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Visual piety in public space: Islamic aesthetics, moral messaging, and spatial authority in Indonesian streetscapes

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ABSTRACT

Background: Indonesian streetscapes increasingly display Islamic calligraphy, Ramadan banners, halal-oriented signs, sacred symbols, and public moral warnings, yet these visual forms remain insufficiently examined as spatial practices through which piety, authority, and belonging become publicly legible. **Objective:** This study investigates how Islamic aesthetics, moral messaging, and spatial authority are constructed through visual-textual signs in Indonesian public streetscapes. **Method:** This study applies qualitative multimodal discourse analysis, linguistic landscape analysis, and geosemiotic coding to a 40-item corpus, with closer analysis of 18 primary visual-text items from publicly verifiable institutional and media sources. **Results:** Islamic public aesthetics appear mainly through processional Ramadan visibility, regulatory banners, sacred lettering, seasonal greetings, symbolic objects, and civic-religious event branding. Moral messaging operates through invitation, prohibition, remembrance, welcome, symbolic evocation, and civic celebration, showing that public piety is both affective and disciplinary. Spatial authority is produced through layered communal, police, religious-textual, governmental, symbolic, and civic-event voices rather than through a single institutional source. **Implication:** These findings show that Indonesian streetscapes function as negotiated moral-visual environments where ordinary public space is temporarily and materially reorganized by religious signs. **Novelty:** This study advances visual piety research by integrating multimodal-geosemiotic mapping, moral-message typology, and spatial-authority analysis within Indonesian linguistic landscape scholarship.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia offers a critical site for examining how Islamic visuality enters ordinary public space because religion is not only practiced in designated worship settings but also displayed, regulated, and circulated across streets, markets, neighbourhood gates, schools, transport corridors, and commercial façades. In 2024, BPS [1] recorded Islam as representing around 87.2% of Indonesia's population, while Ministry of Religious Affairs data reported hundreds of thousands of mosques and prayer halls across this archipelagic society. These figures matter not as demographic background alone, but as spatial conditions through which piety becomes publicly legible. Qur'anic calligraphy, halal labels, modesty instructions, Ramadan banners, mosque announcements, and moral warnings are therefore not neutral ornaments; they participate in everyday negotiations over visibility, authority, and belonging. This issue is crucial because Indonesian

streetscapes increasingly function as moral-visual environments where religious aesthetics address passers-by as believers, consumers, citizens, and disciplined urban subjects.

Recent scholarship has substantially examined Indonesian Islam through piety, consumption, gender, preaching, digital media, and political authority. Wildan and Witriani (2021) [2] describe popular piety as an aestheticized and reproducible form of Islam, while Rahim (2022) [3], Pribadi and Sila (2023) [4], and Millie and Baulch (2024) [5] show how Islamic symbols circulate through lifestyle, halal consumption, and middle-class religious economies. Other studies foreground urban mobility, mosque ecosystems, religious influencers, and new authority formations in contemporary Islam [6], [7], [8], [9]. Parallel work on Indonesian linguistic landscapes and visual urban discourse has examined signage, typography, graffiti, murals, ethnolinguistic visibility, and spatial belonging [10], [11], [12], [13]. Yet these conversations remain insufficiently connected. What remains underexplored is how Islamic aesthetics and moral messages operate as streetscape discourse: visible, emplaced, materially situated signs that organize public morality and spatial authority beyond mosques, platforms, or formal religious institutions.

This study addresses that gap by analysing visual piety in Indonesian streetscapes as a multimodal configuration of text, image, typography, colour, placement, institutional voice, and spatial address. Rather than treating Islamic signs as simple indicators of religiosity, this study asks how Islamic aesthetics become public, how moral messages are visually organized, and how streetscape signs authorize particular modes of conduct and belonging. Three questions guide this inquiry: how are Islamic aesthetics represented through visible signs and symbols in Indonesian public space; what forms of moral messaging are articulated through these streetscape materials; and how do these materials construct spatial authority, public belonging, and moral subjectivity? Methodologically, this study combines linguistic landscape analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and geosemiotic attention to placement and material context. Such a design enables this study to distinguish description from interpretation while avoiding unsupported claims about actual behavioural effects.

This study argues that Islamic streetscape signs should be understood as spatial acts of moral address, not merely as decorative religious expressions. Their significance lies in how they translate piety into visible urban form: calligraphy sacralizes surfaces, halal branding aligns consumption with moral legitimacy, Ramadan banners temporarily reorganize street atmosphere, and warning signs mark public space as ethically supervised. This argument extends Hefner's (2022) [14] concern with morality and religious authority, Weng's (2022) [15] analysis of Islamic counter-publics, and Chaplin's (2025) [9] account of urban mosque authority by relocating attention to everyday visual infrastructures. It also contributes to Indonesian visual landscape studies by showing that streetscape visibility is shaped not only by language inequality or aesthetic design, but also by religious normativity. The implication is conceptual and methodological: visual piety reveals how Indonesian public space becomes a field where aesthetics, morality, commerce, and authority meet without collapsing into a single ideological or institutional source.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Visual piety

Visual piety refers to ways religious commitment becomes publicly perceptible through images, bodies, texts, commodities, architecture, and spatial display. It differs from private devotion because it depends on visibility, recognition, and shared semiotic conventions. Wildan and Witriani (2021) [2] frame Indonesian popular piety as an aestheticized reproduction of Islam, while Rahim (2022) [3] and Pribadi and Sila (2023) [4] show how hijab, beauty, and halal lifestyle transform piety into consumable appearance. Benussi (2021) [16] similarly treats halal living as spatially produced subjectivity. These approaches agree that piety is not merely belief; it is performed through visible forms, although they differ in whether emphasis falls on discipline, identity, market culture, or moral aspiration.

