Communication skills and virtual micro-guiding: Competency development strategies for Hajj guides in Islamic universities

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the importance of developing the competency of candidate Hajj ritual guides, amidst the high interest in going to the Hajj, but not supported by the availability of competent resources to guide the congregation. On the other hand, the format for competency development in Islamic colleges is still not uniform, so an ideal competency development strategy based on communication skills and virtual micro-guiding is needed. This study aims to describe and analyze communication skills and virtual micro-guiding as a strategy for developing the competency of candidate professional Hajj ritual guides. This study is operationalized through qualitative analysis of critical interaction models. Data was collected from 87 candidate Hajj guides in the Department of Hajj and Umrah Management. The data results are in the form of persuasive communication practices, virtual micro-guiding from the results of in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. This study found a form of skill consisting of persuasive communication and therapeutic communication. The virtual micro-guiding form is operationalized with virtual group guiding, support group, group counseling, and teaching group devices. The implications of persuasive and therapeutic communication skills are directed at efforts to understand the Hajj ritual. Meanwhile, the implications of virtual micro-guiding are one of the national policies in developing competencies by implementing a conducive communication environment. This is the first study to examine communication skills and virtual micro-guiding as competency development strategies for hajj guides.

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Abstrak

Studi ini dilatarbelakangi pentingnya pengembangan kompetensi calon pembimbing *manasik* haji, ditengah animo pergi haji yang masih tinggi, namun tidak didukung ketersediaan sumber daya kompeten untuk membimbing jemaah. Di sisi lain, format pengembangan kompetensi di Perguruan Tinggi Islam masih tidak seragam, sehingga dibutuhkan strategi ideal pengembangan kompetensi berbasis keterampilan komunikasi dan virtual *micro-guiding*. Studi ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan serta menganalisis keterampilan komunikasi dan virtual *micro-guiding* sebagai strategi pengembangan kompetensi calon pembimbing *manasik* haji profesional. Studi ini dioperasionalkan melalui analisis kualitatif model interaksi kritis. Data dihimpun dari calon pembimbing haji di Prodi Manajemen Haji Umrah sebanyak 87 orang. Hasil data berupa praktek komunikasi persuasif, virtual *micro-guiding* dari hasil wawancara mendalam dan studi dokumentasi. Studi ini menemukan bentuk keterampilan yang terdiri dari komunikasi persuasif dan komunikasi terapiutik. Bentuk virtual *micro-guiding* dioperasionalkan dengan perangkat kelompok bimbingan virtual, kelompok dukungan, kolompok konseling, dan kelompok pengajaran. Implikasi keterampilan komunikasi persuasive dan terapiutik diarahkan pada usaha pemahaman ritualistic haji. Sedangkan implikasi virtual *micro-guiding* menjadi salah satu kebijakan nasional dalam pengembangan kompetensi dengan penerapan lingkungan komunikasi yang kondusif. Ini adalah studi pertama yang mengkaji keterampilan komunikasi dan bimbingan mikro virtual sebagai strategi pengembangan kompetensi pembimbing haji.

INTRODUCTION

Availability of human resources must, of course, meet high competency standards. This is important to do to provide quality services and maintain the existence of human resources in the world of work market, which is ready to compete, and in various formats and models, one of which is in the field of Hajj and Umrah rituals. Studies conducted by Jamil et al. (2019), Djamil et.al. (2020), and Hasanah et al. (2021) show that the development of competency of candidate Hajj ritual guides

has actually been carried out at Indonesian Islamic Religious Universities. However, it is still not uniform, both in terms of management and curriculum composition, resulting in the failure to fulfill ideal standards and patterns to produce reliable candidate Hajj guides. One of the problems commonly found is communication skills as the basis of general skills as a candidate Hajj guide. Studies conducted by Topler et al. (2017), Al-Alaweeh et al. (2019), Kapur (2020), and Hanan & Sugianto (2021) show that communication skills are the savior of interaction relationships, because communication can increase and improve knowledge and achieve success, productivity, and profitability. Wolff (1943), Susilana et al. (2009), Suardhana et al. (2013), and Sagala, (2013) stated that the development of communication competencies must be innovative and accessible virtually, so that the use of communication technology becomes a necessity, because virtual communication skills are the basis for interacting, understanding ideas and values, thus bringing a person to global understanding and personal expression.

Several competency improvement program organizers have carried out this in accordance with the Graduate Competency Standards that have been set by each university through curriculum and extracurricular components. On the other hand, competency development is also starting to accommodate advances in information technology and local wisdom as regional characteristics of Indonesia.

Micro-guiding is the key to realizing the competency of a Hajj guide to understand and solve problems effectively. Halim (2020) and Yanis et al. (2015), with a higher weight (by 40%) than other abilities. Meanwhile, Anasom et al (2016) and Hasanah (2018) stated that micro-guiding is one of the keys to an effective method of honing skills using guiding principles. By utilizing the interaction of infrastructure, materials, and the communication environment. Communication assistance facilities develop the skills, abilities, qualities, creativity, and integrity of guides in handling Hajj problems completely, effectively, and efficiently. A study conducted by Widyanto et al (2020) found that the special character of guiding is the provision of a conducive communication environment with automation systems, virtual environments through machine, data, and human connectivity, thereby forming more creative learning models, which not only touch aspects of cognition, but also build psychological dynamics in the form of independence and professional responsibility.

