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## Intergenerational Communication Patterns in Maintaining the Existence of Selapanan Recitation in Purworejo

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### Abstract

Communication as a means of transmitting values, traditions, and religious identities in society, especially in maintaining the sustainability of traditional religious activities such as selapanan recitation involving various age groups. The background of the research shows that the difference in communication characteristics between the older generation and the younger generation in the digital era has the potential to cause a communication gap that can affect the sustainability of traditions. The purpose of this study is to analyze and describe the intergenerational communication pattern that occurs between religious leaders, the older generation, and Generation Z in maintaining the existence of the Selapanan Recitation in Tepus Hamlet, Somorejo Village. The research uses a qualitative research type with a socio-psychological communication approach to examine intergenerational communication patterns in maintaining the existence of selapanan recitation activities in society. This study employs a case study method through participatory observation, interviews, and documentation to explore the social interactions, communication behaviors, and meaning-making processes that occur between generations within the recitation activities. The collected data are analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Furthermore, this research applies Herbert Blumer's Symbolic Interaction Theory to analyze how religious values, cultural traditions, and social meanings are constructed and transmitted through communication processes among the older generation, middle generation, and younger generation in the selapanan recitation tradition. The results of the study show that the sustainability of the selapanan recitation is strongly influenced by dialogical, participatory, and multidirectional communication patterns, where the older generation acts as the guardian of religious values and traditions, while the younger generation plays a role as an agent of adaptation who helps maintain the relevance of the tradition amid social and technological changes in modern society. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that open and inclusive intergenerational communication creates a balance between preserving tradition and adapting to social change, allowing the selapanan recitation to remain relevant as a spiritual and social space for the community. This study also contributes to the development of socio-cultural communication studies by showing that Symbolic Interaction Theory can be used to understand how local religious traditions are maintained through intergenerational communication in the midst of modernization and digital transformation.



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**Keywords**

intergenerational communication; Selapanan; Symbolic Interaction

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology and social changes in modern society have transformed patterns of communication between generations, including in maintaining the continuity of local religious traditions such as the selapanan Islamic study gathering in Tepus Hamlet, Somorejo Village, Purworejo. Differences in communication styles between the older generation, who tend to maintain traditional patterns, and the younger generation, who are more adaptive to digital media, create unique challenges in the process of transmitting religious and cultural values. In various countries, the development of digital technology and changes in modern lifestyles also influence how younger generations perceive traditions, culture, and religious activities. The phenomenon of declining youth involvement in socio-religious activities has become a global issue occurring in many places, including religious communities in Asia, Europe, and other developing countries (Tapscott, 2009).

In this context, the selapanan Islamic study gathering in Tepus Hamlet becomes an interesting subject of study because it has been able to maintain its existence through intergenerational communication patterns that remain open, participatory, and adaptive to changing times. The selapanan gathering is not only a space for worship but also a medium of social interaction that brings together the older generation, the middle generation, and the younger generation within one religious community. This tradition demonstrates that the sustainability of religious activities is not only influenced by the strength of the religious values being taught but also by the community's ability to build communication capable of bridging differences in perspectives between generations (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019).

The persistence of the selapanan gathering amid the flow of modernization indicates that intergenerational communication plays an important role in preserving the continuity of community religious traditions. However, differences in communication characteristics between older and younger generations often create gaps in understanding during the transmission of religious and cultural values. The older generation generally uses communication patterns that are more formal, hierarchical, and centered on the authority of religious leaders. Meanwhile, the younger generation prefers communication that is open, fast, and interactive through the development of digital media (Muntaha & Saifudin, 2025). These conditions can affect the process of transmitting religious traditions if

communication capable of creating a space for dialogue between generations is not established (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

In the selapanan gathering in Tepus Hamlet, intergenerational communication can be seen through the involvement of all age groups in the study activities. The older generation acts as the guardian of values and the transmitter of religious teachings, while the middle generation plays a role in managing activities and maintaining the continuity of the study organization. On the other hand, the younger generation has begun participating in various technical activities such as documentation, information dissemination, and assisting in the implementation of the study gathering. This shows that the continuity of tradition is maintained not only through religious sermons but also through ongoing social interactions within the community (Ikhwan, 2019).

Research on intergenerational communication within religious traditions has developed extensively in various countries, particularly concerning social changes caused by modernization and the development of digital technology. Tapscott explains that younger generations who grow up in the digital era possess communication characteristics that are faster, more open, and more interactive compared to previous generations (Tapscott, 2009). Studies by Littlejohn and Foss also emphasize that communication is not merely a process of delivering messages but also a process of constructing social meaning in community life (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). In the context of religious traditions, communication becomes an important medium for maintaining social solidarity and preserving a community's cultural identity.

