



Cultural-Based Da'wah Communication Through Dalihan Na Tolu in Strengthening Islamic Values among the Padangsidimpuan Community

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of globalization and the gradual decline in adherence to local cultural values have posed significant challenges to the internalization of Islamic values within society, particularly in Padangsidimpuan. Conventional da'wah approaches that lack contextual sensitivity often result in the ineffective transmission of religion, thereby necessitating strategies that integrate Islamic teachings with local cultural messages wisdom. This study aims to examine the cultural-based da'wah communication approach through Dalihan Na Tolu in strengthening Islamic values within the community. This research adopts a qualitative method with a case study design, employing indepth interviews, observations, and documentation, which are analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings indicate that Dalihan Na Tolu serves as an effective communication medium due to its congruence with Islamic values, supported by the influential role of traditional leaders and the use of culturally embedded symbols. Consequently, a culturally grounded da'wah approach is demonstrated to enhance both the acceptance and the internalization of Islamic values in a contextual and sustainable manner.

Keywords: Culture-based da'wah; da'wah communication; dalihan na tolu; Islamic values.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of globalization, digital communication technologies, and socio-cultural transformation has significantly influenced the religious life of Muslim communities worldwide. While globalization provides broader access to information, education, and intercultural interaction, it simultaneously poses challenges to the preservation of local cultural values and the internalization of religious teachings. Contemporary Muslim societies increasingly encounter cultural shifts characterized by individualism, materialism, secular lifestyles, and the weakening of

traditional social institutions. These developments create new challenges for Islamic communication (*dakwah*), particularly in maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of religious messages within culturally diverse communities.

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, the relationship between Islam and local culture has historically played an important role in shaping religious identity and social cohesion. The process of Islamization in the Indonesian archipelago did not occur through cultural eradication but rather through accommodation, adaptation, and transformation of existing cultural traditions. Islamic scholars, preachers, and community leaders often employed local customs, languages, symbols, and social institutions as effective media for conveying Islamic teachings. Consequently, various forms of local wisdom have become integral components of Islamic communication practices across different regions of Indonesia.

One region that demonstrates a strong integration between Islam and local culture is Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra Province. Padangsidempuan occupies a strategic cultural position within the southern part of North Sumatra and serves as an important center of Angkola culture while maintaining close historical, linguistic, and social connections with Mandailing society. The cultural landscape of Padangsidempuan is therefore characterized by a dynamic interaction between Islamic values and indigenous traditions that have developed over centuries.

Understanding the cultural context of Padangsidempuan requires an explanation of the relationship between Angkola and Mandailing societies. Both communities belong to the broader Batak cultural family and share numerous similarities in language, kinship systems, customary laws, and religious traditions. However, they have developed distinct cultural identities through different historical experiences, geographical settings, and social developments. The Angkola people predominantly inhabit Padangsidempuan and surrounding areas of South Tapanuli, whereas the Mandailing people are historically associated with the Mandailing Natal region.

Although both communities are predominantly Muslim and share similar cultural foundations, differences can be observed in ceremonial traditions, linguistic expressions, customary practices, and patterns of social interaction. Nevertheless, one of the most important cultural institutions shared by both communities is the Dalihan Na Tolu kinship system, which

functions as the foundation of social organization, customary governance, and interpersonal relationships.

Dalihan Na Tolu literally means “three-legged stove,” symbolizing balance, harmony, and mutual support within society. Philosophically, the concept illustrates that social stability can only be achieved when the three main kinship elements function harmoniously. These elements consist of *Mora* (wife-givers), *Kahanggi* (clan relatives), and *Anak Boru* (wife-takers). Each component possesses specific rights, obligations, and social responsibilities that regulate community interactions.

Within Angkola-Mandailing society, Dalihan Na Tolu is not merely a kinship structure but also a moral and ethical system governing social behavior. It promotes values such as respect, mutual assistance, deliberation, responsibility, social solidarity, and communal harmony. These values resonate strongly with Islamic teachings concerning brotherhood (*ukhawah*), consultation (*shura*), justice (*'adl*), cooperation (*ta'ammun*), and social responsibility.

The compatibility between Dalihan Na Tolu values and Islamic principles creates opportunities for developing culture-based Islamic communication approaches. Religious messages conveyed through culturally familiar frameworks tend to be more easily understood, accepted, and internalized by community members. Consequently, local culture can function as a strategic medium for strengthening Islamic values without diminishing the authenticity of religious teachings.

