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Cultural Da'wah and Social Solidarity In The Kupek Tuhun Mandi Tradition Among The Ogan Community

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Abstract

This study examines how cultural da'wah is communicated through the Kupek Tuhun Mandi tradition among the Ogan community in Tanjung Karang Village, South Sumatra, and how the ritual reflects local social values. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a case-study design, the research draws on observations, interviews with customary elders, a religious leader, and a child's parent, as well as documentary materials. The findings reveal that the tradition functions as a communal ritual to express gratitude for childbirth, offer prayers for the child's well-being, and introduce the newborn to the wider community. Islamic practices, including yasinan, marhaban, salawat, and aqiqah, are integrated into the customary procession to the Ogan River. Meanwhile, ritual objects retain meanings rooted in local knowledge. The study highlights cultural da'wah as a form of ritual communication that accommodates religious expression and mutual assistance while requiring critical engagement with customary beliefs and sensitivity to families' economic circumstances.

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana dakwah kultural dikomunikasikan melalui tradisi Kupek Tuhun Mandi pada masyarakat Ogan di Desa Tanjung Karang, Sumatera Selatan, serta bagaimana ritual tersebut merefleksikan nilai-nilai sosial masyarakat setempat. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan desain studi kasus melalui observasi, wawancara dengan tokoh adat, tokoh agama, dan orang tua bayi, serta dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ini berfungsi sebagai ritual komunal untuk mengungkapkan rasa syukur atas kelahiran anak, memanjatkan doa bagi keselamatan dan kebaikan anak, serta memperkenalkan bayi kepada lingkungan sosial yang lebih luas. Praktik keislaman seperti yasinan, marhaban, selawat, dan akikah terintegrasi dalam prosesi adat menuju Sungai Ogan. Sementara itu, benda-benda ritual tetap memiliki makna yang berakar pada pengetahuan lokal. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dakwah kultural berlangsung melalui komunikasi ritual yang mengakomodasi ekspresi keagamaan dan praktik tolong-menolong, sekaligus memerlukan sikap kritis terhadap kepercayaan adat dan kepekaan terhadap kondisi ekonomi keluarga.

Keywords: Cultural Da'wah; Kupek Tuhun Mandi; Ritual Communication; Social Solidarity; Ogan Community

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A. Introduction

Cultural traditions are an important dimension of social life in Indonesia. They preserve collective memories, structure social relationships, mark significant life events, and transmit values regarded as meaningful across generations.[1] In everyday life, traditions take various forms, including family ceremonies, birth rituals, weddings, funerals, religious celebrations, and other collective activities. Such practices demonstrate that culture does not exist separately from religious life.[2] Rather, culture and religion may intersect, shape one another, and undergo adjustment in response to social change. In the Indonesian context, this interaction is particularly visible in local traditions that combine customary practices with Islamic da'wah, as seen in the integration of religious messages into agrarian rituals and birth ceremonies.[3] Such integration is evident in the Turun Mani tradition among the Gayo community, where local elements such as the Begenap ritual and coconut-water bathing of the newborn are combined with Islamic aqiqah practices, and in the walimatul aqiqah ceremony in Lampung, where symbolic objects are used to convey Islamic values.[4] Such examples suggest that local rituals can serve as a medium through which religious meaning is communicated in forms that are familiar and accessible to the community, a point that is further supported by studies of living hadith and living Qur'an practices in regional settings.[5] Within this framework, the Kupek Tuhun Mandi tradition can be understood

[1] Erland Valerian Souisa and Vransisca Kissya, "Simbol, Solidaritas, Dan Memori Kolektif: Perspektif Komunikasi Budaya Pada Ritual Obor Pattimura Di Tuhaha, Maluku Tengah," Populis Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik 19, no. 2 (May 9, 2025): 200–212, https://doi.org/10.30598/populis.19.2.200-212.

[2] Thita M. Mazya et al., "Religious and Cultural Diversity in Indonesia: Dynamics of Acceptance and Conflict in a Multidimensional Perspective," International Journal of Current Science Research and Review 7, no. 7 (July 11, 2024): 4, https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/v7-i7-32.

[3] Ika Puspitasari and Alfri Ultriasratri, "INTEGRATION OF DA'WAH AND LOCAL CULTURE:," Jurnal Dakwah 24, no. 2 (December 30, 2023): 120–32, https://doi.org/10.14421/jd.2023.24202; Naillis Sakda and Al Zuhri, "The Symbolic Meaning of Communication in the Baby Bathing Tradition in Kuta Sayeh Village," Jurnal Realitas Sosial 1, no. 2 (December 30, 2025): 87–112, https://doi.org/10.64126/jrs.v1i2.26.

[4] Wahyu Nurcahyono et al., "Dakwah Kultural Melalui Tradisi Walimatul Aqiqah: Studi Komunikasi Simbolik Pada Masyarakat Lampung," Anida 25, no. 1 (June 26, 2025): 149–68, https://doi.org/10.15575/anida.v25i1.45213.

