

Islamic Perspectives on Market Segmentation: Insights from Qu’ran and the Sunnah

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ABSTRACT

Market segmentation is a classic approach in marketing that focuses on dividing markets into distinct audience groups to send specific messages or provide services. This article explores market segmentation from an Islamic viewpoint using the Qur’an and the Sunnah as primary references. From literature findings, we see that Islamic teachings do acknowledge the diversity of human society and promote ethical communication that is beneficial (*maslahah*). Moreover, Quranic verses cite differences in age, gender, and background and specific roles. Prophet Muhammad also tailored his approach to different audiences. Basic ethical practices in market segmentation also include fairness (*‘adl*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and avoidance of deceitful practices (*gharar*). This study suggests that segmentation in Islamic teaching fosters inclusivity, relevance, and impact in the outreach of religious, educational, and community engagements. Furthermore, a practical framework is suggested on the ethical use of segmentation in modern Islamic institutions.

Keywords: Islamic marketing, market segmentation, ethics, audience targeting.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Market segmentation has traditionally served as a foundational strategy in marketing, enabling organisations to tailor their messages and services according to the distinct needs of targeted audience groups. In recent years, this concept has gained increasing relevance within Islamic institutions, which are seeking to foster more meaningful, inclusive, and contextually sensitive engagement with diverse Muslim communities (Philip Kotler, 2022) (Mohd Mahabub Alom, 2011). From an Islamic standpoint, human diversity is regarded as a manifestation of divine wisdom, as reflected in the Qur’anic acknowledgment of differences in race, culture, and intellect. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplified this principle through his *da’wah* practices, adopting audience-specific communication strategies that considered individuals’ intellectual capacity and emotional readiness (Asmanidar, 2023) (Saad Jaafar, 2021). Nevertheless, many contemporary Islamic institutions continue to employ uniform communication approaches that inadequately address the heterogeneity of their audiences in terms of age, knowledge, and social context. Such limitations often diminish the effectiveness and ethical integrity of outreach initiatives. Integrating segmentation principles with *maqasid al-shariah* while emphasising sincerity (*ikhlas*), fairness (*‘adl*), and communal well-being (*maslahah*) can bridge this gap and enhance institutional credibility and trust within Muslim societies (Ahmad Yusdarwin Waworuntu, 2024). Accordingly, this paper seeks to examine market segmentation from an Islamic perspective and proposes a conceptual framework that supports ethical, inclusive, and effective

communication practices. This study adopts a conceptual approach by synthesising literature on market segmentation, Islamic communication ethics, and Qur'anic and Prophetic guidance to develop a framework for ethical market segmentation in Islamic institutions.

1.1 Background of the Study

The diversity within contemporary Muslim societies shaped by variations in culture, education, and social background has led to differing expectations regarding religious communication and institutional engagement. Islamic organisations are now required to communicate with audiences spanning multiple generations, socio-economic groups, and levels of religious understanding, making standardised approaches increasingly ineffective (Juhaidi, 2024). Consequently, the application of segmentation principles has gained importance in domains such as *da'wah* activities, mosque governance, and educational program development (Islam, 2020).

Moreover, the rapid advancement of digital media has transformed the dynamics of *da'wah*, introducing new audience categories such as digitally native youth, online learners, and recent converts seeking foundational religious knowledge (Zulfa Ilma Nuriana, 2024). From an Islamic standpoint, the systematic understanding of audience diversity aligns with *shari'ah* objectives when pursued to encourage inclusivity, safeguard human dignity, and uphold moral accountability. Thus, segmentation transcends its conventional marketing function, representing an ethically informed approach grounded in Islamic values that integrates traditional *da'wah* ethics with the demands of contemporary communication.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although segmentation is widely recognised in marketing and communication research as an effective means of tailoring messages to diverse audiences, its implementation within Islamic institutions remains relatively limited and largely informal. Many mosques, *da'wah* organisations, and religious educators continue to employ uniform communication strategies that fail to account for variations in religious literacy, cultural context, and audience needs, thereby diminishing the overall impact of their outreach efforts (Islam, 2020).

Existing academic discussions have primarily addressed Islamic communication ethics in general terms or examined *da'wah* methodologies without conceptualising segmentation as a structured process grounded in *maqasid al-shariah*. Furthermore, much of the existing scholarship has relied on Western segmentation frameworks without incorporating guidance derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, resulting in a methodological gap concerning *shariah*-compliant audience differentiation (Islam, 2020) (Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 2022) (Anis Husna, 2024).

