



RECONSTRUCTING INLAND ISLAMIZATION: A MOSQUE-CENTRIC AND TRADITION-INTEGRATED MODEL FROM BANUA LIMA, SOUTH KALIMANTAN

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Abstrak

Sejarah penyebaran Islam di Banua Lima, khususnya kawasan DAS Batang Alai Barabai, masih menyisakan kekaburan akibat minimnya rekaman tertulis dan kajian mendalam, sehingga pemahaman mengenai proses islamisasi di wilayah hulu sungai tertinggal dibanding kawasan muara. Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi pola dakwah Islam di Banua Lima melalui identifikasi jejak sejarah, peranan masjid, tokoh lokal, dan akulturasi tradisi masyarakat. Menggunakan pendekatan sejarah dan sosial dengan tahapan heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi, data diperoleh dari sumber arsip, sejarah lisan, observasi masjid keramat, serta tradisi masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penyebaran Islam berlangsung melalui tiga pola utama: pembangunan masjid sebagai pusat dakwah, penguatan peran tokoh lokal sebagai agen penyebaran ajaran, serta integrasi tradisi lokal menjadi praktik keagamaan seperti tradisi baayun maulid dan batumbang. Masjid-masjid keramat di Palajau, Banua Halat, Banua Lawas, serta sejumlah kawasan Hulu Sungai menjadi bukti material yang menegaskan proses dakwah rombongan Khatib Dayan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa islamisasi di Banua Lima bersifat damai, adaptif, dan kolaboratif, sehingga menjadi model dakwah yang relevan untuk dikembangkan dalam konteks masyarakat lokal masa kini. Rekomendasi diarahkan pada pelestarian situs masjid dan penguatan tradisi keagamaan sebagai warisan sejarah penyebaran Islam di Tanah Banjar.

Kata Kunci: Banua Lima, Islamisasi, Dakwah, Sejarah Sosial, Masjid Sakral

Abstract

The history of Islamic dissemination in Banua Lima particularly along the Batang Alai River Basin in Barabai remains poorly documented, resulting in a fragmented understanding of early Islamization in the upstream region compared to the more extensively recorded coastal areas. This study aims to reconstruct the development pattern of Islam in Banua Lima by examining historical traces, the role of sacred mosques, local religious figures, and the acculturation of pre-Islamic traditions. Employing a historical-social approach with heuristic, verification, interpretation, and historiographical stages, data were collected through archival studies, oral histories, site observation of heritage mosques, and documentation of cultural rituals. The findings indicate that Islam spread through three fundamental mechanisms: the establishment

of mosques as centers of religious activities, the empowerment of local figures as key agents of da'wah, and the integration of indigenous traditions such as *Baayun Maulid* and *Batumbang*—into Islamic practice. Heritage mosques in Palajau, Banua Halat, Banua Lawas, and surrounding areas serve as material evidence of the da'wah mission led by Khatib Dayan. The study concludes that the Islamization process in Banua Lima was peaceful, adaptive, and collaborative, forming a da'wah model that remains contextually relevant for contemporary local communities. Further research and preservation of historical mosques and cultural traditions are recommended as strategic efforts to maintain the Islamic historical legacy in South Kalimantan.

Keywords: Banua Lima, Islamization, Da'wah, Social History, Sacred Mosques

Introduction

The historical narrative of Islamic expansion in Banua Lima remains incomplete and fragmented, leaving considerable uncertainty regarding how Islam was first introduced and disseminated in the upstream regions of South Kalimantan. While the history of Islamization in Banjarmasin and other downstream areas is well recorded, the upstream counterpart is marked by gaps in documentation, limited archival evidence, and reliance on oral transmissions that are gradually fading. This imbalance in historical memory has created a critical need to revisit, reconstruct, and contextualize the early phases of Islamic propagation in Banua Lima to restore continuity in the story of Islam in the Banjar world.¹

The urgency of this issue is not merely academic but also cultural and social. Without systematic documentation, historical understanding becomes vulnerable, and the collective memory of religious identity is weakened over time. Traditional practices, sacred heritage sites, and local Islamic wisdom risk disappearing amidst modern transformation if not anchored to verified historical knowledge. Therefore, exploring how Islam developed in Banua Lima is essential to strengthen cultural continuity, provide historical clarity, and safeguard Islamic heritage for future generations.²

Scholarly discussions on Islamization in the wider Indonesian context generally focus on the major coastal kingdoms, trade routes, ulama networks, and political conversion narratives. Research by H. J. de Graaf, Azyumardi Azra, and Karel A. Steenbrink, among others, largely emphasizes Java, Aceh, and the Western Archipelago, while inland Kalimantan receives scant attention.³ This leaves a global research gap: the spread of Islam through river basins and rural hinterlands particularly via local interaction, mosque-building, and cultural adaptation has yet to be fully conceptualized within the Nusantara Islamization model.

At the national and regional level, works by Yusliani Noor and Ita Syamtasyiah Ahyat, for example, contribute to understanding Islamic development in Banjarmasin and

¹ M. Idwar Saleh, *Sejarah Bandjarmasin* (Bandung: Balai Pendidikan Guru, 1958), 17.

