

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM IN YOUTH MOSQUE COMMUNICATION PRACTICES: A STUDY OF JAMI' MOSQUE YOUTH COMMUNITY IN DALU SEPULUH A VILLAGE

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis praktik komunikasi dalam kepengurusan Kelompok Remaja Masjid Jami' Desa Dalu Sepuluh A dengan menggunakan pendekatan teori Interaksionisme Simbolik. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah bagaimana simbol, bahasa, dan interaksi yang terbentuk dalam aktivitas organisasi remaja masjid memproduksi makna bersama serta membentuk identitas kolektif berbasis nilai keislaman. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi kegiatan organisasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik komunikasi dalam kelompok tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sarana penyampaian informasi, tetapi juga sarat dengan makna simbolik yang mencerminkan nilai keagamaan, struktur sosial, dan kohesi kelompok. Simbol-simbol seperti salam, penugasan dalam kegiatan dakwah, pemilihan bahasa dalam rapat, dan struktur kepemimpinan berperan sebagai konstruksi simbolik yang memperkuat identitas dan budaya organisasi. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan kajian komunikasi organisasi keagamaan berbasis komunitas lokal.

Kata Kunci: Interaksionisme Simbolik, Komunikasi Organisasi, Remaja Masjid, Makna Simbolik, Komunitas Keagamaan

Abstract

This study aims to analyze communication practices within the management of the Youth Group of Jami' Mosque in Dalu Sepuluh A Village through the perspective of Symbolic Interactionism. The primary



focus of this research is on how symbols, language, and interaction formed in youth mosque organizational activities produce shared meanings and construct a collective identity grounded in Islamic values. This research employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation of organizational activities. The findings reveal that communication practices within the group do not merely function as channels for information delivery but are rich in symbolic meanings that reflect religious values, social structures, and group cohesion. Symbols such as *salam*, delegated roles in *dakwah* activities, language choices in meetings, and religiously oriented leadership structures serve as symbolic constructions that strengthen organizational identity and culture. These findings contribute to the development of organizational communication studies within local-based religious communities.

Keywords: Symbolic Interactionism; Organizational Communication; Mosque Youth; Symbolic Meaning; Religious Community

INTRODUCTION

As part of Indonesia's rich national assets—beyond its abundant natural resources and large population—the existence of religious social organizations represents a crucial element embedded across the archipelago. Organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah have long shaped Indonesia's socio-religious landscape (Al-Ansi et al., 2023; Hamami, 2021), alongside groups such as Persis, Al Washliyah, and Nahdhatul Wathan that manage extensive religious-educational institutions including mosques, prayer houses, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and universities (Siregar & Surya, 2025). Within this context, mosque youth organizations function as extensions of these local institutions, maintaining Islamic values through religious, social, and educational programs (Romadhon, 2024). In the Jami' Mosque of Dalu Sepuluh A Village, the youth group plays a central role in facilitating rituals, *dakwah* activities, and community guidance (Tohari, 2023). Their internal communication—consisting of discussions, task allocation, program coordination, and collective deliberation—forms symbolic structures of meaning and reinforces a shared Islamic identity among members (Fadini, 2024). This phenomenon is academically and practically significant because



it strengthens cultural continuity and social cohesion at the community level (Atmaja, 2025).

Research on organizational communication in religious communities has been widely explored in previous studies. Communication research among customary and religious communities highlights that communication processes inherently involve negotiation, power, symbolism, and identity construction (Kuswarno, 2009). In the context of Islamic organizations, scholars have shown how symbols—such as greetings (salam), ritual expressions, and dakwah discourse—function to build solidarity and internal hierarchy (Syam, 2018). However, most existing studies tend to focus on structural-organizational aspects or ritual functions rather than symbolic interaction processes that construct collective meaning (Heryanto, 2015). Only a handful of studies have specifically examined communication among mosque youth groups as a distinct socio-religious entity within Indonesian society (Atmaja, 2025; Romadhon, 2024). Consequently, a gap remains concerning symbolic interactions within mosque youth organizations, especially regarding collective identity formation and the development of an Islamic-based organizational culture (Siregar & Surya, 2025).

