

LAPAU AS A DA'WAH MEDIA: A STUDY OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN SOCIAL INTERACTION IN MINANGKABAU

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Abstract

This article explores the traditional Minangkabau lapau as a public space that functions as a medium for Islamic proselytization (dakwah). This research employs a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to observe and analyze social interactions occurring in three nagari (traditional villages) located in Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province. The findings indicate that the lapau is not merely a place for selling coffee and relaxing but also serves as an active forum for conveying Islamic values such as honesty, mutual respect, deliberation (musyawarah), and Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah). Preachers (da'i) and traditional leaders informally utilize the lapau as a means to deliver religious messages that strengthen local wisdom integrated with Islamic teachings. The analysis reveals that the lapau contributes significantly to the process of Islamization of local culture through daily interactions, and acts as an effective medium for dakwah. This study contributes to the discourse on cultural approaches in dakwah communication and offers a contextual dakwah model based on local traditions.

Keywords: Da'wah Communication, Lapau, Minangkabau



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INTRODUCTION

Da'wah is a central activity in the life of Muslims that aims to convey Islamic teachings to the public, both orally, in writing, and through behavior. In the context of the social life of the Minangkabau people, da'wah does not only take place in mosques or suraus, but also permeates other social spaces that are part of the culture and traditions of the community. One of these social spaces is lapau, lapau is a place where people gather to discuss, socialize, and

interact informally (Utami, 2025). Lapau in Minangkabau culture is not just a place to sell coffee or a place to relax, but also a discussion room, a place to exchange information, and even become a medium for forming public opinion. In this context, lapau has great potential as a strategic public space in conveying and shaping Islamic values indirectly through daily communication.

The presence of lapau in the life of the Minangkabau people is not only as a traditional social institution, but also as a lively and dynamic cultural arena. This space is a place for cross-generational meetings, starting from those who are elderly (Herianingrum dkk., 2024). To young people who are finding their social identity. The interactions that occur in it often contain religious values. These values indirectly shape how people view religion, as well as influence their attitudes and behaviors in daily life.

In the communication that occurs in Lapau, da'wah messages are often tucked away in daily conversations (Nelson, 2024). For example, in talking about honesty in trading, justice in society, or the importance of maintaining Islamic ukhuwah, there are Islamic values that are naturally conveyed there. This means that da'wah does not always have to be formal or structured.

Several previous studies have touched on the role of traditional social space as a medium of cultural da'wah, such as research by Madjid (2014) on surau as a center for traditional Islamic education, and by Tanjung (2020) on the role of mamak in internalizing religious values in Minang families. However, studies that specifically review lapau as an informal da'wah space are still relatively few (Rhama, 2022). This is an important gap that needs to be filled in the scope of da'wah studies and Islamic communication, especially in understanding relevant and locally-based forms of da'wah.

The importance of this research is to reshape the understanding of da'wah (Aji dkk., 2021). This is done by expanding the scope of the study to social areas that have received less attention, such as lapau.

This approach is in line with the view of cultural-based da'wah communication, which makes the local context an important element in the strategy of conveying religious messages (Rahimi dkk., 2025). By exploring the dynamics of communication that occurs in Lapau, it is hoped that it can be found how Islamic values are conveyed, disseminated, and accepted by the community through adaptable but meaningful interactions.

This research aims to describe and analyze how social interaction in Lapau contains Islamic values and how the space contributes as a medium of cultural da'wah in the Minangkabau Society (ElMassah & Abou-El-Sood, 2022). Da'wah communication that takes place informally but has a significant impact on the social and religious life of the community.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. This method is selected to deeply and naturally uncover how informal da'wah (Islamic preaching) communication exerts significant influence on social life (Naeem, 2019). The ethnographic approach allows the researcher to be immersed within the socio-cultural context of the Lapau (traditional coffee house), enabling a holistic analysis of communication patterns and Islamic values embedded in daily interactions.

Research Design

The design is ethnographic and qualitative, focusing on the interpretation and analysis of cultural phenomena within a specific public space (Al-Okaily & Al-Smadi, 2025). The theoretical framework for analysis is anchored by the cultural-based da'wah communication approach and Jurgen Habermas's theory of public space, which helps examine how Lapau

functions as an arena for the production of meaning and the dissemination of Islamic values through informal processes.

Research Target/Subject

The research location is focused on three nagari (traditional villages) in Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province, known for actively maintaining the socio-cultural function of Lapau. The selection of locations and subjects utilized purposive sampling. The specific Lapau chosen met criteria such as active community interaction, cross-generational and cross-professional visitors, and the regular presence of community leaders (Ihtiyar, 2019). Key informants included religious leaders, traditional leaders, local traders, and permanent visitors of the Lapau.

