

Shiddiq in Cyberspace: The Foundation of Honesty and Integrity in the Digital Age

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Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi digital telah membawa perubahan signifikan dalam pola komunikasi masyarakat, khususnya melalui media sosial yang memungkinkan setiap individu menjadi produsen sekaligus penyebar informasi. Namun, kemajuan tersebut juga menghadirkan tantangan serius berupa krisis kejujuran yang ditandai dengan maraknya hoaks, disinformasi, dan manipulasi konten digital. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji relevansi nilai *shiddiq* dalam pandangan Islam sebagai landasan etika komunikasi di era digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif dengan metode studi kepustakaan terhadap sumber-sumber klasik dan kontemporer yang membahas konsep *shiddiq*, etika komunikasi Islam, serta fenomena komunikasi digital. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *shiddiq* merupakan nilai akhlak yang bersifat komprehensif, mencakup keselarasan antara niat, ucapan, dan perbuatan, serta memiliki implikasi spiritual, moral, dan sosial. Dalam konteks dunia maya, nilai *shiddiq* memiliki relevansi yang kuat sebagai prinsip verifikasi informasi, tanggung jawab moral, dan integritas personal dalam bermedia. Penerapan nilai ini, yang sejalan dengan prinsip *tabayyun*, berpotensi menekan penyebaran hoaks dan memperkuat kepercayaan sosial. Dengan demikian, internalisasi nilai *shiddiq* menjadi kebutuhan mendesak untuk membangun ekosistem komunikasi digital yang etis, beradab, dan berorientasi pada kemaslahatan bersama.

Kata kunci: shiddiq, etika komunikasi Islam, media sosial, hoaks, dunia digital

Abstract

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed patterns of social communication, particularly through social media, which enables individuals to act as both information producers and disseminators. However, this progress has also generated serious challenges in the form of a crisis of honesty, marked by the widespread circulation of hoaxes, disinformation, and digital content manipulation. This article aims to examine the relevance of the value of *shiddiq* from an Islamic perspective as an ethical foundation for communication in the digital era. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach through library research, drawing on classical and contemporary sources that discuss *shiddiq*, Islamic communication ethics, and digital communication phenomena. The findings

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indicate that *shiddiq* is a comprehensive moral value encompassing consistency between intention, speech, and action, with spiritual, moral, and social implications. In the context of the digital sphere, *shiddiq* plays a crucial role as a principle of information verification, moral responsibility, and personal integrity in online communication. Its application, aligned with the principle of *tabayyun*, has the potential to reduce the spread of hoaxes and strengthen social trust. Therefore, the internalization of *shiddiq* is essential for fostering an ethical, civilized, and socially responsible digital communication ecosystem.

Keywords: shiddiq, Islamic communication ethics, social media, hoaxes, digital society

A. Introduction

The virtual world is an electronic medium in a computer network used for one-way or two-way online communication (direct connection). (Abdul Azmi Fadillah, 2019). The development of digital technology in the modern era has brought about major changes in the way humans communicate and obtain information. The presence of the internet and social media has enabled the production and distribution of information to take place quickly, massively, and across space and time. Digital media no longer functions solely as a means of interpersonal communication, but has also become a new public space where opinions, social discourse, and collective meaning are constructed. (Rulli Nasrullah, 2018). This situation facilitates access to knowledge and broadens public participation in public discourse in a more open and interactive manner.

However, the rapid flow of digital information also raises various serious issues, particularly those related to the accuracy and honesty of information. Information circulating on social media often does not undergo an adequate verification process, thus opening the door to hoaxes, fake news, and content manipulation. Hoaxes can be understood as information that is deliberately

produced or disseminated without factual basis with the aim of misleading, provoking, or influencing public opinion. (Claire Wardle dan Hossein Derakhshan, 2017). This phenomenon is increasingly difficult to control because it is supported by the nature of digital media, which emphasizes speed, virality, and the logic of popularity over accuracy. (Zainal Abidin Bagir et al.,2020).

Furthermore, the spread of false information in cyberspace not only leads to misunderstandings among individuals, but also has the potential to undermine social trust and damage the fabric of society. When hoaxes and disinformation become daily consumption, society tends to experience information confusion, which ultimately weakens public rationality in responding to and dealing with social realities. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2016). Therefore, the main challenge of digital communication today is not only in terms of technology, but also in terms of ethics and morals in producing and disseminating information.

In this context, the value of honesty becomes a fundamental aspect that needs more attention. Islam places honesty (shiddiq) as one of the main principles in human life. Conceptually, shiddiq is not only interpreted as telling the truth, but also reflects harmony between what is believed, said, and done. This value is an obligatory trait of the prophets and serves as a moral example that must be embodied in daily life. (Abdul Karim Zaidan, 2021) According to Quraish Shihab, shiddiq is an inner attitude that gives rise to moral consistency, so that a person is not easily moved to convey false information for certain interests. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2025).