[5] Delsi Langke, Fitria N. Laiya, and Ferlin Anwar, "The Meaning and Implications of the Use of Chickens in the Aqiqah Tradition:A Living Hadith Study in Torosiaje Jaya Village," International Journal on Advanced Science Education and Religion, September 30, 2025, 1, https://doi.org/10.33648/ijoaser.v8i3.1171; Rafika Dhiya Alfadhilah and Bahriyadi, "The Living

as a form of ritual communication in which Islamic teachings are conveyed through customary symbols and collective participation rather than through formal instruction alone, a perspective consistent with studies showing that Minangkabau and Malay traditions transmit religious values through symbolic elements such as ceremonial objects and communal feasting.[6]

Within the context of da'wah, the relationship between religion and culture raises an important question how can Islamic values be communicated and understood through customs that are already embedded in community life. Da'wah is often associated with sermons, Friday preaching, religious study sessions, or the verbal transmission of religious teachings. Yet da'wah may also take place through exemplary conduct, social action, symbols, interpersonal relationships, and cultural activities that convey moral messages. Cultural da'wah attends to the social and cultural contexts of its audiences. It seeks to make existing cultural practices a space for communicating values without disregarding the fundamental principles of Islam.

Previous studies have demonstrated that local traditions can provide a setting for articulating religious and social values.[7] Aliyudin's study of the Ngalaksa ceremony and Thaib and Kango's research on the Hileyia tradition show how customary practices may serve as contexts for religious expression and communal values. Amin discusses cultural da'wah from the perspective of Islamic education, while Adde and Rifa'i emphasize the importance of understanding local social systems and customs when developing da'wah strategies. These studies provide a basis for examining tradition as a context for da'wah communication. The present study, however, focuses on Kupek Tuhun Mandi, a birth ritual that brings together families, customary elders, religious

Qur'an in the Mandi Safar Tradition: Internalizing Qur'anic Values in Air Hitam Laut, Jambi," Al-Fahmu Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur an Dan Tafsir 5, no. 1 (March 27, 2026): 402–16, https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v5i1.976.

[6] Viviana Utami, Sulthan Ahmad, and Dwi Wahyuni, "Tradition's Vital Role: Exploring the Multifaceted Functions of Mandi Ka Luak in Minangkabau Society," Journal of Contemporary Rituals and Traditions 1, no. 2 (September 11, 2023): 89–98, https://doi.org/10.15575/jcrt.381; Nilasari Siagian, Surono Zamroni, and Andri Nurwandri, "Integration of Religious Values and Local Wisdom: Strategy for Strengthening Local Traditions Towards the Self-Identity of the Community of Batu Bara District," JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam) 9, no. 2 (February 17, 2026): 561, https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v9i2.27046.

[7] Mubarok Ahmadi and Razif Baharuddin, "Dakwah Kultural Berbasis Kearifan Lokal," Proceedings of Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars 9, no. 1 (November 21, 2025): 980–94, https://doi.org/10.36835/ancoms.v9i1.753.

leaders, and residents through a procession centred on the Ogan River. Its attention to the river as a ritual space, the distribution of authority between customary and religious figures, and the interpretation of local symbols extends discussions of cultural da'wah from cultural accommodation to the analysis of ritual communication and solidarity. Such an approach allows the study to situate the tradition within the broader debate on how local customs can carry Islamic values without displacing the community's existing cultural identity, a concern that has been noted in research on the Nilekka tradition among the Makassar community, where religious messages are transmitted through symbols and customary actions that the community readily accepts.[8] Such findings indicate that the Kupek Tuhun Mandi tradition may likewise be read as a site where Islamic values are negotiated through familiar symbols, rather than as a practice that stands apart from religious life.[9]

This article examines the Kupek Tuhun Mandi tradition, which continues to be practised by the community of Tanjung Karang Village, Baturaja Barat District, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, South Sumatra. According to the explanations provided in the study, the Ogan word kupek refers to a baby, while tuhun mandi means going down to bathe. The tradition involves taking a baby to the Ogan River for a bathing ritual and is understood by community members as an inherited custom associated with childbirth. The procession connects the baby's family with relatives, neighbours, customary elders, and religious leaders. Birth is therefore not celebrated solely as an experience of the nuclear family, but also acknowledged as a social event involving the wider community. In this sense, the ritual functions as a communal affirmation of the newborn's place within both kinship networks and the wider social order, reflecting the Ogan community's understanding of childbirth as a collective responsibility rather than a purely private matter.

[8] Rintoh Rintoh et al., "Actualization of Da'wah And Communication Values in the Nilekka Tradition Among The Makassar Tribe In Makassar City," International Journal on Advanced Science Education and Religion, March 30, 2026, 1, https://doi.org/10.33648/ijoaser.v9i1.1689.

[9] Hadi Pajarianto, Imam Pribadi, and Puspa Sari, "Tolerance between Religions through the Role of Local Wisdom and Religious Moderation," HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies 78, no. 4 (January 1, 2022): 3, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7043.

Although the tradition continues to be practised, social change may affect its sustainability. The parent interviewed identified economic conditions as one challenge, explaining that the food and materials required for the ceremony increasingly have to be purchased, whereas some needs could previously be met through resources available in the surrounding environment. This suggests that cultural preservation cannot be addressed merely by describing a practice as ancestral heritage. It is also necessary to understand how community members adapt the practice, maintain the meanings they consider important, and respond to changing living conditions.

