

The Role of K.H. Muhammad Tahir (Imam Lapeo) in Integrating Sufi Educational Values in the Spiritual Development of the Mandar Community

Darwis^{a)}, Wahyu Alhidayat^{b)}, Muammar Zuhdi Arsalan^{c)}, Fabry Nuari^{d)}

a) Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Majene, Indonesia

b) Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Majene, Indonesia

c) Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Majene, Indonesia

d) Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Majene, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Nilai-nilai pendidikan berbasis tasawuf memiliki peran penting dalam menumbuhkan kesadaran spiritual yang sangat diperlukan untuk menghadapi tantangan zaman. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan upaya K.H. Muhammad Tahir (Imam Lapeo) dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai pendidikan melalui pendekatan tasawuf pada masyarakat Mandar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan historis, dan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara serta dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Imam Lapeo, sebagai seorang pendakwah dan pendidik Islam yang berpengaruh, menanamkan nilai-nilai pendidikan tasawuf utama, yaitu sabar, zuhud, ikhlas, dan taubat kepada masyarakat Mandar. Perannya sebagai pendakwah, pengajar, dan teladan sangat penting. Nilai-nilai ini disampaikan melalui metode yang beragam: nilai sabar melalui praktik sosial dan ibadah, nilai zuhud dengan menunjukkan hidup sederhana, nilai ikhlas melalui ceramah, pengajaran langsung, dan partisipasi dalam aktivitas sosial, serta nilai taubat melalui metode dakwah yang mudah dipahami. Imam Lapeo berhasil mengintegrasikan ajaran tasawuf dengan pendekatan kontekstual, memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap pembentukan karakter dan spiritualitas masyarakat Mandar.

ABSTRACT

The values embedded in Sufi-oriented education play a vital role in cultivating spiritual awareness, which is increasingly relevant in addressing contemporary societal challenges. This study explores the efforts of K.H. Muhammad Tahir (Imam Lapeo) in instilling educational values grounded in Sufism within the Mandar community. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method with a historical approach, data were gathered through interviews and document analysis. The findings indicate that Imam Lapeo, a respected Islamic preacher and educator, promoted core Sufi values patience (sabar), asceticism (zuhud), sincerity (ikhlas), and repentance (taubat). His roles as preacher, teacher, and moral exemplar were central to this process. These values were transmitted through contextualized and practical methods: sabr through daily religious and social practices; zuhd through a lifestyle of simplicity; ikhlas through sermons, personal instruction, and community service; and taubah through accessible and relatable religious discourse. Imam Lapeo's integration of Sufi teachings with local contexts contributed significantly to the moral and spiritual development of the Mandar community.

KATA KUNCI

Nilai pendidikan tasawuf; spiritualitas Islam; K.H. Muhammad Tahir; Masyarakat Mandar; Pengembangan karakter.

KEYWORDS

Sufi education values; Islamic spirituality; K.H. Muhammad Tahir; Mandar community; Character development.

A. Introduction

The implementation of the Sufi approach in various Islamic educational institutions has shown a positive impact on both students' character formation and academic development. As such, integrating Sufism into Islamic Religious Education is seen as an effective and holistic solution for enhancing the quality of religious education and nurturing a generation of morally upright and responsible youth.¹ Sufism is not only a means of drawing closer to God, but also a guide for cultivating harmonious relationships with fellow beings. Through the study of Sufism, individuals learn the methods of self-purification and how to practice them correctly in daily life. This knowledge is expected to help individuals develop self-control in social interactions and in worldly activities that demand honesty, sincerity, responsibility, trustworthiness, and noble character. Given the essential role of Sufism in supporting a holistic human life, it is not surprising that Sufism has become deeply integrated into the lives of Muslim communities particularly after they have established their foundations in faith and worship through the study of theology ('ilm al-tawḥīd) and jurisprudence (fiqh).²

Sufism, as the spiritual dimension of Islam, plays a vital role not only in nurturing the vertical relationship between humans and God, but also in strengthening social relations grounded in moral values. In the context of Islamic education, the Sufi approach offers a significant alternative for instilling noble character and spiritual resilience particularly in the face of modern challenges that often erode religious and ethical values.³ Various Islamic educational institutions have begun integrating the Sufi approach into their curricula in response to the growing need for education that addresses not only intellectual development but also spiritual and moral growth. Sufism teaches core principles such as patience (ṣabr), sincerity (ikhlaṣ), simplicity (zuhd), and deep repentance (tawbah). These values are believed to shape resilient individuals who can withstand life's pressures while maintaining humility in social interactions. Beyond that, Sufism offers a strong spiritual foundation that enables Muslims to live more meaningful lives. Historically, Sufi practices have been closely intertwined with local cultures in Indonesia, making Sufism an effective medium for religious outreach and community education.⁴

One region with a strong historical legacy in the spread of Sufism-based Islam is Campalagian, located in Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi. In this area, K.H. Muhammad Tahir widely known as Imam Lapeo played a pivotal role as a religious scholar who not only preached but also educated the community through a Sufi-oriented approach. Imam Lapeo is renowned for his significant influence in

¹ Maulana, D. P. P., & Noviani, D. (2023). Pendekatan Tasawuf Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam. *Ihsanika: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 1(4), 123-134.

² Alparizi, A. S. (2022). Pendekatan Tasawuf Dalam Kajian Islam. *Maqasid: Jurnal Studi Keislaman Dan Hukum Ekonomi Syariah*, 10(01), 63-79.

³ Hasam, "Teaching Scientific Tasawufin The Islamic Education System: Exploring Kial Ahmad Khotib's Insights," *European Journal For Philosophy Of Religion* 15, No. 3 (2023): 131–55, <https://doi.org/10.24204/Ejpr.2023.4229>.

⁴ A Mustofa, "A Comparative Study On Forming Sincere And Honest Characteristics Based On Sufism View In Al Urwatul Wutqo And Jampes Boarding School," *Tadris: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2022, <https://ejournal.iainmadura.ac.id/index.php/Tadris/Article/View/5670>.

shaping the spiritual life of the Mandar people through personal example, public sermons, and various socio religious activities.

In the broader context of Islamic propagation, several regions have served as focal points for the dissemination of religious teachings. One such area is the Campalagian District in Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi. The local community here is known for its deep knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings, largely due to the efforts of a prominent religious figure, K.H. Muhammad Tahir, better known as Imam Lapeo. Imam Lapeo was a key figure in the spread of Islam in the Mandar region during the 20th century, employing a variety of strategic approaches in his mission. He is remembered by the community as a devout scholar with a steadfast heart and a strong dedication to the pursuit of knowledge, especially in the field of Islamic studies.⁵

According to Darwis, who examined the relevance of K.H. Muhammad Tahir's Islamic teachings for the millennial generation.⁶ The da'wah strategy in the dissemination of Islam employed by K.H. Muhammad Tahir in Polewali Mandar Regency.⁷ Previous studies have not specifically focused on the educational values embedded in the Sufi approach practiced by K.H. Muhammad Tahir. This represents one of the key novelties of the present study. The significance of educational values rooted in Sufism is considerable, particularly in their potential to foster spiritual awareness an essential capacity in responding to the challenges of contemporary life. The importance of Sufi education lies in its ability to guide individuals toward a deeper understanding of life and spirituality. According to Hidayati, Sufi education emphasizes core values such as patience (*ṣabr*), repentance (*tawbah*), detachment from worldly desires (*zuhd*), and sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*).⁸ Based on these issues, this study seeks to explore how K.H. Muhammad Tahir, also known as Imam Lapeo, sought to instill educational values within the Mandar community through a Sufi-based approach.

Although several studies have highlighted Imam Lapeo's da'wah activities and his contributions to the spread of Islam in the Mandar region, there remains a lack of research specifically examining how he instilled educational values through a Sufi approach. In fact, this approach is a central characteristic of his da'wah and educational methodology. The values promoted by Imam Lapeo such as patience (*ṣabr*), detachment from worldly matters (*zuhd*), sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), and repentance (*tawbah*) were not merely normative concepts, but were actively embodied in the social practices and religious rituals that shaped the everyday lives of the community.

