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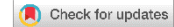
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Interpersonal communication patterns of Aisyiyah in cultural da'wah activities in isolated tribal communities

Pola komunikasi interpersonal Aisyiyah dalam aktivitas dakwah kultural pada masyarakat suku terasing

Erwin Rasyid[1]*, Hari Akbar Sugiantoro[2], Dinara Maya Julijanti[3], Moch Imron Rosyidi[4], and Achdiar Redy Setiawan[5]

[1] Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Economic, Social Science and Humanities Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, Sleman, Indonesia. email: erwin.rasyid@unisayogya.ac.id
[2] Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Economic, Social Science and Humanities, Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, Sleman, Indonesia. Email: hariakbarsugiantoro@unisayogya.ac.id
[3] Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences, Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Bangkalan, Indonesia. Email: dinara.mj@trunojoyo.ac.id
[4] Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences, Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Bangkalan, Indonesia. Email: imron.rosyidi@trunojoyo.ac.id
[5] Center for Islamic Development Management Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, George Town, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. Email: achdiar.redy@student.usm.my
* Corresponding author

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the interpersonal communication patterns employed by PDA Banggai in their cultural dakwah activities directed at indigenous and isolated communities. The research adopts a case study approach. Data collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. Data were thematically analyzed to identify PDA Banggai's interpersonal communication strategies. The findings indicate that PDA Banggai applies an adaptive form of interpersonal communication that emphasizes trust-building, the use of local languages, and collaboration with stakeholders. This approach is rooted in the values of Al-Ma'un, integrating religious messages with cultural contexts. The success of cultural dakwah hinges on context-sensitive interpersonal communication that respects local traditions. These findings offer insights into faith- and culture-based empowerment strategies among indigenous and marginalized communities

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pola komunikasi interpersonal yang digunakan oleh PDA Banggai dalam kegiatan dakwah budaya mereka yang ditujukan kepada masyarakat adat dan terpencil. Penelitian ini menggunakan strategi studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan analisis dokumen. Data dianalisis secara tematik untuk mengidentifikasi strategi komunikasi interpersonal PDA Banggai. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa PDA Banggai menerapkan bentuk komunikasi interpersonal adaptif yang menekankan pada pembangunan kepercayaan, penggunaan bahasa lokal, dan kolaborasi dengan para pemangku kepentingan. Pendekatan ini berakar pada nilai-nilai Al-Ma'un, yang mengintegrasikan pesan-pesan keagamaan dengan konteks budaya. Keberhasilan dakwah budaya bergantung pada komunikasi interpersonal yang peka terhadap konteks yang menghormati tradisi lokal. Temuan-temuan ini menawarkan wawasan tentang strategi pemberdayaan berbasis agama dan budaya di antara masyarakat adat dan terpinggirkan.

INTRODUCTION

Aisyiyah was established in 1917 by Siti Walidah (1872–1946) as the women's wing of Muhammadiyah. The organization's vision is to educate women and combat backwardness by encouraging their social participation in society (Aryanti, 2013). Today, Aisyiyah operates in all 34 provinces across Indonesia as well as abroad, including in Australia, Egypt, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Taiwan (Syamsiyatun, 2020). Saat ini, perempuan Aisyiyah menikmati kebebasan untuk berpartisipasi dalam ruang publik (Dewi, 2008). At present, Aisyiyah women enjoy the freedom to engage in the public sphere (Dewi, 2008). As an Islamic-based organization, Aisyiyah remains focused on the Qur'an and Sunnah (Chaerowati et al., 2021).

Since its inception, Aisyiyah has aimed to teach the essence of Islamic knowledge to women, interpreted through the lens of modern Islamic reformism. The organization has dedicated substantial resources to women's general education, family health programs, and women's economic empowerment (Hefner, 2016). Aisyiyah has made a positive contribution to the Indonesian nation and to women by helping them develop their potential optimally in accordance with the roles they choose to enact in society (Qodariah, 2016). It has successfully encouraged and enhanced women's roles in community development. Through the spirit of baldatun toyyibatun wa rabbun ghafur, women are positioned as the strength of the family in building a peaceful, harmonious, and blessed society.

