

Prophetic Communication Strategies Against Hypocrisy: A Case Study of Abdullah bin Ubay in Early 7th Century Islamic Leadership

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Abstract

The leadership of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina faced significant internal challenges, notably from Abdullah bin Ubay, a key figure known for his hypocrisy and efforts to destabilize the Muslim community. His actions, including slander, hoaxes, and provocations, posed serious threats to the unity and progress of Islamic da'wah during its formative years. This study investigates the impact of Abdullah bin Ubay's negative communications and the strategic responses of the Prophet between the 2nd and 9th years of Hijrah. Using a qualitative, library-based research method and a political-historical lens, the study identifies two main types of messages from Abdullah bin Ubay: verbal and non-verbal. Verbal attacks included slander, such as the false accusations during the Battle of Banu Mustaliq and the incident involving Aisyah and Shafwan bin al-Mu'attal. Non-verbal provocations included actions like troop withdrawal during the Battle of Uhud, intended to weaken morale and sow division. In response, Prophet Muhammad employed a set of wise and strategic communication methods. He showed patience, avoided public confrontation,

and entrusted inner intentions to Allah's judgment. He used reasoned dialogue, refrained from punitive actions like leading Ubay's funeral prayer, and chose reconciliation over retaliation. The Prophet also promoted consultation, verified information, and practiced direct clarification to counter hoaxes. The study concludes that the Prophet's approach reflects a profound balance of spiritual integrity, political wisdom, and social resilience, offering enduring lessons in leadership, conflict resolution, and ethical communication.

Keywords: *Communication Strategy; Hypocrisy; Hoax; Prophet Muhammad; Abdullah bin Ubay*

1. Introduction

The arrival of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina in 622 CE marked not only a physical migration but a profound socio-political transformation in the Arabian Peninsula (Farhan et al., 2024) (Islam, 2025). At that time, Medina, then known as Yathrib, was rife with tribal divisions, particularly between the Aus and Khazraj tribes, whose rivalries often erupted into violence (Hamudy & Hamudy, 2020). Many Medinans hoped that the Prophet's leadership would offer a new moral and spiritual framework capable of unifying the fragmented society under principles of justice, brotherhood, and ethical governance. (Atamimi et al., 2024). However, the Prophet's growing influence disrupted existing power structures, particularly the ambitions of local leaders like Abdullah bin Ubay bin Salul, who saw his political aspirations threatened by the Prophet's rising authority (Jaiyeoba et al., 2024). Abdullah bin Ubay's tactics were sophisticated and largely centered on persuasive communication. He skillfully manipulated tribal sentiments and social anxieties, using misinformation, slander, and political rhetoric to sow division and weaken communal trust. His role in events such as the Hadith al-Ifk, the false accusation of adultery against Aisyah (RA), the Prophet's wife, and his inflammatory remarks during military campaigns exemplify the strategic use of language to create discord (Quadir, 2022). These actions, though veiled in civility, represent some of the earliest recorded instances of political disinformation within Islamic history. Despite Abdullah's antagonism, the Prophet (peace be upon him) consistently responded with restraint, justice, and ethical communication, choosing not to expose or punish hypocrites publicly unless divine revelation specified their wrongdoing (Kilic et al., 2025). This approach preserved community cohesion while maintaining the moral high ground.

This research is important because it highlights how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) navigated internal political subversion not through coercion or retaliation, but through strategic, ethical, and communicative leadership. In today's world marked by political polarization, misinformation, and a crisis of ethical leadership, the Prophet's example offers valuable lessons in maintaining moral integrity while managing internal dissent. By exploring the communicative strategies the Prophet used to counter slander, manipulation, and social division, this study aims to contribute not only to Islamic scholarship but also to contemporary discussions on ethical and resilient leadership practices (Wahid, 2024).

Previous research on Islamic leadership has largely focused on theological and moral frameworks, especially Qur'anic teachings about hypocrisy (*nifaq*), justice, and patience. Scholars have emphasized moral responses to hypocrisy, such as promoting honesty, patience, and the verification of information (*tabayyun*) in community leadership (Sabri & Abdul Rahim, 2023). Relatively few studies specifically examine how the Prophet managed misinformation, slander, and manipulation using rhetorical and strategic communication methods (Raza et al., 2024). Studies on prophetic communication often highlight interpersonal etiquette, aesthetics, and sincerity in *da'wah* practices, but rarely do they analyze how the Prophet responded to organized political disinformation and internal opposition in a systematic or strategic manner (Mokodenseho et al., 2024). In terms of communication theory, some scholarship has attempted to draw connections between Islamic communication ethics and modern theories, such as strategic communication, emotional intelligence, or persuasive rhetoric.

