

## Research Article

## **Communication Exclusivity in Disseminating Local Sufism to Wetu Telu Islamic Community in Kayangan Village, Kayangan District, North Lombok**

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### **Abstract**

Exclusive communication is one of the techniques or methods used by the Sasak community (Lombok tribe, NTB) in maintaining the values and norms contained in each of its teachings known as Islam Wetu Telu, which in the scientific tradition of Sufism is known as local Sufism, namely Sufism which has adapted to local wisdom. The objectives of this study are: a) to determine the causes of communication exclusivity in the spread of local Sufism in the Wetu Telu Islamic community in Rebakong Hamlet, Kayangan Village; b) to find out how the process of exclusivity of communication in the dissemination of local Sufism teachings of Islam Wetu Telu in Rebakong Hamlet, Kayangan Village; c) to find out the supporting and inhibiting factors in the exclusivity of communication that occurs in the environment of Wetu Telu Muslims who spread local Sufism teachings. While in data collection using documentation, interviews and observations. And testing the credibility of its data using triangulation. The results of this study are: a) the causes of exclusivity of communication in the Wetu Telu Islamic community include: (1) confidentiality of local Sufism content that should not be disseminated publicly, (2) maintaining existing local wisdom, (3) maintaining previously believed values. b) The process of spreading local Sufism is only carried out to the Jama'ah. The study carried out is not bound by schedule and usually before conducting the study, the character begins with



small talk so that pilgrims who study local Sufism teachings have no difficulty and quickly understand the teachings. c) Factors supporting the exclusivity of communication in the dissemination of local Sufism teachings include high motivation of local Sufism disseminators to continue to spread these teachings. In addition, there is encouragement and enthusiasm given by pilgrims, the surrounding community, and even government agencies. There are inhibiting factors such as false accusations of local Sufism and conflicts that lead to social exclusion.

**Keywords:** Communication Exclusivity, Local Sufism, Islam Wetu Telu

## **A. Background**

Lombok Island as well as Java Island is known to have a variety of religions and beliefs that developed and flourished before Islam set foot on this island of "a thousand mosques". The customs, culture and rituals "performed" by the Sasaki reflect previous religions and beliefs, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Animism, and Dynamism.

When Islam was first spread on the island of Lombok through Sunan Prapen in the 17th century, it did not directly justify and mislead the beliefs or customs that were already applicable to the Sasak people at that time. Sunan Prapen himself looks more at the inner (read: esoteric) side of the beliefs or customs adopted by the Sasak people, so he preaches more religious messages through the context of Sufism.

This later gave birth to a belief system that acculturated between culture and religion. That belief until now we know as Islam Wetu Telu.

Broadly speaking, Islam is spread through two approaches, namely the shari'a approach and the Sufism approach.<sup>4</sup> Usually, the teachings of shari'a are spread to the general public rather than to the community individually, such as prayer, hajj, zakat, and others. But it is different from the spread of Sufism which is more esoteric in nature. The communication that occurs in it is more exclusive because the meaning of every teaching of a religion cannot be conveyed to the public except to certain people who already have sufficient religious understanding capacity.

Rebakong Hamlet is one of the hamlets located in Kayangan Village, Kayangan District, North Lombok Regency—the average local population in the hamlet still

exists in studying and spreading Islamic teachings (read: local Sufism). However, as mentioned above, the dissemination is not carried out in general, but only limited to the circle. The studies they do, for example, such as majlis ta'lim in general often study classic books that are said to be passed down from generation to generation from the person who first spread Islam in Lombok, namely Sunan Prapen.

As from the results of an interview conducted with a traditional leader said that there are three books handed down by Sunan Prapen, namely, kitab Bayanullah, Bayanul Alif, and Bayanul Hak.<sup>5</sup> These books in fact contain Islamic messages that enter the esoteric or spiritual area of Islam, so the implications of these books are that many people look more at the aspects of shari'a that is not important. For example, such as not wanting to pray with the belief that for people who understand the meaning of worship, the obligation of worship is void for him.

