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INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM INTO DA'WAH MANAGEMENT FOR INTERFAITH PEACEBUILDING: EVIDENCE FROM MUSLIM, CATHOLIC, AND CONFUCIAN RESIDENTS OF LAM BHEU, ACEH BESAR

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Abstract

Studies of interfaith relations in Indonesia tend to measure harmony at the aggregate level, leaving the everyday mechanisms that produce coexistence in religiously mixed villages largely undocumented. This article examines how local wisdom is incorporated into the management of *da'wah* in Lam Bheu Village (*Gampong* Lam Bheu), Aceh Besar, and how this incorporation works as a mechanism of peacebuilding among Muslim, Catholic, and Confucian residents. Using a qualitative case-study design, data were collected between May and June 2026 through in-depth interviews with nine purposively selected informants (the mosque imam, a *da'wah* steward, the village head (*keuchik*), a customary leader, a Muslim resident, and a formal representative and an ordinary resident from each of the Catholic and Confucian communities), supplemented by participant observation and documentary analysis. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, with source and technique triangulation. Three findings emerge. First, decisions on *da'wah* content and scheduling are reached collectively through

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musyawarah (consultative deliberation) involving mosque administrators, imams, customary leaders, and village authorities. Second, local values function both as sermon content and as method: *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), condolence visits, and village festivities become the medium of *da'wah bil-hal* (*da'wah* through deeds), bringing Muslim and non-Muslim residents into the same social space without extending worship across the boundary. Third, *da'wah* is calibrated along a line that residents themselves articulate as mixing in social affairs while observing limits in worship, which also governs the handling of minor friction. The study specifies *da'wah* management as a boundary-conscious and collectively coordinated practice and extends participatory communication theory to a configuration in which participation and religious particularity coexist. Because the evidence derives from a single village and a small purposive sample, the argument is offered as a context-specific account rather than a transferable model.

Keywords: Da'wah Management; Local Wisdom; Interfaith Peacebuilding; Social Cohesion; Interfaith Harmony; Aceh.

Abstrak

Kajian tentang relasi antaragama di Indonesia cenderung mengukur kerukunan pada tingkat agregat, sehingga mekanisme sehari-hari yang menghasilkan koeksistensi di desa-desa berpenduduk majemuk masih jarang terdokumentasikan. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana kearifan lokal diintegrasikan ke dalam manajemen dakwah di Gampong Lam Bheu, Aceh Besar, dan bagaimana integrasi tersebut berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pembangunan perdamaian di antara warga Muslim, Katolik, dan Konghucu. Dengan desain studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan pada Mei–Juni 2026 melalui wawancara mendalam dengan sembilan informan yang dipilih secara purposif (imam masjid, pengurus dakwah, keuchik (kepala gampong), tokoh adat, seorang warga Muslim, serta seorang perwakilan formal dan seorang warga biasa dari masing-masing komunitas Katolik dan Konghucu), dilengkapi observasi partisipatif dan analisis dokumentasi. Data dianalisis dengan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman disertai triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Tiga temuan diajukan. Pertama, keputusan mengenai materi dan penjadwalan dakwah diambil secara kolektif melalui musyawarah yang melibatkan pengurus masjid, imam, tokoh adat, dan aparatur desa. Kedua, nilai-nilai lokal berfungsi sekaligus sebagai isi ceramah dan sebagai metode: gotong royong, kunjungan duka, dan pesta desa menjadi medium dakwah bil-hal yang mempertemukan warga Muslim dan non-Muslim dalam ruang sosial yang sama tanpa melintasi batas ibadah. Ketiga, dakwah dikalibrasi menurut garis yang dirumuskan warga sendiri sebagai baur dalam kemasyarakatan, batas dalam ibadah, yang juga mengatur penanganan gesekan kecil. Penelitian ini merumuskan manajemen dakwah sebagai praktik yang sadar-batas dan terkoordinasi secara kolektif, serta memperluas teori komunikasi partisipatif ke konfigurasi di mana partisipasi dan kekhasan keagamaan berjalan bersama. Karena bukti berasal dari satu desa dengan sampel purposif yang kecil, argumen ini ditawarkan sebagai keterangan yang spesifik-konteks, bukan model yang dapat dipindahkan begitu saja.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Dakwah; Kearifan Lokal; Pembangunan Perdamaian Antaragama; Kohesi Sosial; Kerukunan Antarumat Beragama; Aceh.

INTRODUCTION

Religious pluralism is celebrated in Indonesian public discourse as a national strength, but celebration is not explanation. The Ministry of Religious Affairs closed 2025 with the national Religious Harmony Index at 77.89, the highest reading since measurement began a decade earlier, and the figure is widely cited as evidence that tolerance and cooperation between religious groups are improving.[1] An index of this kind is an aggregate, however. It can climb while the practices that generate coexistence in particular places remain undocumented, and a district that scores well may do so for reasons quite unlike those operating in its neighbour. What a national number cannot supply is an account of the mechanisms at work inside a single village where Muslims, Catholics, and Confucians live side by side. This article takes up that task in one such village.

Da'wah (Islamic outreach) management has usually been studied as a problem of message design, media selection, and institutional planning, with effectiveness judged by how far religious content reaches a Muslim audience and is internalized by it.[2] The approach has yielded solid knowledge about programme structure and communication technique. It also carries two assumptions that repay closer inspection. The first is that the audience is religiously homogeneous. The second is that the *da'i* (preacher) is the primary, and often the only, agent of *da'wah*. Neither assumption travels well to a village where non-Muslim residents form part of the everyday social fabric. Once they are set aside, two questions open up. If *da'wah* is planned in meetings attended by mosque administrators, customary leaders, and village officials, then management is a negotiated and collective achievement, and the interesting question concerns how that negotiation proceeds.[3] And if *da'wah* is conducted in a shared social space, it cannot be assessed by doctrinal content alone. It must also be read through what may be called religious boundary management: the deliberate calibration of how, when, and where religious activity is carried out, so that it neither compromises its religious purpose nor unsettles the space residents hold in common. The second of these has received considerably less attention than the first, and how *da'i* and community leaders perform the calibration in practice remains largely unexamined.[4]

A separate body of work treats local wisdom as a cultural resource for social cohesion, with *musyawarah* (consultative deliberation) and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) normally identified as values that lower the chance of conflict.[5] n Aceh the maxim *adat bak Poteu Meureuhom, hukom bak Syiah Kuala* (custom rests with the sovereign, Islamic law with Syiah Kuala) is routinely invoked to show that customary and religious authority work in

[1]'Minister Highlights Harmony as Foundation for Indonesia's Development', ANTARA News, accessed 25 October 2026, https://en.antaranews.com/news/433780/minister-highlights-harmony-as-foundation-for-indonesias-development; '11 Years of the Religious Harmony Index Survey: 2025 Marks a New High', UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 22 August 2026, https://uin-suka.ac.id/en/show/berita/3289-1/11-years-of-the-religious-harmony-index-survey-2025-marks-a-new-high.