However, there is still a lack of research that directly applies structured communication theories such as Speech Act Theory (Searle) or Berlo's SMCR model to analyze the Prophet's leadership and communicative responses to internal sabotage (Alhamidi et al., 2019).. Additionally, while the literature acknowledges the Prophet's restraint and ethical consistency, it rarely contextualizes these within models of conflict communication, leadership under pressure, or crisis messaging, thus leaving a significant gap in both Islamic and communication studies.

There is a clear research gap in the academic exploration of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) communication strategies in responding to internal political subversion. While existing literature addresses theological and moral dimensions of dealing with hypocrisy, it often overlooks the rhetorical and strategic aspects of the Prophet's communication in high-stakes political scenarios. The absence of

interdisciplinary studies that integrate Islamic ethics with modern communication theory, especially in contexts involving misinformation, character defamation, and leadership under internal pressure, limits the practical applicability of prophetic leadership principles. Moreover, in contemporary Muslim societies, leaders often lack a clear communicative framework grounded in both ethical and strategic principles to address internal crises, misinformation, and societal fragmentation. This underscores the need for a robust and historically grounded model of Prophetic communication that speaks to today's leadership challenges.

This study aims to analyze the communication strategies employed by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in responding to internal political opposition, particularly through the case of Abdullah bin Ubay, using modern communication theories. It also seeks to develop a model of Prophetic Strategic Communication that can inform contemporary leadership practices in contexts of internal conflict, misinformation, and ethical crisis.

2. Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in library-based research and context-sensitive textual analysis. Its central aim is to explore how Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) utilized strategic and ethical communication to counter misinformation, slander, and political manipulation by Abdullah bin Ubay during the foundational years of the Islamic community in Medina. Instead of empirical data, this method draws insights from primary Islamic texts and authoritative secondary literature, a fitting approach given the theological, historical, and discursive nature of the subject.

2.1 Define Phase

This phase establishes the research's scope, objectives, and the types of data required.

- a. Research Objective: To analyze Prophet Muhammad's strategic and ethical communication in response to misinformation, slander, and political manipulation by Abdullah bin Ubay.
- b. Research Approach: Qualitative, library-based research using context-sensitive textual analysis.
- c. Historical Context: The study focuses on the period from the 2nd to the 9th year after the Hijrah (624–631 CE). This critical era saw the establishment, challenges, and consolidation of the Islamic state in Medina, including key events such as the Battle of Badr (2 AH), Battle of Uhud (3 AH), Battle of the Trench (5 AH), Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (6–7 AH), and the 'Year of Delegations' (9 AH).

These events offer a clear chronological framework to track the Prophet's communicative responses.

- d. Data Characteristics: The methodology seeks to extract historical, rhetorical, and theoretical insights from theological and historical texts, allowing for a nuanced interpretation of the Prophet's communication style and leadership strategies.

2.2 Search Phase

This study's "search" phase is inherently linked to its library-based nature, focusing on identifying and collecting relevant authoritative texts.

a. Primary Sources:

- 1) The Qur'an (specifically verses on hypocrisy, unity, and ethics).
- 2) Hadith collections (e.g., *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*).
- 3) Classical *Tafsir* works (e.g., Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi).
- 4) Historical biographies (e.g., Ibn Ishaq's *Sirah*, Al-Waqidi's *al-Maghazi*).

b. Secondary Sources:

- 1) Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic monographs, and graduate theses.
- 2) Focus Areas: Islamic leadership, prophetic ethics, communication theory, and early Islamic political developments.

- c. Source Location: University libraries and scholarly databases are used to ensure academic rigor for secondary literature.

2.3 Select Phase

The selection of data sources in this methodology is guided by specific criteria to ensure the authenticity, credibility, and relevance of the chosen texts.

Table 1. Source Inclusion Criteria

No	Source Type	Criteria for Inclusion	Verification Method
1	Primary Texts	Scholarly Credibility, Textual Authenticity, Relevance to Research Questions, and Interdisciplinary Applicability. Offer detailed narratives and theological insights.	Cross-validated through multiple authoritative sources to ensure consistency.

No	Source Type	Criteria for Inclusion	Verification Method
2	Secondary Texts	Scholarly Credibility, Relevance to Research Questions, and Interdisciplinary Applicability. Focus on Islamic leadership, prophetic ethics, communication theory, and early Islamic political developments.	Selected through university libraries and scholarly databases to ensure academic rigor.

