

The Internalization of Islamic Educational Values in the Mandi Taman Tradition of the Malay Community of Bengkalis

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reveal the process of internalizing Islamic educational values embedded in the mandi taman (garden bathing) tradition among the Malay community of Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province. The mandi taman tradition is part of the Malay customary wedding ceremony that is still practiced today, although its preservation tends to decline due to social change and external cultural influence. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with an ethnographic method, using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies involving traditional leaders, the mak andam (traditional bridal attendant), and the local community. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the mandi taman tradition is rich in Islamic educational values, including *aqidah* values (trust in God and gratitude), worship or *sharia* values (*thaharah*, namely physical and spiritual purification), moral values (courtesy, patience, and respect for parents), and social values (mutual cooperation and kinship ties). The internalization process occurs through three stages, namely knowledge, appreciation, and practice, facilitated by traditional leaders and the mak andam as informal educators within the family and community. Supporting factors include the role of traditional leaders, the community's religious understanding, and kinship bonds, while inhibiting factors include limited knowledge among the younger generation, economic considerations, time constraints, and the influence of global culture. This study recommends the revitalization of the mandi taman tradition as a medium of nonformal Islamic education rooted in local wisdom.

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Introduction

Indonesia is known as a country with a diversity of ethnic groups, religions, and cultures spread across the archipelago. One of the richest expressions of this cultural diversity has grown and developed within the Malay community of the coastal region of Sumatra, including Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province. The Malay community is known for firmly upholding the life philosophy of “adat bersendi syara’, syara’ bersendi Kitabullah” (custom is grounded in Islamic law, and Islamic law is grounded in the Book of Allah), which affirms that Malay customs cannot be separated from the values of Islamic teaching (Darussamin et al., 2014). This philosophy provides the philosophical foundation for the formation of various community traditions that are laden with Islamic messages, one of which is the mandi taman (garden bathing) tradition.

The mandi taman tradition, in some places also called mandi kumbo taman, is part of a series of Malay customary wedding ceremonies performed after the marriage contract (akad nikah) has taken place (Arrasyidi, 2017). This procession is generally held in the yard of the bride's family home with the purpose of purifying both the bride and groom, physically and spiritually, before they enter a new phase of life as husband and wife. In essence, this tradition is not merely a ceremonial procession but also contains guidance and instruction (tunjuk ajar) for the newlyweds as they navigate married life (Repository of the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Padangpanjang, n.d.). Behind the seemingly simple series of rituals—such as the sprinkling of water mixed with rampai flowers and kaffir lime, accompanied by the tepung tawar (flour-and-water blessing) rite and prayers for safety—lies a profound symbolic meaning intertwined with the Islamic teaching of *thaharah*, or ritual purification.

Amid the strong currents of modernization and globalization, the preservation of the mandi taman tradition among the Malay community of Bengkalis faces considerable challenges. Research conducted in Bantan Sari Village, Bengkalis Regency, shows that community interest in preserving the mandi taman culture is relatively low, a condition attributed to limited public knowledge of the tradition, economic considerations, time constraints in its implementation, the diminishing role of the *mak andam*, and the influence of external culture (JOM FKIP UR, 2020). This situation reveals a gap between the noble values embedded in the tradition and the level of understanding and participation of the younger generation in preserving it.

Yet, upon closer examination, the mandi taman tradition is not merely a cultural heritage; it also functions as a medium of nonformal Islamic education that has been passed down through generations. Several previous studies have examined the value dimensions of this tradition from various perspectives. Robi'ah and Astafi (2024), for instance, examined the religious values within the mandi kumbo taman tradition from the perspective of art, culture, and essence. Arrasyidi (2017) reviewed the Malay customary wedding ceremony on Bengkalis Island, including mandi kumbo taman, from the perspective of Islamic law using the 'urf approach. Meanwhile, Indra (2016) examined the educational values in Malay wedding traditions in Bengkalis Regency in general and their implications for modern life. These three studies make important contributions, yet none specifically and in depth examines how the process of internalizing Islamic educational values unfolds through the specific stages of the mandi taman tradition. This is precisely where the novelty of the present study lies: it focuses on the process of value internalization, rather than merely the identification of values.

