



Integration of Riau Malay customs and Islam: Content analysis

Amelia Monasari, Zarkasih, Rian Vebrianto

Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, Indonesia

*22590124705@students.uin-suska.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to examine the integration of Riau Malay customs with Islamic teachings in the social life of the community, especially in Pekanbaru. Malay and Islamic customs have been integrated through the principle of "adat berjundi syarak, syarak bersendi kitabullah", which is the normative foundation and cultural identity of the Malay community. The study used a mixed method approach that combined quantitative data through questionnaires of 26 Riau Malay respondents and qualitative data through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with 3 key informants. Quantitative data is analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data is analyzed thematically. The results of the questionnaire showed that 92.3% of respondents viewed Malay and Islamic customs as a harmonious unit, 92.4% stated that the value of manners reflected Islamic morals, and 80.8% affirmed that the integration of the two strengthened Malay identity. However, there is a dynamic of practice, where 57.7% of respondents admit that customs are sometimes maintained even though they have the potential to be contrary to Islam and 50% consider that customary adjustments to Islam tend to be symbolic. However, 77% of respondents emphasized that if there are differences, Islamic teachings remain a priority. Overall, the integration of Riau Malay customs and Islam is a characteristic of a society that remains structurally strong, but has undergone changes due to modernization and social media. Continuous efforts are needed through education, the role of the family, and the synergy of traditional leaders and scholars so that the integration is not only symbolic.

Keywords: customs and traditions; Malay identity; integration; Malay; Islamic values; Riau

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji integrasi adat istiadat Melayu Riau dengan ajaran Islam dalam kehidupan sosial masyarakat, khususnya di Pekanbaru. Adat istiadat Melayu dan Islam telah bersatu melalui prinsip "adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi kitabullah", yang telah menjadi landasan normatif dan identitas budaya masyarakat Melayu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran yang menggabungkan data kuantitatif melalui kuesioner dari 26 responden Melayu Riau dan data kualitatif melalui observasi partisipatif dan wawancara mendalam dengan 3 informan kunci. Data kuantitatif dianalisis secara deskriptif, sedangkan data kualitatif dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa 92,3% responden memandang adat istiadat Melayu dan Islam sebagai kesatuan yang harmonis, 92,4% menyatakan bahwa nilai tata krama mencerminkan moral Islam, dan 80,8% menegaskan bahwa integrasi keduanya memperkuat identitas Melayu. Namun, ada dinamika praktik, di mana 57,7% responden mengakui bahwa adat istiadat terkadang dipertahankan meskipun berpotensi bertentangan dengan Islam dan 50% menganggap bahwa penyesuaian adat terhadap Islam cenderung bersifat simbolis. Namun, 77% responden menegaskan bahwa jika ada perbedaan, ajaran Islam tetap menjadi prioritas. Secara keseluruhan, integrasi adat istiadat Melayu Riau dan Islam merupakan ciri masyarakat yang tetap kuat secara

struktural, namun telah mengalami perubahan karena modernisasi dan media sosial. Diperlukan upaya berkelanjutan melalui pendidikan, peran keluarga, dan sinergi tokoh adat dan ulama sehingga integrasi tidak hanya simbolis.

Kata kunci: adat istiadat; identitas melayu; integrasi; melayu; nilai Islam; Riau

Introduction

Islamic law basically has two main dimensions, namely the normative dimension and the interpretive dimension. The normative dimension comes from *nash qath'i* which is definite and becomes the basic guideline for Muslims in carrying out religious life. Meanwhile, the interpretive dimension comes from *nash zhanni* which provides space for scholars to carry out *ijtihad* in formulating laws in accordance with the needs and development of society. Through this process, *fiqh* was born as a form of human understanding of sharia that is dynamic and contextual. This dynamic allows Islamic teachings to interact with various local cultures without losing its basic principles (Ash Shiddieqy 1988).