Hefni's research on dakwah communication in urban majelis taklim shows that communication patterns within religious communities often occur in a one-way manner, where religious leaders become the center of message delivery while congregation members act as information recipients (Hefni, 2017). Similarly, Ikhwan states that the sustainability of religious communities is influenced by the effectiveness of internal communication in maintaining community member participation (Ikhwan, 2019). However, research on intergenerational communication patterns in preserving local religious traditions remains relatively limited, especially within traditional religious study communities based on local culture.

In global studies, Campbell explains that the development of digital media has transformed patterns of religious practice in modern society, including in building social relations between generations within religious spaces (Campbell, 2013). Hoover also mentions that digital media has made younger generations more active in seeking religious understanding through virtual communication

spaces rather than relying solely on traditional religious authorities (Hoover, 2006). These conditions indicate that religious communities need to develop communication patterns that are more open and adaptive so that religious traditions can continue to be accepted by younger generations amid the progress of the times (Muhammad et al., 2024).

In addition, Putnam explains that declining social interaction in modern society can weaken social solidarity and community participation in collective activities (Putnam, 2000). In the context of local traditions, this condition becomes a challenge for religious communities in preserving traditions inherited from generation to generation. Therefore, intergenerational communication becomes an important factor in maintaining the continuity of traditions and strengthening community social relations.

The relationship between religion and local culture is also explained by Hidayat and Khalika, who state that religious traditions in Indonesia have developed through a process of dialogue between Islamic teachings and local community culture (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019). Azra also explains that Islamic practices in Indonesia possess characteristics that are adaptive to local culture, resulting in distinctive forms of religious traditions within society (Azra, 2013). The selapanan study gathering tradition is one form of integration between religious values and local culture that survives through the process of social communication between generations.

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, Blumer explains that the meaning of a tradition is formed through ongoing social interaction within society (Blumer, 1969). The selapanan gathering is not only a place for delivering religious teachings but also a space for exchanging social, cultural, and spiritual meanings between generations. Through dialogical and participatory communication, communities can preserve the symbolic meaning of tradition so that it remains relevant to younger generations amid modern social changes.

Based on these various phenomena and studies, it can be understood that intergenerational communication plays an important role in preserving the continuity of local religious traditions amid social changes in modern society. This research was conducted to understand how communication patterns are built between the older generation, the middle generation, and the younger generation in the selapanan gathering in Tepus Hamlet, Somorejo Village, so that the tradition remains sustainable and relevant amid technological developments and social changes within society.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a socio-psychological communication approach to deeply understand the intergenerational communication patterns in maintaining the existence of the Selapanan study group in Tepus Hamlet, Somorejo Village. The socio-psychological communication approach is used because this study focuses on the interaction process, meaning, attitudes, and social responses that emerge in intergenerational communication within the study group environment. This approach helps researchers understand how individuals from different generations build communication relationships, interpret religious values, and maintain traditions through ongoing social interactions (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Qualitative research was chosen because it does not aim to measure phenomena through numbers, but rather to understand social experiences, communication behaviors, and the meanings that emerge naturally in community life (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the socio-psychological communication approach is not a distinct method from qualitative research, but rather part of the analytical perspective or perspective used in qualitative research to examine how psychological and social aspects influence intergenerational communication processes in selapanan religious study activities (West & Turner, 2010).

This study also uses a case study as a research strategy because the focus of the research is directed at a specific social phenomenon, namely intergenerational communication patterns in selapanan religious study activities in Tepus Hamlet. Through this case study, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the forms of interaction, social relationship patterns, and communication processes that occur within the religious study community (Yin, 2018).

The theory used to analyze the phenomena in this research is Symbolic Interaction Theory, proposed by Herbert Blumer. This theory is used because the research focuses on the intergenerational communication process in maintaining the selapanan religious study tradition through social interactions within the community. Symbolic interactionism views social meaning as being formed through the communication process and exchange of symbols carried out by individuals in everyday life (Blumer, 1969).

In the context of this research, selapanan religious study is understood not only as a religious activity but also as a social interaction space where the older (Ngajibullah & Khafidhoh, 2023), middle, and younger generations build a shared understanding of religious values, culture, and tradition. Religious symbols such as the recitation of Quranic verses, the use of the Javanese calendar to determine the timing of selapanan, the delivery of religious advice, and community involvement in religious study

activities are part of the process of constructing social meaning within the community (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Symbolic interaction theory also helps explain how intergenerational communication can create a sustainable process of passing on values and traditions. The older generation acts as a transmitter of religious values and symbols, while the younger generation interprets and adapts the meaning of traditions to current developments and social changes. Through this interaction process, the tradition of selapanan religious studies remains and remains relevant in modern society (West & Turner, 2010).