Against this background, the article addresses two research questions. First, how does cultural da'wah take place through the Kupek Tuhun Mandi tradition in Tanjung Karang Village? Second, what da'wah messages are interpreted through the tradition, and how do these messages relate to local social values and cultural symbols? The article aims to describe the performance of the tradition as a medium of cultural da'wah and to analyse the messages emerging from informants' accounts and field observations.

The article's contribution lies in examining Kupek Tuhun Mandi as a cultural communication practice that brings together religious expression, collective memory, and social relationships. Analytically, it distinguishes three dimensions: (1) religious practices explicitly identified by informants; (2) customary symbols and actions explained through local knowledge; and (3) social functions reflected in the participation of families and residents. This distinction is necessary to ensure that respect for tradition does not become a claim that every customary element constitutes Islamic teaching, and that solidarity is not presented as a causal outcome that the study has not measured.

B. Literature Review and Analytical Framework

Cultural da'wah can be understood as an approach to religious communication that takes account of a community's social context, language, customs, and systems of meaning.[10] It involves more than using cultural forms as channels for delivering messages; it requires an understanding of how people interpret the practices in which

[10] Irzum Farihah and Ismanto Ismanto, "Buka Luwur as A Media of Education and Social Solidarity of Kudus Community," Al-Tahrir Jurnal Pemikiran Islam 19, no. 1 (May 5, 2019): 148, https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v19i1.1568.

they participate. Adde and Rifa'i argue that da'wah strategies should engage with local social systems and consider customs regarded as positive by the community. Cultural da'wah, therefore, is not simply the unilateral insertion of religious messages into tradition. It is a communicative process involving contextual understanding, dialogue, and interpretation.

In communication studies, Carey distinguishes the transmission view of communication from the ritual view. From a ritual perspective, communication does not merely transfer information from a sender to a receiver; it also sustains a shared world of meaning through participation, repetition, and symbolic action.[11] This perspective is relevant to Kupek Tuhun Mandi because its messages are not conveyed solely through speech or religious recitations. They are also shaped by the sequence of the procession, the presence of participants, the journey to the river, shared meals, and acts of mutual assistance.[12] The tradition can thus be understood as a communicative event in which community members participate in actions they collectively recognize.

This analysis requires caution in interpreting symbols. Symbolic meanings are not universally inherent in objects; rather, they are shaped by a community's experiences, memories, and knowledge. Researchers must therefore distinguish meanings explicitly stated by informants from analytical interpretations proposed by the researcher. In this study, explanations of the wood ember, flowers, coins, sweets, and lime are treated as accounts of local knowledge. Such accounts do not, by themselves, demonstrate that these objects possess protective powers or constitute religious teachings.

Social solidarity is used here in a limited sense to refer to forms of togetherness expressed through social visits, mutual assistance, residents' participation, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.[13] The concept is not used to claim that a single ritual automatically produces long-term social cohesion. The available data

[11] Roy Pea, "Seeing What We Build Together: Distributed Multimedia Learning Environments for Transformative Communications," Journal of the Learning Sciences 3, no. 3 (July 1, 1994): 288, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327809jls0303_4.

[12] Pea, 288.

[13] Sandra Igreja, Constança Paúl, and Soraia Teles, "Family Transmission of Crafts and Folk Art: A Mixed-Methods Study on Family Relationships and Cohesion among Artisans in a UNESCO Creative City," Frontiers in Sociology 11 (June 17, 2026): 1800486, https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2026.1800473.

support an analysis of opportunities for and practices of collective work during the ceremony, as well as the positive meanings attributed to these practices by informants. Distinguishing observable participation from long-term social effects helps ensure that the conclusions remain proportionate to the evidence. The same caution applies to the wider literature on ritual and cultural communication, which generally treats the social effects of ritual participation as processes to be examined empirically rather than assumed from the performance itself.[14] In this study, the analysis therefore focuses on how the ritual is performed and interpreted, and on the communicative meanings that participants describe, rather than on measuring cohesion as a quantifiable outcome. [15] Accordingly, the subsequent analysis treats the ceremony as a site where meanings are negotiated and reproduced, rather than as a closed system whose effects can be read directly from its outward form.

The analysis of Kupek Tuhun Mandi is guided by four interrelated areas: the ritual's context and sequence; the distribution of roles among families, customary elders, and religious leaders; religious messages and customary symbols; and forms of social participation accompanying the procession. This framework connects the field description to the question of how cultural da'wah takes place without assuming that all participants share an identical interpretation. The section therefore moves from conceptual framing to the empirical setting, beginning with the description of Tanjung Karang Village and the procedures through which data were gathered and cross-checked.

In the context of Muslim communities in Indonesia, the relationship between religion and culture does not necessarily take the form of absolute acceptance or rejection.[16] Religious practices may interact with local customs through processes of

[14] Adam Adam, "From Ritual Conflict to Cultural Cohesion: Tracing the Historical, Typological, and Peacebuilding Transformations of Ndempa in Bima, Indonesia," Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies 13, no. 4 (July 28, 2026): 401, https://doi.org/10.66815/ejecs/2686.

[15] Davita Dyah Ayu Puspitasari and Ahmad Choirul Rofiq, "Ethnographic Study of Ritual Communication in the Slametan Punden Tradition in Duyung Village, Takeran District, Magetan Regency," International Journal of Applied and Advanced Multidisciplinary Research 3, no. 7 (July 26, 2025): 477–90, https://doi.org/10.59890/ijaamr.v3i7.61.

