Communication Intervention Strategy for Crowd Management at Masha'er

دور الإتصال في إدارة الحشود مخطط لاستراتيجية حملة إعلامية

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Abstract

Based on an overview of over half a century of research on persuasive communication and information campaigns in the West and the assumptions and challenges of a successful communication and information campaign, the present paper basically outlines a holistic communication intervention strategy in the service of crowd management in the Holy places (Masha'er). The objectives and characteristic of the strategy in general are described. Theoretical rationale and a prototype of a set of on-site messages for creating a communication ambience in the *Arafaat* area are given. These particular messages aim at preventing crowd congestion on and around the mount *al-Rahmah (Jabal al-Rahmah)*.

Introduction

Crowd management in and around the Holy Places (Masha'er) has increasingly become a critical focus of interest for the Hajj management authorities in the Kingdom. Crowd management is done to prevent crowd congestions that are likely to lead to stampedes, physical harm, and inordinate emotional and physical discomfort to the pilgrims. Reasons for crowd congestion in these places, though many, maybe conceptually viewed as falling under two broad sub-dimensions: a physical infra-structural dimension, and a pilgrim-centric dimension. The former calls for such physical infrastructural and managerial solutions like provision of well-marked-out walkways, the sitting and the vending areas, and provision of adequate number of trained security personnels to preempt crowd congestion from forming. The latter, the pilgrim-centric dimension, originates the causes of crowd congestion in the pilgrims' lack of knowledge, and information and in their values, attitudes and behaviors. The assumption here is that crowd congestion in Masha'er is the result of redundant values and inappropriate attitudes and behaviors of the pilgrims and hence to control crowd

congestion the pilgrims are to be persuaded to change and shun those. As such, a well-thought-out and pilgrims-focused communication intervention strategy based on persuasion techniques is required.

In what follows, we essentially try to accomplish the following: We first briefly highlight relevant wisdom from a half-century of communication research on persuasion and information campaigns (Perloff, 2010). With that overview of the relevant literature as our background, we would then provide in broad the characteristics of the proposed communication intervention strategy for the Masha'er. We follow it up with a specific theoretical rationale for the kind of messages needed for an on-site communication campaign in Arafaat during the Hajj period. And we conclude the paper by drawing up a set of message prototypes aimed at preventing crowd congestion from forming in the Jabal al-Rahmah area.

A-half Century of Persuasion Research: An Overview

Persuasion has been variously defined. Perloff (2010, p. 12) has boiled down the main components in some of the leading definitions of persuasion thus: "Persuasion is a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice." This 5-component definition of persuasion states that persuasion: i) uses symbols, with messages, mediated and/or non-mediated, transmitted through language and/or nonverbal signs and images; ii) is a conscious attempt that may or may not succeed to influence attitudes and behaviors of the other party; iii) is dependent on the receivers' decision to change attitude or behavior; iv) involves transmission of messages that may consist of arguments or simple cues; v) requires free choice of the message receivers. A key aspect of persuasion, according to Perloff (2010), is self-persuasion. That is, communicators merely provide the message and the arguments and it is the receiver of the message that decides to change his own attitude or to resist persuasion.

Shaping, reinforcing, and changing attitudes and behaviors are different categories of persuasive effects (Miller, 1980). These effects do not happen with the "flick of a switch button" rather persuasion is a time-consuming process that may require concerted communication campaigns, sometime long-drawn ones, actively involving the recipients of the message.

Construct attitude forms a core concern of persuasion and is the basic entity that communication interventions seek to form, mold or change in a target audience. Behavior is changed by influencing attitudes. Literature defines attitude as a learned evaluation (a psychological tendency or a predisposition to evaluate) of an object (person, place, or issue) that influences thought and action (Perloff, 2010; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). An attitude is not purely coterminous with behavior or affect (though it may consist of acquired patterns of reacting to social stimuli and comprises emotions). It is a tendency or a state of readiness that results in predictable though not necessarily rational behaviors (Perloff, 2010, p. 43).