The indicators of visual piety therefore include script, ornament, dress codes, halal logos, architectural references, colour schemes, and religiously marked commodities. Dariyadi et al. (2025) [17] show that Arabic calligraphy in Indonesian mosques carries architectural and devotional significance, while Aryanti and Achmadi (2024) [18] interpret Istiqlal Mosque through national and religious interiority. Islamic visuality also appears in screen culture and social media, where aesthetics mediate authority, gender, and authenticity [19], [20], [21]. However, these studies often privilege buildings, bodies, or platforms. Streetscape objects require a more situated reading because their meanings emerge through placement, circulation, and everyday encounter.

2.2. Moral messaging

Moral messaging concerns public language and imagery that invite, warn, instruct, discipline, or persuade audiences toward ethically coded conduct. In Islamic contexts, moral messages are not limited to doctrine; they can appear as *da'wah*, lifestyle advice, institutional reminders, political signals, or commercial persuasion. Weng (2022) [15] highlights popular preaching and Islamic counter-publics, while Djainudin et

al. (2023) [22] examine how piety is instructed through education and anti-radicalism discourse. Hefner (2022) [14] stresses that religious authority increasingly works through mediated moral forms. Yet moral messaging is analytically unstable: it can empower ethical reflection, normalize public discipline, or commercialize virtue depending on speaker, audience, and spatial context.

The main indicators of moral messaging include imperative phrases, warnings, prohibitions, Qur'anic or hadith references, invocations of modesty, halal assurance, anti-vice discourse, and appeals to communal order. Studies of *hijrah*, Salafi *da'wah*, Muslim youth, and middle-class piety show how moral messages circulate through identity transformation, lifestyle aspiration, and religious self-fashioning [23], [24], [25], [26]. Abadi et al. (2023) [27] demonstrate that café culture can become a site of Islamic self-conception. These works clarify moral discourse but less often examine how streetscape placement changes moral address from personal advice into public spatial expectation.

2.3. Spatial authority

Spatial authority refers to how signs, institutions, and visual arrangements produce claims over who may speak, appear, behave, and belong in public space. In linguistic landscape studies, authority is not only legal or governmental; it is semiotically produced through language choice, visibility, scale, material durability, and placement. Aini (2026) [10], Sartono (2026) [11], Sain and Assya'bani (2026) [12], and Kartika (2026) [13] show that Indonesian urban landscapes organize identity, inequality, and belonging through visible language. Sadiq (2024) [28] extends this concern to Islamic schoolscapes. In Islamic studies, Chaplin (2025) [9] and Alam et al. (2023) [6] demonstrate how urban mosques and Islamic urbanism embed authority in everyday space.

Indicators of spatial authority include institutional logos, mosque committee names, government seals, school or *pesantren* affiliation, banner placement near gates or intersections, territorial wording, durable signboards, and temporary event-based displays. Savirani et al. (2022) [29] show how mosque ecosystems extend halal entrepreneurship, while Fansuri (2023, 2024) [7], [30] links *hijrah*, mobility, and urban religious transformation. Studies of political piety and religious nationalism further reveal how Islamic symbols authorize public claims beyond worship [31], [32], [33]. This study positions Indonesian streetscapes as a meeting point where visual piety, moral messaging, and spatial authority jointly produce religiously charged urban visibility.

3. METHOD

The unit of analysis is one publicly visible Islamic streetscape item or one supporting document attached to its interpretation. This study uses a 40-item corpus consisting of visual-text materials, contextual public documents, comparative public-sign items, and secondary scholarship. Primary units include banners, billboards, public captions, religious-processional objects, Ramadan messages, police/public-order signs, and government or religious-office communications located in Indonesian public environments. Each item was assigned a unique code, source group, date, region, spatial site, URL, textual summary, visual description, and initial coding field. This structure allows visual piety to be analysed as a situated public object rather than as an abstract expression of religiosity.

Table 1. Dataset composition

Code Range	Data Type	Source	Period	Number	Characteristics
VP-PRI-001	Primary visual-text data	Kementerian Agama Denpasar	2021–2026	1	Religious-administrative banner/billboard in KUA surroundings
VP-PRI-002–006	Primary visual-text data	Police public communication / Tribratanews	2021–2026	5	Ramadan safety banners, prohibitions, public-order moral messages
VP-PRI-007–015	Primary visual-text data	Media Center Kota Palangka Raya	2021–2026	9	Tarhib Ramadan street procession, banners, religious symbols, public captions
VP-PRI-016	Primary visual-text data	Pemkab Sumenep	2021–2026	1	Public religious-government visual communication
VP-PRI-017	Primary visual-text data	Kemenag Kepulauan Riau	2021–2026	1	Community religious visual communication
VP-PRI-018	Primary visual-text data	Pemkot Pematangsiantar	2021–2026	1	Public Islamic event communication
VP-PRI-019–020	Contextual comparative public-sign data	Local government / Korlantas Polri	2021–2026	2	Comparative non-Islamic public-sign regulation
VP-SEC-001–015	Secondary literature	Peer-reviewed journals	2021–2026	15	Visual piety, Islamic urbanism, linguistic landscape, religious authority
VP-CTX-001–005	Context data	Government, police, and religious-office sources	2021–2026	5	Public-space regulation and institutional context
Total	Mixed corpus	Public and scholarly sources	2021–2026	40	Deduplicated, coded, and source-verified corpus

This study adopts a qualitative multimodal discourse design supported by linguistic landscape and geosemiotic analysis. This design is appropriate because Islamic public signs combine written language, visual symbolism, colour, typography, object placement, institutional voice, and spatial address. Following Indonesian visual-landscape scholarship on signage, graffiti, murals, spatial belonging, and large-scale urban imagery [10], [11], [12], [13], this study treats streetscapes as semiotic environments. It does not infer behavioural effects from signs. Instead, it examines how visible Islamic materials organize public meaning, moral address, and spatial authority.