Unfortunately, the micro-guiding model that has been implemented so far is still not yet mature in its formulation, still conventional in nature, plus several universities do not yet have a uniform format and adapt to the demands of the times. Hasanah et al (2021) found that 90% of the competency development of candidate Hajj ritual guides in Islamic universities is still in the form of basic communication practicum and conventional models. On the other hand, 70% of competency development is still based on processes, not outcomes, so we cannot find the ideal format. This is inversely proportional to the need to produce professional Hajj ritual guides.

Even though micro-guiding is the main element in developing learning methodology, especially in increasing the competence of candidate *manasik* (a practical demonstration of the Hajj rituals conducted before departure to the Holy Land) guides, a new format must immediately be sought and developed, so that the entire competency development process can run according to needs, conditions, and progress of the times. Apart from that, it is developed in a learning group which allows for participatory and massive scale interaction to occur, at one time, is open, and is very possible to do online/virtually without reducing the competency standards that have been set. And it is time to develop a virtual micro-guiding model as a strategy for developing the competence of *manasik* instructors with values of effectiveness, efficiency, and on a massive scale.

Based on development principles, some things need to be considered in formulating and developing prototypes, especially competence and micro-guiding, namely the principle of conformity with advances in science and technology (automation and network systems), needs, competencies, and local wisdom. So, this study is important to carry out so that strategies can be found to develop supervisor competency through persuasive communication and virtual micro-guiding, so that the goal of producing competent guides who are experienced, independent, and have professional, creative, and innovative responsibilities can be achieved.

Many studies have been carried out regarding supervisor competency, including Cohen et al (2002), Murtadlo et al. (2019), and Nurfizri (2015) that in increasing competence, guiding becomes a model to produce understanding and skills. Other research also examines the importance of guiding in developing

supervisor competency in the field of Hajj, but this research is still limited to explaining guiding management and guiding theories, and has not been operationalized in competency development. Apart from that, this study is still general in describing the competency development of professional Hajj ritual guides.

METHODS

This study employed descriptive qualitative research with a field study approach. This research approach employed communication psychology. Primary data sources were obtained from 87 candidates of Hajj guides in the Department of Hajj and Umrah Management, a State Islamic University in Central Java. Data were obtained from communication skills competency training tests and virtual micro-guidance practicums.

To analyze the level of communication and virtual micro-guidance skills, this study utilized in-depth interviews and document studies derived from copies of portfolio results. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using the critical interaction model analysis of Miles & Huberman (1992). To ensure data validity, this study also utilized source and method triangulation, as well as a model readability test, to develop a pattern for developing Hajj guide competency through communication skills practice and virtual micro-guiding. This readability test was conducted jointly by the Hajj and Umrah Institutional Management Division and the Hajj and Umrah Management Study Program at Walisongo State Islamic University (UIN) Semarang.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of candidate Hajj and Umrah guides

The study included 87 subjects, consisting of 31 men and 56 women (see Table 1). Based on their portfolios, 69 candidates had obtained Umrah guide certificates from the Indonesian Sharia Tourism Professional Certification Institute (LSP Parsya), and 18 candidates had local guide certificates from the Indonesian Tourism Association (HPI) (see Table 2). The study resulted in excellent communication skills for the *manasik* guide candidates and good virtual micro-guiding skills (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 1. Profile of candidate Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage guides by sex

No	Sex	Amount	Percentage
1	Men	31	35.62
2	Women	56	64.36
	Total	87	100

Source: Portfolio documentation

Table 2. Types of competency certificates

No	Competency Certificate	Amount	Percentage
1	Certified Guide Umra (CGU)	69	79.81
2	Local Guide Certificate (LG)	18	20.19
	Total	87	100

Source: Portfolio documentation

Table 3. Communication skill practice score

No	Score	Criteria	Amount	Percentage	Description
1	> 89	very good	17	19.54	
2	70 - 89	good	61	70.11	Communication skill criteria in the good category
3	50 – 69	medium	9	10.35	
4	< 50	not good	0	0	
	Total		87	100	

Source: Portfolio documentation

Table 4. Virtual micro-guiding practice score

No	Score	Criteria	Amount	Percentage	Description
1	> 75	very good	8	9.22	
2	68 - 75	good	22	25.28	Virtual micro-guiding criteria in the medium category
3	60 – 67	medium	55	63.21	
4	< 60	not good	2	2.29	
	Total		87	100	

Source: Portfolio documentation

Persuasive communication skills for Hajj guides

The very complex dynamics of organizing the Hajj in Indonesia necessitate quality services. Mayasari et al. (2021) and Tohari et al. (2024) stated that quality services must be based on reliable resource management. This is done to provide the

best service to every guest of Allah. The government has taken various steps to always improve the quality of services to Hajj pilgrims, one of which is by developing the quality of potential guides who are competent, professional, and have the ability to adapt to all possibilities and advances in communication technology and globalization through communication skills.