Research Procedure

The research procedure primarily involved extended fieldwork over a 3-month period, specifically from January to March 2025. This phase was dedicated to systematic data collection, which required the researcher to be directly involved in social interactions within the Lapau (Mohd Yusof dkk., 2018). The entire procedure emphasized non-extractive, continuous engagement to capture the authentic, natural flow of communication and value transmission within the public space.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

The primary instrument for this qualitative study was the researcher as the human instrument, supported by structured guides. Data collection instruments included a Field Observation Protocol used to guide the researcher's direct involvement in social interactions for systematically recording communication patterns and the emergence of Islamic values (Aslam dkk., 2024). An In-depth Interview Guide was employed to systematically gather narratives, views, and profound understanding from selected key informants. Finally, Documentation Tools were utilized for recording conversations (audio/video), writing detailed field notes, and capturing photographs as crucial visual data to contextualize the Lapau setting.

Data Analysis Technique

The obtained data was analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which consists of three concurrent and interconnected stages: Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing/Verification. In the Data Reduction stage, information collected from observations and interviews is selected, focused, and simplified to identify key themes related to da'wah communication. In the Data Display stage, the reduced data is presented in a narrative and descriptive format to facilitate understanding of the emerging patterns of communication and value dissemination. Finally, Conclusion Drawing/Verification involves inductively drawing conclusions from the established patterns and continuously verifying them throughout the process (Wilson & Grant, 2013). Data validity is rigorously strengthened through triangulation of sources, methods, and times, alongside member checking (confirmation with informants) to ensure the dependability and trustworthiness of the final interpretations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that lapau in Minangkabau is not just a place to sell coffee and relax. Lapau is an active social space in spreading Islamic values through social interactions that take place naturally and informally. There are a number of dominant Islamic values that appear in conversations in lapau, both explicitly and implicitly (Puspitasari dkk., 2024). These values include: (1) Honesty and trust in trading, especially involving small business actors such as coffee and snack traders, the topic of honesty and trust often arises. The business actors

discussed the importance of not deceiving buyers, maintaining the quality of goods, and being open to the profits taken. This discussion contains the internalization of Islamic values about honest business and trade ethics, as reflected in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

(2) Deliberation and Tolerance in Differences of Opinion

Lapau is a public space, where people discuss local issues, such as nagari development, religious activities, and social problems that are happening. Although there are sometimes differences of opinion, discussions take place by prioritizing the spirit of deliberation and mutual respect (Choudhury dkk., 2019). This reflects the implementation of Islamic values in solving social problems collectively and peacefully, including: (1) Ukhuwah Islamiyah and Social Solidarity, In lapau, various individuals of all ages, social status, and backgrounds interact and mingle without barriers. When there is a community that experiences a disaster or needs help, spontaneously a fundraising initiative or moral support appears. The value of Islamic ukhuwah is very felt, where fellow Muslims are positioned as brothers who bear each other's burdens. (2) Social criticism based on Islamic values.

Criticism of the corrupt behavior of state officials, injustice in the distribution of social assistance, or dishonesty in organizing often appears in the form of discussions or jokes in lapau (Islam dkk., 2023). Although it is conveyed in a humorous tone, the moral content in the criticism comes from Islamic values such as justice 'adl, the truth of haq, and the responsibility of mas'uliyah. (3) The Role of Da'i and Traditional Leaders in Conveying Islamic Messages.

The da'i or ustadz who are often present in lapau certainly do not preach formally, but engage in daily conversations with methods that are conversational and in harmony with the culture. They insert religious messages through stories, parables, or responses to the issues being discussed (Jumani, 2024). Traditional leaders are often used as role models, because they are considered to have a strong influence in terms of ethics and morals, which is in line with Islamic teachings. The observations made by the researcher also show that an egalitarian and open atmosphere allows all walks of life to participate in religious discussions without feeling that there is a conflict between religious experts and the general public (Hindolia dkk., 2024). This strengthens the function of the lapau as a democratic and religious public space.

In addition to the 3 main points above, there are also forms of non-verbal communication that support the spread of Islamic values in Lapau. For example, when the time for prayer arrives, some visitors go directly to the mosque (Rehman dkk., 2020). Although not in the form of lectures or direct invitations, this attitude contains a strong da'wah message through the example of uswah hasanah. Among others: (1) Da'wah through humor and rhyme. The delivery of Islamic values is carried out through poems, proverbs, and humor typical of Minangkabau. For example, when talking about dishonest behavior, someone throws a sarcasm in the form of a rhyme: "Baranik sabana is rancak, but the heart is not batungkek syarak." (Looks attractive, but his heart is not in accordance with sharia). Humor like this not only dilutes the atmosphere, but also inserts an Islamic-based moral message that is easily accepted by all circles. (2) The function of religious education for the younger generation,