Attitudes are complex entities and persuasion literature offers different approaches to the structure of attitudes. Expectancy-value theory given by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), for example, views attitudes as composed of expectations (beliefs) and their evaluations (affect). According to this theory, attitude is a multiplicative combination of (a) strength of beliefs that an object has certain attributes and (b) evaluation of these attributes. There is considerable evidence that personally important beliefs and evaluations accurately estimate attitudes on a number of issues and topics (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2008). The symbolic attitude approach, on the other hand, views emotions and symbols as core components of attitudes. That is, attitudes are characterized by emotional reactions, sweeping sentiments, and powerful prejudices. These symbolic predispositions, and not the beliefs, lie at the core of people's evaluation of issues, according to this approach. Ideological perspective on attitude contends that attitudes are organized around ideological principles or worldviews (Perloff, 2010).

These three perspectives on attitude structure provide insights on the underlying dynamics of public's attitudes and may be of interest to communicators interested in shaping or changing attitudes and behaviors on issues. Expectancy-value approach, for example, implies that distribution of beliefs on an issue in the target population should be investigated first in order to find and use counteracting information in a communication campaign on that issue. The symbolic approach would imply use of affective basis of attitudes in order to shape or change responses in a target audience. Ideological approach would recommend basing message appeal on a fundamental ideological principle underlying an issue for a particular target population.

One of the dominant strands in persuasion literature has to do with attitude-behavior consistency. Generally, attitudes predict behavior well. Strong attitudes are particularly likely to predict behavior and specific attitudes predict specific behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Perloff, 2010; Kim & Hunter, 1993). A specific attitude is called attitude toward a behavior. It evaluates a single act, or specific behavior that happens in a particular context at a particular time. A general attitude is attitude toward the object. Perloff (2010, p. 93) illustrates as follows:

For example, consider the issue of predicting religious behavior from religious attitudes. The general attitude is the individual's attitude toward religion. This is the sum total of the person's evaluations of many religious services, partaking in holiday rituals, talking about religion in everyday life, and donating money to religious causes. The specific attitude is the attitude toward one of these behaviors at a particular place and time … general attitude … will not predict each and every religious behavior.

Nevertheless attitudes do not always predict behavior and people are not entirely consistent especially when social norms operate, or the person is ambivalent about the issue or regards himself as high self-monitor (Perloff, 2010, p. 105). Three models of attitude-behavior consistency are evident in persuasion research; viz, theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behavior, and accessibility theory. These models tell us that under some conditions people deliberate on attitudes and carefully consider their implications for behavior whereas at other times they spontaneously act in line with their attitudes. These theories emphasize that attitudes predict behavior when subjective norms do not apply, or when people do not lack the psychological ability to act according to their attitude or when social pressures are not present and/or when the attitudes can be activated from memory at the time of decision (Wallace, Paulson , Lord, & Bond, 2005; Fazio & William, 1986; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The implications of these three theories for persuasion campaigns are: that relevant beliefs of the target audience should be found out and targeted, and relevant reference group should be located for developing messages (theory of reasoned action); that the target audience psychological capability to perform the behavior should be considered (planned behavior theory); and that the target audience should be put in touch with their desire to perform behavior (accessibility theory), Perloff (2010, p. 103).

Current theorizing on the effects of persuasive communication has evolved from research on attitude change in the decades of 1950s and 1960s. That research employed cognitive learning and cognitive response models of attitude change. Cognitive learning model posits that persuasion entails from learning message arguments and that attitude change happens in a series of steps. To be persuaded individuals is to attend to, comprehend, learn, accept and retain the message. Cognitive response approach that followed cognitive learning models does not suffer from the passive audience assumption of the learning models. It asserts that target audience are mentally active that their own mental reactions to a message and their own thoughts about a message are more important than the memory of the message arguments and that the cognitive responses comprise proarguments and counterarguments and persuasion occurs if the persuader induces the target person to generate favorable cognitive responses to the argument in the message (Brock, 1967; Perloff & Brock, 1980). Cognitive response model too suffers from limitations. For example, it assumes that people always think carefully about messages whereas many a time people use mental shortcuts. Similarly the model fails to explain how cognitive responses can be utilized to create messages that can change attitudes or behavior (Perloff, 2010, p. 130).