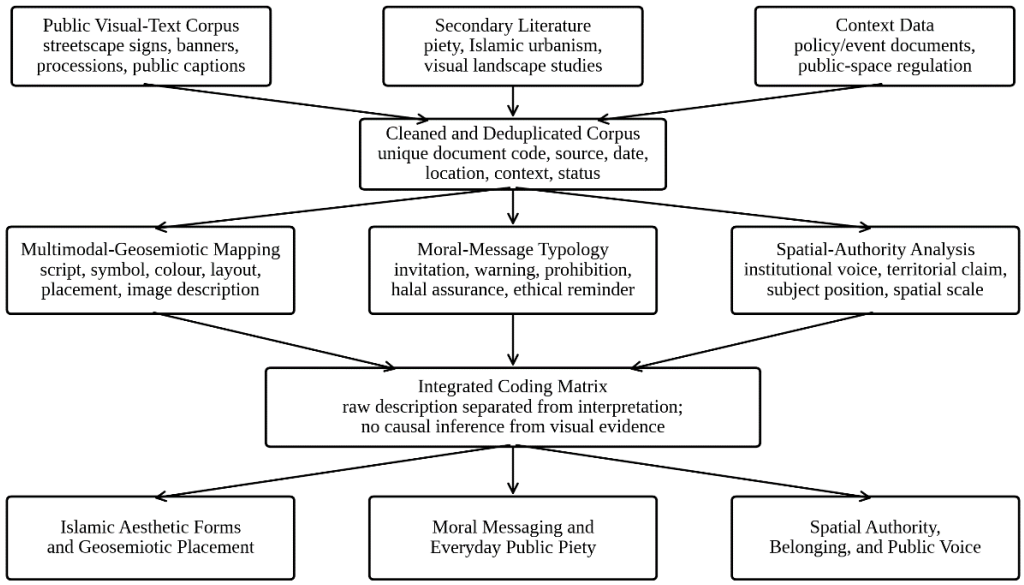
Information was drawn from three source layers. Primary data came from publicly accessible official or institutional webpages documenting streetscape signs, banners, processions, and public visual communication. Secondary data came from peer-reviewed studies on visual piety, Islamic urbanism, popular piety, religious authority, and Indonesian linguistic landscapes, including Wildan and Witriani (2021) [2], Weng (2022) [15], Alam et al. (2023) [6], Fansuri (2023) [7], Millie and Baulch (2024) [5], Febrian (2024) [8], and Chaplin (2025) [9]. Context data came from public regulatory and event-related documents. This layered source strategy enables empirical description, conceptual interpretation, and contextual positioning to remain analytically distinct.

Data collection followed a structured corpus-building procedure. Official pages and public institutional channels were searched using Indonesian and English keywords related to Islamic banners, Ramadan streetscapes, halal signs, mosque announcements, moral warnings, *da'wah* signage, and public-space religious messages. Items were included when they contained a visible or textually documented public sign, identifiable source, date or publication context, spatial reference, and accessible URL. Items were excluded when they lacked public-space relevance, source traceability, or sufficient visual/textual information. Duplicates were removed through document title, URL, institution, date, and spatial-site comparison before each item received a unique code.

Data analysis proceeded in three connected stages. First, multimodal-geosemiotic mapping identified language script, visual symbol, colour, layout, logo placement, actor, frame, and spatial site. Second, moral-message typology classified whether public signs worked as invitation, celebration, prohibition, warning, halal assurance, ethical reminder, or communal discipline. Third, spatial-authority analysis examined institutional voice, territorial marking, subject position, and scale of address. These stages are supported by the initial codebook and coding matrix. This procedure enables this study to move from documented public objects to interpretive claims about Islamic aesthetics, moral messaging, and spatial authority in Indonesian streetscapes.

Table 2. Data collection and analysis procedure

Stage	Procedure	Output Field	Quality Control
Source identification	Locate official, institutional, public media, and scholarly sources	source_group; institution; source_url	Prioritize verifiable public sources
Keyword search	Use Islamic visuality, Ramadan, halal, banner, mosque, *da'wah*, moral-warning terms	search_terms; context	Keep Indonesian and English variants
Screening	Apply inclusion and exclusion criteria	inclusion_status; exclusion_reason	Remove unverifiable or irrelevant items
Metadata capture	Record title, date, location, spatial site, source, and media type	corpus_metadata	Preserve source traceability
Text and visual capture	Store public text, quotation, image description, symbol, colour, layout, actor, frame	corpus_text	Separate description from interpretation
Deduplication	Compare URL, title, institution, date, and spatial context	deduplication_key; deduplication_status	Retain only unique entries
Initial coding	Apply aesthetic, moral-message, and spatial-authority codes	corpus_coding	Use codebook definitions consistently
Analytic synthesis	Compare coded patterns across source layers	discussion categories	Avoid causal claims



Source: corpus_metadata, corpus_text, corpus_coding, and codebook_initial worksheets.

Figure 1. Operational matrix of analysis

4. RESULTS

4.1. Visual-geosemiotic forms of public islamic aesthetics in Indonesian streetscapes

Public Islamic aesthetics in Indonesian streetscapes appear through a repertoire of mobile, textual, regulatory, symbolic, and event-based visual forms. The primary corpus indicates that visual piety is not confined to fixed mosque architecture or commercial halal branding; it also becomes visible through Ramadan processions, banners, sacred lettering, public greetings, and civic-religious event signage. This distribution matters because streetscape piety works through repeated exposure in ordinary public environments rather than through doctrinal explanation alone. Studies of Indonesian popular piety have

shown that Islamic identity is increasingly aestheticized, reproduced, and attached to everyday consumption and public appearance [2], [3], [5]. The corpus extends this concern into streetscape space, where piety becomes publicly encountered as visual address.