Aisyiyah is widely regarded as a modern women's organization due to its strategic programs. With its strong social capital, Aisyiyah facilitates development across various social sectors, such as advocacy, community outreach, and assistance for social issues, particularly those affecting women (Wijaya, 2019). Aisyiyah plays a crucial role in numerous government- and donor-supported health programs by mobilizing its female members (Sciortino et al., 2010). As an autonomous entity within Muhammadiyah, Aisyiyah plays a vital role in developing health centers across Indonesia. Due to its wide-ranging engagement in society, the organization actively participates in various development processes related to public welfare and healthcare through both philanthropic and non-philanthropic services (Latief, 2010). Its extensive organizational structure disseminates these efforts, reaching even the most remote areas, from urban to rural communities.

Aisyiyah has made an important impact on community development through its cultural dakwah activities led by the Aisyiyah Regional Leadership (Pimpinan Daerah Aisyiyah/PDA) in Banggai Regency, specifically among the local Loinang people in Tombiobong. Banggai Regency, located in Central Sulawesi Province, is home to three distinct ethnic groups: the Banggai, Balantak, and Loinang peoples, each with its language and customs (Mangundap et al., 2017).

Banggai categorizes the Loinang indigenous community, particularly those residing in Dusun Tombiobong, Maleo Jaya Village, South Batui District, as an isolated ethnic group. The term Loinang refers to people who historically lived in remote inland areas, particularly along the Sensean and Lobu rivers (Dalle & Jundi, 2021). PDA Banggai has provided healthcare services and addressed various aspects of life within the Loinang community. Their efforts represent a form of Muhammadiyah's cultural dakwah,

rooted in the spirit of the Al-Ma'un movement.

The cultural dakwah approach employed by Muhammadiyah-Aisyiyah aims to rationalize religious messages within the social realities of communities. We can harness the potentials and resources of Muslim communities through cultural dakwah to support their development (Suparto, 2009). Muhammadiyah's dakwah has shifted from a reactive bi al-lisan (verbal) model to one that combines verbal expression with concrete social actions among marginalized populations (Alifudin et al., 2021). In the context of indigenous empowerment, cultural dakwah seeks to accelerate the understanding and application of Islamic teachings in daily life among indigenous groups (UMAR, 2017). However, such efforts face challenges due to the unique characteristics of these communities. There is a need for alternative development models that can balance territorial control and preserve local structures (Torres-Wong & Jimenez-Sandoval, 2021).

Empowerment and dakwah activities among isolated or remote indigenous communities have drawn criticism. Empowerment programs targeting Remote Indigenous Communities (Komunitas Adat Terpencil) are often considered ineffective. One major issue is that local government agencies primarily offer guidance, training, and awareness without providing adequate infrastructure, such as education facilities, places of worship, and healthcare services (Sujarwani et al., 2018). Another issue is the lack of continuous support and training (Bakar & Ghofur, 2017).

Programs aimed at integrating isolated groups into broader society should transition from a "guidance" approach to a genuine "empowerment" model, with policies that consider their cultural values and aspirations (Syuroh, 2011). As noted by Adriyani, for remote indigenous communities, the forest represents a space where their rights and obligations toward nature are deeply rooted (Adriyani et al., 2019). One important indicator of the effectiveness of Aisyiyah's cultural dakwah among isolated communities is the communication aspect. Message planning, channel and media selection, as well as communication style and approach, are crucial components (Rasyid et al., 2019).

Current studies lack sufficient exploration of how cultural and religious norms influence communication patterns in isolated communities. Existing research often focuses on broader societal transformations, such as shifts in Arab communities from strict religious adherence to more global norms (Mulhem et al., 2020). Furthermore, research on the communication of such issues within these communities is still scarce. This gap highlights the need for further inquiry into how communication theories can enhance the effectiveness of dakwah among isolated ethnic groups (Hussain Alamyar et al., 2023). These approaches allow for dialogue between religious practices and cultural traditions, fostering greater acceptance and understanding of Islam in isolated communities (Susana, 2023).

