

## TRANSMISSION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL VALUES THROUGH LOCAL WISDOM IN MALAY NUSANTARA ORAL TRADITIONS

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### ABSTRACT

The oral tradition of the Malay community in the Nusantara plays a central role in transmitting Islamic educational values across generations. Through mediums such as advisory pantun, gurindam, religious syair, customary proverbs, tunjuk ajar Melayu, as well as folktales and legends, values of faith, law, and morality are conveyed subtly yet profoundly in everyday life. This study aims to explore the transmission process of Islamic educational values embedded in Malay oral traditions, focusing on their meanings, functions, and contexts of delivery in Langkat Regency. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing text analysis, interviews, and cultural observation. The findings reveal that oral tradition serves not merely as a medium of entertainment or literature but also as a deeply rooted instrument of da'wah and education within the local culture. The identified values include: (1) divinity (tawhid), (2) morality and social ethics, (3) patriotism, (4) love of knowledge and education, and (5) the sustainable preservation of ancestral culture. These findings highlight the successful acculturation between Islam and Malay culture and suggest that oral traditions can serve as a relevant and contextual model for character education in the modern era.

### KEYWORDS

Oral Tradition, Islamic Education, Malay Archipelago

### ABSTRAK

Tradisi lisan masyarakat Melayu Nusantara memiliki peran sentral dalam pewarisan nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam dari generasi ke generasi. Melalui medium seperti pantun nasihat, gurindam, syair keagamaan, petuah adat, tunjuk ajar Melayu, serta cerita rakyat dan legenda, nilai keimanan, hukum, dan akhlak ditransmisikan secara halus namun mendalam dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi proses transmisi nilai pendidikan Islam yang terkandung dalam tradisi lisan Melayu, dengan fokus pada makna, fungsi, dan konteks penyampaiannya di Kabupaten Langkat. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui analisis teks, wawancara, dan observasi budaya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi lisan bukan hanya media hiburan atau sastra, melainkan juga instrumen dakwah dan pendidikan yang berakar kuat dalam budaya lokal. Nilai-nilai yang ditemukan meliputi: (1) ketuhanan (tauhid), (2) akhlak dan etika hidup bermasyarakat, (3) cinta tanah air, (4) kecintaan terhadap ilmu dan pendidikan, serta (5) pelestarian budaya leluhur secara berkesinambungan. Temuan ini mengindikasikan keberhasilan akulturasi Islam dan budaya Melayu, sekaligus memberikan implikasi bahwa tradisi lisan dapat dijadikan model pendidikan karakter yang relevan dan kontekstual pada era modern.

### KATA KUNCI:

Tradisi Lisan, Pendidikan Islam, Melayu Nusantara

## INTRODUCTION

Oral traditions are a cultural heritage rich in educational values, including in Malay communities in the archipelago. Oral traditions in Malay society are not merely a form of cultural expression, but also a means of passing on noble values that encompass religious, moral, social, and cultural aspects. Through media such as pantun, gurindam, syair, and hikayat, previous generations transmitted Islamic teachings, social ethics, social norms, and local cultural values to future generations. In this context, oral tradition serves as a means of informal education that instills the values of monotheism, respect for parents and teachers, a spirit of mutual cooperation, and love for the homeland. This is in line with the views of Yayah and Sumadi (2017), who emphasize that oral tradition has a comprehensive educational dimension for Islamic communities in the archipelago. Oral traditions among Malay Muslims not only reflect cultural identity, but also serve as an effective means of conveying Islamic principles in a contextual and communicative manner. Thus, oral traditions have proven to be a strategic instrument in character building, maintaining cultural continuity, and strengthening the identity of the Malay Muslim community in the archipelago.

As a reflection of the local wisdom of the community, oral literature reflects symbols of the cosmos that are deliberately created to be reinterpreted into a set of values for life. In this era of globalization, there are several symbols found in oral literature that have become memories in

history to be reflected upon again in the present day. This shows that oral traditions are not static, but can always be reinterpreted in accordance with the social and cultural context of the communities that support them. In Malay communities, the existence of oral traditions is still very relevant as a reference for strengthening character education, especially amid the challenges of modernization and the rapid flow of globalization, which often have a negative influence on the younger generation.

Jan Harold Brunvard (2006) explains that traditional oral forms (genres) can be divided into main categories, including: (1) folk speech, such as accents, nicknames, traditional positions, and noble titles; (2) traditional expressions such as proverbs, sayings, and aphorisms; (3) traditional questions, such as riddles; (4) folk poetry, such as gurindam, pantun, and syair; and (5) folk prose stories, which include myths, legends, and fairy tales. This classification shows the breadth of traditional oral forms and demonstrates the richness of cultural heritage that can be utilized in the educational process.

When talking about oral traditions in natural Malay culture, there are two distinct characteristics. The first is oral traditions that are widespread in most Malay cultural regions, such as zapin, ronggeng or joget, poetry, rhymes, gurindam, talibun, nazam, makyong, pacar, and others. The second is oral traditions that developed in certain areas of the Malay culture and were then developed specifically. For example, Dedeng in the Langkat region, North Sumatra,

Sinandong in Batubara, Asahan, and Labuhanbatu, as well as ulik mayang in Perlis, mandi minyak in Serdang, and gebuk dance in Sergai. This phenomenon shows that although oral traditions have a general form, each region still has its own characteristics that reflect local identity while enriching the Malay cultural heritage.