[16] Dede Dendi, "Religious Integrity and Local Culture (Descriptive Study on Cicarucub Indigenous Peoples of Lebak Banten)," Riwayat Educational Journal of History and Humanities 6, no. 2 (April 1, 2023): 519–26, https://doi.org/10.24815/jr.v6i2.29844.

adaptation, reinterpretation, and negotiation.[17] A dialogical framework avoids treating religion and culture as entirely separate domains. However, dialogue does not mean that every cultural element automatically receives normative legitimacy from religion. Distinguishing religious values, social practices, and local beliefs remains necessary to avoid both romanticizing culture and judging it prematurely.[18]

Cultural context plays an important role in how da'wah messages are recognized and received. Messages communicated through familiar language, figures, and activities may be more closely connected to people's everyday experiences. Nevertheless, cultural familiarity is not the sole criterion for successful da'wah. The substance of the message, openness to dialogue, and the ability to distinguish values consistent with religious principles remain important considerations. Accordingly, this article uses the term cultural da'wah to describe how religious values are expressed through established social practices, not to suggest that every stage of the ritual is consciously designed as da'wah by all participants.

The perspective of ritual communication also helps explain the significance of the sequence of activities and residents' involvement. From this perspective, communication operates through repeated actions and the maintenance of shared systems of meaning, rather than merely through the transfer of information. In Kupek Tuhun Mandi, prayer recitations, the collective journey to the river, the involvement of customary elders, and the presence of family members and neighbours form a social event recognized by the community. Communication media are therefore not limited to speech or religious texts; they also include bodies, spaces, objects, time, and relationships among participants.

The concept of social solidarity is used to examine forms of togetherness observable during the organization of the tradition. Assistance with preparing food, arranging the venue, and meeting other ceremonial needs demonstrates contributions

[17] Abdul Karim et al., "Negotiating Faith, Ritual, and Ecology: Islamic–Hindu Acculturation and Interreligious Cohesion in the Petik Laut Ritual of Pengambengan, Bali," Journal of Contemporary Rituals and Traditions 4, no. 1 (May 3, 2026): 47, https://doi.org/10.15575/jcrt.2014.

[18] Nor Hasan et al., "Tradition, Social Values, and Fiqh of Civilization: Examining the Nyadran Ritual in Nganjuk, East Java, Indonesia," SAMARAH Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam 7, no. 3 (November 16, 2023): 1791, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i3.20578.

of time and labour from the family's social environment. However, these practices do not in themselves prove that the tradition produces increased social cohesion over the long term. Such a claim would require comparative or longitudinal data, which are not available in this study. The article therefore uses the more measured expressions "a space for solidarity" and "practices of mutual assistance" rather than claiming that the tradition directly causes stronger solidarity throughout the community.

C. Research Methods

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach and a case-study design. It was conducted in Tanjung Karang Village, Baturaja Barat District, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, South Sumatra. A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to understand the performance of the tradition, participants' experiences, and the meanings attached to cultural and religious practices, rather than measure frequencies or test relationships between variables. The case-study design enables Kupek Tuhun Mandi to be examined within the social context in which it is practised.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research notes indicate that field observations took place from 27 February to 30 March 2026. The observations covered the village environment, residents' social and religious life, the performance of the tradition, and the involvement of families and community members. The field notes also describe the Ogan River as a geographical feature of the procession, the use of the Ogan language in everyday communication, and practices of mutual assistance in community activities. The dates should be verified by the author against the original field records.

Informants were selected purposively on the basis of their knowledge of and involvement in the tradition. The four principal informants identified in the source material were two customary elders, Farida and Suryani; a religious leader, Ruslan Ahmad Ghani; and a baby's parent, Dela Velani. Information from village officials and documentary materials was used to supplement the contextual description. Interviews addressed the history of the tradition, the sequence of the procession, the functions of symbols, perceived values, religious perspectives, community roles, and challenges to preservation. The source manuscript does not specify interview dates, duration, recording procedures, or transcription methods; these details should be added on the basis of the original research records before submission.

The data were analysed thematically through repeated readings of observation notes and interview accounts, the organization of information into themes, and comparison of informants' statements with observations and documentary evidence. The themes included the sequence of the tradition, participants' roles, religious messages, cultural symbols, social functions, and challenges to continuity. Cross-source comparison was used to identify both corroborating information and differences in emphasis. Informants' accounts were treated as individual interpretations rather than as a single representation of the entire community.

This study has several limitations. The data were collected in one village and involve four principal informants explicitly identified in the source material; the findings are therefore not intended to represent the entire Ogan community. The article also relies on previously collected research data and does not introduce new interviews or claim to measure effects of da'wah that were not investigated. Interpretations of the tradition's communicative and solidarity-related functions are analytical readings of the available evidence. Information about informed consent, the protection of participants' identities, and permission to use documentary materials is not included in the source manuscript and must be confirmed by the author.