Ingles (2018) stated that communication skills are an important part of efforts to increase competence, considering that communication is a medium for sharing world experiences, providing knowledge, understanding, and self-reflection. Close & Ham (2016) further explained that communication skills need to be designed in an interesting way to raise awareness, influence decisions, and solve problems. Apart from that, there are three things that must be considered, namely attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. This relates to a person's psychological ability to motivate, self-empowerment, personal progress, and the process of creating new knowledge through observing and understanding phenomena. The two forms of communication studied by candidate *manasik* guides at Islamic Universities are persuasive communication and therapeutic communication (see Table 5).

Table 5. The form of communication of the Hajj guides

Persuasive Communication	Therapeutic Communication
Rational Appeal	Pilgrimage relationship and collaborative ritual activity
Emotional Appeal	Motivation and suggestion
	Communication Empathy
	Presents a sense of Caring
	Raise awareness of the existing situation.

Source: documentation of communication skill practice

The results of the study showed that the communication skills of the candidates for Hajj and Umrah Hajj guides were in the good criteria for 61 people (70.11%), this proves that communication skills are an important element in developing the competence of Hajj and Umrah Hajj guides as stated by Silvi and Purnama who stated that communication is a basic skill that a Hajj guide must have, including persuasive and therapeutic communication.

"It's very appropriate that a guide must have communication skills. That's the basic. The most important communication is persuasive. How a guide can influence interest and make their communication interesting, so that the congregation understands and willingly follows the direction and guidance. Not only that, ma'am, besides engaging communication, communication must also make the congregation feel helped and solve their problems. Problems during the Hajj pilgrimage can be very complex and sometimes unexpected, so effective communication is needed to address them" (Silvi, 2024).

"Communication, the most important communication in Hajj and Umrah guidance, is communication that can foster enthusiasm, calm, and make pilgrims feel happy with the information, not the opposite, which can make them feel threatened and intimidated. People performing Hajj, especially the elderly, often experience unstable emotions and mental disorders, so the communication strategy is to use persuasive and therapeutic communication. Communication that also produces solutions to address pilgrims' problems" (Purnama, 2024).

Wardhani, Puspitasari, and Deniati further stated that the mentor's communication skills must be able to raise awareness and manage emotions well.

"As a guide, you must be able to make pilgrims aware of various situations. Therefore, simple, easy, and engaging communication is essential. It shouldn't just be about imparting knowledge about the rituals, but also fostering trust, closeness, and empathy, conveying situations in an understandable way. Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, who are mostly elderly, require communication that touches their feelings and is logically accepted. They need communication that is open-minded, even one that makes them feel comfortable" (Wardhani, 2024).

"Guides must understand the situations and conditions of their pilgrims. Therefore, it's very appropriate to apply therapeutic communication. For us, if the communication contains values of closeness and truth, and is conducted with empathy, it will certainly be warmly welcomed by the pilgrims, fostering trust and motivation to perform the pilgrimage better. Since the Hajj is more physically and psychologically draining, communication must also be directed

at addressing the issues of pilgrim fatigue and psychological disorders, especially among the elderly" (Puspitasarim, 2024).

"The communication we practice isn't just random communication. Rather, it's communication that fosters a genuine interest in the information we provide. It's also crucial to guide the recipient toward awareness of the information transfer process. Therefore, communication that is both understandable and engaging is needed" (Deniati, 2024).

Griffin & Raj (2017) and Lugmayr et al. (2017) prove that persuasive communication is closely related to the development of progress, experience, and more effective relationships, giving rise to high commitment. Persuasive communication can be successful through the principles of reciprocity, lack of authority, commitment, consistency, consensus, liking, understanding others, making strong arguments, and using effective language. Pelletier and Sharp (2008) emphasize that persuasive communication uses credibility, the ability to listen and empathize, maintain an open attitude, consistency, and conformity. Furthermore, from this principle, persuasive communication can be done verbally and non-verbally.

Candidate Hajj *manasik* guides are proven to use persuasive communication as evidence of using three methods of persuasive communication, namely by relying on cognitive, affective, and behavioral abilities (past). Forms of persuasive communication for candidate Hajj guides can be demonstrated by rational appeal and emotional appeal. Rational appeal concerns the functional needs of communication, the uses and benefits of communication. Gilson & Berkman (1980), Howkins, et al. (1998), Belch & Belch (2001), and Kolter, et al. (1999) explain that rational appeal is related to advantages and real experience in the communication process. The goal of rational appeal is the ability to attract interest and attention. Rational appeals in the findings of Kashari & Jain (2014), Hornik et al (2017), and Nabude (2022) use logical arguments and factual evidence to convince individuals that advocacy can be carried out and achieve success with audience perception.

Persuasion through rational appeals is a cognitive response tradition where persuasive effectiveness is a function of the individual's cognitive response to. Fill (2006), Sadeghi et al (2015), and Nadube (2021) stated that if the overall cognitive

response is positive, then persuasion will occur, and vice versa. The success of a rational appeal depends largely on the strength and quality of the arguments in the message, given that the recipient is capable and motivated to process the message. In line with the study conducted by Nadube & Isenah (2022), factual evidence can be in the form of statistics or personal testimonies, message modalities, channels, or source credibility. Furthermore, Fill (2006) states that the main dimensions of rational advertising appeal include factual, slice-of-life, demonstration, and comparative advertising. This dimension is a measure of how rational attraction can be assessed and applied. Another attraction is emotional.