² Wajidi, *Akulturas Budaya Banjar Di Banua Halat* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Book Publisher, 2011), 17.

³ Karel A. Steenbrink, "Arsyad Al-Banjari: Pelopor Penulisan Kitab Fikih Dalam Bahasa Melayu," in *Beberapa Aspek Tentang Islam Di Indonesia Abad Ke-19* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), 156–78; Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994).

Martapura, yet studies specifically addressing Banua Lima remain scarce, fragmented, and often descriptive.⁴ Existing literature mentions key figures and historical sites but rarely integrates archaeological findings, oral histories, and socio-cultural dynamics into a coherent narrative. Consequently, an academic gap persists in mapping how Islam was introduced, accepted, and institutionalized in Banua Lima through the establishment of sacred mosques, the empowerment of local leaders, and the integration of Dayak-Banjar traditions⁵

This study emerges from the necessity to answer central questions concerning the pattern of Islamic da'wah in Banua Lima along the Batang Alai River Basin. It seeks to explore how sacred mosques served as religious hubs, how local actors functioned as agents of Islamic propagation, and how local traditions were absorbed and transformed into Islamic ritual life.⁶ The analysis is grounded in social-historical theory and multidimensional historical approaches, drawing on the framework that Islam expands not only through political authority or trade, but also through interaction, adaptation, and cultural negotiation. This aligns with Islamic teachings on da'wah through wisdom, persuasion, and cultural sensitivity, reinforcing the religious relevance of this research.⁷

The purpose of this study is to reconstruct the historical development of Islam in Banua Lima by identifying da'wah patterns and interpreting material and immaterial evidence left across generations.⁸ Through historical and social methodologies heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography supported by archival review, field observation, and oral testimony, this research aims to produce a comprehensive historical reconstruction grounded in both tangible heritage and living cultural memory.

Ultimately, this work contributes theoretically by expanding the discourse on Islamization beyond coastal-centered narratives, positioning Banua Lima as a valuable case of river-based Islamic dissemination in Southeast Asia. Practically, the findings offer a foundation for cultural preservation, revitalization of historical mosques, and strengthening of Islamic traditions rooted in local identity. This research argues that Islam in Banua Lima did not simply arrive it grew, adapted, and shaped a distinctive religious civilization through intimacy between mosque, tradition, and the community itself.

⁴ Ita Syamtasyah Ahyat, "Perkembangan Islam Di Kesultanan Banjarmasin," *Sosio Humanika Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Sosial Dan Kemanusiaan* (Bandung) 8, no. 1 (2015): 11–20.

⁵ Yusliani Noor, *Islamisasi Banjarmasin Abad Ke-15 Sampai Ke-19* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2016), 15.

⁶ Saleh, *Sejarah Bandjarmasin*.

⁷ Zulfa Jamalie and Fasih Wibowo, *POLA PENYEBARAN ISLAM DI BANUA LIMA (TINJAUAN SEJARAH)*, Lp2m, 2022, <https://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/22196/>; Miranti Anggraini and Zudan Rosyidi, "Adat Mandi Tolak Balak (BEPAPAI) Pada Calon Pengantin Suku Banjar Kuala Tungkal," *Journal of Education Research* 6, no. 4 (2025): 784–90.

⁸ Meldy Muzada Elfa, *Sejarah Masjid Keramat Pelajau Barabai* (Barabai: Badan Pengelola Mesjid Keramat Pelajau, 2002).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on Islamization in the Indonesian archipelago has expanded significantly over the last three decades, drawing attention from historians, anthropologists, Islamic scholars, and sociologists. The majority of scholarly discussions converge on the narrative that Islam spread into Southeast Asia primarily through trading networks, Sufi scholarship, and the formation of Islamic kingdoms, particularly along coastal regions. Works by Azyumardi Azra, Anthony Reid, Karel Steenbrink, and H.J. de Graaf demonstrate strong evidence of interregional Islamic intellectual networks connecting the Middle East, India, and the Malay world. Meanwhile, other studies highlight the syncretic character of Islam in the region, showing how Islam negotiated space with existing belief systems. More recently, academic works have begun to explore micro-histories of Islamization, shifting from macro-political narratives toward local cultural expressions. This trend opens space for research into inland Islamic communities such as those in Kalimantan, which have historically been overshadowed by coastal narratives. Despite the breadth of scholarship, one pattern remains clear, the historiography of Islamic expansion is rich at the shoreline but sparse in the hinterland.⁹

The first major trend in Islamic historiography concerns factors driving Islamization (*the red theme*), focusing on catalysts that enabled Islam to enter and thrive within indigenous social structures.¹⁰ Scholars commonly attribute the rise of Islam in Indonesia to maritime trade routes, the mobility of Arab–Gujarat traders, and the role of Sufi intellectuals in transmitting doctrine through teaching and personal charisma.¹¹ This perspective emphasizes that Islam prospered because of its flexible nature, adaptability to local customs, and ability to merge with pre-existing social norms. In Kalimantan, the formation of Islamic power in Banjar Kingdom during the 16th century is often recognized as the turning point of Islamization, where political conversion acted as the institutional gateway to Islam. Yet, this factor-based approach tends to place political centers and trading hubs as the main drivers, inadvertently assuming that peripheral regions such as Banua Lima were passive recipients. The literature rarely explores how Islam survived, evolved, and gained authority in inland society independently of coastal religious institutions. This presents a conceptual gap the socio-cultural factors that allowed Islam to grow upstream remain underexplored and potentially unique.