This study seeks to fill these gaps by exploring how audience segmentation can be systematically and ethically integrated into Islamic communication, merging traditional ethical principles with the demands of contemporary communication practice.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to examine market segmentation from an Islamic perspective and to develop a conceptual framework for ethical segmentation practices. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the concept of market segmentation from an Islamic perspective based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.
2. To analyse the Islamic ethical principles that guide market segmentation practices.
3. To develop a conceptual framework for ethical market segmentation in Islamic communication and institutional outreach.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study offers both practical and scholarly contributions in addressing contemporary challenges within Islamic communication. On a practical level, it provides Islamic institutions with clear and actionable guidance on how to ethically segment and engage diverse audiences while maintaining inclusivity, relevance, and adherence to Islamic values such as fairness (*'adl*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and communal welfare (*maṣlahah*). In an era increasingly influenced by digital communication, Muslim audiences are frequently exposed to fragmented narratives, misinformation, and online polarisation that can obscure authentic religious understanding. Through the application of ethical segmentation principles, mosques, educational institutions, and *da'wah* organisations can craft context-sensitive and credible messages that effectively address these challenges, thereby strengthening public trust and promoting constructive dialogue within the community.

From an academic perspective, this study bridges the conceptual gap between Islamic ethical principles and modern communication theory by reconceptualising segmentation not merely as a marketing technique but as a morally and spiritually informed practice. In contrast to conventional Western STP (Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning) models, which prioritise efficiency and persuasion, the framework proposed here is grounded in *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* and anchored in Qur'anic and Prophetic ethics. By doing so, it enriches the existing body of knowledge on Islamic communication, digital *da'wah*, and audience analysis, while offering a normative foundation for addressing emerging ethical concerns in the digital religious sphere.

Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual framework underpinning this study, integrating Qur'anic guidance, Prophetic practices, and contemporary communication approaches to promote ethically guided audience engagement.

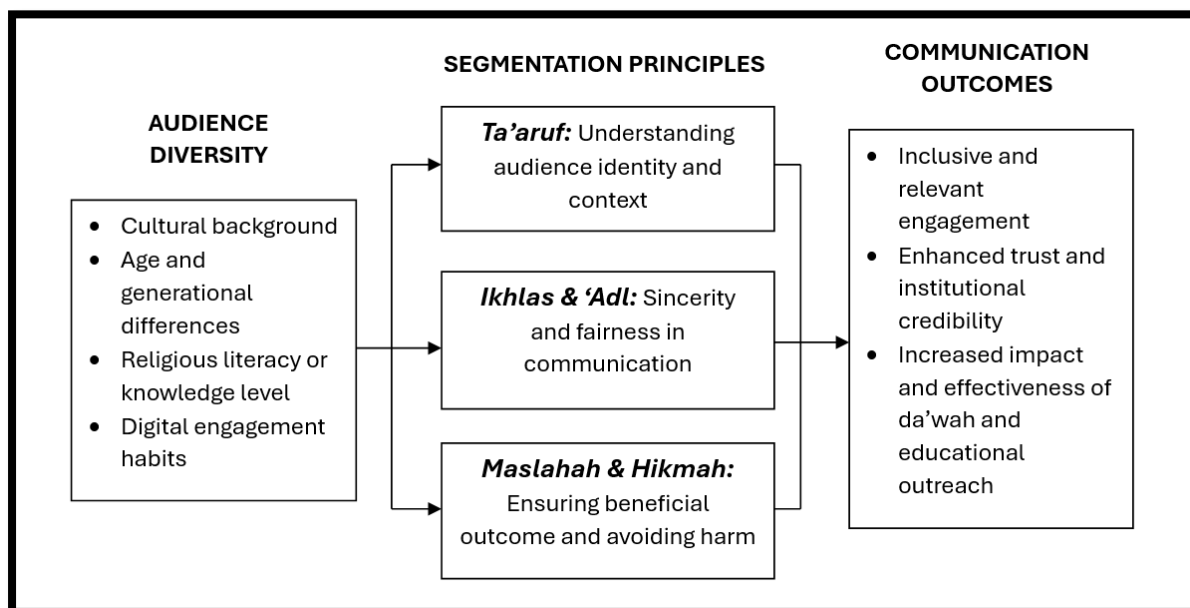


Figure 1 Ethical Audience Segmentation Framework in Islamic Communication
 Conceptual framework illustrating the integration of Qur'anic, Prophetic, and contemporary communication principles for ethical audience segmentation.