**Research instruments** In qualitative research, it is basically the researcher himself who plays the role of the main instrument in the process of data collection and analysis. The researcher functions as an observer, interviewer, as well as an interpreter of the meaning that emerges from the observed social interaction (Scott, 2019). In addition, this study also uses several supporting instruments such as interview guidelines, field notes, and documentation of selapanan recitation activities to assist in the data collection process.

**Data collection techniques** In this study, it was carried out through three main methods, namely observation, interview, and documentation. Observations were carried out to directly observe the interaction process that occurred in the selapanan recitation activities, especially in seeing the patterns of communication between generations that took place in it. Interviews were conducted with religious leaders, recitation administrators, and worshippers from various age groups to obtain more in-depth information about their experiences and views regarding the recitation activities. Meanwhile, documentation is carried out by collecting various supporting data such as photos of activities, archives of recitation activities, and records related to the implementation of the recitation of the selapanan (Creswell, 2014).

**Data analysis techniques** in this study, an interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman was used which included three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction is carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying the data obtained from the field. Furthermore, the data that has been reduced is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative so that it is easier for researchers to understand the patterns of relationships that appear in the data. The last stage is the drawing of conclusions that are carried out continuously during the research process until a comprehensive understanding of intergenerational communication patterns is obtained in maintaining the existence of the recitation of selapanan.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### *3.1. Dynamics of the Implementation of Selapanan Recitation in Somorejo Village*

Selapanan religious study in Somorejo Village is a religious activity that is carried out every 35 days on Legi Tuesday based on the Javanese calendar. This activity has been going on for generations and has become part of the religious tradition of the local community. In practice, this recitation is attended by various age groups, ranging from the older generation, the middle generation, to the younger generation. Recitation activities usually begin with the reading of prayers, followed by the reading of the holy verses of the Qur'an, the delivery of religious materials by religious leaders, and closed with a joint prayer. In addition, this activity is also often accompanied by social interaction between worshippers, such as light discussions about daily life problems and community social activities.

Existence pengajian Selapanan not only functions as a means of religious education, but also as a social communication medium that strengthens relationships between members of the community. Through this activity, the community can exchange information, strengthen social relations, and maintain the sustainability of traditional values that have been inherited by previous generations. This shows that recitation activities not only have a religious dimension, but also an important social dimension in people's lives (Madjid, 2002).

#### *3.2. Intergenerational Communication Patterns in Selapanan Studies*

Based on the results of the research, it was found that the pattern of intergenerational communication in the recitation of the selapanan in Somorejo Village is dialogical and participatory. Each generation has a different role in maintaining the sustainability of these activities. In the selapanan religious study group in Tepus Hamlet, intergenerational communication patterns are not rigid and one-way, but develop through dialogical and participatory social relationships. The older generation, which generally consists of religious leaders and community elders, holds a crucial position as guardians of traditional values and sources of religious authority. They not only convey religious material but also serve as moral symbols and social role models for the community. Through lectures, advice, and daily interactions, the older generation strives to instill religious values while maintaining the selapanan tradition as part of the village's social identity (Ikhwan, 2019).

However, in practice, the sustainability of the selapanan study group is not solely determined by the dominance of the older generation. The middle generation plays a strategic role as a bridge between

traditional values and the social needs of modern society. They are responsible for managing activities, organizing the study group, and maintaining active community participation. The presence of the middle generation demonstrates that traditions cannot survive solely through symbolic transmission of values but also require social management that can adapt to changing times (Putnam, 2000).

Conversely, the involvement of the younger generation demonstrates the process of adapting traditions to social and technological developments. The younger generation is no longer merely passive listeners during religious study sessions, but has begun to participate in documenting activities, disseminating information through social media, and even assisting with event implementation. This situation indicates that the Selapanan religious study tradition is undergoing changes in the way it is disseminated and implemented. Traditions are no longer maintained solely through conventional communication patterns, but are beginning to adapt to digital communication patterns that are more relevant to the lives of the younger generation (Campbell, 2013).

