

Communication Strategy of Jendral Sudirman Mosque Management in Making the Mosque an Education Center

Ardi Tri Yuwono ^{1*}, Andi Sebastian ², Pieter-Jan Clumpers ³

¹ Sekolah Alam Ramadhani & Taman Baca Mahanani, Kediri, Indonesia.

² Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam, Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Dakwah, Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Wasil, Kediri, Indonesia

³ International Bachelor Communication and Media, School of History, Culture and Communication, Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands

*Corresponding Author: arditriyuwono1945@edukator.elevaite.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the transformation of mosques into dynamic educational centers, addressing the gap between their potential and the limited sustainable programs in Indonesian mosques. The primary objective is to analyze the communication and da'wah strategies employed by the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (MJS) management in Yogyakarta to revitalize its educational function. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants directly involved in Mosque's educational ecosystem, document analysis of Monthly Bulletins and MJS Press publications, and content analysis of digital media, particularly the "MJS Channel" on YouTube. Thematic analysis was conducted using Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action as an analytical lens. Findings reveal that Jendral Sudirman Mosque's success is underpinned by an adaptive communication strategy cycle, beginning with *Ngaji Filsafat* as a flagship program, which evolved into a comprehensive literacy ecosystem encompassing writing classes, MJS Press publishing, and Monthly Bulletin distribution. The convergence of offline dialogical communication and online content dissemination creates a deliberative public sphere. Embodying Jürgen Habermas's concept of mutual understanding (*verständigung*) achieved through rational discourse. This single-case study's limitation lies in its focus on an urban mosque. Future research should conduct comparative studies across diverse mosque typologies and employ quantitative methods to measure long-term program impacts. The study's originality lies in its integrative application of Jürgen Habermas's theory to analyze a mosque-based communication model in a non-Western, non-secular context, demonstrating how contemporary mosques can function as alternative public spheres facilitating critical learning and knowledge production.

Keywords: Communication Strategies, Communicative Actions, Da'wah, Education, Mosque.

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of mosques from mere places of ritual worship to centers of education is an ideal concept in Islam that remains relevant in the modern era. Recent developments in the study of da'wah communication indicate a shift from a monologic-transformative approach to a participatory-collaborative paradigm, enabling mosques to function as empowering community centers through sustainable programs and activities (Agung et al., 2024). National research data shows that although 85% of mosques in Indonesia hold regular religious study sessions, only around 30% have structured educational da'wah sessions for all age groups, and youth participation remains below 40% (Danarrahmanto et al., 2025).

Previous research in recent years has highlighted the role of the administrator, such as that conducted by Burju Amar Ma'ruf Hasibuan and Muniruddin (2025), who found that the effectiveness of community development at the Taqwa Mosque, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra, is highly dependent on the leadership capacity and managerial abilities of the mosque management. This research emphasized the importance of systematic program planning, but was still limited to an analysis of internal organizational management and did not address the aspect of communication strategy as a key variable in attracting diverse congregational participation. In addition, research by Putra Rizki Julianto and Aji Damanuri (2026) strengthened the findings of Burju Amar Ma'ruf Hasibuan and Muniruddin by stating that the success of the Baitul Mukhlisin Mosque, Ponorogo, East Java as a center for educational activities is inseparable from the professionalism of the mosque management. Furthermore, research initiated by Muhammad Ridwan, Andi Edwin Rewira, and Ahmad Saefuddin (2025) which observed the trend of social media use by the mosque management of the Jami' Baitul Muslim Mosque, Jakarta indicated that the achievement of digital platform-based da'wah depends on contextual and interactive content.

Another study on best practices for transforming the Ar-Rahman Ody Lestari Mosque in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, into a community learning center led by Annisa Nursyifa and Zulfiana Herni (2025) made a significant contribution. In a study conducted by Alwi Ahmad Asshiddiq and Muhammad Anshar Akil (2025), the digital aspects of youth engagement were examined, and the results showed that updated visual content and program information significantly increased youth interest in participating in activities at the Al-Junaidiyah Biru Mosque, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi. These five previous studies collectively built a foundation for understanding the management of the mosque's (community prayer committee), the potential for digital da'wah (Islamic outreach), and the concept of community-based mosques. However, a research gap was identified, namely the absence of a study that comprehensively discusses the role of the mosque's mosque management as a communicator from the perspective of communicative action according to Jürgen Habermas's (1985) thinking, as well as the specific goal of revitalizing the mosque as an educational center, within a unified analytical framework focusing on an urban mosque, namely the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, Yogyakarta. This mosque is located in a strategic area equipped with adequate facilities and has congregations from various backgrounds, such as students, activists, academics, and the general public (Hidayat, 2025).