[2]Neneng Hasanah, Randi Tamirano, Sandi Maspika, and Haikal Romadhan Al Yusad, 'From the Pulpit to the Algorithm: Millennial Digital Da'wah Management Strategy in the Hijrah Youth Shift Ecosystem and Writing Pause', *J-MD: Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah* 7, no. 1 (2026): 118–32, https://doi.org/10.24260/2dh1e452.

[3]Sarmo Maulina Bako and Sahrul Sahrul, 'Management of Religious Extension Workers in the Development of Da'wah in the Minority Muslim Community', *Suluah Pasaman* 4, no. 2 (2026): 832–42, https://doi.org/10.70588/suluahpasaman.v4i2.1298.

[4]Fahdiana Yuniasih and Evawani Ellisa, 'Negotiating Sacred Space in Jakarta's Central Business District: Mosque Typo-Morphologies, Governance, and Urban Transformation', *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering* (2026): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.1080/13467581.2026.2633022.

[5]John R. Bowen, 'On the Political Construction of Tradition: Gotong Royong in Indonesia', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 45, no. 3 (1986): 545–61, https://doi.org/10.2307/2056530.

tandem rather than in tension.[6] Two limitations run through this literature. Local wisdom is commonly represented as an inheritance, a stock of values a community holds, rather than as a repertoire that people select from and reinterpret as circumstances require. And the connection between local wisdom and *da'wah* is asserted more often than shown. It is seldom specified which values enter *da'wah* content and delivery, who decides on their entry, or through which recurring activities the entry becomes visible rather than merely rhetorical.

Work on interfaith harmony and peacebuilding supplies a third frame, and its difficulty is of a different kind. Studies in this area tend to organize around outcomes. Communities are described as harmonious or otherwise, and explanation is offered in terms of tolerance, moderation, or the presence of interfaith forums.[7] What such accounts rarely provide is the operational link between religious management and those outcomes. The path from a decision about sermon content, or from the scheduling of a religious activity, to the texture of everyday relations between neighbours of different faiths is left largely untraced. Minority perspectives are scarcer still. The residents whose daily experience is most directly shaped by the majority's religious practice are seldom the ones whose accounts inform the analysis. A further difficulty is conceptual: tolerance, moderation, harmony, and social cohesion are frequently used as if they were interchangeable, when they describe different things—an attitude, a calibration of expression, a quality of relations, and the general density of social association—and treating them as synonyms obscures what a given practice actually produces.[8]

Read together, these bodies of work leave a specific gap. Existing studies have established that *da'wah* management involves collective managerial functions and that local wisdom eases the reception of *da'wah*, but they have not shown how local values are deliberately built into *da'wah* content and delivery, who makes that decision, or through which recurring activities it becomes observable. Accounts of interfaith harmony, for their part, have described outcomes without tracing the pathway from *da'wah* practice to lived relations, and have given little space to minority residents' own readings of that practice. What is missing is an empirically grounded account of *da'wah* as a community-managed and socially embedded practice that absorbs local values into both its substance and its conduct, and that takes the form of *da'wah bil-hal*, that is, *da'wah* enacted through participation in communal life rather than delivered from the pulpit alone.[9]

The contribution this article claims is therefore not the juxtaposition of three adjacent topics but a proposition about how they connect. *Da'wah* management in a plural village, it argues, operates through two interlocking mechanisms: the collective coordination of *da'wah* content and activity through *musyawarah* among religious and customary leaders, and the deliberate management of religious boundaries so that *da'wah* coexists with, rather than displaces, everyday interfaith interaction. As a theoretical advance, the article extends participatory communication theory to a configuration the

[6]Joko Hariadi, Katimin Katimin, Hasrat Effendi Samosir, Nur Amelia, Tanita Liasna, and Indah Fajarini, 'Adat Bak Poteu Meureuhom and Hukom Bak Syiah Kuala: Symbolic Power and Islamic Governance in Aceh History', *Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial* 9, no. 2 (2025): 668–76, https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v9i2.40952.

[7] Fikriya Aniqa Fitri, Darlin Rizki, and Nisa Ulmuftia, 'Peran Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) dalam Membangun Relasi Antarumat Beragama: Kajian Etnografi di Aceh Barat', *Dialektika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Ilmu Sosial* 19, no. 1 (2026), https://doi.org/10.33477/da.v19i1.12682.

[8]Imam Sopyan, Pepen Irpan Fauzan, and Ahmad Khoirul Fata, 'Religious Harmony, Godly Nationalism, and the Limits of State-Sponsored Interreligious Dialogue Agenda in Indonesia', *Islamika Inside* 6, no. 2 (2020): 31–53, https://doi.org/10.35719/islamikainside.v6i2.113.

[9]Al Kahfi, 'Manajemen Dakwah Berbasis Kearifan Lokal: Studi Komunitas Nelayan dan Petani Pesisir Indragiri Hilir', *Academic Journal of Da'wa and Communication* 7, no. 1 (2026): 21–40, https://doi.org/10.22515/ajdc.v7i1.14987.

theory does not ordinarily accommodate, in which a communication process remains participatory in structure while religiously particular in intent. It also refines the concept of *da'wah bil-hal* by showing that local wisdom can operate as message and as method at once, a distinction the existing literature does not clearly draw. Practically, the account offers religious leaders, customary authorities, and village administrators a description of how interfaith relations are sustained in one comparably diverse community. Because the evidence comes from a single village and a small purposive sample, the argument is presented as a context-specific account rather than a model offered for transfer; how far the mechanisms identified here travel is a question for comparative research.[10]

Aceh Besar Regency provides a suitable setting. It combines a strong customary and Islamic institutional presence with documented interaction among residents of varied cultural and occupational backgrounds, and its Interfaith Harmony Forum (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama*, FKUB) has reported no significant religion-related conflict in recent years, an outcome whose mechanisms have not been examined at village level. Within the regency, Lam Bheu Village (*Gampong* Lam Bheu) in Darul Imarah Sub-district lends itself to close observation. The village comprises five *dusun* (hamlets)—Balee Cut, Indra Sakti, Lam Bheu Barat, Perumnas Utara, and Poja—with a population of approximately 7,465. Around fifty residents are Catholic or Confucian, mostly of Batak or Chinese descent and largely engaged in trade, dispersed across four of the five *dusun*.[11] The scale matters analytically. A minority large enough to sustain visible and recurring social interaction, yet small enough that its relationship with *da'wah* practice and customary authority can be traced with some precision, is hard to isolate in larger or more diffuse urban settings.