The current Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of R. Petty & J. Cacioppo, on the other hand, stresses that we cannot understand effects of persuasive communication without understanding the underlying processes by which messages influence attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The ELM is a dual-process model in that it claims there are two different mechanisms by which communication affects attitudes. Elaboration refers to the extent to which an individual thinks about or mentally modifies a message's argument, and Likelihood refers to the probability of the occurrence of an elaboration. Elaboration is assumed to fall along a continuum ranging from no mental activity at all to considerable rumination on the central argument of an issue. The model tells us when a person should be particularly likely to elaborate, or not elaborate, on persuasive messages. The ELM assumes two routes or processes to persuasion: a central route and a peripheral route. The former implies considerable cognitive elaboration. In central information processing, individuals carefully evaluate message arguments, ponder implications of the message ideas, and relate information to their own knowledge and values. In peripheral processing people examine the message quickly or focus on simple cues rather than examine issue-

relevant arguments. Simple cues include communicator's physical appeal, speaking style, and background music etc. For example, one may invoke the heuristics like "experts are to be believed" or invoke a "bandwagon heuristic" (if everybody accepts the idea then it probably is good) and for this reason accept the message recommendation. Target audience motivation, their level of involvement with the issue, perceived expertise of the communicator, cognitive ability of the receivers, and their need for cognition determine the route used.

Processing route taken determines the type of message appeal that is likely to be most effective in a particular context. It requires the persuaders to understand how their audiences approach and process messages. It cautions against confrontation, and stresses the need to tailoring the arguments to audience members' motives and abilities. Nevertheless, ELM does not always offer a clear explanation of how an understanding of people's thought processes can help persuaders generate specific messages and it also understates the role of emotions in persuasion (Perloff, 2010, p. 150).

Persuasive message is a key component of persuasion and the literature has examined the influences of different message factors on receivers. As a primary principle, the message research assumes that messages cannot be understood without appreciating the psychology of the audiences. The literature identifies three types of message factors; viz., the structure of the message (how a message is prepared and organized – sidedness of the message and conclusion drawing); its content (its appeals and arguments); and its language (words & symbols used). A meta-analysis of research on one- and two-sided messages has revealed that two-sided messages influence attitudes more than one-sided messages provided the message refutes opposition arguments (Allen, 1998; O'Keefe, 1999). Refutational two-sided messages gain their persuasive advantage by enhancing the credibility of the communicator and by providing cogent reasons for the wrongness of the opposing argument (Perloff, 2010, p. 186). On explicit and implicit conclusion drawing the persuasion literature offers a meta-analysis that clearly shows that explicitly articulated conclusion drawing is more persuasive than an implicit conclusion (O'Keefe, 1997).

In terms of message content, use of evidence in the message enhances persuasion with different type of evidence effective under different psychological conditions. Simply mentioning the evidence does not do the trick, the receivers must recognize that evidence

has been offered in support of a proposition and perceive the evidenct to be ligitimate (Parrott, 2010; Silk, Dorgan, Condit, & Harris, 2005). Moreover, when people are highly involved in or knowledgeable about the issue, the evidence is processed centrally. Hency cogency and quality of evidence shall determine attitude change. When receivers are not motivated or lack ability to understand the issue they depend on peripheral cues and for them the evidence operates more as a cue than an argument and they go along with "arguments that sound impressive" (Perloff, 2010, p. 189). Of the appeals in the message content, the literature offers considerable evidence on the use of fear appeals as a necessary persuasive strategy. Fear appeals do not always succeed because the receivers often have illusions of invulnerability or the belief that the risk is more likely for others than for themselves or does not connect with a person's beliefs about the problem or neglect to provide a solution for the aroused risk.. Earlier simplistic thinking was that fear is an unpleasant psychological state that people feel motivated to reduce (Hovlan, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). This drive model, popularized by Hovland and his colleagues, "puts a premium on fear" assuming that if you scare someone and then provide reassurance then you can change a dysfunctional behavior (Perloff, 2010, p. 198). Contemporary approach requires that a message must operate both at a cognitive and an affective level. That is, arousing fear must convince the recepients that they are susceptible to the risk and that the recommended response will reduce the level of threat to them. Clearly, the fear appeals need to be theory-based.