D. Findings and Discussion

1. Kupek Tuhun Mandi as a Birth Ritual and Local Identity

Kupek Tuhun Mandi is known as an intergenerational tradition among the Ogan community in Tanjung Karang Village.[19] In the interview transcripts, customary elders describe it as an inheritance from the "ninek puyang" (ancestors), performed to express gratitude for the birth of a child. This expression situates the tradition within relationships with ancestors and intergenerational memory. For those who practise it, the ceremony is not simply a new activity chosen by an individual family; it forms part of the customary framework through which families experience and mark childbirth. Within this framework, the procession, the offering of food, and the recitation of prayers become public acts through which the family's gratitude is made visible to the

[19] Utami, Ahmad, and Wahyuni, "Tradition's Vital Role: Exploring the Multifaceted Functions of Mandi Ka Luak in Minangkabau Society."

wider village. At the same time, the manner in which this gratitude is expressed reflects local understandings of kinship, religious obligation, and the community's collective responsibility toward newborns.[20] Such responsibility is articulated through practices in which the ritual's symbolic elements, the involvement of the extended family, and the participation of neighbours together constitute a shared understanding of how a child is welcomed into both the household and the wider community.

The Ogan River, where the procession takes place, gives the tradition a distinctive spatial dimension.[21] The river is not merely an incidental natural backdrop; it is part of the local environment identified in the research notes and familiar to community members.[22] Nevertheless, the available data are insufficient to conclude that the river has a sacred meaning for all residents. A more cautious interpretation is that the use of the river connects the ritual to a geographical space closely associated with community life. This relationship between place and ritual distinguishes Kupek Tuhun Mandi from birth celebrations conducted solely within the domestic sphere. Such a spatial and communal orientation suggests that the ritual's meanings are shaped not only by religious and kinship values but also by the social organisation of the village as a shared public space. Such a spatial dimension also indicates that the ritual's communicative force operates through visible, collective participation rather than through private devotion alone, a point that becomes clearer when the roles of elders, religious leaders, and families are examined in the sections that follow.

According to the research accounts, kupek refers to a baby, while tuhun mandi means going down to bathe. The central procession connects the baby with the Ogan River, a geographical feature that forms part of the local community's identity. In this context, the river is more than the location of an activity. It provides the setting for a

[20] Madimetja Nyaloko et al., "Parental Experiences of Caring for Preterm Infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Limpopo Province: A Descriptive Qualitative Study Exploring the Cultural Determinants," BMC Health Services Research 24, no. 1 (May 28, 2024): 678, https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-024-11117-6.

[21] Stevanya Lucia Wety Wollo, Yeni Rachmawati, and Ernawulan Syaodih, "Moku Hesi Miti Tradition: Birth Ritual in Ethnoparenting of Takpala Indigenous Village Community, Alor Regency," Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research 7, no. 2 (January 15, 2026): 216, https://doi.org/10.46843/jiecr.v7i2.2516.

[22] Yusni Arni et al., "The Integration of Local Stilt House Architecture in Natural Disaster Mitigation Education in South Sumatra, Indonesia," Jàmbá Journal of Disaster Risk Studies 18, no. 1 (January 28, 2026): 1993, https://doi.org/10.4102/jamba.v18i1.1987.

customary action recognized by residents and forms part of the narrative of local belonging. The tradition thus connects three elements: birth as a family event, the river as a concrete local space, and the community as the group witnessing the arrival of a new member.

This social introduction can be understood as an expansion of the child's circle of relationships. During the earliest stage of life, a baby is cared for by the immediate family; through this procession, however, the child's presence is announced and witnessed by relatives and residents. This recognition does not mean that the baby has already established social relationships through active interaction. Rather, it indicates that the family presents the birth as an event relevant to the community. The tradition therefore connects family reproduction with the continuity of local social life.

The tradition also serves a function of social introduction. The baby's parent explained that the event provides an opportunity to introduce the child to nearby residents. This statement indicates a clear communicative function: community members become aware of the arrival of a new member in their social environment. Birth is not treated solely as a domestic matter but is celebrated through relationships with extended family and neighbours. In this sense, the tradition provides a form of social recognition that extends the baby's relational context beyond the nuclear family.

The identity function is also reflected in informants' desire to preserve the tradition. The baby's parent stated that customary practices should not be allowed to disappear. This statement need not be interpreted as resistance to change. Rather, it suggests that preservation is considered important because the tradition maintains connections with previous generations and creates opportunities to reaffirm valued principles. Its continuity, however, depends on the community's ability to adapt its performance to present conditions, including costs and changing ways of life.

2. The Ritual Process and the Encounter between Adat and Islamic Practices

Interview data indicate that Kupek Tuhun Mandi involves family preparations, religious activities, a journey to the river, and the bathing of the baby.[23] Families invite relatives and residents to help prepare the event and food.[24] Yasinan and marhaban or nadum are identified as parts of the sequence, while aqiqah is also performed as part of the birth celebration. According to the religious leader interviewed, these elements demonstrate the relationship between the preservation of adat and religious practices as understood by community members.[25] The religious leader's account suggests that these practices are not experienced as separate domains, since the recitation of prayers and the customary procession are understood by participants as complementary expressions of the same act of gratitude and welcome. Such an understanding indicates that Islamic teaching and local custom are integrated within the community's practice, rather than positioned as competing frameworks. Such integration does not, however, imply that the ritual's religious and customary components carry equal weight for every participant, a variation that the interview data suggest should be considered when assessing how the tradition is sustained across different family circumstances. Such variation may be particularly visible in households where economic constraints limit the scale of preparations, since the extent of food provision and the number of guests invited can shape how fully the procession and prayers are carried out.

