. In other words, there is a conflict between the noble values of dakwah and the attention-driven economy that pursues clicks and traffic.

From an Islamic Communication perspective, such delivery strategies can be viewed as a form of contemporary ijtihād, an effort to adapt dakwah methods to digital audiences while remaining consistent with the principles of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. According to Malik Ibrahim and Agus Riyadi, Islamic communication must be adaptive to public communication patterns as long as it aligns with these principles. Thus, the presence of religious clickbait headlines should not be automatically rejected but examined to determine whether their form and substance remain within the boundaries of Islamic values.

Analysis of several clickbait articles from PALTV.disway.id shows that religious content framed with emotional elements has considerable potential to engage audiences, increase virality, and expand the reach of dakwah messages. However, this practice also raises ethical dilemmas, especially when religious content is commodified for commercial purposes. The seventh informant, Renza, noted:

"I enjoy religious news, but if it's made too sensational, it feels like 'selling faith.'"

This statement aligns with the findings of M. Rizky Kertanegara, who emphasizes that "when religion is packaged as content commodity, there is a high risk of degrading its spiritual meaning." In other words, instead of enhancing spirituality, clickbait strategies risk reducing religious teachings to mere objects of sensationalism.

In the case of PALTV.disway.id, religious clickbait practices intersect with Agenda-Setting Theory, the Attention Economy concept, and religious messaging. However, deeper analysis indicates a risk of spiritual manipulation that contradicts the Islamic principles of tablīgh (truthful dissemination) and amānah (moral responsibility). According to Indah Siti Nurazizah and Nia Kurniati Syam, "Islamic communication ethics not only convey the truth but also ensure that its delivery does not deceive or mislead." This implies that it is not enough for content to be factually correct; the method of delivery must also uphold ṣidq, clarity, and integrity.

This can be further structured in Table 1, which presents the forms of deviation from dakwah values in the practice of religious clickbait on PALTV.disway.id:

Table 1. Forms of Deviation from Dakwah Values in Religious Clickbait Practices on PALTV.disway.id

Clickbait Practice	Violated Islamic Value	Explanation
Exaggerated claims, e.g., "Western Scientists Prove the Qur'an's Truth"	Ṣidq (Honesty)	Scientific claims exaggerated without clear references can undermine the credibility of the *dakwah* message.
Emotionalized headlines, e.g., "Brings Readers to Tears"	Amānah (Integrity)	Manipulating readers' emotions can damage public trust in the *dakwah* message.
Sensational headline but shallow content	Balāgh (Clarity of Message)	Incomplete information may mislead readers' understanding.

This phenomenon underscores the urgent need to balance click-attracting strategies with efforts to maintain ethical integrity. In Islamic Communication, the method of message delivery is as important as the message content itself. Muhammad Ghifari asserts that "Islamic media must prioritize the principle of al-ḥaqq (truth) and avoid ghurūr (deception), even in the virtual realm." Therefore, using attractive headlines is not inherently wrong as long as the content is appropriate, educational, and does not deviate from syarī'ah values.

Unfortunately, this study found that most clickbait headlines on PALTV.disway.id did not correspond with the content. This situation demonstrates the potential for ghurūr al-ma'nā (misleading meaning), a form of distortion that contradicts the principles of tabyīn (clarification) and tablīgh (trustworthy dissemination) in Islamic Communication.

From an intertextual perspective, particularly the thought of Fazlur Rahman, religious clickbait headlines should be understood as part of a social interpretation of religious values in contemporary contexts. Rahman emphasizes the importance of contextual understanding, asserting that "individual and collective piety must be built on a foundation of knowledge, not mere emotion." Therefore, Islamic media should not make emotion the primary tool of dakwah but prioritize rational, communicative, and responsible approaches.

This study highlights the ethical and strategic dilemmas in disseminating dakwah through digital media. On one hand, sensational

religious headlines effectively attract reader interest and expand the reach of messages. On the other hand, without meaningful content, this approach risks spiritual deception, which undermines the mission of Islamic dakwah. Therefore, it is crucial for media like PALTV.disway.id to evaluate their delivery strategies to achieve a balance between appeal and integrity, in accordance with the principles of akhlaq al-karīm (noble ethics) in Islamic Communication.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the practice of using clickbait headlines on the online media PALTV.disway.id in Palembang has ambivalent effects: it is effective in capturing readers' attention but can potentially undermine public trust when there is a mismatch between the headline and the actual content. From the perspective of Islamic Communication, this practice contradicts the principles of ṣidq (honesty), tablīgh (truthful dissemination), and amānah (moral responsibility), while also neglecting the principle of tabayyun as a basis for verification and caution in information delivery.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the integration of Islamic ethical values with Information Gap Theory and the Expectation–Decision model in digital communication studies, emphasizing that the optimization of clicks should never be separated from the media's moral responsibility. Practically, online media need to prioritize the accuracy and proportionality of headlines as part of a strategy to sustain credibility, rather than merely as a tool to increase traffic.

As a policy recommendation, this study encourages local media to develop ethical guidelines for headline writing based on Islamic Communication values, integrated into editorial SOPs and aligned with the Indonesian Press Council's Cyber Media Reporting Guidelines, particularly regarding accuracy, verification, and the prohibition of misleading the public. Implementation of these guidelines should be supported through Islamic ethics-based journalism training for journalists and media literacy programs for the public, in order to build an ethical, credible, and public-oriented digital communication ecosystem.

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