



PANDALUNGAN AS A MEETING POINT: THE INTERACTION OF ISLAMIC ECONOMY AND DA'WAH IN LOCAL HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine the role of the Pandalungan area as a center of interaction between economic activities and the spread of Islamic da'wah in the perspective of local history. With a qualitative approach through historical studies, this research utilizes sources from literature, interviews with community leaders, and observations of historical sites. The findings of the study revealed that trade routes function as an effective means in the process of Islamization, where Muslim traders play the role of spreading da'wah through ethical business principles and social interaction. Da'wah in this community takes place culturally, adaptively, and without confrontation. The Pandalungan people integrated Islam into their local traditions, resulting in a distinctive and contextual form of Islam. The study emphasizes the importance of cultural- and economic-based da'wah strategies in the success of past Islamization, which remains relevant in the current situation.

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INTRODUCTION

The spread of Islam in the archipelago did not occur through military domination or political power alone, but rather took place peacefully through social interaction. One of the main routes in this process was trade, where Muslim merchants not only traded but also introduced Islamic values and teachings to the local community. With a cultural and persuasive approach, Islam is widely accepted and becomes part of the social life of the community (Daulay, Supriadi, & Hasanah, 2020).

In this development, the Pandalungan area acts as an interaction center that brings together various communities, including traders, scholars, and people with diverse cultural backgrounds. This diversity creates an environment conducive to the exchange of knowledge and traditions, so that Islam is increasingly developing in the archipelago. Pandalungan is a cultural area in northeast Java which is known as the meeting point between Javanese and Madura cultures. Geographically, this area includes several districts such as

Jember, Situbondo, Bondowoso, and parts of Banyuwangi. The existence of small ports and land trade routes that connect the coast with the interior makes Pandalungan a strategic commercial and cultural traffic space in the history of Islamization in the East Java region.

In the social life of the Pandalungan people, trade not only plays a role as an economic tool, but also as a means of effective dissemination of Islamic teachings. Muslim merchants take advantage of every interaction with customers to introduce Islamic values, both through their attitudes, business ethics, and daily practices. In this way, they not only transact and buy, but also contribute to the formation of communities based on religious values. This phenomenon shows that Islamic da'wah can go hand in hand with economic activities without having to be separated from each other. Therefore, trade has a wider impact, not only strengthening the economy but also enriching the spiritual life of the people (Nawawi, 2012).

Tracing the role of Pandalungan as a crossroads between trade and Islamic da'wah provides valuable insights into enriching local history. By understanding how economic activity plays a role in the spread of Islam, we can see a unique pattern in the interaction between merchants and local communities. This research aims to delve deeper into how Islamic values are introduced, accepted, and developed in Pandalungan culture. This process not only reflects socio-economic dynamics, but also shows how religion adapts to local traditions (Zamroni, 2021). Therefore, understanding this relationship helps us appreciate the diversity of da'wah processes in a broader social context.

METHOD

This research applies a qualitative approach with historical study methods to trace how trade routes became a means of spreading Islam in the Pandalungan area in the context of local history. Through a critical analysis of various historical sources, both written and oral, the researchers sought to reconstruct past events in more depth. This approach allows for a broader understanding of the dynamics of economic interaction and Islamic da'wah that continue to develop in people's lives. Thus, this study not only uncovers the pattern of the spread of religion through trade routes, but also looks at how local communities adapt and develop Islamic teachings in their lives. Therefore, this study contributes to enriching the historical narrative and understanding the relationship between economy and religion in shaping the social identity of the Pandalungan people.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Pandalungan as a Cultural and Economic Space

From a geopolitical and geosocio-cultural perspective, the Pandalungan community is part of the community that inhabits the horseshoe area. This horseshoe area is located in East Java Province and has a geographical shape resembling a horseshoe or horseshoe treadmill. The area has certain

characteristics and has long been a center for supporters of cultural Islam and the abangan. Cultural Islamic groups are usually led by kiai and ulama, while abangan are more likely to be influenced by political figures and figures who belong to various faiths (Zoebazary, 2018).