The second research trend discusses Islamization as a socio-cultural process (*the yellow theme*), emphasizing da'wah, ritual transformation, and knowledge transmission. Scholars such as Merle Ricklefs and M.C. Ricklefs highlight that the embedding of Islam into

⁹ Rahmadsyah Tanjung, “Sejarah Perkembangan Seni Pada Bangunan Istana Lima Laras Abad Ke-19,” *Ability: Journal of Education and Social Analysis*, 2022, 9–18; Yusliani Noor, “Sejarah Perkembangan Islam Di Banjarmasin Dan Peran Kesultanan Banjar Abad XV-XIX,” *Jurnal Al Banjari* 11, no. 2 (2012): 239–63.

¹⁰ Abdul Wahab Syakhrani et al., “Interaksi Islam Dengan Kebudayaan Banjar,” *Cross-Border* 6, no. 1 (2023): 507–25.

¹¹ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII*.

local identity was gradual, occurring through intermarriage, sufistic teachings, literacy in Arabic texts, and the establishment of religious gatherings. In many regions, mosques acted as community-driven centers for learning, dispute resolution, and ritual practice. Several works on Javanese and Sumatran Islam reveal how local practices were not erased but absorbed and Islamized, forming hybrid cultural expressions. However, research specifically addressing the process of Islamization in South Kalimantan's inland river basin is extremely limited. Existing writings mostly acknowledge the presence of pre-Islamic traditions, yet seldom analyze how rituals like *baayun maulid* or *batumbang* transitioned from cultural ceremony to Islamic devotional practice. Moreover, studies have not yet mapped how figures like Khatib Dayan and local ulama structured religious education beyond major coastal pesantren networks. Thus, the mechanisms through which Islam was taught, negotiated, and internalized in Banua Lima remain largely unrecorded and unwritten into broader Islamic historiography.¹²

The third trend concerns the impact and legacy of Islamization (*the green theme*), focusing on how Islam reshaped social structures, legal norms, architecture, and collective memory. Research in Aceh, Demak, and Minangkabau demonstrates how Islam influenced governance, inheritance law, community ethics, and built religious monuments that survive today. In the Banjar context, Masjid Sultan Suriansyah and Masjid Al-Karomah Martapura are often referenced as architectural legacy of early Islamic authority, yet inland heritage such as Masjid Palajau, Banua Halat, and Banua Lawas is rarely foregrounded in academic discourse.¹³ These structures, along with oral genealogies and cultural practices, reflect a deep-rooted Islamic presence that extends far beyond royal centers. While some ethnographic works mention these sites, they do not examine them as historical evidence capable of reconstructing inland Islamic development. Consequently, the long-term impact of Islamization in Banua Lima including the shaping of religious identity, cultural resilience, and local Islamic character remains academically undervalued and methodologically underinvestigated. This creates space to interpret architecture, sacred sites, and ancestral traditions as living archives rather than mere cultural remnants.¹⁴

Despite these advancements, the limitations of previous studies demonstrate noticeable gaps. Much literature gravitates toward macro-centers of Islamic authority, often assuming downstream-to-upstream religious diffusion without critically tracing how Islam

¹² De Roy Jacob Jansz, *Borneo En Atchin* (Leiden: Pieter Vander Aa Boekverkoer, 1706).

¹³ Elfa, *Sejarah Masjid Keramat Pelajau Barabai*.

¹⁴ Fudiat Suryadikara, "Meninjau Masuknya Islam Ke Kalimantan Selatan," *Seminar Prasejarah Masuknya Islam Ke Kalimantan Selatan* (Banjarmasin), 1973; Fazry Hairullah, "Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Miskin Melalui Program Padat Karya Tunai Desa Dalam Perspektif Ekonomi Pembangunan Islam (Studi Kasus Desa Banua Lawas Kabupaten Kotabaru)," *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence, Economic and Legal Theory* 2, no. 1 (2024): 286–99.

gained legitimacy and permanence inland.¹⁵ Scholars tend to rely on written chronicles and formal royal archives, which leads to a historical silence surrounding peripheral regions lacking textual documentation.¹⁶ Oral traditions are frequently considered supplementary rather than primary evidence, diminishing their potential to shape historiography. Moreover, the absence of interdisciplinary method combining historical science, anthropology, and material culture means that heritage mosques and cultural rituals have yet to be interpreted as historical data.¹⁷ In Banua Lima, knowledge of early Islam largely exists through community memory; without systematic research, this intangible heritage risks being lost. Therefore, there is a necessity for fieldwork-driven studies capable of bridging narrative gaps and elevating local testimony, architecture, and ritual as scholarly sources.¹⁸