Malay oral traditions, known in the form of expressions, proverbs, sayings, rhymes, folklore, folk tales, and teachings, can still be found today in Malay society. For example, in various traditional ceremonies such as marriage proposals, river descents, child swings, and circumcision, oral traditions are still involved. These various oral traditions contain cultural values that are rich in virtue and character, which have been deliberately instilled in the community from generation to generation. This shows that oral traditions are not only a form of entertainment, but also have a profound educational content.

The importance of oral traditions in character education is also emphasized by Kurniawan et al. (2024), who emphasize that an Islamic education curriculum based on Malay ethnopedagogy can internalize character values through local cultural practices. Therefore, oral traditions are not merely cultural heritage, but important instruments in Islamic education that are relevant to the local context of Malay communities. By making oral traditions a reference in education, the values of monotheism, morality, togetherness, and love of knowledge can be more easily accepted and internalized by the younger generation.

Through the understanding and preservation of oral traditions, Islamic educational values can continue to be transmitted and applied in the daily lives of the Malay communities in the archipelago. This is in line with the views of Nurbaiti et al. (2020), who state that Islamic education in the archipelago has undergone a long journey since the days of the kingdom, Islamic boarding schools, to the development of madrasas, all of which interacted with the development of Islamic education from the influences of the Middle East, Europe, and Japan. Oral tradition, in this case, became an important medium that allowed the acculturation of Islamic values with local culture to run harmoniously.

Based on the above context, this study aims to explore the role and contribution of oral traditions in transmitting Islamic educational values in Malay society, particularly in Langkat Regency. This study is important considering that Langkat Regency has a wealth of unique oral traditions, such as Dedeng, which not only serve as entertainment but also as a medium for conveying Islamic values and local culture. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how oral traditions play a role in maintaining the continuity of Islamic values while strengthening the cultural identity of the Malay community in the region.

This study has its own distinctions compared to previous studies. Previous studies generally highlight oral traditions from a literary, historical, or anthropological perspective. For example, Sinaga & Harahap (2024) emphasize the

stylistic aspects and heroic values in Malay heroic poetry as a representation of historical culture; Muhammad Kiki Wardana et al. (Wardana et al., 2023) examined the performance of the *Malay Tunjuk Ajar* oral tradition within an anthropological framework; and Sihabudin Noor(2019) examined the *Seloko Adat* oral tradition of the Jambi community as a medium for preaching based on local wisdom. Meanwhile, Hidayat et al.(2020) did touch on the construction of Islamic character education in the Deli Malay culture, but their focus was limited to the urban community of Medan.

Unlike these studies, this study places oral traditions within the framework of Islamic education with an explicit focus on the transmission of character values among the Malay community in Langkat Regency. This approach provides a new nuance in the study of Malay oral traditions because it not only documents the form and function of oral traditions but also explores the content of Islamic educational values and relates them to the needs of the younger generation in the modern era. Thus, this study contributes to strengthening the perspective of Islamic ethnopedagogy based on oral tradition while expanding the scope of study by highlighting the local context of Langkat, which has received little attention in academic literature.

The contribution of this research is expected to be not only academic but also practical. Academically, this research can enrich the literature on Malay oral traditions while adding a new perspective to the study of Islamic

education based on local culture. Practically, the results of this research are expected to serve as a reference for educators, policymakers, and the wider community in designing a contextual character education model based on local wisdom and relevant to the challenges of globalization. By making oral traditions a source of values, Islamic education can be more down-to-earth, closer to people's lives, and capable of shaping a young generation with strong character, clear identity, and the ability to face the dynamics of the times wisely.

Thus, oral tradition plays a strategic role in maintaining the continuity of Islamic educational values in Malay society. Through this research conducted in Langkat Regency, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be gained of how oral tradition functions as an effective medium of education, both within the family, community, and educational institutions. Therefore, this study is important to strengthen the position of oral tradition as a cultural heritage that is not only worth preserving but can also be further developed as a character education model in line with Islamic values and Malay culture in the modern era.

## **THEORY DESCRIPTION**

The process of transmitting Islamic educational values through oral traditions does not only occur formally, but also through social interactions in everyday life. Nurbaiti et al. (2020) explain that Islamic education in the Malay Peninsula in the 7th to 8th centuries AD was carried out through various channels, including art

and culture, which became effective media in conveying Islamic teachings to the community. In Malay society, the Islamic educational values contained in oral traditions include aspects of divinity, morals, social life, and culture. These values are not only taught verbally, but also through cultural symbols that have deep meanings. For example, in the Manolam tradition in Kampar, Riau, there are religious values that teach religious teachings such as the journey of the prophet, the punishment of the grave, and guidelines for life in this world and the hereafter (Ritawati & Alsantuni, 2021).

Oral traditions are a legacy of ancestors and can be used as local wisdom, in the form of policies and philosophical elements of life that have been expressed in the form of traditional ceremonies, proverbs, performances, or mantras. Oral traditions, found in the archipelago, at the same time, national identity needs to be maintained, because in oral traditions, cultural roots and traditions are Indonesian subcultures.