Das et al. (2003) and de Hoog et al. (2007) revealed that emotional appeal can take the form of fear in considering potential solutions to the problems faced. This is part of developing the motivation of candidate Hajj guides to gather more information, take advantage of opportunities, minimize danger, and be resilient. Candidate mentors become more sensitive to being aware of potential problems, risk information, the impact of behavior, and the potential that threatens to give a lot of fear (Rothman & Salovey, 2007). Although awareness of threatening problems can provide a cognitive framework that helps them monitor or integrate new information. Witte & Allen (2000) call emotional appeals a means of evaluating potential solutions to a problem. Once people realize that they have to face environmental problems that may affect their lives, they may be motivated to believe that something can be done.

Table 6. Communication skill in Hajj services

No	Hajj Services	Rational Appeal	Emotional Appeal
1	Hajj Pilgrim Administration	a. Skill in eloquence and gentleness of communication b. Speaking with confidence c. Communication based on accurate data d. Experience and knowledge e. Factual Administration	a. Softness and Communication expression b. Traits that indicate trustworthiness c. Pleasant expression.
2	Health Services	a. benefits of health information b. Knowledge of Disease risk factors c. slice-of-life	a. Fear b. Source of Hajj pilgrims' health problems c. Resilient and independent
3	*Manasik* Guide Service	a. Role models	a. Emotional support b. Social dynamics

	b. Attention and increasing the ability to pay attention	c. Awareness
	c. Comparative-advertising	
	d. Demonstration	

Communication skills are directed at how to package and understand Hajj service messages based on the type of communication skills (see Table 6). Rational attraction to administrative services is proven by skills in communication fluency, gentleness of communication, speaking with confidence, communication based on accurate data, real experience, general knowledge, and factual evidence. The rational appeal of Hajj health services is the ability to see the benefits of health information, knowledge of disease risk factors, and a slice of life. Meanwhile, *manasik* guidance services are realized in the form of examples, such as attention to increasing the ability to pay attention, comparative-advertising, and demonstration.

Emotional skills are directed at how communication becomes something that provides enthusiasm and motivation. Emotional appeal in administrative services is manifested in displaying communication expressions in the form of facial softness and smiles, characteristics that increase trustworthiness, and pleasant expressions in serving the congregation's administration. The emotional appeal of Hajj Health services is focused on fears and sources of evaluation of health problems, as well as encouragement to become independent and resilient. The emotional appeal of *manasik* guidance services includes communication skills in providing emotional support, social dynamics, and awareness. Basri (2015), Widyanto et al. (2015), Kurniawan & Dewi (2017), Hasanah (2018), and Wulandari et al. (2020) explain that communication skills need to adopt facilitation procedures, adapting revolutionary era methodologies. industry 4.0, and the development of fun, interesting, and innovative learning media.

Therapeutic communication skills of Hajj *manasik* guides

The research results show that, in addition to persuasive communication, therapeutic communication is a communication skill that plays a crucial role in developing Hajj services (see Table 7). Interview data indicate that there are five forms of therapeutic communication that Hajj and Umrah pilgrimage guides must master,

namely (1) pilgrimage relationship and collaborative ritual activity skills; (2) motivation and suggestion skills; (3) communication empathy skills; (4) presentation of a sense of caring skills, and (5) raising awareness of the existing situation. This is consistent with interview data from Wibowo, Razaq, and Masruri.

"Hajj pilgrims, especially the elderly, need communication that not only provides information on the procedures for performing the Hajj, but also forms of communication that foster close, strong, and friendly relationships. Hajj pilgrims are often tired, so they need forms of communication that lift their spirits and encourage them. Therefore, communication with strong therapeutic power is essential" (Wobowo, 2024).

"Good communication for people in difficult situations and conditions of fatigue is communication that can foster enthusiasm, strengthen brotherhood, and also foster mutual understanding and comprehension. Everyone in a state of stress and fatigue needs new energy that can make them susceptible to information. Therefore, a guide needs to know what his congregation is experiencing, not just be engrossed in his own world. Try to pay attention to what their needs are, what their requirements are, so if they experience problems, communicate with empathy and motivation. Do not make them more afraid or frustrated. People who are in an unstable condition can experience serious mental disorders, so therapeutic communication skills are needed, both for themselves and the congregation being guided" (Razaq, 2024).

"Not only must a guide be a good talker, but he must understand the pilgrims' situation. Therefore, when communicating something, he must do so with careful consideration and empathy. While the goal of communication is understanding, in the case of the Hajj, understanding alone is not enough. The guide must be able to guide the pilgrims to be aware of their own circumstances and understand the situation they are facing. The guide must not appear judgmental or provide information that puts pressure on the pilgrims. If a problem arises, a guide needs to guide the pilgrims so they pay attention and find a solution, ensuring the problem can be handled. Providing suggestions and motivation is, of course, very important" (Masruri, 2024).