The communication patterns formed in Selapanan religious studies demonstrate the simultaneous existence of vertical, horizontal, and participatory communication. Vertical communication is evident when religious leaders convey teachings and advice to the congregation. Meanwhile, horizontal communication is evident through interactions between congregants in community social activities. This also includes participatory communication that allows each generation to participate in maintaining the tradition. This pattern demonstrates that the success of maintaining Selapanan religious studies is not only due to strong religious values, but also to the existence of open communication between generations (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

From a symbolic interaction perspective, Selapanan religious studies serve as a space for the exchange of social and religious meanings that is continuously developed through community interaction. The use of symbols such as the recitation of Quranic verses, the determination of time based on the Javanese calendar, and the tradition of gathering in religious study forums have meanings that are not only religious but also strengthen the cultural identity of local communities. These symbols are understood and passed down through ongoing communication between generations (Blumer, 1969). Therefore, the continuity of the Selapanan study group essentially demonstrates that religious traditions can survive if the community is able to build adaptive, open, and relevant communication to current social changes.

### ***3.3. Comparison of the Implementation of Selapanan in Somorejo Village with Other Places***

When compared to the implementation of selapanan recitation in several religious organizations or other communities, there are several differences in the pattern of implementation. Some studies show that recitation activities in formal religious organizations tend to be more structured and hierarchical. For example, research conducted by Ikhwan (2019) in *the Journal of Islamic Communication* shows that da'wah communication in formal religious organizations often takes place top-down, where religious leaders or organizational leaders become the center of message delivery, while congregations play more roles as message recipients. This type of communication pattern places the leader as the main source of authority in the process of conveying religious information.

Similar findings were also described in the study (Hefni, 2017) which examines da'wah communication in the urban taklim council. The research shows that in some formal recitation communities, da'wah activities often take place in one direction, where the preacher delivers lecture material systematically without much direct interaction with the congregation. This type of communication model tends to position worshippers as passive audiences who receive religious information without much room for dialogue.

In contrast to these findings, the recitation of the eight in Somorejo Village showed a more general and participatory communication pattern. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted in this study, pilgrims not only played the role of listeners, but also actively engaged in social interaction during the activity. This interaction can be seen from informal discussions after the delivery of study materials, conversations between congregations about daily life, and the involvement of the younger generation in various activities to support study activities. This type of communication pattern reflects a more dialogical and inclusive form of communication in the village community (Rakhmat, 1989).

In addition, the recitation of the selapanan in Somorejo Village also has different characteristics because of the strong elements of local wisdom that are integrated with the religious practices of the community. The selapanan tradition carried out based on the Javanese calendar shows the integration between local culture and Islamic religious practices. This is in line with the concept of cultural Islam that developed in the people of the archipelago, where religious values interact with local culture and produce distinctive religious practices in people's lives (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019). Research on cultural Islamic practices is also explained by Azra (2013) who states that the development of Islam in Indonesia cannot be separated from the process of dialogue between religious teachings and local traditions of the community.

Thus, the comparison between the recitation of the selapanan in Somorejo Village and the practice of recitation in several formal religious organizations shows that there is a difference in the communication pattern used. If in formal organizations the communication pattern tends to be structural and one-way, then in the recitation of the selapanan in Somorejo Village, the communication pattern is more participatory and community-based. This communication pattern allows for more intense social interaction between worshippers so as to strengthen social solidarity while maintaining the continuity of religious traditions in the community.

### ***3.4. Actualization of Symbolic Interaction in Selapanan Studies***

From the perspective of symbolic interaction theory, the activity of recitation can be understood as a process of exchanging meanings that occurs through social and religious symbols used by the community in their interactions. According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interaction emphasizes that humans act towards something based on the meaning that something has, and that meaning is formed through the process of social interaction. In the context of the recitation of the prayer in Somorejo Village, religious symbols are used by religious leaders as a medium of conveying moral, spiritual, and social messages to worshippers from various generations.

The symbolic actualization of the Selapanan religious study in Tepus Hamlet is not only evident through the implementation of religious activities, but also through the various social and religious symbols used in intergenerational communication. From a symbolic interaction perspective, these symbols have meanings that are constructed and understood collectively by the community through ongoing interactions. Selapanan religious study becomes a space where the community not only receives religious teachings but also interprets cultural values, social identity, and intergenerational relationships through the symbols present in these activities (Blumer, 1969).

One of the most visible symbols is the use of Legi Tuesday as the fixed schedule for religious study. The determination of time based on the Javanese calendar demonstrates that the community's religious traditions are inseparable from the influence of local culture, which has been passed down through generations. In this context, time is understood not only as a marker of routine activities but also as a symbol of the preservation of Javanese cultural identity, integrated with Islamic religious practices. The use of the Javanese calendar in religious study activities demonstrates the harmonious process of cultural and religious acculturation within the community (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019). This tradition also demonstrates that the community does not view local culture as incompatible with religion, but rather as a social and spiritual medium for maintaining community unity.