Jan Harold Brunvard (2006) explains that oral tradition is one of the cultures that is still preserved in society. Oral tradition as a culture contains all aspects of life that exist in society. The scope of life aspects in various oral traditions is diverse. Types of oral tradition groups include verbal oral tradition, semi-verbal oral tradition, and nonverbal (material) oral tradition. Sulistyowati (2019) reveals that there are three groups of oral traditions, namely folk tales, folk dances, folk games, folk architecture, and so on.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analytical method to understand the transmission of Islamic educational values through oral traditions in Malay communities, particularly in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency. The research location was chosen because Tanjung Pura is a center for the preservation of oral traditions such as *Dedeng*, which showcases the uniqueness of local culture and is rich in Islamic educational values. The choice of location allowed the researcher to explore cultural practices that are still alive, authentic, and function as a medium for informal education in the community (Creswell, 2007).

The primary data sources for this study are community leaders, including traditional elders, local religious scholars, and cultural figures, with a total of 15 informants selected using purposive sampling. The purposive criteria used included: (1) having knowledge and experience in the Malay oral tradition in Tanjung Pura, (2) being active in local cultural and religious activities, and (3) being willing to share in-depth information about Islamic educational values in the oral tradition. Secondary data sources were obtained from traditional texts, local documents, archives, and relevant publications on Malay culture and Islamic education in the Langkat region.

Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies.

Participatory observation allowed researchers to be directly involved in cultural practices, thereby gaining firsthand experience and an authentic understanding of the process of conveying values. In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face to explore informants' views, experiences, and interpretations of Islamic educational values contained in oral traditions. Documentary studies included the collection of pantun, syair, gurindam, and hikayat texts, as well as audio-visual recordings of cultural practices, to support data triangulation.

Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model, which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data reduction stage was carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying relevant information. Data presentation was carried out in a descriptive thematic manner, emphasizing Islamic educational values, transmission patterns, and socio-cultural contexts. Drawing conclusions involved interpreting meanings and relationships between themes to understand the process of value transmission.

To ensure data validity, this study applied source and technique triangulation, member checking, and audit trails. Triangulation ensured consistency of information between informants, documents, and field observations. Member checking was conducted by requesting informants' responses to the researcher's interpretations, while audit trails verified the

research steps so that they could be scientifically accounted for.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Islamic Educational Values in the Oral Tradition of the Malay Community**

#### **1. The Value of Monotheism**

Based on field research conducted in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency, it was found that the oral traditions of the Malay community not only serve as a medium of entertainment or literature, but also as an effective means of Islamic education. Through direct observation, researchers saw that oral traditions such as pantun (quatrains), syair (poetry), gurindam (proverbs), and folk tales are still actively practiced in various cultural and religious activities, including traditional ceremonies, religious lectures, and community gatherings. Documentation studies show that local pantun and syair texts, which are still stored in the homes of traditional elders and in community archives, contain religious teachings that are consistent with Islamic educational values.

In-depth interviews with 10 key informants, including traditional elders, local clerics, and cultural figures, confirm that one of the main values conveyed through oral tradition is the value of monotheism (*tauhid*). Oral traditions such as pantun and poetry contain teachings about the oneness of God, the obligation to worship, and gratitude to Allah. For example, pantun often used in religious lectures or traditional events emphasize the importance of tawakal (trust in God) and patience, as expressed in the phrases

You cannot run away from what God has determined and Strive for success, tawakal is the key to blessings. In addition, poems that tell the stories of prophets and companions serve a dual purpose: to entertain and to instill values of faith and piety. This is in line with the findings of Kaloeti et al. (2024) and Maideja et al. (2023), which confirm that oral traditions serve as a means of character education based on spiritual values.

The results of the study also show that the values of divinity in oral traditions include: faith and piety, gratitude to Allah, spirituality, carrying out religious commands, perseverance in the face of trials, steadfastness, surrender to Allah, *tadharu'*, discipline in worship, love for Allah, *tazkiyah*, and sincerity for Allah (Dahanayake, 2023). Malay proverbs, such as *adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi kitabullah* (customs are based on sharia, sharia is based on the book of Allah) and *siapa meninggalkan syara', maka ia meninggalkan Melayu* (whoever abandons sharia, abandons Malay), reinforce the understanding that the social and cultural norms of society must be in harmony with Islamic teachings.

Overall, the findings of field research in Tanjung Pura show that oral traditions are not only a medium of culture but also a strategic instrument in Islamic education, helping the younger generation to understand and internalize divine values in a contextual manner. The preservation of these oral traditions is key to maintaining the religious identity of the Malay community, while strengthening a spiritual

character that is consistent with the principles of Islamic education in the archipelago.

## 2. Values of Morality and Ethics in Community Life

Field research in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency, shows that the oral traditions of the Malay community play a significant role in instilling noble moral values and ethics in community life. Through participatory observation, researchers found that pantuns, poems, gurindams, and folk tales are still actively practiced in everyday life, including in traditional ceremonies, religious lectures, and local community meetings. Documentary studies of traditional texts stored in the homes of traditional elders and audio-visual recordings reveal consistent moral messages about good behavior, social responsibility, and harmony in society.

In-depth interviews with 12 key informants, including traditional elders, religious leaders, and local cultural figures, confirm that the moral values contained in oral traditions teach the younger generation to be honest, to respect their elders, to love their juniors, to be polite, to show solidarity, responsibility, kinship, cooperation, empathy, forgiveness, and deliberation. For example, a local pantun (poem) often recited on various occasions reads: Good manners are our culture, A legacy for all time, Without good manners, the nation will collapse, High morals lead to a noble life. This pantun emphasizes that noble character is the foundation of a sustainable society and instills a collective awareness to maintain social norms. Folktales with Islamic elements are

also an effective medium for instilling moral values because, in addition to being entertaining, these stories provide moral lessons that are easy to remember and apply in everyday life.