2.4 Analyze Phase

This phase involves a rigorous, multi-layered approach to interpreting the selected texts.

- a. Context-Sensitive Textual Analysis: This is the core analytical method, allowing for an in-depth examination of narrative events, speech acts, and rhetorical interactions between the Prophet and Abdullah bin Ubay.
- b. Thematic Coding:
 - 1) Categorization: Each relevant instance (direct speech, indirect response, nonverbal act) is categorized.
 - 2) Coding: Instances are coded based on their communicative function, ethical content, and strategic significance.
 - 3) Key Themes Identified: Public silence versus private correction, ethical restraint versus political expediency, revelation-based clarification versus rumor control, and truth-telling versus misinformation.
 - 4) Reasoning: The coding process uses both deductive (informed by theoretical frameworks to identify predefined themes like speech acts or ethical constraints) and inductive reasoning (allowing new insights to emerge from the material, leading to refinements in categories).
- c. Theoretical Frameworks:
 - 1) Speech Act Theory (J.L. Austin & John Searle): This theory interprets utterances as performative actions. The Prophet's words are analyzed as intentional communicative acts with specific social and political purposes (e.g., his silence or recourse to divine revelation as deliberate *illocutionary acts*). The study also considers the *perlocutionary effect* and how these acts impacted the community.

- 2) Berlo's SMCR Model (Source, Message, Channel, Receiver): This model dissects the communication structure. Each communicative episode is analyzed for the source's credibility, message clarity and tone, communication medium (e.g., sermon, private consultation, revelation), and audience reception. This helps highlight strategic differences in communication between the Prophet and Abdullah bin Ubay.
- d. Integration of Ethical and Theological Dimensions: A unique aspect of this analysis is treating communication as a reflection of Islamic values like truthfulness (*ṣidq*), restraint (*ḥilm*), wisdom (*hikmah*), and justice (*ʿadl*). These principles serve as a moral compass, examining not just *what* and *how* communication occurred, but also *why*, grounded in prophetic ethics.
- e. Source Triangulation and Theoretical Application: Enhances reliability and interpretive depth by interpreting primary texts through classical exegesis and modern communication theories. Thematic codes are tested across multiple events for consistency. Special attention is given to the Prophet's nonverbal cues (silence, inclusive decision-making, appeals to divine instruction) as integral communicative elements.

2.5 Present Phase

The final stage involves synthesizing and presenting the findings in a coherent and insightful manner.

- a. Synthesis: The study aims to uncover a timeless paradigm of leadership and ethical messaging by merging classical Islamic historiography with modern theoretical insights.
- b. Model Identification: It positions the Prophet's communication not only as a historical response to crisis but also as a model for contemporary leadership facing misinformation, internal division, and character defamation.
- c. Structure: Findings are presented to demonstrate how the Prophet Muhammad responded to internal threats through communication, guided by the ethical principles embedded in Islamic teachings.