From the perspective of Islamic communication studies, effective dakwah requires not only theological accuracy but also cultural sensitivity. Communication scholars emphasize that successful message transmission depends upon the communicator's ability to understand the audience's social, cultural, and psychological context. In multicultural societies, communication strategies that ignore local cultural realities often encounter resistance, misunderstanding, or limited effectiveness.

Islam itself recognizes the importance of cultural diversity. Allah SWT states in the Qur'an:

"O mankind, indeed We created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another" (Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13).

This verse demonstrates that cultural diversity constitutes part of Allah's divine wisdom and serves as a means for mutual understanding rather than conflict. Therefore, cultural differences should not be perceived

as obstacles to Islamic communication but rather as opportunities for contextualizing religious messages within local social realities.

Another important theological foundation is found in Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 199:

"Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good (al-'urf), and turn away from the ignorant."

Classical Islamic scholars interpret *al-'urf* as socially recognized goodness that aligns with sound human nature and does not contradict divine guidance. This verse provides textual support for incorporating beneficial customs and local traditions into Islamic social life.

The concept of *'urf* occupies a significant position in Islamic jurisprudence. Muslim jurists classify customs into two categories: *al-'urf al-sahib* (valid custom) and *al-'urf al-fasid* (invalid custom). Valid customs are practices that support public welfare and do not conflict with Islamic principles, whereas invalid customs contradict religious teachings and therefore require modification or rejection. This distinction highlights that Islam adopts neither an entirely accommodative nor a completely oppositional stance toward culture. Instead, Islamic teachings evaluate cultural practices based on their conformity with the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the objectives of Islamic law.

The theoretical relevance of culture-based Islamic communication can also be understood through the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. According to Al-Shatibi, Islamic law seeks to preserve five fundamental objectives: religion (*hifẓ al-din*), life (*hifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*hifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*hifẓ al-mal*). Cultural traditions that support these objectives may serve as effective instruments for promoting Islamic values within society.

Dalihan Na Tolu reflects many of these objectives. Its emphasis on social harmony contributes to the preservation of community stability; its moral norms support ethical conduct; and its kinship obligations strengthen family relationships and social solidarity. Consequently, Dalihan Na Tolu can be viewed as a local cultural mechanism that facilitates the realization of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* within everyday social life.

Several contemporary studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of local wisdom-based approaches in strengthening religious awareness and social cohesion. Research on indigenous cultural traditions across Indonesia indicates that local customs frequently function as important channels for transmitting religious values, resolving conflicts, fostering

social integration, and promoting communal responsibility. These findings suggest that culture-based communication strategies possess significant potential for enhancing the effectiveness of dakwah activities in contemporary Muslim societies.

However, despite the recognized importance of local wisdom, globalization continues to challenge traditional cultural institutions. The increasing influence of digital media, popular culture, and global consumerism has altered patterns of social interaction among younger generations. Traditional gatherings, customary ceremonies, and communal activities that once served as primary venues for transmitting cultural and religious values are gradually experiencing reduced participation.

Field observations conducted in Padangsidempuan indicate similar trends. Community leaders and religious figures have expressed concerns regarding declining youth engagement in customary activities and weakening understanding of local cultural values. One traditional leader stated:

"Many young people today know more about global culture than their own traditions. If cultural values are not transmitted together with religious teachings, future generations may lose both."

Similarly, an Islamic scholar interviewed during preliminary observations emphasized:

"Dakwah will be more effective when delivered through cultural approaches familiar to the community. Religious messages become easier to accept because people feel that Islam respects their identity and traditions."

Another community elder observed:

"Dalihan Na Tolu teaches respect, responsibility, and togetherness. These values are also Islamic values. Therefore, integrating culture and religion is not difficult in our society."

These observations suggest that culture-based Islamic communication remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary social challenges. Rather than viewing local culture and Islam as competing forces, many community members perceive them as mutually reinforcing components of social life.

Nevertheless, the relationship between Islam and culture should not be romanticized as permanently harmonious. Throughout history, interactions between religious norms and local traditions have involved processes of negotiation, adaptation, transformation, and occasionally

contestation. Certain cultural practices may align closely with Islamic teachings, while others may require reinterpretation in light of religious principles. Therefore, a critical examination of culture-based dakwah should explore both the opportunities and limitations of cultural integration.

