

Islamic Wedding Traditions in Cross-Culture: An Integration of Social Norms and Religion

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Abstract: This study aims to offer a new perspective on the integration of social norms and Islamic teachings in the wedding traditions of multicultural Muslim communities. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, the research was conducted in Bajur Village, West Lombok, where Sasak customary wedding traditions are still preserved. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and visual documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The findings reveal that rituals such as *nyelabar*, *maling*, *sorong serah*, and *nyongkolan* represent a contextual integration of Islamic values with local culture. These traditions serve not only as expressions of cultural identity but also as educational tools for transmitting religious and social values. This integration fosters harmony between Islamic principles and indigenous wisdom, although tensions may arise when differences in interpretation occur between customary norms and religious doctrines. The study highlights the importance of preserving cultural traditions that remain adaptive to Islamic values as a means of strengthening collective identity and social cohesion in diverse Muslim societies.

Keywords: Islamic Wedding, Social Norms, Local Tradition, Cultural Integration, Sasak Community

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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population, regulates marriage through two main legal frameworks: Islamic law and national law. Islamic law provides guidelines based on the Qur'an and Hadith regarding the conditions, pillars, and objectives of marriage. Meanwhile, national law, through Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, governs the formal legal aspects of marriage to ensure legal certainty and protection for all parties involved (Abu Yazid Adnan Quthny et al., 2022). Marriage is a social institution that plays a crucial role in the life of society, encompassing religious, social, cultural, and juridical dimensions (Malisi, 2022). From an Islamic perspective, marriage is understood not merely as a formal bond between two individuals but as an act of worship that carries spiritual values and social responsibility (Prawiro, 2019).

The regulations regarding marriage in Islam are derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, which are then elaborated in more detail within Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). In the context of Indonesia, a pluralistic and multicultural society, the implementation of Islamic marriage

often interacts with social values and cultural traditions that have developed at the local level. While Islamic law has provided clear guidelines on marriage in accordance with Sharia principles, it is broadly categorized into two areas: *fiqh ibadah* (ritual worship) and *fiqh muamalah* (transactions and social relations). *Fiqh ibadah* includes regulations concerning acts of worship such as prayer (*salat*), fasting (*sawm*), almsgiving (*zakat*), pilgrimage (*hajj*), vows (*nazar*), and others, all of which aim to govern the relationship between humans and their Creator. On the other hand, *fiqh muamalah* regulates relationships between individuals, such as contracts (including marriage), legal sanctions, and other provisions that ensure order and justice in practice, both on an individual and societal level (Atabik & Mudhiiah, 2014).

The practice of marriage, which is based on Islamic teachings, is generally carried out alongside traditional customs that have deeply rooted in the community's way of life (Azwar et al., 2024). Elements of tradition in Lombok's marriage practices, such as *maling*, *nyelabar*, *seserahan*, *ijab kabul*, *begawe*, *nyongkolan*, and others, are integral parts of the wedding process, reflecting an effort to harmonize religious teachings with local culture (Mayasari, 2018). The presence of these traditions demonstrates social adaptation, allowing Islamic values to blend with local wisdom, although in practice, it often sparks discourse regarding the compatibility of these traditions with Islamic legal principles (Apriliani et al., 2022).

Based on several previous studies related to marriage issues, including those by (Azani, 2021; Azwar et al., 2024; Ershad uddin, 2023; Farid et al., 2023; Apriliani et al., 2022; Mansyur, 2021; Mayasari, 2018; Nasir, 2022; Nurdin et al., 2021; Yamani, 2021). Azwar et al., (2024) explains that the marriage tradition of Merariq still holds significant cultural value, but it must be simplified to align with Islamic teachings. The Sasak traditional marriage, or Merariq, involves several stages such as *midang*, *memaling*, *nyelabar*, *akad nikah*, *sorong serah*, *begawe*, and *bejango* or *nyongkolan*. The execution of the Sasak traditional wedding ceremony, or Merariq, must be harmonized with an understanding of Islam to ensure compliance with Islamic principles.