There remains a significant research gap in applying modern communication theories to dakwah practices, particularly within isolated indigenous communities. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on these often-underrepresented communities, offering new insights into the integration of cultural and religious practices. Interpersonal communication is a key strategy in dakwah, as it involves direct interaction and

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personal engagement, which can be more effective in message delivery and comprehension (Sakdiah, 2017). Therefore, this study aims to describe how PDA Banggai carries out its cultural dakwah through interpersonal communication within the Loinang indigenous community. Specifically, it seeks to examine the communication patterns employed by PDA Banggai in empowering this community and to identify the roles of the actors involved. To describe these interpersonal communication patterns, a strong theoretical foundation is necessary. This study adopts the interpersonal communication approach based on concepts developed by DeVito.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on isolated ethnic communities, which are often underrepresented in communication studies. By examining Aisyiyah's cultural dakwah approach, the study offers new perspectives on effective communication strategies adapted to unique cultural contexts. Aisyiyah's integration of religious and cultural messages into its communication strategies provides a valuable model for engaging with communities that possess distinct cultural and religious identities. The research on how Aisyiyah communicates within its cultural dakwah efforts in remote communities is complex and connects with many different communication theories and methods. The current state of this field involves diverse understandings of how communication is structured and employed in the empowerment of indigenous communities.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study. The case study approach is designed to explore research questions and issues in which the phenomenon under investigation cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs. We utilized the case study method in this context to examine the phenomenon of Aisyiyah's cultural dakwah activities and the contextual factors surrounding these practices. The rationale for adopting the case study method is based on several considerations. First, the research focuses on answering "how" and "why" questions. Second, in case study research, the researcher must not manipulate the behavior of the individuals or entities involved in the study. Third, the researcher seeks to understand the contextual conditions underlying the phenomenon, assuming they are relevant to the subject of inquiry. Lastly, Yin & Djauzi Mudzakir highlight the unclear boundary between the phenomenon and the context under study (Yin & Djauzi Mudzakir, 2008).

This research used a case study method to look at how people communicate with each other during cultural dakwah activities organized by the Regional Leadership of Aisyiyah (Pimpinan Daerah Aisyiyah/PDA) Banggai, focusing on the remote Tombiobong indigenous community in Maleo Jaya Village, South Batui District, Banggai Regency, Central Sulawesi. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and document studies. The interviews were conducted with members of PDA Banggai, Central Sulawesi, who have been directly involved in empowerment and dakwah activities for the isolated indigenous community in Tombiobong, located in Maleo Jaya Village, South Batui District, Banggai Regency, Central Sulawesi (Sulteng). Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, with the following criteria: (1) they must be part of the PDA Banggai leadership, (2) they must be directly involved in dakwah and community empowerment activities in Tombiobong, and (3) they must have more

than one year of experience in PDA Banggai's cultural dakwah efforts in Tombiobong. Based on these criteria, the study interviewed one chairperson of PDA Banggai (Sri Moxsa Djalamang or Ms. Inang) and two field dakwah team members (Ms. Ernita and Ms. Nurhaidah). The three informants are members of the regional leadership board of 'Aisyiyah (Pimpinan Daerah 'Aisyiyah, PDA) in Banggai Regency. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain insights into communication strategies, challenges, and the dynamics of cultural dakwah. PDA Banggai collected document-based data from activity reports, field documentation, and archives of empowerment programs.

To ensure data validity, the technique of data triangulation was employed. Data triangulation involves validating information by cross-verifying it from multiple sources and using the evidence to justify themes in a coherent manner (Cresswell, 2016). Triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from interviews with available documents and by analyzing consistency across different interviewees' statements. This process aimed to strengthen the credibility and validity of the data obtained from the participants.