To address this gap, the primary focus of this study is to comprehensively examine the communication strategies of mosque administrators in revitalizing the mosque's function as an educational center. The theoretical study will integrate the role of the mosque administrators in conducting routine study activities to revitalize the mosque as an educational center. This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of how mosque administrators design messages and social media that are accessible to the general public. The novelty of this study lies in the convergence of social media and physical space in mosque studies and da'wah, with a focus on how mosque administrators, as strategic communicators, bridge the two to create a sustainable educational experience. Unlike previous studies that tend to separate digital media analysis from physical activities or focus solely on one segment of the congregation, this study comprehensively maps multi-channel and multi-target communication strategies. The initial hypothesis proposed is that the effectiveness of a mosque as an educational center is directly proportional to the

implementation of an integrative da'wah communication strategy, adaptive to the characteristics of the congregation, and utilizing the convergence of physical and digital spaces to build participation and program sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To analyze the communication phenomenon in the transformation of mosques into educational centers, this study integrates the Communicative Action Theory proposed by Jürgen Habermas (1985). This theory distinguishes two orientations of human rationality: instrumental-strategic rationality, which focuses on achieving unilateral goals (controlling or influencing others), and communicative rationality, which is oriented towards achieving mutual understanding (*verständigung*) through dialogue free from coercion. In the context of religious organizations, this theory is relevant to understanding how interactions between the mosque committee and congregation can build a deliberative public space within the mosque environment.

From an applied communication perspective, Jürgen Habermas's theory has been adapted in various organizational and community contexts. Betteke van Ruler (2018) explains that strategic communication is not solely oriented toward achieving instrumental goals but must also consider the aspect of achieving mutual understanding as the foundation for sustainable organizational relationships with its publics. Meanwhile, Joseph A. DeVito (2016) emphasizes that effective interpersonal communication in religious settings requires a balance between transactional and reflective aspects. In the context of mosques as educational centers, Jürgen Habermas's communicative approach translates into the practice of discourse facilitation, where the mosque administrator acts not only as an administrator but also as a facilitator of dialogue and curator of knowledge content.

In addition to the theory of communicative action, this study also integrates several supporting theoretical frameworks to analyze the educational ecosystem at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque. First, Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, developed in the educational context by Tracey S. Hodges (2017) and Yin Ling Cheung & Han Jang (2019), explains that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration within a community of practice. Therefore, this study positions itself in a position that integrates various perspectives to comprehensively analyze the communication strategies of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque administrators in revitalizing the mosque as an educational center. Unlike previous studies that tend to separate digital media analysis from physical activities, or only focus on one segment of the congregation, this study comprehensively maps the multi-channel and multi-target communication strategies implemented by Jendral Sudirman Mosque. The novelty of this study lies in the approach of the convergence of social media and physical space in mosque studies and da'wah, with a focus on how the mosque administrators as strategic communicators bridge the two to create a sustainable educational experience.

METHODOLOGY

This research was structured using a qualitative paradigm with a descriptive design to describe the efforts of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque administrators in creating an educational space within the mosque. A case study approach was applied with an analysis of the pressures on the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (MJS) as a unique and contextual location (Creswell, 2012). The unit of analysis in this study consists of key individuals directly involved in the educational ecosystem within the mosque environment, namely the actors behind the *Ngaji Filsafat* program, the Jendral Sudirman Mosque administrators, and active contributors to the MJS Project literacy community. Multimethod data collection techniques were used to construct a holistic understanding and obtain substantial data depth. The main technique used was in-depth interviews involving research participants selected through the Systematic Purpose Sampling technique, so that informants were selected based on their depth of knowledge and involvement in educational activities at the Jendral

Sudirman Mosque (Yuwono, 2025). Data from these interviews were then enriched and cross-checked with literature studies of relevant documents, such as books published by MJS Press and archives of the Monthly Bulletin. In addition, this study also involved content analysis of digital media belonging to the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, especially video recordings on the YouTube channel “MJS Channel” and content on the official website *mjscolombo.com*, to observe the narrative dissemination strategy and public response (Taylor et al., 2015).

This research was conducted in December 2025. To ensure the validity of the data, this study used a data triangulation method. Triangulation is carried out by comparing and confirming information obtained from one source (for example, the results of an interview with a mosque caretaker) with other data sources (such as written documents or statements from other informants), resulting in consistent and accountable findings (Yuwono et al., 2025). Data were analyzed using a responsive and continuous approach throughout the data collection process. Data from interviews, documents, and media were analyzed using a thematic approach to identify patterns, categories, and meanings related to efforts to establish the mosque as an educational center (Given, 2008). The theoretical framework of the theory of communicative action initiated by Jürgen Habermas was used as an analytical lens to analyze the communication practices and social interactions that occur in the activities of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, particularly *Ngaji Filsafat*, and their relationship to the formation of a broader educational ecosystem (Sebastian & Yuwono, 2025).

