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## Empowerment of Remaja Masjid Raya Limo Kaum in Preserving Culture and Historical Values in Tanah Datar Regency

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to analyze the role of the youth of Masjid Raya Limo Kaum in preserving the cultural and historical values of Nagari Limo Kaum, Tanah Datar Regency. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this field research utilized observation, interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that the mosque youth are actively involved in various preservation activities, including traditional schools, martial arts training, cultural seminars, and the upkeep of the tomb of the mosque's founding figure. Nevertheless, several challenges persist, such as waning interest among young people in mosque-related activities, low appreciation for elders, and the pervasive influence of technological advancements. This study recommends a synergistic integration of tradition and innovation, particularly through the use of social media to introduce historical values to the younger generation. In doing so, it is hoped that local culture can be preserved and made relevant to the present generation.*

**Keywords:** *Empowerment, Cultural Preservation, Historical Values*

## INTRODUCTION

Minangkabau, located in West Sumatra, is a region rich in traditions and cultural characteristics that remain well-preserved. One such cultural center is located in Nagari Limo Kaum, Lima Kaum District, Tanah Datar Regency, where the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque, the oldest mosque in West Sumatra, is located. This mosque not only serves as a place of worship but also preserves various historical and cultural elements worthy of preservation (Hasibuan et al. 2023).

Preservation is defined as a dynamic effort to maintain the existence and value of culture through protection, development, and sustainable utilization (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11, 2010). Cultural preservation is a manifestation of love for ancestral heritage, enabling cultural values to be protected and developed so they can be passed down from generation to generation. This process ideally involves all groups, from children and adolescents to adults. However, the involvement of the younger generation, especially adolescents,

is crucial because they have a mindset that is in line with current developments, ensuring optimal and sustainable cultural preservation (Sony et al. 2021).

One strategic forum for cultural preservation within the mosque environment is the mosque youth organization. The mosque youth organization facilitates the activities of Muslim youth in improving the mosque and developing themselves in the fields of Islam, knowledge, youth, and skills (Bustani, 2016). The existence of the mosque youth serves important functions, including: (1) improving the mosque through participation in congregational worship, (2) developing community members for leadership regeneration, (3) continuously developing Muslim youth, and (4) supporting various mosque congregation activities (Karakter, 2019).

Previous research has shown that the role of mosque youth in cultural preservation still faces various obstacles, including a lack of interest from the younger generation and the influence of modernization (Mutiara, 2021). On the other hand, several studies emphasize the importance of innovative approaches utilizing technology to attract youth interest in mosque-based activities (Siregar, 2022). This research expands on these studies by focusing on the local context of the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque,

which possesses a unique cultural and historical richness in the Minangkabau region.

The Limo Kaum Grand Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in West Sumatra, boasts unique cultural and historical aspects. These include the wall carvings, a distinctive feature of the mosque's prayer hall, and the traditional mangglai anyang, a culinary specialty. Historical aspects include the water reservoir created by youths in ancient times, as well as the mosque's pillars and windows, which symbolize the many chiefs and tribes of Nagari Limo Kaum, serving as a reminder for future generations.

However, in practice, efforts to preserve the culture and historical values at the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque face various challenges, including modernization, lifestyle changes, and low youth interest. Based on this background, this study aims to: (1) analyze the forms of empowerment undertaken by youth at the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque in preserving culture and historical values, and (2) identify the challenges faced by youth in these preservation efforts. This research is expected to provide insight into the role of youth in cultural preservation and recommendations for developing more effective empowerment programs.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a field research method with a descriptive qualitative approach. This method was chosen because it allowed the researcher to conduct direct observations at the research site and gather in-depth data from participants (Handayani, 2020). The descriptive approach aims to describe, explain, and elaborate on the conditions and various variables observed in the context of youth empowerment at the mosque.

The research location focused on the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque, located in Jorong Tigo Tumpuak, Nagari Limo Kaum, Lima Kaum District, Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatra Province. The research was conducted in July until comprehensive data collection was complete.

The research subjects were selected purposively, including mosque administrators, the mosque secretary, the youth leader, and community leaders who play a role in preserving the mosque's cultural and historical values. Subject selection was based on their in-depth knowledge and direct involvement in preservation activities at the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque.