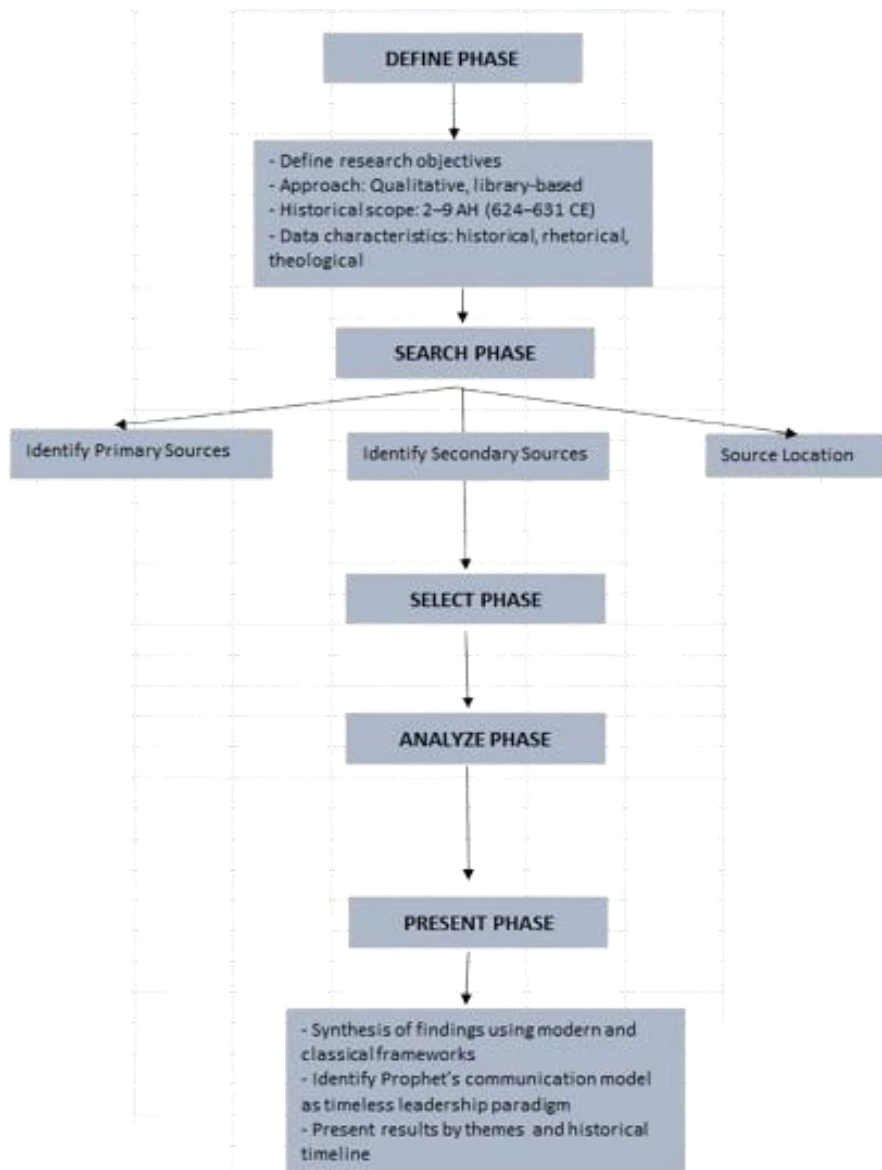


Figure 1. Research Method Flowchart: Prophetic Communication Strategies Against Hypocrisy

3. Result

3.1 Communication Strategies of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him): A Model of Ethical Leadership and High-Context Engagement

The communication strategies employed by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during his leadership in Medina demonstrate a profound blend of ethical conviction, situational awareness, and strategic

restraint (Zulaiha, 2024). Drawing from Qur'anic guidance and exemplified through his lived Sunnah, the Prophet's approach to both verbal and non-verbal interaction was deliberate, compassionate, and anchored in wisdom (hikmah) (Zul et al., 2024). Contrary to a reactive or emotionally driven communication style, his methods were rooted in high-context communication, where silence, timing, tone, and contextual cues played as significant a role as spoken words. This was particularly evident during times of communal tension or internal crisis, such as the Incident of Ifk or the withdrawal of troops at the Battle of Uhud.

Primary among his strategies was the use of Qur'anically inspired speech types. These include qawlan baligha (effective and impactful speech), qawlan maysura (simple and accessible communication), qawlan karima (noble and dignified words), qawlan ma'rufa (socially accepted and good speech), and qawlan layyina (gentle and compassionate expression). These speech acts were not rhetorical flourishes but reflected a strategic alignment with the emotional and social conditions of his audience. For instance, during sensitive situations involving his family or companions, he often employed qawlan karima or qawlan layyina, reinforcing dignity and emotional care. When addressing tribal leaders or adversaries, his tone would shift to qawlan baligha, emphasizing clarity and authority. These different forms of speech were instrumental in diffusing tension, affirming justice, and preserving community unity.

Equally significant was the Prophet's use of non-verbal communication, especially silence. In key episodes such as the Ifk incident, where his wife Aisha (RA) was falsely accused of immorality, the Prophet's choice to remain silent during the initial phase of the scandal was a conscious communicative act. Rather than reacting impulsively to unverified claims, he allowed space for clarity, pursued private consultation (shura), and ultimately deferred to divine revelation before taking public action. His silence thus functioned as a form of moral leadership, signaling trust in divine justice while preventing premature communal rupture. Modern communication theory recognizes such silence as a form of high-context strategy, where restraint communicates integrity, composure, and commitment to truth.

Another key element of the Prophet's communication strategy was his consistent reliance on consultation (Ikhsan & Busrul, 2025). When confronted with slander or internal unrest, he would seek advice from trusted companions such as Ali ibn Abi Talib and Usama ibn Zayd before formulating a public response. This participatory model not only legitimized his decisions but also fostered a culture of collective responsibility. His deference to divine revelation, as seen in his handling

of the Ifk accusation and the eventual revelation of Surah An-Nur, highlights the ethical foundation of his communication, where truth and justice were sought through verified means, not emotional pressure or public retaliation.