After collecting the data, we conducted a data reduction process by filtering and selecting relevant data for further analysis. The selected data were then analyzed using case study data analysis procedures, which involve categorization and thematic interpretation. The analysis consisted of the following stages: (1) Data categorization—organizing the data according to emergent themes, such as communication patterns, community responses, and the dynamics of social relationships, (2) Pattern matching—comparing the observed patterns in the

data with pre-existing theoretical frameworks or initial conceptual models, (3) Explanation building—constructing a narrative explanation of the phenomenon based on the empirical findings, and (4) Time-series analysis—applied to understand how dakwah practices evolved. We employed an additional technique, cross-case synthesis, to analyze multiple cases and identify recurring themes or patterns. The final output of this research is a narrative that presents the case in a comprehensive and contextualized manner, enabling readers to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon studied (Prihatsanti et al., 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
### Patterns and Strategies of Interpersonal Communication in the Cultural Da'wah of PDA Banggai

Interpersonal communication refers to verbal and nonverbal interactions between two (or sometimes more) interdependent individuals (DeVito, 2022). It differs significantly from many other forms of communication (Floyd, 2021). Communication is a critical aspect to consider when analyzing social phenomena, as interpersonal communication also occurs within group dynamics and situations (Ngunan & Regina, 2016).The interactions and relationships among people involved in the cultural da'wah activities of PDA Banggai in the Loinang indigenous community can be understood using the parts of interpersonal communication described in DeVito's framework. These elements include: source-receiver (including competence, encoding-decoding, and code-switching); message (metamessages, feedback, and feedforward); channel; noise; context; effect, and ethics. These elements serve as the analytical lens for

understanding the patterns of interpersonal communication employed by PDA Banggai in its cultural da'wah practices with marginalized indigenous communities. From the adaptation of the elements of DeVito's interpersonal communication pattern, the following pattern is produced as the basis of cultural da'wah activities (see figure 1).

Figure 1

The relationship between Aisyiyah's interpersonal communication patterns and cultural Da'wah activities in alienated tribal communities
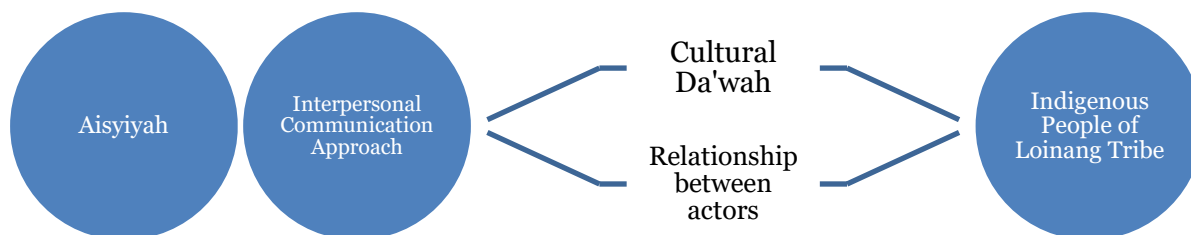
Source: Adapted from Devito (2022).

Interpersonal communication involves two or more individuals who are interdependent to a certain degree and share a unique bond (Li et al., 2017). Communication, as a construct, can be defined in multiple ways depending on the approach and contextual situation (Schiller & de Wet, 2018).It serves as a crucial instrument in social dynamics, including in the cultural da'wah activities of PDA Banggai. However, its application within the context of the Loinang indigenous community by the Banggai branch of 'Aisyiyah (PDA) cannot be understood merely as a harmonious process. This study reveals that the communication patterns that emerge are complementary in nature (Figure 1), where both PDA Banggai and the indigenous community have an equitable share in message exchange. Effective interpersonal communication is vital for empowerment, encompassing openness, empathy, support, and equality, all of which are essential for building trust and facilitating transformation (Rodiah et al., 2022).Interpersonal communication approaches can assist 'Aisyiyah in engaging with isolated tribal communities by promoting mutual understanding and collaboration.

The term Loinang refers to people who historically inhabited the interior regions, particularly areas along the Sensean and Lobu rivers (Dalle & Jundi, 2021). The Loinang indigenous community primarily resides in forested and hilly terrains. Their daily language is Saluan, which is widely spoken across 18 sub-districts in Banggai Regency, Central Sulawesi, particularly in Pagimana and its divisions, Lobu and Bualemo (Pamolango, 2012). However, it's important to steer clear of oversimplified ideas about indigenous peoples, their cultures, and their goals—ideas that some people still hold, seeing indigenous groups either as completely natural and in tune with the environment or as vulnerable communities that need help to develop (Torres-Wong & Jimenez-Sandoval, 2021).