The results of this study are in line with the findings of Muliadi et al. (2024) and Dewi et al. (2024), which confirm that oral traditions can be effective instruments for character education. By utilizing attractive local cultural media, moral values and ethics of social life can be transmitted from generation to generation naturally, thereby shaping the character of the younger generation to be not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and socially mature. Overall, field findings in Tanjung Pura show that oral traditions are not merely cultural heritage, but also a strategic means of informal education, supporting the formation of a society with noble character and ethics in social life.

### 3. The Value of Love for the Homeland

Field research in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency, shows that the oral traditions of the Malay community play an important role in instilling the values of love for the homeland and wise leadership. Direct observation reveals that the practice of pantun, syair, and gurindam, which contain messages of heroism and patriotism, are still routinely conveyed at traditional ceremonies, recitations, and local community meetings. Documentary studies of old syair texts in community archives and the homes of traditional elders confirm the consistency of these values in the local culture.

Interviews with 10 key informants, including traditional elders and cultural figures, emphasize that Malay poetry contains stories of heroism that instill pride in the homeland, a fighting spirit, and sacrifice for the honor of the nation and territory. The values of love for the homeland instilled through oral tradition include: pride in being Indonesian, maintaining unity and integrity, obeying the laws and regulations of the state, defending the country, caring for the environment, respecting diversity, participating in development, and honoring heroes.

The results of this study are in line with the findings of Sinaga & Harahap (2024), which show that Malay heroic poetry is a source of inspiration for patriotism among the younger generation. In Tanjung Pura, this oral heritage serves as an effective medium for character education, raising historical awareness, and strengthening the cultural identity of the Malay community. Oral traditions not only entertain but also educate the community to appreciate cultural heritage and internalize the values of love for the homeland in daily life (Hidayat et al., 2020; Istiqomah et al., 2024).

### 4. The Value of Love for Knowledge and Education

Field research in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency, shows that the oral traditions of the Malay community play a significant role in instilling the value of love for knowledge and education. Through participatory observation, researchers found that the community routinely recites pantuns, poems, and gurindams that

contain messages about the importance of seeking knowledge, respecting teachers, and applying knowledge in daily life. Documentary studies of traditional manuscripts, recorded folk tales, and pantun texts stored in the homes of traditional elders reinforce the evidence that these educational values are consistently embedded in the local culture (Lubis et al., 2024; Siddik et al., 2025).

In-depth interviews with 10 key informants, including traditional elders, Quran teachers, and cultural figures, reveal that Malay proverbs such as "Knowledge enlightens, faith saves" serve as guidelines for community life. Informants explained that seeking knowledge is not merely about acquiring information, but also a means of shaping the character of a "blessed person" who is virtuous, knowledgeable, and noble. Education is directed towards practicing local spiritual and cultural values, so that loving knowledge becomes an integral part of the Malay community's identity.

These findings are in line with Hidayat et al. (2020), Tarwiyani et al. (2023), and Kurniawan et al. (2024), who emphasize that education in Malay culture is not only aimed at transferring knowledge but also shaping individual character and preserving local traditions. The values of love for knowledge found in Tanjung Pura include seeking knowledge as a religious and life responsibility, respecting teachers and knowledgeable people, lifelong learning, appreciation of scientific books, and a combination of worldly and spiritual knowledge.

Thus, oral traditions serve as an effective medium for informal education, shaping a young generation that is intelligent, moral, and loves science and local culture.

#### 5. The Value of Preserving Ancestral Culture Continuously

Field research in Tanjung Pura, Langkat Regency, shows that the oral traditions of the Malay community play a strategic role in preserving ancestral culture in a sustainable manner. Participatory observation of community activities, such as the recitation of pantuns, poems, and selokas, as well as folk tale performances, reveals that oral traditions serve as a medium for cultural education that instills noble values from generation to generation. Documentary studies of manuscripts, audio-visual recordings, and archives of folk tales in local communities reinforce the evidence that cultural values, beliefs, and social norms are embedded in the daily practices of the community.

In-depth interviews with 12 key informants, including traditional elders, Quran teachers, cultural figures, and the younger generation, reveal that the people of Tanjung Pura actively preserve their cultural heritage through informal education, traditional ceremonies, and the preservation of traditional Malay houses. Informants emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation, the principle of "do not destroy before replacing," and respect for Malay art, crafts, and language as integral parts of local cultural identity. The younger

generation also uses digital media and social media to promote traditional dances, literature, and games, ensuring cultural continuity amid the tide of globalization.

These findings are in line with Aisyah & Rahmat (2021), Noor (2019), and Wardana et al., (2021), which emphasize that oral traditions serve not only as a medium for Islamic education, but also as a means of shaping character, morals, and cultural awareness. The cultural preservation

values that emerge in Tanjung Pura include respect for customs and traditions, preservation of the Malay language, appreciation of traditional arts and crafts, education through folklore and stories, and strengthening of mutual cooperation and community harmony. Thus, oral traditions have proven to be an important instrument in maintaining Malay cultural identity and building awareness among the younger generation to continue the legacy of their ancestors.