The observations reported in the source material show the involvement of family members, community figures, and nearby residents.[26] The documentation also depicts a customary elder carrying the baby to the river, a group walking together, flowers being scattered near the riverbank, and the baby being bathed with lime. This sequence indicates that bodies, spaces, objects, and movement form part of the tradition's

[23] Abdul Manan, "THE RITUAL OF FIRST INFANT BATHING IN ACEH: An Ethnographic Study in West Labuhan Haji, South Aceh," Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies 3, no. 2 (December 30, 2019): 3, https://doi.org/10.30821/jcims.v3i2.5466.

[24] Halimahtu Saddiah et al., "The Newborn Baby Ceremony in Labuhan Batu, South Aceh," Interdisciplinary Journal of Advanced Research and Innovation 2, no. 1 (January 22, 2024): 6–12, https://doi.org/10.58860/ijari.v2i1.46.

[25] Rahmatun Nair et al., "Rituals as Sites of Normative Production: Rethinking Living Islamic Law through the Sennu-Sennureng Tradition in Bugis Weddings," JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah) 25, no. 1 (June 21, 2026): 220, https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v25i1.16669.

[26] Annet P. Pauwelussen, "Community as Network: Exploring a Relational Approach to Social Resilience in Coastal Indonesia," MAST. Maritime Studies/Maritime Studies 15, no. 1 (February 8, 2016): 11, https://doi.org/10.1186/s40152-016-0041-5.

communication. The meaning of the procession is conveyed not only through verbal explanations but also through actions that participants can observe and follow.

The distribution of roles indicates that ritual authority is not concentrated in a single figure. Knowledge of customary procedures and objects is held by customary elders, while religious explanations and recitations are associated with the role of the religious leader.[27] The family initiates and organizes the event, while residents participate and provide support. This pattern demonstrates a distribution of roles through which the tradition is maintained by cooperation among several social actors.[28] However, the available data do not establish whether this division of roles remains consistent or varies across families and performances.

An important feature is the division of responsibilities between customary elders and the religious leader. Customary elders hold knowledge of the sequence of the procession and inherited symbols. The religious leader guides yasinan and marhaban and explains the relationship between the tradition and Islamic values. Although their functions are not identical, both figures participate in the same sequence of activities. This arrangement demonstrates cooperation between customary and religious authorities. In this context, cultural da'wah takes place through collaboration and adaptation, rather than by eliminating customary roles or replacing every stage with a sermon.

The religious leader's perspective reflects a process of evaluating the tradition from a religious standpoint.[29] In community practice, such assessments are important because traditions are transmitted not only through families but may also be explained and considered by figures with religious authority. Nevertheless, the data record the perspective of only one religious leader. The article therefore does not generalize this view as a consensus among Islamic scholars or all residents of Tanjung Karang Village.

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[27] R. H. Barnes, James J. Fox, and Clifford Sather, "Origins, Ancestry and Alliance: Explorations in Austronesian Ethnography.," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 3, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 985, https://doi.org/10.2307/3034075.

[28] Carolus Borromeus Mulyatno, "A TRADITION OF INTERFAITH NYADRAN AS A MODEL OF PERSERVING SOSIAL HARMONY," Journal of Asian Orientation in Theology 4, no. 2 (August 30, 2022): 152, https://doi.org/10.24071/jaot.v4i2.5079.

[29] Nair et al., "Rituals as Sites of Normative Production: Rethinking Living Islamic Law through the Sennu-Sennureng Tradition in Bugis Weddings," 221.

Further research should include a wider range of perspectives, including those of residents who hold different views or choose not to participate in the procession.

The religious leader interviewed considered the tradition permissible as long as its sequence remained consistent with Islamic teachings.[30] He identified yasinan, nadum or marhaban, salawat, the basmalah, and the shahada as Islamic elements within the event. This view illustrates how a local religious leader provides a religious interpretation of a practice already familiar to the community. However, the perspective of one informant cannot represent the full range of possible Islamic interpretations. The article therefore records it specifically as the understanding of the religious leader interviewed.

3. Gratitude, Prayer, and Hopes for the Child

The clearest message emerging from the data is gratitude for the birth of a child. Customary elders associate the tradition with the family's expression of gratitude, while the baby's parent explained that the event was held to give thanks and to seek the fulfilment of prayers for the child. Gratitude thus becomes a point of convergence between the family's personal experience and communal expression.[31] Birth is understood as an event for which thanks should be given, and this gratitude is expressed through prayer, shared meals, and the participation of people around the family.

In addition to gratitude, the tradition conveys hopes for the child's safety and blessings. The religious leader referred to prayers for the child's well-being and blessings, as well as for the family to remain mindful of Allah. These hopes give the procession a future-oriented dimension: the community not only acknowledges the birth but also expresses aspirations for the child's life ahead. Within ritual communication, prayer conveys a message while helping to create a shared emotional

[30] Fahrudin Fahrudin et al., "Exploring Students' Perspectives on Sufism and Tarekat in Islamic Education," Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 10, no. 1 (June 18, 2024): 8, https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i1.33521.