The social practices of the Loinang community diverge from those of mainstream society. Few members are fluent in Indonesian; they have limited exposure to modern technology, limited social interactions, and bear

unconventional names such as "Landasan," "Filipina," "Pensil," and "Pesawat"—the latter being the name of a tribal chief. Access to the engineered settlement of the Loinang people in Tombiobong is rather isolated, requiring unpaved roads and river crossings. These geographical factors contribute to their marginalization relative to other communities.

These conditions underpin PDA Banggai's motivation to conduct da'wah activities among the Loinang community. The head of PDA Banggai stated that the da'wah is rooted in the Spirit of Al-Ma'un, a fundamental teaching within Muhammadiyah emphasizing social humanitarian values derived from the Qur'anic Surah Al-Ma'un, which advocates for care toward the disadvantaged (Hilman & Sari, 2018).This spirit forms the philosophical basis for PDA Banggai's interpersonal approach. The interpersonal component entails individuals' awareness of their capacity to influence others; it focuses on how individuals interact within their environment to effectively gain influence and resources, while the behavioral component refers to actions that impact the sociopolitical environment, including participation in community organizations and activities (Ratriyana et al., 2021).

The Loinang people are characterized by shyness and a sensitivity to outsiders, which means interpersonal communication with them must be grounded in local knowledge, community consent, and trust. PDA Banggai recognizes that trust-building is a critical factor for effective da'wah. Thus, the team exercises extreme caution in their communication efforts. As Junaedi et al. note, social behavior is governed by regularities and relational norms; deviation from agreed-upon norms can result in social sanctions or mistrust (Junaedi et al., 2017).Therefore, the intensity of communication is key to cultivating interpersonal trust (Rasyid et al., 2021).

PDA Banggai's initial approach involved the frequent distribution of basic food supplies (sembako).

> "What we initially did in Tombiobong was intensive distribution of basic necessities. Over time, the intervals became shorter and the distributions more frequent. The approach was that every time we visited, we always brought something with us—usually food supplies. These typically included rice, because the local community relies on farming for their livelihood. However, they practice dryland farming for rice, which means they only harvest once a year." *(Ms. Sri Moxsa Djalamang, Aisyiyah's Cultural Da'wah, August 29, 2022).*

Additionally, intermediaries such as healthcare workers—who had previously served in Tombiobong—were utilized for early engagement. The Head of the Banggai Health Office, who also chairs the Muhammadiyah Regional Board, facilitated this access. PDA Banggai's presence in Tombiobong aligns with the Banggai Regency's strategic program for stunting prevention. Government involvement lends legitimacy to the empowerment initiatives targeting isolated communities, such as the Loinang. Previously, the Social Affairs Office had also contributed to the development of the engineered settlement that eventually became Tombiobong hamlet. While government participation in programs such as stunting prevention confers structural legitimacy, it can also reinforce

narratives positioning indigenous communities as dependent without acknowledging their autonomy.

The relationship between PDA Banggai and the Banggai government in indigenous empowerment represents a form of legitimized facilitation and authority. In addition to government collaboration, PDA Banggai involves various agencies under 'Aisyiyah councils and Muhammadiyah's autonomous organizations. This practice reflects the use of interpersonal communication dominance as a skill to influence others in relational contexts (Langlinais et al., 2022). Dominance involves the exercise of power through control over resources (Achmad, 2020).

The structure of dominance includes schemata of control over people (politics) and goods. Such schemata are evident in PDA Banggai's communication strategies, especially through the distribution of food aid. Though subtle, this mechanism of dominance is observable in their persuasive communication methods that blend religious values with indigenous social practices. This approach, while effective in initiating dialogue, also reflects a hegemonic relationship that produces hybridized values and potential cultural resistance. In this context, indigenous people are not passive recipients but possess agency in negotiating meaning within interactions.