In the digital age, the value of truthfulness faces increasingly complex challenges. Information disseminated on social media often does not undergo adequate verification, and is even deliberately twisted to shape public opinion. This situation has led to a decline in public trust in information sources, increased social conflict, and disruption to religious and social harmony. A number of studies show that the spread of hoaxes not only causes unrest, but also has the potential to damage the social order and national stability. (Sarjito, 2024). Therefore, honesty in conveying and receiving information in the virtual world can no longer be understood as merely an individual moral issue, but rather as a collective social necessity.

The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the importance of speaking the truth and prohibits mixing truth with falsehood. In QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 70–71, Allah SWT commands believers to always speak the truth, because honesty will bring goodness and blessings in life. Similarly, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 42 emphasizes the prohibition of concealing the truth or mixing it with lies. These verses show that honesty is an ethical principle that is relevant throughout the ages, including in facing the challenges of digital communication in this era.

Although studies on hoaxes, communication ethics, and the value of honesty from an Islamic perspective have been conducted extensively, most of these studies still focus on normative aspects and moral laws in general, such as the prohibition of lying or the obligation to tell the truth. Meanwhile, discussions that specifically place the value of shiddiq as a framework for digital communication ethics that is contextual to the characteristics of cyberspace, such as the speed of information dissemination, user anonymity, and the tendency to manipulate content, are still relatively limited. In addition, a number of studies tend to view honesty as an individual moral



responsibility, without linking it to the social and collective dimensions in the digital information ecosystem. Therefore, this study offers something new by examining the concept of shiddiq not only as a normative moral value, but as a foundation for ethics in digital communication that is relevant for preventing the spread of hoaxes and disinformation in cyberspace.

Based on this reality, it is important to conduct a study on shiddiq in the context of the virtual world. This article departs from the fundamental question of how the value of shiddiq can be understood and applied as ethics in the dissemination of digital information, and why this value has a strategic role in dealing with the phenomenon of hoaxes and disinformation. Thus, the research questions in this study include: (1) how is the concept of shiddiq in the Islamic perspective relevant to the dynamics of information in cyberspace, and (2) what is the role of shiddiq as the basis of digital communication ethics in preventing the spread of false information.

B. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. This approach was chosen because the study does not aim to test hypotheses or process numerical data, but rather to examine ideas, values, and conceptual views related to honesty (shiddiq) in the Islamic perspective and its relevance in the virtual world. Through a qualitative approach, this study seeks to deeply understand the meaning of shiddiq as an ethical principle in the dissemination of digital information.

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are derived from the Qur'an and its translations and interpretations that contain teachings on honesty and truth,

particularly verses related to the obligation to speak the truth and the prohibition of concealing the truth. Secondary sources were obtained from books on Islamic morals and ethics, journal articles, and previous research discussing the concept of shiddiq, Islamic communication ethics, and the issue of hoaxes in the digital age.

Data collection was carried out using documentation techniques by reading and examining various literature relevant to the research focus. Each source used was selected selectively, considering its thematic relevance and academic validity. The collected data was then recorded and grouped based on the topic of discussion, thereby facilitating the analysis process. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive-analytical methods. At this stage, the collected data was systematically described to explain the concept of shiddiq in Islamic teachings. Furthermore, this concept was analyzed by relating it to the reality of information dissemination in cyberspace. The analysis was conducted critically to see the extent to which the value of shiddiq can serve as an ethical foundation in dealing with hoaxes and disinformation in the digital space.

Through this research method, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the importance of the value of shiddiq as a moral guideline in digital communication can be obtained, while also providing a conceptual contribution to strengthening the ethics of honesty in the use of social media and information technology.

C. Results and Discussion

The Concept of Shiddiq in the Islamic Perspective

In Islamic teachings, shiddiq is understood as an attitude of honesty and truthfulness that is consistently reflected in a person's words, deeds, and intentions. Honesty is not only related to verbal aspects, but also includes consistency between what is believed in the heart, spoken through the mouth, and manifested in real actions. (Abdul Karim Zaidan, 2021). Therefore, shiddiq is a moral value that is continuous, integral, and becomes the main foundation in shaping the character of a Muslim who is faithful and pious.

Etymologically, the word shiddiq comes from the root word shadaqa, (Ibn Manzhur) which means truthful, honest, and trustworthy. This meaning indicates that honesty in Islam is not merely outward behavior, but a reflection of purity of heart and sincerity of intention. Thus, a person who possesses the trait of shiddiq will always maintain their integrity and dignity, both in front of others and in private. This meaning indicates that honesty in Islam is not merely outward behavior, but a reflection of purity of heart and sincerity of intention. Thus, a person who possesses the trait of shiddiq will always maintain their integrity and dignity, both in front of others and in private.