Hajj governance is synonymous with an endless story; this is because the problems of the Hajj pilgrimage from year to year are always complex and never-

ending. One of them is the problem faced by candidate Hajj guides. The problems experienced are related to the competency of the candidate guides. Hajj pilgrims who are dominated by elderly and restive groups need Hajj guides who have high communication skills. Not only information communication, but also communication related to efforts to handle Hajj pilgrims' problems. Communication that functions to help overcome problems, healing, and therapy. The term therapeutic communication was initially used in providing nursing care to patients, but as needs develop, therapeutic communication is used for all types of communication oriented towards fulfilling health, welfare, social, and psychological services.

Therapeutic communication, according to Purwanti (1994) and Pavlova (2024) focuses on forms of adaptive communication, healing, and fostering harmonious, comfortable, and calming relationships. Therapeutic communication develops professional skills in building trust, mutual respect, ensuring empathetic relationships, motivating, and being a source of strength. Therapeutic communication in the field of organizing the Hajj is important as an approach that is oriented towards the overall care and service of the Hajj pilgrims, both physically, psychologically, socially, and emotionally. Kelly, et al (2014), Moreno, et al. (2016), and Hanson, et al. (2017) state that therapeutic communication is a special form of communication that allows for social interaction, determining treatment needs, monitoring and solving problems, seeking and providing specific information in planning care.

Therapeutic communication, if related to the implementation of the Hajj, focuses on communication patterns between the guide and the congregation in the process of social and psychological interaction during the Hajj activity. The presence of therapeutic communication is expected to help Hajj pilgrims understand their condition and get appropriate treatment for psycho-socio-emotional problems during the Hajj pilgrimage. Apart from that, the presence of therapeutic communication is also a nursing care strategy for elderly Hajj pilgrims and religious groups. Noh et al. (2020) stated that information is obtained from the accumulation of various experiences, the results of activities are exchanged, emotional-psychological relationships are formed, and empathy and mutual understanding are developed. Batini et al (2009) and Ritchi et al. (2015) found that therapeutic communication was

used as an effort to increase Hajj pilgrims' awareness in accessing and using quality information.

Table 7. Indicators of therapeutic communication for Hajj *manasik* guides

No	Health Service	Operational Service
1	Empathy	Social Interaction
2	Awareness	Building trust
3	Pilgrimage cantered	Potential barriers
4	Potential barriers	Motivation

This study found two forms of Hajj services that implement therapeutic communication: health services and Hajj operations. As explained by Puspatria and Ramadhan, the two Hajj services are rife with therapeutic communication.

> *"Hajj services can include operational and administrative services. However, therapeutic communication is typically applied in healthcare. Why is this service so heavily focused on therapy? of course, it's related to treatment and achieving optimal health and well-being. Many Hajj pilgrims are ill, so it's important to understand the potential risks of illness. Furthermore, it serves as a means of educating pilgrims about their health care. The principles of empathy, awareness, and a focus on the pilgrims' condition and the most potential health challenges are essential" (Puspatria, 2024).*

> *"Not many Hajj services implement therapeutic communication; as far as I know, it's mostly implemented in health services and operational services. Health services are certainly relevant. It's related to providing information about preventing, treating, and avoiding health risk factors. Operational services are usually related to efforts to create stronger and more solid interactions, building pilgrim trust, and boosting motivation. Operational services enable pilgrims to obtain information related to satisfaction and service quality, thus avoiding complaints. Health services, on the other hand, focus more on preventing health risk factors, both physical and psychological" (Ramadhan, 2024).*

The therapeutic communication of candidate Hajj *manasik* guides is focused on efforts to develop adaptive skills and help Hajj pilgrims deal with psycho-socio-

emotional problems during the Hajj pilgrimage. Guides can direct communication towards information regarding various conditions and situations that occur, so that the congregation understands and is aware of the conditions and can then raise awareness to carry out the best activities. A study conducted by Aryanti (2022) states that therapeutic communication is closely related to motivation. This can be explained by the fact that during the communication process, there is social interaction between the ritual instructor and the Hajj pilgrims. From this interaction, the congregation will gain learning experience in overcoming various problems, which will give rise to encouragement to behave positively, raise awareness, and get social support.

Comfort and trust are the foundations of therapeutic communication practices, which are proven to make it easier for Hajj pilgrims to heal their condition, achieve fitness, and be in prime condition when carrying out the Hajj pilgrimage. Studies conducted by Hidayat et al. (2020) and Hasanah (2023) state that communication built in a warm atmosphere fosters positive psychological dynamics, the ability to open up, and is then directed towards understanding information and carrying out activities that are more beneficial to healing and avoiding potential risks. So *manasik* guides need to hone therapeutic communication skills using a methodology based on a group approach.

Candidate Hajj *manasik* guides operationalized therapeutic communication skills in two forms of services, namely health services and Hajj operations (Hasanah & Hakim, 2025). The form of therapeutic communication for health services is in the form of efforts to raise empathy, awareness, potential problems, and everything must focus on the congregation. This skill is believed to form a cohesive relationship between the congregation and the mansik guide so that it is useful in the process of trust and healing. Meanwhile, in operational services, therapeutic communication includes social interaction activities, building trust, potential barriers, and motivation.