This study aims to address that gap by providing an in-depth description of Imam Lapeo's efforts to integrate Sufi-based educational values into the daily life of the Mandar society. Employing a

⁵ Zuhriah. (2020). *Imam Lapeo Wali Dari Mandar Sulawesi Barat*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Gading.

⁶ Darwis. (2022). Urgensi Ajaran Pendidikan Islam K.H Muhammad Tahir Pada Generasi Milenial. *Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman Dan Kemasyarakatan*, 4, 126.

⁷ Yanita, F. (2024). *Strategi Dakwah Dalam Penyebaran Islam Imam Lapeo Di Kabupaten Polewali Mandar* (Doctoral Dissertation, Iain Parepare).

⁸ Hidayati, I. W. (2019). *Nalar Tasawuf (Sebagai Revolusi Pendidikan Islam)*. Yogyakarta: Dee Publisher.

qualitative descriptive approach combined with historical methods, this research explores how these Sufi values were not only transmitted but also culturally and spiritually internalized by the local community. Such an approach is essential for understanding a model of education that not only shapes individuals externally but also fosters a collective spirituality within the local Muslim community.

This study employs a qualitative approach combined with historical methods.⁹ The qualitative approach was chosen for its capacity to explore the deeper meanings behind the Sufi-based educational practices taught by K.H. Muhammad Tahir (Imam Lapeo) within the social and cultural context of the Mandar community. The historical method is used to reconstruct Imam Lapeo's role in a chronological and contextual manner, particularly in shaping community spirituality through a Sufi approach.

The research was conducted in Campalagian District, Polewali Mandar Regency, West Sulawesi an area that served as the central hub of Imam Lapeo's da'wah activities. Informants were selected purposively, focusing on individuals with direct knowledge and in-depth experience related to Imam Lapeo's life, teachings, and methods of Islamic propagation. These informants include his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, local religious leaders, caretakers of Nurut Taubah Mosque, and members of the surrounding community who continue to uphold his spiritual legacy.

The primary data sources in this study consist of all information directly related to the research problem, including the works, behavior, attitudes, thoughts, and similar aspects associated with the subject. Data were collected through audio recordings and written notes taken during interviews with informants, capturing their responses and reflections relevant to the study.¹⁰ The informants in this study include the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Imam Lapeo his direct descendants who are regarded as the closest custodians of his legacy. They are considered inheritors not only of his familial lineage but also of the spiritual narratives closely tied to the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, particularly those who faced trials with steadfastness.

Through his wisdom-driven approach, Imam Lapeo did not merely teach the concept of *ṣabr* (patience) as a theoretical value. Rather, he demonstrated how to embody and apply it across various dimensions of life. This approach helped the people of Campalagian gain a deeper understanding of patience and encouraged them to practice it in responding to life's challenges and trials on a daily basis.¹¹

Data collection in this study was conducted through several techniques: semi-structured in-depth interviews to capture the narratives and insights of informants; participant observation to examine how Sufi values are practiced in community activities; and documentation, which includes archives, local historical records, and relevant written works. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving steps such as data reduction, the presentation of findings under specific themes such as *ṣabr* (patience), *zuhd* (asceticism), *ikhlaṣ* (sincerity), and *tawbah* (repentance) and drawing

⁹ Matthew B. Miles And A. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1992).

¹⁰ Sugiyono. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta, Cv.

¹¹ Nuramilang, S. (2024, Juli 26). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

conclusions based on emerging patterns of meaning in the informants' narratives. To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed source and technique triangulation, member checking with informants to validate interview findings, and an audit trail to systematically document the research process. Through this methodological approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive, reflective, and contextually grounded account of Imam Lapeo's contributions in instilling Sufi educational values within the Mandar community.

B. Imam Lapeo's Efforts in Cultivating the Value of Patience (*Sabr*) within the Community

In the context of Islamic propagation in the Mandar region particularly in Campalagian District, West Sulawesi the value of *ṣabr* (patience) was one of the core principles intensively taught and instilled by K.H. Muhammad Tahir, more widely known as Imam Lapeo. The patience he emphasized was not merely a theoretical construct within Sufi teachings, but a lived ethical principle, deeply embedded in the social fabric of the community. Imam Lapeo recognized that a society undergoing transformation

toward a more orderly and spiritually grounded Islamic way of life required concrete models of patience especially in facing life's trials, navigating differences of opinion, and adapting to



Islamic teachings. For this reason, patience served as a foundational value in shaping a resilient, empathetic community that was not easily provoked by social unrest or internal conflict.¹²

Imam Lapeo instilled the value of patience (*ṣabr*) through a range of da'wah strategies rooted in a Sufi approach. One of his primary methods was leading by example becoming a living embodiment of the teachings he conveyed. His simple lifestyle, measured behavior, and calm, wise demeanor served as a direct reflection of the patience he advocated. In the face of social pressures and the trials of religious outreach, he consistently demonstrated composure, refrained from anger, and offered gentle counsel. He encouraged the community to cultivate patience in confronting various challenges, including poverty, illness, and injustice. Through his personal conduct, Imam Lapeo provided a tangible model of spiritual endurance that deeply resonated with the people around him.¹³ This example of lived virtue fostered a

¹² Andrey Rosowsky, "Some Linguistic Implications Of Transferring Rituals Online: The Case Of Bay'ah Or Allegiance Pledging In Sufism," *Journal Of Religion, Media And Digital Culture* 8, No. 3 (December 13, 2019): 382–407, <https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-00803001>.

¹³ Syamsun Ni'am, "The Debate Of Orthodox Sufism And Philosophical Sufism: The Study Of Maqāmāt In The Sirāj Al-Ṭālibīn Of Shaykh Iḥsān Jampes," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal Of Islamic Studies* 58, No. 1 (July 1, 2020): 1–34, <https://doi.org/10.14421/Ajjs.2020.581.1-34>.

deep emotional and spiritual bond between Imam Lapeo and the community. As a result, the value of patience was not merely taught it was embodied, experienced, and passed down across generations as a living tradition.

One well-known story that illustrates Imam Lapeo's teaching of patience involves a journey he undertook with a group of community members by boat to Mamuju. During the voyage, the vessel unexpectedly changed course and began heading toward an unplanned destination. As anxiety and confusion spread among the passengers, Imam Lapeo calmly reassured them, urging everyone to face the situation with patience and to place their trust in Allah. That night, he led a prayer and encouraged all those on board to remain patient and composed. By the following morning, the boat had safely arrived in Mamuju. This story became a widely shared narrative among the people of Campalagian, serving as a powerful example of how patience, when coupled with faith in God, can lead to favorable outcomes. The story is frequently retold in religious gatherings and has become a symbolic reference in shaping the community's spiritual consciousness about the importance of patience in daily life.

In addition to real-life experiences, Imam Lapeo also conveyed the value of patience through his sermons and religious teachings. He frequently drew upon stories from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions as primary references. These narratives served not only as sources of spiritual reflection but also as effective pedagogical tools for internalizing the meaning of patience within the community. For instance, he often recounted the Prophet's perseverance when faced with rejection in Thaif, or the steadfastness of the companions who endured persecution during the early years of Islam. These stories offered not just moral inspiration but also made the value of patience more relatable and applicable to the daily lives of community members, many of whom faced social and economic hardships. Furthermore, the practical Sufi approach developed by Imam Lapeo played a key role in embedding patience as a lived and deeply felt value, rather than a mere ideal. Through this approach, patience became a guiding principle in navigating both personal trials and broader communal challenges.¹⁴ In the Sufi tradition, *sabr* (patience) is not merely about restraining one's emotions, but represents a profound spiritual awareness of God's will. Imam Lapeo taught that *sabr* is a form of total surrender to Allah (*tawakkul*), in which a person does not simply endure hardship, but also maintains hope and conviction that everything occurs by His permission and divine plan. In his sermons, he connected *sabr* with devotional practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance of God), fasting, and night prayers, all of which serve as disciplines to cultivate spiritual resilience and self-control. Through this approach, the community is guided not only to practice patience in a social sense, but also to embody it spiritually and existentially.