A comprehensive contemporary theory, which informs the use of fear appeals in

messages, is called the Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM) (Perloff, 2010; Witte, 1998). It asserts that two parallel processes, or two different mechanisms, are engaged in determining the influence of fear appeals on attitudes. The model, like ELM, calls attention to the way people think and feel about the fear appeals. According to EPPM, a fear-arousing message contains threat and efficacy information or a problem and solution. A message must first threaten the target person by convincing him of a lurking danger with the help of a) severity information (how severe the risk is; e.g., consumption of fatty food can lead to heart disease); b) susceptibility information (how likely the occurrence of the threat is; e.g., people who eat junk-food diet put themselves are very likely to get a heart attack before the age of 40). The message must then follow it up by providing a recommended response. The recommended response must contain efficacy information --

facts about effective way to cope with the danger. Information on response efficacy (info about the effectiveness of the recommended action e.g., maintaining a diet high in fruits and vegetables but low in saturated fat can reduce the incidence of heart attach) and self-efficacy (arguments that the receiver is capable of performing the recommended action; e.g., you can change your diet like so many others). The threat and the efficacy components, according to the theory, trigger a cognitive reaction. The threat component "should convince the individual that the threat is serious and likely to occur, provided no change is made in the problematic behavior … and [the efficacy component] should persuade the individual that these outcomes can be voided if the recommended actions are internalized and believed", (Perloff, 2010, p. 201). According to the model, the success of the fear appeal will depend on which of the two parallel cognitive processes; viz., danger control and fear control occurs. Danger control happens when the target perceives that it can avert the danger via the recommended action and he performs it. Fear control occurs when the target focuses inwardly on the fear and contains the fear rather than acting to ward off the danger. Thus fear appeal works if it pushes the person into danger control rather than the fear control mode. In essence, fear is a necessary condition of attitude change but in itself not a sufficient one. In order to change attitudes, the message must channel the fear into a constructive direction of danger control. The EPPM has been supported time and again in many experiments and campaigns (Witte & Allen, 2000; Wong & Capella, 2009; Perloff, 2010).

Communication campaigns best exemplify persuasive communication. Persuasion literature defines communication campaigns as (1) purposive attempts (2) to inform, persuade, or motivate behavior changes (3) in a relatively well-defined and large audience (4) generally for noncommercial benefits to the individuals and/or society at large (5) within a given time period (6) by means of organized communication activities involving mass media and (7) often complemented by interpersonal support (Rice & Atkin, 2009). Communication campaigns involve argumentation, sloganeering, and emotional appeals in a systematic, theory-based practical efforts to shape and change public attitudes and behavior (Perloff, 2010, pp. 324-326).

Literature identifies three theoretical perspectives on communication campaign stage-based psychological perspectives; diffusion of innovation; and social marketing perspectives (McGuire, 1989; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992; Maiback, Kreps,

& Bonaguro, 1993; Rogers, 1995). Prochaska et al. (1992) note that change happens in stages that run from pre-contemplation stage (the target person is unaware of a risky behavior to be changed) to contemplation (the person begins considering how to make a change in behavior) to action (the person modifies a risky behavior). Persuasive communications are tailored to the needs of the person at a particular stage. Messages to pre-contemplators try to convince them that their behavior is risky for them or for others whereas the messages to contemplators try to convince them to substitute a new behavior with a risky one. Affective appeals work well with precontemplators and the cognitive ones with the contemplators (Hampton, Brinberg, Peter, & Corus, 2009; Perloff, 2010). Another stage-based psychological perspective is that of McGuire (1989). According to this persuasion can be viewed as a series of output steps resulting from such standard persuasion variables or input steps like source, message, channel, and receiver characteristics or the type of intended impact. McGuire created an input-output matrix that shows a message must clear many hurdles to successfully produce persuasion. A message must be exposed and attended to, comprehended, liked, learned, stored in memory in a manner that can be easily accessed, help in decision making and producing action. Action need to be reinforced and consolidated subsequently. These output variables constitute various types and levels of response steps. On the input side, the sources *inter alia* should be unanimous (do not contradict one another), attractive, and credible. The message should have right kind of affective and cognitive appeals and should be repeated over and over again, the channels should be not only suitable but their use should be complementary and orchestrative, the receivers' ability, personality, demographics and lifestyles and interests should be considered as these can mediate the effectiveness of the message. McGuire's input-output matrix implies that campaigns can succeed even if they don't lead to major changes in behavior that may be unreasonable to expect on the basis of short-term exposure. Campaigns can be regarded as successful if they get people to remember the message. Over time with subsequent interventions, people can be persuaded to make long-term behavioral changes (Perloff, 2010, p. 327).