The article therefore asks two questions. How is local wisdom integrated into the management of *da'wah* in Lam Bheu Village? And how does that integration function as a mechanism of interfaith peacebuilding among the village's Muslim, Catholic, and Confucian residents? Answering them requires the accounts of those who manage *da'wah* as well as those who, as religious minorities, live with its effects. Combining the two allows the relevant practices to be reconstructed: collective decision-making over *da'wah* content, context-sensitive adjustment of religious messaging, condolence visits, cooperative labour, and the informal handling of minor disputes before they acquire religious overtones. The following section reviews the bodies of literature from which the analytical framework is drawn.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Da'wah* Management: Negotiated Coordination and Boundary Consciousness

Contemporary scholarship has largely abandoned the image of *da'wah* management as the unilateral output of a single preacher transmitting fixed content to a passive audience. The prevailing alternative describes it through the standard managerial functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, applied collectively across mosque committees, customary leaders, and community members.[12] Within this literature, a

[10]Muhammad Bagas Ansari Lubis and Mohd Iqbal Abdul Muin, 'Development of an Islamic Community Model Based on Local Wisdom in Bandar Khalifah Village', *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 6, no. 1 (2026): 220–33, https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v6i1.34339.

[11]Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Aceh Besar, *Kecamatan Darul Imarah Dalam Angka 2026*, 28 September 2026, https://acehbesarkab.bps.go.id/id/publication/2026/09/28/d200862fcea369c1c588bc36/kecamatan-darul-imarah-dalam-angka-2026.html.

[12]Hasanah, Tamirano, Maspika, and Al Yusad, 'From the Pulpit to the Algorithm'; Bako and Sahrul, 'Management of Religious Extension Workers in the Development of Da'wah in the Minority Muslim Community'.

functionalist strand retains the preacher as the organizing centre and treats participation as a means of improving reception, while a communicative strand treats participation as constitutive of the message itself. The difference bears directly on how one reads a village in which *da'wah* is planned in meetings attended by imams, mosque administrators, and customary elders: under the first reading the meeting is an administrative device, and under the second it is where the content of *da'wah* is actually formed.

What neither strand has adequately theorized is what happens to this negotiated structure when the community is not religiously homogeneous. The literature has tended to assume a Muslim audience and, where it has raised the question of religious activity near non-Muslim neighbours, has framed it as a matter of public order or legal regulation.[13] That framing is too narrow: a preacher who adjusts the hour of a loudspeaker address, or decides whether a neighbour of another faith should be invited to a communal meal, is making a managerial decision. The literature on symbolic boundaries supplies the vocabulary for treating such decisions analytically. Boundaries are conceptual distinctions that actors use to categorize people, practices, and objects, and *boundary work* is the effort invested in producing, maintaining, or softening them.[14] Interfaith communication scholarship has described comparable negotiations as dialogue and encounter, but has concentrated on organized forums and joint ceremonies rather than on the routine, largely unplanned adjustments through which everyday coexistence is maintained.[15] This study therefore treats boundary management as a positive practice that is decided, performed, and revised, and sees it and coordination through *musyawarah* as two aspects of one process: coordination determines who decides, and boundary management determines what the decision is about.

B. Local Wisdom: Inheritance, Repertoire, and the Content–Method Distinction

A second body of literature identifies local wisdom, such as *musyawarah*, *gotong royong*, and communal solidarity, as a cultural resource that eases the acceptance of *da'wah*. Two positions can be distinguished within it, though they are rarely stated as such. In the first, local wisdom is an inheritance, a stock of values a community holds and transmits, and the task is to identify which values are compatible with religious teaching.[16] In the second, it is a repertoire that actors select from and reinterpret as circumstances require, so that its content is settled in use rather than given in advance.[17] If local wisdom is inheritance, integrating it into *da'wah* means accommodating something external; if it is repertoire, integration is a creative act performed by identifiable people for identifiable purposes.

The second position also opens a distinction the literature does not clearly draw: local wisdom as content and as method. In the first mode, values such as mutual assistance appear as sermon material; in the second, they are enacted through the assistance itself, so that the practice rather than the sermon carries the value. The concept of *da'wah bil-hal* (*da'wah* through deeds) captures the second mode, but the literature has treated the two

[13]Waryani Fajar Riyanto, 'Escaping Islamic Religious Noise: The Pros and Cons of the Use of Mosque Loudspeakers in Indonesia', *Ulumuna* 28, no. 1 (2024): 81–107, https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i1.826.

[14]Michèle Lamont and Virág Molnár, 'The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences', *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 167–95, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141107.

[15]Muhammad, Nayla Khusnia, and Fadlan Barakah, 'Everyday Religious Tolerance in Gampong Keude Siblah: Social Practices and Symbolic Boundaries between Chinese-Indonesian and Muslim Communities', *Sinthop* 4, no. 1 (2025): 84–91, https://doi.org/10.69548/sinthop.v4.i1.28.84-91.

[16]Luk Luk Atin Marfuah, 'The Tradition of Ngaibakan Benda Pusaka in the Pulo Traditional Village: Symbolic Negotiation of Islam and Local Wisdom in the Construction of Collective Identity', *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, dan Tradisi)* 12, no. 1 (2026): 49–66, https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v12i1.3939.

[17]Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–58; John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

modes as alternatives rather than as co-present.[18] Treating local wisdom as a repertoire also guards against a methodological trap: it is not enough that a village has a tradition of *gotong royong*; the question is whether actors invoked it in the context of *da'wah*, made the connection explicit, and changed what was done as a result.

C. Conflict Handling: Prevention, Management, and Transformation

The literature on conflict resolution offers a more precise vocabulary than the general language of harmony. A standard distinction separates prevention, which reduces the likelihood that a dispute will arise; management, which contains a dispute once it has arisen; and transformation, which alters the underlying relationship so that future disputes are less likely.[19] The distinction matters because accounts of religious harmony often operate at the level of outcome, without specifying which mechanism is doing the work. The categories are not always separable in practice, and they are used here not as stages but as descriptions of what a particular practice accomplishes. A low-intensity dispute contained through immediate face-to-face communication, without appeal to formal authority and without religious framing, is best described as management rather than transformation.

Work closer to interfaith studies has examined the interpretive dimension of conflict: disputes between religiously different neighbours are not automatically religious disputes, and whether they become so depends on how actors frame them.[20] The same incident can be read as a social infraction, a legal matter, or an offence against a faith community. Where studies have noted a preference for social framing, they have described it as a local habit rather than a rule applied deliberately. This study treats it as an empirical question: whether the same interpretive move is made consistently by religious leaders, village authorities, and ordinary residents when a minor incident occurs.