¹⁴ A R Hidayat, Z Zulaekah, And H Harisah, "The Ontological Meanings Of Dhunnya: Principles Of Socio-Religious Harmony In The Lives Of Madurese Migrants In Malaysia," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf ...*, 2024, <https://jurnalfuf.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/teosofi/article/view/2812>.

Imam Lapeo also implemented the value of *sabr* (patience) through cultural and emotional approaches. Within the Mandar culture, which highly values local wisdom, he adapted his methods of preaching to ensure they were well-received by the community. He used the local language, employed cultural symbols, and embraced an interpersonal style marked by gentleness and empathy. This approach allowed his messages about patience to avoid sounding preachy or authoritarian; instead, they were conveyed as familial life advice intimate, heartfelt, and rooted in shared cultural understanding.¹⁵ One of his grandchildren, Zuhriah, recalled that Imam Lapeo consistently showed patience in dealing with differences, even when facing communities that initially rejected his teachings. His patient, gradual, and non-coercive approach eventually led many people to embrace Islam willingly and with sincere conviction. Imam Lapeo also internalized the value of *sabr* through collective acts of worship, such as *majelis dhikr* (remembrance gatherings) and regular Qur'anic study sessions. These gatherings were not only platforms for religious instruction but also served as spaces for spiritual reflection, where participants could contemplate the meaning of patience in their own lives. He connected *sabr* with the concept of *mujahadah an-nafs* the inner struggle against one's base desires—and emphasized that patience is an essential resource in facing worldly temptations, family tensions, and economic hardships. In these religious forums, Imam Lapeo often shared soothing and uplifting advice, helping to embed the value of patience deeply within the hearts of the community not merely as a religious principle, but as a guiding trait for daily life and personal character.

It is important to note that the concept of *sabr* taught by Imam Lapeo was neither passive nor fatalistic; rather, it was active and solution-oriented. He emphasized that patience does not mean remaining silent in the face of hardship, but striving diligently while maintaining hope in God's assistance. In interviews with local religious figures, it was mentioned that Imam Lapeo consistently encouraged the community to be patient in their work, in raising their children, and in self-improvement while continuously seeking guidance and strength from Allah. This concept reflects a progressive and contextual understanding of Sufism one that integrates spiritual values with a resilient approach to life. The impact of Imam Lapeo's teachings on *sabr* (patience) has been deeply felt in the social life of the Campalagian community. People have become more tolerant in the face of differing opinions, more resilient when dealing with disasters or personal hardships, and more steadfast in practicing Islamic teachings, even amid economic pressure and adversity. Patience has come to serve as a kind of moral identity embedded within the community, passed down from one generation to the next. It is not merely an aspect of individual spirituality, but also a foundational element of the Mandar people's collective character religious, composed, and humble in nature. From a Sufi perspective, the value of *sabr* (patience) instilled by Imam Lapeo aligns closely with the teachings of classical Sufi masters, who

¹⁵ Muhammad Robith Fuadi, "Memahami Tasawuf Ibnu Arabi Dan Ibnu Al Farid: Konsep Al Hubb Illahi, Wahdat Al Wujud, Wahdah Al Syuhud Dan Wahdat Al Adyan," *Ulul Albab Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, No. 2 (2013): 147, <https://doi.org/10.18860/Ua.V14i2.2654>.

regarded patience as one of the highest maqāmāt (spiritual stations) that a sālik (seeker of the Divine path) must attain. Through his contextual and grounded Sufi approach, Imam Lapeo successfully translated this spiritual station into a practical, socially relevant virtue that addressed the lived realities of his community. Thus, the sabr taught by Imam Lapeo was not only spiritual in nature, but also served as a mechanism for shaping a resilient, wise, and harmonious social character. Findings from interviews and field research highlight his significant role in cultivating the value of patience within the Mandar community, particularly in Campalagian. He embodied sabr through his modest lifestyle and personal endurance, while also actively preaching its importance. By drawing on stories of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions, Imam Lapeo made the concept of patience tangible and relatable. His thoughtful and meaningful approach enabled the Campalagian community to internalize sabr as a guiding principle in their daily lives. In doing so, he provided a deep understanding of how patience can be practiced across various dimensions of human experience.¹⁶

The patience demonstrated by the community is not merely a spiritual concept, but a vital way of life for facing significant social challenges and transformations. Recognizing this, Imam Lapeo implemented a comprehensive and contextual approach to dakwah (Islamic preaching), integrating Islamic teachings with existing local values. His method was both rooted in tradition and responsive to contemporary realities. Imam Lapeo employed various adaptive pedagogical techniques, including wisdom stories (hikmah) and exemplary narratives that directly resonated with the community's lived experiences of hardship and perseverance. One such story, as recounted by his granddaughter Zuhriah, tells that:

“There was an incident in Mamuju when Imam Lapeo traveled by boat with a group of local residents. Unexpectedly, the boat began to veer off course toward Lero. One of his companions commented, “Why is the boat heading to Lero? Perhaps someone aboard is longing to go there. Maybe that’s why it’s turning.” In response, Imam Lapeo calmly said, “Be patient. Perhaps this is just a sign let us not be too quick to draw conclusions.” Later that evening, he reassured everyone by saying, “Let us place our trust in God. Rest for now, and do not worry. God willing, the boat will find its way and the weather will be in our favor.” The group then went to sleep. To their surprise, when they awoke in the morning, they had already arrived safely in Mamuju, without even realizing it. Imam Lapeo then said, “This is what happens when we remain patient and place our trust in Allah He will surely guide and help us.” This moment strengthened the belief among his companions residents of Campalagian who were traveling with him—that Imam Lapeo was truly a remarkable and spiritually gifted figure.”¹⁷

Through this event, Imam Lapeo did not merely teach the value of patience as an abstract concept; he embodied it in a real-life experience that his followers could witness and relate to. This story offered the community a tangible example of how patience can be practiced in everyday life. Moreover, Imam Lapeo skillfully integrated the value of patience into his preaching (dakwah), not only through words but also through his actions. As noted by Zuhriah, one of Imam Lapeo's great-grandchildren:

¹⁶ N Huda, “Strategies For Strengthening Character Education In Islamic Boarding Schools Through Extracurricular Activities,” *Munaddhomah* 5, No. 3 (2024): 354–66, <https://doi.org/10.31538/Munaddhomah.V5i3.1397>.

¹⁷ Zuhriah. (2024, Agustus 3). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

“Imam Lapeo demonstrated a deep understanding of how to teach the value of patience in a way that resonated with the cultural context of the Mandar people. He was well aware that meaningful change does not happen instantly, but rather requires time and gradual adaptation. For this reason, he consistently encouraged the community to remain patient throughout the process of embracing Islamic teachings. In addition to this, Imam Lapeo offered emotional support and spiritual guidance to help individuals navigate various life challenges. His patience and empathetic approach, especially evident in religious discussions and daily interactions, served as a living example of how the value of patience could be practiced in resolving conflicts and dealing with differences in everyday life.”¹⁸

The explanation drawn from the interview highlights that significant social or religious change often requires time and deep understanding. Imam Lapeo responded to this reality by teaching the community to be patient throughout the process of adapting to new Islamic teachings. This approach involved not only providing spiritual guidance but also offering emotional support to help individuals cope with life's difficulties and challenges. Through his calm and empathetic demeanor in social interactions and community activities, Imam Lapeo actively instilled the value of patience. His consistent dedication in addressing and resolving conflicts and differences positioned him as a role model within the community someone who embodied the virtues he taught.

As a key religious figure, Imam Lapeo played a crucial role in instilling the value of patience among the people of Campalagian, particularly during the period of Islamic dissemination in the region. This is illustrated by the account of one of his great-grandchildren, Sitti Nuramilang, who explained:

“The role of Imam Lapeo in cultivating the value of patience among the Mandar people, particularly in the Campalagian area, is both compelling and deeply meaningful. He served as an exceptional role model in this regard. Living a modest life and facing various life challenges with remarkable resilience, Imam Lapeo demonstrated that patience is not merely a concept to be preached, but a virtue to be lived out in everyday actions. He consistently conveyed this message through his sermons and teachings, often emphasizing the importance of patience as an essential part of spiritual growth. Notably, he frequently linked the concept of patience to the process of taubah (repentance), framing it as a profound journey of introspection and self-improvement.”