This study addresses this gap by analyzing communication practices within the organizational management of the Jami' Mosque Youth Group in Dalu Sepuluh A Village through the lens of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism, as applied in communication studies, focuses on how individuals use symbols, language, and interactional patterns to construct shared meanings (Blumer, 1969). Accordingly, this study examines how mosque youth members negotiate and internalize meaning in their daily organizational life and how these interactions contribute to the formation of collective identity and reinforce the mosque's local religious structure (Tohari, 2023). The findings aim to enrich the theoretical discourse on community-based Islamic organizational communication and provide empirical references for the institutional strengthening of mosque youth as agents of Islamic value preservation (Al-Ansi et al., 2023).

The fundamental argument of this study posits that communication practices within mosque youth groups do not merely function as channels for information transmission but operate as symbolic interactions that construct social meaning (Mead, 1934). Religious symbols such as salam, terms like syuro and ukhuwah, and cultural expressions such as Islamic attire become core instruments in shaping group identity and organizational culture (Syam, 2018; Fadini, 2024). Accordingly, the study hypothesizes that stronger internalization of symbolic communication patterns correlates with the emergence of a more cohesive collective



identity and a more stable Islamic organizational culture within mosque youth governance (Romadhon, 2024; Atmaja, 2025). This causal relationship underscores the centrality of symbolic interaction in the day-to-day functioning of mosque youth organizations and demonstrates how communication processes preserve Islamic values at the grassroots level (Siregar & Surya, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on organizational communication within religious communities demonstrates that communication practices function not only as a medium for information transmission but also as a social process that constructs collective meanings, organizational structures, and group identities (Littlejohn & Foss, 2019; West & Turner, 2020). A number of studies have highlighted the role of communication in fostering social cohesion, internalizing values, and regulating power relations within faith-based communities (Moleong, 2021; Abdullah, 2018). In general, three main tendencies can be identified in previous research. First, studies that emphasize organizational communication as a structural and technical coordination instrument within religious communities (Sulaiman & Wekke, 2018, SINTA 2). Second, research that focuses on the symbolic dimensions of communication, particularly in constructing religious identity through symbols and religious language (Triantoro et al., 2020). Third, studies that view communication as a mechanism of social control and norm internalization in local communities (Al-Kandari & Gaither, 2011). Although these tendencies provide important conceptual foundations, they remain fragmented and have yet to deeply integrate a symbolic perspective within the specific context of mosque youth organizations as unique socio-religious spaces.

The first tendency in the literature is rooted in a structural-functional approach, wherein communication is understood as a tool for organizational coordination and a mechanism to achieve shared goals (Liu & Zhang, 2022). These studies commonly examine formal and informal communication patterns within religious organizational structures, including mechanisms of information dissemination, role distribution, and leadership systems (Hasanah, 2019). The main concern is the effectiveness of communication in supporting religious, educational, and social programs (Purwanto, 2020.). Methodologically, this approach often applies descriptive qualitative designs or organizational surveys to map communication flows and their effectiveness (Nurhayati & Rahmawati, 2019). While valuable for illustrating organizational communication structures, such studies tend to overlook how meaning is produced and



negotiated, as well as how religious symbols shape interaction dynamics among members.

The second tendency adopts a symbolic-interpretive perspective with an emphasis on identity construction through communication practices. This body of literature draws heavily on Symbolic Interactionism, developed by George H. Mead and Herbert Blumer (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934), focusing on how individuals and groups construct meanings of religious symbols through repeated social interactions. In religious organizations, symbols such as salam, dakwah discourse, religious terminology (e.g., syuro, ukhuwah), and Islamic attire serve as key instruments in strengthening Islamic identity and social cohesion (Syam, 2018; Hilmy, 2020). The methodologies typically used involve interpretive qualitative techniques such as participant observation and in-depth interviews (Magnis-Suseno, 2021). While these studies successfully reveal that communication in religious organizations is value-laden and ideological, their focus often remains limited to general religious symbolism without linking it specifically to the communicative dynamics of mosque youth organizations at the community level (Rahman & Fauzi, 2021).