Responding to these research gaps, this study positions itself as a novel contribution by reconstructing the history of Islamization in Banua Lima through an integrated approach. Unlike previous scholarship that privileges coastal chronicles, this research reorients the locus of analysis toward inland river civilization. It employs oral history, mosque architecture, local tradition, and community narratives as legitimate evidence alongside textual sources. The study offers a new perspective that Islamization inland was not merely derivative of coastal kingdom expansion but evolved through a dynamic interplay between mosque-establishment, religious agents, and cultural transformation.¹⁹ The novelty of this research lies in mapping sacred mosques as spatial anchors of early dakwah, identifying local figures as independent religious mobilizers, and analyzing ritual acculturation as an embodiment of Islamic adaptation. Through this direction, the study contributes a micro-historical model of Islamization that broadens national historiography and offers a replicable

¹⁵ R. Rahmadi, “Membincang Proses Islamisasi Kawasan Kalimantan Dari Berbagai Teori,” *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 18, no. 2 (2020): 261–86, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v18i2.4164>; Noor, *Islamisasi Banjarmasin Abad Ke-15 Sampai Ke-19*.

¹⁶ S. Selvia, “Historical Construction of Local Islamic Culture in Central Kalimantan: Bibliographic Study of Islamic History Writing,” *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Pemikiran Islam* 8, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.23971/njppi.v8i2.8226>; A. Bangsa, “Penyebaran Agama Islam Di Kalimantan Selatan Pada Masa Kesultanan Pangeran Samudera,” *Tarbiyah Darussalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan Dan Keagamaan* 9, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.58791/tadrs.v9i01.230>.

¹⁷ H. Monady, “Vernacular Mosque Architecture as Evidence of Local Islamization Patterns in Kalimantan,” *Al-Mada*, 2023, <https://e-journal.uac.ac.id/index.php/almada/article/view/5388>; Fitriyani Arifin, “Akulturasi Budaya Pada Interior Arsitektur Masjid Tua Al-Wahhab Bontang,” *Jurnal Kreatif: Desain Produk Industri Dan Arsitektur* 12, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.46964/jkdpia.v12i1.755>; A. B. Ahmad and W. K. Mujani, “Interior Motifs and Designs of the Malacca Mosque: A Discussion of the Kampung Kling Mosque,” *Journal of Islam and Science* 2, no. 1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.24252/jis.v2i1.2167>.

¹⁸ Hermanto and Suryanti, “Sejarah Masjid Al-Iman Di Desa Telaga, Kamipang, Kabupaten Katingan, Kalimantan Tengah, 1939–2020,” *Syams: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 2, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.23971/js.v2i2.3874>; S. Sulaiman, “Pertautan Emosi Sejarah, Magis, Dan Penjaga Mazhab: Analisis Terhadap Masjid Agung Kyai Gede Di Kotawaringin Barat, Kalimantan Tengah,” *IBDA: Jurnal Kajian Islam Dan Budaya* 12, no. 1 (2021): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.24090/ibda.v12i1.438>.

¹⁹ S. Juwono, S. Rukayah, and N. Lutfiana, “Regionalism in Design Development: Contemporary Mosque Architecture in Indonesia,” *TAJDID* 30, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.36667/tajdid.v30i1.1537>.

framework for similar inland regions across the archipelago. Ultimately, this work seeks to reposition Banua Lima within the intellectual landscape of Indonesian Islamic history not as a peripheral narrative, but as a foundational chapter of inland Islamization with its own agency, legacy, and identity.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative historical design aimed at reconstructing the process of Islamization in Banua Lima along the Batang Alai River Basin. Historical inquiry is chosen because the object of study is rooted in past events, collective memory, and cultural continuity that cannot be measured solely through quantitative indicators. Rather than seeking numerical generalization, the study emphasizes depth of interpretation, contextual meaning, and narrative reconstruction. In line with the logic of historical methodology, the research follows four fundamental stages: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography to ensure that past events are traced, verified, and narrated with academic rigor. The qualitative historical approach enables the researcher to engage closely with material evidence in heritage mosques, oral testimonies from local custodians, and traditional rituals that reflect Islamic influence over centuries.²⁰

The unit of analysis in this study focuses on mosques, figures, and cultural practices associated with the early development of Islam in Banua Lima. Mosques such as Masjid Palajau, Masjid Banua Halat, and Masjid Pusaka Banua Lawas are treated not merely as architectural objects but as living cultural archives containing historical layers. Their physical structure, oral legends, and ritual functions become analytical entry points to trace the trajectory of da'wah in upstream Kalimantan. Religious figures, particularly the lineage connected to Khatib Dayan and subsequent ulama who continued his mission, are examined as agents of Islamization operating within local community structures. Meanwhile, cultural traditions such as *baayun maulid*, *batumbang*, and other ritual forms constitute the third unit of analysis representing how Islam negotiated and gradually transformed local belief systems. These units are interrelated; mosques provide spatial anchors, figures provide intellectual and spiritual leadership, and traditions reflect the internalization of Islamic identity within daily life.²¹

Data in this study are constructed from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data comprise oral histories collected from elders, mosque caretakers, local religious leaders, and community members who inherit knowledge of ancestral traditions. Field documentation of mosque architecture, gravestones, relics, and ritual spaces also serves as direct evidence. Secondary sources involve written publications, colonial archives, manuscripts, regional historiographies, and scholarly works on Banjar Islamization. Textual

²⁰ HA Hafidzi, *Metode Penelitian Hukum Normatif Dan Empiris: Teori Dan Praktik*, no. Query date: 2025-07-03 06:57:07 (2024).