Virtual micro-guiding methodologies

The basic concepts of learning theory in Hajj *manasik* are adopted from the basic concepts of learning theory in general and guiding techniques. Based on the basic concepts of learning theory, there are four theories used to express the learning process, namely behavioristic theory, cognitive theory, humanistic theory, and

cybernetic theory. Learning in the concept of behavioristic theory emphasizes learning outcomes, as stated by Thorndike (1911), Hull (1943), Watson (1963), and Skinner (1969). This means that the results of learning activities are obtained from the interaction between stimuli and mental attitudes so that this interaction gives rise to connectivity (Thorndike, 1911), the fulfillment of needs (Hull, 1943), which must always be observable (Watson, 1913), and is influenced by reinforcing factors in the form of environment (Skinner, 1969).

Brunner (1960), Ausubel (1968), and Piaget (1975) put forward cognitive theory, a person learns well if there is free discovery learning, advanced organizers are available, integration in cognitive structures, accommodation of cognitive structures, and a balance between assimilation and accommodation. Meanwhile, Bloom and Krathwohl (2001) and Habermas (1972) found that the determinant of learning is humans themselves. Humans can actualize their own potential, which includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, which is influenced by harmonious interactions between the environment and fellow humans through technical learning, practical learning, and emancipatory learning. Understanding, independence, awareness, and responsibility are the embodiment of cultural transformation for the benefit of humans in dealing with the problems they face. In contrast to Landa (1987) and Pask & Scott (1972), who explain that learning is an effort to process information and create communication technology.

The learning mechanism for candidate hajj guides then uses the guiding concept. The results of the study indicate that in addition to communication skills, prospective Hajj guides must have the skills to create virtual micro-guiding, although the results of the study show that the level of micro-guiding skills of prospective Hajj guides is in the medium category with a score range of 60-67 for 55 candidates (65.21%), but this shows that virtual micro-guiding can be an alternative in developing the competence of Hajj guides. Virtual micro-guiding skills are technical skills in transferring knowledge using virtual space facilities or online applications.

The special skills taught in virtual micro-guiding training include utilizing the internet and multimedia technology, as explained by Anshari, Risdianto, and Windy.

"The micro-guiding technique makes greater use of internet facilities and communication networks. It doesn't require special software; as long as you have an internet connection, this practice can be carried out. There are advantages to using this technique. First, it has a wider reach, and second, it offers more varied material design. However, the downside lies in the quality of understanding, a common issue for the majority of technologically challenged congregations" (Anshari, 2024).

"If manasik is conducted manually, it's called micro-guiding, while utilizing the internet is called virtual micro-guiding. This technology is an adaptation of technological developments since the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring all service access to be conducted online, avoiding prolonged face-to-face meetings. Virtual micro-guiding utilizes existing software, eliminating the need for the hassle of building or creating new software. This makes it easier for a guide to communicate more widely and with a wide reach, all at once" (Risdianto, 2024).

"As a guide, I prefer using virtual micro-guiding because it's more effective and has a wider reach. This way, when providing guidance, there's no need to wait for a time or be in a crowd, which can be difficult and energy-consuming. Virtual micro-guiding itself can be done using a laptop, notebook, or smartphone. The flexibility of the hardware allows anyone to use it. So, virtual micro-guiding is the right choice for developing mentor competencies amidst complex technological adaptations" (Windy, 2024).

Yolom (1985), Gazda (1989), Djudiyah & Yuniardi (2011), and Hasanah (2021) explain that the guiding learning methodology is oriented towards personal and group approaches, with a focus on learning outcomes, namely changing behavior and raising awareness. Therefore, communication patterns are also directed at persuasive and therapeutic communication to form more conducive group and psychological dynamics. Therefore, the guiding principle was subsequently transformed into micro-guiding.

Micro-guiding, as one of the lessons in Hajj *manasik* certification, cannot be separated from the contribution of behavioral, cognitive, humanistic, and cybernetic learning theories. Anasom et al. (2016) explained that micro-guiding applied by guides starts from learning experiences, involving the interaction of facilities,

infrastructure, tools, and materials, into various experiences. The same study stated by Hasanah, 2018) stated that the micro-guiding process is not only oriented towards two-way communication, but is a process that is dynamic, open-minded, transparent, runs naturally, unpredictable, playful, requires participatory work, and involves the entire conducive environment. Hasanah (2018) further explained that learning is carried out in the capacity of creating a perfect human and prioritizing human aspects. Micro-guiding is the result of a collaboration between learning and guiding theories, giving rise to a unique and varied learning process, supported by digital technology. So, in order to increase the competence of *manasik* guides, the mechanism for developing a micro-guiding model is carried out by combining two theories, namely virtual learning theory and digital technology-based guiding.