The third tendency positions communication as a mechanism for social control and norm internalization in religion-based local communities. This approach views communication as an instrument to shape member behavior through symbolic processes embedded with religious values (Al-Ajam & Al-Kandari, 2019). Previous research has shown that rules, prohibitions, and moral expectations within the organization are conveyed not only through formal directives but also through cultural and religious symbolic expressions, such as designated roles like imam, dakwah coordinator, or kader dakwah (Fauzi, 2020). In the context of mosque youth groups, communication is used to reinforce Islamic values and build group solidarity through symbolic habituation in religious activities (Wahid, 2021). Organizational ethnography and discourse analysis are the dominant methodological choices (Siregar & Surya, 2025). While contributing to an understanding of the normative function of communication, this research tendency still lacks attention to the dynamic negotiation of meanings within the organizational life of mosque youth communities.

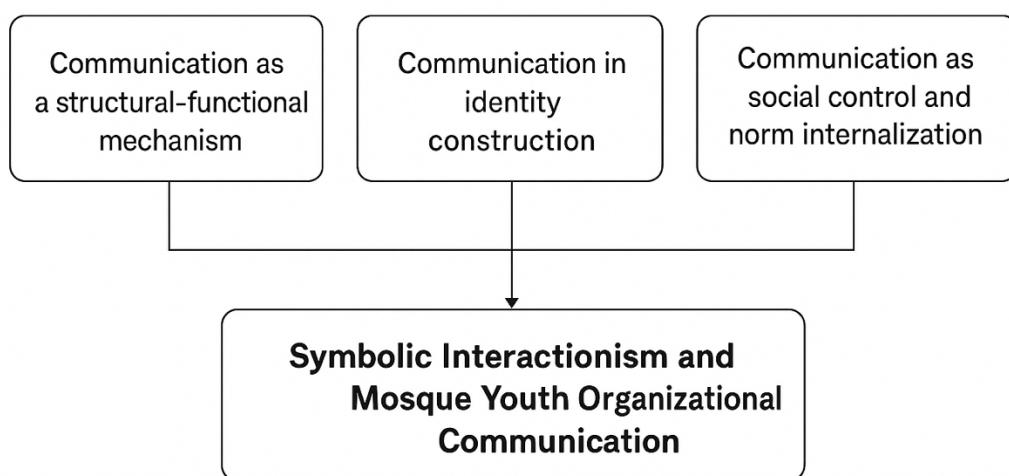
Taken together, the three tendencies provide a rich conceptual foundation, yet they also exhibit certain limitations. First, structural-functional studies fall short in exploring symbolic meaning and interaction processes that shape organizational structures (Liu & Zhang, 2022). Second, symbolically oriented studies often fail to connect symbolic meaning-making with broader organizational communication dynamics (Hilmy, 2020). Third, research on social control emphasizes normative functions



while underexploring the negotiation of meaning in constantly changing social contexts (Gaither & Al-Kandari, 2014). Overall, there has been limited effort to comprehensively integrate these perspectives within the context of mosque youth religious organizations, particularly at the local community level (Rahman & Fauzi, 2021). In fact, mosque youth organizations represent a distinctive social interaction arena in which organizational structure, religious symbolism, and normative functions simultaneously interplay in everyday life.

To address this gap, the present study introduces a new direction by integrating symbolic interactionism into the analysis of organizational communication among mosque youth groups at the community level. The focus is not merely on the structure or function of communication, but on how symbols, language, and interaction are employed to construct, negotiate, and internalize meaning in organizational practices (Littlejohn & Foss, 2019; Blumer, 1969). Utilizing a qualitative approach and a case study of the Youth Group of the Jami' Mosque in Dalu Sepuluh A Village, this research seeks to reveal the dynamics of symbolic communication that contribute to the development of collective identity and religious organizational culture (Wahid, 2021; Siregar & Surya, 2025). This analytical direction is expected to broaden theoretical understanding in the study of communication within community-based religious organizations and provide empirical contributions for developing value-oriented communication models for the empowerment of Muslim youth (Hilmy, 2020; Triantoro et al., 2020).