Another crucial component influencing interpersonal communication patterns is language. Language is vital in shaping relationships and decisions in high-stakes interactions (Matusitz, 2013). PDA Banggai utilizes the Saluan language to engage with the Loinang people. Several PDA Banggai team members are native Saluan speakers. These da'wah activities thus become a bilingual learning arena: the Loinang people acquire Indonesian while the Aisyiyah team expands their Saluan

vocabulary. Consequently, communication between these social structures becomes more effective. Language is therefore a crucial component of da'wah initiatives among remote populations. As explained by Mrs. Inang:

> "Yes, in general, when they meet strangers, they treat them as such—with great caution and suspicion. They show suspicious expressions and are not welcoming at first. Our main strategy was language. When I asked for permission to enter their house, I did so using the Saluan language. Maybe that made them think, 'Oh, this is a good person.' We were perceived as part of the community, even like family. That became our entry point—from house to house—and gave us many opportunities to engage in conversation and introduce several concepts." *(Sri Moxsa Djalamang, Aisyiyah's Cultural Da'wah, August 29, 2022).*

Beyond language, context and ethics also play key roles in interpersonal communication. The Loinang community possesses customary laws and a wealth of local knowledge. Indigenous knowledge systems are generally understood as integrated, holistic, and socio-ecological bodies of understanding concerning relationships among living beings, including humans and their environments (Hill et al., 2020). Members of the Loinang community maintain personal bonds within a cohesive social system that governs community interactions.

The Dynamics of Power Relations, Meaning Negotiation, and Cultural Resistance in Cultural Da'wah

The customary legal system, norms, traditions, and local knowledge of the Loinang indigenous community did not emerge arbitrarily. They developed in an

organized and structured manner, following clear patterns. The customary laws upheld by the Loinang indigenous community are regarded by PDA Banggai as aligned with Islamic sharia. For instance, there are specific rules and norms concerning visiting others: if only women are present in a house, men are not allowed to enter, and vice versa. This discourse is respected by PDA Banggai in adjusting its da'wah activities to the social practices of the Loinang community. This is closely related to the concept that every communication process within a system will inevitably involve rules. Clear and precise rules yield effective communication and contribute to building positive relationships (Wasta Utami, 2018). This adherence is not merely a form of cultural negotiation but can also be seen as a strategic effort to prevent resistance from the indigenous community.

Culture is a significant component of interpersonal communication (Scollo & Carbaugh, 2013).Accordingly, interpersonal communication can be perceived as a large-scale social phenomenon, as it inherently involves group-level normativity (Carassa & Colombetti, 2015). In the social practices of the Loinang people, the role of the tribal chief, esteemed customary figures, and kopi-kopian—a traditional healing incantation—are central to their local knowledge systems. These elements are a particular concern for PDA Banggai, as they strive to honor the prevailing local norms and rules. The da'wah and empowerment programs conducted by PDA Banggai are not top-down in nature but rather reflect a dualism: PDA Banggai operates as both a structural entity and a participant in the community, while the Loinang people act as agents.

"There is also something called *kopi-kopian* mentioned at the beginning of the local chants. Muhammadiyah does not support such practices because they are not in line with Islamic teachings. We gradually tried to change this understanding through religious education. Of course, in our da'wah, we didn't use scriptural citations because the people cannot read. Instead, we used tangible evidence. For instance, once we held a meeting at a school and two children who were traditionally not allowed to meet were present together. Afterward, we asked, 'Look, are they sick now?' The illness didn't come from the meeting; it came from our carelessness, and ultimately, from Allah's will. Alhamdulillah, this has had an extraordinary impact lately." *(Ms. Sri Moxsa Djalamang, Aisyiyah's Cultural Da'wah, August 29, 2022).*