Imam Lapeo employed a culturally grounded and compassionate approach to guide people back to the right path after they had made mistakes. The concept of taubah (repentance) that he promoted served as a powerful moral incentive for individuals to improve themselves and elevate the ethical standards of the community. The impact of his teachings on repentance was evident in daily religious practices such as the rituals of istighfar (seeking forgiveness) and zikir (remembrance of God). These practices not only encouraged personal reflection but also contributed to greater tolerance and mutual understanding within the community. These findings suggest that future research could benefit from a broader exploration of the educational values embedded in tasawuf (Islamic mysticism), possibly through the application of alternative theoretical frameworks. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of the study. Imam Lapeo's approach encompassed not

¹⁸ Zuhriah. (2024, Agustus 3). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

only moral teachings but also ritual practices and acts of worship that emphasized emotional and mental resilience—such as fasting (puasa) and dzikir (remembrance of God). These practices encouraged inner calm and patience in daily life. As noted by K.H. Hisyam Hadi, “Imam Lapeo taught the community with great patience, often through emotionally resonant personal experiences.” By conveying the value of patience through methods deeply connected to personal and cultural experience, Imam Lapeo made a lasting impact on the Mandar community. He helped shape a collective character that was more resilient, emotionally stable, and capable of facing life’s challenges with composure and wisdom all while spreading Islamic teachings in an effective and harmonious manner.

Imam Lapeo’s approach to instilling the value of patience aligns closely with the core principles of tasawuf (Islamic mysticism), which emphasize the importance of mental and spiritual resilience as part of one’s journey toward closeness with God. Through the application of ritual practices, Imam Lapeo not only taught patience in responding to everyday challenges, but also guided his followers toward inner peace and spiritual tranquility. In the tasawuf tradition, the purification of the heart from negative traits and the cultivation of emotional endurance through wholehearted submission to Allah are seen as essential components of spiritual development. Within this framework, Imam Lapeo applied tasawuf teachings in a way that was deeply relevant to the socio-cultural context of his community. His methods supported the Mandar people in navigating life’s hardships with composure and wisdom. In doing so, Imam Lapeo not only strengthened the community’s capacity for patience, but also deepened their understanding of tasawuf’s spiritual values creating a lasting impact in shaping a more resilient and spiritually grounded collective identity.

C. K.H. Muhammad Tahir’s Efforts in Instilling the Value of Detachment (*Zuhud*)

Imam Lapeo played a highly significant role in promoting the value of *zuhud* among the Mandar community through a deep and effective approach to dakwah (Islamic preaching). The concept of *zuhud*, which literally means “detachment from worldly matters,” emphasizes the importance of leading a modest life and prioritizing spiritual over material concerns. In the context of Islamic propagation in Mandar, Imam Lapeo understood that such a concept needed to be communicated in a way that was both relevant and accessible to a community deeply rooted in its cultural traditions and local customs. To achieve this, he adopted a holistic and contextual approach integrating the teachings of *zuhud* with existing cultural values and practices. This allowed the spiritual message to resonate more deeply with the people, fostering an understanding of *zuhud* not as a rejection of the world, but as a conscious choice to live meaningfully with spiritual awareness.¹⁹

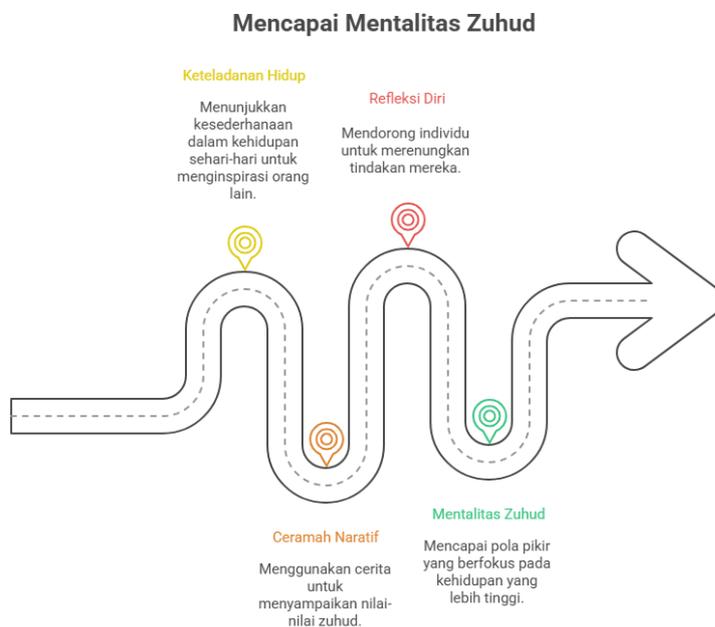
Zuhud is one of the central teachings in the tradition of tasawuf (Islamic mysticism), which emphasizes detachment from excessive attachment to worldly pleasures. It does not advocate for a total

¹⁹ L Maskhuroh, K Khudriyah, And A Musthofa, “Pembentukan Sifat Zuhud Di Pondok Pesantren Jampes,” *Jurnal Al-Murabbi*, 2018, [Http://jurnal.yudharta.ac.id/V2/Index.php/Pai/Article/View/1306](http://jurnal.yudharta.ac.id/V2/Index.php/Pai/Article/View/1306).

rejection of the world, but rather encourages placing worldly matters in a proper, balanced position in accordance with Islamic teachings. In this sense, zuhud calls for a conscious effort to prioritize spiritual values over material pursuits, guiding individuals to live in the world without being dominated by it.²⁰ In the context of dakwah and spiritual education carried out by K.H. Muhammad Tahir (Imam Lapeo) in Campalagian, Polewali Mandar, the value of zuhud emerged as one of the core principles he instilled within the community. Imam Lapeo recognized that the prevailing materialistic tendencies and the growing pursuit of worldly pleasures among the people required a spiritual approach capable of restoring balance between physical and spiritual needs. For Imam Lapeo, zuhud was not merely a theological concept or a philosophical ideal it was a way of life. He embodied this value in his daily conduct, using his own lifestyle as a living example. Through this, zuhud became not just an abstract

teaching, but a practical guide for communal life, offering a moral framework that encouraged modesty, spiritual awareness, and inner contentment in the face of an increasingly material-driven environment.

Imam Lapeo's first and most foundational effort in instilling the value of zuhud was through authentic and consistent personal example. He was widely known for leading an exceptionally modest life detached from luxury and free from



reliance on worldly comforts. In his daily routines, Imam Lapeo dressed simply, ate modestly, and never displayed signs of extravagance. Despite his esteemed position as a highly respected religious leader one who could have easily received privileged treatment from the community he deliberately chose a lifestyle of humility. This personal embodiment of zuhud served as a powerful form of silent preaching, reinforcing his spiritual teachings and earning him deep moral authority in the eyes of his followers. This simplicity was not merely a lifestyle choice, but also a highly effective dakwah strategy, as it provided a direct and visible example of how a Muslim should relate to the material world placing it in its proper place without allowing it to dominate the heart. In an interview with one of his great-grandchildren, Sitti Nuramilang, it was revealed that Imam Lapeo often declined material gifts and frequently redistributed

²⁰ H Susanti, N Nurdin, And ..., "The Relevance Of Zuhud In Modern Sufism Teachings On The Formation Of Ideal Muslim Character From Buya Hamka's Perspective," ... : *Jurnal Aqidah Dan ...*, 2024, <https://jurnallppm.laiasadiyah.ac.id/index.php/falsafatuna/article/view/76>.

what he received to others, especially to children attending religious study circles and to the poor in his community. These actions were not merely acts of charity; they served as practical lessons for the community, demonstrating that *zuhud* means living sufficiently, sharing generously, and remaining unattached to material possessions.