Design of virtual micro-guiding implementation model in developing the competence of Hajj *manasik* guides

The competency development of Hajj *manasik* guides in this research adopted the theory of learning development with automation systems and network systems adapted to advances in communication technology and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (see Figure 1).
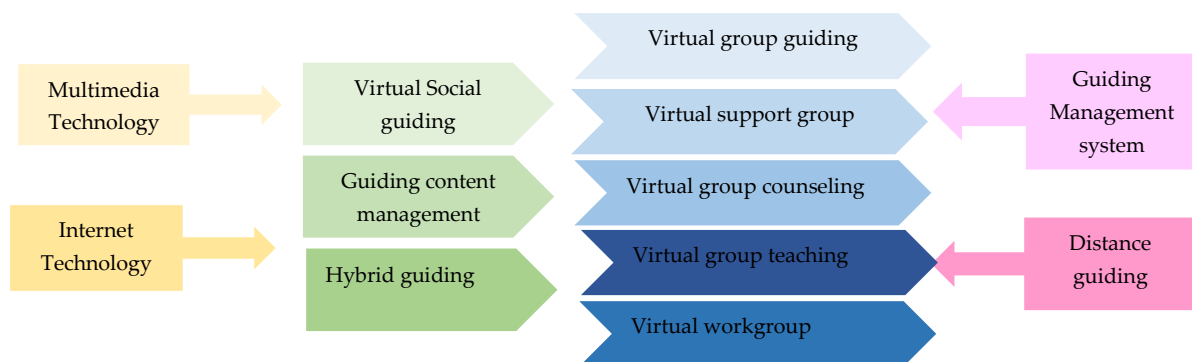

Figure 1: Development of a virtual micro-guiding model for competency development of professional Hajj *manasik* guides

The micro-guiding virtual learning methodology is carried out by utilizing multimedia technology and internet technology. Through these two technologies, all learning tools and devices will be provided through virtual social guiding, a content management system (CMS), and hybrid guiding. Khalil et al. (2024), Roy & Kumar

(2017), Alghofaili (2018), and Bagus (2023) stated that CMS provides an easier and faster process by using several platforms and free features available, such as Joomla, WordPress, and Drupal. According to Ghorecha & Bhatt (2013), by implementing virtual assistance, micro-guiding activities are still able to maintain quality, ideal learning processes, for maximum learning outcomes.

Patel, et al., (2011) show a positive relationship between virtual-based learning systems and content management systems (CMS) in micro-guiding that can run effectively and efficiently because they are supported by applicable learning technology devices, which are then created by using multimedia applications such as *KineMaster, Prezi, Camtasia, VideoScribe,* and internet network support by utilizing various application features that candidate mentors are already familiar with.

The implementation of the Hajj *manasik* guides competency development model, through virtual micro-guiding can be explained that through virtual media devices in the form of virtual group guiding, support groups are directed at developing personality, social and communication competencies, the operationalization of group counseling is directed at developing professional competencies, teaching groups are directed at developing competencies substantive, pedagogical, professional, and the operationalization of virtual workgroups is directed at developing socio-cultural competencies.

From the implementation of the virtual micro-guiding model, the competency development process can be measured based on competency indicators through the use of virtual learning tools. So that students not only have real experience, but can also carry out the process of identifying, analyzing, and resolving competency problems faced through virtual media, which is used as a learning tool.

Competency development strategy model through communication skills and virtual micro-guiding

The discussion of competency theory that will be presented in this study was developed and refers to the competency standards of the professional Hajj ritual guidance certification program. Candidate Hajj ritual guides must have five competencies, namely: substantive competence, pedagogical competence (kemenag.go.id, 2021), personality competence, and communication competence

(drafting team, 2018), professional competence, and socio-cultural competence (Suroso, 2014). Substantive competency is the competency of a supervisor in understanding guidance material for candidate congregation members. Pedagogical competency is the ability and skills related to teaching and learning interactions, guiding, explaining material, carrying out guidance, answering questions, managing guidance, and conducting evaluations. Personality competencies, abilities, and personal characteristics that reflect realistic attitudes, guiding behavior, carrying out guidance tasks, honesty, fairness, intelligence, creativity, innovation, initiative, democracy, respect for others, and empathy.

Communication competency is the ability to provide explanations, explain, solve problems, organize guidance and human relationships, and implement effective communication. Professional competence relates to the ability to carry out basic tasks and functions based on the profession one is engaged in; not only that, but a supervisor and guide must have other material abilities that are relevant to their field of work. Socio-cultural competence is the ability to identify, analyze, and resolve socio-cultural problems faced by the congregation, to build relationships and interact harmoniously with other people. In relation to these competencies, see Figure 2.
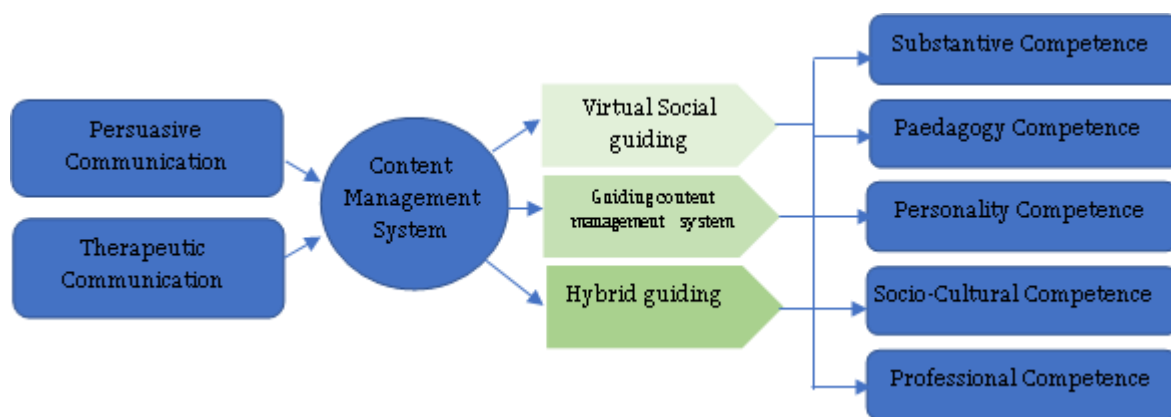