Source: Author's synthesis (2025)

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Market segmentation theory and its relevance to Islamic contexts

Market segmentation serves as a fundamental concept in marketing, enabling organisations to categorise diverse markets into smaller, more manageable segments in order to deliver targeted value propositions and tailored communication (Philip Kotler, 2022) (Eric Kolhede, 2021). Beyond commercial contexts, the underlying logic of segmentation also holds significant relevance for non-profit and faith-based institutions, where it can help adapt outreach strategies to meet the varied needs of different stakeholder groups. (Philip Kotler, 2022) (Mohammad Nasir Uddin, 2024) Contemporary studies in halal and Islamic marketing further emphasise that effective segmentation must consider levels of religiosity, cultural norms, and audience readiness factors that are especially pertinent when developing religious education initiatives and *da'wah* programs (Husna Leila Yusran, 2025) (Mohammad Nasir Uddin, 2024).

2.2 Ethical foundations of Islamic communication

Islamic communication is fundamentally anchored in Qur'anic and Prophetic ethical principles such as fairness (*'adl*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and social welfare (*maṣlaḥah*), which collectively establish moral boundaries for persuasive practices often employed in commercial marketing (Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 2022) (Asmanidar, 2023). Within this ethical framework, scholars emphasise that the application of segmentation in Islamic contexts must adopt a values-driven orientation one that prioritises integrity and respect for the audience. Segmentation, therefore, should serve to deliver messages that are appropriate, dignified, and socially responsible, rather than functioning as a tool for manipulative or self-serving institutional objectives.

2.3 Digital platforms and transformations in *da'wah*

Digital media have transformed both the scale and dynamics of religious communication, allowing for the rapid and targeted dissemination of messages across diverse platforms and demographic segments (Philip Kotler, 2022) (Abdi Ar-Ridho, 2023). Empirical studies on social media-based *da'wah* indicate that each platform fosters distinctive communication practices for instance, Instagram's emphasis on short-form visual storytelling naturally segments audiences by age, urban background, and media consumption habits (Yogi Fery Hidayat, 2024) (Abdi Ar-Ridho, 2023). These findings highlight the importance of adopting deliberate and data-informed segmentation strategies, rather than relying on spontaneous or ad hoc content distribution, to enhance the ethical and communicative effectiveness of digital *da'wah* initiatives.

2.4 Audience reception and interpretation

Reception studies highlight that audience interpretation is shaped by prior knowledge, cultural background, and levels of media literacy consequently, identical messages can generate differing meanings among distinct audience segments (Eric Kolhede, 2021). Research on *da'wah* activities conducted via platforms such as YouTube and Instagram reveals that younger, digitally native audiences tend to prefer interactive and visually engaging content, whereas older or less digitally literate groups are more receptive to traditional, face-to-face communication methods. (Jihan Kurniawan, 2025) These variations demonstrate that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to religious messaging is insufficient and may compromise the overall effectiveness of Islamic communication efforts.

2.5 Integrating ethical segmentation into Islamic communication: The gap

While both marketing theory and digital *da'wah* research underscore the importance of audience segmentation, a significant gap remains: few studies have operationalised a segmentation model explicitly aligned with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. In particular, existing literature seldom demonstrates how Islamic ethical principles can be systematically mapped onto practical segmentation variables and communication channels (Husna Leila Yusran, 2025) (Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 2022). Reviews of Islamic marketing and *halal* studies consistently highlight the need for frameworks that translate fundamental Islamic values such as *maṣlahah* (public benefit) and *'adl* (justice) into tangible criteria for audience differentiation, message tone, media selection, and evaluative measures (Husna Leila Yusran, 2025) (Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 2022).

