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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysis of The Premarital Akken Tradition in Lampung Customary Culture from The Perspective of Islamic Law (A Case Study in Blambangan Village)

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ABSTRACT

The premarital akken tradition is a customary practice consistently maintained by the Lampung Pepadun community, particularly in Blambangan Village, North Lampung. This tradition functions as a mechanism for customary legitimation and social integration for cross-ethnic couples prior to the marriage contract. This study aims to examine the implementation, symbolic meanings, socio-cultural functions, and Islamic legal perspective on the akken tradition. A qualitative case study approach was employed. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, religious figures, and community members, as well as documentation. The findings reveal that akken is performed through stages of customary consultation, deliberation, appointment of adoptive parents, and symbolic procession. This tradition embodies values of kinship, deliberation, respect for customs, and social responsibility. From the perspective of Islamic law, akken can be classified as 'urf shahih (valid custom) as it does not contradict scriptural texts and, in fact, supports maqāṣid al-syarī'ah in preserving lineage and honor. This study concludes that akken represents a harmonious and adaptive integration of custom and sharia. Its primary contribution is strengthening the theoretical framework of 'urf in the context of cross-cultural marriage in Indonesia.



ABSTRAK

Tradisi akken pra nikah merupakan praktik adat yang masih konsisten dijalankan masyarakat Lampung Pepadun, khususnya di Desa Blambangan, Lampung Utara. Tradisi ini berfungsi sebagai mekanisme legitimasi adat dan integrasi sosial bagi pasangan lintas suku sebelum akad nikah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pelaksanaan, makna simbolis, fungsi sosial-budaya, serta pandangan hukum Islam terhadap tradisi akken. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh adat, tokoh agama, dan masyarakat, serta dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa akken dilaksanakan melalui tahapan konsultasi adat, musyawarah, penunjukan orang tua angkat, dan prosesi simbolis. Tradisi ini mengandung nilai kekeluargaan, musyawarah, penghormatan terhadap adat, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Dari perspektif hukum Islam, akken dapat dikategorikan sebagai 'urf shahih karena tidak bertentangan dengan nash syariat, justru mendukung maqāṣid al-syarī'ah dalam menjaga keturunan dan kehormatan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa akken merupakan bentuk harmonisasi adat dan syariat yang adaptif. Kontribusi utama penelitian ini adalah penguatan kerangka teoritik 'urf dalam konteks perkawinan lintas budaya di Indonesia.

Keywords: Akken, Lampung Custom, Islamic Law, 'Urf, Cross-Cultural Marriage

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Islam, marriage is positioned as a contract (akad) possessing both devotional and legal dimensions, the validity of which is determined by the fulfillment of its pillars (rukun) and conditions (syarat) as prescribed by sharia. These normative provisions serve as a universal foundation, independent of variations in local customs. However, Islamic law also acknowledges socio-cultural diversity through the maxim al-'ādat muhakkamah (custom is a binding legal consideration), which affirms that societal traditions can be considered in legal reasoning as long as they do not contradict the principles of sharia (Desmuliati et al., 2025). This recognition provides flexibility for Islamic law in responding to customary practices, including within marriage rituals of the Lampung community.

Preliminary field observations in Blambangan Village, Blambangan Pagar District, North Lampung Regency, indicate that the premarital akken tradition is consistently practiced by the Lampung Pepadun indigenous community. This practice involves a formal visit by the groom's family to the bride's family, carrying cultural symbols such as tapis cloth and traditional dishes, and is attended by customary leaders and both extended families. This procession is not merely ceremonial but constitutes a customary prerequisite that determines the social recognition of the couple, particularly in inter-ethnic marriages where a non-Lampung bride or groom must undergo akken to be accepted into the kinship structure.

In the reality of traditional Indonesian society, marriage is not solely interpreted as a legal act but is situated within a framework of deeply rooted social and symbolic structures. These cultural

elements shape the patterns and stages of marriage, influencing the matrimonial process in everyday life. The Lampung community, especially the Pepadun customary group, adheres to a complex marriage procedure in which marriage is regarded as a customary event concerning the honor of the extended family, social standing, and kinship recognition (Ramadhani & Hasan, 2025).