[31] Panca Dwi Kora and Daryusti Daryusti, "The Function of the Basuh Lantai Tradition for the Daik Village Community," Gondang Jurnal Seni Dan Budaya 8, no. 1 (June 2, 2024): 68, https://doi.org/10.24114/gondang.v8i1.47564.

atmosphere. The family articulates its hopes, while the community is present as both witness and participant.

At the same time, the analysis must distinguish prayer as religious expression from specific beliefs attached to customary symbols. In the interview transcripts, some symbols are explained through inherited beliefs about protecting babies from sawan or disturbances attributed to supernatural beings. Such meanings should be presented as elements of local knowledge, not as automatically applicable religious prescriptions. This distinction is important: the study of cultural da'wah should not automatically recast every element of a tradition as Islamic, but should examine how community members connect symbols, experiences, and hopes.

An analysis of cultural da'wah in this case can begin with the values explicitly communicated: gratitude, prayer, remembrance of Allah, and hopes for the child's well-being. These values are reflected in yasinan, marhaban, salawat, the basmalah, and the shahada, as identified by informants. Customary symbols, meanwhile, form part of a cultural system that requires separate explanation. The tradition therefore provides a layered communicative space: religious messages are articulated through recitations, while local meanings are conveyed through objects, actions, and collective memory.

4. Cultural Symbols and the Limits of Interpretation

Kupek Tuhun Mandi involves several objects and actions regarded as significant by community members. [32] The research material mentions a wood ember, flowers, coins, sweets, and lime. Visual documentation shows a customary elder carrying the baby, the group's journey to the Ogan River, flowers being scattered near the riverbank, preparations for bathing the baby with lime, and the bathing procession itself. These objects should not be assigned universal meanings without evidence. Their meanings are connected to the explanations of customary elders and beliefs circulating within the community.

In the interview transcripts, the wood ember is associated with ancestral beliefs about protecting babies from sawan or disturbances attributed to supernatural beings.

[32] Salma Salma, "The Study of Islamic Law About The Deceased Muslim and Its Cultural Symbols in Sumpur Kudus, West Sumatera, Indonsia," SAMARAH Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam 5, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 407, https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v5i1.9037.

This explanation illustrates how earlier generations understood risks to infants and developed symbolic actions as forms of protection. From the perspective of communication anthropology, such symbols show how communities give tangible form to anxieties and hopes that may be difficult to express abstractly. However, a symbol's function in cultural memory does not constitute empirical proof of protective power or establish it as an Islamic teaching.

Lime is used in the bathing procession, while flowers and other objects appear during the journey to the river. The available data do not provide a basis for assigning a single meaning to every object. Accordingly, this article does not claim that each object is an Islamic symbol. The evidence supports the more limited statement that these objects form part of the customary procession and are understood through local knowledge. Further research could investigate whether their meanings are shared by customary elders, younger families, and residents from different generations.

A practical implication of this distinction is the importance of creating opportunities for dialogue among customary elders, religious leaders, and families.[33] Such dialogue could begin by documenting participants' explanations of the history and function of each element, followed by discussion of which elements are considered socially valuable, which relate to religious expression, and which may require further consideration. The process need not aim to impose uniform interpretations. Open communication, rather, allows community members to explain why they preserve, adapt, or discontinue particular elements without disparaging others.

This distinction is important for da'wah practice. A cultural approach can make religious messages present in familiar settings, but this does not mean that every cultural element should be accepted without critical consideration. Religious leaders, customary elders, and families can discuss the meanings of symbols, the elements to be maintained, and possible forms of adaptation. Such dialogue is more productive than either of two extremes: rejecting the entire tradition because it is not considered part of formal religious practice, or assuming that every customary element

[33] Zokwane L. Mondlane et al., "Elders' Authority and Evolving Roles in Death Rituals in Rural South Africa and Their Relevance for Minimally Invasive Tissue Sampling," Scientific Reports 16, no. 1 (July 27, 2026): 10, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-026-52059-9.

automatically has religious legitimacy. Reflective cultural da'wah seeks to respect the community while distinguishing adat, local beliefs, and religious principles.

E. Social Solidarity and the Continuity of Cultural Da'wah

Social values constitute another important finding. The baby's parent associated the tradition with kinship, mutual assistance, and gratitude. The parent also mentioned shared meals and introducing the baby to residents.[34] The religious leader emphasized social ties and togetherness. Meanwhile, observations of village life recorded mutual assistance in community activities, including cooking, preparing venues, and helping to organize residents' events. Although these practices of mutual assistance were also observed in activities other than Kupek Tuhun Mandi, they help explain the social context that enables the tradition to be performed collectively.

Such participation is important because social values become visible through concrete actions. Residents' attendance, assistance with preparations, and shared presence during the event can be interpreted as forms of non-verbal communication expressing support for the family. This meaning does not necessarily require explicit verbal instruction. Nevertheless, not every form of attendance can automatically be classified as an equivalent contribution to solidarity; this study did not measure the intensity of each participant's contribution or the experiences of residents who did not attend. The analysis is therefore limited to forms of participation mentioned by informants and recorded in the observations.