The primary instrument in this research was the researcher herself, acting as the key instrument for gathering

information (Sugiyono 2018) and for collecting and interpreting data (Adolph 2016). To support data collection, the researcher used observation guidelines, semi-structured interview guidelines, and a mobile phone for video and photo recording.

Data sources consisted of two types: (1) Primary data, obtained through direct interviews and observations with mosque administrators, the mosque secretary, the mosque youth leader, and community leaders. (2) Secondary data, obtained from relevant literature, including books, scientific journals, and documents related to the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque.

Data collection techniques were conducted through three methods: (1) Observation, to directly observe the implementation of the mosque youth program in preserving cultural and historical values. (2) Interviews, to gather in-depth information from research subjects. (3) Documentation, to collect data in the form of relevant photos, videos, and written documents.

Data analysis was conducted through three main stages (Hasdiana 2018): (1) Data reduction, which is the process of sorting and selecting information relevant to the research objectives. (2) Data presentation, which is organizing the reduced data into a narrative form for easy understanding. (3)

Conclusion drawing, which is comparing the correspondence of the subjects' statements with the meaning contained in the basic research concept.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, which tests the credibility of the data by comparing information from various methods and sources, including interviews, observations, and written documents (Sugiyono, 2016).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Forms of Preserving Culture and Historical Values**

Based on observations and interviews, researchers identified several forms of empowerment carried out by youth at the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque, as follows: The initial step in empowerment was the formation of an organization for young men and women residing around the mosque, called REMASRA (Remaja Masjid Raya). This organization serves as a coordinating forum and driving force for all youth activities within the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque. This aligns with the opinion that mosque youth organizations are an effective means of developing the potential of the younger generation (Sodiq 2016).

Traditional school activities are an educational effort to introduce procedures for maintaining and functioning the

mosque in accordance with Minangkabau traditional values. Through these activities, the younger generation learns not only technical aspects but also understands the philosophy and cultural meaning behind each element of the mosque. According to Zain (2014), early traditional education is crucial

The mosque youth regularly hold silek training as part of Minangkabau cultural heritage, as well as seminars on the history of the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque. These activities aim to provide the next generation of youth with a deeper understanding of the mosque's history and the function and meaning of each part (Sugiyantoro, 2025).

This activity involves donating a minimum of one thousand rupiah per day, collected for preservation activities, such as cleaning the mosque and cleaning the tomb of Angku Ambuyuk, the mosque's founder, which is carried out routinely before the fasting month. This program demonstrates the integration of religious values and cultural preservation (Siregar, 2022).

### **Challenges Faced by Preserving Culture and Historical Values**

This study also identified four main challenges: One of the biggest obstacles is the difficulty in encouraging youth to attend and be active in the mosque. Based

on interviews, the current number of REMASRA members is only around 20, which is relatively small compared to the number of young people around the mosque. This phenomenon was also found in Muchtar's (2018) research, which showed that the younger generation's interest in mosque activities tends to decline in the digital era. (Suparman, 2018)

The influence of technology and changing lifestyles has led to a decline in the younger generation's respect for their parents and traditional values. This has resulted in a weakening of the transmission of cultural values from the older generation to the younger generation (Rahmawati, 2015).

Changing times have caused the use of old customs and advice to be increasingly abandoned. Many teenagers and even *niniak mamak* (traditional leaders) no longer carry out customary mandates properly, resulting in a decline in community trust in customs (Hidayat, 2025).

Technological developments, particularly the use of mobile phones, have made the younger generation more interested in the digital world than in studying local history and culture. As a result, there has been a loss of understanding of the history and culture of mosques among teenagers (Suhartoyo, 2024).

### **Culture and Historical Values at the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque**

The Limo Kaum Grand Mosque possesses a rich cultural heritage and well-preserved historical values: (1) Weddings: The mosque serves not only as a place of worship but also as a venue for weddings, in accordance with the Adat philosophy of "basandi syara', syara' basandi kitabullah" (Rasyid et al., 2023). (2) Khatam Al-Qur'an Performance: An annual event that invites all officials and community leaders of Nagari Limo Kaum, with the tradition of carrying *talam* (trays) during the parade (Suhartoyo, 2024). (3) *Gulai Anyang*: A typical dish of the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque, created through the creativity of the community in the past due to limited spices. This tradition is still preserved today and has been adopted by other mosques (Rahmat 2019).