Studies on the internalization of Islamic educational values in local traditions have also been conducted on various other cultural communities across the Indonesian archipelago, such as the internalization of Islamic educational values in the *nganggung* tradition of the Bangka Belitung community (Wawasan: Jurnal Kediklatan BDK Jakarta, 2023), the Islamic educational values in the *panggih manten* tradition of Javanese customary weddings (Wulandari, Jaenullah, & Anwar, 2021), and the Islamic educational values in the life-cycle ritual ceremony of Banjar customary weddings (Muslimah, 2022). These studies collectively demonstrate that local traditions across various regions of Indonesia have continually undergone acculturation with Islamic values, thereby becoming effective vehicles for character and religious education within their communities. Nevertheless, similar studies specifically addressing the mandi taman tradition of the Malay community of Bengkalis from the perspective of Islamic educational value internalization remain very limited.

Based on the foregoing, this study is formulated around the following research questions: (1) how is the implementation of the mandi taman tradition among the Malay community of Bengkalis described; (2) what Islamic educational values are embedded within it; (3) how does the process of internalizing these Islamic educational values unfold in community life; and (4) what factors support and hinder this process of value internalization. This study aims to describe the implementation of the mandi taman tradition, identify the Islamic educational values embedded within it, analyze the process of internalizing these values, and uncover the factors that influence it.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge on Islamic education based on local wisdom, particularly within the context of coastal Malay communities.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a consideration for traditional leaders, educational institutions, and local government in formulating value-based cultural preservation policies, as well as to serve as a reference for the younger generation in re-understanding the philosophical and educational meaning behind the mandi taman tradition, which has often been regarded merely as a customary ceremony.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach of the descriptive type using an ethnographic method, aimed at understanding and interpreting sociocultural phenomena as they are understood and experienced by the cultural actors themselves (Bungin, 2011). This approach was chosen because the object of study—the process of value internalization within a tradition—requires an in-depth understanding of meaning, symbols, and the subjective experience of the community practicing the tradition, aspects that are difficult to measure quantitatively.

The study was conducted among the Malay community in Bengkalis Regency, focusing on Bengkalis District and Bantan Sari Village, areas that still preserve the practice of the mandi taman tradition within the series of customary wedding ceremonies. The research subjects consisted of traditional leaders, administrators of the Malay Customary Institution (Lembaga Adat Melayu/LAM), mak andam (traditional bridal attendants), and community members who had performed or directly witnessed the mandi taman procession.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three methods: participatory observation of the mandi taman procession, in-depth interviews with key informants, and documentation studies involving field notes, photographs, and written documents related to Malay customs in Bengkalis (Moleong, 2010; Sugiyono, 2014). Informants were selected purposively, taking into account their mastery of the intricacies of the tradition's implementation and their direct experience in the customary procession in question.

Data analysis in this study employed the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of three interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing the data on aspects relevant to Islamic educational values and their internalization process. The reduced data were then presented narratively and thematically, from which conclusions addressing the research questions were drawn. To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation, namely by comparing interview results from various informants and cross-checking them against the results of observation and documentation.

The analytical framework of this study is also grounded in Soebadio's theory of tradition, which views tradition as the totality of ideas, norms, and values passed down through generations and still considered relevant by the community that upholds them, as well as Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes that human beings act on the basis of the meanings they assign to symbols within social interaction (Blumer, 1969). Both theories are employed to unpack the symbolic meaning behind each stage of the mandi taman procession and how such meaning is internalized by the community that practices it.