**Table 1.** Main Values of Islamic Education in Malay Oral Tradition

No	Key Values	Details
1	Belief in God	Faith and Piety, Carrying Out Religious Commands, Surrendering to God, Discipline in Worship, Gratitude to God, Patience in Trials from God, Acceptance of God's Decrees, Love for God, Spirituality, Steadfastness, Supplication, Purification
2	Morals and Ethics	Honesty, respecting elders, caring for the younger ones, politeness, solidarity, responsibility, kinship, cooperation, empathy, forgiveness, deliberation; the foundation of community sustainability and collective awareness of maintaining social norms.
3	Patriotism	Pride in being Indonesian, maintaining unity and integrity, obeying the law and state regulations, defending the country, caring for the environment, respecting diversity, participating in development, respecting heroes; patriotism, fighting spirit, sacrifice for the honor of the nation.
4	Love of Knowledge and Education	Seeking knowledge as a religious and life responsibility, respecting teachers and scholars, lifelong learning, appreciation for books of knowledge, combining worldly and spiritual knowledge; forming a character that is moral, intelligent, and loves local culture.
5	Preserving Culture	Appreciating customs and traditions, preserving the Malay language, appreciating traditional arts and crafts, education through folk tales and stories, strengthening mutual cooperation, community harmony; using digital media to preserve culture, ensuring the continuity of ancestral heritage.

**Oral Traditions as a Medium for Non-Formal Education**

Field research shows that oral traditions play a significant role as a medium for non-formal education in Malay communities. Data obtained through direct observation in local communities and interviews with community

leaders, such as elders, hulubalang, and datuak, confirm that various forms of oral traditions—including pantun, poetry, folklore, and tunjuk ajar—serve not only as entertainment but also as a means of transferring moral, social, and spiritual values to the younger generation. This is in line with the findings of Wardana et al.

(2021), which emphasize the role of *tunjuk ajar* in instilling the values of divinity, compassion, hard work, and manners in children through traditional ceremonies.

In addition to its educational function, oral tradition also serves as a means of preserving local history and cultural identity. Field observations show that oral narratives conveyed in community activities, such as traditional meetings and ceremonies, consistently emphasize values relevant to the education of the local community. This supports the findings of Che Yaacob et al. (2024), which show that oral narratives in *Lembangan Sungai Pengkalan Datu* contain educational values that are effective for the development of the character and cultural identity of the local community.

In the context of formal education, field findings also show the effectiveness of integrating Nusantara folk tales through the *Edu-Tale* approach in teaching English as a second language. Based on interviews with teachers and observations of the learning process, the use of folklore not only increases student motivation and engagement but also introduces local cultural values. These findings are in line with the research by Saad and Zolkifli (2025), which emphasizes that *Edu-Tale* can strengthen students' cultural identity while supporting the preservation of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, this study found that the *Onang-Onang Mandailing* oral tradition also plays a role in character education based on

Islamic values. The results of observations and interviews show that the politeness of language contained in *Onang-Onang* encourages respect, humility, and moral integrity among the community. These findings are consistent with the study by Pulungan et al. (2025), which uses an ethnographic approach and linguistic politeness theory to emphasize the strategic role of politeness in oral traditions as a pedagogical tool.

Overall, these field findings confirm that oral traditions are not only a cultural heritage that needs to be preserved, but also an effective non-formal educational medium for transferring cultural, moral, and social values to the younger generation. By preserving and integrating oral traditions into formal and non-formal education, the community can ensure that cultural heritage remains alive and relevant amid the changing times.

### **The Role of Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, and Malay Community Leaders in the Transmission of Islamic Educational Values**

Field research in Langkat Regency shows that the transmission of Islamic educational values in Malay communities does not only take place through formal institutions such as schools or Islamic boarding schools, but is also greatly influenced by the central role of traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community leaders. Data was obtained through direct observation in Malay villages and interviews with key figures, which revealed how

these three groups became social agents in transforming Islamic teachings into the daily lives of the community.

First, religious leaders play a role as spiritual leaders and educators. Observations and interviews in Langkat Regency show that scholars, clerics, and imams not only teach religious knowledge, but also serve as role models in daily behavior and morals. They regularly hold recitations, tahlilan, pilgrimages, and other religious activities as a means of transmitting Islamic values to the community. These findings support the research by Patoni and Rifai (Patoni & Rifai, 2022), which emphasizes that religious leaders convey Islamic education through exemplary behavior, practice of teachings, advice, dialogue, and non-formal guidance.

Second, traditional leaders serve as a link between Sharia and customs. Based on field data in Langkat Regency, traditional leaders play a strategic role in ensuring that customary practices are in line with Islamic principles, as reflected in the concept of "customs based on Sharia, Sharia based on the Book of Allah." They regulate the social life of the community, including marriage, death, and other traditional ceremonies, while emphasizing Islamic values. These findings confirm that traditional leaders not only preserve traditions but also ensure the integration of Islamic teachings into every cultural practice.

Third, community leaders act as social agents in Islamic education through daily

interactions. Observations and interviews in various Malay villages in Langkat show that village heads, teachers, and local leaders set real examples in practicing Islamic values, such as mutual cooperation, honesty, and mutual respect. This finding is in line with the research by Mardiana et al., (2021), which states that Islamic Religious Education teachers act as agents of transformation, shaping social mobility and community character through Islamic values.