The akken tradition functions as a means of establishing social ties, as individuals who undergo it acquire "adoptive parents" (orang tua akken) recognized customarily as a kinship bridge and a determinant of social position within the community. This function becomes crucial when marriages involve couples from outside the Lampung ethnic group, where akken serves as a mechanism for cultural integration (Yanti, 2024). In Blambangan Village, adoptive parents are generally selected from the relatives of the Lampung-origin spouse, facilitating the process due to existing genealogical connections and emotional proximity.

Previous relevant studies have provided an important foundation for this research. Deki's (2024) study on the ngakon tradition in the Lampung Pepadun community in Pakuan Agung Village found that this tradition is still practiced hereditarily; however, divergent community perspectives exist regarding its compatibility with Islamic sharia. Meanwhile, Idham (2021) examined customary marriage in Lampung Sebatin and discovered that customary rituals generally align with the basic principles of Islamic marriage, while still retaining distinctive symbols.

Yanti's (2024) research on the pengangkongan tradition in Tiuh Balak Village, Way Kanan, specifically highlights the role of social legitimation as a mechanism for customary status recognition prior to the marriage contract. This study provides robust empirical data but remains limited to the socio-cultural dimension without in-depth normative analysis. Aimmah (2024) examined the Dau Balak tradition and identified conceptual differences between customary costs and the dowry (mahar) in Islam, although this study has not comprehensively elaborated on the legal implications.

The identified research gap is the scarcity of studies that systematically analyze the practice of akken from the perspective of Islamic law using the frameworks of 'urf and maqāṣid al-syarī'ah. Previous studies tend to be descriptive or merely assess general compatibility without investigating in depth the normative implications and social consequences of such customary practices. Furthermore, scholarly attention to Lampung customs remains relatively limited compared to other indigenous communities such as the Dayak, Banjar, or Javanese.

The novelty of this research lies in integrating an empirical-anthropological approach with normative analysis of Islamic law. This study not only describes the practice of akken but also evaluates it based on the criteria of 'urf shahih and examines its implications for maqāṣid al-syarī'ah. By choosing a research location in Blambangan Village, which consistently preserves this tradition, the study makes a significant contribution to the development of scholarship on the relationship between custom and sharia in the context of cross-cultural marriage in Indonesia. This research is expected to answer questions regarding the practice, meaning, and Islamic legal perspective on the akken tradition, while also enriching the literature on the dynamics of local cultural transformation in the modern era.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research type with a case study approach (case study design). This design was selected because it enables in-depth examination of a bounded system, namely the premarital akken practice within the Lampung indigenous community in Blambangan Village, Blambangan Pagar District, North Lampung Regency. The qualitative approach is deemed most appropriate as this research is not directed at quantitative variable testing but rather at exploring, understanding, and interpreting social reality holistically within its natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher acts as the primary instrument (human instrument), directly collecting and interpreting data in the field.

Informant selection was conducted using purposive sampling followed by snowball sampling until data saturation was achieved. The research informants consisted of Lampung customary leaders who understand the procedures and values of akken, religious leaders (Islamic scholars/community religious figures) possessing knowledge of Islamic law, village officials (village head and staff), and community members who had been directly involved in the practice of akken, whether as participants, family members, or witnesses. The number of informants was determined based on information sufficiency until no new data emerged, totaling approximately 8-10 key informants (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection techniques employed three simultaneous methods for triangulation purposes. First, non-participant observation was conducted to observe the social conditions of the community, the practice of akken, and the roles of customary and religious leaders. Second, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted using open-ended questions to allow informants to provide comprehensive explanations regarding the history, process, purpose, meaning, and religious perspectives on akken. Third, documentation was carried out by collecting village archives, photographs of customary activities, and relevant literature on Lampung customs and Islamic law (Nurdin & Hartati, 2019).

Data validity was ensured through the principle of trustworthiness, encompassing credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was enhanced through source triangulation (comparing information from customary leaders, religious figures, and community members) and method triangulation (combining interviews, observation, and documentation). Member checking was performed by reconfirming findings with key informants to minimize interpretive bias. Additionally, an audit trail was systematically maintained to record the entire research process from raw data to conclusion (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis based on a qualitative-inductive approach. The analysis stages included: (1) data familiarization through repeated reading of interview transcripts and observation notes; (2) initial coding by marking significant data sections such as the purpose of akken, customary mechanisms, religious leaders' views, and legal implications; (3) grouping codes into major themes; (4) reviewing and refining themes through cross-source data

comparison; and (5) interpreting results by connecting empirical themes to the framework of Lampung custom and Islamic legal norms. The analytical process was supported by systematic note-taking and the use of thick description to ensure the transferability of findings (Creswell, 2014).