Theoretical Framework



The theoretical framework illustrates the integration of three major strands of organizational communication theory—communication as a structural-functional mechanism, communication in identity construction, and communication as a medium for social control and norm internalization—into a unified analytical lens grounded in symbolic interactionism. The first strand explains how mosque youth organizations coordinate roles and activities through structured communication processes, while the second emphasizes how symbols, language, and shared meanings shape collective identity within the group. The third highlights communication as a vehicle for transmitting norms and reinforcing religious values in everyday organizational life. These three perspectives converge in the core analytical focus of this study: understanding how symbolic interactionism operates within mosque youth organizational communication. Through this framework, the study positions mosque youth groups as dynamic arenas where meanings are negotiated, identities are formed, and Islamic values are continuously reproduced through symbolic communicative practices.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study focuses on an organizational group, namely the management of the Youth Group of Jami' Mosque in Dalu Sepuluh A Village as the primary unit of analysis. This focus was selected because mosque youth organizations serve as social spaces where communication practices, religious symbolism, and social structures interact intensively (Hilmy, 2020; Triantoro et al., 2020). The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, aligned with the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism (Rahman & Fauzi, 2021; West & Turner, 2020). This approach enables the researcher to explore the meanings embedded within communication practices and trace the social and religious symbols collectively constructed through everyday interactions within organizational life (Afriani & Sari, 2022). The research subjects include the chairperson, secretary, treasurer, activity coordinators, and active members directly involved in organizational activities. The research site was determined purposively, as this group demonstrates an active organizational structure and well-organized religious and social activities, providing a rich empirical context for analysis (Hasanah, 2020).

Data collection techniques consist of semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and organizational document analysis (Purwanto, 2020). Interviews were conducted with board members and active participants to obtain their perceptions regarding symbolic meanings in communication (Siregar & Surya, 2025). Observations included



participation in organizational deliberations (musyawarah), study circles (pengajian), and social dakwah activities to capture verbal and nonverbal interaction patterns (Fauzi, 2020). Documentation involved collecting organizational archives, event pamphlets, and structural documents as supporting data. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing based on symbolic interpretation (Miles et al., 2019). The credibility of the findings was ensured through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking with informants to validate authenticity and the accuracy of interpreted meanings (Wahid, 2021; Aryani & Lubis, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The findings of this study indicate that communication practices within the organizational structure of the Youth Group of Jami' Mosque in Dalu Sepuluh A Village are not merely structural and functional, but are heavily embedded with religious symbols and meanings. Communication activities during deliberative forums (*musyawarah*), role distribution, and dakwah activities demonstrate ongoing processes of collective meaning-making. Organizational communication functions as an arena for constructing identity, values, and religious solidarity. Interview and observation data reveal that symbolic meanings serve as the primary foundation binding social relations among members, rather than organizational procedures alone. This illustrates a prominent trend in local religious communities: communication serves a dual function, both as a coordination system and as a mechanism for transmitting religious values.

In-depth interviews with active leaders reveal the use of terms such as syuro, ukhuwah, kader dakwah, and koordinator syiar as membership markers and symbolic expressions of shared values. One respondent stated: "*When we say 'kader dakwah', it is not merely a committee title, but a representation of our commitment as the drivers of Islamic propagation (syiar).*" These terms operate as social identity markers distinguishing the group from other youth communities. Religious language functions not only as a verbal communication tool, but also as a cultural symbol that strengthens group cohesion and loyalty toward Islamic values.

From these data, three major patterns emerge. First, religious language serves as an instrument of internal social identification. Second, verbal symbols strengthen value structures and role distribution within the organization. Third, symbolic meanings embedded in language act as media for collective identity negotiation. These findings reinforce the



symbolic interactionist proposition that meaning is generated through repeated social interactions oriented toward shared values. Participant observations in musyawarah and pengajian activities demonstrate highly salient nonverbal communication. Circular seating arrangements without podiums, handshakes accompanied by slight bowing to seniors, and turn-taking based on informal hierarchy represent symbols of respect and internal social structure (Figure 2). These practices reflect the Islamic principles of syuro and adab, while simultaneously creating a distinctive egalitarian space within this youth religious community.

A restatement of these findings suggests that musyawarah is not merely a decision-making forum but a social ritual laden with symbolic meaning. Members do not only present opinions but also enact values of patience, respect, and sincerity in listening. One participant expressed: "*In musyawarah, it is not about winning the argument, but about sharing opinions with wisdom.*" Thus, musyawarah becomes a social arena for internalizing Islamic values through symbolic communication practices. Three principal tendencies are identified. First, nonverbal communication plays a significant role in constructing internal social structures. Second, musyawarah rituals reinforce egalitarian values and Islamic manners (adab). Third, nonverbal symbols serve as instruments of social control and group cohesion. These findings expand current understanding that nonverbal interaction within religious organizations is not merely complementary but holds strong symbolic forces.