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Profile of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque and the *Ngaji Filsafat* as a Center for Educational Activities

The Jendral Sudirman Mosque (MJS) in Yogyakarta was founded in 1394 H or 1974 AD (Atfifudin, 2023). Its exact location is at Rajawali Street Number 10, Demangan Baru, Caturtunggal, Depok, Sleman Regency. A routine activity carried out by the Jendral Sudirman Mosque administrators is *Ngaji Filsafat* (Philosophy Study Group). Philosophic studies are still a rare activity found in programs organized by mosques in Indonesia. Philosophical topics, including discussions of figures, concepts, and schools of thought, are generally disliked and often considered inappropriate for discussion in many forums. The lack of exposure to philosophical topics outside of higher academic circles has led to a widespread sense of alienation among the public (Machin, 2023).



Figure 1: Atmosphere at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque.

Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

Viewed from the perspective of its strategic location, the Jendral Sudirman Mosque functions as an educational center in an effort to disseminate ideas that are part of the social community ecosystem. The tagline of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque as stated in the MJS Monthly Bulletin, namely “towards the mosque, cultivate prostration”, has made the Jendral Sudirman Mosque increasingly connected with the wider community (M. A. L. Wahid, 2025). The presence of various educational institutions around the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, from elementary to higher education levels, strengthens its role in conveying certain narratives. The area around the Jendral Sudirman Mosque is crowded with various educational institutions, including Muhammadiyah Colombo Elementary School, Muhammadiyah 3 Middle School in Depok, Colombo High School in Sleman, Kolese De Britto High School in Yogyakarta, as well as two renowned universities, namely Yogyakarta State University and Sanata Dharma University (Faiz, 2023).

Being in an ideal location allows the Jendral Sudirman Mosque to attract public attention through various activities. Maximizing and idealizing its potential serves as the basis for strengthening activism within the mosque (Hadi et al., 2025). The Management of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque began to draft a routine activity program to increase participation and appeal to local residents. The popularity of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque increased along with the holding of “*Ngaji Filsafat*” activities which regularly attracted mass interest and participation. The sustainability of the *Ngaji Filsafat* program to date is the result of the commitment and vision of the administrator of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque to revive the function of the mosque as a center of education and intellectual prosperity (Kiarra, 2025). The *Ngaji Filsafat* study was first held on April 21, 2013, and has since developed into a regular agenda at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (N. Wahid, 2025a). From 2013 to 2025, *Ngaji Filsafat* has reached its 498th edition.

Ngaji Filsafat is a religious study forum that specifically examines and discusses various themes and ideas in the world of philosophy. The scope of *Ngaji Filsafat's* studies encompasses various traditions of thought, from Greek, Western, Eastern, Islamic, to Nusantara philosophy, which are examined chronologically through ancient, classical, modern, and postmodern periods. This study is designed with a multidimensional approach that includes analysis of figures, contextualization of thought within the map of schools of thought, reflection on ethical and practical values, and observation of the unique behavior of figures within the dynamics of their society (Muis, 2021).



Figure 2: Atmosphere of the *Ngaji Filsafat* Activity
Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The term “*Ngaji Filsafat*” emerged later, during the expansion of publication and outreach for this routine study program. The rationale for using the term “*ngaji*” arose from a desire to make

the program feel more in tune with local culture. The term is derived from a Javanese dialect that refers to the activity of “*kajian*,” while also emphasizing the location of the activity within the mosque. Furthermore, the book “*Pandangan Para Filosof: Catatan Santri Ngaji Filsafat*” relates that the term “*Ngaji Filsafat*” originated from casual remarks or a casual remark, rather than a formal term like “Lecture on Philosophy” (Ramadhana, 2020). Although intended to ground philosophy, the term “*Ngaji Filsafat*” instead reveals a hidden burden attached to it. Etymologically, the word “*ngaji*” is rooted in “*aji*,” meaning nobility, thus unwittingly lending philosophy an aura of sacredness and a certain burden. The meaning of “noble” in “*aji*” stems from the word “*mulia*,” which implies dynamism, an effort or quest to attain nobility. From an Islamic perspective, “*Aji*” is often compared to the concept of “*karamah*” as a form of bestowed nobility (Salam, 2025). Therefore, the meaning of “*Ngaji Filsafat*” is an active process, both as an effort to seek nobility and self-transformation into nobility, which is achieved through meditation and philosophical dialectics.