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This study finds that the premarital akken tradition in Blambangan Village persists as a living tradition. Based on interviews with customary leaders, akken is understood as an initial bonding procession between the two extended families of prospective spouses, functioning as customary legitimation. In the context of cross-ethnic marriage, akken constitutes an absolute prerequisite for non-Lampung couples to be accepted into the kinship structure of the Lampung community. One informant stated, "If not akken, our child who is Lampungese marrying an outsider will not be regarded as a customary family member and could cause problems later."

The implementation stages of akken in Blambangan Village comprise five main steps. First, consultation with customary leaders to seek procedural guidance. Second, detailing the costs and customary paraphernalia, such as traditional attire, tapis cloth, and offerings. Third, determining the adoptive parents (*orang tua akken*), usually selected from the closest relatives of the Lampung family to facilitate the process. Fourth, a customary deliberation process involving family members, customary leaders, and prospective adoptive parents to reach collective consensus. Fifth, the execution of the akken procession, symbolizing the couple's acceptance into Lampung custom.

In terms of embedded values, this study identifies four core values in the akken tradition. The value of kinship is reflected in the expansion of marriage meaning from individual bonds to relationships between extended families. The value of deliberation and consensus is evident in every decision-making stage involving intensive dialogue. The value of respect for customs demonstrates the collective awareness of the community to preserve cultural heritage. The value of social responsibility is inherent in the shared commitment to maintaining relational harmony and supporting the sustainability of the marriage.

Community perspectives on akken are overwhelmingly positive. The majority of informants stated that akken is an essential and inseparable part of the marriage sequence. A young informant expressed, "Akken is important as a formal notification to the community that we are serious about marrying. Without akken, our marriage is considered incomplete." This perspective indicates that akken has been internalized as a cultural standard regulating the propriety of a marriage process. Marriages that do not undergo akken may receive negative social evaluation from the community.

In the context of cross-ethnic marriage, akken serves as a crucial instrument of social integration. Non-Lampung couples who undergo akken are customarily considered to have "become children" of the Lampung community, thus possessing equal customary rights and obligations. This process also opens access for the couple to obtain customary titles in the future. A non-Lampung informant

who had undergone akken stated, "Initially, I felt like an outsider, but after being akken, I was genuinely accepted as part of the extended family. I have adoptive parents who always guide me in customary matters."

Another interesting finding is the process of adaptation in the implementation of akken. Although generally preserved in its entirety, some aspects have begun to undergo adjustments. The cost aspect, for example, has become negotiable to avoid burdening families with economic limitations. The forms of customary paraphernalia have also been simplified without eliminating core symbols. These adjustments demonstrate that the akken tradition is not static but dynamic and responsive to social and economic changes in the community.

The social function of akken is also evident in its role as a mechanism of social control. Through this procession, the community indirectly monitors the relationship of the prospective couple. A community leader explained, "Akken is like a public announcement. After akken, all residents know that these two individuals are customarily bound. They cannot arbitrarily cancel or change plans without deliberation." This control function is important in preventing normative violations and maintaining the stability of inter-family relationships.

The roles of customary and religious leaders in implementing akken are highly significant. Customary leaders act as authorities determining procedures, providing legitimation, and mediating disputes. Meanwhile, religious leaders play a role in ensuring that akken practices do not contain elements contrary to sharia, such as polytheism (syirik) or injustice (zhalim). The synergy between these two authorities creates a balance between tradition preservation and the fulfillment of religious values.

From the perspective of Islamic law, religious leader informants assessed that akken fundamentally does not contradict sharia. A local Islamic scholar stated, "Akken is a good custom because its purpose is to strengthen kinship and clarify relationship status. As long as there are no elements of polytheism, usury, or coercion, I think it is fine. It could even be considered commendable (sunnah) because it follows good community habits." This view aligns with the maxim al-'ādah muhakkamah, which accommodates customs that do not contradict scriptural texts.