²¹ Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pengantar sejarah Indonesia baru, 1500-1900: Dari emporium sampai imperium* (Gramedia, 1987), 6.

references include previous historical studies on South Kalimantan, government cultural reports, and academic articles addressing Islamization in Indonesia. The integration of both data types strengthens the credibility of historical reconstruction, acknowledging that written archives alone are not sufficient in regions where history survives predominantly through memory and physical heritage. Using multilayered evidence enables triangulation—an important strategy in historical research to minimize bias and enhance interpretive reliability.²²

Data collection applies three main techniques: archival study, field observation, and semi-structured interviews. Archival study is conducted by reviewing historical documents, books, manuscripts, and academic literature relevant to South Kalimantan's Islamic development. This step establishes a chronological framework and comparative context. Field observation focuses on mosque sites and cultural locations, where the researcher records architectural details, inscriptions, layout patterns, and symbolic elements that indicate Islamic inheritance. Photographic documentation and field notes are taken to capture empirical indicators. Semi-structured interviews are held with key informants including ulama, community leaders, cultural practitioners, and elderly residents who possess genealogical knowledge. Interviews are open-ended to allow narrative flow while maintaining thematic direction around mosque history, da'wah stories, and ritual transformation. These three techniques complement one another: archival records provide structure, field observation provides material context, and oral testimony provides lived memory.

The data analysis process follows a historical analytic technique that moves systematically from evidence gathering to narrative interpretation. First, heuristic analysis is applied to collect as many relevant sources as possible without early interpretation. Second, source criticism is conducted to evaluate authenticity, credibility, and potential bias within oral accounts and written documents. Cross-checking between archival content and field testimony ensures that memory-based information is validated through comparative evidence. Third, interpretation is performed by identifying patterns that explain how mosques, figures, and rituals functioned in Islamization processes. The researcher compares spatial spread of mosques, traces familial and scholarly networks, and maps the transformation of traditional practices into Islamic ritual life. Finally, the historiographical stage synthesizes findings into a coherent narrative, reconstructing how Islam developed in Banua Lima not as a passive extension of coastal Islam, but as an active process shaped by local agency, negotiation, and cultural adaptation.

Overall, the methodological structure of this study is designed to not only document historical facts but also to interpret meaning, continuity, and local wisdom embedded within Banua Lima's Islamic heritage. By combining textual records with field-based evidence, this approach aligns with contemporary historiography that recognizes community memory,

²² Azyumardi Azra, *Historiografi Islam kontemporer: wacana, aktualitas, dan aktor sejarah* (Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2002), 4.

ritual, and space as legitimate historical sources. The method also positions the research to fill existing academic gaps by elevating inland Islamic history as a valuable contribution to Indonesian Islamic studies. Through this design, the study aims to produce a historically grounded, culturally enriched reconstruction of Islamization that reflects the lived reality of Banua Lima communities.

RESULTS

Religious Practices, Sacred Spaces, and Local Traditions

The empirical findings of this study reveal that the spread of Islam in Banua Lima was concretely manifested through the establishment of sacred mosques, the presence of local religious leaders, and the continuation of ritual traditions that reflect Islamic influence. Physical sites such as Masjid Palajau, Masjid Banua Halat, and Masjid Pusaka Banua Lawas stand as material evidence of early Islamic activity upstream, functioning not only as houses of worship but also as educational, social, and judicial centers. The presence of carved wooden pillars, tombstones, and layout patterns indicate a long-standing religious tradition that predates modern administrative Islamic structures. These findings affirm the idea that Islam was not merely introduced but embedded and lived within cultural fabric of local society, especially through sacred spaces functioning as communal identity markers.²³

In other words, Islamization in Banua Lima did not unfold only through textual or doctrinal transmission but through embodied religious practices within communal space. The mosques served as living institutions where prayer, learning, social deliberation, and ritual ceremonies were held continuously across generations. Traditions such as *baayun maulid* and *batumbang* demonstrate how Islam interacted with existing customs rather than replacing them abruptly. The material evidence aligns with oral testimonies that describe the arrival of religious figures, the construction of mosques, and the gradual acceptance of Islam by local communities.²⁴

A closer look at the descriptive layer reveals how these religious practices were intertwined with daily life. *Baayun Maulid*, for example, is performed to introduce infants to the Prophet Muhammad's legacy, indicating the centrality of the maulid tradition in nurturing Islamic identity from the earliest stage of life. The ceremonial rituals involve reciting *shalawat*, singing *barzanji*, and gently rocking infants in decorated cradles inside the mosque, blending maternal symbolism with religious devotion. Meanwhile, *batumbang*—a communal slaughter

²³ A. Sulaiman, T. Ridwan, and M. Munir, "Participatory Approach in Islamic Community Development: Lessons from Rural Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Development Studies* 6, no. 2 (2021): 211–28, <https://doi.org/10.34199/jids.v6i2.289>; Hamdani Ginting and N. Yasmin, "Sejarah Dan Peran Masjid Lama Kota Kabanjahe Dalam Dakwah Islam (1902–2024)," *Kaganga: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Riset Sosial Humaniora* 7, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.31539/kaganga.v7i2.13579>; Tanjung, "Sejarah Perkembangan Seni Pada Bangunan Istana Lima Laras Abad Ke-19"; Ahyat, "Perkembangan Islam Di Kesultanan Banjarmasin."