D. Participatory Communication and Its Two Limits

Participatory communication theory holds that communication produces durable social outcomes when structured as a two-way, dialogical process in which the audience participates as an actor rather than receiving a one-directional message.[21] Applied to religious communication, it predicts that *da'wah* delivered only through top-down sermons will have a weaker effect on social cohesion than *da'wah* that incorporates community participation in shaping and enacting its content. The theory has been criticized on two grounds. First, participation is not automatically empowering: it can be invited in ways that legitimize a decision already taken, and the vocabulary of participation can obscure asymmetries of power.[22] A meeting that appears consultative may ratify a prior decision, so participation cannot be read off from the existence of a meeting; the question is what

[18]Reka Gunawan and Abdul Muhid, 'The Strategy of Da'wah bil Hal Communication: Literature Review', *KOMUNIKE: Jurnal Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam* 14, no. 1 (2022): 33–50, https://doi.org/10.20414/jurkom.v14i1.5270; Al Kahfi, 'Manajemen Dakwah Berbasis Kearifan Lokal'.

[19]Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011); Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: SAGE, 1996).

[20]Muhammad Mufti Sulthanan Nasira, Uwes Fathoni, and Hafizh Dhiya Ulhaq, 'Micro-Governance of Religious Diversity in Segregated Urban Spaces: Conflict De-Escalation in Taman Kopo Indah, Bandung', *Harmoni* 25, no. 1 (2026): 53–73, https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v25i1.983.

[21]Jan Servaes, *Communication for Development: One World, Multiple Cultures* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1999); Thomas Tufte and Paolo Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

[22]Andrea Cornwall, 'Buzzwords and Fuzzwords: Deconstructing Development Discourse', *Development in Practice* 17, nos. 4–5 (2007): 471–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469302.

happens inside it. Second, participation is usually theorized within a single constituency that shares the premises of the project. In a village where non-Muslim residents take part in social action that carries religious meaning for their Muslim neighbours, participation crosses a line the theory does not ordinarily draw. This study treats that as an open question: how participation and religious particularity are held together in practice, as compatible, as requiring separation, or as a matter of continuous adjustment.

E. Conceptual Distinctions and Analytical Framework

Four concepts recur in discussions of Indonesian religious life and are often used interchangeably. *Tolerance* refers to an attitude, a willingness to accept beliefs and practices one does not hold. *Moderation* refers to the calibration of religious expression, usually in the sense of avoiding extremes. *Harmony* describes a quality of relations between religious groups. *Cohesion* is broader, referring to the density of association, trust, and shared expectation whether or not religion is at issue.[23] A village can be cohesive without being especially harmonious, and harmonious in interfaith terms while remaining socially thin, so keeping the concepts apart allows the findings to say which of them the observed practices actually produce.

From this synthesis the study derives its analytical framework. *Da'wah* management in a plural village is examined as operating through two interlocking mechanisms: collective coordination of *da'wah* content and activity through *musyawarah*, and deliberate management of religious boundaries in the conduct of religious activity. The framework directs attention to four things: the substance of what is preached and how it shifts with social occasion; the decisions about who shapes it and how they are reached; the small, recurring adjustments made to avoid friction with residents outside the faith; and the way all of this is read by Catholic and Confucian residents, whose accounts allow the analyst to check whether the intentions of organizers and the experience of neighbours coincide. These four foci are also the foci of data collection described in the following section.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative case-study design.[24] A case study was chosen because the research questions concern mechanisms, namely how local wisdom enters the management of *da'wah* and how that entry bears on relations among Muslim, Catholic, and Confucian residents, and mechanisms of this kind cannot be detached from the setting in which they operate. The design leaves the boundary between phenomenon and context deliberately open, which is what the questions require: collective decision-making, boundary calibration, and the readings that minority residents give to both are practices that only make sense when examined in place. The design is not phenomenological. Phenomenology seeks the subjective meanings individuals attach to an experience, whereas this study is concerned with a set of coordinated practices and with how those practices are understood by the people who organize them and by those who live alongside them.[25] A phenomenological method would have produced rich individual accounts but would not have allowed the two-mechanism framework set out in the literature review to be traced across roles and communities.

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[23]Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000); Sopyan, Fauzan, and Fata, 'Religious Harmony, Godly Nationalism, and the Limits of State-Sponsored Interreligious Dialogue Agenda in Indonesia'.

[24]Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1995); Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018).

[25]John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018).

Fieldwork was carried out in Lam Bheu Village (*Gampong* Lam Bheu), Darul Imarah Sub-district, Aceh Besar Regency, between May and June 2026. The village was selected for three reasons, described in the Introduction: it contains a resident non-Muslim population of roughly fifty Catholic and Confucian residents within a total population of about 7,465; the proportion is small enough for the relationship between minority residents, *da'wah* practice, and customary authority to be traced with some precision, yet large enough for interaction between communities to occur as a matter of routine; and the regency's Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) has reported no significant religion-related conflict in recent years. This makes Lam Bheu an instructive rather than a dramatic case, because the mechanisms at work there have not been forced into visibility by crisis and can be observed in their ordinary operation.

Informants were selected by purposive sampling, on the criterion of direct involvement in, or direct experience of, the management of *da'wah* and its social effects.[26] Nine informants took part. Their composition follows the analytical framework set out at the close of the literature review, which distinguishes those who shape *da'wah* content and activity, those who hold customary or administrative authority over the shared social space, and those who live with the effects of *da'wah* from outside the Muslim community. The first group is represented by the mosque imam and the *da'wah* steward; the second by a customary leader and the village head (*keuchik*); the third by one formal representative and one ordinary member of each of the Catholic and Confucian communities. One Muslim resident was also interviewed, so that the everyday reception of *da'wah* among the majority could be checked against the accounts of the two religious office-holders. The informants are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Informants.

No.	Code	Position/Role
1	MI-01	Mosque Imam
2	DMC-02	*Da'wah* Management Committee Member
3	CCR-03	Catholic Community Representative
4	CFR-04	Confucian Community Representative
5	VHO-05	Village Head (*Keuchik* of Lam Bheu)
6	TL-06	Traditional Leader
7	MR-07	Muslim Resident
8	CR-08	Catholic Resident
9	CNR-09	Confucian Resident

Two informants were drawn from each minority community rather than one because the study distinguishes between formal representation and ordinary experience. A community representative speaks in an official capacity and is positioned to describe arrangements and agreements, whereas an ordinary member is positioned to describe how those arrangements are felt in daily life. The two are not interchangeable, and in a study concerned with the distance between the intentions of organizers and the experience of residents, having both was necessary. Only one Muslim resident was interviewed alongside

[26]Ilker Etikan, Sulaiman Abubakar Musa, and Rukayya Sunusi Alkassim, 'Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling', *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics* 5, no. 1 (2016): 1–4, https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11; Lawrence A. Palinkas, Sarah M. Horwitz, Carla A. Green, Jennifer P. Wisdom, Naihua Duan, and Kimberly Hoagwood, 'Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research', *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research* 42, no. 5 (2015): 533–44, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y.

the imam and the *da'wah* steward because the latter two are themselves residents of the village and members of the majority community, and a third Muslim voice would have added redundancy rather than range, since the themes raised by the Muslim resident were already present in the accounts of the two religious office-holders.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation.[27] The interview guide was organized around the study's analytical concerns: the management of *da'wah* and the process by which content and scheduling are decided; the integration of local wisdom into *da'wah* practice; coordination through *musyawarah* (consultative deliberation); *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) as a recurring form of communal participation; the management of religious boundaries in the conduct of religious activity; and the handling of disputes in a religiously mixed community. Questions were adapted to the role and experience of each informant, so that a question put to the imam about how sermon material is chosen was matched, for a Catholic or Confucian informant, by a question about how that material is heard and what, if anything, it changes in everyday relations. Follow-up questions asked for concrete instances rather than general opinion: a particular meeting, a particular decision, a particular episode of friction and how it was settled.