Despite numerous studies on Islamic communication and local wisdom, limited research has specifically examined how Dalihan Na Tolu functions as a communication medium for strengthening Islamic values in the contemporary Padangsidempuan context. Existing studies tend to focus either on cultural preservation or religious practices separately, leaving a gap in understanding the intersection between local culture and Islamic communication.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how Dalihan Na Tolu serves as a cultural framework for transmitting and internalizing Islamic values within the Padangsidempuan community. Specifically, the research examines the compatibility between Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic teachings, the role of traditional and religious leaders in culture-based communication, and the mechanisms through which local cultural values contribute to strengthening religious awareness.

By exploring these issues, this study contributes to broader discussions concerning Islamic communication, cultural anthropology, sociology of religion, and local wisdom studies. Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide practical insights for developing culturally responsive dakwah models capable of addressing the challenges of globalization while preserving valuable indigenous traditions. Ultimately, the study argues that culture-based Islamic communication, when grounded in authentic Islamic principles and supported by local wisdom traditions such as Dalihan Na Tolu, can become an effective strategy for strengthening Islamic values, promoting social harmony, and sustaining religious identity in contemporary Muslim communities.

Islamic communication refers to the process of conveying Islamic teachings, values, and norms through various communication channels with the objective of guiding individuals and communities toward righteousness and social well-being. Unlike conventional communication, Islamic communication is not merely concerned with transmitting information but also aims to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. According to communication scholars, effective dakwah requires not only mastery of

religious knowledge but also an understanding of the socio-cultural context in which communication occurs.

The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of wisdom, good counsel, and contextual communication in conveying religious messages. Allah SWT states:

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best" (Q.S. An-Nahl [16]: 125).

This verse demonstrates that successful Islamic communication must consider the characteristics, traditions, and social realities of the audience. Consequently, dakwah activities that incorporate local cultural values often achieve greater acceptance because they resonate with the lived experiences of community members.

Communication theorists such as Hall (1976) and Gudykunst (2003) emphasize that culture functions as a framework that shapes human perceptions, values, and patterns of interaction. Religious messages delivered within culturally familiar contexts tend to be more meaningful and persuasive. Therefore, culture-based Islamic communication can be understood as an approach that integrates Islamic teachings with local cultural symbols, customs, and social institutions to facilitate effective communication.

In Indonesia, this approach has historically been employed by Muslim scholars, including the Walisongo, who successfully spread Islam through adaptation to local traditions, arts, languages, and social systems. Their success illustrates that the integration of religion and culture can become a powerful strategy for strengthening religious awareness while preserving social harmony.

One of the most influential cultural systems within Angkola-Mandailing society is Dalihan Na Tolu. Literally meaning "three-legged stove," Dalihan Na Tolu symbolizes balance, cooperation, and mutual dependence among community members. The philosophy reflects the belief that social stability can only be maintained when all social elements fulfill their respective functions harmoniously.

The system consists of three primary kinship groups: (1) Mora (wife-givers); (2) Kahanggi (clan relatives); and (3) Anak Boru (wife-takers). These three components form the foundation of social organization and regulate interpersonal relationships, customary ceremonies, conflict resolution, and collective decision-making processes.

From a communication perspective, Dalihan Na Tolu serves as a

cultural framework through which values, norms, and social expectations are transmitted across generations. Traditional ceremonies, family gatherings, community meetings, and customary deliberations function as communication arenas where cultural and religious messages are reinforced.

Field observations conducted in Padangsidempuan reveal that traditional leaders often utilize Dalihan Na Tolu gatherings to communicate ethical teachings and social responsibilities. One customary leader explained:

"Dalihan Na Tolu is not merely about family relationships. It teaches respect, responsibility, and harmony. These values are transmitted through every traditional gathering and ceremony."

Another community elder stated:

"When advice is delivered through Dalihan Na Tolu structures, people listen because the message comes from respected cultural authorities whom they trust."

These observations suggest that Dalihan Na Tolu functions not only as a kinship system but also as an indigenous communication institution that facilitates the dissemination of moral and religious values within society.

Understanding the effectiveness of culture-based Islamic communication requires an examination of Angkola-Mandailing cultural identity. Historically, both communities belong to the broader Batak cultural family but have undergone significant Islamization processes that reshaped their social structures, leadership patterns, and cultural expressions.