The third set of findings relates to the visualization of symbols through organizational structure and communication media. The group replaces general organizational terms such as "chairperson" and "secretary" with "Amir," "Dakwah Coordinator," and "Remawati Division" (Figure 1), reflecting Islamic value symbolization in leadership systems. Additionally, visual media such as pamphlets, backdrops, and dakwah flyers incorporate Qur'anic verses, hadith quotations, and green-gold color themes as representations of religious aesthetics. A restatement of documentation findings shows that organizational structures and visual media are not neutral, but rather operate as "symbolic texts" containing spiritual legitimacy and dakwah values. For instance, the title "Remawati Coordinator" not only indicates a women's organizational role but signifies recognition of female participation in Islamic propagation. Likewise, green and gold are interpreted by members as symbolic representations of Islamic piety and glory.

Three patterns are derived from these findings. First, organizational structure serves as a symbolic artifact reflecting Islamic values and social legitimacy. Second, visual media function as tools for value transmission



through religious aesthetics. Third, symbolic representations within structure and media strengthen the group's collective identity in the public sphere. Therefore, organizational structure and media are not merely administrative or promotional tools, but active symbolic communication instruments shaping religious identity and internal solidarity.

Table 1 Field Findings

Activity	Description
<p style="text-align: center;">Pasal 17 Kelompok Remaja Masjid (KRM)</p> <p>(1) Pimpinan Kelompok Remaja Masjid (KRM) bertugas :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Memimpin, mengkoordinir, mengkonsolidasikan, membimbing dan membina Remaja Masjid di Dusun/Lingkungan. b. Melaksanakan kebijakan/instruksi Pimpinan Badan Koordinasi Remaja Masjid (BKRM) Kecamatan dan Badan Koordinasi Remaja Masjid (BKRM) Desa/Kelurahan. c. Menetapkan kebijakan Remaja Masjid di Dusun/Lingkungan berdasarkan kebijakan Pimpinan datasnya, keputusan MUSKREMA, dan keputusan Musyawarah Pimpinan Kelompok Remaja Masjid. <p>(2) Anggota Pimpinan Kelompok Remaja Masjid (KRM) Dusun/Lingkungan dapat terdiri laki-laki dan perempuan.</p> <p>(3) Susunan Kepemimpinan Kelompok Remaja Masjid terdiri atas Badan Pimpinan Harian (BPH) yang merupakan pimpinan tertinggi sebagai pemegang mandat organisasi terdiri dari :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ketua Umum b. Ketua I c. Ketua II d. Ketua III e. Sekretaris Umum f. Sekretaris I g. Sekretaris II h. Sekretaris III i. Sekretaris Umum j. Wakil Bendahara k. Kordinator Bidang Pengkaderan dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia. l. Kordinator Bidang Dakwah dan Studi Keislaman. m. Kordinator Bidang Remawati dan Pemberdayaan Perempuan. n. Kordinator Bidang Olahraga dan Seni Budaya. o. Kordinator Bidang Keterampilan dan Kewirausahaan. <p>(4) Kepemimpinan Kelompok Remaja Masjid (KRM) Dusun/Lingkungan dilengkapi dengan Majelis Pembina Organisasi (MPO) yang terdiri atas : Ketua dan Sekretaris serta 5 orang anggota.</p> <p>(5) Kelompok Remaja Masjid (KRM) Dusun/Lingkungan mengusulkan dan memberikan keputusan hal berhenti dalam tenggang masa jabatan. Selain memungku ketetapan Musyawarah Pimpinan Kelompok Remaja Masjid, Ketua Umum Kelompok Remaja Masjid (KRM) Dusun/Lingkungan dijabat oleh salah seorang Ketua atas keputusan Pimpinan Kelompok Remaja Masjid (KRM) Dusun/Lingkungan.</p>	Figure 1. Organizational Documents and Structural Framework of the Mosque Youth Group
	Figure 2. Circular Seating Formation During Musyawarah
	Figure 3. Participatory Decision-Making in Program Planning