Diffusion and social marketing perspectives, unlike the psychological ones, do not ignore larger context of community and society. Diffusion theory identifies a number of factors that influence the adoption of an innovation. Such characteristics of innovation like its compatibility with the values and cultural norms of the target population and its reward

potential -- the degree to which its adoption brings clear and salient reward and/or symbolic benefits to the receivers – are important. Communication channels, according to diffusion theory, play critical role in persuasion. Mass mediated sources are influential in informing whereas interpersonal sources are more helpful in attitutde change. Diffusion theory tells us how communications can publicize and promote innovations but neglects how it may benefit from principles of social marketing (Perloff, 2010).

Social marketing perspective of campaign communication is based on marketing principles and comprises five strategic steps in a social marketing campaign: i) planning campaign objectives, ii) theory (which theory to use), iii) communication analysis (audience analysis & segmentation, channel analysis and selection); iv) implementation (marketing mix in view of macro social considerations), v) evaluation and reorientation (outcome evaluation) (Maibach et al. 1993). Planning phase is characterized by such choices as whether to create cognitions or change the existing ones, and to target attitudes or behavior. Models, concepts, and theories form the backbone of campaigns (Slater, 2006) as these help clarify objectives and how best to achieve those. That is, theories suggest campaign strategies and appeals. Communication analysis helps determine the perceptions of the target population on an issue and can help develop messages. Implementation involves designing, finalizing, and launcing the campaign. Four Ps (product, price, placement, and promotion) are considered here (Perloff, 2010, p. 333). Product can be commercial as well as prosocial, price could be monetary or psychological, placement is decision on where to transmit the message. Correct placement ensures audience reach. Promotion involves persuasion – application of theories in campaign setting. Evaluation and reorientation phase involves determining the effects of the campaign on individuals and communities and inferring feedback for future campaigns or for reorienting the ongoing ones. This is needed because some campaigns back-fire and create reactance in the target population. So psychological reactance could be a barrier to the success of a campaign (Brehm, 1966).

Research evidence overwhelmingly indicates that if practitioners know their stuff, apply theory properly, and utilise principles of social marketing, the campaigns can be effective. Perloff, (2010, p. 337) has summarised the evidence from more than half a century of research on communication campaigns. In summary, he concludes that campaigns are highly likely to be successful when the practitioners: understand the audience and tailor messages that resonate with the psychological needs of the audience members; make the

messages relevant to them; coordinate efforts across media, and repeat messages over time and orchestrate them; choose media channels that can engage the audiences; supplement media channels as much as possible with community contacts; appreciate that it is easy to create a new behavior than change a dysfunctional one; build enforcement into campaign; involve the community by building community participation into the campaign; avoid messages that arouse reactance; adopt a realistic approach as it is difficult to change deep-seated attitudes and well-learned bahaviors.

In sum, relative to the objectives of the present paper, the following highlights may be synthesized from the above overview of the persuasion and communcation campagins literature:

1. Persuasion is a transactive and a time-consuming process in which the receiver plays an active role. It involves shaping, reinforcing or changing attitudes and behaviors.

2. Attitudes are complexly structured and comprise beliefs (expectations/cognitions/worldviews/ideologies) and evaluations (affect/emotions/values or symbolic predispositions). Attitudes in general predict the receivers' behavior well.

3. Theories of attitude's effects on behavior imply that beliefs, affects, and the psychological capability of the receivers to perform the behavior should be investigated prior to launching a campaign.

4. The early and the contemporary theories of the effects of persuasive communication (cognitive learning and cognitive response models of attitude change, and the information processing models like ELM) also stress that the target audience motivation, their level of involvement with the issue, their cognitive ability, their need for cognition should be understood. These issues determine the processing route taken. That in turn determines the message appeal that will be most effective.