The Angkola people primarily inhabit Padangsidempuan and surrounding areas of South Tapanuli, while the Mandailing people are historically concentrated in Mandailing Natal Regency. Although both groups maintain distinct dialects and cultural characteristics, they share similar customary institutions and a strong commitment to Islamic values.

Scholars have observed that Islam and culture within Angkola-Mandailing society are deeply interconnected. Religious practices frequently incorporate cultural symbols, while customary traditions often reflect Islamic ethical principles. This interaction has produced a unique socio-religious identity in which cultural belonging and religious commitment mutually reinforce one another.

Several interview participants emphasized that cultural traditions

remain important mechanisms for preserving religious values. A religious leader interviewed during this study remarked:

"Islam is already embedded within our culture. Many cultural values taught by our ancestors correspond to Islamic teachings regarding respect, cooperation, and moral responsibility."

This statement illustrates how local communities perceive the relationship between culture and religion as complementary rather than contradictory. The integration of local culture into Islamic communication can be theoretically explained through the concept of *'urf* (custom) in Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic legal scholars recognize that socially accepted customs may serve as legitimate considerations in social and legal matters provided they do not contradict Islamic principles.

The Qur'an refers to the importance of socially recognized goodness through the concept of *al-'urf*. Allah SWT states:

"Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good (*al-'urf*), and turn away from the ignorant" (Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 199).

Classical scholars such as Ibn Kathir interpreted *al-'urf* as customs and practices that are acknowledged as good by society and remain consistent with divine guidance.

Islamic jurists classify customs into two categories: first, *Al-'Urf al-Sahih* (Valid Custom). These are customs that support public welfare and do not conflict with Islamic teachings. Such customs may be accepted and utilized in social life and dakwah activities.

Second, *Al-'Urf al-Fasid* (Invalid Custom). These are customs that contradict Islamic principles, promote injustice, or contain elements inconsistent with the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The distinction is particularly relevant when evaluating local cultural traditions. Not every cultural practice can automatically be integrated into Islamic communication. Rather, each tradition must be assessed according to Islamic ethical and legal standards.

Within Angkola-Mandailing society, many aspects of Dalihan Na Tolu can be categorized as *al-'urf al-sahih* because they promote social harmony, respect, family responsibility, and collective welfare—values that align with Islamic teachings.

The theoretical relevance of Dalihan Na Tolu can also be understood through the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law). According to Imam Al-Shatibi, Islamic law seeks to preserve five essential interests: (1) Protection of religion (*hifẓ al-dīn*); (2) Protection of life (*hifẓ al-*

nafs); (3) Protection of intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*); (4) Protection of lineage (*hifẓ al-nasl*); and (5) Protection of property (*hifẓ al-mal*).

Many values embedded within Dalihan Na Tolu contribute directly to these objectives. Respect for elders and religious leaders supports the preservation of religion. Family obligations and kinship responsibilities contribute to the protection of lineage. Conflict resolution mechanisms enhance social stability and protect human welfare.

One participant explained:

"When disputes arise, Dalihan Na Tolu encourages dialogue and collective problem-solving. This prevents conflict from damaging family relationships."

This observation illustrates how local wisdom contributes to social cohesion and aligns with broader Islamic objectives concerning justice and public welfare.

Furthermore, contemporary scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Wahbah al-Zuhayli argue that local culture can become an effective vehicle for Islamic development when it promotes ethical values and societal benefit. Therefore, integrating Dalihan Na Tolu into dakwah activities represents not merely cultural preservation but also the practical implementation of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.

Although local wisdom continues to play an important role in Angkola-Mandailing society, globalization presents significant challenges to the sustainability of traditional cultural institutions. Advances in digital technology, social media, urbanization, and global cultural exchange have transformed patterns of communication and social interaction.

Younger generations increasingly consume global cultural content, often resulting in reduced participation in customary activities and declining familiarity with traditional values. Several interview participants expressed concerns regarding these developments.

One traditional leader stated:

"Many young people are more familiar with foreign cultural trends than their own traditions. This creates a challenge for both cultural preservation and religious education."

Similarly, observations revealed that attendance at certain customary events has declined compared to previous generations, particularly among urban youth.

However, globalization should not be viewed solely as a threat. Modern communication technologies can also serve as opportunities for

revitalizing culture-based Islamic communication. Religious leaders and cultural institutions can utilize digital platforms to disseminate local wisdom and Islamic teachings to broader audiences.