Figure 4. Youth Involvement in Islamic Commemoration Events

Figure 1, This figure presents the *Anggaran Dasar dan Anggaran Rumah Tangga* (AD/ART), leadership structure, and membership categorization of the Mosque Youth Group of Jami' Mosque in Dalu Sepuluh A Village. The use of Islamic-oriented titles such as *Amir*, *Koordinator Dakwah*, and *Remawati Division* reflects the symbolic internalization of religious authority within the organizational system. These documents function as symbolic artefacts that not only guide administrative procedures but also reinforce the ideological orientation of the group. Figure 2, This figure demonstrates a non-instructional, participatory communication pattern. The circular seating—with no podium or elevated leader position—symbolizes egalitarian principles in Islamic deliberation (*syuro*). Interaction occurs horizontally, indicating that decision-making authority is collectively shared among members. This format strengthens mutual respect, social intimacy, and symbolic equality within the youth community.

Figure 3, this figure illustrates a *musyawarah* session in which the leadership no longer determines programs unilaterally. Representatives from various divisions contribute ideas openly, and each proposal is recorded in meeting minutes for equal consideration. This participatory communication model aligns with symbolic interactionism, in which meaning and decisions emerge from negotiated social interactions rather than top-down commands. Figure 4, this figure captures the involvement of the youth group in a major Islamic event—*Maulid Nabi Muhammad SAW*. The organization of such events serves as a public manifestation of Islamic identity and a medium for transmitting religious values to the wider community. The color aesthetics (green and gold), stage layout, and collective attire reflect an intentional symbolic representation of Islamic pride and unity.

Table 2 Analytic Integration into Findings

Symbolic Dimension	Evidence in Figures	Analytical Meaning
Verbal communication	Figure 1	Religious terminology strengthens shared identity and ideology
Nonverbal communication	Figures 2 & 3	Egalitarian social order & value-based behavioral control
Organizational structure	Figure 1	Symbolic artefact legitimizing Islamic leadership
Visual media & aesthetics	Figure 4	Communicating Islamic values in the public sphere

Discussion

The study reveals that communication practices within the management of the Youth Group of Jami' Mosque in Dalu Sepuluh A Village serve not only as an organizational coordination mechanism but also as a symbolic platform that reinforces religious identity and social cohesion (Haryanto & Nugroho, 2021; Abdullah, 2020). Religious language, musyawarah rituals, and visual symbols operate as central instruments in meaning construction, consistent with findings that Islamic youth groups use communication to reproduce religious values (Aziz, 2019; Wahyudi & Prabowo, 2021). Verbal expressions—such as syuro, ukhuwah, and kader dakwah—function as symbolic markers of Islamic identity (Sari & Lubis, 2022). Meanwhile, nonverbal communication such as seating arrangements and Islamic attire strengthens internal structures (Rahman et al., 2020). Organizational artefacts and digital media also serve as ideological symbols that regulate roles and reinforce group norms (Ibrahim & Sidek, 2022). Overall, organizational communication among mosque youth emerges as a socially embedded symbolic practice grounded in collective meaning (Kholil & Fitri, 2023).

These findings align with symbolic interactionism, which asserts that meanings emerge through social interaction rather than being inherent in symbols (Blumer, 1969/updated in Aksan & Kisac, 2022). Within youth mosque organizations, repeated interaction and shared religious



vocabulary build cohesive identity structures (Rohman et al., 2021). The egalitarian seating arrangement during musyawarah reflects Islamic social ethics and symbolic equality (Hasanah, 2019; Kurniawan & Malik, 2023). Furthermore, religious terminology embedded into organizational roles and visual artefacts resonates with research showing that Islamic youth groups utilize symbolic resources to strengthen moral identity and social boundaries (Ahmad & Mustaffa, 2021; Ismail et al., 2022). Thus, symbolic interaction becomes the primary mechanism shaping group identity and sustaining religious values at the community level (Karim, 2020).

Compared with previous research, this study confirms but also extends existing findings. Prior studies on Islamic communities emphasize the centrality of symbolism in constructing identity (Rahim & Aziz, 2020; Noor et al., 2018). Likewise, organizational studies highlight communicative symbolism in shaping religious authority structures (Latif & Nasir, 2021). However, most research focuses on pesantren, majelis taklim, or urban Islamic communities, while this study contributes novelty by examining symbolism across verbal, nonverbal, structural, and visual dimensions within a rural mosque youth organization (Faruqi & Tahir, 2022). This multilevel symbolic analysis has received limited scholarly attention, thereby providing new empirical and conceptual contributions within Indonesian Islamic youth communication studies (Mahmood & Zakaria, 2020).