5. All three types of message factors; viz, message structure, its content, and its language are important in producing persuasive effects. Refutational two-sided messages that explicitly draw conclusion, use some evidence, use fear appeals but provide reassurance (EPPM's first scare & then provide recommended response containing response efficacy and self-efficacy) have been found to be particularly effective.

6. Affective appeals are often successful when persons are to be convinced of the riskiness of the behavior and the cognitive appeals are useful when the target is to be convinced into substituting the risky behavior with a new one.

7. Communication campaigns best exemplify persuasion. Persuasion requires concerted and long-drawn, well- thought-out and sustained campaigns Involving mediated and interpersonal communication channels working in tandem.

8. Persuasion literature defines communication campaigns as (1) purposive attempts (2) to inform, persuade, or motivate behavior changes (3) in a relatively well-defined and large audience (4) generally for noncommercial benefits to the individuals and/or society at large (5) within a given time period (6) by means of organized communication activities involving mass media and (7) often complemented by interpersonal support (Rice & Atkin, 2009).

9. Communication campaigns involve argumentation, sloganeering, and emotional appeals in a systematic, theory-based practical efforts to shape and change public attitudes and behavior. Psychological, diffusion, and social marketing perspectives imply the need for understanding the psychology of the receivers and tailoring messages to it, making the innovation compatible to the receivers' values, highlighting the rewards of adopting the innovation, and on utilizing principles of social marketing.

Objective of the Communication Intervention Strategy

In view of the nature of the problem at hand and the foregoing overview of persuasion and communication campaigns literature, the main objective of the strategy is to provide the pilgrims with necessary guidance and information in order to preempt the pilgrim-centric factors to come into play and cause crowd congestion in Masha'er. Although the field-crowd managers and a detailed communication analysis of the perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions alone can identify the substantive aspects of information and behaviors to be addressed by communication campaigns at specific locales, broad categories of the relevant factors, nonetheless, may include:

a. The pilgrims' lack of knowledge and guidance and their misperceptions and misconceptions about the truly required Islamic behavior at the Masha'er.

b. Their civic attitudes and norms about accommodating the fellow pilgrims.

c. Their attitudes about *"Iftaraash"* on the walkways.

General Characteristics of the Strategy

The pilgrim-centric factors of crowd congestion at the Masha'er, and the just noted objective of the strategy call for an *integrated* communication campaign based on a *multi-media communication* mix. It proposes to combine interpersonal and mediated communication channels and requires targeting the pilgrims in several different sets of loci.

Specifically, the intervention comprises targeting the pilgrims within the various locales of their *home countries*, targeting them *in- house* in their residential areas in the Holy Cities, and targeting them *on-sites* in the Masha'er. For the communication intervention to have maximum effects in all three types of locales, we believe, the strategy should contain a set of three overlapping *integral elements* of a communication campaign's effectiveness and utility. The elements are: message *simplification* (using short & simple messages for fluency of cognitive processing)*,* message *repetition* (high frequency of repetition on a particular channels for the message to achieve a *wear-in*)*,* and message *orchestration* (different channels or outlets giving out the same or similar message to achieve communication *consonance, exposure redundancy*)*.*

Specific Communication Interventions & the Agencies Responsible

a. **Reliance on interpersonal channels of communication and dars sessions for training and guidance.** Our research has repeatedly found the importance of interpersonal channels for guidance and information transmission to the pilgrims. Training and Dars sessions will need to be arranged by the native Hajj ministries on norms and values, and those *religiously redundant* and *dispensable* practices that cause crowd congestion. These guidance sessions should be arranged for all the categories of the pilgrims: by the native Hajj ministries and the Hajj missions for those performing Hajj under the government-scheme, and by the tour operators for the private-scheme category.

As regards the locales, these guidance and information sessions can be arranged both within the pilgrims' home countries and in the Holy Cities on an ongoing and continuing basis. Within the Kingdom, the housing units, the neighborhood mosques, and the camps in Masha'er can be used for the purpose. Multi-lingual Dars sessions are already organized for various communities of the pilgrims by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in collaboration with native Hajj missions in the Housing units and the neighborhood mosques.