²⁴J.J. Ras, *Hikajat Banjar: A Study in Malay Historiography*, h.179.

ritual often conducted after harvest or personal vows—reflects the Islamic regulation of animal sacrifice (qurban) integrated into agrarian cycles. Both traditions reveal how Islam was localized and rooted in communal meaning, transforming customary rites into expressions of Islamic virtue.

The mosques themselves provide structural evidence of religious continuity. Wooden pillars without nails, layered roof structures, and mihrab orientations suggest influences from early Banjar architectural forms, similar to the coastal Masjid Sultan Suriansyah yet adapted to inland craftsmanship. Tombstones near the mosques bear Arabic calligraphy and hijri dates, marking scholarly lineage and honoring early religious teachers. The narrative of Khatib Dayan, transmitted through generations, is remembered not only as a figure of da'wah but as a cultural founder of Islam in Banua Lima. These findings support the argument that Islam developed through spatial institutionalization and ritual reproduction rather than state administration alone. The descriptive dimension therefore forms the empirical foundation for deeper analytical interpretation.

Factors Shaping Islamization in Banua Lima

Beyond the descriptive layer, the analysis identifies three interrelated factors that critically shaped Islamization in Banua Lima: (1) the strategic function of mosques as socio-religious hubs, (2) the role of local religious figures in knowledge transmission, and (3) cultural negotiation between Islamic teachings and pre-existing customs. These factors operated simultaneously, creating a multi-layered process of religious acceptance rather than a singular conversion event. Islam grew through persuasion, teaching, and ritual adaptation, enabling the community to adopt Islamic norms without rupturing social harmony. This organic model differs from coastal Islamization that was often state-supported and militarily guarded.²⁵

Put differently, mosques were not passive structures but active engines of Islamization. They hosted Quranic learning circles, served as places for legal consultation, and strengthened communal bonds through collective rituals. Local ulama acted as mediators between textual Islam and cultural identity, translating doctrine into familiar symbols and rhythms. The negotiation between Islam and local tradition allowed communities to internalize religious values gradually, forming a syncretic yet orthodox religiosity. Islam was thus accepted because it harmonized rather than clashed with existing values.

This evidence challenges the dominant historiographical assumption that Islamization in Kalimantan was predominantly driven by the coastal kingdom. While the Banjar Sultanate played a role in legitimizing Islam politically, the inland region developed its religious character through local agency where community leaders, not royal authority, served as primary transmitters of Islam. Oral narratives describe Khatib Dayan's journeys

²⁵ Jamalie and Wibowo, *POLA PENYEBARAN ISLAM DI BANUA LIMA (TINJAUAN SEJARAH)*.

through the river system to establish places of worship and mentor disciples who later continued the da'wah. This indicates that Islamization upstream relied more on charismatic authority and intimate teaching, rather than institutional power. The persistence of mosque-based rituals further suggests that religious knowledge was reproduced through performance, memory, and everyday life.²⁶

Existing literature often underestimates the importance of local ritual as a mechanism of religious internalization. In Banua Lima, rituals did not simply incorporate Islamic elements—they became Islamic by adopting Quranic recitations, invoking the Prophet, and aligning intentions with *niyah ibadah*. This transformation implies agency, negotiation, and selective adaptation, reflecting a complex process rather than automatic conversion. Critically, these findings reveal that Islamization in Banua Lima was bottom-up, decentralized, and culturally embedded. This insight contributes a corrective perspective to Indonesian Islamic historiography, which has long prioritized coastal narratives.

Model Development and Implications of Islamization

The combined descriptive and critical findings lead to a transformative insight: Islamization in Banua Lima constitutes a river-based, mosque-centric, tradition-integrative model. Unlike state-driven religious expansion, the Banua Lima model evolved through everyday ritual performance, spatial continuity of sacred sites, and intergenerational transmission of Islamic memory. The mosque anchors religious life, the ulama provides intellectual leadership, and tradition acts as the cultural vehicle that carries Islamic meaning across time.

Reformulated, the Banua Lima case demonstrates that Islamic growth inland is not merely an extension of coastal Islam but an autonomous cultural process. This suggests a new framework for understanding Islamization beyond port kingdoms and trade. The transformative axis of this research lies in recognizing that tradition is not a residue of pre-Islamic belief but a platform through which Islam lives, evolves, and becomes identity. This transforms how Islamic historiography views peripheral regions—from passive receivers into active creators of Islam. From these results, a three-pillar model of inland Islamization can be proposed:

Component	Function	Implication
Mosque as Spatial Anchor	Centre of worship, education, social deliberation	Islam grows as a lived space, not only a doctrine
Religious Figures as Intellectual Carriers	Transmit teaching, form disciples, negotiate norms	Da'wah spreads through personal authority and trust

²⁶ Adinda Tasya Namira, “Rekam Jejak Kesultanan Banjar: Relasi Kuasa Sosial-Politik Hingga Transformasi Kultural Berdasarkan Tinggalan Budayanya” (FIB Universitas Indonesia, 2018); M. Fahmi Al Amruzi, “Islamic Law in the Marriage Tradition Banjar Community,” *JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC AND LAW STUDIES* 9, no. 2 (2025): 1–14.