To address this theoretical and methodological gap, the present study proposes a conceptual framework that connects segmentation theory directly with Qur'anic and Prophetic ethics, while also accommodating the realities of digital communication. This framework introduces three interrelated ethical pillars *ta'aruf* (mutual understanding), *ikhlas/'adl* (sincere and just intent), and *maṣlahah/hikmah* (public benefit and wisdom) as the normative foundation for segmentation in Islamic contexts. By adopting this approach, the study advances the discourse by repositioning segmentation from a marketing-oriented technique to a theologically grounded and ethically informed model for context-sensitive Islamic communication.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative conceptual research design to examine the ethical foundations of audience segmentation from an Islamic perspective. Conceptual research is commonly used to explore theoretical relationships between concepts and to develop new frameworks based on existing knowledge and scholarly literature. Rather than collecting empirical data through surveys or experiments, conceptual studies focus on the systematic interpretation and synthesis of theoretical sources to generate new insights and models.

In the present study, the conceptual approach is appropriate because the objective is to integrate contemporary market segmentation theory with ethical principles derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The research therefore relies on interpretive analysis of texts and scholarly literature to identify ethical principles relevant to communication and audience engagement. Qualitative conceptual studies are widely used in social science research to explore complex phenomena where theoretical development is the primary goal rather than statistical testing

3.2 Sources of Data

The study is based on library research, utilising both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consist of selected Qur'anic verses and authenticated Prophetic traditions (hadith) related to communication ethics, human diversity, and wisdom in delivering messages. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and scholarly publications on market segmentation, Islamic marketing, and communication ethics. These materials were obtained from academic databases such as Google Scholar and university library resources.

3.3 Selection of Qur'anic Verses and Hadith

Qur'anic verses and hadith were selected based on their thematic relevance to communication ethics and audience diversity. Texts emphasising concepts such as human diversity, wisdom in communication, justice, sincerity, and social responsibility were examined to understand how Islamic teachings guide audience engagement and message delivery.

3.4 Analytical Approach

To analyse the collected sources, this study employs thematic textual analysis, a widely used qualitative method for identifying patterns, themes, and meanings within textual data. Thematic analysis allows researchers to organise large amounts of textual information into meaningful categories and interpret their relevance to the research objectives.

According to (Muhammad Naeem, 2023), thematic analysis is one of the most used qualitative methods for analysing textual data and developing conceptual models from qualitative findings. The analysis in this study follows several stages:

1. Familiarisation with the data - Qur'anic verses, hadith, and relevant academic literature were carefully reviewed to understand their meanings and relevance to communication ethics.
2. Identification of key themes - Recurring ethical concepts were identified from the texts, such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), wisdom (*hikmah*), justice (*'adl*), public benefit (*maṣlahah*), and mutual understanding (*ta'aruf*).
3. Categorisation of themes - These ethical principles were categorised according to their relevance to communication strategies and audience engagement.
4. Interpretation and conceptual integration - The identified themes were interpreted in relation to contemporary segmentation theory in marketing and communication studies.

Through this process, Islamic ethical teachings were systematically interpreted and connected to modern communication frameworks.

3.5 Development of the Conceptual Framework

The final stage of the methodology involves the development of a conceptual framework for ethical audience segmentation in Islamic communication. This framework was constructed by synthesising the findings from the thematic analysis of Islamic texts with existing segmentation theories in marketing and communication literature.

Conceptual frameworks are often developed through qualitative interpretation and synthesis of theoretical insights. Researchers commonly use thematic analysis to transform textual findings into structured models that explain relationships between concepts. (Muhammad Naeem, 2023)

In this study, Islamic ethical principles derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah were integrated with segmentation variables commonly used in communication research, such as audience characteristics, levels of knowledge, cultural context, and digital literacy. The resulting framework illustrates how Islamic institutions may adopt segmentation strategies while maintaining ethical integrity and social responsibility.

This framework aims to provide guidance for Islamic organisations, educational institutions, and da'wah initiatives in designing communication strategies that are both contextually relevant and ethically grounded

4 QUR'ANIC AND PROPHETIC FOUNDATIONS OF MARKET SEGMENTATION

4.1 Qur'anic Evidence

The Qur'an explicitly affirms human diversity as part of Allah's design and wisdom. This diversity is not merely demographic but functional, intended to create mutual recognition and social cooperation among people. Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Hujuraat (49), verse 13, meaning:

“O mankind, indeed, we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.”

Normatively, this verse establishes that differences are acknowledged and dignified in Islam, not erased. Segmentation as a communication principle emerges here not as a marketing technique, but as a recognition that audiences do not possess identical needs, contexts or levels of understanding. The Qur'anic worldview therefore supports audience-sensitive approaches when delivering guidance, information, or da'wah, provided that ethical values remain intact.