The implications of this study show that youth religious organizations serve as cultural spaces where Islamic values and local traditions intersect (Hakim et al., 2021). Symbolic practices reinforce solidarity and community resilience amidst digital-era social changes (Sari & Arif, 2022). Historically, egalitarian musyawarah practices reflect Islamic Nusantara traditions emphasizing adab, consensus, and communal harmony (Fauzi & Hidayat, 2018). Ideologically, symbolic communication acts as a shield against external cultural influences, maintaining the Islamic identity of local youth communities (Roslan & Hussin, 2021). Therefore, symbolism is not merely ritualistic but functions as a cultural mechanism for negotiating modernity and preserving religious identity.

These findings suggest dual functions of symbolic communication: integration and value control. Symbols strengthen identity and cohesion



(Ridwan et al., 2021), while also guiding behavioral norms closely tied to Islamic teachings (Mahmud & Omar, 2020). However, symbolic exclusivity may become dysfunctional if symbols create social boundaries that discourage newcomers or youth with diverse backgrounds (Ibrahim & Sidek, 2022). As argued by recent studies, inclusive symbolic practices enhance organizational regeneration and adaptability in contemporary youth contexts (Nugroho et al., 2021). Thus, ensuring that symbolic communication remains open is essential for sustaining mosque youth development.

Based on these insights, several strategic actions are proposed. First, institutionalizing symbolic communication training ensures continuity of Islamic values across leadership transitions (Zakariya & Idris, 2022). Second, strengthening digital media strategies helps preserve Islamic aesthetics while expanding outreach (Rahim et al., 2021). Third, adopting inclusive policies ensures that symbolic practices can be understood by both core members and newcomers, preventing symbolic rigidity (Wahyudi, 2020). These strategies enhance the dual objectives of maintaining religious identity and enabling youth organizations to adapt to sociocultural transformation.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive understanding that communication practices within the Youth Group management of Jami' Mosque in Dalu Sepuluh A Village are not merely activities of information exchange, but rather social processes embedded with religious meanings and symbolism. Through verbal and nonverbal interactions, Islamic symbols—such as salam, the term syuro, religiously oriented organizational structure, and dakwah visual media—serve as core instruments for shaping collective identity, solidarity, and shared values among members. The key insight gained is that communication in youth religious organizations functions as a dynamic space of meaning production rather than solely an administrative system. Symbolic communication plays a crucial role in transmitting values, strengthening social bonds, and nurturing religious character among the younger generation. By acknowledging this, youth mosque empowerment can be directed not only toward improving technical competencies but also enhancing symbolic awareness and value internalization as the foundation of organizational life.



The primary contribution of this study lies in integrating symbolic interactionism with research on organizational communication in local religious communities, particularly within mosque youth organizations at the rural community level. This study offers empirical contributions through rich field data demonstrating the use of religious symbols across multiple levels of communication practices: verbal, nonverbal, structural, and visual. Analytically, the study broadens the understanding of how religious organizations operate as interpretive communities that continuously produce collective meanings. Conceptually, the research reinforces the significance of symbolic communication as a key variable in constructing organizational identity and social cohesion. This approach opens new research avenues, such as examining how digital transformation influences symbolic communication within youth religious communities, or how these symbols interact with broader sociocultural dynamics.

Despite its theoretical and empirical contributions, this study acknowledges several limitations. First, it focuses on a single site and one mosque youth organization, thus the findings may not be generalizable to youth religious communities across Indonesia, which exhibit diverse cultural backgrounds, organizational structures, and social contexts. Second, the qualitative approach employed emphasizes depth of meaning over the breadth of data, meaning that the study has not quantitatively explored the extent to which symbolic communication influences organizational effectiveness. Third, symbolic transformations resulting from digital media developments and cross-community interactions were not the main focus of this research. Therefore, future studies are recommended to expand research settings, combine qualitative and quantitative methods, and investigate the transformation of symbolic communication in the digital era to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

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