Interviews were conducted in Indonesian, lasted between ten and twenty minutes with an average of about fifteen, and took place at times and locations convenient to informants, usually in or near their homes or places of work. The short duration was a function of two conditions rather than of design. Informants were approached without prior formal arrangement, so interviews had to fit into whatever interval each person could spare, and several were conducted during a break in the working day. The consequence for the material is that interviews yielded concentrated rather than expansive accounts: informants who hold a specific role tend to answer a question about that role directly, and fifteen minutes of focused questioning produced a substantial body of concrete detail even though the exchanges were brief. A further consequence is that no interview was audio-recorded. Informants were asked for verbal consent, and notes were taken in point form during the conversation, recording the substance of answers, the sequence of events where one was described, and the researcher's own observations about emphasis, hesitation, and remarks offered without being solicited. These notes were expanded into full field notes on the same day, while the conversation was still fresh, and it is these expanded notes rather than transcripts that constitute the interview corpus.[28]

Participant observation was carried out during the same two months. The principal event observed was a preparatory meeting for a village religious activity in June 2026, attended by mosque administrators, the *da'wah* steward, a customary leader, and a village official, with attention to how religious and communal activity was arranged, who took part, and how the boundary between social participation and worship was marked in practice. Practices that fell outside the fieldwork period, notably Ramadan 1447 H (February–March 2026), were not observed directly and are reported in the findings as informants' recollections. Field notes were written on the same day. Documentation comprised the village profile and records of joint activities. Where documentation was unavailable, observation notes served the corroborating function that documents would otherwise have performed, and this is stated here rather than left implicit.

[27]Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2015).

[28]Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.[29] Condensation began during fieldwork. The expanded interview notes, field notes, and documents were read repeatedly and marked against the study's analytical foci, with attention to passages in which an informant described a decision, an adjustment, or an incident rather than stating a general view. In the display stage, condensed material was organized into a matrix that set the three communities and the two authority positions against the analytical foci, so that a claim made by one category of informant could be read alongside what other categories said about the same matter. Conclusion drawing proceeded alongside display: preliminary interpretations were tested against the corpus and revised where they failed to account for an observed case, and an interpretation that explained the imam's account but not the Catholic resident's was treated as incomplete rather than as confirmed. Because the corpus consists of expanded notes rather than transcripts, the analytical vocabulary used here is deliberately modest. Claims about what informants said are grounded in notes taken at the time and written up the same day, and quotations in the findings are English renderings of entries recorded in those same-day field notes. This is a limitation of the material and is treated as such rather than disguised.

Source triangulation was applied by cross-referencing the accounts of religious office-holders, customary and village authorities, and members of the three communities, with attention to both consistencies and divergences.[30] Divergences were treated as data rather than as problems, since a difference between how organizers describe an arrangement and how it is experienced by residents is precisely what the framework was designed to detect. The presence of two informants from each minority community made this possible within the minority communities themselves, and not only between minority and majority. Method triangulation compared interview accounts against observation and documentation, so that a claim about how a decision was reached could be checked against whether the activity that resulted was observed as described and whether any written or photographic record corroborated it. These procedures follow the standard of trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry, which locates credibility in sustained engagement, systematic cross-checking, and reflexive attention to the researcher's own position.[31]

The study's chief limitations are its scope and the conditions under which its material was produced. A single village and nine informants cannot support statistical generalization, and none is claimed. The interviews were brief and unrecorded, which limits the precision with which informants' own wording can be reported; quotations in the findings should therefore be read as renderings of field-note entries rather than as verbatim transcripts. Access was negotiated informally rather than through formal institutional channels, which meant that the sample was assembled from those available and willing during the fieldwork period rather than from a pre-established list. What the design supports is analytical generalization: the two mechanisms identified in the literature review can be traced in one setting, and the account is detailed enough to be compared with other settings.[32] How far it travels remains an empirical question.

[29]Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014).

[30]Nancy Carter, Denise Bryant-Lukosius, Alba DiCenso, Jennifer Blythe, and Alan J. Neville, 'The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Research', *Oncology Nursing Forum* 41, no. 5 (2014): 545–47, https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547.

[31]Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE, 1985); Sarah J. Tracy, 'Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 10 (2010): 837–51, https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121.

[32]Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings draw on nine interviews, field observation, and village documentation collected in Lam Bheu Village between May and June 2026. Informant codes correspond to Table 1 in the Method section. The material is organized around the four foci set out at the close of the literature review: the substance of what is preached and how it shifts with social occasion; the decisions about who takes part in shaping *da'wah* and how they are reached; the small, recurring adjustments made in the conduct of religious activity to avoid friction with residents outside the faith; and the way all of this is read by Catholic and Confucian residents. The first two foci correspond principally to the coordination mechanism, the third to the boundary mechanism, and the fourth cuts across both.

Two cautions apply throughout. The article does not claim that *da'wah* management in Lam Bheu has been transformed, since no baseline was collected against which current practice could be compared; where informants drew a contrast with earlier practice, it is reported as their perception. Nor does the evidence support a claim of intensive interfaith engagement. What it supports is narrower: a workable arrangement of coexistence, maintained through continuous attention to where the line between social participation and worship is drawn.

1. Collective Coordination: Planning, Implementation, and the Limits of Evaluation

Da'wah in Lam Bheu is not the work of a single preacher. The imam (MI-01) and the *da'wah* steward (DMC-02) described a division of labour in which sermon themes and the scheduling of religious activity are settled in deliberation attended by mosque administrators, customary leaders, and village officials, with timing arranged so that those carrying other responsibilities can be present. The steward was explicit that planning is not confined to deciding what will be delivered:

> "*Religious activities need to consider the circumstances and needs of the community. Communication among the people involved is important so that activities can be organized properly and do not interfere with other community responsibilities. Planning is not only about deciding what to do, but also about making sure that the activities are useful for the people.*"[33]

The four managerial functions are distributed unevenly. Planning is collective. Organizing falls mainly to the steward, who coordinates logistics, invitations, and the sequence of events. Implementation falls to the imam and those invited to speak, with residents contributing labour and attendance. Evaluation is the least formalized: neither the imam nor the steward described a written instrument or a scheduled review, and assessment happens in conversation afterwards and, more consequentially, in whether people come.