Nasir, (2022) elaborates that the practice of marriage traditions in Indonesian Muslim communities, when examined based on Islamic rules and their legal nature according to applicable regulations, shows a blend of adherence to both Islamic law and national legal provisions. In practice, some members of the community follow Islamic legal provisions normatively, especially regarding the marriage contract (*akad nikah*), ensuring that it meets the requirements and conditions outlined in Sharia, as well as complying with the country's legal regulations. However, the study also highlights instances of marriage practices that have been adjusted to local social and cultural realities, meaning that their implementation does not always reflect the ideal norms of Islamic law, although they are still socially accepted. Mansyur, (2021) found that the motivation behind the Sasak aristocracy's determination of the high *pesuke* (dowry or bride price) value is to maintain respect for their communal identity. Another reason for setting such a high *pesuke* is to establish it as an unnegotiable price in marriage, particularly in systems like *melaik*, *meruput*, or *merugul*. This becomes particularly significant in marriages, as it is often seen as a burden for young people wishing to marry.

Based on the findings from previous studies, many still focus on the formal legal aspects or the understanding of traditional elements in isolation, thus failing to fully depict the process of adaptation and integration of Islamic values within local culture comprehensively. Therefore, the aim of this study is to offer a new perspective by demonstrating how local traditions are not only preserved but also reinterpreted to align with the principles of Sharia, resulting in a form of contextual harmonization that reflects the identity of a multicultural Muslim society.

B. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the integration of social norms and religious teachings in the practice of Islamic marriage traditions in a community with a diverse cultural background. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with religious leaders, customary figures, and newlywed couples, as well as participatory observation of the marriage rituals. The research was conducted in a purposively selected location, specifically in Bajur Village, West Lombok, where the community continues to preserve the values of Sasak traditional marriage practices, in order to observe how Islamic values interact with local cultural traditions. Documentation, including photos, videos, and archival materials, was used to enrich the information gathered throughout the study. The data analysis technique applied in this research is the Miles and Huberman approach.

The data analysis in this study was conducted using the Miles and Huberman analysis technique, which includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and interpretation of conclusions from each finding. This process aims to identify the key themes related to the integration of social and religious norms, such as the stages of marriage, cultural symbols, and religious values embedded in the marriage rituals. With this approach, the study is expected to illustrate how harmony between Islamic teachings and local culture is created in the practice of marriage, as well as identify potential conflicts arising from the differences between prevailing social norms and religious teachings.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Definition and Essence of Marriage in Islam

Marriage in Islam is a sacred bond between a man and a woman aimed at establishing a harmonious family and seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT. Etymologically, the word "*nikah*" comes from the Arabic language, meaning "*to unite*" or "*to join*," while terminologically, marriage in Islam is defined as a contract that legitimizes the relationship between a man and a woman to live together as husband and wife in accordance with Islamic law. Marriage is not merely a social contract but also an act of worship with a high spiritual value (Januario et al., 2022).

Scholars from various Islamic schools of thought provide specific definitions of marriage. According to the Hanafi school, marriage is a contract aimed at gaining enjoyment from a woman who is not a mahram through the institution of marriage. In contrast, the Shafi'i school defines marriage as a contract that allows the husband and wife to engage in a lawful relationship using specific terms such as "*nikah*" or "*tazwij*". The Maliki school views marriage as a contract that transforms a woman's previously unlawful sexual relationship into a lawful one through a valid marriage. These definitions underscore that the primary purpose of marriage in Islam is to safeguard lineage, honor, and the establishment of a high-quality family within the framework of Islamic law.

Muzammil, (2019) emphasizes that the essence of marriage in Islam extends beyond fulfilling biological needs; it encompasses profound spiritual, social, and legal dimensions. One of the fundamental aspects of marriage is its role as an act of worship to Allah SWT. Through marriage, a Muslim follows the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and fulfills the natural human inclination towards companionship. Furthermore, marriage is described as *mitsaqan ghalidzan*, a strong covenant between husband and wife, as mentioned in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, verse 21. The objective of marriage is to create a family that

is *sakinah* (peaceful), *mawaddah* (loving), and *rahmah* (compassionate), where spouses complement and support each other in managing household life.

In addition, marriage in Islam aims to preserve legitimate and quality offspring, fostering a generation that is devout and pious toward Allah SWT. In this regard, Islam stresses the importance of raising children in an Islamic, loving environment. Marriage also serves as a means to protect one's honor and dignity from immoral acts, such as adultery, and to maintain social stability within the community. Thus, Islam places great emphasis on the importance of lawful marriage, which complies with both Islamic law and the prevailing state laws, to ensure blessings both in this life and the hereafter. By understanding the concept and essence of marriage in Islam, Muslims are expected to approach married life with responsibility, love, and piety toward Allah SWT. Marriage is not merely a social contract but also a significant trust that must be upheld to create a harmonious, prosperous family that is blessed by Allah SWT.