Results and Discussion

A. General Overview of Malay Wedding Customs in Bengkalis

Bengkalis Regency is one of the regions in Riau Province whose population is predominantly Malay and Muslim. The life of the Malay community in this region remains deeply rooted in ancestral customs, particularly within the series of wedding ceremonies, which are regarded as sacred events and important markers within the cycle of an individual's life. The series of Malay customary wedding ceremonies in Bengkalis consists of several stages, beginning with the pre-akad nikah (pre-marriage-contract) stages, such as merisik (initial inquiry), meminang (formal proposal), antar belanja (delivery of dowry goods), and

menggantung (hanging decorations), through to the post-akad nikah stages, such as tepung tawar, berinai, berandam, khatam kaji (Qur'an recitation completion), berarak (procession), membuka pintu (opening the door), bersanding (the ceremonial seating of the couple), makan bersuap (feeding one another), makan hadap-hadapan (facing each other while eating), menyembah mertua (paying respect to the in-laws), mandi kumbo taman or mandi taman, and finally makan nasi damai (the peace rice meal) and the menyembah (respect-paying) ceremony (Arrasyidi, 2017).

Among this entire series, mandi taman occupies a significant position, as it is performed toward the conclusion of the whole sequence of customary rites, serving as a symbolic closure to the couple's long journey into a new phase of life. The Malay customary saying "biar mati anak, jangan mati adat" ("let the child die, but let not the custom die") illustrates the profound standing of customary tradition within Malay community life, such that the preservation of traditions like mandi taman is regarded as part of safeguarding both the Malay and Islamic identity of the local community.

B. Description and Procession of the Mandi Taman Tradition

The mandi taman tradition is performed in the yard of the bride's family home, typically in the late afternoon after the bersanding and makan bersuap processions have concluded (Repository of the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Padangpanjang, n.d.). The procession is led by the mak andam, an elder woman entrusted with in-depth knowledge of Malay wedding customs, assisted by local elders and traditional leaders. In general, the stages of the mandi taman tradition's implementation can be described as follows.

Table 1. Stages of the Mandi Taman Tradition

<i>No.</i>	<i>Activies</i>	<i>Brief Description</i>
1	Preparation of venue and materials	The mak andam prepares water mixed with rampai flowers, kaffir lime, and pandan leaves, along with tepung tawar equipment, in the yard of the bride's family home.
2	Opening prayer and statement of intent	A traditional leader or religious scholar leads the recitation of a prayer for safety, marking the intention of the bath as an expression of gratitude for blessings and a request for a blessed married life.
3	Tepung tawar rite	The bride and groom are blessed with tepung tawar by the elders as a symbol of the giving of blessing and prayers for safety.
4	Water-pouring/bathing procession	The prepared water is poured over the bride and groom in turn by the elders, parents, and mak andam, symbolizing physical and spiritual purification.
5	Advice and instruction	The traditional leader delivers marital advice (tunjuk ajar) concerning responsibility, patience, and loyalty in married life.
6	Closing and prayer of gratitude	The procession concludes with a joint prayer of gratitude and an exchange of greetings, symbolizing togetherness and kinship between the two families.

The table above, outlining the stages of the mandi taman procession, was compiled based on the results of observation and interviews with the mak andam and traditional leaders, illustrating that each stage is not a mere ceremonial routine but carries prayers, advice, and symbols oriented toward strengthening the spiritual and moral condition of the couple.

Figure 1. Tepung tawar rite



The bride and groom are blessed with tepung tawar by the elders as a symbol of the giving of blessing and prayers for safety.

Figure 2. The water-pouring procession



The water-pouring procession performed on the bride and groom in turn by the mak andam, parents, and elders, symbolizing physical and spiritual purification.

C. Symbolic Meaning in the Mandi Taman Tradition

Water in the mandi taman tradition carries symbolic meaning as a medium of purification, consistent with the concept of *thaharah* in Islam, which positions ritual purity as an essential precondition before a person performs an act of worship or enters a new phase of life. The mixing of water with *rampai* flowers and *kaffir lime* is not intended to convey a mystical element but rather symbolizes the fragrance and freshness expected to accompany the couple's married life. The alternating act of pouring water, performed by parents and elders, also carries the meaning of transmitting prayers and blessings from the older generation to the younger one, as affirmed in the study on the religious values of the *mandi kumbo taman* tradition (Robi'ah & Astafi, 2024).