The traditional leader (TL-06) supplied the rationale for why deliberation carries weight:

> "*Musyawarah is important because people have the opportunity to discuss a problem before making a decision. When a disagreement occurs, it is better to hear the people involved and look for a solution that the community can understand. This helps prevent misunderstandings from becoming more serious.*"[34]

[33]Interview with DMC-02, *Da'wah* Management Committee Member, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.

[34]Interview with TL-06, Traditional Leader, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.

Observation at a preparatory meeting for a village religious activity in June 2026 followed the same pattern.[35] Those present included mosque administrators, the steward, a customary leader, and a village official. The imam proposed the theme and the sequence, the steward raised the question of timing in relation to the working day, and the schedule was adjusted in the course of the discussion rather than settled beforehand. No vote was taken and none was needed; the decision emerged from the exchange, and those who had spoken in favour of the adjustment were the ones expected to carry it out.

2. Local Wisdom as Content and as Method

Local values appear in *da'wah* in Lam Bheu in two distinct ways. As content, they are named and recommended. The imam described *da'wah* as extending well beyond the sermon:

> "*For us, da'wah is not only about delivering sermons at the mosque. It is also about reminding people to maintain good relationships with their neighbors, help those in need, and avoid creating problems within the community. Religious teachings should be visible in how we treat other people in everyday life*."[36]

The steward made the connection between local practice and *da'wah* explicit:

> "*Values such as musyawarah and* gotong royong *are already familiar in community life. They can support da'wah because people learn about responsibility and mutual assistance not only through words, but also through activities in which they participate together*."[37]

As method, the same values are enacted rather than recommended. The traditional leader described cooperative labour in these terms:

> "*Gotong royong brings people together through shared work. People may have different religions and backgrounds, but they can still contribute to the same community activity. These encounters help maintain relationships because people get to know one another through their actions, not only through words*."[38]

The Muslim resident (MR-07) described the same relationship from the receiving side:

> "*For me, religious guidance should encourage people to behave well and care about others. Helping a neighbor or participating in gotong royong may seem like an ordinary activity, but it also reflects the values that people learn through religion*."[39]

He also described the ordinary texture of interfaith relations in the village:

> "*In everyday life, we meet our neighbors through ordinary activities, not only through religious events. We can work together, help one another, and attend community activities. These relationships are important because we live in the same village and share responsibilities toward the community*."[40]

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[35]Field observation, preparatory meeting for a village religious activity, Lam Bheu Village, June 2026.
[36]Interview with MI-01, Mosque Imam, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[37]Interview with DMC-02, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[38]Interview with TL-06, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[39]Interview with MR-07, Muslim Resident, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[40]Interview with MR-07, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.

The two modes are co-present, but not equivalent. Not every value named in a sermon is enacted, and not every enacted practice is understood by its participants as religiously significant.

3. Boundary Work: Participation Without Worship

The most consistent finding concerns not what is preached but how religious activity is conducted. Informants across all categories described the same arrangement in closely similar terms, without having been asked to comment on one another's accounts. The Catholic representative (CCR-03) put it as a matter of comfort and limit at once:

> "*We are comfortable participating in community activities such as mutual cooperation and other social events. At the same time, we understand that religious worship has its own boundaries. We can work together as neighbors without having to participate in each other's religious rituals.*"[41]

The same informant described what participation looks like in ordinary circumstances:

> "*Although Catholics are a minority in Lam Bheu, our daily relationships with Muslim residents continue through ordinary community activities. When someone experiences a loss or needs help, we can still show our concern. For us, being different in religion does not mean that we should live separately from our neighbors.*"[42]

The Confucian representative (CFR-04) framed the arrangement in terms of autonomy rather than comfort:

> "*We understand that Muslim residents have their own religious obligations, just as we have our own beliefs. We do not need to take part in another religion's worship to show respect. What matters is that we do not interfere with one another and continue to help each other in matters concerning the wider community.*"[43]

He also described how the arrangement is sustained:

> "*Our numbers are smaller, but we remain part of the village community. Activities such as gotong royong provide opportunities for people from different religious backgrounds to work together. When people meet and cooperate regularly, it becomes easier to maintain trust and understanding.*"[44]

The Catholic resident (CR-08) added the element of identity maintenance. The phrase *baur dalam kemasyarakatan, batas dalam ibadah* (mixing in social affairs, observing limits in worship) is the article's summary of the principle and not a quotation from any informant; the principle itself is stated in informants' own words:

> "*We respect Muslim religious activities, and we also maintain our own religious practices. In social life, we can cooperate and help one another, but we understand that worship belongs to*

[41]Interview with CCR-03, Catholic Community Representative, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[42]Interview with CCR-03, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[43]Interview with CFR-04, Confucian Community Representative, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[44]Interview with CFR-04, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.

each person's religious commitments. For us, respecting this distinction is part of living peacefully together."[45]

"*When there are community activities, we can participate alongside Muslim neighbors. We do not have to share the same religious beliefs to help with something that benefits everyone. These activities give us opportunities to maintain friendships and understand one another better.*"[46]

The Muslim accounts converge on the same line. The imam distinguished the religious activities of each community from the obligation to maintain good relations:

"*The Muslim community has its own religious activities, while Catholic and Confucian residents have their own beliefs and practices. We should carry out our religious responsibilities while maintaining good relations with everyone. Differences in religion should not prevent us from helping one another in community matters.*"[47]

The Catholic representative also described how *da'wah* is perceived from outside the Muslim community:

"*We understand that da'wah is part of Muslim religious life. What matters in our relationships is mutual respect. We respect Muslim religious activities, and we also hope that our own religious practices will be respected. This allows us to maintain good relations without having to set aside our respective beliefs.*"[48]

The Confucian resident (CNR-09) described the arrangement as a matter of belonging rather than tolerance:

"*Even though we belong to a different religion, we are still part of the same village. When there is a community activity, we can contribute according to our ability. Small interactions like these matter because they help people remain connected and avoid unnecessary distance between neighbors.*"[49]

The convergence is not perfect: the Catholic accounts place more emphasis on participation and the Confucian accounts on autonomy. But the boundary itself is described in the same place and in the same terms by informants on both sides. Neither minority informant described resentment, and neither described full inclusion; what they described is a settled arrangement that requires each side to accept a limit on how far participation extends.

The Ramadan material requires a caveat. Ramadan 1447 H fell in February and March 2026, before fieldwork began, so what is reported here are informants' recollections rather than observed practice. The recollections were consistent across categories: non-Muslim informants described Ramadan as a month of worship for Muslims rather than as an imposition, and none reported discomfort with the increased religious activity that accompanies it.