The Pandalungan region has a unique culture born from the combination of Javanese and Madurese ethnicities, creating a distinctive identity that is reflected in the language, customs, and socio-economic orientation of its people. Geographically, Pandalungan is located on a strategic route that connects northern coastal areas, such as Situbondo and Probolinggo, with inland areas such as Bondowoso and Jember (Satrio, Suryanto, & Suyanto, 2020). This location makes Pandalungan a meeting center for various activities, both economic, social, and cultural, which take place dynamically. The existence of trade routes also strengthens the region's role in the exchange of goods and ideas, enriching interactions between different communities (Satrio et al., 2020). Thus, Pandalungan is not only a transit area, but also a place for the development of harmonious and diverse social life.

The Horseshoe area is mainly inhabited by people from ethnic Madura and Javanese, but there are also minority groups such as ethnic Arabs and Chinese. The Open Door Politics (liberal politics) policy implemented by the Dutch East Indies colonial government in 1870 and the development of private plantations attracted immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds to the area. Generally, they adapt to the Madura-Javanese culture that dominates the local environment. In social interaction, especially in the field of trade, the Chinese people use Madurese or Javanese with a typical Chinese accent, as well as ethnic Arabs (Arrovia, 2021).

Historically, the Pandalungan area has long been part of the inter-regional trade network, even outside Java. Sea and land trade routes connect local communities with merchants from Madura, the northern coast of Java, Bali, and even from the wider archipelago. This economic activity opened a meeting room between the local community and Muslim preachers who also traded. These trade relations not only bring economic benefits, but also enrich the cultural insights and values of the local community (Rosid, Andika, Mariska, & Rokhmawati, 2024). Therefore, Pandalungan grew into an area with a strong social character and a cultural identity that continued to develop along with the times.

Trade as a Path to the Spread of Islam

Trade is an effective medium in the spread of Islam in the archipelago because it takes place peacefully, relationally, and sustainably (Ari, Maulana, Farhanan, Aisyi, & Nurjanah, 2024). In Pandalungan, Muslim traders not only acted as economic agents but also as da'wah agents, introducing the teachings of Islam through daily business interactions. The spread of Islam is carried out without an approach to power, but through social relations in commercial activities, such as transactions in the market and trade cooperation. In addition, Islamic business ethics that reflect the values of honesty, justice, and the

prohibition of usury are applied in the practice of buying and selling. The existence of the Muslim community also supports this process, for example by establishing langgar or small mosques near trade centers.

Economic integration and da'wah can be seen in the existence of market-pesantren complexes in several areas of Pandalungan. In this place, religious activities flourish side by side with economic activities, creating harmony between spiritual life and material well-being. Merchants not only trade but also share Islamic values with others, making trade a means of spreading religious teachings. With an inclusive and relational approach, trade becomes a da'wah tool that is able to attract more people to know Islam. This shows that economics and religion can support each other in building a prosperous and moral community (Adi, 2021).

Da'wah Actors and Networks in Pandalungan

The da'wah process in Pandalungan involves various actors who play an important role in the spread of Islam in this region. Muslim merchants from Madura and the northern coast of Java often settled and mingled with the local community, thus strengthening cultural and social interactions. In addition, the nomadic scholars who came with the trade group also contributed by establishing a simple pesantren as a center for religious learning. No less important, local figures such as traditional leaders and village heads who are interested in Islamic values play a role as mediators of da'wah for the surrounding community. This diversity of roles makes da'wah in Pandalungan a dynamic and sustainable process.

The interaction between these da'wah actors is horizontal and collective, reflecting the spread of Islam that takes place naturally without the dominance of certain parties. The presence of Muslim merchants who settled and blended with the local community allowed for more intensive cultural exchanges. Nomadic clerics who established Islamic boarding schools provide access for people to learn religion more deeply (Ari et al., 2024). Meanwhile, local figures who act as mediators help bridge the understanding of Islamic values with people's daily lives. With this balanced interaction, da'wah in Pandalungan takes place in harmony.