Overall, the field findings in Langkat Regency confirm that the successful transmission of Islamic educational values in Malay communities is highly dependent on the active role of religious leaders, traditional leaders, and community leaders. These three roles complement each other, making Islamic education not only formal but also alive in everyday social practices, so that moral, spiritual, and social values can be effectively instilled in the community.

### **The Process of Transmitting Islamic Educational Values in Malay Oral Culture**

The transmission of Islamic educational values is the process of inheriting, conveying, and instilling Islamic teachings and values from one generation to the next through various media, methods, and institutions. These values include aspects of faith (belief), worship (practice), morals (behavior), and muamalah (social interaction) which are formed based on the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The

main elements in the transmission of Islamic educational values include: (1) The subject transmitting the values, including: religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders, or educational institutions that are the source of values; (2) Media or means. Media or means can be formal education (schools, madrasas), informal (family), or non-formal (religious lectures, majelis taklim, local culture). (3) Message. Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, love of knowledge, tolerance, and piety. (4) Recipients. Recipients of moral values such as children, adolescents, or the wider community who are the targets of education. The objectives of the transmission of Islamic educational values include: (1) Forming Muslim individuals who have noble character and strong faith. (2) Maintaining the continuity of Islamic teachings in society. And (3) Strengthening Islamic identity in the face of modern challenges.

The process of transmitting Islamic educational values in Malay oral culture is carried out through: First, Pantun Nasihat (advice poems). Pantun is a form of old Malay poetry consisting of four lines with an a-b-a-b rhyme pattern. In pantun nasihat, Islamic values such as honesty, piety, patience, and respect for parents are conveyed in a subtle and memorable way. Examples of values: Faith, manners, and social morals. One of the customs and traditions that has been passed down from generation to generation by the Deli Malay community is the use of pantun. Pantun is rich in character values,

because it usually contains advice that is beneficial to individuals and the Malay community.

Among the pantuns that are always recited by the Deli Malay community are the following: (1) Harvest the rice when it is ripe, Don't be lazy tomorrow, Watch over us when you see us, Don't be longing tomorrow; (2) The Deli River flows calmly, Paddling the boat while singing, We are truly happy, We welcome you; (3) The morning sun is bright, Not flattering, not praising, We have been waiting endlessly, May you arrive safely; (4) According to Malay custom, When we have guests, Betel nut is always offered, This has been the custom since long ago; (5) Lime and gambier tobacco inside, Areca facing the sun, betel leaf bowing, Our hearts are stunned inside, May the guests who come bring good luck; (6) Lubuk Pakam, the long estuary, The long estuary of the fishing village, Living according to Malay customs, Religious teachings become practice.

Based on these Malay pantuns, there are several values that contain character education, including: (1) the value of obedience to God; (2) the value of practicing religious teachings; (3) the value of living harmoniously in society; (4) the value of the inevitability of struggle in life; and (5) the value of adhering to culture.

Second, Gurindam is a form of oral literature that resembles proverbs or short advice with religious content. Gurindam is often used to convey the teachings of monotheism, the prohibition of sinful acts, and the

importance of knowledge and charity. In form, gurindam usually consists of two lines in one stanza, where the first line contains the cause or problem, and the second line provides the consequence or answer in the form of advice.

As a work similar to proverbs, gurindam has the power to convey life messages in a simple yet profound way. Its concise and rhythmic style makes it easy for people to memorize and pass it down from generation to generation. Therefore, gurindam is often used in traditional education to instill values of wisdom and local knowledge.

The religious content in gurindam is a distinctive feature that sets it apart from other forms of oral literature. Many gurindam teach about faith, obligations to God, and human relationships based on Islamic principles. Famous works such as *Gurindam Dua Belas* by Raja Ali Haji are clear examples of how gurindam is used as a medium for preaching and shaping the character of a religious and civilized Malay society.

*Gurindam Dua Belas* by Raja Ali Haji is a classic Malay literary work consisting of twelve chapters. Each chapter contains moral and religious advice in the form of two lines of gurindam. The following is the complete text of Chapter 1 as an example: Anyone who does not adhere to religion cannot be called by name. Whoever knows the four, then he is the one who has ma'rifat. Whoever knows Allah, his commands and prohibitions, he will not go astray. Whoever knows himself, then he has known the Lord of the universe. Whoever knows the world, he knows

that it is deceitful. Whoever knows the hereafter, he knows that the world is harmful.

Based on the explanation of Malay gurindam, especially those found in *Gurindam Dua Belas* by Raja Ali Haji, there are five Islamic educational values that are clearly reflected, namely: (1) The value of *Tamhid* (the Oneness of God); (2) The value of *akhlak* (Ethics and Morals); (3) The value of worship; (4) The value of knowledge; and (5) The value of awareness of the afterlife.

Third, religious poetry is a form of Malay oral literature used to convey Islamic values in a beautiful and meaningful way. These poems are usually in the form of narrative poetry with four lines in each stanza, and a rhythm of a-a-a-a. In a religious context, these poems often contain stories about prophets, companions, exemplary stories, as well as moral teachings and worship in Islam.