The Prophet also exercised remarkable emotional intelligence in navigating conflict (Abdullah, 2022). He did not respond to Abdullah bin Ubay's provocations with punitive measures or public denunciation. Instead, he maintained composure, applied indirect correction, and used prophetic guidance to expose duplicity through education rather than confrontation. His use of public sermons to reinforce values of truthfulness, justice, and unity without naming individuals illustrates a sophisticated form of strategic messaging that protected the community from further division while subtly countering misinformation. In this light, the Prophet's communication model emerges not only as spiritually exemplary but also as a pragmatic framework for contemporary leadership: one that upholds ethical restraint, prioritizes communal welfare, and leverages both speech and silence as tools of conflict management and trust-building.

3.2 Communication Tactics of Abdullah bin Ubay: Hypocrisy, Misinformation, and Political Manipulation

In contrast to the Prophet's principled and unifying communication, the tactics employed by Abdullah bin Ubay, leader of the hypocrites (munafiqun) in Medina, were marked by duplicity, misinformation, and self-serving political maneuvering. As a tribal leader from the Khazraj who was poised to assume leadership before the Prophet's arrival, Abdullah saw his ambitions thwarted and responded not with open opposition, but with strategic subversion cloaked in outward allegiance. His communication was characterized by hypocrisy (nifaq), where public displays of loyalty were coupled with private efforts to undermine the Prophet's leadership. This dual behavior rendered his threat particularly insidious, as it sowed doubt and division from within the Muslim community itself.

One of Abdullah bin Ubay's most harmful tactics was his reliance on slander and rumor-mongering, best exemplified in the Incident of Ifk. Although he never directly accused Aisha (RA), he initiated and amplified the circulation of doubt regarding her integrity. By using ambiguous and suggestive language, he created a climate of suspicion without exposing himself to direct accountability. This method of plausible deniability, where insinuations replace explicit claims, made it difficult to confront him directly without risking further social unrest. His behavior in this episode aligns closely with modern definitions of strategic

disinformation, wherein falsehoods are seeded subtly and allowed to grow through public conjecture.

Abdullah also frequently employed tribal and emotional appeals, manipulating long-standing tensions between the Aus and Khazraj to question the Prophet's authority. One recorded statement "Do not give to those with the Messenger of Allah, so that they disperse from him" was a thinly veiled attempt to sever the support of the Muhajirun and create economic divisions. His rhetoric often invoked concepts of tribal pride and hierarchy, contrasting the 'noble' Medinans with the 'lowly' immigrants. These statements, though emotionally charged, lacked any ethical or logical grounding and served only to fracture communal solidarity.

A further tactic involved symbolic acts of dissent, such as Abdullah's highly public withdrawal from the Muslim army during the Battle of Uhud, taking 300 of his followers with him. This action was not merely military it was a calculated non-verbal political message, aimed at publicly undermining the Prophet's leadership without engaging in outright rebellion. Such staged performances sent powerful cues to his sympathizers and reinforced his role as an internal saboteur. Through this, Abdullah cultivated an image of alternative leadership, portraying himself as the rational dissenter in contrast to the Prophet's perceived 'radical' decisions.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of Abdullah's communication was his practice of double-tongued speech. While he presented himself as a Muslim in public, his private statements and behavior contradicted the values of sincerity and loyalty. His ambiguous statements, when scrutinized through the lens of Speech Act Theory, reveal a consistent use of illocutionary acts aimed at undermining communal trust assertions and questions that seemed harmless but carried damaging implications. These acts had serious perlocutionary effects, fostering mistrust, gossip, and disunity. Notably, his claims were never supported by evidence or testimony, violating even the most basic standards of reliable communication. As such, his rhetorical behavior aligns with what legal theorists and communication scholars describe as hoax-based discourse, in which narrative manipulation replaces factual testimony.

Collectively, these tactics reveal a communication strategy grounded in ego, resentment, and political calculation. Unlike external enemies, Abdullah's duplicity was internal and systemic, making it more corrosive and difficult to neutralize. The Prophet's refusal to confront him publicly unless through revelation or overwhelming need demonstrates an understanding of the social cost of amplifying such figures. By responding

with restraint, truth, and community-centered messaging, the Prophet marginalized Abdullah's influence without elevating his visibility. In this contrast, the two figures represent opposite poles of communicative leadership: one based on moral clarity and ethical governance, the other on manipulation and selfish ambition.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Prophet's Communication Strategy in Context

Beyond the immediate dynamics of crisis management, the Prophet Muhammad's communication approach reveals a sophisticated integration of sociopolitical awareness, ethical reasoning, and psychological insight that transcends typical crisis communication models. His handling of internal provocations such as those by Abdullah bin Ubay illustrates not only tactical adeptness but also a visionary understanding of community building that prioritizes systemic resilience over short-term control.