PDA Banggai's role in empowering members of the Loinang community is not limited to social, economic, and health facilitation. Gradually, PDA Banggai introduces Islamic teachings—values, beliefs, and ideology—through da'wah. This form of empowerment in da'wah extends beyond spiritual guidance and includes efforts to improve socio-economic conditions. This is evident in the historical example of the Prophet Muhammad's empowerment activities in Medina, which encompassed spiritual, social, educational, and economic dimensions (Nurjamilah, 2017). This aligns with the philosophical foundation of the Al-Ma'un spirit. The Al-Ma'un principle in Muhammadiyah's da'wah stems from the movement's commitment to social justice and community welfare. Inspired by KH Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of

Muhammadiyah, this foundation emphasizes practical theology that translates religious teachings into social action. The spirit of Al-Ma'un, drawn from the Qur'anic Surah Al-Ma'un, advocates kindness, charity, and social responsibility—core values of Muhammadiyah's da'wah philosophy. Contemporary da'wah now emphasizes community empowerment to address poverty and social inequality (Aziz, 2010; Rofiq, 2020). This approach is not limited to spiritual enlightenment but also seeks tangible improvements in community conditions, reflecting a holistic understanding of Islam.

An example of the application of the Al-Ma'un spirit is found in the Loinang community's traditional beliefs surrounding healing. They believe that illness is caused by another person, and as such, the sick person and the believed source of the illness must not meet. This belief poses challenges to the implementation of health services and assistance programs. PDA Banggai addresses this by offering religious perspectives to reinterpret these local beliefs. This practice exemplifies the concept of structural duality, in which agents and structures are mutually constitutive and reciprocally influential It illustrates a process of hybrid meaning-making, where local values are neither wholly rejected nor uncritically accepted.

The da'wah and empowerment activities carried out by PDA Banggai within the Loinang indigenous community, though rooted in the motives and spirit of the Al-Ma'un movement, may unconsciously function as mechanisms of social system regulation. PDA Banggai's adherence to customary laws and practices reflects discursive consciousness—an awareness of the potential for social sanctions. These new practices emerge through repeated social actions. Such

social practices serve as means for actualizing normative frameworks, which continue to operate within the temporal and spatial dimensions of daily interactions (Hidayatulloh et al., 2021).

> "There are customary laws in that area. Alhamdulillah, some of these are aligned with Islamic principles. So, our empowerment programs were adjusted to the local social practices. That's how it had to begin. I had to learn their customs first—how to visit someone's house, how to interact. I learned from local community leaders who had long interacted with the Loinang people. I asked them about the unusual traditions, how customary practices work. And when I made house visits, I followed those customs. Because some had been previously rejected. Alhamdulillah, that didn't happen in our case." *(Sri Moxsa Djalamang, Aisyiyah's Cultural Da'wah, August 29, 2022).*

This negotiation process requires cultural sensitivity and a dialogic intercultural approach. In practice, PDA Banggai employs healthcare workers as intermediaries and utilizes the Saluan language skills possessed by some members. This indicates efforts to build horizontal communication. Da'wah in multicultural settings necessitates strategies that respect diversity and promote tolerance. This includes identifying common ground and fostering mutual understanding among different cultural groups (Marfu'ah, 2017). Aisyiyah may adopt such strategies to ensure culturally sensitive and inclusive communication. However, a critical question remains: to what extent is this communication truly dialogic rather than merely transactional? Are the Loinang people granted space to express their aspirations and negotiate their values? Or are they largely in a position of passive

"reception" due to the logic of aid and the symbolic authority of external actors?

Figure 2
The process of negotiating meaning and empowerment in the intercultural da'wah of Banggai PDA
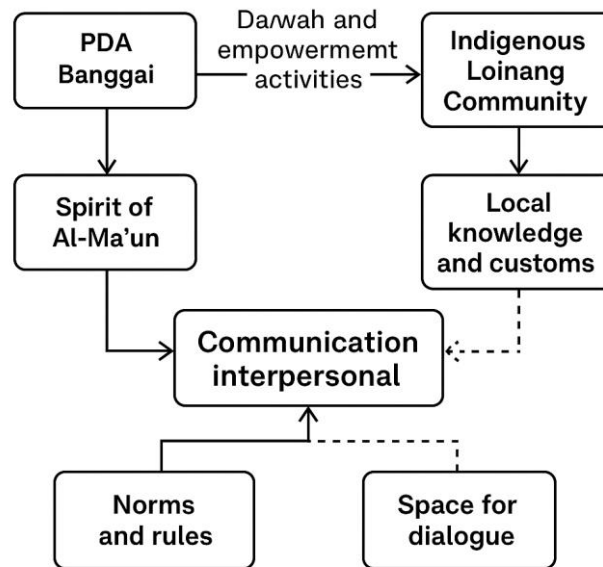
Source: researcher data processing results