Figure 2: Implementation of Hajj *manasik* guiding competency development strategy with communication and virtual micro-guiding skills

Factors that can be used to develop competence include internal and external factors. Hasanah (2018) states that internal factors come from knowledge, personality, obedience and obedience, and awareness, while external factors can be obtained from

a conducive environment through training, education, and habituation. Figure 2 shows that communication skills and virtual micro-guiding are used as an effort to develop competence. This refers to the basic concepts of Hajj ritual learning theory, adopted from the basic concepts of learning theory in general, and guiding techniques, group approaches, and communication skills. There are four theories used to express the learning process, namely, behavioristic theory, cognitive theory, humanistic theory, and cybernetic theory. Learning in the concept of behavioristic theory emphasizes learning outcomes, as stated by Thorndike (1911), Hull (1943), Watson (1963), and Skinner (1969). This means that the results of learning activities are obtained from the interaction between stimulus and mental attitude, so that this interaction creates connectivity for the fulfillment of needs, which must always be observable, and influenced by reinforcing factors in the form of the environment.

In line with Adriani (2015), Al Yakin (2019), and Hasanah &Hakim (2025) stated that the learning methodology was developed through information technology-based innovation, namely learning management systems, learning content management systems, and social learning networks. There has been a shift in the delivery of material from conventional to virtual, based on digital technology, with multimedia technology and internet technology. Multimedia technology is carried out using digital visualization and simulation, while internet technology is used as a learning tool that utilizes various trending features and applications such as Joomla, Drupal, and WordPress.

Communication skills are directed at two forms, namely persuasive and therapeutic communication. These two forms of communication skills have a significant influence in developing the competence of Hajj ritual guides. Studies conducted by Irwanto et al. (2022) and Rahmi & Hariani (2023) found that communication influences in developing abilities and the prediction of expertise. In line with Wardiningsih et al. (2013), Fahruraz (2014), Perdana (2017), and Sitanggang et al. (2019), who stated that certain communication skills influence professionalism and competence, so that communication skills must be developed and honed. to support the objectives of guidance on Hajj rituals and services to Hajj pilgrims. In addition, to make competency development more effective and efficient,

communication skills can be combined with the use of virtual devices such as virtual communication technology.

This is in line with the findings of Vijaylakshmi (2023) and Amelia & Balqis (2023) that a person's skills can be changed by changing conventional communication with a focus on digital communication, thereby simplifying the way humans interact, increasing global connectivity, and handling problems more quickly. In terms of competency development, the role of digitalization of communication is explained by Abdallah et al (2024) as platform navigation that is directly involved in facilitating the development of other competencies in terms of expression, understanding, and stronger interaction with other people, thereby generating self-confidence and increasing competence. This finding is in line with the theory of self-efficacy and social capital, which is actualized as a strategy for developing the competence of a *manasik* guide. In this way, the study of communication skills, virtual microphones for the congregation, truly becomes a new model in efforts to increase competence with its various elements. These results certainly have implications for determining policies to increase competency through communication skills and the implementation of virtual guiding in providing future Hajj services.

CONCLUSION

This research finding reveals that the communication skills of Hajj *manasik* guides include two forms, namely persuasive communication and therapeutic communication. These two forms of communication skills are additionally included in the micro-guiding learning methodology, as an environment conducive to competency development. The operationalization of micro-guiding adopts a content management system based on internet technology and digital platforms such as Joomla, WordPress, and Drupal. The combination of guidance techniques with digital platforms produces four learning models, namely support groups, group teaching, group counseling, group guidance, and working groups. The communication implications of communication skills and the virtual micro-guiding model methodologically produce substantive, pedagogical, professional, socio-cultural, and personality competencies. These five forms of competency are the main capital for the

expertise of a ritual guide, so that they become part of efforts to handle Hajj issues and problems of Hajj pilgrims in a comprehensive manner.

Another implication can be found from the substantive aspect, that these findings substantively provide an academic contribution in the form of the inevitability that integrated model learning helps predict competency development, and thus this research succeeds in completing and enriching the literature in the field of Psychological Hajj and Umrah Management. This study has limitations in the use of a virtual micro-guiding model trial as an adaptation of the media to develop the competency of prospective Hajj and Umrah *manasik* guides. Therefore, this study can be used as a recommendation for the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in adopting various technological innovations on a large scale for the purposes of training for Hajj *manasik* guide certification. This study can also be a recommendation for other researchers in developing instrumentation for *manasik* learning techniques in the future, using more comprehensive and measurable variables.

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