One critical dimension often overlooked in traditional analyses is the Prophet's anticipatory foresight in managing group identity and collective memory (Abrori et al., 2025). His strategic silence and inclusive leadership were not merely reactive or defensive tactics but proactive measures aimed at constructing a coherent, stable Muslim identity amidst competing tribal loyalties and external threats. By allowing accusations to unfold with divine verification and permitting dissenters a place within the communal framework, he effectively minimized fragmentation risk, fostering a shared narrative grounded in justice and mercy. This narrative coherence, a key element in social identity theory, enhances group cohesion by embedding conflict resolution within a collective moral framework.

Moreover, the Prophet's non-verbal communication strategies such as refraining from public condemnation or retaliatory measures can be understood through the prism of symbolic interactionism. His leadership relied heavily on the shared meanings and interpretations within the early Muslim community. For instance, Abdullah bin Ubay's troop withdrawal symbolized more than mere disloyalty; it was a performative act challenging the legitimacy of the nascent Muslim polity. The Prophet's refusal to publicly counter or delegitimize this act allowed the community to interpret and internalize the event's moral implications independently, strengthening their collective critical faculties and resilience. This use of symbolic interaction and interpretive agency contrasts sharply with contemporary crisis communication tactics that often seek to monopolize

narrative control, thereby limiting community agency and fostering polarization.

Another facet of the Prophet's approach that warrants exploration is his nuanced management of *power dynamics* and *conflict asymmetry*. Abdullah bin Ubay wielded influence based on tribal affiliations and political maneuvering, creating an asymmetrical power struggle that the Prophet had to navigate without fracturing fragile alliances. Instead of confronting this imbalance through direct power assertion, the Prophet employed soft power a concept articulated by Joseph Nye which leverages attraction and moral legitimacy rather than coercion. His communication strategy operated by elevating ethical standards and communal values above transactional political power, thereby redefining leadership legitimacy in terms of moral authority rather than brute force or political dominance. This approach subverts conventional realpolitik assumptions and offers a model of leadership grounded in principled influence.

Additionally, the Prophet's commitment to dialogical communication played a crucial role in diffusing tension and fostering mutual understanding. By maintaining open channels of communication even with adversarial figures he encouraged a culture of transparency and accountability. This approach anticipates elements of dialogic communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of open-ended, respectful, and reciprocal dialogue in managing conflict. Through such engagement, the Prophet not only mitigated the risks of covert dissent but also modeled a participatory form of governance where dissent could be negotiated rather than suppressed. This has profound implications for modern leadership, suggesting that sustainable social cohesion depends on the capacity to accommodate dissent within inclusive, principled dialogue rather than exclusionary tactics.

From a psychological standpoint, the Prophet's communication style demonstrates an acute awareness of group emotional dynamics and social contagion. By consciously regulating his own emotional expression particularly by refraining from public outbursts or hasty judgments he set a tone of calm and reasoned deliberation that tempered collective anxiety and hostility. This regulation of affect is critical in crisis situations, where heightened emotions can escalate conflict and lead to irrational decision-making. Contemporary leadership literature increasingly recognizes emotional intelligence as a core leadership competency; the Prophet's example predates this modern concept but embodies its principles in practice, underscoring the timeless relevance of emotional regulation in leadership communication.

The Prophet's handling of internal crises contributes to a reevaluation of leadership temporality. Modern crisis communication often privileges immediate, visible responses aimed at short-term damage control. In contrast, the Prophet's strategies reflect a long-term temporal orientation, where communication actions are designed to shape enduring social realities rather than merely manage transient events. His patience and strategic delay in judgment during the Incident of Ifk exemplify this extended temporal perspective, emphasizing the gradual emergence of truth and social healing over quick fixes. This long-term vision is particularly instructive for contemporary leaders operating in fast-paced media environments that often reward immediacy at the expense of accuracy and ethical reflection.

Finally, the Prophet's leadership through communication invites a reconsideration of ethical pragmatism. Rather than adhering rigidly to theoretical ideals or expedient tactics, he negotiated a path that balanced ethical imperatives with pragmatic necessities. His inclusive treatment of Abdullah bin Ubay did not signal naivety but a sophisticated ethical calculus aimed at preserving the integrity and unity of the community while exposing and marginalizing hypocrisy through social processes rather than coercive exclusion. This blend of ethics and pragmatism enriches contemporary debates on leadership ethics, which often polarize between idealism and *realpolitik*, by illustrating how moral leadership can be both principled and strategically effective.