From the perspective of da'wah communication, residents' participation is part of the message conveyed through action.[35] When relatives and neighbours assist the family, solidarity is not merely discussed but enacted.[36] Collective work demonstrates

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[34] Muhammad Ladoni Harsandi et al., "The Values of Local Wisdom in the Bretes (Seven-Month) Tradition among the Community of Jeringo Village, Gunungsari District, West Lombok Regency," Jurnal Multidisiplin Sahombu, September 3, 2025, 5, https://ejournal.seaninstitute.or.id/index.php/JMS/article/view/7258.

[35] Abdul Malik et al., "From Worship to Collective Practice: Zakat, Local Leadership, and Social Change in Indonesia," Frontiers in Communication 11 (August 7, 2026): 11, https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2026.1839828.

[36] Khusnul Khotimah and Asep Amaluddin, "Contextualization of Da'wah Based on the Civil Society Concept in Kroya," Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah 16, no. 2 (December 28, 2022): 319, https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v16i2.19450.

that social relationships require concrete contributions of time and effort. In this respect, da'wah need not take the form of verbal instructions about the importance of brotherhood. Such values can be experienced directly through preparing the event, attending prayers, sharing food, and accompanying a family celebrating a birth.

Intergenerational relationships within this tradition can be examined through the transmission of knowledge. Customary elders preserve knowledge of the sequence and materials used in the procession, religious leaders convey recitations and religious explanations, and younger families decide whether to carry out the tradition.[37] Knowledge is transmitted not only through formal explanations but also through participation and observation. However, this study did not interview younger generations as a distinct group. The success of knowledge transmission therefore cannot be established. What can be stated is that the tradition provides a setting in which customary knowledge and religious practices are displayed to family members and residents who attend.

Whether this display translates into sustained intergenerational learning, and whether younger participants internalize the meanings behind each element, remains an open question that future fieldwork with younger families would need to address. Until such evidence is available, the present analysis can only describe the tradition as a setting for cultural and religious display rather than as a demonstrated mechanism of intergenerational transmission. Accordingly, the following subsection turns to the spatial and material dimensions of the event, examining how the venue, the arrangement of objects, and the movement of participants shape the ways in which these social and religious meanings are perceived. Within this framework, the physical setting of the Kupek Tuhun Mandi event functions as a medium through which kinship, gratitude, and religious devotion become legible to attending participants, rather than as a neutral backdrop to the ritual sequence. Such an approach allows the analysis to treat the venue, the arrangement of objects, and the sequence of movements as meaningful components of the event, rather than as incidental features that merely accompany the core religious and customary content.

[37] Marjan et al., "Culture-Based Social Education Through The Sambas Malay Arak Pengantin Tradition: An Ethnographic Study," IJGIE (International Journal of Graduate of Islamic Education) 7, no. 2 (September 18, 2026): 1057, https://doi.org/10.37567/ijgie.v7i2.5673.

Conceptually, this case suggests that cultural da'wah can be analysed at two levels. The first involves messages explicitly expressed through recitations and prayers that informants identify as religious practices. The second concerns social values experienced through participation, mutual assistance, and the introduction of the baby to the local community. These levels are related but not identical. This distinction avoids equating every form of togetherness with da'wah while creating space to examine how social practices may support the communication of religious values.

Overall, Kupek Tuhun Mandi demonstrates that cultural da'wah is not merely a strategy for inserting religious messages into customary events. It also concerns how a community makes space for prayer, gratitude, social relationships, and cultural identity within a shared experience. At the same time, a responsible cultural approach must distinguish explicitly articulated Islamic messages from symbolic beliefs rooted in local tradition. This distinction enables respect for cultural practices to coexist with critical reflection and clearer religious understanding.

F. Conclusion

This study shows that Kupek Tuhun Mandi in Tanjung Karang Village, Baturaja Barat District, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, connects the event of childbirth with local identity, religious expression, and community social life. The tradition involves family preparations, yasinan and marhaban or nadum, a procession to the Ogan River, the bathing of the baby, and activities associated with aqiqah. Its performance involves customary elders, religious leaders, the baby's family, and nearby residents. The most prominent da'wah messages in the data are gratitude to Allah, prayers and hopes for the child's safety and blessings, and social values expressed through mutual assistance, social ties, and togetherness. These messages are communicated through religious recitations as well as through action and community participation. The tradition becomes a communicative space because residents do not merely hear messages; they attend, assist, observe, and interpret the procession. Nevertheless, customary and religious elements must be distinguished analytically. Informants identify yasinan, marhaban, salawat, the basmalah, the shahada, and aqiqah as religious practices. Symbols such as the wood ember, flowers, and lime, by contrast, belong to a system

of local meanings that must be explained through community knowledge rather than automatically classified as religious teachings. A reflective approach to cultural da'wah can respect tradition while opening space for dialogue about its meanings and possible adaptations. The identified challenge concerns the increasing dependence on purchased materials for organizing the event. The preservation of the tradition may therefore focus on maintaining its central meanings—gratitude, prayer, introducing the baby to the community, and togetherness—while allowing adaptations that do not place an undue burden on families. This study is limited to one village and a small number of informants; its findings cannot be generalized to the entire Ogan community. Future research should include younger generations, families who do not perform the tradition, and comparisons with birth rituals in other Ogan areas to examine changing practices and differences in interpretation.

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