Consequently, culture-based Islamic communication must adapt to contemporary realities by combining traditional cultural approaches with modern communication strategies. Such adaptation ensures that local wisdom remains relevant while continuing to strengthen Islamic values among future generations.

The theoretical framework developed in this study therefore positions Dalihan Na Tolu as a form of local wisdom that functions simultaneously as a cultural institution, communication system, and ethical framework. Supported by the principles of *'urf* and *maqāṣid al-syari'ah*, Dalihan Na Tolu provides a culturally legitimate and religiously compatible foundation for strengthening Islamic values within the contemporary Angkola-Mandailing community.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of a culture-based Islamic communication approach in strengthening Islamic values within the Padangsidempuan community. A qualitative approach was selected because the research aimed to understand social realities, cultural meanings, religious experiences, and communication practices from the perspectives of individuals directly involved in the interaction between local culture and Islamic teachings. According to Yin (2018), a case study is particularly suitable for investigating contemporary social phenomena within their real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. In this study, the case under investigation was the utilization of the Dalihan Na Tolu cultural system as a medium for communicating and internalizing Islamic values among the Angkola-Mandailing Muslim community in Padangsidempuan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia.

The selection of Padangsidempuan as the research site was based on its unique sociocultural characteristics. The city serves as a cultural center for the Angkola community while maintaining strong historical and sociocultural connections with Mandailing society. Both communities share the Dalihan Na Tolu kinship system and have experienced a long process of Islamization, making the region an appropriate setting for

examining the relationship between local culture and Islamic communication. Furthermore, rapid social changes driven by globalization, technological advancement, and urbanization have created new challenges for preserving local wisdom and strengthening religious values, thereby increasing the relevance of the study.

The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in cultural and religious activities. The study involved traditional leaders (*tokoh adat*), Islamic scholars (*ulama*), community leaders, educators, youth representatives, and members of the local community who actively participated in cultural and religious practices. These participants were chosen because they possessed firsthand experience regarding the implementation of Dalihan Na Tolu values and their relationship with Islamic teachings. Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, meaning that no substantially new information emerged from subsequent interviews. Saturation was reached after repeated patterns, themes, and perspectives were consistently identified across participants.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain detailed information regarding participants' perceptions of Dalihan Na Tolu, Islamic communication practices, local wisdom, and contemporary social challenges. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to share their experiences, interpretations, and reflections. Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent before being transcribed for analysis.

Several interview questions explored how cultural values facilitate the communication of Islamic teachings, how traditional leaders and religious scholars collaborate in community activities, and how younger generations respond to local cultural traditions in the era of globalization. One traditional leader stated:

"Dalihan Na Tolu is not merely a customary system; it teaches responsibility, mutual respect, and social harmony. These values are also Islamic values, which is why people readily accept religious messages delivered through cultural approaches."

Similarly, an Islamic scholar explained:

"The community often understands religious advice more easily

when it is linked to cultural values that have been practiced for generations. Culture becomes a bridge that connects religious teachings with daily life."

Participant observation was conducted during customary ceremonies, religious gatherings, community meetings, wedding celebrations, and social activities where Dalihan Na Tolu principles were actively practiced. These observations enabled the researchers to examine how cultural values were communicated, interpreted, and implemented in real social interactions. Field notes were recorded systematically to document communication patterns, symbolic expressions, leadership roles, and community participation. Observation findings revealed that traditional leaders frequently integrated Islamic teachings into customary speeches and deliberations, illustrating the practical interaction between culture and religion within community life.

Documentation analysis was also employed to complement interview and observation data. Relevant documents included customary regulations, local historical records, religious publications, community reports, and previous academic studies concerning Dalihan Na Tolu, Angkola-Mandailing culture, Islamic communication, and local wisdom. These materials provided additional contextual information and facilitated data triangulation.

The theoretical framework guiding this study was informed by the concepts of Islamic communication, *'urf* (customary practice), and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law). The concept of *'urf* was used to evaluate the compatibility between local cultural traditions and Islamic teachings. Islamic jurisprudence distinguishes between *al-'urf al-sahih* (valid custom) and *al-'urf al-fasid* (invalid custom). This framework enabled the researchers to assess how Dalihan Na Tolu functions as a culturally legitimate and religiously acceptable medium for transmitting Islamic values. Additionally, the theory of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, particularly the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, was utilized to analyze the broader social and ethical contributions of Dalihan Na Tolu within the community.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary materials were coded and categorized according to emerging themes. The

second stage involved organizing and presenting data through thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying relationships among cultural values, Islamic communication practices, local wisdom, and community responses to globalization.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from traditional leaders, religious scholars, community members, and documentary sources. Second, method triangulation was achieved through the integration of interviews, observations, and document analysis. Third, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to verify the accuracy of the findings. Fourth, peer debriefing with fellow researchers and academics was undertaken to minimize researcher bias and strengthen analytical rigor. An audit trail documenting research procedures, coding decisions, and analytical processes was also maintained throughout the study.