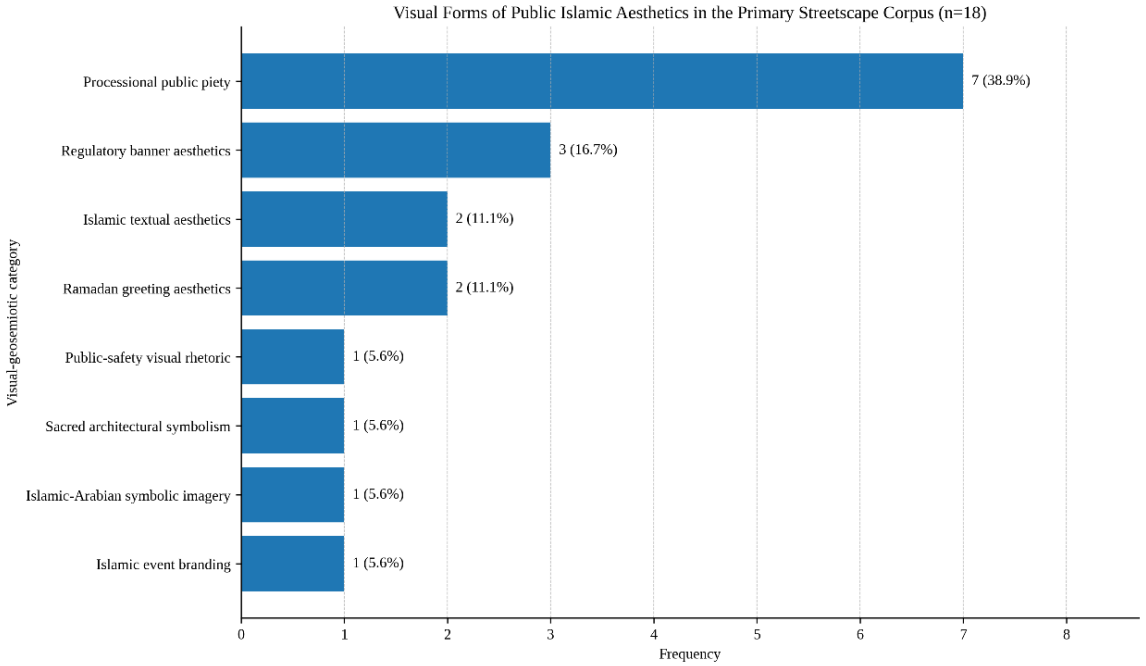


Figure 2. Visual forms of public Islamic aesthetics in Indonesian streetscapes corpus

The dominant pattern is processional public piety, which accounts for 7 of 18 primary items, or 38.9%. These items include banners, participant numbering, decorated vehicles, *drumband* performance, public waiting, and spectatorship around Tarhib Ramadan. The textual evidence shows that Islamic visibility is organized through collective movement, as in "*menyiapkan spanduk dan nomor urut peserta*" and "*warga menyaksikan iring-iringan pawai Tarhib*." Regulatory banner aesthetics form the second-largest category, with 3 items or 16.7%, marked by phrases such as "*tidak melakukan kegiatan perang sarung, tawuran, maupun menyalakan mercon*," "*imbauan larangan balap liar*," and "*larangan penggunaan knalpot brong*." Islamic textual aesthetics and Ramadan greetings each account for 11.1%, indicating that sacred words and seasonal formulas operate as compact visual markers of moral atmosphere.

These patterns suggest that visual piety works less as isolated ornament than as spatialized moral choreography. Processions convert roads into temporary devotional corridors, while prohibition banners attach Ramadan to discipline, safety, and public order. Sacred lettering such as Asmaul Husna and greeting formulas such as "*Marhaban Ya Ramadhan*" condense religious memory into portable and readable objects. This finding aligns with studies of Islamic urbanism and public piety that treat religious life as spatially produced rather than privately contained [16], [6], [7]. It also resonates with linguistic landscape research showing that public signs organize visibility, belonging, and authority [10], [11], [12]. Visual piety, therefore, functions as a public grammar through which aesthetics and moral order are jointly displayed.

Table 3. Visual-geosemiotic forms of public Islamic aesthetics in Indonesian streetscapes

Main Category	Subcategory	Operational Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data Variation	Example / Quotation	Data Code
Processional public piety	Ramadan procession visibility	Public movement, parade objects, decorated vehicles, spectatorship, institutional participation	7	38.9%	*Spanduk*, participant order, decorated vehicle, *drumband*, waiting crowd, public spectatorship	"*menyiapkan spanduk dan nomor urut peserta*"; "*warga menyaksikan iring-iringan pawai Tarhib*"	VP-PRI-001, VP-PRI-006, VP-PRI-007, VP-PRI-010, VP-PRI-013, VP-PRI-014, VP-PRI-015
Regulatory banner aesthetics	Prohibition banner	Banner form, Ramadan timing, prohibition language, public-order visual appeal	3	16.7%	Anti-war-sarong banner, anti-illegal-racing banner, anti-loud-exhaust banner	"*tidak melakukan kegiatan perang sarung, tawuran, maupun menyalakan mercon*"; "*imbauan larangan balap liar*"; "*larangan penggunaan knalpot brong*"	VP-PRI-002, VP-PRI-003, VP-PRI-004
Islamic textual aesthetics	Sacred names / Islamic lettering	Asmaul Husna, sacred lettering, Islamic textual display in public procession	2	11.1%	Styrofoam lettering, carried textual object, sacred-name display	"*bertuliskan Asmaul Husna*"; "*membawa tulisan 'Asmaul Husna'*"	VP-PRI-008, VP-PRI-012
Ramadan greeting aesthetics	Seasonal Islamic public greeting	Greeting banner, public welcome formula, seasonal Islamic atmosphere	2	11.1%	Government-installed greeting, KUA/community greeting	"*Marhaban Ya Ramadhan*"	VP-PRI-016, VP-PRI-017
Public-safety visual rhetoric	Safety banner	Ramadan mobility, *mudik* safety, traffic discipline	1	5.6%	Safety banner placed in public road context	"*spanduk keselamatan berlalu lintas*"	VP-PRI-005
Sacred architectural symbolism	Kaaba miniature	Portable sacred architecture, miniature religious landmark, processional display	1	5.6%	Miniature Kaaba carried in Ramadan procession	"*mengusung miniatur Kabah*"	VP-PRI-009
Islamic-Arabian symbolic imagery	Camel replica	Arabian-Islamic symbolic association, processional spectacle	1	5.6%	Animal replica used as visual attraction	"*menarik replika hewan unta*"	VP-PRI-011
Islamic event branding	Ramadan economy/event signage	Ramadan event naming, urban celebration, halal-economy ambience	1	5.6%	Ramadan public-event branding linked to civic economy	"Semarak Ramadhan Siantar (SERASI) 2026"	VP-PRI-018