From the perspective of Blumer's (1969) theory of symbolic interactionism, every symbol within the *mandi taman* procession—from the water, flowers, and *tepung tawar* to the seating position of the bride and groom—is collectively understood by the community as a representation of prayer and hope. This meaning is not inherent in the objects themselves but is formed through processes of social interaction and cultural transmission across generations. Consequently, the younger generation's understanding of the meaning behind these symbols becomes a key factor in sustaining the educational value of this tradition, rather than the mere preservation of its physical form.

D. Islamic Educational Values in the Mandi Taman Tradition

1. Aqidah (Faith) Values

The *aqidah* values evident in the *mandi taman* tradition can be seen in the prayers and intentions accompanying each stage of the procession. The recitation of a prayer for safety at the beginning of the procession reflects an attitude of *tawakal*, that is, complete surrender to Allah regarding the continuation of the newly begun married life. In addition, the prayer of gratitude at the conclusion of the procession embodies the value of thankfulness for the blessing of a marriage that has proceeded smoothly. Both values form an essential part of *aqidah* education, as emphasized by Daradjat (2014), who states that the cultivation of faith must be accompanied by the habitual practice of *tawakal* and gratitude in daily life, rather than mere theoretical knowledge.

2. Worship and Sharia Values

The bathing procession within this tradition is philosophically intertwined with the concept of *thaharah*, or ritual purification, in Islamic teaching, which is a precondition for the validity of various acts of worship, including prayer (*salat*). Although *mandi taman* is not an obligatory ritual bath (*mandi wajib*) under Islamic jurisprudence, it symbolically teaches the importance of physical and spiritual cleanliness as a foundation for entering a new phase of life. This value serves as an effective medium for instilling awareness of worship, particularly the importance of self-purity before assuming new roles and responsibilities within married life (Ramayulis, 2015).

3. Moral (Akhlak) Values

Moral values are clearly evident in the stage of advice and instruction (*tunjuk ajar*) delivered by traditional leaders to the bride and groom. This advice generally contains messages about patience, loyalty, responsibility, and mutual respect between husband and wife. In addition, the couple's gesture of bowing and showing respect to the parents and elders who pour the water reflects the cultivation of *birrul walidain*, or filial piety toward parents, a value also found in the *panggih manten* tradition of Javanese customary weddings (Wulandari, Jaenullah, & Anwar, 2021). These values of courtesy and patience form a core part of moral education in Islam, transmitted implicitly through exemplary conduct and cultural habituation.

4. Social Values

The implementation of the *mandi taman* tradition involves many parties, from the extended family and neighbors to community leaders, who together prepare for and

witness the procession. This collective involvement fosters the value of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and strengthens kinship ties (silaturahmi) among community members. Islam strongly encourages the cultivation of silaturahmi and communal solidarity, such that this tradition indirectly serves as a means of strengthening brotherhood (ukhuwah) and the social capital of the Malay community of Bengkalis (Tamrin & Iskandar, 2009).

E. The Process of Internalizing Islamic Educational Values

The process of internalizing Islamic educational values within the mandi taman tradition unfolds through three interrelated stages, in accordance with the framework proposed by Widyaningsih (2014): the stages of knowledge, appreciation, and practice. At the knowledge stage, the younger generation gains an understanding of the meaning and procedure of the mandi taman through direct involvement in the procession, observation of relatives' weddings, and oral explanations from parents and traditional leaders. At this stage, the mak andam and traditional leaders act as informal educators who convey knowledge of the philosophy underlying each stage of the procession.

The appreciation stage occurs when individuals, particularly the bride and groom, emotionally experience the meaning of the procession they undergo—for instance, feelings of gratitude and being moved when water is poured over them by their parents, or a sense of humility when receiving advice from the elders. This appreciation is reinforced by the sacred and familial atmosphere accompanying the procession, such that the values conveyed are not merely understood cognitively but also touch the affective domain of the participants. The subsequent practice stage is evident in how these values—such as patience, responsibility, and gratitude—are manifested in the couple's married life after the procession has concluded.