The concept of shiddiq has a very important position in Islam because it is one of the obligatory characteristics of prophets, in addition to amanah, tabligh, and fathanah. Prophet Muhammad SAW was widely known as an honest and trustworthy person (al-Amīn), even before he was appointed as a messenger. (Muhammad Husain Haekal, 2013) This example shows that honesty is the main capital in building social trust and

moral legitimacy in society. Without honesty, the prophetic message would not have been widely accepted by the people.

M. Quraish Shihab explains that shiddiq does not only mean speaking the truth, but is an inner attitude that gives rise to moral consistency in various situations in life. Honesty that stems from inner awareness will encourage a person to be fair, responsible, and avoid manipulative behavior. In this context, shiddiq functions as an ethical control that guides humans not to deviate from the values of truth, even when under the pressure of worldly interests.

The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the importance of honesty as part of obedience to Allah SWT. The command to speak the truth as stated in QS. al-Ahzab [33]: 70–71 confirms that honesty has direct implications for the quality of human deeds and social life. This verse shows that honesty is not only morally valuable, but also has a spiritual impact because it is the reason for the acceptance of deeds and the forgiveness of sins.

Furthermore, Shiddiq also has a strong social dimension. Honesty is the foundation for harmonious, trusting, and just social relationships. In society, the loss of Shiddiq values can trigger a crisis of trust, conflict, and the breakdown of social order. (Burhan Bungin, 2014). Therefore, internalizing Shiddiq values is crucial not only for developing individual morals but also for maintaining a healthy social life and well-being. Thus, it can be concluded that shiddiq is a comprehensive moral concept in Islam, covering spiritual, moral, and social aspects. This value is an important foundation in shaping Muslims with integrity who are able to uphold truth in every dimension of life.

The Challenge of Honesty in the Virtual World

The development of digital technology has changed the way people produce and disseminate information. Social media allows every individual to become an information disseminator, but this condition is often not balanced with moral responsibility. As a result, hoaxes, fake news, and content manipulation can easily spread widely without adequate verification processes. (Sarjito, 2024)

This phenomenon shows that the virtual world has become a space prone to crises of honesty. Information is often shared based on emotions, specific interests, or the mere desire for popularity. The impact is not only misleading to the public, but also has the potential to cause social conflict and division within society. (Gustrinanda, 2023)

Several studies reveal that the prevalence of hoaxes has led to a decline in public trust in the media, social institutions, and religious authorities. In addition, the spread of false information can also reinforce social polarization and weaken national integration.

The phenomenon of a crisis of honesty in the digital space can also be observed in the immediate social environment, such as family, school, and community. At the family level, for example, information circulating through WhatsApp chat groups is often shared without any clarification of the source. It is not uncommon for chain messages containing health claims, religious issues, or political information to be forwarded simply because they are considered to come from a trusted source, even though they have no clear factual basis. This condition



shows that social closeness does not always correlate with the accuracy of the information being disseminated. (Rulli Nasrullah, 2018)

In the educational environment, social media is often used as an alternative source of information by students. However, low digital literacy causes many students to have difficulty distinguishing between valid and manipulative information. Research conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology shows that most hoaxes in Indonesia circulate through social media platforms and instant messaging applications, with the dominant themes covering political, health, and religious issues. (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika Republik Indonesia, 2022). This has the potential to shape erroneous mindsets and weaken the tradition of critical thinking among the younger generation.

Furthermore, in the context of social life, the spread of dishonest information often triggers social tension. A common example is the circulation of fake news related to issues of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA) ahead of certain political events, such as elections or regional elections. This type of information not only muddies the public atmosphere, but also reinforces social polarization and creates mutual suspicion among citizens. Data from the Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (MAFINDO) shows that hoaxes based on social provocation have a high rate of dissemination because they exploit emotions and group identities. (Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia (MAFINDO), 2021)

This situation confirms that the issue of hoaxes and information manipulation is not merely a technological problem, but rather a moral and ethical communication issue. Without a foundation of honesty,

technological advances have the potential to become a tool for spreading mass deception. Therefore, an approach is needed that not only emphasizes regulation and digital literacy, but also strengthens moral values such as honesty (shiddiq), responsibility, and ethical awareness in the media. These values are important for building a healthy and civilized digital ecosystem. (Abdul Karim Zaidan, 2021)