4.2. Moral messaging and everyday public piety

Moral messaging in this corpus is distributed across celebratory, prohibitive, devotional, symbolic, and civic-religious forms. The same 18 primary streetscape items used in the preceding analysis are reclassified here according to communicative function rather than visual form. This distinction is methodologically important because a single streetscape object may be visually aesthetic while also performing moral work: a banner may decorate a street, invite collective participation, or warn against conduct considered inappropriate during Ramadan. The table shows that public piety is not communicated only through explicit religious instruction. It also emerges through parade organization, seasonal greeting, sacred-text display, and safety-oriented public warnings. This pattern supports scholarship that treats Indonesian piety as mediated, aestheticized, and publicly organized rather than confined to private belief or formal worship.

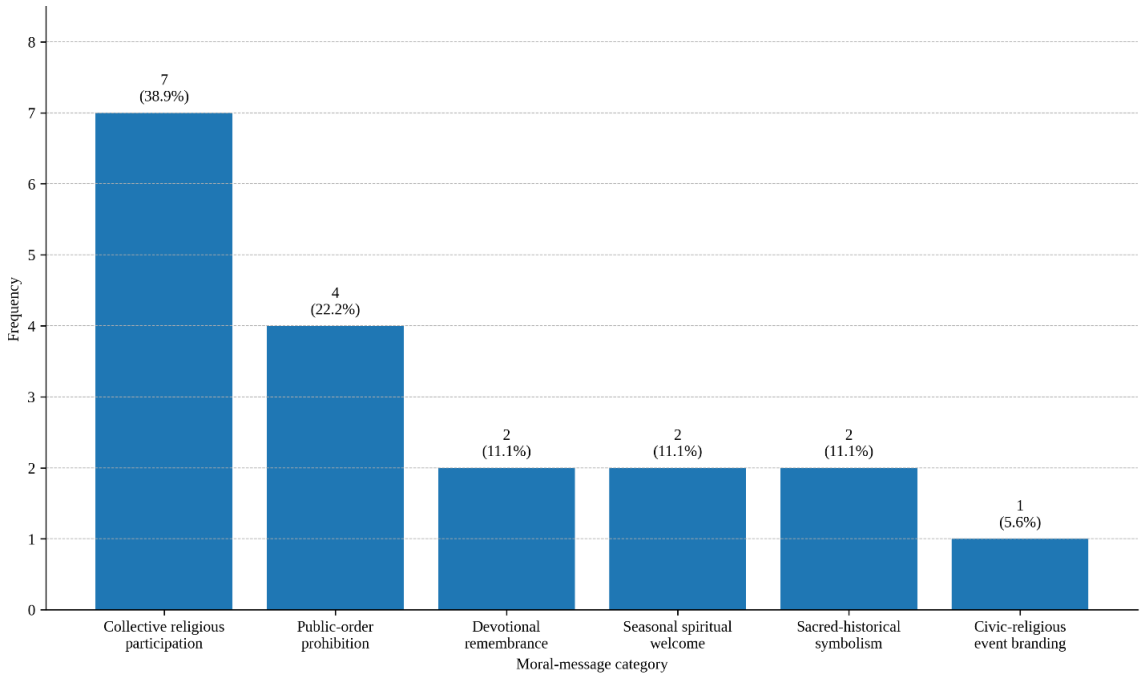


Figure 3. Moral messaging functions in the primary streetscape corpus

The dominant category is collective religious participation, appearing in 7 items or 38.9% of the primary corpus. These items include processional signs, participant numbering, decorated vehicles, and public spectatorship in Tarhib Ramadan events. The phrases "*menyiapkan spanduk dan nomor urut peserta*" and "*warga menyaksikan iring-iringan pawai Tarhib*" show that the moral message is not framed as direct command but as organized participation. Public-order prohibition forms the second-largest category with 4 items or 22.2%, marked by directive phrases such as "*tidak melakukan kegiatan perang sarung, tawuran, maupun menyalakan mercon*," "*imbauan larangan balap liar*," and "*larangan penggunaan knalpot brong*." Devotional remembrance, seasonal welcome, sacred-historical symbolism, and civic-religious event branding appear in smaller but analytically distinct clusters.

The distribution indicates that moral authority in Indonesian Islamic streetscapes is often soft, atmospheric, and event-based, but it can also become disciplinary when linked to police, public safety, or Ramadan order. This finding connects with Weng's (2022) [15] account of Islamic persuasion and counter-public formation, Hefner's (2022) [14] concern with moral authority, and Djainudin et al.'s (2023) [22] discussion of instructed piety. It also extends studies of *hijrah*, urban piety, and Muslim public culture by showing how moral address is spatially staged through signs rather than only through bodies, sermons, platforms, or commodities [24], [7], [5]. Streetscape moral messaging therefore works through a double movement: it invites public religious belonging while also marking boundaries of acceptable conduct.