Through these methodological procedures, the study sought to generate a comprehensive and credible understanding of how Dalihan Na Tolu functions as a culture-based Islamic communication model in strengthening Islamic values within the contemporary Angkola-Mandailing community amid the challenges of globalization and social transformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dalihan Na Tolu as a Medium of Islamic Communication

The findings of this study indicate that Dalihan Na Tolu functions not only as a customary kinship system but also as an effective medium of Islamic communication within the Angkola-Mandailing community of Padangsidempuan. The cultural structure provides an established social framework through which religious values, moral teachings, and communal responsibilities are transmitted and internalized across generations.

Interviews with traditional leaders revealed that religious messages are more easily accepted when communicated through cultural mechanisms familiar to the community. Participants consistently emphasized that people tend to trust advice delivered through traditional structures because these structures possess social legitimacy and cultural authority.

One traditional leader stated:

“When religious messages are delivered through the framework of

Dalihan Na Tolu, people do not feel that they are being lectured. Instead, they feel that the message is part of their own cultural identity.”

Similarly, a local religious scholar explained:

“Islamic teachings regarding respect, cooperation, and social responsibility are already reflected in Dalihan Na Tolu. Therefore, cultural and religious values reinforce each other.”

These findings support communication theories emphasizing the importance of cultural relevance in message transmission. According to intercultural communication theory, messages are more likely to be accepted when they are delivered through symbols, values, and social structures familiar to the audience. In the context of Padangsidempuan, Dalihan Na Tolu provides a culturally meaningful framework that facilitates the communication of Islamic teachings.

Field observations further demonstrated that traditional ceremonies, wedding celebrations, community meetings, and customary deliberations frequently incorporate Islamic advice delivered by both religious scholars and traditional leaders. This integration enables religious teachings to become embedded within everyday social practices rather than remaining confined to formal religious institutions.

Harmony Between Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic Values

One of the most significant findings concerns the compatibility between Dalihan Na Tolu values and Islamic teachings. Participants consistently identified several cultural principles that closely correspond with Islamic moral values.

The principle of respect toward *Mora* reflects Islamic teachings regarding honor and gratitude. The responsibility of *Anak Boru* demonstrates values of service and social obligation, while solidarity among *Kahanggi* reinforces concepts of brotherhood and mutual support.

A community elder remarked:

“Dalihan Na Tolu teaches us how to respect others, fulfill our responsibilities, and maintain harmony. These are the same values taught in Islam.”

This finding is consistent with the Qur’anic emphasis on social harmony and cooperation. Allah SWT states:

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety” (Q.S. Al-Ma’idah [5]: 2).

The observed cultural practices demonstrate how local wisdom can

become a practical mechanism for implementing Islamic ethical principles within community life.

From the perspective of Islamic communication, the integration of culture and religion enhances message effectiveness because cultural values function as interpretive frameworks through which religious teachings are understood. Rather than perceiving Islam as external to their cultural identity, community members regard Islamic teachings as naturally integrated into their customary traditions.

This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that local cultural institutions often strengthen religious internalization by providing familiar social contexts for learning and practicing religious values.

Dalihan Na Tolu Through the Perspective of 'Urf

The findings can also be analyzed through the concept of *'urf* in Islamic jurisprudence. Islamic scholars recognize that customs may be accepted as long as they do not contradict the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Participants repeatedly emphasized that Dalihan Na Tolu promotes values such as justice, cooperation, respect, and social responsibility. These values correspond with what Islamic jurists classify as *al-'urf al-sahih* (valid custom).

One religious leader explained:

“Dalihan Na Tolu does not oppose Islam. Instead, it helps people practice Islamic values in social life. That is why traditional and religious leaders often work together.”

Observations revealed no significant contradiction between the fundamental principles of Dalihan Na Tolu and Islamic teachings. Instead, many customary activities incorporate religious elements such as prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and Islamic moral guidance.