The number and size of the pillars symbolize the number of *niniak mamak* (ancestors) in Nagari Limo Kaum. The large pillar in the center of the mosque symbolizes *Datuak Bandaro Kuning*, the head of Nagari Limo Kaum (Pertama, 2025). The 28 windows symbolize the many tribes in Nagari Limo Kaum and serve as a visual representation of the philosophy of Adat Basandi Syara', Syara' Basandi Kitabullah (Ramadhani et al. 2025).

The results of this study indicate that empowering youth at the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque in preserving cultural and historical values is carried out through a holistic approach, encompassing educational aspects (traditional schools and seminars), skills (silek training), socio-religious aspects (almsgiving and grave cleaning), and institutional aspects (the formation of REMASRA). This finding aligns with the opinion that fostering youth at the mosque should include religious guidance, discussions, provision of reading materials, assignment of responsibilities, protection from negative influences, and the promotion of hobbies and sports (Aslati et al. 2018).

The success of the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque in maintaining traditions such as gulai anyang (anyang curry), mosque weddings, and the completion of the Quran demonstrates that the mosque serves as a cultural center for the Minangkabau people, not simply a place of worship. This reinforces the theory that mosques in Minangkabau serve a dual role as surau (houses of worship) and centers for cultural development (Dwi 2025). Research (Khasanah 2019) also confirms that ancient mosques in West Sumatra serve as centers for the preservation of local customs and culture.

However, findings on various challenges indicate that youth

empowerment is not yet optimal. The low interest of the younger generation in attending mosques is a phenomenon also observed in various other regions in Indonesia (Muchtari, 2018). This indicates the need for more creative and contextual approaches, such as utilizing social media and digital technology to introduce cultural and historical values in ways that appeal to Generation Z (Zain, 2014).

The lack of respect for elders and traditions, along with changes in the times that shift traditional values, indicate a crisis in value transmission. According to Hasibuan et al. (2023), cultural sustainability requires an intensive process of socialization and enculturation from an early age. Therefore, existing traditional schools need to be strengthened and expanded. Research (Ramadhani et al. (2025) shows that local wisdom-based programs are effective in increasing youth cultural awareness.



*Picture 1. Youth synergy in worship activities*

The influence of technology, the fourth challenge, can be transformed into

an opportunity if utilized strategically. This study recommends that REMASRA develop digital content about the history and culture of the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque, such as short videos, infographics, and social media campaigns, to reach a wider audience of young people. This approach demonstrates the effectiveness of social media in preserving local culture.

Synergy between mosque administrators, traditional leaders, and mosque youth is key to successful preservation. Strengthening this collaboration is necessary to ensure tradition and innovation can coexist, ensuring local culture remains relevant and acceptable to today's generation amidst the increasingly strong currents of globalization (Marni et al. 2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the youth of the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque play a crucial role in preserving culture and historical values. Empowerment efforts include the formation of the REMASRA organization, holding traditional schools, silek training, history seminars, and a program of giving one thousand alms a day to maintain the Angku Ambuyuk tomb. These activities not only preserve culture but also build the

character of young people with noble morals and a sense of responsibility for their ancestral heritage.

However, preservation efforts face significant challenges, including low interest among the younger generation in attending the mosque, a lack of respect for traditions and elders, changes that shift traditional values, and the negative influence of technology. The cultural and historical values still preserved at the Limo Kaum Grand Mosque, such as wedding traditions, completing the Quran, anyang curry, and the symbolic meaning of the mosque's pillars and windows, are valuable assets that require continued protection.

The Mosque management and REMASRA are advised to develop innovative strategies by utilizing social media and digital platforms as a means of introducing culture and history to the younger generation. Traditional School activities need to be strengthened and made a regular program with a more structured curriculum, and involve the niniak mamak (ancestors) as key resource persons. Collaboration with the Regional Government and the Cultural Heritage Preservation Agency (BPCB) needs to be improved to obtain technical and financial support for mosque preservation efforts as cultural heritage.

The Sedekah Saribu Sahari program can be developed into a broader

social movement involving the entire Nagari Limo Kaum community. Further research is recommended to quantitatively measure the effectiveness of mosque youth empowerment programs and examine the impact of social media use on increasing the younger generation's interest in cultural preservation.

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