One concrete proof of the impact and appeal of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (MJS) is its presence in the digital realm. The mosque has a YouTube channel called “MJS Channel”, which serves as a means of documenting and disseminating study content to a wider audience. The MJS Channel is managed independently by the Jendral Sudirman Mosque Takmir, with the support of media infrastructure under MJS Press. This ensures that all uploaded material remains in line with the mosque's mission and values. The Jendral Sudirman Mosque's success in building public attention through its YouTube channel can be measured by the number of followers (subscribers) which reached around 360 thousand in December 2025. This figure is clear evidence of the expanding reach and resonance of the study programs held. In the journey of almost ten years since its founding on May 19, 2016, MJS Channel has managed to record a total of 47.621.911 views by the end of December 2025, a testament to the resilience and relevance of the scientific content it presents.

Of the many videos uploaded since 2016, a clear pattern emerges: the content with the highest viewership is dominated by recordings of the *Ngaji Filsafat*. This fact confirms that the program, led by Fahrudin Faiz, is not only successful in the physical mosque space but also has become the most sought-after digital product on the MJS YouTube channel. Not only does it stop in the mosque's central space, but each *Ngaji Filsafat* session is also brought into the digital realm. The recordings are regularly uploaded to the MJS Channel, making them accessible to anyone who wants to watch from anywhere. Recordings of each session are uploaded with a strict time commitment, no more than a week before the next study session is held. This allows the public to follow the study flow continuously through the MJS Channel, without being constrained by distance and time.

Table 1. Based on data analysis at the end of December 2025, the ranking of the *Ngaji Filsafat* video with the highest number of views on the MJS Channel

No.	Title <i>Ngaji Filsafat</i>	Edition	Uploaded Date	Number of Viewers
1.	<i>Filsafat Cinta</i> (Philosophy of Love) – Jalaluddin Rumi	144	February 18, 2019	1.762.841
2.	Syaikh Siti Jenar	113	May 16, 2019	931.936
3.	Buya Hamka – <i>Tenggelamnya Kapal (sinking ship)</i> Van Der Wijk	299	February 24, 2021	843.783
4.	<i>Yunani Kuno</i> (Ancient Greece) – Stoikisme	147	April 2, 2019	836.700
5.	Krishna	97	July 26, 2020	786.977
6.	Nizami Ganjavi – Layla Majnun	221	March 4, 2019	725.314
7.	Isa AS	96	July 19, 2020	652.049
8.	Abu Nuwas	245	November 6, 2019	635.770

9.	Syaikh Abdul Qadir Al Jailani – <i>Ibadah Lahir Ibadah Batin</i> (Outward Worship, Inward Worship)	153	May 8, 2019	560.468
10.	Sufi Nusantara – Sunan Kalijaga	138	February 1, 2019	537.840

Source: MJS Channel, 2025

As a visual illustration of public interest, Table 1 presents the number of viewers of the *Ngaji Filsafat* video recordings on the mosque's official YouTube channel, MJS Channel. From simply hosting recordings, MJS Channel has now transformed into a vibrant communication bridge. The high viewership of the *Ngaji Filsafat* videos demonstrates that the channel has successfully delivered philosophical narratives beyond the mosque's confines, reaching a wider audience. The Jendral Sudirman Mosque administrators play a crucial role as content curators, social media managers, and digital community liaisons in disseminating information about *Ngaji Filsafat* studies through the Instagram platform.

The mosque management serves as the planner and producer of visual-informative content. Prior to the study, digital posters containing information about the day, date, time, speakers, and theme are designed in an engaging manner and disseminated several days in advance. Themes such as “Finding Calm Amidst Uncertainty,” “The Wisdom of Socrates,” or “Javanese Life Wisdom” are presented in a popular yet academic language to attract the attention of young people and academics (Rahmah, 2023). These posters can arouse curiosity among the general public.



Figure 3: *Ngaji Filsafat* Poster to Convey Information to the Audience
Source: Instagram @masjidjendralsudirman, Desember 3, 2025

Throughout the study process, the committee actively managed Instagram Stories to

engage with viewers who were not physically present. They also frequently shared video clips or key quotes from the presentation by the speaker, Fahrudin Faiz, while directing viewers to access the full recording on the “MJS Channel” YouTube channel (Umam et al., 2025). This multi-platform strategy ensured that information remained connected and built a cohesive digital ecosystem for the study. After the study was completed, highlight content in the form of summaries, conclusions, or documentary photos were shared. The committee also archived the study themes on the “MJS Channel” YouTube channel or the “mjscolombo.com” website, thus creating a digital library easily accessible to new followers. With this consistency, social media served as a publication tool as well as a space for documentation and strengthening the identity of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque as a mosque that fosters philosophical discourse.