This finding supports the legal maxim:

"Al-'adah mubakkamah" (Custom is authoritative).

According to classical scholars, customs may be recognized as legitimate social references when they contribute to public welfare and remain consistent with Islamic principles. However, several participants acknowledged that not all traditional practices should be accepted without evaluation. Some respondents argued that cultural traditions must continuously be examined to ensure their conformity with Islamic teachings.

A religious scholar noted:

“Culture should support religion, not replace it. If a cultural practice

conflicts with Islamic principles, it should be corrected.”

This perspective reflects the dynamic relationship between Islam and culture. Rather than accepting all traditions uncritically, the community engages in an ongoing process of cultural adaptation and religious evaluation.

Dalihan Na Tolu and Maqasid al-Shariah

The study also found that many values embedded within Dalihan Na Tolu contribute directly to the realization of *maqāṣid al-ṣyārī'ah*. Protection of Religion (Hifz al-Din). The integration of Islamic teachings into customary activities strengthens religious awareness and encourages participation in religious practices. Religious leaders frequently utilize cultural gatherings as opportunities for religious education. Several participants stated that advice delivered during traditional ceremonies often includes reminders concerning prayer, moral conduct, family responsibility, and community service.

First, Protection of Life (Hifz al-Nafs)

Dalihan Na Tolu promotes peaceful conflict resolution and social harmony. Community disputes are often resolved through dialogue and collective deliberation rather than confrontation.

One traditional leader explained:

“When conflicts occur, the first step is discussion among the kinship groups. The goal is reconciliation rather than punishment.”

This mechanism contributes to social stability and reduces the likelihood of prolonged conflict.

Second, Protection of Intellect (Hifz al-'Aql)

Participants reported that cultural gatherings serve as educational spaces where younger generations learn social values, ethical principles, and community responsibilities.

Observation data showed that elders frequently provide guidance regarding moral behavior, education, and social obligations during customary events.

Third, Protection of Lineage (Hifz al-Nasl)

Family relationships occupy a central position within Dalihan Na Tolu. The system emphasizes responsibility toward family members and encourages strong kinship bonds.

Participants viewed these practices as essential for maintaining family integrity and preserving social order.

Fourth, Protection of Property (Hifz al-Mal)

Mutual assistance and collective responsibility often extend to economic matters. Community members frequently support one another during weddings, funerals, and social crises. Such practices strengthen social solidarity and contribute to economic resilience within the community. These findings demonstrate that Dalihan Na Tolu supports multiple objectives of Islamic law, thereby strengthening its legitimacy as a culturally grounded mechanism for promoting Islamic values.

Local Wisdom as a Source of Social Cohesion

Another important finding concerns the role of local wisdom in fostering social cohesion. Participants consistently described Dalihan Na Tolu as a mechanism for maintaining community unity despite social and economic differences.

Observations revealed that customary activities bring together individuals from different educational, occupational, and social backgrounds. Through shared participation in cultural traditions, community members develop stronger social bonds and collective identities.

A community member stated:

“Dalihan Na Tolu reminds us that we are connected. Even when people have different opinions, they still respect one another because of cultural obligations.”

This finding supports social capital theory, which emphasizes the importance of trust, reciprocity, and social networks in maintaining community stability.

The study suggests that local wisdom functions not only as cultural heritage but also as an active social resource capable of strengthening communal relationships and religious identity.

Globalization and Emerging Challenges

Despite its continuing relevance, the study identified several challenges associated with globalization and social transformation. Participants expressed concern regarding declining participation among younger generations in traditional cultural activities. The influence of social media, global entertainment, and urban lifestyles has altered patterns of social interaction and cultural engagement.

One traditional leader stated:

“Young people spend more time on their phones than attending

customary gatherings. Many of them understand global trends better than local traditions.”

Observations confirmed that participation in certain customary events has decreased compared to previous generations. Several respondents feared that weakening cultural knowledge could eventually reduce the effectiveness of culture-based Islamic communication. However, globalization was not perceived solely as a threat. Many participants recognized opportunities for utilizing digital technology to preserve and disseminate local wisdom.

A young community activist explained:

“Technology can help introduce Dalihan Na Tolu to younger generations. Cultural and religious content can be shared through social media platforms.”

This perspective suggests that cultural preservation and technological adaptation are not mutually exclusive. Instead, modern communication technologies may provide new avenues for strengthening both cultural identity and religious awareness.