4. Handling Friction: Framing Before Response

The clearest instance of boundary work under strain concerns an episode of late-night noise involving a non-Muslim resident. By the accounts given independently by the

[45]Interview with CR-08, Catholic Resident, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[46]Interview with CR-08, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[47]Interview with MI-01, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[48]Interview with CCR-03, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.
[49]Interview with CNR-09, Confucian Resident, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.

village head (VHO-05) and the Confucian resident (CNR-09), a resident was singing late at night, a neighbour was disturbed, the matter was raised directly with the person concerned, and a warning was given.[50] It was settled there. No formal report was made, no religious framing was applied, and the matter did not recur. The village head described the general approach rather than the specific case: when a resident's behaviour disturbs others, the matter should be addressed directly and considered in terms of the behaviour and its impact on the community rather than immediately treated as a religious problem, and clear communication prevents a small disagreement from becoming a larger one. The Confucian resident described the same logic independently:

> "*If a problem occurs between neighbors, I think it is important to understand what actually happened before connecting it to religion. A problem caused by someone's behavior should be discussed as a problem that needs to be resolved. If people communicate calmly and respect one another, differences do not automatically have to become conflicts*."[51]

The incident was read first as a social infraction, and the reading adopted shaped both the response and its brevity. The same reading was applied independently by the village head and by a member of a minority community, from different positions and without coordination between them.

Discussion

The findings do not support the claim that *da'wah* management in Lam Bheu has been transformed, and the article does not advance it. What they support is a claim about how coexistence is organized in a religiously mixed village, in three parts: *da'wah* management is a collectively coordinated practice, local wisdom operates within it as both content and method, and the practice is sustained by continuous boundary work rather than by shared conviction. Each part engages a different strand of the literature reviewed earlier: the first extends an existing argument, the second corrects it, and the third specifies a configuration it does not ordinarily cover.

1. Coordination Without Openness: Extending the Participatory Turn

The coordination described in Lam Bheu confirms the shift from unilateral transmission to negotiated practice that participatory communication theory describes: content is proposed, discussed, and adjusted, and the meeting is where the substance of *da'wah* is formed rather than merely approved.[52] The steward's account of planning as a matter of judging usefulness rather than settling doctrine supports this reading, and the traditional leader's account of *musyawarah* as a mechanism for preventing misunderstanding gives it a rationale that is local rather than imported. The two accounts are not the same account: the steward describes a planning function, the traditional leader a conflict-prevention function, and the fact that both are performed in the same meeting is part of what makes the arrangement effective.

But the same coordination illustrates the criticism that participation is not automatically open.[53] Deliberation distributes ownership of a decision; it does not guarantee that the decision was open. The agenda is set by those with standing to set it, and the imam's proposal carries weight that a resident's would not. The observation that no vote was taken and none was needed could be read as evidence of consensus, and it

[50]Interviews with VHO-05, Village Head (*Keuchik*), and CNR-09, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.

[51]Interview with CNR-09, Lam Bheu Village, May–June 2026.

[52]Servaes, *Communication for Development*; Tufte and Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*.

[53]Cornwall, 'Buzzwords and Fuzzwords: Deconstructing Development Discourse'.

could equally be read as evidence that the meeting was not structured to produce disagreement. The evidence does not permit a choice between these readings. What it does permit is the observation that the meeting's authority rests on the presence of those with standing rather than on the count of those present. Participation in Lam Bheu is therefore real but bounded, and the question to ask of a village is not whether a meeting occurs but what the meeting is able to decide.

2. Two Entries of Local Wisdom: Correcting the Inheritance Assumption

The second part refines the concept of *da'wah bil-hal* (*da'wah* through deeds) by separating two modes the literature tends to conflate. Local wisdom appears in Lam Bheu as sermon content and as enacted method: the first persuades, the second demonstrates. The imam's statement that religious teaching should be "visible in how we treat other people" and the traditional leader's observation that people come to know one another "through their actions, not only through words" describe the same distinction from different positions. Both describe a *da'wah* that is accountable to observation, and both locate accountability in conduct rather than in profession.

The finding also supports the repertoire position over the inheritance position set out in the literature review.[54] Local values were not simply present and available; they were selected, named, and connected to religious teaching by identifiable actors for identifiable purposes, the imam in his sermons and the steward in organizing *gotong royong*. The steward's statement that these values "can support *da'wah*" is a statement of strategy rather than of inheritance. This is a modest but consequential correction to accounts that treat local wisdom as a cultural stock on which *da'wah* draws automatically, and it makes the claim that *da'wah* is culturally contextualized testable rather than merely asserted. The inheritance position also makes it hard to explain why some villages with strong local traditions do not develop contextualized *da'wah*, whereas the repertoire position makes that variation intelligible: the values are available, but they must be selected.

3. The Boundary as a Joint Achievement

The third part carries the article's principal theoretical contribution. The arrangement informants describe, cooperation in social life and separation in worship, is a configuration the literature on symbolic boundaries anticipates but has not documented in this setting. Boundaries are markers whose significance depends on how they are handled rather than on the marker itself.[55] The Lam Bheu evidence shows a community in which markers of religious difference are actively placed and paced, and in which the placement is the subject of shared expectation rather than unilateral imposition. The point at which participation in a celebration stops short of worship, the readiness of a minority resident to help without taking part in ritual, and the scheduling of an activity so that a neighbour can attend are each a decision made with reference to a boundary that both sides can describe in the same terms. The Catholic representative's formulation ("we can work together as neighbors without having to participate in each other's religious rituals") and the imam's ("differences in religion should not prevent us from helping one another in community matters") are not identical statements, but they locate the same line in the same place. That mutual describability is the finding: the boundary is not a line one community draws and the other experiences, but a jointly maintained arrangement that requires each side to accept a limit.

This differs from the asymmetric pattern often described in the boundary literature, in which one group draws a line and another is placed on the far side of it. In Lam Bheu

[54]Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital'; Lederach, *Preparing for Peace*.
[55]Lamont and Molnár, 'The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences'.

the line is drawn by both groups in the same place, and the drawing is the work of maintaining a relationship rather than of establishing a difference. It may be a specifically Acehnese use of the concept, since the relationship between *adat* (custom) and religion in Aceh has long been one of complementarity rather than separation.[56] The article does not claim that the arrangement is typical of Aceh, only that it is one the concept of boundary work can describe.

The configuration is also interesting for a second reason: standard applications of participatory communication theory do not accommodate it. Participation here is genuine but deliberately partial, extending across the social domain and stopping at the domain of worship, and the stopping point is maintained by agreement rather than by exclusion. The theory is usually developed for a constituency that shares the premises of the project, whereas in Lam Bheu the participants do not share those premises and participation proceeds anyway.[57] The case therefore specifies a form the theory does not ordinarily cover: participation in the social dimension of a religiously organized activity by people who are not participants in the religion. Whether this is a general extension or a locally specific arrangement is a question for comparative work.