In addition, the author chose the background of this study because the socio-religious conditions of the community are still thick following traditions and customs as adherents of Wetu Telu Islam in general. In their daily lives, religious practices that smell of kebatinan are also often applied to their customs and culture such as mawlid adat. As the observations made by researchers, in traditional mawlid there are rituals that smell of kebatinan. Among these rituals are condensing, peresean, bisok rice, nampah kao, and the culminating event roah (zdikir together and enjoying mawlid meals in ancient traditional mosques). At the peak of the traditional mawlid event, for example, people who come out of the ancient mosque are beaten using braids if they touch the ritual umbrella placed next to the door of the ancient mosque. It is intended that the bad qualities in humans disappear by beating. The things mentioned above in addition to ancestral heritage are also the implementation of local Sufism teachings studied by Wetu Telu Muslims.

Unpleasant stereotypes are often thrown against these Wetu Telu Muslims. Many people think that the Islamic concept of Wetu Telu is a symbol of the prayer time they do, which is as many as three times. From the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers in Rebakong Hamlet, Kayangan Village, shows the way religion such as Islamic sharia is practiced in general, but the basic differences

are only found in terms of custom. For example, the blessing for the deceased is coupled with the reading of the book of Adam's Footprint. The Islamic concept of Wetu Telu is also actually a symbol of the birth process which is termed Menganak, Mentelok, and Meniok.

Currently, the majority of Rebakong villagers already have adequate educational backgrounds. The average parent has sent their children to every educational institution both formal and informal, even some of them send their children to Islamic boarding schools. Nevertheless, it still does not change their mindset in terms of customs and culture, because according to them customs and culture are ancestral relics that must be preserved, including the teachings of local Sufism.

### **B. The reason for the exclusivity of communication in the dissemination of local Sufism teachings in the Wetu Telu Islamic community.**

Social interaction is one form of a developing society, both in terms of ethnicity, culture, religion and others. Social interaction is characterized by the establishment of communication between individuals with individuals, as well as between individuals with groups and groups with groups.

In this process of communication, there is communication that occurs unilaterally (in the sense that it occurs only in certain social spheres) without penetrating into society in general. Usually in a social perspective, it is usually interpreted as exclusive communication—especially faced with issues of teaching, religion, and belief.

More neatly, Ferry Adi Dharma explained that in general, exclusivity is an effort to separate individuals or groups from their social environment. This is done because of differences in the behavior of a person or group towards values that are considered right by most people.<sup>9</sup>

The perspective above, directs something very significant if traced to some individual or group interests in understanding a particular value, resulting in an unusual separation. This action is done due to several things; 1) the spiritual element of a certain teaching; 2) so as not to threaten previously believed values derived from ancestors; 3) maintaining cultural values that have developed.

The motive for exclusivity in spreading the local Sufism teachings of Wetu Telu Islam can be studied more deeply using the pattern of reasoned action theory from Ajzen and Fishbein: Behavior belief. Outcome evaluation. Attitude. Normative Beliefs. Motivation to Comply. Subjective Norms. Subjective Norms. Behavior.

### **C. Communication Exclusivity Process in Disseminating Local Sufism**

In the Wetu Telu Islamic Community, humans are social creatures who need the help of others to: meet his needs. In order to fulfill these needs, an active interaction is needed as a form of reciprocal relationship between an individual and an individual, individual with group and group with group so that communication is born in the realm of social interaction.

Harold Lasswele explained in detail that communication is a reciprocal process that explains whom? Say what? With what channel? To whom? And with what effect or what result?

From the theory above, a common thread can be drawn that communication is a reciprocal process that occurs through several processes and stages involving several elements including: 1) communicator; 2) communicants; 3) messages; 4) media; 5) Effect or influence caused.

In the process of spreading local Sufism, communication that occurs is usually exclusive, but the process of communication still involves some of the elements mentioned above. Communicators play an important role in spreading local Sufism, in this case in relation to the figure who spread it.