This personal example became a crucial instrument in shaping the *zuhud* mentality among the Mandar people. In a society deeply rooted in local customs and social values, lived example carried far more weight than verbal preaching alone. Imam Lapeo did not merely instruct others to live simply he embodied this principle in every aspect of his life. The modest condition of his home, his eating habits, the way he dressed, and his overall lifestyle all conveyed a powerful moral message. These everyday practices subtly yet effectively influenced the community's mindset, embedding the value of *zuhud* within the social fabric through lived experience rather than abstract instruction. Thus, the value of *zuhud* as taught by Imam Lapeo did not encourage withdrawal from the world, but rather cultivated an understanding that worldly life is not the ultimate goal. Instead, it is a means to attain a higher, eternal purpose the afterlife. His teachings emphasized that engagement with the world should be guided by spiritual awareness, where material existence serves as a pathway toward greater closeness to God, not as an end in itself.²¹ In addition to his personal example, Imam Lapeo employed an educational approach grounded in narrative to convey the value of *zuhud* to the community. He often delivered religious sermons that featured stories of the Prophets and early Muslim scholars (*ulama salaf*) who led lives of simplicity and remained untempted by worldly wealth. These stories were told in clear, accessible language and infused with local wisdom, making them relatable and easily accepted by people from all walks of life. This narrative method allowed spiritual values to be internalized not through abstract doctrine, but through culturally resonant storytelling that connected with the everyday experiences of his audience. In one of his religious gatherings, Imam Lapeo recounted the story of how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once slept on a rough mat that left marks on his body yet he remained grateful and never complained. Stories like this served as an effective means of internalizing the value of *zuhud*, as they touched the emotional core of listeners and invited personal reflection. In a society often caught in economic competition and the pursuit of material symbols of success, such narratives offered a counterbalance, encouraging a mindset rooted in gratitude, humility, and spiritual awareness.

Moreover, Imam Lapeo actively contributed to the development of a religious social structure centered on the value of *zuhud*. One notable example was his initiation of spiritually grounded social activities, such as *amal jariyah* (ongoing charity), collective almsgiving, and communal efforts to support economically disadvantaged members of society. In these initiatives, Imam Lapeo did not merely serve as a visionary or organizer—he played a central role in their implementation. He immersed himself in

²¹ Dwi Puspitarini Et Al., "Humanistic Pesantren: Systematic Literature Review And Bibliometric Visualization Analysis On Character, Moral, And Ethical Values," *Pertanika Journal Of Social Sciences And Humanities* 31, No. 2 (April 12, 2023): 465–90, <https://doi.org/10.47836/Pjssh.31.2.01>.

the daily lives of the people, working alongside them and offering a living example of how the value of zuhud could be embodied through communal solidarity and shared responsibility. These social activities fostered a culture of solidarity and helped reduce social inequality, which could otherwise give rise to resentment and a sense of injustice. In this context, the value of zuhud was transformed into a social ethic one that nurtured a community grounded in compassion, humility, and mutual care, while discouraging individualism and consumerist attitudes. Through this transformation, zuhud evolved from a personal spiritual principle into a collective moral framework that shaped the character of the broader society.

In his da'wah practices, Imam Lapeo emphasized the importance of self-restraint and spiritual discipline as fundamental pillars of zuhud (asceticism). He encouraged the community to cultivate the soul through various non-obligatory religious observances, such as fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, performing qiyamul lail (night prayers), engaging in dhikr (remembrance of God), and regularly reciting the Qur'an. These practices were viewed as essential tools to strengthen one's spiritual core and subdue the dominance of base desires. According to Imam Lapeo, zuhud is not merely about renouncing wealth, but more profoundly about purifying the heart from traits such as greed, envy, and arrogance. He frequently reminded his followers to cultivate gratitude and to accept Allah's decree with an open heart, seeing this spiritual posture as the gateway to inner peace and closeness to the Divine.²²

The impact of Imam Lapeo's promotion of zuhud values was significant in shaping the character of the Campalagian community. The people became more accustomed to living frugally, simply, and without excess. Within the social structure, respect was no longer based on wealth but rather on moral conduct, piety, and contributions to the common good. The value of zuhud also encouraged the community to avoid envy of others' achievements and to reject hedonistic lifestyles that contradict Islamic principles. More importantly, zuhud fostered a strong spiritual atmosphere within the community, where worldly life was viewed as a field for righteous deeds rather than a stage for ostentation and pride.

One of the main methods used by Imam Lapeo to instill values in the community was through leading by personal example. As expressed by one of his great-granddaughters, Mrs. Sitti Nuramilang: "When asked about Imam Lapeo's role in promoting the value of zuhud (asceticism) within society, I would say that he truly served as a deeply inspiring role model. Imam Lapeo lived a very simple life, and through his own lifestyle, he demonstrated the importance of living without luxury. He often avoided extravagance and chose simplicity, which helped people understand that zuhud is not merely about distancing oneself from material possessions, but more about focusing on spiritual growth and drawing closer to God. With this approach, Imam Lapeo successfully taught the community to appreciate a simpler and more spiritual way of life one that significantly shaped both the character and daily habits

²² Ahmad Zaini, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Imam Al-Ghazali," *Esoterik: Jurnal Akhlak Dan Tasawuf* 2, No. 1 (2017): 146–59, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.21043/esoterik.v2i1.1902> Pemikiran.

of society as a whole.”²³ In conclusion, the account above illustrates that Imam Lapeo lived a life of simplicity and deliberately avoided luxury, offering the community a practical example of how *zuhud* can be practiced in everyday life. He often resided in modest environments, wore simple clothing, and distanced himself from a glamorous lifestyle. Through this consistent example, he provided a concrete model of ascetic living. His simple and devoted way of life taught people to shift their focus toward spiritual development and a closer relationship with God, rather than the pursuit of wealth and worldly status.

In addition, Imam Lapeo employed a pedagogical approach that involved the use of moral stories and wise counsel to emphasize the values of *zuhud*. As noted by K.H. Hisyam Hadi, the Imam of Nurut Taubah Mosque in Lapeo Village: "He shared stories from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions that illustrated the spirit of *zuhud*, and he conveyed the principles of simple living through sermons, religious lectures, and direct teaching while also serving as a living example for the community".²⁴ In this way, Imam Lapeo not only taught the concept of *zuhud* in theory but also offered practical guidance on how to embody it in everyday life. In social practice, he promoted *zuhud* values by encouraging charitable acts such as *amal jariyah* (ongoing charity), *sadaqah* (almsgiving), and community-based initiatives aimed at helping those in need. As narrated by Zuhriah: "Imam Lapeo didn't really possess material wealth. For example, when someone came to him bringing a goat, and then another person came in need, he would give the goat away to be shared with students of the religious study group and members of the surrounding community."²⁵

The interview highlights the importance of sharing and giving values that align closely with the principles of *zuhud*, which emphasize distancing oneself from materialism and prioritizing the well-being of others. By actively involving the community in charitable and social activities, Imam Lapeo strengthened the collective understanding that living simply and sharing with others can deepen one's relationship with God. Through these various efforts, Imam Lapeo successfully instilled *zuhud* values in a profound and meaningful way, integrating them into the everyday lives of the people of Campalagian. His influence contributed significantly to shaping a community characterized by modesty, humility, and a focus on spiritual life. This approach not only impacted individuals but also helped form a more cohesive social structure rooted in simplicity and compassion fostering the spread of Islamic teachings in a more inclusive and harmonious manner throughout the region.²⁶

In relation to Sufism (*tasawuf*), Imam Lapeo's approach closely aligns with its core principles, which emphasize the importance of a simple and spiritually centered life as part of the journey toward closeness with God. Sufism teaches that *zuhud* involves reducing attachment to material possessions

²³ Nuramilang, S. (2024, Juli 26). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

²⁴ Hadi, H. (2024, Juli 16). Imam Masjid Nurut-Taubah Desa Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

²⁵ Zuhriah. (2024, Agustus 3). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

²⁶ Maskhuroh, Khudriyah, And Musthofa, "Pembentukan Sifat *Zuhud* Di Pondok Pesantren Jampes."

and instead focusing on spiritual development and nurturing a deeper, inner connection with the Divine.²⁷ By teaching the value of *zuhud* through direct personal example and its integration into daily life, Imam Lapeo not only deepened the community's understanding of simplicity but also enriched their comprehension of Sufi (*tasawuf*) principles. His approach contributed to the formation of a more spiritually attuned and harmonious society. It enabled the people of Campalagian to apply Sufi teachings in their everyday lives, strengthening both social and spiritual bonds within the community and enhancing the overall quality of their spiritual life.