Religious poetry not only serves as entertainment, but also as an effective tool for preaching, especially among illiterate communities or those living in traditional environments. Through poetry, Islamic messages are conveyed in a way that is easy to remember and touches the heart. Figures such as Hamzah Fansuri and Nuruddin ar-Raniri are known as Sufi poets who used poetry to spread Sufism and the teachings of monotheism. An example of popular religious poetry is *Syair Perahu* (the boat poem) by Hamzah Fansuri, which uses the metaphor of a boat as a symbol of human life that must be directed towards God. In its verses, this poem teaches the

importance of self-knowledge, maintaining faith, and leaving the mortal world behind for the sake of salvation in the hereafter. Poems like this reflect the combination of literary beauty and the depth of Islamic spirituality in Malay culture.

Regarding the previous explanation of religious poetry in Malay society, there are five Islamic educational values contained within it. These poems are not only entertainment or works of art, but also a medium for spiritual and moral education for the community. The five values are: (1) the value of *Tawhid* (the Oneness of God); (2) the value of *Akhlak* (Ethics and Morals); (3) the value of Worship; (4) the value of Knowledge; and (5) the value of Awareness of the Hereafter.

Fourth, traditional advice and proverbs. Advice (verbal advice from elders/traditional leaders) and proverbs in Malay culture often contain Islamic ethical elements such as not boasting, keeping promises, and prohibiting envy and slander. Examples of values: Social ethics, social responsibility, honesty. There are many Malay proverbs that serve as guidelines for their lives. The Malay community prioritizes moral values and language that demonstrate politeness and the high level of Malay civilization. This can be seen in Malay advice, for example: "What is the sign of a rice stalk, growing in a field with abundant fruit, what is the sign of a person of good character, pleasant to look at and kind in speech."

There is a Malay saying that shows that the Malay people are based on (religion), for example: "Depend on the One, live a perfect life, live

rationally and die with faith, live miserably and live unluckily, live without knowing what is halal and haram." Malaysians speak politely, dress modestly, control their desires, avoid prohibitions and sins, and would rather die than suffer shame themselves or for their family members, because they can control themselves. There are several ways of expressing this: "What is called shame is shame at exposing the faults of others, shame at uncovering the clothes on one's body, shame at defiling the syarak, shame at being overwhelmed by customs, and shame at fighting in institutions." Also in the expression "the price of salt is its saltiness, the price of a human being is his shame, the sign of war is its beginning, the sign of a person is his shame. Rather than live in shame, if shame has befallen you, life in this world is useless."

A Malay expression states, 'the fortune of a chicken is in its legs, the fortune of a human is in his children', describing the position of a child in Malay community life. In Malay society, there is a term "anak bertuah" which means a child who "becomes a person," who then becomes physically and mentally perfect, always remembers and treats their parents and relatives well, and subsequently their nation and country. By carrying out religious commands and avoiding everything that is forbidden, they are taught to obey religion and stay away from religious prohibitions.

Furthermore, there is a Malay saying that expresses "living in harmony", which means the values of unity and integrity in life, including the values of mutual cooperation and a sense of shared destiny. As the saying goes, upstream we

row together, downstream we paddle together, when submerged we get wet together, when floating we drift together, when rough we are sanded together, when lumpy we are pounded together. As the saying goes, "live with character", which means the values of good character, nobility and praise, being cultured and civilized, and being good at socializing. A Malay saying goes, "When sitting, sit and learn; when standing, stand and ask questions; when speaking, speak meaningfully; when silent, be meaningful."

Based on these Deli Malay proverbs, there are several values that contain character education. These values are: (1) the value of divinity; (2) the value of practicing religious teachings; (3) the value of community life; (4) values of struggle in life; (3) values of living in harmony within the nation and state; (5) values of living in peace with nature; and (6) values of living while preserving culture.

Fifth, *Tunjuk Ajar Melayu* (Malay Teachings), there are 29 topics on *Tunjuk Ajar Melayu*, plus 10 topics on Advice and Trust, and conclude with the closing. The twenty-nine topics are as follows: (1) Obey Almighty God, (2) Obey your father and mother, (3) Obey leadership; (4) Unity and integrity, mutual cooperation and tolerance; (5) Justice and truth; (6) The need for scientific knowledge; (7) Willingness to make sincere sacrifices; (8) Hard work; (9) Independence and self-confidence; (10) Cultivate virtue and repay virtue; (11) Obligations; (12) Modesty; (13) Compassion; (14). Rights and property; (15). Deliberation and consensus building; (16) Heroism; (17). Honesty; (18). Thrift and prudence;

(19). Humility; (20). Good intentions; (21). Stinginess; (22). Self-knowledge; (23). Openness; (24). Tolerance; (25). Integrity; (26). Use of time; (27). Visionary; (28). Gratitude to God for His blessings, and (29). Simple living.

At the same time, Malay advice and teachings consist of ten themes of messages and advice: (1). Teacher to student; (2). Parent to child; (3). Family life; (4). General messages and advice; (5). Education and protection of children; (6). Social unity; (7). Advice on facing the future; (8). Trustworthy advice on family development and family welfare; (9). Leadership, and (10). Reminders about responsibility towards the environment.

Based on the above explanation, Malay teachings contain several character education values, including: (1) values of God; (2) values of humanity; (3) values of daily behavior; (4) values of statehood; and (5) values of coexisting with nature.

Sixth, folk tales and legends, such as *Hang Tuah* and *Si Tanggung*, often convey Islamic values about the consequences of disobedience, the importance of gratitude, and obedience to parents and just leaders. Examples of values: leadership, reward for good deeds, humility.