Within this process, the mak andam and traditional leaders occupy a strategic position as agents of value internalization. Both do not merely perform a technical role in leading the procession but also function as conveyors of moral and religious messages to the couple and the community in attendance. This is consistent with the view of Bali and Susilowati (2019) that the exemplary conduct of respected community figures is a determining factor in the effectiveness of religious value internalization through nonformal channels such as customary traditions and rituals.

F. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Value Internalization

The findings identify several factors that support the process of internalizing Islamic educational values within the mandi taman tradition, including the active role of traditional leaders and the mak andam as figures respected and trusted by the community, the strength of kinship ties and mutual cooperation in carrying out the procession, and the community's religious understanding, which positions this tradition as an inseparable part of religious observance and gratitude for the blessing of marriage. These factors strengthen the effectiveness of value transmission from the older to the younger generation.

On the other hand, this study also identifies a number of inhibiting factors, consistent with the findings of the JOM FKIP UR (2020) study in Bantan Sari Village, namely: (1) the younger generation's limited knowledge of the meaning and philosophy of the mandi taman tradition; (2) economic considerations, given that the procession requires additional costs beyond the core wedding expenses; (3) time constraints in modern wedding receptions, which tend to be shorter and more practical; (4) the declining number of mak andam who possess a complete mastery of the procession's intricacies; and (5) the influence of external culture and modern lifestyles regarded as more practical and efficient compared to customary processions that require more time and preparation. These five factors directly affect the low level of participation and understanding among the younger generation, thereby posing a potential threat to the continuity of the educational values within this tradition in the future.

G. Relevance to Contemporary Character and Islamic Education

The mandi taman tradition holds strong relevance to the concept of contemporary character and value education. Adisusilo (2012) asserts that value learning becomes more meaningful when carried out through a constructivist approach and the Value Clarification Technique (VCT)—that is, through direct experience and appreciation, rather than the mere verbal transfer of knowledge. The mandi taman tradition, with all its symbols and stages, has essentially applied this principle organically, long before the concept of modern character education was formally articulated in academic terms.

A similar preservation effort can be seen in the Mandi Safar tradition in Bengkalis Regency, which has now been developed by the local government into an annual cultural festival involving the younger generation and attracting tourists (RRI.co.id, 2026). This kind of revitalization approach may serve as a reference for a preservation strategy for the mandi taman tradition, for instance through cross-generational education, the systematic documentation of the tradition's values and philosophy, and the integration of local wisdom material into the local-content curriculum of both formal and nonformal educational institutions in Bengkalis Regency. In this way, the mandi taman tradition would not merely survive as a ceremonial heritage but would continue to function as a living and relevant medium of nonformal Islamic education for future generations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the mandi taman tradition among the Malay community of Bengkalis is part of a series of customary wedding ceremonies performed in the yard of the bride's family home, comprising the stages of preparation, opening prayer, tepung tawar, the water-pouring procession, marital advice, and closing prayer. This tradition is rich in Islamic educational values, encompassing aqidah values in the form of tawakal and gratitude; worship or sharia values in the form of awareness of thaharah, or self-purification; moral values in the form of courtesy, patience, and respect for parents; and social values in the form of mutual cooperation and kinship ties.

The process of internalizing Islamic educational values within this tradition unfolds through three continuous stages—knowledge, appreciation, and practice—facilitated by the strategic roles of the mak andam and traditional leaders as informal educators. Supporting factors in value internalization include the role of traditional leaders, the strength of kinship ties, and the community's religious understanding, while inhibiting factors include the younger generation's limited knowledge, economic considerations, time constraints, the declining number of mak andam, and the influence of external culture.

This study recommends the need for efforts to revitalize the mandi taman tradition through cross-generational education, the systematic documentation of the tradition's values and philosophy, and collaboration among traditional leaders, educational institutions, and local government in preserving this tradition as a medium of nonformal Islamic education rooted in local wisdom. Future research is recommended to examine more deeply the younger generation's perceptions of this tradition and to formulate a model for integrating local wisdom values into the Islamic education curriculum in Bengkalis Regency in a more specific and measurable manner.

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