

ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION MESSAGES FOR THE MALAY TRADITIONAL PROPOSAL EVENT OF THE DELI COMMUNITY OF NORTH SUMATRA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore and understand the Islamic communication messages contained in the Malay traditional engagement ceremony among the Deli community, North Sumatra. This study uses a qualitative approach with field research methods, which allows researchers to directly engage in social and cultural observations and collect data from sources involved in the tradition. The main informants in this study consisted of Shafwan Hadi Umri, Aslim, and Tengku Ismail, who each provided scientific, cultural, and practical insights regarding the traditional engagement ceremony. Secondary data were obtained through a desk study of relevant literature. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings of this study indicate that the Deli Malay traditional engagement ceremony is not only a cultural ritual, but is also rich in Islamic messages, such as polite speech, respect for parents, honesty, and silaturahmi (silaturahmi). These messages are conveyed through cultural symbols, pantun (rhymes), and figurative language, reflecting polite and wise communication in accordance with Islamic teachings. The results of this study emphasize the importance of preserving this traditional tradition so that the younger generation remains connected to a cultural identity that is rich in Islamic values.

Keywords: Messages, Islamic Communication, Proposal Event, Malay Customs

1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage theologically is a religious commandment, especially that regulated by Islamic law. (Awaliyah & Batubara, 2021) In this view, marriage is not only a means of fulfilling biological needs, but also a form of obedience to religious commands. Islam views marriage as a way to form a sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah family, as well as a door to a blessed life. (Selvia & Fiqri, 2021). Islam has set out the

procedures for marriage clearly and simply, as long as it meets the requirements and pillars according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. However, in the social reality of Muslim society in Indonesia, marriage is not only seen from a religious perspective, but is also influenced by culture and customs. The Malay community, for example, integrates Islamic values into their cultural structure. This is in line with the Malay proverb "adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah" which emphasizes that custom and religion are not separate, but rather mutually reinforcing. (Tanjung, 2023)

In the context of Malay culture in Indonesia, marriage is part of a sacred journey of life. One of them is reflected in the traditional Malay proposal procession, which is loaded with religious values, social norms, and cultural symbols that reflect the integration between custom and Islamic teachings. (Soiman, et.al, 2022) This proposal process is not just a normal ritual, but also a form of spiritual and social communication that contains a moral message.

Indonesia itself is known to have a unique cultural diversity in each of its regions. Regional culture, including in matters of marriage, reflects a unique local identity (Alamsyah, et.al, 2022). In this regard, Malay culture has a wealth of traditions that reflect Islamic values through symbols and marriage processions that are carried out from generation to generation. Symbols in Malay wedding customs also play a role as traditional communication media that contain deep meaning. Through submissions, prayers, traditional poems, to family representative speeches, Islamic communication messages such as manners in conveying meaning, deliberation, respect between families, and good intentions in building a household are preserved (Indainanto et al., 2023; Sikumbang et al., 2024).

According to (Suryani, et.al, 2022) this communication is not only verbal, but also non-verbal through traditional media such as dance, visual, speech, and other art forms. (Adi, 2020) Unfortunately, in today's development, there is a shift in meaning in the traditional Malay proposal tradition, especially among the younger generation (Ritonga et al., 2024). The application process that used to be rich in religious values is now beginning to be replaced by modern concepts that are more practical and tend to ignore the spiritual and cultural meaning contained in it. This phenomenon is caused by the lack of understanding of traditional values, as well as the strong influence of foreign cultures that are more individualistic (Dalimunthe et al., 2025; Ritonga et al., 2024).

In fact, as explained in the research (Siti Nurhaliza, et.al, 2023), the Malay Deli traditional proposal procession holds many messages of Islamic communication that are important to preserve. Values such as respect, responsibility, speech etiquette, prayer, and friendship become part of the communication that is integrated in the culture. This tradition is not only ceremonial, but also a medium of cultural preaching and Islamic character education (Dalimunthe et al., 2025).

One of the traditions that is still sustainable to this day is the proposal procession in Malay Deli custom in North Sumatra. This tradition is not just a formal event to bring two families together, but also a means of communication that is full of meaning, both culturally and religiously. In the middle of Deli's traditional Malay proposal procession, there are many moral messages and Islamic values that are conveyed subtly but profoundly through symbols, language, and a series of events. But in today's development, a shift in values is beginning to be seen. Many people, especially the younger generation, are starting to lack understanding or even abandon the original meaning of the traditional proposal procession. The marriage ceremony that used to be carried out with full religious and cultural meaning, is now often just a formality or replaced with a more practical modern concept. This problem arises due to the lack of understanding of the values contained in tradition, as well as the strong influence of external cultures that are more individualistic and lack spiritual elements.