D. K.H. Muhammad Tahir's Efforts in Instilling the Value of Repentance (*Taubat*)

In his practice of *dakwah* and spiritual education, K.H. Muhammad Tahir, also known as Imam Lapeo, placed great emphasis on cultivating the value of repentance (*taubat*) as one of the central principles of the Sufi (*tasawuf*) approach. For him, *taubat* was not merely a ritual act of seeking forgiveness, but a comprehensive spiritual process a conscious and sincere effort to reform oneself and return to the path of God with full awareness and genuine intention.²⁸ Within the context of the Mandar community then undergoing a process of religious transformation Imam Lapeo recognized that many people needed guidance to let go of long-standing practices that conflicted with Islamic values. Therefore, the concept of *taubat* that he promoted was not merely normative or abstract; it was grounded in everyday life, made accessible, and closely aligned with the lived experiences of the community.

Imam Lapeo employed multiple approaches to instill the value of *taubat* (repentance) in the community. First, he established the Nurut-Taubah Mosque as a center for spiritual activities and community development. This mosque served not only as a place of worship but also as an educational space where he conveyed a deep and reflective understanding of *taubat*. Within its walls, Imam Lapeo frequently delivered sermons that emphasized the importance of self-reflection, acknowledgment of one's faults, and a sincere intention to change. He taught that true *taubat* goes beyond verbal confession; it requires heartfelt sincerity and visible transformation in one's behavior. Through his simple and empathetic communication style, people felt safe to open up, reflect, and begin the process of repentance without fear or shame. Second, Imam Lapeo made use of local language and the cultural wisdom of the Mandar people to communicate the message of *taubat*. He often wove moral stories and parables from the lives of the Prophet and his companions into the everyday context of the local community. This culturally grounded approach made the teachings on *taubat* more relatable and less judgmental. In his sermons, he reminded people that all humans are bound to make mistakes, but that God is the Most Forgiving as long as one genuinely regrets their actions and commits not to repeat them.

²⁷ Z M Bizawie, "The Legacy Of 'Tasawuf Akhlaqi' sheikh Sholeh Darat And Sheikh Ihsan Jampes," ... *Journal Of Religious Literature And Heritage*, 2017, <https://Heritage.Kemenag.Go.Id/Index.Php/Heritage/Article/View/419>.

²⁸ Mohsen Shiravand And Sepideh Razi, "Animal Ethics And The Philosophy Of Its Existence; An Outline Of The Theory Of 'Common Beliefs,'" *Al-Jami'ah: Journal Of Islamic Studies* 59, No. 2 (December 31, 2021): 423–48, <https://Doi.Org/10.14421/Ajis.2021.592.423-448>.

This message offered hope and renewed motivation for those burdened by their past sins. With a gentle and compassionate tone, Imam Lapeo inspired spiritual optimism in the community, reinforcing the belief that change for the better is always possible.

Third, Imam Lapeo conveyed the value of taubat through collective acts of worship such as dhikr (remembrance of God), istighfar (seeking forgiveness), and night prayers (shalat malam). He encouraged the community to make istighfar a part of their daily practice—not as a mechanical utterance, but as a spiritually conscious act grounded in deep awareness of one’s relationship with God. In the regular dhikr gatherings he led, people were guided to reflect on their past wrongdoings and sincerely seek forgiveness. These spiritual gatherings fostered a solemn and sacred atmosphere, offering individuals space for muhasabah (self-evaluation) and a renewed commitment to personal transformation. Imam Lapeo presented taubat as a return to God that not only absolves one from sin, but also marks the beginning of a purer, more meaningful spiritual journey. Fourth, Imam Lapeo’s approach to taubat was also reconciliatory and aimed at strengthening social solidarity. He encouraged people not only to repent before God but also to seek forgiveness from and offer forgiveness to one another. In his teaching sessions and social interactions, he often emphasized the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships, avoiding resentment, and helping one another in acts of goodness. This perspective reinforced the community’s social fabric, where taubat became a gateway to cultivating peace, mutual respect, and social cohesion. In this way, repentance served not only as a means of individual renewal but also as a catalyst for healing and improving collective social relations.²⁹

The impact of this internalization of taubat values became evident in the changing attitudes of the Campalagian community. Many began to abandon cultural practices that conflicted with Islamic teachings, such as excessive celebrations or unfounded mystical behaviors. There was a growing awareness of the importance of maintaining a pure heart, seeking forgiveness, and striving to become better individuals. Rituals such as communal istighfar, shalat taubat (prayer of repentance), and tadarus (Qur’anic recitation) became integral parts of daily life demonstrating that taubat was not merely taught, but truly lived within the community. Even in subsequent generations, these values continue to be preserved and transmitted in local Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), underscoring the enduring spiritual legacy of Imam Lapeo. His role in instilling the values of taubat within the Mandar community holds profound and lasting significance. Through his teachings, Imam Lapeo conceptualized taubat not merely as a plea for divine forgiveness, but as a continuous process of self-reflection and moral reform embedded in everyday life.

In this context, taubat is understood as a comprehensive effort toward holistic self-improvement one that involves deep reflection on past misdeeds and a sincere commitment to positive change. This

²⁹ Muhammadiyah Ahyan Yusuf Sya’bani And Ismi Rajiani, “Philosophical Thought Of Al-Farabi As Models Of Establishing Civil Society In The Era Of Technology Disruption,” *International Journal Of Recent Technology And Engineering (Ijrte)* 8, No. 2 (July 30, 2019): 5446–50, <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.B3773.078219>.

process highlights the importance of self-awareness and personal transformation as essential elements of an individual's spiritual journey. Imam Lapeo's gentle and culturally grounded approach encouraged people to return to the right path after making mistakes. As noted by Zuhriah: "One of the ways Imam Lapeo instilled the value of taubat in the community was by directly conveying the essence of what repentance truly means. He used the mosque he built now known as Masjid Nurut-Taubah as a space for teaching the community in ways that were easy to understand."³⁰

The interview findings indicate that Imam Lapeo effectively utilized the mosque he built as a central space for conveying the deeper meanings of taubat. Through this setting, the message of repentance was communicated in ways that resonated with the community and were easily understood. Traditional arts functioned as a medium of communication that touched not only the cognitive but also the emotional dimensions, allowing people to internalize the values of taubat within a culturally familiar and accepted context. Furthermore, Imam Lapeo introduced a robust moral framework in which taubat served as a foundational element in the cultivation of noble character (akhlak). As K.H. Hisyam Hadi explained in an interview:

*"The teaching I remember most about taubat from my teacher is this: na pe'gurui tau Annagurutta Imam Lapeo mua mappogau tahu assalangang, maka da parakke merau ampunan lao Puangta yang penting mupamacking tongang alawemu"*³¹

The meaning behind this interview is clear: when someone makes a mistake, they should not be afraid to seek forgiveness from Allah SWT as long as they sincerely purify their soul. Every sin, no matter how grave, can be forgiven if accompanied by genuine remorse and a strong intention to improve oneself. This concept encouraged the community to avoid negative behaviors and remain committed to ongoing self-betterment. Through various activities such as religious study circles (pengajian), group discussions, and reflective sessions, Imam Lapeo created a safe and nurturing space for individuals to share their experiences and past misdeeds, while also exploring their hopes of returning to the right path. This approach not only strengthened personal commitment to spiritual transformation but also fostered a supportive social environment that actively encouraged and sustained the process of taubat.

The impact of taubat teachings is clearly reflected in the everyday traditions and practices of the Campalagian community. Many individuals now regularly engage in rituals such as istighfar and zikir as a means of acknowledging past transgressions, making these acts an integral part of their spiritual lives. These rituals serve not only to renew one's intentions and deepen spiritual connection, but also to encourage ongoing self-reflection and personal growth.

Moreover, the value of taubat has inspired a culture of forgiveness within the community, fostering stronger social bonds. This practice of mutual forgiveness contributes to greater tolerance and

³⁰ Zuhriah. (2024, Agustus 3). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

³¹ Hadi, H. (2024, Juli 16). Imam Masjid Nurut-Taubah Desa Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

understanding among residents, ultimately supporting the development of a harmonious and morally grounded society oriented toward collective well-being.