4.2 Sunnah and Prophetic Approach

The Prophet Muhammad PBUH demonstrated adaptive communication in practice, tailoring messages according to the listener's background and capacity.

For instance, when a Bedouin asked, “Advise me,” the Prophet Muhammad PBUH gave the concise instruction, narrated by Abu Huraira (RA):

A man said to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, “Advise me.” The Prophet said, “Do not become angry.” The man repeated (his request) several times, and the Prophet said, “Do not become angry.”
[Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 6116]

This brief advice suited the man's temperament and social context, showing sensitivity to his personality and environment. In another instance, when a young Companion asked about righteousness, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH replied with a broader spiritual guidance, narrated by Wabisah ibn Ma'bad (RA):

I came to the Messenger of Allah PBUH, and he said, “You have come to ask about righteousness?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “Consult your heart. Righteousness is what brings peace to the soul and comfort to the heart, and sin is what wavers in the soul and causes uneasiness in the chest even if people give you their legal opinion.”
[Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 17372]

This response reflected a different communicative style, one appropriate for a person with deeper spiritual awareness and maturity. These examples demonstrate that the Sunnah models audience differentiation based on personal characteristics, readiness, and needs. (Munawir, 2022) further highlight this method as “dialogical adaptation,” where the Prophet Muhammad PBUH intentionally selected linguistic style, emotional tone, and length of guidance according to the receiver's capacity.

4.3 Ethical Principles in Islamic Communication

Islamic communication is guided by ethical obligations that regulate how segmentation should occur. These values ensure that tailoring does not lead to manipulation, deception, or preferential treatment.

Table 1 Ethical Principles Guiding Islamic Communication and Their Scholarly Support

Principle	Meaning	Qur’anic / Prophetic Basis	Scholarly Support
<i>Ta’aruf</i> (Mutual Understanding)	Recognising and engaging diverse audiences with respect and empathy	Qur’an 49:13	(Rohman, 2018)
‘ <i>Adl</i> (Justice)	Ensuring fairness, honesty, and equality in communication and representation	Qur’an 16:90	(Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Ridzuan, 2025)
<i>Ikhlas</i> (Sincerity)	Intention guided by sincerity and truth, not self-interest	Qur’an 98:5	(Muhammad Faqih Nidzom, 2022)
<i>Maṣlahah</i> (Public Benefit)	Prioritising collective well-being and avoiding harm in message design	Qur’an 2:219 / 16:90	(Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 2022)
<i>Hikmah</i> (Wisdom)	Communicating with tact, insight, and appropriateness to context	Qur’an 16:125	(Aggriany, 2024)

Source: Author’s synthesis (2025)

These ethical principles *ta’aruf* (mutual understanding), *ikhlas* (sincerity), ‘*adl* (justice), *maṣlahah* (public benefit), and *hikmah* (wisdom) serve as moral boundaries that guide Islamic institutions in segmenting audiences without compromising integrity. Rooted in Qur’anic injunctions such as *ta’aruf* (Q 49:13), ‘*adl* (Q 16:90), and *hikmah* (Q 16:125), these values anchor communication in inclusivity, truthfulness, and communal welfare. *Ta’aruf* promotes recognition of audience diversity and empathy in communication (Rohman, 2018) while *ikhlas* ensures sincerity of intention over persuasion (Muhammad Faqih Nidzom, 2022) and ‘*adl* enforces fairness and honesty in message framing (Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Ridzuan, 2025).

Likewise, *maṣlahah* directs communicators to prioritise collective benefit and social harmony (Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 2022), while *hikmah* encourages context-sensitive, tactful delivery grounded in Qur’anic ethics (Aggriany, 2024). Collectively, these principles transform segmentation from a technical marketing device into an ethically guided practice that upholds Islamic values of sincerity, justice, and collective good.

4.4 Translating Qur’anic Teachings into Segmentation Practice

Table 2 Translating Qur’anic and Prophetic Teachings into Ethical Segmentation Practices

Qur’anic / Prophetic Basis	Key Principle	Practical Segmentation Implication
Qur’an 49:13	<i>Ta’aruf</i> (Mutual Understanding)	Communication should recognise and respect audience diversity (age, literacy, culture), promoting empathy and inclusion rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
Qur’an 16:90	‘ <i>Adl</i> (Justice)	Segmentation should ensure fairness and avoid privileging or excluding any audience group in message access or delivery.
Qur’an 98:5	<i>Ikhlas</i> (Sincerity)	Segmentation should be guided by sincere intention to benefit audiences, not by self-interest or manipulation.
Qur’an 2:219 / 16:90	<i>Maṣlahah</i> (Public Benefit)	Segmentation should prioritise collective well-being and usefulness for each audience group, avoiding harm and promoting benefit.
Qur’an 16:125	<i>Hikmah</i> (Wisdom)	Segmentation and communication design should be informed by insight, tact, and sensitivity to audience context and readiness.