Table 4. Moral-message typology in Indonesian Islamic streetscapes

Main Moral Category	Communicative Form	Operational Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data Variation	Example / Quotation	Data Code	Dominant Public Address
Collective religious participation	Invitation / public celebration	Processional visibility, collective movement, spectatorship, Ramadan mobilization	7	38.9%	Tarhib Ramadan parade, participant banners, decorated vehicles, *drumband*, public spectatorship	"*menyiapkan spanduk dan nomor urut peserta*"; "*warga menyaksikan iring-iringan pawai Tarhib*"	VP-PRI-001, VP-PRI-006, VP-PRI-007, VP-PRI-010, VP-PRI-013, VP-PRI-014, VP-PRI-015	Community members as participants and witnesses
Public-order prohibition	Warning / prohibition	Prohibition of risky conduct during Ramadan or religiously marked public time	4	22.2%	Anti-war-sarong, anti-firecracker, anti-illegal-racing, anti-loud-exhaust, traffic safety	"*tidak melakukan kegiatan perang sarung, tawuran, maupun menyalakan mercon*"; "*imbauan larangan balap liar*"; "*larangan penggunaan knalpot brong*"	VP-PRI-002, VP-PRI-003, VP-PRI-004, VP-PRI-005	Residents and road users as disciplined publics
Devotional remembrance	Sacred reminder	Display of sacred names or Islamic textual objects	2	11.1%	Asmaul Husna lettering, portable sacred text	"*bertuliskan Asmaul Husna*"; "*membawa tulisan 'Asmaul Husna'*"	VP-PRI-008, VP-PRI-012	Passers-by as remembering subjects
Seasonal spiritual welcome	Greeting / affective moral atmosphere	Ramadan greeting formula, public welcome to sacred month	2	11.1%	KUA or government greeting banners, public Ramadan welcome	"*Marhaban Ya Ramadhan*"	VP-PRI-016, VP-PRI-017	Public audience as shared religious community
Sacred-historical symbolism	Symbolic evocation	Portable objects associated with Islamic sacred geography or historical imagination	2	11.1%	Miniature Kaaba, camel replica	"*mengusung miniatur Kabah*"; "*menarik replika hewan unta*"	VP-PRI-009, VP-PRI-011	Viewers as affective religious spectators
Civic-religious event branding	Event-based moral ambience	Islamic event naming linked to civic festivity and public economy	1	5.6%	Ramadan festival branding in urban public space	"Semarak Ramadhan Siantar (SERASI) 2026"	VP-PRI-018	Citizens as religious-festive publics

4.3. Spatial authority, public belonging, and institutional voice

Spatial authority in this corpus is not produced by one institutional source alone; it emerges through intersecting communal, police, religious-textual, governmental, symbolic, and event-based voices. The same 18 primary visual-text items are classified here according to how each object authorizes public space and positions its audience. Communal-processional authority is the most visible pattern, accounting for 7 items or 38.9%, followed by police/public-order authority with 4 items or 22.2%. Smaller clusters show how sacred texts, Ramadan greetings, sacred-historical symbols, and civic event branding also participate in organizing public space. This distribution indicates that Islamic streetscapes do not simply display religious identity. They produce public address by defining who is invited, warned, remembered, celebrated, or disciplined

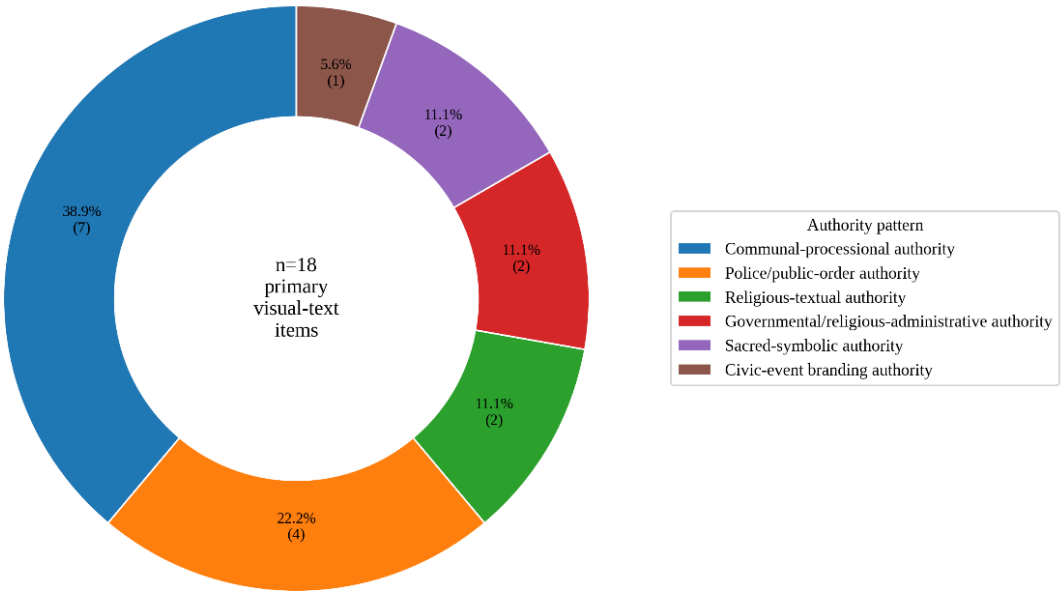


Figure 4. Spatial authority patterns in the primary streetscape corpus

The dominant pattern appears in Tarhib Ramadan processions, where streets are temporarily reorganized through movement, banners, spectatorship, and collective religious participation. Phrases such as "*menyiapkan spanduk dan nomor urut peserta*" show that spatial authority is created through ordering, sequencing, and visible participation, not merely through official command. Police/public-order signs operate differently. Their authority is directive and preventive, as shown in "*tidak melakukan kegiatan perang sarung, tawuran, maupun menyalakan mercon*" and "*larangan penggunaan knalpot brong*." Sacred-textual and symbolic items work through reverence rather than prohibition: "*bertuliskan Asmaul Husna*," "*mengusung miniatur Kabah*," and "*menarik replika hewan unta*" make religious memory materially present within public circulation.