The legacy of Imam Lapeo's teachings continues to this day, as many pesantren and educational institutions still emphasize the importance of taubat as a core element of their curriculum. As stated by K.H. Hisyam Hadi, the current Imam of Masjid Nurut-Taubah and a teacher of classical Islamic texts (kitab) in Pambusuang: "From Imam Lapeo, the teachings passed down by scholars and caregivers in the pesantren of Pambusuang often stress that taubat is a pathway to inner peace and surrender to God".³² The inclusion of taubat teachings as a fundamental aspect of moral education reflects an ongoing commitment to character development. In this context, Imam Lapeo is not merely remembered as a historical figure, but is also regarded as a pioneer of moral education someone who has passed down enduring values that continue to shape and support the character formation of future generations.

Imam Lapeo's efforts in instilling the values of taubat (repentance) within the Campalagian community have not only had a profound impact in the past but have also produced long-term effects that continue to shape the personality and moral character of future generations. The concept of taubat introduced by Imam Lapeo has become a foundational element in building a better, more hopeful, and peaceful society. His contribution illustrates how the teachings of taubat, as part of a broader moral tradition, have influenced not only individual spiritual life but also the social structure and interpersonal relationships within the community, ensuring the continuity and relevance of these teachings into the future. By embedding taubat into daily life and community practices, Imam Lapeo succeeded in creating a lasting and deeply rooted impact in Campalagian society. The transformation he initiated is still evident in the way people respond to their own mistakes, engage in self-reflection, and commit to personal growth. This spiritual legacy can continue to be upheld by the Mandar community, encouraging ongoing moral and spiritual development. Imam Lapeo's emphasis on taubat thus serves as a vital foundation for the ongoing effort to create a more virtuous and harmonious society.

E. K.H. Muhammad Tahir's Efforts in Instilling the Value of Sincerity (*Ikhlas*)

Sincerity (*ikhlas*) is a core principle in tasawuf (Islamic mysticism), highly esteemed by Sufi practitioners and deeply embedded in the spiritual and educational approach of K.H. Muhammad Tahir, more widely known as Imam Lapeo. In the Sufi tradition, *ikhlas* goes beyond performing good deeds for the sake of Allah alone; it also involves purifying one's intentions and cleansing the heart from spiritual maladies such as *riya'* (showing off), *ujub* (self-admiration), and the desire for praise or recognition from others. Imam Lapeo fully recognized that *ikhlas* is a foundational value in cultivating sincere faith and nurturing consistent religious behavior. This was particularly crucial in the context of the Mandar society, which at the time was undergoing significant social changes and spiritual transformation. As such, Imam

³² Hadi, H. (2024, Juli 16). Imam Masjid Nurut-Taubah Desa Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

Lapeo approached the internalization of ikhlas with deliberate intent—through serious, holistic efforts and by embodying the values he taught in his personal conduct..³³

One of the most tangible expressions of Imam Lapeo's commitment to cultivating the value of sincerity (ikhlas) was through his consistent and humble way of life. He was widely recognized as someone who never sought praise or recognition for his deeds. In his daily life, Imam Lapeo consistently rejected excessive veneration from the community, preferring instead to live in simplicity and quietude. He frequently assisted others in discreet ways—distributing donations or helping those in need—without revealing the identity of the giver or using such acts for self-promotion. Numerous testimonies from community members and his descendants affirm that Imam Lapeo would often conceal his good deeds so that they would remain unknown to others. This behavior exemplifies how he did not merely preach about sincerity, but more importantly, embodied it through his personal conduct and actions.³⁴

In addition to leading by example, Imam Lapeo instilled the value of sincerity (ikhlas) through an educational approach in his sermons and religious gatherings. In his various teachings, he consistently emphasized the significance of intention in all acts of worship. For Imam Lapeo, the value of a deed is determined more by the sincerity of the intention behind it than by its outward form or quantity. He often cited well-known hadith, such as "Verily, actions are judged by intentions," as a foundational principle in nurturing the community's spiritual awareness. These teachings were delivered in language that was accessible and adapted to the local social and cultural context. In one religious gathering fondly remembered by his grandchild, Imam Lapeo advised the congregation not to compete in displaying piety in public, but rather to focus on cultivating a genuine relationship with Allah SWT.³⁵

Imam Lapeo also cultivated the value of sincerity (ikhlas) within the realm of socio-religious practices. He actively encouraged the community to engage in charitable activities such as supporting the poor, caring for orphans, and participating in the development of mosques and Islamic schools (pesantren), consistently reminding them that these acts should be done solely for the sake of seeking Allah's pleasure not for social recognition or personal gain. In collective efforts such as community almsgiving or mutual aid projects (gotong royong), Imam Lapeo would repeatedly emphasize that sincerity is the true measure of whether a deed is accepted by God. This emphasis gradually fostered a communal culture that was less concerned with status or external rewards, and more oriented toward humility, honesty, and heartfelt devotion in all actions..

³³ N Chanifah, "Designing A Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework For Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study From Two Indonesian Universities," *Higher Education Pedagogies* 6, No. 1 (2021): 195–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1960879>.

³⁴ A Jackelén, "Technology, Theology, And Spirituality In The Digital Age," *Zygon*®, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1111/Zygo.12682>.

³⁵ Ágnes Bálint, "Káromkodásból Katedrális: Lelkigondozás És Spiritualitás Összefüggései 'Jób Könyvé'ben," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Theologia Reformata Transylvanica* 66, No. 2 (December 20, 2021): 141–62, <https://doi.org/10.24193/Subbtref.66.2.07>.

Furthermore, Imam Lapeo employed storytelling and exemplary narratives as a means of instilling the value of sincerity (ikhlas), particularly among the younger generation. He frequently recounted stories from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions that illustrated acts of devotion and charity performed with pure intentions. These stories served not merely as entertainment, but as a powerful medium for moral and spiritual education. Through such narratives, the community was encouraged to reflect and recognize that those most beloved by Allah are those who perform good deeds without seeking recognition or reward, apart from the pleasure of God. In this way, storytelling became a vehicle for internalizing values, allowing the message of ikhlas to be absorbed not only intellectually, but also emotionally and spiritually..

The impact of Imam Lapeo's teachings on sincerity (ikhlas) is clearly reflected in the daily life of the Campalagian community. Many residents engage in acts of charity spontaneously and anonymously, such as giving infak (alms) without revealing their identity, as a genuine expression of sincerity. The community also exhibits a strong work ethic and spiritual discipline that is not driven by the desire for human praise. This indicates that the value of ikhlas has moved beyond being merely a normative teaching it has become an integral part of the local religious culture. Even today, the principle of sincerity continues to be upheld by religious teachers in local pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), many of whom refer to Imam Lapeo's legacy as a guiding example. Students are taught that the true success of a Muslim lies not in public recognition, but in the sincerity and consistency of their devotion to Allah.³⁶

Theologically, the concept of sincerity (ikhlas) taught by Imam Lapeo aligns closely with the core principles of classical Sufism. In Sufi thought, ikhlas is regarded as a spiritual maqam (station) that can only be attained through continuous self-discipline and deep introspection (muhasabah). Imam Lapeo not only emphasized the importance of sincerity but also offered practical methods and approaches that could be followed by ordinary people to cultivate it.

He consistently highlighted the dangers of riya (showing off), sum'ah (seeking praise), and ujub (self-admiration)—all of which can corrupt the value of good deeds. By simplifying the concept of ikhlas and relating it to the everyday experiences of his community, Imam Lapeo was able to instill this spiritual value in a sustainable and contextually grounded manner.³⁷

Imam Lapeo played a crucial role in instilling the value of ikhlas (sincerity) among the Mandar community through a profound and holistic approach to Islamic propagation. Ikhlas, which refers to performing all actions solely for the sake of Allah without expecting praise or reward from others, is one of the core pillars of Islamic teachings. It emphasizes the purity of intention and genuine devotion in worship. In the context of Islamic dissemination in Mandar, Imam Lapeo recognized that this value had to be introduced in a culturally sensitive manner—one that aligned with local traditions and social

³⁶ A L Ai, *Assessing Spirituality In A Diverse World, Assessing Spirituality In A Diverse World*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52140-0>.