Figure 2 illustrates the interaction flow and dynamics of cultural da'wah carried out by PDA Banggai among the Loinang people. The diagram shows the process of value negotiation, cultural adaptation, and empowerment through interpersonal communication that is sensitive to local social structures and norms. It also reflects how the success of PDA Banggai's da'wah and empowerment efforts is highly dependent on their ability to understand, respect, and negotiate with the value systems embedded in customary laws, social norms, and local knowledge. Interpersonal communication in this context is not merely a medium for message delivery but a complex process involving symbolic exchange, shared meaning-making (hybrid meaning-making), and power dynamics between structure and agency. In this context, interpersonal communication in PDA Banggai's cultural da'wah becomes more than just message exchange. It constitutes a space of epistemic, symbolic, and social encounter, demanding intercultural approaches, critical awareness of power positions, and recognition of indigenous communities' rights to retain their knowledge and social structures. Therefore, the success of da'wah and empowerment should not be measured solely by the acceptance of new values but also by the extent to which the process opens dialogue, respects cultural autonomy, and fosters more equitable relationships. Fundamentally, interpersonal communication is an activity of symbolic

exchange aimed at achieving interpersonal goals (Matusitz, 2013). In this context, it involves one-on-one conversations or individual interactions within group settings. Interpersonal communication thus serves as an effective means to reduce uncertainty and establish mutual understanding (Peranginangin & Perbawaningsih, 2017). Accordingly, every communicative act within PDA Banggai's da'wah and empowerment efforts in the Loinang indigenous community represents an interconnected and mutually influential process.

CONCLUSION

Through an interpersonal communication approach, Aisyiyah's cultural da'wah activities can become more contextually grounded within isolated indigenous communities, particularly the Loinang people. A critical component in the interpersonal communication pattern of Aisyiyah's cultural da'wah is the ethical conduct and message adaptation process tailored to the customs of the Loinang indigenous community. The use of the local language and respect for indigenous knowledge reflect how Aisyiyah's cultural da'wah efforts remain relevant to the social and cultural contexts they encounter. As such, the interpersonal communication approach in PDA Banggai's cultural da'wah is dynamic—encompassing negotiation, adaptation, and the potential for domination.

Culture and social practices are crucial aspects that must be carefully considered in the implementation of cultural da'wah activities. A dialogic approach allows indigenous communities to actively reframe the values introduced to them. Communication becomes a central element in establishing these relationships. Through effective interpersonal communication, there is a far greater opportunity to foster relationships that are productive, supportive, open, and honest—embodying all the desirable characteristics of a healthy interpersonal relationship. The evidence indicates that communication patterns serve as a guide for achieving effectiveness in the development, deterioration, and repair of interpersonal relationships.

This study offers insights into how Aisyiyah develops interpersonal communication patterns in its cultural da'wah activities among isolated indigenous communities. Although the research provides valuable understanding of Aisyiyah's communication strategies within these groups, it is also important to consider the broader implications of these findings. The integration of ethical and culturally sensitive interpersonal communication practices can significantly enhance the effectiveness of da'wah activities. However, to fully realize the potential of these strategies, we must address challenges such as resistance to change and limited resources. Women in da'wah leadership positions also offer a chance for revolutionary change by encouraging diversity and inclusivity in religious communities. The representation and leadership of women in cultural da'wah efforts can shift community perceptions and enhance the inclusivity of religious practices. This is particularly relevant in remote communities, where traditional gender roles may be more deeply entrenched.

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