4.2 Contrasting Leadership Communication in Historical and Modern Contexts

This study reveals that Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) communication strategies in addressing the hypocrisy and subversive actions of Abdullah bin Ubay were distinguished by ethical restraint, strategic patience, and a commitment to long-term social cohesion. Unlike historical leaders such as Julius Caesar who swiftly suppressed political opposition or Napoleon Bonaparte who deployed propaganda to control public perception the Prophet avoided public retaliation and reactionary tactics. Instead, his methods prioritized dialogue, information verification, consultation, and reliance on divine guidance, as noted by (Aziz & Amir, 2025). This approach aligns more closely with contemporary transformational leadership models that emphasize moral authority, emotional intelligence, and inclusive governance. Previous research on Islamic leadership, such as the works of Al-Azmi (2017) and Rahman (2020), often portrays the Prophet as a moral and spiritual exemplar but tends to overlook the specific strategic dimensions of his communication in response to internal threats. This study therefore offers a novel contribution by examining both the rhetorical and non-verbal

responses of the Prophet in key incidents including the Ifk slander episode, the withdrawal at Uhud, and the pre-Hudaybiyyah hoaxes through the combined lens of Islamic historiography and modern communication theory. However, the study is not without limitations. Its reliance on classical Islamic sources means it is bound by the epistemological assumptions and narrational authenticity of early Islamic historiography, which, while foundational, is open to critical scrutiny in modern academic discourse.

Furthermore, while theoretical frameworks such as Speech Act Theory and Berlo's SMCR model provide useful analytical tools, their application to a 7th-century religious context must be handled with caution to avoid historical and conceptual anachronism. Nonetheless, the study successfully integrates Islamic ethical paradigms with contemporary communication models, revealing how the Prophet's actions can be interpreted as a unique model of ethical crisis management and spiritualized leadership. This contributes to a broader understanding of conflict resolution, especially in religious-political settings, by highlighting how truthfulness (*ṣidq*), forbearance (*ḥilm*), wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and justice (*ʿadl*) served as guiding principles in responding to misinformation and internal dissent.

4.3 Ethics, Psychology, and Political Science

This study demonstrates that the communication strategies of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are not only significant within the domain of religious or rhetorical analysis but also resonate meaningfully across the disciplines of ethics, psychology, and political science. Ethically, his emphasis on *rahmah* (mercy), *ʿadl* (justice), and *ḥilm* (forbearance) reflects a normative model of moral leadership that prioritizes reconciliation over retaliation. In the context of his interactions with Abdullah bin Ubay a prominent hypocrite and political agitator the Prophet's forbearance, refusal to escalate hostilities, and consistent concern for communal harmony signal a deeply principled form of leadership rooted in divine values yet responsive to human realities. Prior scholarship, such as that by Nasr and Kamali, has highlighted the moral character of the Prophet in general terms, but this study provides a more targeted exploration of how that character informed real-time strategic communication under conditions of internal threat.

Psychologically, his restraint and measured silence during times of tension, combined with public consultation (*shura*), resonate with principles of emotional regulation and social identity theory, which emphasize the importance of managing collective emotions and reinforcing group identity in conflict scenarios. Politically, the Prophet's

avoidance of public confrontation with Abdullah bin Ubay, while subtly neutralizing his influence, reflects a sophisticated understanding of statecraft. It illustrates how inclusive governance rather than authoritarian suppression can defuse dissent and safeguard societal unity. These findings offer an important counterpoint to both ancient and modern examples of leaders who respond to opposition with force, propaganda, or exclusion. Nevertheless, this study also acknowledges its limitations. The primary sources consulted, while rich and foundational in Islamic tradition, are not always subject to the same empirical scrutiny applied in secular historical or political science methodologies. Moreover, applying modern theories such as speech act theory, emotional psychology, or political inclusion models to a 7th-century context requires careful hermeneutics to avoid anachronism or reductive analysis. Despite these interpretive challenges, this research significantly contributes to the broader understanding of ethical leadership by demonstrating how the Prophet's communication style integrated moral values, emotional intelligence, and strategic foresight. It presents a holistic leadership model that remains profoundly relevant to contemporary discourses on governance, social cohesion, and conflict resolution.