According to the latest information on *mjscolombo.com* (2026), the *Ngaji Filsafat* is no longer a standalone institution. The Jendral Sudirman Mosque also offers a number of other study programs, including:

1. *Ngaji* Al-Hikam, a Sufism study that explores the book Al-Hikam by Sheikh Ibn Atha'illah, led by KH. Imron Djamil. This study is held regularly on Monday Wage nights (before Tuesday Kliwon) after Isha prayers;
2. *Ngaji* Tarjuman al-Aswaq, an in-depth study of Ibn Arabi's book Tarjuman al-Aswaq, explained by Kyai Kuswaidi Syafi'ie. The study is scheduled biweekly, every Thursday night and Friday, starting at 8:00 PM after Isha prayers;
3. *Ngaji* Rubaiyat Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, a Sufi literary study that explores the Rubaiyat by the great poet Jalaluddin Rumi, is presented by Kuswaidi Syafi'ie. This study is held biweekly on Thursday nights and Fridays, starting at 8:00 PM;
4. *Ngaji* Serat Jawa, a study that explores the treasures of Javanese manuscripts (*serat*) with Herman Sinung Janutama as the resource person. This program connects local Javanese wisdom with an Islamic perspective;
5. *Ngaji* Studi Al-Qur'an, a study forum that explores the meaning and context of Quranic verses, led by Muhammad Al-Fayyadl. This study emphasizes critical reading and relevance to contemporary conditions;
6. *Ngaji* Post-Colonial, an interdisciplinary study that examines post-colonial concepts, is led by Katrin Bandel. This program offers a critical reflection on the legacy of colonialism and its implications for contemporary Muslim society;
7. Thematic *Ngaji* is an interdisciplinary study forum that presents various speakers for specific topics, such as: Women's Cosmology (A.M. Safwan), Al-Ghazali's Psychology of Sincere (Luluatul Chizanah), Theory of More Voices (Martin Suryajaya), Astronomy (Muntaha Arkanudin), Perennial Philosophy (Halim Miftahul Khoiri), Humanism and Transhumanism (Alfahtri Adlin), and Mosques as Schools of Democracy (Danielle N Lussier). This demonstrates the mosque's commitment to opening a broad and inclusive dialogue space.

The Role of the administrator of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque in Establishing the Mosque as an Educational Center

Monthly Bulletin

The publication of the Monthly Bulletin serves as a means of actualizing education and literacy at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, which was first started since the previously halted revitalization, namely in 2007. The name “Monthly Bulletin” is not the original name of this bulletin. Around the 1980s, the Jendral Sudirman Mosque had a bulletin known as Ar-Risalah. However, it is very unfortunate, the life of this bulletin was short because it contained many articles containing criticism of the New Order government. As a result, this bulletin became a target of the government at that time and its authors were thrown into prison. Since September 21, 2007, the Monthly Bulletin from the Jendral Sudirman Mosque was republished for the first time. The distinctive narrative of the Jendral Sudirman Monthly Bulletin is reflected in the tagline “towards the mosque, cultivating prostration” (*menuju masjid, membudayakan sujud*). This distinctive narrative is the

core of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque's da'wah which seeks to convey the message that every movement we make as humans should always be connected to the nuances of the mosque and prostration (Anjasyah, 2025).

The distribution of the Monthly Bulletin can be said to cover a wide area, from one mosque to another. The Monthly Bulletin is printed on Taman Siswa Street, Yogyakarta City, and the administrator of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque can distribute this bulletin by stopping at the mosque passed. Not playing around, mosques that receive the Monthly Bulletin from the Jendral Sudirman Mosque can reach around 40 mosques in one trip if it is published on time. The Monthly Bulletin distribution network covers various types of mosques, including those with large congregational capacities and strategic influence, such as the Syuhada Mosque, the Nurul Ashri Mosque, the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Mosque, and the Gadjah Mada University Campus Mosque. The distribution strategy targeting large mosques has created high expectations among readers, so that each edition of the Monthly Bulletin is always eagerly awaited (Anjasyah, 2025).

The consistency of the Monthly Bulletin began to face challenges around 2014. At that time, the former editor and founder of *Ngaji Filsafat*, M. Yaser Arafat, resigned from his position as administrator MJS. On the other hand, the new editor faced four problems related to consistency, namely the ability to routinely publish articles every Friday, maintaining the content of the articles in accordance with the narrative that had been built, the technical aspects of editing and maintaining the knowledge contained in the articles, and bookkeeping issues. However, of these various problems, the most significant factor was the difficulty in finding a type of writing that suited the narrative of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque. The writing style that had been applied previously prioritized reflective, conceptual-alternative, storytelling genres, did not contain verses from the Qur'an and hadith, and did not use bombastic vocabulary. This difficulty in finding articles had an impact on whether or not the bulletin was published each month. If there were no suitable articles, then with a heavy heart the monthly bulletin would not be published that month (Anjasyah, 2025).