From that spiritual journey then formed and instilled the soul of Sufism in him. Even though he had studied Sufism with a Murshid tarekat, it did not necessarily make him dabble in becoming a follower of Jama'ah Tarekat, but just compared the science of tariqa with local Sufism.

Therefore, when there are people who want to learn local Sufism, it is not like the procedures for learning tariqa which generally use the system of bai'ah (agreement between Murshid and Murid) and special practices.

Effective communication is active communication between communicators and communicants that goes both ways and is not vacuum. To create an effective communication, several approaches are needed from several aspects so as to make the communication run smoothly.

The psychological approach taken by the disseminator is direct or face to face. For example, when pilgrims arrive at the ceremony, the disseminator does not spontaneously open the book or recitation, but begins with small talk.

When the pilgrims felt that they could civilize, then in the middle of the chat were inserted discussions about local Sufism teachings. After that the book was opened as a support or reference to the previous explanation, and when the pilgrims felt difficulty or confusion in understanding it, the disseminator figure gave them the opportunity to ask questions.

Cultural messages, local Sufism teachings are teachings that are acculturated with local culture, because previously the people of Lombok before the entry of Islam

had held animist beliefs and dynamism. This can be seen in the traditional and religious celebrations carried out by the Wetu Telu Islamic community such as traditional mawlid as described in the previous discussion.

Communication carried out in any form will have an impact or influence on communicators and communicants. Sometimes communication has a positive influence and sometimes it also has a negative influence. Influence in communication terms is called Effect, so the effect is divided into two, namely positive effect and negative effect.

This effect by Nurudin is explained as a difference experienced by communicants between what is thought, felt, and done after or before receiving the message. Generally, the majority of people outside the community of Rebakong Hamlet think that local Sufism is a heresy under the pretext that this kind of teaching leaves the Shari'a. However, the disseminator refuted this statement and emphasized that studying Sufism, especially those that talk about the truth, does not make us leave the Shari'a, even more making the shari'a that we do more perfect, as stated in the book of Tahkik which is a reference for local Sufism spreaders.

There are also those who view the heresy of this local Sufism from the perspective of exclusivity carried out. They consider learning local Sufism like learning witchcraft or the term Sasak learning *tuselak*. However, of all the negative assumptions about local Sufism teachings above, some people, especially the people of Rebakong Hamlet, support and give high initiatives to local Sufism disseminators and *jama'ah* teachings. For them, this activity to spread local Sufism teachings has a positive impact on the village they live in. Proven by some outsiders who deliberately came to Rebakong Hamlet to learn this local Sufism.

The second element of the communication process is a communicative or audience. According to Rully Nasrullah, communicators are people who receive messages in a communication process.

#### **D. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Communication Exclusivity**

Communication as a form of social interaction that is carried out does not always go as expected. Often it will be faced with two factors, namely supporting factors and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors are usually identified with something positive, while inhibiting factors are identified with something negative. Both factors can come from internal or external parties.

Taufan Ardiansyah explained that every communication carried out must have ease or difficulty experienced by the messenger (communicator) and the recipient of the message (communicant).

The inhibiting factor in communication exclusivity occurs because of the effect of exclusivity behavior itself which makes an individual or group contaminated from

the social group because of the closure carried out. This creates a relationship strain that results in social exclusion of exclusive actors.

Schraft and Smith mention in the book *The Social World of Older People* five typologies of exclusivity or social exclusion as follows: 1) Exclusion from basic services of society; 2) Exclusion from social relations; 3) Exclusion from community activities; 4) Exclusion from income; 5) Exclusion from the surroundings.

The five typologies above are forms of social exclusion or exclusivity carried out by individuals or groups so as to influence other individuals or groups to give similar responses. The exclusivity of communication in the dissemination of local Sufism has a significant influence on perceptions that influence attitudes as well as the social exclusion mentioned above.