Overall, the research findings demonstrate that premarital akken in Blambangan Village has multidimensional functions: as a means of customary legitimation, a mechanism of social integration, an instrument of social control, a vehicle for cultural value preservation, and a medium for strengthening family relations. The continuity of this tradition amidst social change indicates the cultural resilience of the Blambangan Village community. Despite facing modernization challenges, akken is preserved because it is deemed capable of providing added social, cultural, and even religious value.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that the premarital akken practice in Blambangan Village constitutes a very important initial stage in the series of processes leading to marriage. The groom's family formally visits the bride's family, bringing various cultural symbols such as tapis cloth and traditional dishes. This visit is not merely a formality but is laden with strict customary etiquette and involves deep communication between extended families. This finding aligns with Deki's (2024) research, which states that the ngakon tradition is still practiced hereditarily as a customary identity possessing strong symbolic value within the Lampung customary marriage structure.

From a sociological perspective, the akken activity transcends mere kinship visitation. It serves as a significant instrument of social validation for the relationship being established between individuals. The community of Blambangan Village ensures that the relationship to be formed is not solely derived from personal will but also obtains approval and support from wider relatives and the customary social structure. This social legitimation function was also found by Yanti (2024), who stated that the pengangkongan tradition provides social legitimation for couples about to marry before the Islamic marriage contract is performed.

Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism theory provides a framework for understanding the role of akken. According to Parsons, every element in the social order has a unique function to maintain collective order and stability. In the context of akken, this tradition functions as a means of adjustment and social adhesive that enables families to adapt to one another and establish harmonious ways of interacting before proceeding to the more formal stage of marriage (Parsons, 1951). This is reinforced by Damayanti et al.'s (2025) findings, which state that marriage in Indonesian customary law functions as the union of two families, not merely two individuals.

The symbolic meaning within the akken tradition is profound. Each item brought, such as the kendi or kibuk (traditional containers), symbolizes the union of man and woman, while traditional cloth becomes a symbol of honor and Lampung cultural identity. The manner of conveying intentions is also conducted with courteous and ethical language, demonstrating that akken is not merely a formality but a deep expression of respect. Clifford Geertz, in his theory of symbolic anthropology, explains that cultural symbols serve as primary channels for conveying meaning and values existing within society (Geertz, 1973). Akken can be understood as a complex symbolic system reflecting how the Lampung community understands human relationships.

The moral values contained in akken include maintaining family reputation, respecting social norms, and strengthening relationships between extended families. These values are evident in the humility displayed by the men during their visit and the willingness of the women's side to receive them wholeheartedly. For the residents of Blambangan Village, disregarding this meaning would diminish the blessings of marriage. This finding aligns with Nor Harika et al.'s (2025) research, which states that the principle of al-'ādah muhakkamah can serve as a basis for the harmonization of custom and sharia, provided necessary adjustments are made.

From socio-cultural perspectives, the function of akken can be examined through several crucial aspects. First, this activity is proven to strengthen ties between families from both sides. Second,

it serves as an effective medium for instilling cultural norms in the younger generation. Third, akken plays a role as a subtle social control over pre-marital relationships to ensure they remain in line with community norms. This social control function is also highlighted by Masyithoh et al. (2025), who found that customary law in marriage often functions as a living law with high social binding power.

The role of strengthening family relationships is clearly visible when both parties communicate openly during the visit. Many informants explained that after akken, mutual trust between families increased, making subsequent marriage processes easier and more warm. This finding is consistent with Idham's (2021) research, which states that Lampung Sebatin customary marriage reflects a strong social system and kinship pattern. As a means of instilling cultural values, akken provides opportunities for the younger generation to directly learn about manners, traditional language, and the philosophy behind each gesture.

The function as a form of social surveillance also plays a very important role. Through akken, the community indirectly monitors to ensure that pre-marital relationships do not deviate from prevailing norms. If there are issues, these are usually discussed gently at this stage before they escalate. Wahyuni et al. (2023), in their research on customary fines in the Pepadun tradition, also found that social and customary sanctions function as effective surveillance mechanisms in Lampung society.

From the perspective of Islamic law, the practice of akken has no explicit regulation in the Qur'an or Hadith as primary references of sharia. However, this practice can be viewed through the approach of al-'urf or deeply rooted local custom, as long as it does not contradict fundamental religious principles. According to Abdul Wahhab Khallaf (1994), a tradition can be considered a source of law if it does not contradict scriptural texts, is generally accepted by the community, and provides benefit. Based on this study, the practice of akken fulfills all three criteria.