Component	Function	Implication
Tradition as Cultural Medium	Ritualization of Islamic memory	Islam becomes identity through performance, not coercion

This model implies that Islamic expansion thrives where religion is spatially rooted, socially embodied, and ritually enacted. The case of Banua Lima therefore provides a blueprint for other hinterland communities in Southeast Asia, affirming that the strength of Islam lies not in political power alone but in cultural integration.

The transformative impact of this research is twofold. Academically, it expands Islamic historiography into inland perspectives, offering new vocabulary for scholarship: *river-based Islamization, mosque-centric heritage, ritual as memory*. Practically, the findings support cultural preservation policy and encourage revitalization of sacred mosques and local traditions as heritage tourism and community education. Recognizing these sites as historical evidence can inspire documentation programs, archival digitization, and integration of ritual knowledge into Islamic curriculum. In this way, Banua Lima is not merely a subject of history but a living laboratory of Islamic civilization.²⁷

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that Islamization in Banua Lima emerged as a gradual, community-driven process anchored in sacred mosques, ritual practices, and the intellectual authority of local religious figures. Instead of a singular conversion event, Islamization unfolded through everyday life prayers, celebrations of *maulid*, sacrificial rituals, and moral teachings embedded in social interaction. The three central dimensions constructed in the results descriptive, critical, and transformative show that Islam inland grew through spatial institutionalization, charismatic leadership, and cultural adaptation. The descriptive dimension demonstrates how material traces like mosques and tombstones serve as living archives of religious presence. The critical dimension identifies the factors enabling this process, particularly the strategic role of mosques and the persistent work of local ulama. The transformative dimension formulates a model for inland Islamization that highlights how tradition functions as a medium through which Islam becomes memory and identity. Collectively, these insights reposition Banua Lima not as a peripheral extension of coastal Islam but as a region with its own religious agency, capable of shaping a distinctive Islamic civilization.

Contextually, Banua Lima is an intersection of river-based settlement patterns, agrarian livelihood, and Dayak–Banjar cultural interaction. Historically, Dayak communities in the upstream regions practiced animistic beliefs, ancestor worship, and ritual offerings,

²⁷ Muhammad Hafiz Fadhillah, “Harmoni Tradisi Dan Syariat: Telaah Bapingit Dalam Pernikahan Adat Banjar Perspektif Maqasid Syariah Al-Syathibi,” *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Jurisprudence, Economic and Legal Theory* 2, no. 4 (2024): 2257–69; Slamet Hambali, “Kontekstualisasi Fikih Dalam Tradisi Lokal: Pendekatan Antropologis-Normatif,” *Jurnal Antropologi Hukum Islam* 16, no. 1 (2023): 123–45.

while Banjar societies in the downstream areas developed Islamic kingdoms and commercial networks. The spread of Islam across river routes created zones of cultural negotiation where belief systems encountered one another. In Banua Lima, Islam did not enter through violent rupture but through gradual persuasion, allowing syncretic transitions where local customs were reinterpreted rather than erased. Rituals such as *baayun maulid*, originally linked to fertility and communal blessing, were Islamicized through Qur'anic recitation and celebration of the Prophet's birth. Likewise, *batumbang* incorporated Islamic jurisprudence on animal sacrifice, blending local ceremony with Islamic law. This reflects a pattern similar to Malay Islamization in coastal Sumatra and Kalimantan, yet with inland characteristics shaped by tight kinship, land-based cosmology, and oral transmission rather than formal state schooling. Thus, the Islamization of Banua Lima cannot be fully understood without considering its socio-cultural ecology, where rivers act as highways of mobility and mosques as anchors of settlement identity.

From a theoretical standpoint, the Banua Lima case illustrates what scholars describe as hybrid modernity, where tradition and religious norms coexist without eliminating one another. Islam in this context operates as a *living law*—not merely doctrine codified in texts but a norm internalized through collective practice. These findings resonate with legal anthropological perspectives that view law and religion as cultural processes negotiated in everyday interaction. The mosque becomes more than a religious building; it becomes a legal arena where disputes are mediated, marriages are blessed, and moral values are taught through custom. This blurs boundaries between *syariah* and *adat*, creating a normative system where Islamic principles gain legitimacy through social acceptance. The hybridization of Dayak-Banjar customs with Islamic values illustrates that religious change is neither linear nor binary but dialogical. This reinforces the theoretical claim that Islamization is strongest when it flows through tradition rather than suppressing it. The Banua Lima case therefore contributes to broader debates in Islamic studies about how religion evolves when interacting with indigenous cosmology—producing a model where Islam becomes localized without losing theological essence.

Through this analysis, a deeper understanding emerges: Islam in Banua Lima is not merely a religious identity but a cultural memory sustained by ritual performance. Children introduced to *baayun maulid* grow up with emotional familiarity to Islamic symbols; families participating in *batumbang* renew spiritual connection through communal sacrifice. The repetition of rituals generates what anthropologists call *embodied knowledge*—knowledge that lives in the body before it lives in the text. This study shows that material culture such as mosques and tombstones works alongside intangible culture such as chanting and storytelling, creating multiple entry points for religious continuity. The insight is that religion survives not only because it is taught but because it is experienced. Islam becomes heritage, grounded in soil, sung in prayer, and carried in memory. This has scientific implications for studying inland Islam: textual archives alone cannot reconstruct historical consciousness.