(Source: Author’s synthesis, 2025)

Table 2 shows how Qur’anic and Prophetic principles such as *Ta’aruf* (mutual understanding), *’Adl* (justice), *Ikhlāṣ* (sincerity), *Maṣlaḥah* (public benefit), and *Hikmah* (wisdom) can be applied to guide ethical segmentation practices in communication (Rohman, 2018) (Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Ridzuan, 2025) (Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, 2022) (Aggriany, 2024). This demonstrates that segmentation, when rooted in Prophetic pedagogy, serves as an ethical means of communicating with wisdom and compassion.

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework for ethical segmentation in Islamic communication integrates classical segmentation logic with Qur’anic and Prophetic guidance. As this study adopts a conceptual research approach, the framework proposed here is developed through theoretical synthesis rather than empirical data collection. Its central purpose is to demonstrate how Qur’anic ethics can be operationalised within contemporary audience engagement strategies.

The framework is built upon three interrelated pillars that together form the ethical foundation for segmentation in Islamic communication (see Figure 1: Ethical Segmentation Framework in Islamic Communication).

1. Mutual Understanding (*Ta’aruf*) – Based on Qur’an 49:13, recognising diversity as divinely intended. Segmentation respects audience differences to meet distinct needs responsibly.
2. Sincerity and Justice (*Ikhlāṣ* and *’Adl*) – From Qur’an 16:90, requiring truthfulness and fairness. Ethical segmentation avoids manipulation or bias.
3. Wisdom and Public Benefit (*Hikmah* and *Maṣlaḥah*) – Drawn from Qur’an 16:125, promoting messages that are context-appropriate and beneficial for spiritual and moral growth.

To operationalise this conceptual model, Islamic institutions may identify practical segmentation variables such as age or life stage, Islamic literacy level, digital literacy and media preference, social context (urban or rural), spiritual readiness, and cultural or linguistic background. These variables enable context-sensitive and ethically grounded outreach strategies (see Table 4.1).

Table 3 Sample Ethical Audience Segmentation in Islamic Institutions

Segment	Key Characteristics	Recommended Channel /Message Style	Ethical Guardrails
Youth (16-25)	Digitally native, identity-seeking, peer-influenced	Short-form video reminders, Instagram/Tiktok live Q&A	Uphold fairness and empathy (<i>’Adl & Ta’aruf</i>), avoid sensationalism or misinformation
New Muslims / Beginners	Low literacy, high curiosity, seeking belonging	Step-by-step guides, mentoring circles, gentle tone	Guide with sincerity and patience (<i>Ikhlāṣ</i>), avoid judgmental or exclusionary language
Elderly / Retirees	Prefer face-to-face learning and trusted authority figures	Mosque <i>ḥalaqah</i> , home visits, telephone outreach	Maintain dignity and comfort (<i>Maṣlaḥah & Hikmah</i>), respect life experience
Women’s Study Groups	Balancing family duties and faith learning	WhatsApp or Telegram reminders, hybrid in-person sessions	Foster inclusion and privacy (<i>Ta’aruf & ’Adl</i>), ensure confidentiality and mutual respect
General Public / Community Events	Mixed literacy and cultural exposure	Friday sermons, institutional websites, YouTube live lectures	Promote collective benefit and insight (<i>Maṣlaḥah & Hikmah</i>), communicate with tact and balance

(Source: Author’s synthesis, 2025)

This demonstrates segmentation not as market profiling but as dignified *khidmah* (service) that aligns form, tone, and platform with audience realities.

5.2 Institutional Applications

When implemented ethically, segmentation enhances the relevance and impact of religious communication across institutional settings:

1. Religious Institutions: Mosques can design programmes suited to each audience's readiness digital youth sessions, adult *tafsir* classes in hybrid mode, and senior *halaqah* conducted in person.
2. Educational Institutions: Islamic schools and universities may segment learners by stage and literacy level, promoting fairness (*'adl*) and gradual intellectual growth.
3. Community Organisations: NGOs and welfare groups can segment by social need (families, new converts, women's empowerment) to ensure equitable support.