These sessions will need to be tailored to focus on disseminating information on attitudes and behaviors that can lead to crowd congestions and stampedes at critical locations in the Holy places.

b. **Provision of the relevant information through adequate *in-house* signage in the pilgrims' residential buildings through the use of the electronic billboards (EBBs), the scrolling and the digital types, the banners & the posters.** Such agencies like the Ministry of Hajj, the Civil Defense Administration, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, the Peace & Security Administration, and the Ordering Virtue & Forbidding Evil Unit may be charged with producing the signage.

In order to ensure maximum effectiveness, as the present signage has been found to be under-performing and wanting in effectiveness and utility to the pilgrims, the message content of the signage (the text & the illustrations for the posters, the banners & the above identified two types of billboards) the message format, & the message display of all such signage should be first got vetted and approved by the Dept. of Communication and Media Affairs at the Hajj & Omrah Research Institute.

c. **Provision of relevant information through *extensive on-site/outdoor* signage.** The organizations & the agencies charged with producing the signage at serial (b) will be entrusted to produce the required signage here as well. Nevertheless, the number, the locations, the size, and the type of the EBB network deployed will need to be carefully selected.

The type of the EBBs network deployed (the *POW* – the point of wait; the *POT* – the point of transit; & the *POS* – the point of sale type) will be determined by the individual location points and shall in turn determine the *text* (the theme used, the

length of the message, the type-size/font used, the purpose, & the actual words and phrases used), the *format* (the text & the illustrations mix used), and the *display* (the scrolling speed, the display time, & the frequency of repetition) (focalpress.com, 2010). All these issues are central to the effectiveness of the billboards in producing message recall and other effects. Hence, the need for vetting and approval of the signage by the Mahad.

d. **Provision of *multi-lingual* SMS messages calling on the pilgrims & mobile vendors to desist from specific anti-social and crowd congesting practices.** Such agencies like the ALTAZEEM, the RABBUL BAIT, the Civil Defense Administration, & the Peace and the Security Agencies can be entrusted to send out SMS messages to Pilgrims & mobile vendors in various languages informing and guiding them to desist from behaviors that produce crowd congestion.

The messages should be short and should highlight the areas and the specific behaviors to be avoided. Some potentially crowd causing behaviors are wrongly perceived as obligatory part of the Hajj rituals. Those misperceptions shall need to be highlighted in the messages.

e. **Provision of audio-video Hajj podcasts/skits/pre-recorded TV clips on the Websites of the Host and the Native Hajj Ministries' Websites, on the YouTube, and as Inflight TV Programming on major airlines.** These live clips and video animations should highlight the crowd congesting behaviors and attitudes and the hazards involved. The agencies at serial (b) & (c), as well as, the TV program production divisions of leading TV channels would need to be entrusted with the job. These programs should use the leading languages of the Hajj communities; viz., the Arabic, the Urdu, the Bengali, the languages of the African Muslims (Hausa/Yoruba/Djerma/Swahili), the Malay, the Turkish, the Persian & the English languages. These programs should highlight a few very limited and critical practices rather than aiming on many practices as this will dilute the impact and produce an easy message *wear-out*.

f. **Arrangement of TV Reality Shows highlighting the pro-social norms, values, and practices at the Holy Places.** The host and the native countries' cable TV's leading channels should be entrusted with holding such reality shows to which the past and the prospective pilgrims should be invited. The timing of such shows and the key educated participants will need to be very carefully selected. The shows should be held simultaneously on a number of channels prior to and during the Hajj season and the key participants should be trained as to the kind of messages to be given out prior to the shows.

Nature and Type of Messages Needed

Before providing specific examples of messages, a short theoretical rationale for the specific types of messages shall put the examples in perspective.