To address this consistency issue, the Jendral Sudirman Mosque Management began designing activities aimed at ensuring the continued availability of writing for the Monthly Bulletin. The call, distributed through the Jendral Sudirman Mosque website, contained an open invitation for anyone interested in writing at the mosque. This reasoning underpinned the creation of the "Writing in the Mosque" writing class (Anjasyah, 2025). With this initiative, the Jendral Sudirman Mosque can at least maintain its consistency in publishing the Monthly Bulletin with various themes. This initiative is a smart participatory communication strategy, as it transforms the congregation from mere message recipients (audience) to message producers (contributors), while simultaneously building a sense of ownership and educational space through the Monthly Bulletin.



Figure 4: Jendral Sudirman Mosque Monthly Bulletin for the 2025 Ramadan Edition
 Source: Website mjscolombo.com, 19 Februari 2025

The Monthly Bulletin's communication strategy focuses on unique and consistent message design. Each edition of the Monthly Bulletin is presented with the tagline “towards the mosque, cultivating prostration,” (*menuju masjid, membudayakan sujud*), which is not just a slogan, but also a core message that becomes the common thread throughout the content (Furman, 2015). This message is designed to change the public's view that the mosque is not only a place for ritual worship, but also a cultural and educational space. The written content in the Monthly Bulletin deliberately avoids a writing style that uses too many technical verses from the Quran and Hadith, and emphasizes a reflective, conceptual-alternative, and narrative style (Olimpia & Mihaela, 2015). This strategy is to make the Islamic message more contextual, easy to understand, and relevant to the social dynamics of readers, especially among educated and young people. This practice reflects an awareness of outreach strategies and geographic-demographic segmentation. By targeting mosques with large congregational capacities and located in educational centers, the Monthly Bulletin effectively reached its primary target audience, namely urban Muslims, academics, and students who were potentially interested in new Islamic discourse (Timm, 1978).

Writing Class “Writing in the Mosque”

The “Writing in the Mosque” Writing Class at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque is a strategic participatory educational communication model that effectively translates the concept of lifelong learning into educational and religious spaces. From a communication theory perspective, this initiative applies the principle of two-way dialogic communication, shifting from a one-way message delivery paradigm (monologue) to transactional communication. This process not only transfers knowledge about writing but also builds a shared space for the negotiation of meaning, identity, and the production of new knowledge among the congregation (Hikmah et al., 2025). This activity realizes Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action, so that interactions are based on the goal of achieving mutual understanding (*verständigung*) through rational discourse in the mosque's public space, rather than merely achieving instrumental goals (Habermas, 1991).



Figure 5: Poster Related to the Writing Class at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, 8th Edition

Source: Instagram @masjidjendralSudirman, 2025

Viewed from the perspective of educational theory, particularly social constructivism, this program builds an efficient community of practice. The learning process takes place through social

interaction and collaboration among participants who share similar interests (Hodges, 2017). The writing class serves as initial scaffolding, providing technical skills, while activities at the mosque serve as a means for contextual and applied learning. Participants, who were initially students of the *Ngaji Filsafat* (Philosophy Study Group), not only learn to write theoretically but also directly produce writing for real media such as the Monthly Bulletin, the website *mjscolombo.com*, and books published by MJS Press (Cheung & Jang, 2019). This cycle, which begins with consuming ideas (through the *Ngaji Filsafat*), discussing them, and producing and publishing writing, is a manifestation of experiential learning and emancipatory education that equips participants with critical thinking skills and the agency to contribute to public discourse.

In an integrated manner, this program also implements organizational communication and community development. The Jendral Sudirman Mosque's management serves as a facilitator, creating a supportive ecosystem, from providing training and discussion spaces to publishing channels through MJS Press. The relationship between the management, speakers, and participants shifts from a hierarchical relationship to a collaborative network. Thus, "Writing in the Mosque" is not simply a training program, but rather a holistic communication and education strategy to empower the congregation, strengthen the cohesion of the mosque community, and simultaneously produce intellectual content that enriches the public's Islamic heritage. Through this approach, the mosque transforms into an active learning center that builds the social and intellectual capital of its congregation, enabling the mosque to function as an educational center for the surrounding community (N. Wahid, 2025b).

Jendral Sudirman Mosque Publishing Company through "MJS Press"

The establishment of MJS Press as an official publishing institution integrated within the structure of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (MJS) management reflects a sophisticated organizational communication strategy focused on sustainability. From the perspective of communication theory, specifically the convergence communication model, MJS Press functions as the final node that archives the entire communication process that takes place in the mosque ecosystem. This process begins with verbal discussions in *Ngaji Filsafat* (interpersonal and group communication), which are then transformed into writing by participants in the Mosque Writing Class (intrapersonal communication & literacy), and finally produced as a book or bulletin that can be distributed widely (mass communication). Thus, MJS Press transforms implicit and temporary knowledge into explicit and permanent knowledge, while significantly expanding the reach and extending the life of the mosque's da'wah and educational messages (Ruler, 2018). MJS Press also functions as a formal communication channel that increases the credibility and legitimacy of the knowledge produced by the congregation of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (N. Wahid, 2025c).