The Relevance of Shiddiq Values as Digital Communication Ethics

The value of shiddiq has significant relevance in dealing with the complexity of communication in the virtual world, which is characterized by speed, openness, and a lack of ethical control. In the digital context, honesty is no longer limited to direct interpersonal relationships, but extends to the practices of producing, distributing, and consuming information in virtual public spaces. Therefore, shiddiq can be positioned as a normative principle that guides individuals in filtering the truth of information, conveying messages responsibly, and receiving information critically and proportionally. This attitude requires moral awareness so that individuals do not rush to share information before confirming the validity of the source and substance of its content. (Rulli Nasrullah, 2018)

In the Islamic perspective, the principle of caution in receiving information is known as the concept of tabayyun, as emphasized in QS. al-Hujurāt [49]: 6. This verse provides a normative basis that all information, especially that which has the potential to cause social impact, must be verified before being believed or disseminated. The principle of tabayyun is closely related to the value of shiddiq, as both stem from an awareness of moral responsibility in communication. In the context of the

digital world, the application of tabayyun has become increasingly relevant given the massive flow of information that is often not accompanied by clarity of source and accuracy of data. Thus, shiddiq and tabayyun can be understood as ethical instruments to curb the spread of hoaxes, disinformation, and narrative manipulation on social media. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2017)

In addition, shiddiq also serves as the foundation for personal integrity in the digital space. Every post and comment reflects the character and moral responsibility of its user. Therefore, internalizing the value of shiddiq can help build a more ethical and civilized digital communication culture. (Armen, A., 2023).

Shiddiq as the Foundation of Social Integrity in the Digital Age

Personal integrity in the digital space can be understood as the unity between moral values, inner attitudes, and communication behaviors when interacting in the virtual world. Integrity is not merely honesty in conveying facts, but also includes ethical consistency between what one believes, says, and does, both in physical and virtual spaces. From an Islamic perspective, this kind of integrity is rooted in the value of shiddiq, which is truth that comes from inner awareness and is consistently reflected in natural behavior. (Abdul Karim Zaidan, 2021).

In the digital age, personal integrity has increasingly broad implications because every individual leaves a digital footprint through posts, comments, and various forms of interaction on the internet. These digital footprints are not only technical in nature, but also morally charged, as they represent the character and ethical responsibility of their users.

Therefore, the virtual world cannot be viewed as a neutral or value-free space, but rather as an extension of the ethical space of human life. When someone acts dishonestly, manipulatively, or provocatively on social media, these actions reflect weak personal integrity, even if they are carried out without face-to-face interaction. (Rulli Nasrullah, 2018)

The value of shiddiq plays an important role in maintaining personal integrity by encouraging individuals to be substantially honest, not just formally. Honesty that stems from inner awareness will shape self-regulation so that a person is not easily tempted to spread unverified information, distort facts, or exploit sensitive issues for personal or group interests. In this case, shiddiq functions as an internal ethical mechanism that guides communication behavior to remain within the scope of truth and moral responsibility. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2016)

Furthermore, personal integrity built through the value of shiddiq has a significant social impact. Individuals who consistently maintain honesty and ethical communication in the digital space contribute to the creation of social trust, which is the main foundation of a healthy communication ecosystem. Conversely, when personal integrity weakens, the digital space becomes vulnerable to hate speech, hoaxes, and provocative narratives that undermine the social order. Thus, strengthening personal integrity based on the value of shiddiq is not only individual in nature, but also strategic in building a civilized digital space oriented towards the common good. (Zainal Abidin Bagir et al., 2020)

Thus, internalizing the value of shiddiq not only contributes to the formation of individual character, but also plays a strategic role in building



a digital communication culture that is ethical, responsible, and oriented towards the common good. In a digital society that is vulnerable to crises of honesty, strengthening the value of shiddiq is an urgent necessity so that advances in information technology do not lead to moral degradation, but rather become a means of strengthening the values of truth and social justice. (Zainal Abidin Bagir et al., 2020).

D. Conclusion

Shiddiq is a fundamental moral value in Islam that reflects honesty and consistency between intention, speech, and action. This value carries not only a spiritual dimension but also moral and social significance, making it a foundation for character formation and trust in social life, as exemplified by Nabi Muhammad SAW.

In the digital era, the proliferation of hoaxes and disinformation indicates an ethical crisis that weakens social trust and intensifies polarization. In this context, shiddiq, aligned with the principle of tabayyun (verification), serves as an essential foundation for digital communication ethics, encouraging verification, responsibility, and integrity. Therefore, strengthening the value of honesty becomes an urgent necessity to ensure that digital spaces function as a means for collective good and reinforce social harmony. Shiddiq is a fundamental moral value in Islam that reflects honesty and consistency between intention, speech, and action. This value carries not only a spiritual dimension but also moral and social significance, making it a foundation for character formation and trust in social life, as exemplified by Nabi Muhammad SAW.



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