Beyond symbolizing time, the presence of congregants from various age groups also holds significant symbolic significance in the community's social life. The gathering of older, middle, and younger generations in a single religious study forum demonstrates the existence of a communication space that allows for the direct transmission of values. The interactions that occur within the study forum are not only related to the delivery of religious material, but also serve as a means of sharing life experiences, social advice, and fostering community solidarity. In this context, the selapanan study group functions as a social space that maintains intergenerational connections amidst changes in modern lifestyles that tend toward individualism (Madjid, 2002).

Religious symbolism is also evident in the use of the Quran as the primary source for delivering religious material. For the community, the recitation and explanation of Quranic verses are not only understood as acts of worship but also as symbols of religious authority that legitimize the messages conveyed by religious figures. Through verses from the Quran, religious leaders build the congregation's trust while instilling moral values deemed relevant to the community's daily lives (Nasr, 2003). From a symbolic communication perspective, the use of Quranic verses demonstrates that religious messages possess symbolic power that can influence how communities understand their social and spiritual realities.

In addition to the Quran, the use of hadith, *ijma'*, and *qiyas* in delivering religious teachings also has strong symbolic significance. Hadith are used as symbols of the Prophet Muhammad's exemplary behavior in everyday life, enabling the congregation to understand moral values through concrete examples. Meanwhile, *ijma'* is understood as a symbol of consensus among scholars, demonstrating that the teachings conveyed have a collective basis in the Islamic scholarly tradition. The use of *qiyas* also demonstrates that religious teachings can be explained rationally and contextually in accordance with developments in modern society (Hallaq, 2009). This is important because the younger generation tends to be more receptive to religious teachings conveyed through a logical approach and relevant to the social realities they face.

Religious figures in Selapanan religious studies often use stories of the prophets as a medium for conveying moral messages. Tales of the prophets' struggles, patience, and exemplary behavior serve as symbols of moral education that are easily understood by people of all ages and educational backgrounds. These stories not only serve as preaching material but also possess emotional power that can build psychological closeness between religious figures and congregations (Azra, 2013). Through these narrative symbols, religious values are more easily accepted and remembered by the community because they are conveyed in the form of concrete life experiences that touch on everyday life. Dari

berbagai simbol tersebut terlihat bahwa pengajian selapanan tidak hanya menjadi kegiatan ritual keagamaan, tetapi juga menjadi ruang pembentukan makna sosial dan budaya dalam masyarakat.

The symbols used in religious studies help people understand the relationship between religion, culture, and social life more contextually. The symbolic communication process that occurs within them also demonstrates that the continuity of religious traditions is greatly influenced by the community's ability to maintain their symbolic meaning amidst modern social change. Thus, selapanan religious studies not only serve to preserve religious values but also serve as an important medium for maintaining social identity and intergenerational solidarity within the community (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Through the use of these various symbols, the selapanan recitation activity is not only a forum for the delivery of religious information, but also a space for the construction of social and spiritual meaning for the community. The symbols used in the delivery of messages by religious leaders help the congregation in understanding Islamic teachings in a more contextual way and strengthen the religious identity of the community. Thus, the symbolic interaction that occurs in the recitation of the selapanan plays an important role in maintaining the sustainability of religious traditions while strengthening social relations between generations in society (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; Blumer, 1969).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The sustainability of the Selapanan religious study group in Tepus Hamlet is maintained not only through routine religious activities but also through intergenerational communication patterns that are dialogical, participatory, and adaptive to social change. The differences in communication styles between the older and younger generations do not hinder the process of transmitting religious values, but rather form a complementary communication relationship. The older generation plays the role of guardian of religious values and traditions, while the younger generation plays a role in adapting traditions to technological developments and the social needs of modern society.

The findings of this study demonstrate that intergenerational communication is a key factor in maintaining the existence of local religious traditions amidst the currents of modernization and digitalization. Selapanan religious study not only serves as a spiritual space but also as a medium for building social solidarity, exchanging cultural meanings, and strengthening community identity. Using a socio-psychological communication approach and symbolic interaction analysis, this study found that the sustainability of religious traditions is significantly influenced by the community's ability to construct shared meaning through open and inclusive social interactions. Thus, this research contributes to the development of socio-religious communication studies, particularly in understanding

how local traditions can survive through intergenerational communication amidst changing times.

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