³⁷ B G Bonab, "Attachment To God In Islamic Spirituality," *Journal Of Muslim Mental Health*, 2013, https://api.elsevier.com/content/abstract/scopus_id/84937694468.

practices—to ensure its effective acceptance and implementation. This awareness was critical, as each region carries unique cultural characteristics that influence how religious teachings are received. Imam Lapeo understood that a deep and context-aware approach to dakwah would resonate more profoundly and be more readily embraced by the community.

To instill the value of ikhlas, Imam Lapeo employed a range of methods, combining personal example with spiritual guidance. As noted by Sitti Nuramilang: “Imam Lapeo demonstrated sincerity in all aspects of life, both in worship and in his daily social interactions. By living modestly and avoiding any form of extravagance, he exemplified how pure and selfless intentions could be manifested in everyday life. For instance, he would often distribute donations from benefactors without expecting praise or reward, and he preferred to keep his charitable acts hidden from public view.” This approach not only strengthened his credibility as a role model of ikhlas but also encouraged the community to do good solely for the sake of attaining Allah’s pleasure, rather than for public recognition or personal gain. Beyond his personal example, Imam Lapeo also conveyed the value of sincerity through various forms of religious communication, including sermons, Friday khutbahs, and direct teaching. As mentioned by one of his great-grandchildren, Zuhriah :

“Imam Lapeo instilled the value of ikhlas (sincerity) in the community not only through direct teaching but also by embodying it in his daily life. He practiced what he preached, using a deeply reflective and culturally grounded approach to communicate this essential value to the people”³⁸

This reflects the spirit of sincerity in worship and charitable acts. The stories shared did not merely present a theoretical understanding of ikhlas (sincerity), but offered practical guidance on how to apply this principle in everyday life. By employing narratives that were both rich and contextually relevant, Imam Lapeo succeeded in conveying the value of ikhlas in a heartfelt manner that inspired the community to internalize and practice it. In social contexts, Imam Lapeo encouraged sadaqah jariyah (ongoing charity) and acts of kindness carried out without expectation of reward or recognition. As one interviewee remarked: “Imam Lapeo taught us that ikhlas must be rooted in a sincere heart, especially when it comes to doing good for others.”³⁹

The interview highlights the importance of maintaining sincere intentions in all acts of charity and worship, emphasizing that divine reward from God is far more valuable than worldly recognition. Imam Lapeo actively promoted social engagement rooted in selfless service to the community, reinforcing the idea that sincerity (ikhlas) strengthens one’s spiritual connection with God. This approach not only deepened individual spiritual foundations but also fostered a more harmonious and compassionate community. Through this holistic method, Imam Lapeo successfully integrated the values of sincerity into the everyday lives of the Mandar people. His teachings shaped individuals to act with

³⁸ Zuhriah. (2024, Agustus 3). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

³⁹ Hadi, H. (2024, Juli 16). Imam Masjid Nurut-Taubah Desa Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

pure and honest intentions, while also nurturing a social structure grounded in genuine care and moral integrity. The influence of his emphasis on ikhlas is evident in the community's increasingly positive social interactions, marked by mutual support and empathy. The internalization of this value has contributed to the overall spiritual development of society and has facilitated the dissemination of Islamic teachings in a more effective and peaceful manner. Furthermore, the impact of Imam Lapeo's teachings on sincerity can be observed in the daily lives of the Mandar people. This is reflected in an interview with Sitti Nuramilang, who noted that:

*"The direct application of the values of sincerity (ikhlas) as taught by Imam Lapeo significantly influenced the way the community perceived and lived their lives at the time. His teachings encouraged people to prioritize spiritual aspects over material concerns, fostering a mindset that placed greater emphasis on inner devotion, humility, and moral responsibility"*⁴⁰

The commitment to doing good selflessly, as cultivated by Imam Lapeo, helped foster a purer and more dedicated mindset within the community. This, in turn, supported the development of stronger and more virtuous individual character. Moreover, the internalization of sincerity (ikhlas) played a vital role in strengthening the social structure of the Campalagian community. By encouraging acts of charity and kindness rooted in genuine intention, Imam Lapeo not only enhanced individual spiritual well-being but also deepened social bonds among community members. A society grounded in the values of sincerity became more cohesive and supportive, contributing to a more positive and harmonious social environment. The implementation of these values ultimately reinforced social solidarity and helped build a more resilient community capable of withstanding various social challenges.

Therefore, Imam Lapeo's role in instilling the values of sincerity (ikhlas) within the Mandar community not only brought about positive change during his time but also laid a strong foundation for future generations. The value of ikhlas introduced by him has become a vital element in shaping a better, more hopeful, and peaceful way of life within the community. It continues to influence the formation of personal character and social relationships in a meaningful and enduring way. Based on the findings of this study, a comparison can be drawn with the ideas of Hamka, as discussed in Roza Susanti's journal article. Hamka, a prominent Islamic thinker known for his concept of "Modern Sufism" (Tasawuf Modern), did not seek to create a new form of Sufism. Rather, he aimed to restore its original purpose: purifying the soul from spiritual maladies, cultivating moral excellence, suppressing greed, and controlling excessive desires in pursuit of true happiness. The current study, which adopts a Sufi approach in its analysis, finds conceptual resonance with Hamka's Modern Sufism, particularly in its emphasis on inner purification and ethical self-discipline.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Nuramilang, S. (2024, Juli 26). Cicit Imam Lapeo, Wawancara. (W. Hidayat, Interviewer) Campalagian.

⁴¹ Susanti, R. (2021). Nilai-Nilai Tasawuf Dalam Konsep Pendidikan Islam Menurut Hamka Roza Susanti. *Journal Of Education And Instruction (Joeai)*, 4(1), 271-286.

Thus, Imam Lapeo's efforts to instill the value of sincerity (ikhlas) formed an integral part of his mission to shape the character of the Mandar community into one that is devout, modest, and deeply sincere. Through exemplary leadership, oral teachings, social practices, and spiritual narratives, he demonstrated that sincerity is not merely a Sufi ideal but a practical value that can be applied in the everyday lives of a diverse and dynamic society. His success in embedding this value not only nurtured spiritually grounded individuals but also fostered a harmonious and socially cohesive community. The legacy of ikhlas passed down by Imam Lapeo continues to serve as a moral compass for future generations, guiding them to face life's challenges with a pure heart and a clear, purposeful direction.

F. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, K.H. Muhammad Tahir (Imam Lapeo) played a pivotal role in instilling educational values within the Mandar community through a Sufi-based (tasawuf) approach, particularly in the Campalagian region of West Sulawesi. Through gentle, contextual preaching and exemplary personal conduct, Imam Lapeo successfully integrated the teachings of Sufism into the socio-religious life of the community. His Sufi approach went beyond individual spirituality, shaping the community's collective moral and social structure. Imam Lapeo emphasized four core values: patience (sabar), detachment from worldly desires (zuhud), repentance (taubat), and sincerity (ikhlas) as foundational to building a devout, humble, and God-oriented society. Sabr was taught through calm endurance in the face of trials, supported by experiential learning and storytelling. Zuhud was embodied in a simple lifestyle and social practices that discouraged excessive attachment to worldly pleasures. Taubat was instilled by fostering spiritual awareness that every individual has the potential to change for the better, through introspection and sincere repentance. Meanwhile, ikhlas was introduced through acts of charity devoid of personal gain, purification of intention, and a life marked by honesty and humility. These efforts were not abstract in nature. Rather, they were implemented through concrete methods: personal example, religious sermons, moral tales, collective worship, and the integration of Sufi values into community social activities. Imam Lapeo succeeded in embedding these values as part of the religious culture of the Mandar people, ensuring that they were not only understood intellectually but also practiced across generations. Thus, this study affirms that a Sufi-based educational approach, when applied contextually and with a humanistic orientation as demonstrated by Imam Lapeo can significantly contribute to character formation, spiritual development, and the creation of a harmonious society. These findings are expected to serve as inspiration for the development of a transformative model of Islamic education that is relevant to the needs of contemporary society.

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