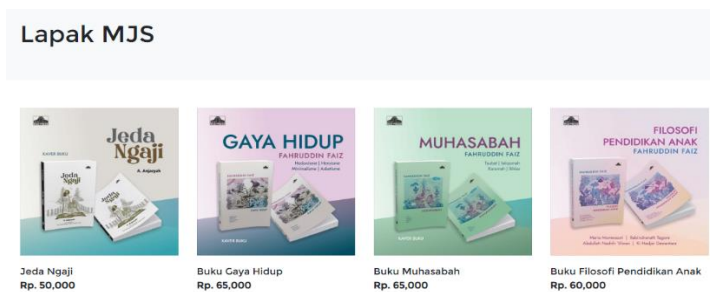


Figure 6: MJS Press Page Selling Written Works

Source: Website *mjscolombo.com/lapak-mjs*, 2025

From an educational theory perspective, MJS Press demonstrates a concrete application of the principles of transformative education and social constructivism. This publishing house serves not only to print books but also to create a complete learning cycle that encourages production-based learning. This process allows the congregation's writings, which emerge from reflection on studies, to be selected, edited, designed, and finally published as books, thus providing a profound learning experience. Contributors not only act as consumers of knowledge but also experience the process of becoming publicly recognized knowledge producers. This aligns with David Kolb's concept of experiential learning, namely that learning occurs through concrete experience, reflection from observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Publication of works becomes a form of active experimentation and social recognition that encourages motivation to learn further (Kolb, 2015).

Furthermore, MJS Press also implements the principles of ideapreneurship in a religious context. As a business entity with a CV (*Commanditaire Vennootschap*) legal entity, MJS Press manages literacy activities with the principle of sound economic sustainability. This approach reflects an independent educational strategy and is not entirely dependent on donors, thus ensuring program continuity. Theoretically, this aligns with the cultural capital theory proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. MJS Press converts cultural capital (philosophical knowledge and writing skills of the congregation) and social capital (community networks) into symbolic capital (the mosque's scholarly authority) and even economic capital (from book sales). This multidimensional transformation strengthens the mosque's position not only as a center of worship, but also as an autonomous center for the production and reproduction of knowledge that has a broad cultural impact on society (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, MJS Press is a clear example of how the integration of a mature communication strategy and an empowering educational philosophy can transform the traditional function of a mosque into a center of education (N. Wahid, 2025c).

The Mosque as an Educational Center Reviewed from the Rationalization of Communicative Action according to Jürgen Habermas

Table 2: Analysis of the Function of Mosques as Educational Centers through Dichotomy Actions according to Jürgen Habermas

Analysis Aspects	Instrumental-Strategic Action (Working Paradigm)	Communicative Action (Communicative Paradigm)	Manifestation at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque
Goal Orientation	Achieving unilateral goal success (controlling, directing, and influencing).	Achieving mutual understanding (<i>verständigung</i>) and consensus through rational argumentation.	The study is designed for dialogue and the search for shared meaning.
Communication Relations	Subject and object (one way).	Subject and subject (bidirectional and reciprocal).	Communication patterns in <i>Ngaji Filsafat</i> and other studies.
Dominant Language Form	Imperative, instructive, and persuasive language for compliance.	Argumentative, reflective, and deliberative language for understanding.	The use of popularized philosophical language and reflective discussion in response to the material.
Basis of Social Integration	Integration through power, authority, or enforced norms.	Integration through shared understanding is achieved discursively.	The formation of a cohesive literacy community based on shared interests and understanding that is constructed together.

The Role of the Congregation	As a message recipient or passive listener.	As an active participant subject in the production and validation of knowledge.	The congregation contributes articles to bulletins, books, and is an active participant in discussions.
Outcomes of Mosques as Education Centers	Compliance, reproduction of fixed knowledge, and social stability.	Emancipatory learning, new knowledge production, and cognitive transformation.	The birth of writers and thinkers from among the congregation of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, as well as the publication of books from the results of discussions and studies of the <i>Ngaji Filsafat</i> .
Rationalization of Everyday Life	The life world is colonized by the instrumental logic of the system.	Life world is rationalized through communication that strengthens social solidarity and cultural meaning.	The mosque becomes a shared life world that is rich in intellectuals and builds a cultural identity of a “cultural mosque” that is different from mosques in general.