This phenomenon demonstrates a serious challenge in preserving culture and conveying Islamic values through traditional communication. However, upon closer examination, Islamic communication messages, such as etiquette in conveying intentions, ethical speech, and the value of responsibility in building a household, are strongly reflected in the Deli Malay traditional engagement ceremony. Therefore, it is important to examine how these Islamic communication messages are conveyed and understood within this local cultural context. This research is expected to re-envision the positive values of Deli Malay customs, particularly the engagement ceremony, and demonstrate that Islamic teachings and local culture can go hand in hand in creating a harmonious and religious social order. Furthermore, this research can serve as a form of documentation and preservation of Deli Malay culture, which is rich in noble values.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a field research (Meleong, 2017) that uses a qualitative approach to explore and understand in depth the Islamic communication messages contained in the Malay traditional engagement ceremony among the Deli community, North Sumatra. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to be directly involved in social and cultural observations of the community, as well as to obtain data from the direct experiences of informants involved in carrying out the tradition.

The main informants in this study consist of: (1) Shafwan Hadi Umri, a Malay academic and cultural expert who provides scientific and cultural views on communication practices in Malay customs; (2) Aslim, as the leader of Sanggar Payung Bertuah who actively preserves Malay culture through arts and traditions; and (3) Tengku Ismail, a Telangkai (Malay traditional emcee) who has direct experience in leading the traditional engagement procession. In addition,

secondary data was collected through library studies of relevant literature (Meleong, 2017) including books, journals, and previous research results on Islamic communication, Malay culture, and communication anthropology.

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3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

In the traditions of the people of Deli, North Sumatra, the traditional Malay proposal procession is not only a cultural series passed down from generation to generation, but is also full of Islamic communication messages conveyed through symbols, words and actions. Through this procession, values such as etiquette, respect, friendship and responsibility are upheld, in line with Islamic teachings. Each stage, from the introduction of the proposal to the woman's reply, has its own meaning that reflects Islamic morals, such as politeness in speaking, respect for parents, and conveying intentions openly and honestly. In this context, communication does not only take place verbally, but also through cultural signals such as handing over betel, using rhymes, and sitting positions that depict ethical and moral values. Thus, the traditional Malay application procession is not only a formal tradition, but also a means of educating Islamic values which are instilled through the practice of people's daily lives.

As the results of an interview with Shafwan Hadi Umri as a Malay academic and cultural observer explained that; (Shafwan Hadi Umri, 2025)

"A Malay cultural expert explained that the engagement ceremony in Deli Malay customs is a form of cultural communication steeped in Islamic values. According to him, every stage of the engagement procession from the arrival of the groom's entourage, through the communication of their intentions, to the symbolic handover of betel nuts is a form of communication imbued with Islamic teachings,

such as maintaining good manners, respecting parents, and conveying intentions honestly and kindly. He emphasized that this tradition is not only a hereditary custom but also a medium for conveying moral, ethical, and religious messages, packaged in symbolic forms and refined language. Values such as silaturahmi (silaturahmi), deliberation (musyawarah), and sincerity are clearly visible in the process. In fact, the use of rhymes and figurative language serves as a means of conveying messages without offending, reflecting local wisdom that aligns with the principles of Islamic da'wah (Islamic propagation). Shafwan also explained that Malay society maintains harmony and a sense of shame (haya') in every procession, which he believes is part of high Islamic ethics. Therefore, the traditional engagement ceremony. "It's not just a procession leading to marriage, but also a platform for social and spiritual education. He also believes that the continuity of this tradition needs to be maintained so that the younger generation remains familiar with a cultural identity deeply rooted in Islamic values."

From the explanation of Shafwan Hadi Umri, a Malay cultural expert, it can be concluded that the engagement ceremony in the Deli Malay tradition is not merely part of a cultural tradition but also a means of conveying profound Islamic values. Every element of the engagement ceremony, from the manner of speaking, the symbols used, to the attitudes of the parties involved, reflects Islamic teachings, such as etiquette, the importance of respecting parents, and honesty in conveying intentions. Furthermore, the use of rhymes and figurative language is a hallmark of communication that is not only beautiful but also polite and full of meaning. This tradition, he believes, also serves as a platform for social and spiritual learning for the community, as it teaches how to live harmoniously together, respect each other, and maintain the value of shame as part of Islamic ethics. Therefore, preserving this engagement ceremony is crucial so that the younger generation remains connected to its Islamic and meaningful cultural roots. The messages contained in the Deli Malay engagement ceremony are:

1. The importance of maintaining adab (politeness in speaking and acting).
2. Respecting parents as part of family and religious values.
3. Honesty in conveying intentions, as a form of sincerity in relationships.
4. Maintaining relations between the extended families of both parties.
5. Deliberation is the best way to make joint decisions.
6. Sincerity in receiving and giving, without any strings attached.
7. Polite and figurative language as a form of subtle communication
8. Maintaining shame (haya') as a reflection of Islamic morals.
9. Preserving cultural values of Islam so that they are not lost over time.