5.3 Inclusivity and Impact

Segmentation, when guided by Qur'anic ethics, fosters inclusivity rather than division. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH exemplified this through personalised instruction simplifying for new learners, deepening discourse for scholars, and using storytelling for children. This illustrates that effective *da'wah* is rooted in wisdom (*hikmah*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*), not uniformity.

By embedding these ethical values *ikhlas* (sincerity), *'adl* (justice), and *maṣlahah* (benefit) into audience segmentation, Islamic institutions can cultivate trust and credibility among diverse Muslim communities. Ethical segmentation thus becomes a means of service (*khidmah*) rather than persuasion, aligning modern communication strategies with Prophetic ethics and contemporary institutional responsibilities.

5.4 Insights from Contemporary Digital Da'wah Studies

Recent studies reflect that *da'wah* communication methods that take into consideration audience diversity and contextual realities attain greater relevance and trust. This has been backed by empirical studies on digital platforms. For instance, narrative-descriptive studies on Facebook-based *da'wah* described how the platform's interactive elements allowed more contextualised, two-way engagements with youth, albeit with some credibility issues (Mukti Ali, 2021). Similarly, the mixed-methods studies on social-media *da'wah* content that was deemed successful centered on audience interactivity as well as current social issues instead of generic proclamations (Ahmad Sampurna, 2025). Studies on digital waqf fundraising communication also demonstrate that segmentation strategies can improve demographic participation and engagement (Hendri Hermawan Adinugraha, 2024).

5.5 Implications for Islamic Institutions

The findings indicate that segmentation improves communication effectiveness when implemented ethically and contextually. However, many existing studies do not explicitly integrate segmentation strategies with Islamic ethical frameworks such as *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* or Qur'anic communication ethics.

By integrating ethical principles such as *ta'aruf*, *ikhlas*, *'adl*, and *maṣlahah*, segmentation can move beyond a tactical marketing instrument to become an ethically grounded communication approach rooted in Islamic teachings. For Islamic institutions, ethical segmentation offers several advantages.

Tailoring communication strategies to audience needs can strengthen institutional credibility, enhance message relevance, and foster long-term trust among diverse Muslim communities.

6 CONCLUSION

This study explored the ethical ways to segment an audience and opened the possibilities of reinforcing the credibility and contextual relevance of *da'wah* communication. Integrating Qur'anic principles of *ta'aruf*, *ikhlas*, and *maṣlahah* demonstrates that the combination of ethical audience analysis and integration audience analysis goes beyond a simple marketing approach, but an ethically responsible approach within Islamic moral principles (Mohamad Farid Abdul Wahed, 2025). The proposed framework transitions the audience segmentation paradigm from a marketing approach to a more Prophetic ethical paradigm that connects classical instructions to the Prophetic model with current institutional needs (Munawir, 2022).

In practical terms, Islamic institutions and organisations should prioritise the analysis of their audience to be within the dimensions of age, literacy, digital literacy, and spiritual dimension, so that their communication approach upholds their message, all while disengaging from a performative approach. Equipping *da'wah* practitioners with ethical principles of communication that centres on trust, which is built on fairness and *'adl*, will simultaneously advance the organisation's credibility (Muhammad Zahiruddin Hassan, 2025). Through partnerships between Islamic and Communication scholars, creativity and clarity of messaging can be enhanced while observing *shari'ah*. Most importantly, segmentation should be viewed as an act of *khidmah* (service) and not as an act of persuasion. Hence, the emphasis should be on inclusiveness and the welfare of the community as a whole (*maṣlahah*).

This paper makes a conceptual contribution, although the framework has yet to be tested empirically. Subsequent work examines segmentation that is ethically informed and assesses its impact on audience trust, audience understanding, and sustained interest and engagement over time. concerns. These would include equitable access, transparency, and potential data privacy issues.

In sum, this study adds to Islamic communication scholarship in new and meaningful ways by offering a *maqāsid al-shari'ah*-aligned model, which combines practical segmentation, and moral-imbued principles. Hence, it serves to lay a dual contribution; while establishing a theoretical premise, it maps out communication practices that are workable, ethical, and uphold Islamic principles.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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