4.4 Practical Applications: Lessons for Contemporary Leadership and Conflict Resolution

The findings of this study underscore the practical applicability of Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) communication strategies in contemporary leadership, particularly within contexts of organizational, political, and conflict resolution. His model promotes a leadership ethic that is measured, inclusive, and morally grounded qualities increasingly necessary in an era marked by digital immediacy, misinformation, and polarized discourse. One of the most salient lessons is the Prophet's use of strategic patience and silence in response to internal threats, a communication technique that contemporary leaders can adopt to avoid exacerbating crises through impulsive or emotionally charged responses. This aligns with recent studies in leadership psychology, which emphasize emotional regulation and delayed response as critical traits in high-stakes environments (Patoni & Rifai, 2022). While literature on Islamic leadership has generally highlighted the Prophet's moral integrity, this study brings a new dimension by examining how non-verbal restraint and inclusive dialogue functioned not only as ethical commitments but also as strategic tools of community preservation (Sulastri, 2019). The commitment to engage even ideological adversaries, such as Abdullah bin Ubay, reflects an early prototype of restorative justice emphasizing

reintegration over exclusion, which modern peacebuilding models now seek to emulate. Nevertheless, the practical extrapolation of these prophetic strategies into modern secular contexts must be approached with caution. Differences in cultural, institutional, and theological frameworks pose limitations to direct application. Furthermore, contemporary leaders operate in highly institutionalized and often secularized environments, where prophetic authority cannot be replicated.

Despite these contextual boundaries, the Prophet's multi-modal communication combining verbal articulation, symbolic behavior, and personal moral example offers a comprehensive leadership blueprint that addresses not only the informational aspects of crises but also the emotional and moral dimensions (Ratih Kumalasari et al., 2024). This integration advances the current understanding of ethical leadership by proposing a framework rooted not merely in competence but in character and relational intelligence. However, the research is limited by its primary reliance on classical seerah sources and interpretive secondary literature, which may reflect inherent biases and theological framing. The contextual specificity of 7th-century Arabian tribal politics also constrains direct generalization to modern settings without careful cultural adaptation.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the communication strategies employed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during episodes of internal crisis, specifically the Incident of Ifk and the political subversion led by Abdullah bin Ubay. It highlights how the Prophet's strategic use of silence, emotionally restrained responses, nonverbal cues, and inclusive consultation served as ethically grounded and contextually intelligent methods of crisis management. These communicative acts were deeply informed by Islamic theological values such as justice, mercy (*rahmah*), and patience, while also aligning with modern communication theories like Speech Act Theory and high-context communication. The research finds that these approaches were neither reactionary nor improvisational, but instead deliberate acts of leadership that effectively neutralized internal dissent, preserved communal harmony, and minimized the spread of misinformation challenges that remain highly relevant in today's sociopolitical and organizational contexts.

The study contributes significantly to both academic and theological discourse by bridging classical Islamic leadership principles with interdisciplinary frameworks drawn from communication studies,

psychology, and political science. It offers a compelling model for contemporary leaders particularly in Muslim-majority societies who face issues of emotional polarization, internal conflict, and misinformation. Theologically, it reinforces the understanding of the Prophet's communication as divinely guided yet pragmatically effective. While the study acknowledges its limitations, including its reliance on classical *seerah* texts and the cultural specificity of 7th-century Arabia, it defends its interpretive approach as essential for analyzing ethical leadership within a faith-based context. Future research could investigate how prophetic communication methods shaped the political behavior of the early caliphs and how these principles are applied or overlooked by contemporary Muslim leaders, particularly in pluralistic or politically unstable societies. Comparative studies across religious and cultural traditions may reveal shared models of ethical leadership, offering a richer understanding of moral governance in diverse contexts. A central theoretical proposition is that the Prophet Muhammad's communication style reflects a paradigm of conflict transformation, where restraint, inclusion, and truthfulness serve not as signs of weakness, but as strategic tools for moral authority, communal healing, and long-term stability. This can be framed as a model of "ethical governance under internal tension," offering a meaningful alternative to authoritarian or populist leadership styles. Additionally, future research could examine how these communication ethics are adapted in Muslim-majority governments, NGOs, and interfaith organizations responding to public distrust or internal conflict. Longitudinal case studies and empirical research could assess whether leaders who embrace restraint-based communication foster greater public trust and institutional resilience. The emerging concept of "ethical resilience leadership" positions prophetic values as practically relevant in a global context marked by misinformation, polarization, and declining ethical standards. To build on this theoretical foundation, researchers are encouraged to employ cross-religious comparisons, real-world case analyses, and quantitative methodologies to test the contemporary impact and scalability of prophetic communication models.

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