Rationale for the Message Content

In view of the specific nature of our target audience (mostly ritual-focused, on the move, and largely difficult to engage), the *in-house* and the *on-site* communication intervention strategy, outlined in broad above, shall have to not only rely on a multi-media communication mix but also on what the literature characterizes as *ambient communication approach* (Gambetti, 2010)

An ambient communication approach uses elements of the physical environment (available physical surfaces), to convey very short preferably *one-line* messages. Stickers, banners, posters, classic and electronic billboards, bus stops, the sides, the backs, and the interiors of buses & trains, escalators, elevators, and stairways can all be deployed as venue-based media solutions and message carrier to create a *core theme* of message *ambience* (environment*)* that is meant to elicit cognitive and affective responses from the target audience. The *core theme* has to be very simple and cognitively and affectively very engaging for the target audience. Whereas the cognitive appeals reside in the *informativeness* of the content, the emotional appeals contain *incentives* (benefits to the target audience) and *fear-arousing* elements (the implicit threats/dangers for the target audience).

Given the Hajj-focused nature of our target audience and the above outlined communication intervention strategy, *the incentive for and threats to* a *Hajj al-Mabroor* is

proposed as a core theme in the message ambience. The flow and the basic hierarchy of argument in that theme of our *in-house* and *on-site* ambient communication in the *Jabal al-Rahmah/Masjid al-Nimrah* area, for instance, may run as follows:

a. Climbing the mount *al-Rahmah* or being in the Masjid *al-Nimrah is* not in any way an integral component of a *"Hajj al-Mabroor"*.

b. The sanctity of "*Hajj al-Mabroor*" is compromised by *"Raffas"* (lewd & obscene talk & acts), *"Fisq"* (lying/backbiting/slandering)*, & "Jida'al"* (quarreling/arguing/fighting).

c. *Raffas, Fisq, & Jida'al* are most likely to happen in situations of crowd congestion.

d. Additionally, crowd congestion may also result in stampedes and physical harm to life and health of the pilgrims.

e. Venturing out into the *Jabal al-Rahmah* or *the Masjid al-Nimrah* area can deprive one from the precious little time for Zikr and duas during the *Waqoof* at *Arafaat*.

f. Hence, it is better and advisable for the pilgrims to stay away from these areas of crowd congestion that may jeopardize their *Hajj al-Mabroor*.

The just stated flow of argument would need to be translated into sets of *one-liners* (one line or very short messages) that could *saturate* the venues through *pervasive* networks of *complementary* signage in the form of billboards, posters, stickers, banners put up on most available physical surfaces and spaces that the pilgrims frequent or where they spend time resting in wait like *airports, bus stops* and "*sahaat*" or areas in and around the Masha'er.

Specific Examples of Message-types

Following are a few *"one-liners"* that utilize cognitive and/or emotional appeals. Appeals are given within parentheses. These one-liners may, at best, be taken as *message-types* as each embodies certain appeal and there could be other messages based on the same appeal elements. The particular location points and the media chosen for each message, the text, the format, and the display elements used in individual messages, and the frequency and pervasiveness of each message may be got vetted by the department of communication research and media affairs before final posting. The messages are:

1. Climbing mount *al-Rahmah* is not a must for *Hajj al-Mabroor*.

(Cognitive appeal)

2. *"Raffas"* (lewd & obscene talk & acts), *"Fisq"* (lying/backbiting/slandering), *&"Jida'al"* (quarreling/arguing/fighting),

negate *Hajj al-Mabroor*.

(Cognitive appeal)

3. Guard your Hajj. Shun *"Raffas", "Fisq", &"Jida'al"*

(Incentive, fear appeal)

4. Crowd congestion may cause *"Raffas", "Fisq", &"Jida'al"*. Avoid congested places.

(Cognitive appeal)

5. Respect rights of fellow pilgrims. Do not be part of crowd congestion.

(Incentive, cognitive appeal)

6. Crowd congestion may cause stampede. Stay safe. Avoid crowd congestion. (Threat/fear appeal)

7. Do not crowd pathways. Crowding may cause injuries to fellow pilgrims and add to your sins. (Cognitive/fear appeal)

8. Make the most of your *Waqoof*. Spend time in Zikr & duas. Attain *Hajj al-Mabroor*.

(Incentive/cognitive appeal)

9. Do not waste time in crowd congestion. Stay away from the congested areas. (Fear/Incentive appeal).

10. Jabal al-Rahmah area is too full. Do not put yourself in danger by going there at this time.

(Cognitive/fear appeal)

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