Social exclusion that is very prominent in the activities of spreading local Sufism in the Wetu Telu Islamic community is exclusion from social relations and exclusion from the surroundings, thus causing several inhibiting factors in spreading the teachings of local Sufism.

Ferry Adhi Dharma explained that these social factors certainly interfere with communication activities in the social environment. Access to information will be disrupted and socio-cultural communication will be filled with negative impacts such as tereotivity, prejudice, and ethnocentric.

According to research that has been done, one of the inhibiting factors in the spread of local Sufism is that some people who think this teaching is heretical begin to stay away from local Sufism. They consider this teaching heretical, even pilgrims are often accused of learning heresy.

Behind these accusations, local Sufism disseminators made their antithesis by clarifying unequivocally that if indeed this teaching is heretical as some people have alleged, then he is ready to accept all kinds of consequences even if he has to abandon the teaching and stop spreading it.

The statement of the above figure proves that indeed from the beginning the figure spreading local Sufism teachings was ready to accept all the consequences of this exclusivity of communication activities for the dissemination of local Sufism.

This has been mentioned by Ajzein and Fishbein in the theory of reasoned action, in the concept of Behavior (behavior) explains that behavior is an action that a person has chosen to display based on the intention that has been formed. Behavior is the transition of intention or will into action or action.

Basically, social exclusion of local Sufism disseminating groups comes from communities outside Rebakong Hamlet, Kayangan Village. This then makes the outside group feel reluctant to learn even deeper about local Sufism teachings because they have already given a negative assessment of these teachings.

Exclusivity often invites conflict with other groups. The conflict occurred due to the closed factor of exclusive groups both in terms of information and communication, thus eventually making disintegration between existing social groups. As a result, conflicts always lead to all efforts made to bring down conflict opponents both in terms of word and deed. Cherni Rachmadani sees conflict in terms of sociology, which is a social process between two or more people (it can also be groups) in which one of the two camps tries to bring down his opponent or make him helpless.

In general, the causes of conflict are twofold, namely: 1) value conflict, values become something that is very principled for each individual. Values are something that is basic, guided, and a reference place to spill all the ideologies they believe in. This conflict of values occurs because two individuals of different values claim each other that a value they believe is the most correct; 2) Lack of Communication, often a problem faced leads to conflict because of poor communication built. Failure to communicate such as failure to convey thoughts, feelings, in interpersonal and group communication groups causes the main factor in conflict.

It is well understood that value factors are the main source of conflict among adherents of local Sufism in the Wetu Telu Islamic community. The constancy of teachings accompanied by the closure of information makes outsiders very quick to give negative stereotypes to this community. Some groups of people in the Wetu Telu Islamic community still have primitive beliefs that mix religion and culture, so that an understanding arises not to pray, to be allowed not to fast because it has been represented by the traditional leader, and so on. This happened because of their incomprehension of the concept of pure local Sufism teachings taught by the first saint who set foot on Lombok Island. But unlike the case with local Sufism communities that study, deepen, and spread local Sufism teachings as studied by researchers, they strongly criticize heresy – as mentioned above – by basing it on local Sufism teachings, because according to them pure teachings are teachings that strengthen shari'a and essence, and not vice versa separate between the two.

Likewise with the element of lack of communication between the local Sufism community and outsiders. This goes back to the principles and values of this teaching which are closed in addition to the confidentiality of content that must be maintained.

Similarly, Coleman explained that there are three components in discussing conflict issues or events in the community realm, namely: 1) when an event is placed as the most important side of the activities or life of a community, in this case it is a value aspect of the beliefs held by the Wetu Telu Islamic community; 2) activities or events that are considered to affect the life of a community, in this case teachings and activities to study and disseminate local Sufism; 3) events or events that can or must



have been experienced by members of the local Sufism community of Islam Wetu Telu.