These findings suggest that spatial authority in Islamic streetscapes is layered rather than centralized. Communal processions authorize space through participation; police banners authorize it through discipline; sacred texts authorize it through devotional recognition; government or religious-administrative greetings authorize it through official acknowledgement; symbolic objects authorize it through affective religious memory. This layered pattern resonates with Chaplin's (2025) [9] analysis of urban mosque authority, Hefner's (2022) [14] account of mediated morality, and Alam et al.'s (2023) [6] discussion of Islamic urbanism. It also extends linguistic landscape studies by showing that public signs organize not only language visibility but also moral subject positions [10], [11], [12]. Indonesian streetscapes therefore function as negotiated fields of visual authority.

Table 5. Spatial authority and public address in Indonesian Islamic streetscapes

Authority Pattern	Spatial Mechanism	Operational Indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data Variation	Example / Quotation	Data Code	Subject Position Produced
Communal-processional authority	Temporary reordering of streets through collective religious movement	Procession, participant numbering, public spectatorship, organized Ramadan mobility	7	38.9%	Tarhib Ramadan parade, decorated vehicles, public crowd, *drumband*, procession order	"*menyiapkan spanduk dan nomor urut peserta*"; "*warga menyaksikan iring-iringan pawai Tarhib*"	VP-PRI-001, VP-PRI-006, VP-PRI-007, VP-PRI-010, VP-PRI-013, VP-PRI-014, VP-PRI-015	Residents as participants, witnesses, and members of a visible religious public
Police/public-order authority	Regulation of conduct in religiously marked public time	Prohibition banner, safety warning, behavioural restriction, road-user discipline	4	22.2%	Anti-war-sarong, anti-firecracker, anti-illegal-racing, anti-loud-exhaust, traffic safety	"*tidak melakukan kegiatan perang sarung, tawuran, maupun menyalakan mercon*"; "*larangan penggunaan knalpot brong*"	VP-PRI-002, VP-PRI-003, VP-PRI-004, VP-PRI-005	Residents and road users as morally disciplined publics
Religious-textual authority	Sacralization of public visibility through sacred words	Asmaul Husna, sacred lettering, portable religious text	2	11.1%	Styrofoam sacred names, carried Islamic textual objects	"*bertuliskan Asmaul Husna*"; "*membawa tulisan 'Asmaul Husna'*"	VP-PRI-008, VP-PRI-012	Passers-by as remembering and reverential subjects
Governmental/religious-administrative authority	Institutional inscription of Islamic atmosphere into public space	Public greeting banner, KUA/government religious communication	2	11.1%	Ramadan greeting displayed by public or religious-administrative actor	"*Marhaban Ya Ramadhan*"	VP-PRI-016, VP-PRI-017	Citizens as members of an officially acknowledged religious community
Sacred-symbolic authority	Use of sacred geography and Islamic imaginary to authorize visual attention	Kaaba miniature, camel replica, religious-historical symbolic reference	2	11.1%	Processional sacred object, Arabian-Islamic symbolic figure	"*mengusung miniatur Kabah*"; "*menarik replika hewan unta*"	VP-PRI-009, VP-PRI-011	Viewers as affective spectators of sacred memory
Civic-event branding authority	Branding of Ramadan as urban civic-religious experience	Named Ramadan event, festival identity, public celebration economy	1	5.6%	Municipal Ramadan branding and civic festivity	"Semarak Ramadhan Siantar (SERASI) 2026"	VP-PRI-018	Citizens as festive religious publics and urban participants

5. DISCUSSION

The prominence of processional and publicly visible Islamic aesthetics suggests that visual piety in Indonesian streetscapes functions as an infrastructure of collective recognition. Its significance lies not simply in making Islam visible, but in converting ordinary streets into temporary scenes of shared moral attention. Processions, banners, sacred lettering, and Ramadan objects invite passers-by to see themselves as part of a religiously marked public, even when they are not direct participants. This supports Wildan and Witriani's (2021) [2] argument that Indonesian Islam is often reproduced through aestheticized public forms, but it extends that insight from personal appearance and media culture to street-level spatial practice. At the same time, this finding complicates studies that emphasize piety primarily as lifestyle consumption [3], [4], [5]. Streetscape visuality is less privately aspirational and more publicly relational: it organizes attention, belonging, and moral atmosphere.

This pattern can be understood through an underlying structure of seasonal urban religiosity, where public space becomes temporarily reorganized around Ramadan and related Islamic events. The corpus does not show that streetscape signs cause pious behaviour; rather, it indicates an association between religious temporality, collective display, and spatial visibility. Processions and symbolic objects work because streets are not neutral containers; they are already social routes through which communities move, gather, and recognize authority. This aligns with Alam et al. (2023) [6], who describe Islamic urbanism as a changing spatial formation, and with Fansuri's (2023) [7] account of *hijrah* as involving mobility and identity formation. Yet this finding differs from research focused on mosque interiors or digital Islamic visibility [18], [8]. In streetscapes, authority is not enclosed or algorithmically mediated; it is distributed through movement, placement, and repeated public encounter.