An interview with Aslim, the head of the Payung Bertuah studio, explained that (Aslim, 2025)

"The engagement ceremony in Deli Malay tradition contains many messages rooted in Islamic values. Each stage of the process, such as the halang Kipas (fan offering), the plain flour offering, and the eating of adap-adapan rice, is

carried out with etiquette and rich symbolic meaning. According to him, the halang Kipas symbolizes the preservation of a woman's dignity in Malay culture, and gaining her blessing requires good manners and sincere intentions. The "pangerut tawar" tradition is not merely a ritual, but an expression of prayer and hope that the marriage they build will be peaceful, loving, and merciful. This process also demonstrates the principles of responsibility, hard work, and sincerity, all of which align with Islamic values. Meanwhile, the eating of adap-adapan rice reflects the importance of kinship and harmony between two extended families. He believes that through this engagement ceremony, Malay society is actually teaching noble morals in married life through symbolic language and customs that are carried out with respect."

In line with Khairil Anhar's statement, the Malay traditional ceremony host explained that (Khairil Anhar, 2025)

"Islamic messages are often conveyed through meaningful expressions by the parents of one of the prospective bride and groom. Typically, these messages are delivered subtly and meaningfully when the bride and groom's families arrive or during the handover ceremony. These words not only convey the purpose of the proposal but also serve as advice on married life, embodying morality, responsibility, and sincerity. Tengku Ismail explained that in Malay tradition, messages are not delivered directly or to the point, but rather through figurative language, rhymes, or traditional expressions containing Islamic values. This reflects local wisdom that aligns with Islamic teachings regarding polite and wise communication."

From interviews with Aslim, the head of Sanggar Payung Bertuah, and Tengku Ismail, the Malay traditional ceremony host, it can be concluded that the engagement ceremony in Deli Malay tradition is not merely a cultural ceremony, but rather a means of communication rich in Islamic values. Each stage of the ceremony, such as the halang kipas (fan offering), the plain flour offering, and the eating of adap-adapan rice, conveys profound messages about respect for women, the importance of sincere intentions, and prayers for building a household blessed by Allah. Furthermore, Islamic messages are also conveyed subtly through the words of the bride and groom's parents, using pantun (pantun), figurative expressions, and meaningful traditional language. This demonstrates that Malay society has long applied ethical, polite, and wise communication principles within the context of custom. This tradition not only preserves culture but also serves as a means of moral and ethical education in accordance with Islamic teachings.

The Islamic messages conveyed in the traditional Malay engagement ceremony of the Deli people of North Sumatra are subtly conveyed through symbols, figurative language, and meaningful etiquette. Each procession, such as the halang kipas (fan ceremony), the offering of plain flour, and the eating of adap-adapan rice, not only showcases cultural beauty but also conveys Islamic values such as courtesy, honesty, responsibility, and respect for parents. In conveying the

purpose of the engagement, moral messages and advice on domestic life are conveyed through pantun (traditional rhymes), demonstrating that the Malay people have long prioritized polite and ethical communication. This tradition serves as a form of cultural da'wah (Islamic outreach), where Islamic teachings are taught in a gentle, touching manner, and in accordance with local wisdom.

According to Selvia et al., 2021, this engagement ceremony is not only a cultural tradition but also a means of learning Islamic values that can be passed down to the next generation. According to (Siti Nurhaliza, et.al, 2023), their research revealed that the Islamic communication messages in the Malay traditional engagement ceremony in Tanjung Balai highlight the importance of Islamic values contained in each stage of the engagement ceremony, which is not only a cultural ritual, but also a means to convey moral and social messages to the community.

The engagement ceremony reflects messages about responsibility, loyalty, and the importance of maintaining family relationships. Furthermore, (Taslim Batubara, et.al, 2022), the results of their research explain that in the process of 'merisik' (investigation) and 'meminang' (proposing), there are messages about the importance of mutual understanding and commitment in marital relationships, as well as how marriage is seen as an act of worship that is expected to bring blessings to both parties. In addition, Islamic elements such as prayer and 'tepung tawar' add a spiritual dimension that strengthens this sacred bond, while reflecting the harmony between customs and religion in Malay society.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the Malay traditional engagement ceremony in Deli, North Sumatra, is not merely a cultural ceremony but also a means of conveying profound Islamic messages. Each stage of the engagement ceremony, from the arrival of the groom's entourage to symbols such as betel and white flour, is imbued with Islamic values, such as polite speech, respect for parents, and honesty in conveying intentions. This tradition also teaches the importance of silaturahmi (good manners), sincerity, and responsibility in relationships, which are integral parts of Islamic teachings.

These messages are conveyed through refined language, rhymes, and cultural symbols, reflecting polite and wise communication. In addition to preserving culture, this engagement ceremony also serves as moral and spiritual education for the community, maintaining harmonious relationships between families, and preserving Islamic values amidst modernization. Therefore, it is important to preserve this tradition so that the younger generation can remain connected to a cultural identity steeped in religious teachings.

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