4. Conflict Handling as Interpretive Practice

The handling of the noise episode supports a claim about conflict that is narrower than transformation and more precise than harmony. In the terms set out in the literature review, what occurred was management, not transformation: a bounded dispute contained through immediate face-to-face communication, without escalation and without altering the underlying relationship.[58] The analytically significant feature is the framing. The incident was read as a social infraction before it was read as anything else, and the same reading was applied independently by the village head and by a minority resident, from different positions and without coordination.

This suggests that de-escalation, often described in the literature on interfaith relations as a general disposition, may be better understood as a specific interpretive practice applied at the moment a dispute arises and applied consistently enough to function as a norm. The Confucian resident's formulation, understanding what happened before connecting it to religion, is a procedure, and procedures are more portable than dispositions: they can be described to others, invoked in the moment, and evaluated by whether they were followed. A norm held only by the majority would be a form of forbearance, which can be withdrawn unilaterally; a norm held by both sides is a form of cooperation, which cannot, because it depends on both parties continuing to act in the same way. Whether the practice would hold under a more serious provocation is not something this evidence can establish.

5. What Kind of Coexistence

These findings also bear on how the outcomes of religiously mixed coexistence are described. What Lam Bheu exhibits is not harmony in the strong sense of active engagement across traditions, nor moderation in the sense of a calibrated religious discourse. It is a coexistence in which tolerance, the willingness of non-Muslim residents to live alongside *da'wah* they do not share, is combined with a cohesion sustained by shared social activity, and in which the two are kept from collapsing into one another by

[56]Hariadi, Katimin, Samosir, Amelia, Liasna, and Fajarini, 'Adat Bak Poteu Meureuhom and Hukom Bak Syiah Kuala'.

[57]Tufte and Mefalopulos, *Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide*.

[58]Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*; Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*.

continuous boundary work.[59] The distinction explains why a national harmony index can rise while the practices that produce coexistence remain invisible: an index registers that people report tolerance without registering that they have agreed on where a boundary lies, and it is the agreement rather than the report that does the work.[60]

The arrangement is also fragile. It depends on the continued operation of deliberation, on the willingness of minority residents to participate in social activity from which they are excluded in worship, and on the willingness of religious office-holders to treat behavioural problems as behavioural rather than religious. None of these is guaranteed; each is a practice rather than a structure, and practices can lapse.

6. Limitations and the Scope of the Claim

The article's limitations follow from the same considerations. A single village, nine informants, brief and unrecorded interviews, and a fieldwork period of two months cannot establish how far these mechanisms travel or how stable they are under pressure. The evidence on friction rests on one episode, and the evidence on non-Muslim experience, though drawn from two communities, is small. The claim is correspondingly modest: it does not hold that local-wisdom-based *da'wah* management is an effective instrument of peacebuilding in general, nor that Lam Bheu is a model other villages should adopt. It holds that the arrangement can be described, that the description identifies mechanisms the literature on *da'wah* management, local wisdom, boundary work, and participatory communication has not brought together, and that it is specific enough to be compared with other cases.

CONCLUSION

This article asked how local wisdom is integrated into the management of *da'wah* in Lam Bheu Village (*Gampong* Lam Bheu), and how that integration functions as a mechanism of peacebuilding among the village's Muslim, Catholic, and Confucian residents. The answers the evidence supports are more specific than the questions suggest, and narrower than the vocabulary of harmony tends to imply. Local wisdom enters *da'wah* through two doors. As content, it is named and recommended from the pulpit: neighbourly conduct, mutual assistance, and the obligations of living alongside people of a different faith. As method, it is enacted through activities in which residents participate together, such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), condolence visits, and village festivities. The two do different work: content explains why an activity is religiously significant, and method makes that significance visible to people who never heard the sermon. The integration functions as a peacebuilding mechanism through two interlocking practices. The first is collective coordination: decisions about what is preached and when it is delivered are reached through *musyawarah* (consultative deliberation) among the imam, the *da'wah* steward, customary leaders, and village officials. The second is boundary work: religious activity is conducted along a line that informants on both sides of the religious boundary describe in the same terms, cooperation in social life and separation in worship. The line is not imposed by the majority on the minority but maintained jointly, and the handling of a late-night noise episode, read first as a social infraction by both the village head and a minority resident, shows the same logic under mild strain.

The article's contribution lies in bringing these practices together under a description the existing literature does not supply. Studies of *da'wah* management have described a shift from unilateral transmission to negotiated practice but have assumed a religiously

[59]Putnam, *Bowling Alone*; Sopyan, Fauzan, and Fata, 'Religious Harmony, Godly Nationalism, and the Limits of State-Sponsored Interreligious Dialogue Agenda in Indonesia'.

[60]'Minister Highlights Harmony as Foundation for Indonesia's Development', ANTARA News.

homogeneous audience. Studies of local wisdom have treated *musyawarah* and *gotong royong* as inherited resources rather than as a repertoire from which actors select. Studies of symbolic boundaries have concentrated on organized interfaith activity rather than on the routine adjustments of village life, and participatory communication theory has theorized participation within a constituency that shares the premises of the project. The configuration documented here, in which non-Muslim residents take part in the social dimension of religiously organized activity without taking part in the religion, is a modest extension of the theory's range. Two clarifications follow for how similar cases are described. Lam Bheu exhibits neither harmony in the strong sense of active engagement across traditions nor moderation in the sense of a calibrated religious discourse, but a combination of tolerance and a cohesion sustained by shared social activity, kept from collapsing into one another by continuous boundary work. And the arrangement is a set of practices rather than a structure, which means it can lapse: it depends on the continued operation of deliberation, on the willingness of minority residents to participate in activity from which they are excluded in worship, and on the willingness of religious office-holders to treat behavioural problems as behavioural problems. For religious leaders, customary authorities, and village administrators, the implication is not that Lam Bheu offers a model to be adopted, but that the practices sustaining coexistence there are ordinary enough to be considered elsewhere.

These conclusions are bounded by the evidence. A single village, nine informants, brief and unrecorded interviews, and a fieldwork period of two months support an analytical description, not a generalization, and the evidence on friction rests on one episode. Comparative work across other religiously mixed villages in Aceh, particularly villages where the minority is larger or where customary and religious institutions are weaker, would establish whether boundary-conscious *da'wah* management is a local arrangement or a more widely available one. Longitudinal observation would show whether the practices persist across changes in religious leadership and in the composition of the minority communities, and research attentive to digital communication and generational change, which this study could not examine, would show whether the small, repeated adjustments that sustain the arrangement are as durable as they currently appear. Until such work is done, the most that can be said is that coexistence in a religiously mixed Acehnese village is produced, maintained, and made describable by practices that are neither dramatic nor inevitable.

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