Source: Personal Documentation

Based on the table, the concept of the mosque as an educational center can be analyzed in depth through the perspective of the Theory of Communicative Action proposed by Jürgen Habermas. This theory distinguishes two orientations of human rationality: instrumental-strategic rationality, which focuses on achieving goals (such as controlling or influencing others), and communicative rationality, which is oriented towards achieving mutual understanding (*verständigung*) through dialogue free from coercion. The transformation of the mosque into a dynamic educational center, as demonstrated by the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (MJS), reflects a shift in dominance from the instrumental paradigm to the communicative paradigm in the management of religious space. Educational practices in this type of mosque are no longer merely transmitting dogma in a one-way manner (strategic action), but create a deliberative public space, so that the congregation, as equal subjects, engages in an exchange of arguments to build a shared understanding.

In this context, flagship programs such as the *Ngaji Filsafat* at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque are concrete manifestations of communicative action. This activity is not designed as a monologue lecture, but rather as a forum, allowing validity claims, particularly claims of truth and normative accuracy regarding various philosophical ideas, to be tested through rational discussion. The presenter and participants engage in a conversational situation that approximates an ideal speech situation, allowing each party to express their opinions and offer symmetrical opportunities to rebut them. This process produces intersubjective understanding that forms the basis for authentic social integration, not integration based solely on coercion or traditional authority. After the study, the discussion continues informally, further strengthening the mosque's function as a lifeworld rationalized through communication, where educational values are developed cooperatively.

The broader educational ecosystem at the Jendral Sudirman Mosque, including writing classes and the MJS Press publishing house, demonstrates the institutionalization of communicative rationality. Therefore, the mosque functions as a system that regulates action through norms discursively legitimized by its members. The production of knowledge (such as writing essays or books) becomes the object of a consensus, which is then recirculated for further discussion. This dialogical cycle transforms the mosque from a mere system (in administrative logic) back into a life-world rich in meaning, while protecting it from “colonization” by market logic or bureaucracy that are merely instrumental. Thus, through Jürgen Habermas's theory, the

existence of the mosque as a dynamic educational center is the result of a communicative action praxis that prioritizes dialogue, critical reflection, and knowledge construction to achieve collective progress.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals the most significant finding, namely that the communication strategy of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque (MJS) management has organically embodied the principles of deliberative democracy introduced by Jürgen Habermas in the micro context of religious communities, long before the concept was consciously adopted. The process of transforming the mosque into an educational center is not the result of rigid top-down communication planning, but rather the result of a reflective and adaptive communication cycle that emerged from the failure of initial programs (such as the less popular Al-Qur'an Interpretation Study). This cycle, which began with needs identification, format experimentation (One-Day Philosophy Training), participatory evaluation, and consolidation into a routine program (*Ngaji Filsafat* held every week), shows how communicative rationality can be a key driving force in the management of traditional religious organizations. These findings contribute theoretical implications by strengthening and contextualizing Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action in a non-Western and non-secular context, and provide a new perspective that contemporary mosques can function as alternative public spaces that facilitate critical learning and knowledge production. In practical terms, the Jendral Sudirman Mosque model offers a blueprint that other urban mosques can adapt. Therefore, mosque administrators at other mosques need to be empowered to develop their capacity as discourse facilitators and content curators, rather than simply administrators. Religious and government institutions can design supportive policies that promote financial independence and inclusion through ideapreneurship models like MJS Press, so that mosque educational programs are not dependent on short-term funding.

This study has several limitations, namely the study's scope that only focused on a single case (the Jendral Sudirman Mosque) in a single urban location (Yogyakarta), which hinders the generalization of the findings to the context of mosques in rural areas, mosques with limited resources, or mosques in areas with different socio-cultural characteristics. Furthermore, this study has not quantitatively measured the impact of the program implemented by the Jendral Sudirman Mosque administrators, such as increasing literacy capacity or changing the congregation's religious behavior in the long term. Therefore, further research is recommended to conduct a comparative study that tests the application of the Jendral Sudirman Mosque's integrative communication model in several mosques with different typologies (campus, urban, and rural) to identify contextual factors that influence its success. In addition, it is recommended to conduct quantitative research with a larger sample to measure the correlation between the intensity of participation in the literacy and education ecosystem in the mosque with the level of critical reasoning, religious tolerance, and social engagement of the congregation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ardi Tri Yuwono: Educator at Sekolah Alam Ramadhani & Taman Baca Mahanani, as well as, a literacy activist. He has conducted extensive research in the fields of communication history, hermeneutics, and colonial historiography in Indonesia.

Andi Sebastian: Lecturer in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Da'wah, Syekh Wasil State Islamic University. He frequently conducts research in the field of advertising.

Pieter-Jan Clumpers: A student in the International Bachelor Communication and Media, School of History, Culture and Communication, Erasmus University Rotterdam. He likes studying communication in the field of religion.

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