The Dialectical Relationship Between Islam and Culture

One of the most significant theoretical implications of the findings is the recognition that the relationship between Islam and culture is dynamic rather than static. The data indicate that Islam and Dalihan Na Tolu influence one another through continuous processes of adaptation and reinterpretation. Islamic teachings provide ethical guidance for evaluating cultural practices, while local culture offers practical mechanisms for implementing religious values within daily life.

Participants generally rejected the notion that culture and religion are inherently opposed. Instead, they viewed both as complementary sources of social guidance.

A respected religious scholar summarized this relationship:

“Islam gives direction, while culture provides the language through which people understand and practice religious values.”

This finding supports contemporary theories of religious localization, which argue that universal religious principles often become meaningful through their interaction with local cultural contexts.

Consequently, Dalihan Na Tolu should not be understood merely as a traditional custom but as a dynamic cultural institution that continues to evolve while supporting the communication and internalization of Islamic

values.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the culture-based Islamic communication approach rooted in the Dalihan Na Tolu philosophy plays a significant role in strengthening Islamic values within the Angkola-Mandailing community of Padangsidempuan. The findings reveal that Dalihan Na Tolu is not merely a customary kinship system but also a dynamic cultural institution that functions as an effective medium for transmitting religious teachings, moral values, and social responsibilities. Through its interconnected structure of *Mora*, *Kabanggi*, and *Anak Boru*, Dalihan Na Tolu provides culturally legitimate communication channels through which Islamic messages can be delivered, understood, and internalized by community members.

The study further confirms that the values embedded within Dalihan Na Tolu are highly compatible with fundamental Islamic principles. Respect for others, mutual cooperation, social responsibility, kinship solidarity, deliberation, and conflict resolution are cultural values that correspond closely with Islamic teachings concerning *ukhwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), *shura* (consultation), justice, and collective welfare. Interview findings indicate that community members perceive religious messages delivered through cultural frameworks as more meaningful and easier to accept because such messages are connected to familiar traditions and social experiences. As one participant emphasized, "Dalihan Na Tolu teaches the same moral values that Islam teaches; therefore, culture helps people practice religion in everyday life."

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, the findings support the relevance of the concept of *'urf* in understanding the relationship between religion and culture. The study demonstrates that Dalihan Na Tolu can be categorized as *al-'urf al-sahib* (valid custom) because it promotes ethical behavior, social harmony, and public welfare without contradicting the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This finding reinforces the view that local cultural traditions may serve as legitimate instruments for Islamic communication when they remain aligned with Islamic principles. Consequently, culture should not be viewed merely as a social heritage to be preserved but also as a strategic resource for strengthening religious awareness and community development.

The findings also reveal that Dalihan Na Tolu contributes

significantly to the realization of *maqāṣid al-syari'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law). The cultural system supports the protection of religion through religious education and moral guidance, the protection of life through peaceful conflict resolution, the protection of intellect through intergenerational knowledge transmission, the protection of lineage through strong family relationships, and the protection of property through social solidarity and mutual support. These contributions illustrate that local wisdom can function as a practical mechanism for implementing Islamic values within everyday social life.

At the same time, the study highlights the challenges posed by globalization, technological transformation, and changing social lifestyles. While globalization has increased access to information and communication technologies, it has also contributed to declining participation among younger generations in customary activities and local cultural traditions. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that globalization should not be perceived solely as a threat. Digital media and modern communication platforms can also be utilized to preserve, promote, and revitalize local wisdom-based Islamic communication. Therefore, future dakwah strategies should combine cultural traditions with technological innovation to ensure their continued relevance among contemporary audiences.

In conclusion, the study affirms that Dalihan Na Tolu remains a valuable form of local wisdom capable of strengthening Islamic values, preserving cultural identity, and fostering social cohesion within the Angkola-Mandailing community. The integration of Islamic communication, local culture, *'urf*, and *maqāṣid al-syari'ah* demonstrates that religion and culture can work synergistically to address contemporary social challenges. Therefore, collaboration among religious leaders, traditional leaders, educational institutions, policymakers, and community organizations is essential to develop sustainable culture-based dakwah models that are both culturally responsive and firmly grounded in Islamic teachings. Such efforts will ensure that local wisdom continues to serve as a source of moral guidance, religious development, and social resilience in the era of globalization.

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