2. Integration Between Islamic Teachings and Local Cultural Traditions in Marriage Practices

Based on field observations conducted in Bajur Village, it is evident that the majority of the community continues to practice marriage ceremonies rooted in Sasak customs. The sequence of matrimonial rites not only adheres to the normative requirements of Islamic law—such as the performance of the *akad nikah* (marriage contract) in accordance with its essential conditions and pillars but also incorporates traditional elements such as *nyelabar*, *maling*, *sorong serah*, and *nyongkolan*. This reflects the community's understanding of marriage as a sacred act of worship, while simultaneously valuing local cultural practices as integral components of their collective identity that must be preserved.

This integrative process is evident in the community's efforts to harmonize cultural elements without compromising core Islamic principles. For example, the *nyongkolan* tradition, characterized by a public bridal procession, is conducted with an emphasis on modesty and religious decorum. Similarly, the offering of *seserahan* (gifts) by the groom's family to the bride's is interpreted not as an obligatory dowry (*mahar*), but as a symbolic gesture of respect and familial bonding. The coexistence of religious and cultural values is manifested in the community's collective intention to complement religious practices with tradition, rather than substitute one for the other.

Nonetheless, the integration process faces certain challenges. Some religious leaders and younger community members critique specific customary practices—such as the high cost of *pesuke* (bridewealth) which are perceived as inconsistent with the Islamic ideal of modesty and financial simplicity. Despite these differing perspectives, ongoing dialogue regarding the reconciliation of customary and religious norms is actively pursued through the involvement of religious scholars, community leaders, and educational institutions. This dynamic interaction highlights the evolving nature of the relationship between religious values and local traditions, and the community's continual efforts to achieve a more contextually harmonious integration.

3. The Role of Local Traditions in Enhancing Social Harmony in Marriage

Local traditions accompanying marriage practices play a crucial role in strengthening social cohesion and fostering interpersonal relationships within the community. In the context of the Sasak society in Lombok, for instance, customary rituals such as *nyelabar*, *sorong serah*, and *nyongkolan* not only carry symbolic significance in uniting two extended

families but also serve as a means of reinforcing communal solidarity. Collective participation in these traditions reflects the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), which in turn contribute to the maintenance of social harmony within the community.

Moreover, local marriage traditions serve a strategic function in the internalization of cultural values among younger generations. The involvement of families and community members in each stage of traditional ceremonies positions marriage as an educational medium through which social norms are transmitted such as respect for elders, reverence for cultural customs, and the importance of communal life. Thus, tradition functions not only as a cultural heritage but also as a mechanism for preserving collective identity and reinforcing social bonds.

Challenges persist in the implementation of these practices, particularly concerning the economic and social implications of certain customs, such as the financial burden associated with elaborate ceremonies. Therefore, a collaborative effort involving cultural leaders, religious figures, and the broader community is needed to reevaluate certain traditional elements to ensure their continued relevance to Islamic values and contemporary social conditions. This adaptive approach would allow traditions to maintain their role in fostering social harmony while upholding principles of justice, simplicity, and sustainability in community life.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Marriage in Islam is a sacred institution encompassing dimensions of worship, social responsibility, and legal commitment, aimed at establishing a harmonious family. Within the Sasak community in Bajur Village, marital practices are not solely grounded in Islamic principles but are also deeply intertwined with local traditions such as *nyelabar*, *maling*, *sorong serah*, and *nyongkolan*. This integration reflects a harmonious relationship between religious teachings and local culture, thereby strengthening social cohesion and the collective identity of the community. These traditional practices serve not only as cultural expressions but also as educational tools and mechanisms for preserving the community's inherited values across generations.

Future research is encouraged to explore the perceptions of younger generations regarding the integration of Islamic and customary values in marriage, in order to understand the direction of value transformation amidst ongoing modernization. Additionally, an in-depth analysis of the social and economic impacts of customary marriage practices is essential for formulating culturally adaptive strategies that uphold tradition while remaining relevant to contemporary socio-religious contexts.

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