Various folk tales of the Deli Malay community are rich in character values that have been passed down from generation to generation, which are useful for building the moral character ( ) of the community. Among these stories is *Hikayat Deli*. *Hikayat Deli* tells the story of the genealogy of the kings who once ruled Deli,

including the story of who actually founded the Deli kingdom in the first place.

The Hikayat Deli tells the story of the exploits of a figure known as the founder of the Deli Kingdom, Gojah Pahlawan. Gojah Pahlawan was a son of Hindustan, specifically from Deli Akbar. He was a descendant of Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain. Gojah Pahlawan had a brother named Muhammad Derekan, while his own name was actually Muhammad Dalik.

Then there is the tale of the green princess. Putri Hijau tells the story of a princess who was born in the village of Siboraya and was very beautiful. She lived near the headwaters of the Petani River (Deli River). Her beauty radiated a green light, from Aceh in Malacca to northern Java, and she was famous throughout the country. She was then called Putri Hijau. In the legend, the princess had two twin brothers, who were believed to be a dragon named *Ular Simangombus* and a cannon named *Meriam Puntung*.

In addition, the folk tales of Putri Merak Jingga and Putri Burung Kuau have themes of nature and the supernatural, while the folk tales of

Malang Jilbau, Tuah Burung Merbuk, and Si Buyung Besar have social and educational themes. The character of in the folk tale of Merak Jingga is described as loyal and handsome. The depiction of good people in the Merak Jingga folk tale is similar to that in Putri Burung Kuau. In the stories of Jibau Malang, Tuah Burung Merbau, and Si Buyung Besar, the protagonists are depicted as patient and hardworking people. The message in these five folk tales is to educate about morality, truth, honesty, and purity to bring happiness and victory.

These various folk tales have character values that can build the Malay community. Among these values are: (1) obedience to God; (2) maintaining self-respect; (3) obeying religious law; (3) living in harmony and peace; (4) the inevitability of struggle in life; (5) living in harmony with nature; and (6) preserving culture in daily life.

The process of transmitting Islamic educational values in the oral tradition of the Malay community in the archipelago is summarized in the following figure:

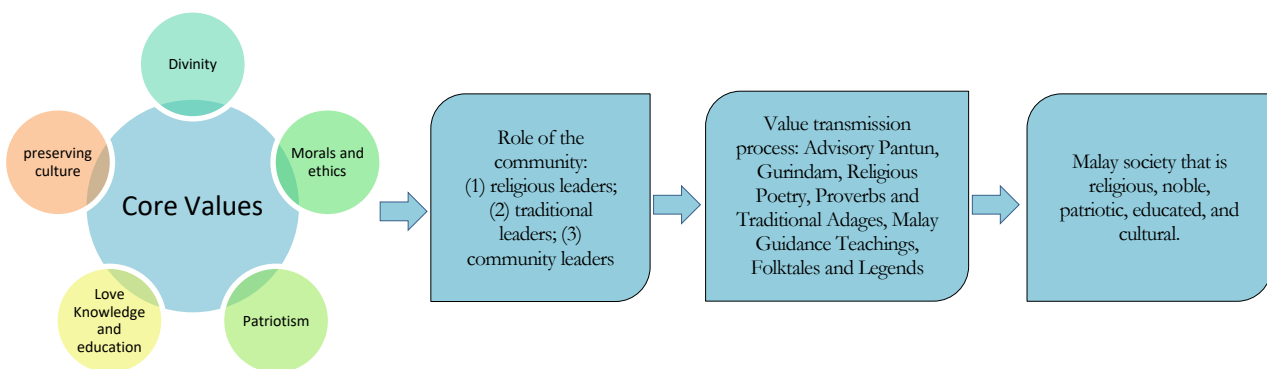


Figure 1. Transmission of Islamic Educational Values in the Oral Tradition of Malay Society

## CONCLUSION

Research on the Transmission of Islamic Educational Values in the Oral Traditions of the Malay Community in Langkat Regency confirms that oral traditions are a highly effective medium for transmitting Islamic educational values within the community. Various forms of oral tradition, such as *pantun* (poetry), folk tales, *syair* (poetry), *gurindam* (poetry), *tunjuk ajar* (teaching), and *peribahasa adat* (traditional proverbs), not only serve as a means of entertainment and cultural preservation, but also as a medium of education that instills religious teachings in a subtle and profound way. Oral traditions allow values of faith, morals, social norms, and culture to be conveyed narratively so that they are easily accepted by the younger generation. Malay pantuns, for example, contain moral advice and guidelines for living in accordance with Islamic ethical principles. Folktales and legends emphasize religious messages implicitly, so that Islamic education can be accepted without feeling like formal teaching. Gurindam, religious poetry, *tunjuk ajar*, and traditional proverbs also provide behavioral guidelines, shape character, and strengthen the cultural identity of the Malay community in Langkat. In addition, oral traditions play a role in maintaining harmony between customs and Islamic teachings, so that the community can internalize noble values in their daily lives. Thus, oral traditions in Langkat Regency are not merely cultural heritage, but also an effective and relevant medium of preaching for current and future generations.

Efforts to preserve, develop, and integrate oral traditions into formal and non-formal education are very important so that these noble values remain alive, are embedded in the character of the younger generation, and continue to be passed down from one generation to the next. Oral traditions, with their beauty of form and depth of meaning, remain a strategic tool in building a moral and cultured society.

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