This finding is reinforced by Widiyansari's (2024) research, which states that the himpun bah pemekonan practice in the Lampung Saibatin tradition can be categorized as 'urf shahih because it meets the criteria of custom that does not contradict the principles of Islamic sharia. Similarly, Aimmah's (2024) research, although finding conceptual differences between Dau Balak and the dowry (mahar), still acknowledges that customary traditions can coexist as long as they do not contradict the principles of justice and public welfare (maslahah).

Furthermore, the practice of akken provides significant benefits in maintaining social order and family dignity. Through this formal meeting, both parties can get to know each other, discuss agreements, and prevent future disputes. This benefit aligns with the principle of maslahah, which is one of the fundamental objectives of sharia (maqāṣid al-syar'ah), particularly in preserving lineage (hifz al-nasl) and protecting honor (hifz al-'ird). Al-Syatibi (2004) in Al-Muwāfaqāt affirms that any practice supporting the realization of benefit and preventing harm is acceptable as long as it does not violate sharia provisions.

This study also finds that akken can be regarded as al-'urf al-shahih or custom recognized by Islamic law. This is not a reprehensible innovation (bid'ah), but rather a positive custom that strengthens sharia values in communal life. This result supports the research assumption

that akken is a beautiful synthesis of local culture and Islamic values. This pre-marital visit activity has been integrated with religious teachings without losing its identity as a traditional heritage, as also found in Alia's (2025) research on the akken anak tradition in the marriage of the Lampung Pepadun community.

In a broader view, this research affirms that Islamic law has a flexible nature. Sharia is not rigid but is capable of accommodating local traditions as part of the social changes within society, as long as these traditions bring benefit and do not violate religious norms. Heri & Arrosid (2021), in their study on the theory of custom in qawaid fiqhiyah, emphasize that the application of the *maxim al-'ādah muhakkamah* in Islamic family law requires contextual adjustments without abandoning the fundamental principles of sharia.

The findings of this research have significant implications for the development of studies in legal anthropology and contextual Islamic law. This research demonstrates that local traditions such as akken hold meaning beyond mere culture; they are also important from the normative perspective of Islam. This impact is evident in efforts to preserve culture while remaining within the framework of sharia principles. The community can continue to practice akken with the confidence that this activity aligns with religion, even supporting the values of honor and justice in marriage bonds. As stated by Rohman (2024), Islam, culture, and social inclusivity can coexist within a framework of positive acculturation.

This research also highlights the crucial importance of documentation and preservation of such traditions. Given that many villages in Lampung are changing due to migration and urbanization, Blambangan Village can serve as an example of how a tradition continues to hold value. Through akken, residents not only celebrate love but also strengthen broader social foundations for the future. Noortyani et al. (2023), in their study on symbolic communication in Banjar traditional marriage rituals, also found that ritual traditions play an important role in maintaining cultural identity amidst modernization.

Finally, an in-depth understanding of this premarital akken practice is expected to contribute to the preservation of Lampung culture in general. Amidst globalization, which often erodes local identity, traditions such as this serve as a reminder that a strong cultural foundation is crucial for building a harmonious and dignified society. As expressed by Mega Palyanti et al. (2024) regarding the value of *sakai sambayan*, the local wisdom of the Lampung community has great potential to be integrated with Islamic educational values and character formation.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings conducted in Blambangan Village, it can be concluded that the premarital akken practice is not merely a ceremonial tradition but holds a highly important social function in community life. Akken serves as a means of binding the relationship between two families while simultaneously providing customary legitimation to the prospective couple, especially in cases of marriage between Lampung and non-Lampung ethnic groups. In

practice, akken functions as a mechanism of social acceptance that enables non-Lampung partners to be customarily recognized and accepted into the community's kinship structure. This tradition contains noble values of kinship, deliberation, respect for customs, and social responsibility that remain relevant to modern community life.

From the perspective of Islamic law, the akken practice can be categorized as 'urf shahih as it meets the criteria of not contradicting scriptural texts, being generally and consistently applied within the community, and providing benefit (maslahah). Indeed, akken supports maqāsid al-syarī'ah in preserving lineage, protecting honor, and strengthening social relationships (silaturahmi). This research demonstrates that the relationship between custom and Islamic law is not always antagonistic but can coexist harmoniously and complementarily. Amid accelerating social change, the existence of akken retains meaning as long as its core values are preserved. The most important aspect is not rigidly maintaining its traditional form, but rather safeguarding the essence of its embedded values so that it continues to provide benefit to the community.

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