However, among local Sufism groups, usually the conflict never reaches the level of physical contact, but the conflict leads to social inequality. Social inequality here as explained earlier in the form of negative perceptions such as false accusations pinned on local Sufism adherents groups until finally leading to social distancing.

Communication is usually characterized by a dynamic deployment process. This means that communication can spread quickly to the general public. This kind of communication by Helix is like a circle that continues to rotate and get bigger and will never stop at one scope.

In his theory of Helical Dance, he states that the communication process is a circular form that is getting bigger, showing attention to the fact that the communication process is always moving forward and aspects of the process are always changing according to development over time.

Conflicts over the spread of local Sufism mostly come from communities outside the village. The process of spreading this conflict, like the Helix theory above, quickly propagates by word of mouth, inviting wider conflict. However, as revealed by the head of Kayangan village, those who spread the conflict did not dare to reveal it in real terms because they already knew the customs and culture in Kayangan village.

From some of the series of inhibiting factors described above, the spread of local Sufism also has supporting factors. If the inhibiting factors for the spread of local Sufism are viewed from the external side only, but the supporting factors can be seen from two sides, namely the internal and external sides.

Internal factors relate to the motivation built by individuals and groups. Motivation is one of the important indicators that trigger a person's attitude or action. Without motivation, a person will not perform actions that are his main goal.

To that end, in reasoned action theory in the aspect of motivation to comply Ajzein and Fishbein explain that motivation addresses the fact that individuals may or may not adhere to the social norms of reference groups around action. False accusations to social exclusion that occurred against local Sufism adherents gradually shaped their mentality and motivation to continue to maintain this teaching.

The local Sufism disseminator admitted that the accusations and negative attitudes leveled at him became his own spirit to be more active and diligent in spreading local Sufism. Plus the pilgrims who are increasingly coming to study this teaching make this local Sufism disseminator figure more passionate and enthusiastic. Similar motivation is also built by pilgrims.

For them, the local teachings of Sufism are a spiritual need that mediates for them as a veil opener between themselves and God. From this motivation emerged a strong spirit to continue to spread and learn local Sufism.

The external supporting factors are related to the environment and people around. Communication carried out will certainly affect the feedback or feedback from several communicants when viewed from the range of mass communication formed. This is a form of effect of a running communication process. This feedback can be in the form of responses or actions either real or vague. Feedback, as Onong explains, is a reciprocal process involving the communicator and communicant, where the communicator encodes a message, then conveys it to the commune, and the communicant will encode the message. Various kinds of feedback arising from the exclusivity of communication in the dissemination of local Sufism. Among them, some jama'ah from local Sufism teachings interpret it as a positive and negative response he got during the study of the teaching.

The positive response is related to the results received by the Jama'ah during the process of studying local Sufism teachings in the form of increasing spiritual knowledge to the level of increasing worship related to religion.

Support for the support of local Sufism does not only come from jama'ah and disseminating figures. The majority of their families even give full support to this local Sufism dissemination activity. Not only that, the head of Kayangan Village said that he would provide protection and was ready to protect local Sufism leaders and their worshippers. One concrete proof of the village head's actions is by providing an opportunity for one of the family members of a local Sufism disseminator to become a Kayangan Village government staff.

## **E. Conclusion**

The causes of exclusivity of communication in the Wetu Telu Islamic community include: (1) confidentiality of local Sufism content that should not be disseminated publicly, (2) maintaining existing local wisdom, (3) maintaining previously believed values.

The process of spreading local Sufism teachings is only carried out to the congregation. The study carried out is not bound by schedule and usually before conducting the study, the character begins with small talk so that the pilgrims who study the teachings of local Sufism have no difficulty and quickly understand the teachings.

Factors supporting the exclusivity of communication in spreading local Sufism include the high motivation of local Sufism disseminators to continue spreading this teaching. In addition, there is encouragement and enthusiasm given by pilgrims, the

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surrounding community, and even government agencies. There are inhibiting factors such as false accusations of local Sufism and conflicts that lead to social exclusion.

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