One of the aspects that helped strengthen the Islamization process in Pandalungan was the marriage between Muslim traders and local women. This marriage not only strengthens social relationships, but also becomes a means of integrating Islamic values in people's lives. Through marriage, there is a cultural fusion that accelerates the acceptance of Islam culturally. In addition, the established family relationships make da'wah more effective because Islamic values are conveyed directly in the domestic environment. With these various factors, da'wah in Pandalungan develops with an inclusive and community-based approach.

Local Cultural Response to Islamic Da'wah

The Pandalungan people accept the teachings of Islam gradually through an adaptive internalization process, where Islamic values are adapted to the local

culture. For example, traditional ceremonies such as selamatan and ruwatan are still carried out but given Islamic nuances, the use of Javanese-Madurese language in oral da'wah, and the establishment of mosques and prayer rooms that follow the shape of traditional houses. This approach shows that the success of da'wah does not lie in the rejection of culture, but in efforts to embrace and reform it according to Islamic values. In this way, Islam developed in Pandalungan without eliminating the cultural identity that had been rooted in people's lives. This reflects that the integration of Islam with local culture is the key to its successful spread.

The Dynamics of Islamic Da'wah in Local History

The spread of Islam through trade routes in Pandalungan is not a process that runs in a linear manner, but is full of dynamics. One of the challenges that has arisen is the resistance of indigenous groups and followers of old beliefs who are trying to maintain their traditions. Nonetheless, the interactions that occur in trade allow for the exchange of cultures and thoughts. Muslim merchants brought not only merchandise, but also Islamic values that gradually began to be accepted by the local community. This suggests that the spread of religion is not always through coercion, but can develop through harmonious communication and social interaction (Azra, 2013).

In this process of Islamization, social consolidation has an important role in strengthening the existence of the Muslim community in Pandalungan. Many Islamic boarding schools began to emerge as centers for religious learning as well as a place for the development of a network of scholars who play a role in da'wah. The presence of religious leaders who also play the role of local leaders further strengthens the spread of Islam in people's daily lives. They not only teach the teachings of Islam, but also contribute to building the values of togetherness that strengthen the relationship between citizens. Over time, Islam became part of a broader social structure and was accepted as part of people's lives (Muhlison, 2013).

Cultural transformation is also a crucial aspect in the Islamization of Pandalungan, where Islamic symbols begin to be inherent in the identity of the local community. The emergence of local figures who simultaneously play the role of kyai and traditional leaders shows the integration between Islamic tradition and Pandalungan culture. This makes Islamic teachings more acceptable because they are conveyed in a cultural context that is already known to the public. The success of da'wah in this region proves that Islamization is more effective when carried out with a social and cultural approach than with the domination of power. Thus, Pandalungan is an example of how Islam can develop and take root in people's lives through a natural and dynamic process.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that Pandalungan has a strategic role in the spread of Islam through trade routes. As an area that is the meeting point of Javanese and Madura cultures, Pandalungan provides a space for the exchange of ideas,

values, and beliefs. Islamic da'wah developed in this context, taking advantage of social interactions that occur naturally. The cultural diversity in Pandalungan creates conditions conducive to the acceptance of Islam. This shows that the spread of religion occurs through an inclusive social process.

The trade routes that cross this region not only carry merchandise, but also spread Islamic values. Muslim traders act as agents of da'wah through their interactions with local communities. Da'wah is carried out peacefully by prioritizing good business ethics and cultural adaptation. This approach allows Islam to be accepted without coercion, but rather through dialogue and shared experience. Thus, trade became one of the effective paths in the process of Islamization.

The main actors in this process include Muslim merchants, overseas clerics, and local figures who contributed to the formation of Muslim communities. They played an important role in introducing Islamic teachings organically to the Pandalungan people. People respond to da'wah in an adaptive way, making Islam a part of their identity. In this process, traditional roots are preserved, reflecting the balance between local culture and religious teachings. This shows that Islamization took place in harmony in Pandalungan.

In conclusion, this study confirms that trade routes are an effective and sustainable means of da'wah. Cultural and participatory approaches play a big role in the success of this process. Pandalungan is clear evidence that Islamization in the archipelago is a dynamic and inclusive social process. Humanitarian values are also the basis for the acceptance of Islam in this region. Thus, trade is not only an economic means, but also a vehicle for the dissemination of Islamic teachings based on cultural values.

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