The moral-message pattern shows that public piety operates through both invitation and discipline. Its implication is ambivalent. On one side, Ramadan greetings, sacred names, and procession signs create a hospitable moral atmosphere, making religious belonging publicly recognizable without direct coercion. On another side, prohibition banners and public-order warnings attach piety to regulation, risk prevention, and behavioural correction. This ambivalence resonates with Hefner's (2022) [14] argument that morality and religious authority increasingly circulate through mediated forms, and with Weng's (2022) [15] analysis of Islamic persuasion in public discourse. However, this finding also challenges overly celebratory readings of popular piety. When Islamic signs instruct publics not to engage in *tawuran*, *perang sarung*, fireworks, illegal racing, or loud-exhaust practices, moral address becomes intertwined with surveillance-like expectations. Visual piety therefore functions not only as expression, but also as a public technique for defining acceptable conduct.

The structure behind this moral messaging is a convergence between sacred time and civic order. Ramadan intensifies public expectations of restraint, discipline, and communal responsibility; public institutions can therefore frame safety campaigns as morally resonant rather than merely administrative. This does not mean religious signs produce obedience, but it shows how regulatory discourse gains legibility when attached to Islamic time, vocabulary, and visual atmosphere. Djainudin et al. (2023) [22] discuss instructed piety in education and anti-radicalism discourse, while Farchan and Rosharlianti (2021) [24] and Dewi et al. (2024) [25] show how *hijrah* and *da'wah* shape urban Muslim identity. This corpus suggests a streetscape version of that process: moral instruction becomes spatially available to anonymous publics. Compared with digital piety studies [21], [34], street banners cannot personalize audiences, but they compensate by occupying shared routes and making moral norms physically unavoidable.

The spatial-authority pattern demonstrates that Indonesian Islamic streetscapes are governed by layered voices rather than a single religious institution. Communal actors, police, religious texts, government offices, sacred symbols, and civic event branding all participate in authorizing public visibility. This matters because it prevents a narrow interpretation of Islamic streetscape signs as either purely devotional or purely state-regulatory. Instead, authority is assembled through overlapping forms: participation, prohibition, reverence, administration, memory, and festival branding. This supports Chaplin's (2025) [9] account of religious authority in urban mosques, but it shifts attention beyond mosque-centred leadership toward dispersed public signage. Fawaid et al.'s (2019) [35] historical account of contested mosque architecture in Java is a reminder that sacred space has long been a site where competing authorities negotiate legitimacy. It also extends linguistic landscape research by showing that visibility is not only about language choice or ethnolinguistic inequality [10], [12]. In this corpus, signs authorize subject positions: citizens, road users, worshippers, spectators, community members, and disciplined moral publics.

This layered authority emerges because Indonesian public space is shaped by overlapping religious, civic, commercial, and communal infrastructures. Streetscape signs can speak with mosque-related, governmental, police, or community voices because urban publics already encounter these institutions as part

of daily spatial order. This explains why sacred-textual displays, police warnings, and Ramadan event branding can coexist without necessarily appearing contradictory. They draw on different but compatible forms of legitimacy: scripture, public safety, communal festivity, and administrative recognition. Sartono (2026) [11] and Kartika (2026) [13] show that Indonesian urban visuality is materially and technologically organized, while Sadiq (2024) [28] demonstrates that Islamic schoolscapes encode institutional identity through language and placement. This study adds that Islamic streetscapes produce spatial authority through multi-source visual address. The implication is theoretical: visual piety should be read as a negotiated semiotic ecology, not as a uniform religious agenda or a simple reflection of demographic religiosity. Fawaid et al.'s (2024) [36] reading of Javanese Islamic aesthetics as a field of political negotiation and Abdullah et al.'s (2025) [37] study of visual representation in the 2024 presidential campaign point in the same direction: aesthetic and visual form carries authority claims rather than serving as neutral decoration.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that visual piety in Indonesian streetscapes operates as a public grammar through which Islamic aesthetics, moral messaging, and spatial authority become mutually constitutive. Its central lesson is that Qur'anic lettering, Ramadan banners, processional objects, halal-inflected signs, and public warnings should not be read as isolated religious decorations, but as spatial acts that organize visibility, belonging, and moral address. The contribution lies in renewing linguistic landscape and Islamic piety studies by shifting attention from mosques, bodies, platforms, and commodities toward everyday streetscape infrastructures. Methodologically, this study offers an integrated multimodal-geosemiotic, moral-message, and spatial-authority framework.

The limitation of this study lies in its dependence on publicly documented visual-text materials, which restricts access to audience interpretation, production history, and the everyday negotiations behind sign placement. Because this design is interpretive and corpus-based, it cannot establish causal effects between public signs and behavioural change. Future research should combine streetscape documentation with interviews, ethnographic observation, geospatial comparison, and longitudinal tracking across different Indonesian cities, religious demographics, and urban zones. Comparative work with non-Islamic religious signage would also clarify which features are specific to Islamic visual piety and which reflect broader patterns of moral communication in public space.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Author states no conflict of interest.

AI USE DECLARATION

The author used artificial intelligence tools to assist with the generation of illustrative figures and with the formatting and layout of this manuscript. AI was not used to generate the substantive content, conceptualization, data, analysis, or conclusions of the research, all of which remain the sole responsibility of the author.

INFORMED CONSENT

Not applicable – this study did not involve direct human participants. Data consisted solely of publicly accessible visual-text materials (banners, billboards, public captions, and processional objects), public regulatory and institutional documents, and peer-reviewed scholarly literature.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research did not involve human or animal subjects; it analyzed publicly accessible streetscape signs, banners, and institutional communications, together with scholarly literature and public regulatory documentation, and therefore no institutional review board approval was required. Where research does involve human subjects, the author affirms that such research would be conducted in full compliance with all

relevant national regulations and institutional policies, in accordance with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki, and would be approved by the author's institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The corpus of publicly accessible visual-text items, secondary literature, and contextual documents analyzed in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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