Instead, oral narratives, architecture, and ritual behavior must be treated as primary data. The Banua Lima case teaches that history is not only what is written but what is lived.

Compared to previous literature that emphasizes coastal kingdoms as engines of Islamization, this study highlights a different mechanism inland Islamization led by local actors through sacred spaces and tradition. Works by Azra, Ricklefs, and Reid focus on networked ulama, trade, and royal patronage, providing valuable macro-perspectives but leaving inland regions underrepresented. Research on Banjar history often privileges Banjarmasin and Martapura, mentioning Banua Lima only in passing as a hinterland territory. This study diverges by centering Banua Lima, proving that the region contributes uniquely to the Islamic map of Kalimantan. Unlike studies that treat ritual syncretism as residue of pre-Islamic belief, this research shows ritual as an Islamic strategy of cultural integration. The three-pillar model—mosque, figure, tradition—offers a conceptual framework not found in earlier Banjar historiography. This comparative positioning demonstrates that the study does not replicate but expands existing scholarly discourse, filling methodological and geographical gaps within Indonesian Islamic historiography.

The implications of this research unfold across theoretical, practical, and policy domains. Theoretically, it advances inland Islamic historiography by proposing a river-based, mosque-centric Islamization model that can be applied to other rural Muslim formations in Southeast Asia. Practically, the findings support efforts to preserve heritage mosques as historical archives and living cultural spaces—suggesting documentation, restoration, and educational programs for sacred sites in Banua Lima. Policy implications involve integrating local Islamic traditions into regional cultural protection frameworks, heritage tourism development, and Islamic education curricula. Local governments, religious institutions, and cultural communities can collaborate to formalize ritual practices like *baayun maulid* as intangible cultural heritage. This research also contributes to contemporary da'wah strategy, suggesting that effective propagation today must respect local wisdom and utilize cultural symbolism rather than rely solely on textual preaching. In these ways, Banua Lima is not a relic of the past but a foundation for future Islamic scholarship, identity strengthening, and cultural sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Islamization of Banua Lima was not an instantaneous conversion nor an extension of coastal royal authority, but a gradual cultural process built upon everyday religious practice, sacred spatial continuity, and intergenerational memory. Mosques such as Palajau, Banua Halat, and Banua Lawas functioned as the earliest centers of Islamic institutionalization, shaping communal identity through worship, education, and social deliberation. Ritual traditions like *baayun maulid* and *batumbang* further reveal how Islamic teachings were internalized through familiar cultural forms, transforming local customs into expressions of faith rather than eliminating them. The findings demonstrate that Islam in Banua Lima grew through the interaction of three pillars—mosque, religious

figures, and tradition—leading to a distinctive inland Islamic civilization. This research contributes to Indonesian Islamic historiography by shifting scholarly attention from coastal narratives to inland dynamics, offering an alternative model that enriches the understanding of Islam’s spread in Southeast Asia beyond political and maritime frameworks.

Theoretically, this study advances the discourse on hybrid Islamic modernities and *living law* by showing how religious norms become authoritative when embedded in cultural performance and spatial ritualization. It supports the notion that Islamization is strongest when transmitted through social negotiation and emotional familiarity rather than exclusively through doctrinal enforcement. The “river-based, mosque-centric, tradition-integrated” model proposed here demonstrates how Islam localizes itself through space, memory, and embodiment. Methodologically, this research highlights the value of integrating historical data with ethnographic evidence—oral testimony, architectural observation, and ritual documentation—as primary sources for reconstructing inland Islamic history. The approach responds to the scarcity of written archives by validating material and intangible cultural heritage as legitimate historical archives. This reflection may inspire future historians to look beyond textual dependency and engage with living communities as repositories of historical consciousness. In this sense, Banua Lima becomes not only a case study but a methodological example for studying other inland regions where Islamic memory survives outside written script.

Practically, this research offers foundational insight for cultural preservation, da’wah development, and regional heritage policy. Local governments and religious institutions may adopt the findings to protect sacred mosques as historical sites, formalize rituals such as *baayun maulid* as intangible cultural heritage, and integrate Banua Lima’s Islamic legacy into educational curricula and heritage tourism. For contemporary da’wah, the study emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity and tradition-based engagement as a pathway to religious awareness—an approach that remains relevant for multi-ethnic communities today. Future research can expand this work by conducting archaeological mapping of mosque sites, exploring manuscript traditions of inland ulama, and comparing Banua Lima with other upstream Islamic formations in Borneo and the Malay world. Interdisciplinary collaboration involving historians, anthropologists, architects, and religious scholars would enrich understanding of spatial-religious memory. Ultimately, this research invites future scholarship to continue uncovering inland Islamic narratives that have long remained unspoken—ensuring that Banua Lima is recognized not only as a historical witness but as a vibrant chapter in the evolving story of Islam in Indonesia.

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