Lapau is also an informal learning space for young people (Ana & Wan Ahmad, 2020). Some of the young people present seemed to listen enthusiastically to the stories of elderly figures or ustadz who told about the history of Islam in Minangkabau, the story of the Prophet, or moral teachings in Islam. This signifies that the process of religious knowledge transfer occurs naturally in this space without pressure or formality. (3) Inculcating Islamic values in response to social conflicts, in certain cases, for example when there is tension between citizens or issues about social injustice, lapau becomes a da'wah media space that prioritizes solutions based on Islamic values (Ramdani dkk., 2024). For example, a person who has a dispute is sat together by community leaders with an approach to Islamic advice such as the importance of forgiving each other, staying away from su'udzan prejudices, and prioritizing ittihad unity. (4). Integration of customary and Islamic values in daily conversations. Researchers found that in almost every discussion in lapau, phrases such as "Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi

Kitabullah” are often cited to reinforce arguments or decisions in conversation. This shows the strong integration between Minang customs and Islamic values in daily social life (Alenizi, 2023). In Lapau, Islamic values are formed and strengthened through the chatter and togetherness of the residents that occur there.

The findings of this study show that lapau is not only a space for social interaction, but also functions as an effective da’wah medium through an ethnographic approach. Da’wah in Lapau takes place in a non-formal atmosphere, which makes religious messages easier to accept by the community (Goh dkk., 2014). This strengthens the idea that da’wah approaches based on local culture have high effectiveness in internalizing Islamic values (Ma’arif & Fikri, et al., 2017).

In the context of da’wah communication, the existence of lapau reflects the importance of social space in conveying the teachings of Islam through dialogue and involving all parties. This approach is in line with the view (Littlejohn et al. 2019) that effective communication in traditional societies must consider local social norms, symbols, and structures in order for messages to be captured in a wholesome and meaningful way.

The use of rhymes, sarcasm, and humor in conversations in lapau is a tangible manifestation of contextual da’wah strategies (Bin-Nashwan dkk., 2021). Humor is not only a means of entertainment, but also as a mechanism for conveying moral values and social criticism in a subtle but sharp manner. This phenomenon is supported by the results of Hasanah’s (2021) research, which emphasizes that symbolic language in local communities is a powerful da’wah tool because it touches on the emotional aspects and collective identity of the community.

The function of the lapau shows that this space is close to the concept of the public sphere as developed by Jurgen Habermas, but in a local and religious frame (Mindra dkk., 2022). The discussion in Lapau is not only a means of exchanging information, but also a place for the formation of social norms and the cultivation of Islamic values such as justice ‘adl, brotherhood of ukhuwah, honesty of shidq, association of ittihad.

Lapau has also been proven to play an educational role, especially for the younger generation. The process of socialization of Islamic values occurs naturally through cross-age interactions that occur in it. Research by Fathurrahman and Aini (2020) shows that community-based social spaces such as lapau can be an effective channel in shaping the religious consciousness of the younger generation, without having to rely on institutional approaches.

In addition, the involvement of traditional and religious leaders in Lapau strengthens Lapau’s position as an authoritative but still egalitarian da’wah media (Alam dkk., 2023). The role of the da’i who was present was not as a formal speaker, but as part of a community in dialogue, showing a form of da’wah that is rooted in the tradition of uswah hasanah (exemplary), as researched by Syamsuddin (2019), that da’wah through social exemplification is much more impactful than top-down lectures.

The transformation of lapau into a modern stall or informal forum shows that this culture-based da’wah space is very adaptive to changing times and the needs of society. This phenomenon shows that da’wah is not static, but dynamic, contextual, and inclusive (including all parties) (Nurhayati et al., 2022).

Thus, the results of this study emphasize that the da’wah approach based on cultural space such as lapau is an effective strategy in conveying Islamic values in a deep and sustainable manner. Da’wah is not only about delivering messages, but also about relationships between individuals, community involvement, and cultural development.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that lapau as a social space in Minangkabau culture, has great potential as a medium for cultural da’wah. The social interaction that takes place in lapau not

only contains daily conversations, but also becomes a means of conveying Islamic values in an informal, dialogical, and contextual manner.

Values such as honesty, deliberation, Islamic ukhuwah, and social criticism based on Islamic morality are conveyed subtly through discussions, satirism, humor, and folklore. Da'i, traditional leaders, and the community play an active role in conveying Islamic values in Lapau, regardless of status or social role, thus creating an egalitarian da'wah space.

Lapau also plays an important role in the process of internalizing Islamic values among the younger generation and becomes an arena for social mediation that prioritizes the principles of justice and deliberation in resolving conflicts. The development of lapau to a more modern form shows that this space is able to adapt to the needs of society and the progress of digitalization, without losing its main function as an active and relevant da'wah media.

Thus, this study emphasizes that da'wah does not always have to be carried out in formal spaces such as mosques, prayer rooms or taklim assemblies, but can also grow and develop in socio-cultural spaces that are familiar to the community. Lapau is a real representation of da'wah based on local wisdom, which combines Islamic values with Minangkabau social traditions in a harmonious and sustainable manner.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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