One of the regions that shows the strong interaction between Islam and local culture is Riau Province. Riau is known as an area that has a Malay identity that is very close to Islamic values. Since the entry and development of Islam in the Malay archipelago, there has been a process of social and cultural transformation that affects various aspects of people's lives, ranging from value systems, mindsets, traditions, to daily life practices. Islam is well accepted by the Malay community because its teachings are considered in line with the character of a society that upholds the values of equality, togetherness, and harmonious social life (Sumiyati et al. 2024).

In its historical development, Islam was not only accepted as a religion, but also an important part of the identity of the Malay people. Islamic values then merged with customs to form a distinctive cultural pattern. The integration process can be seen in various social and cultural traditions of the Malay community, such as wedding ceremonies, religious activities, social manners, and social systems based on Islamic values. Therefore, in Malay society, the view developed that being a Malay is synonymous with being an Islamist. Islam is not only understood as a belief system, but also as the moral and cultural foundation that shapes the character of society (Purnama, 2021).

The close relationship between Malay and Islamic customs is reflected in a phrase that is very popular among the Malay people, namely "*adat berjun syarak, syarak berjun Kitabullah*." The phrase emphasizes that customs must be based on Islamic teachings derived from the Qur'an and hadith. Thus, customs and religion are seen as two elements that reinforce each other in shaping the social life of the community. The cultural values that develop in Malay society ideally do not conflict with the principles of sharia, and even become a medium to implement Islamic teachings in daily life (Hasbullah, 2011).

However, the development of the times, modernization, and the current of globalization present new challenges to the sustainability of integration between Malay and Islamic customs. Changes in people's lifestyles, the development of information technology, and the increasing influence of social media have the potential to affect the way people understand and practice traditional and religious values. In these conditions,

it is important to know the extent to which people still view Malay and Islamic customs as an inseparable unit, as well as how they practice this integration in contemporary social life (Albarry & Aqshal, 2024).

Studies on the relationship between Malay customs and Islam have actually been carried out by many researchers before. Research conducted by Nuh, Hasanah, and Irwanda (2024). The study explained that Islam has become part of the cultural identity of the Malay people so that it is difficult to separate it from their social life. Furthermore, Maryamah, et al., (2024) findings show that Malay civilization developed through a process of internalizing Islamic values that took place in a sustainable manner. Hafiz and Tafsiruddin (2022) The results of the study confirm that the main identity of the Riau Malay community is Malay, Malay customs, and Islam, which shows the close relationship between Malay culture and Islam. Meanwhile, research by Annisa Fitri, et al. (2024) on the relationship between Islam and Malay culture confirms that Malay customs are inherently inseparable from Islamic teachings because they develop simultaneously in people's lives.

In addition, the research of Palawa, Arbi, and Syukri (2024) on the integration of Islam and Malays in the Southeast Asian region and the archipelago provides a broader picture of how Islam plays a role in shaping the collective identity of the Malay community in various regions. The research shows that the integration of Islam and Malay culture is a historical phenomenon that lasts for a long time and shapes the social character of society to this day. Although these studies have shed light on the relationship between Malay and Islamic customs from historical, cultural, legal, and civilizational perspectives, most of the research still focuses on conceptual, normative, and literary aspects. Previous studies have not studied much how the Malay community itself perceives, feels, and practices the integration of customs and Islam in daily social life in the midst of the social changes that are happening today. In other words, the perspective of the community as the main actor of culture is still relatively limited in previous studies.

Based on these conditions, this research has a novelty in its focus of study which not only discusses the normative relationship between Malay and Islamic customs, but also analyzes the experiences, views, and practices of the community related to the integration of the two in contemporary social life. This study uses a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative data so that it can provide a more comprehensive picture of public perception of the integration of Malay and Islamic customs. In addition, this study also highlights the dynamics that arise due to modernization and the development of social media that have the potential to affect the sustainability of traditional and religious values in Malay society (Adam, et. al., 2023).

Based on this description, the purpose of this research is to analyze how the Riau Malay community understands, views, and practices the integration between Malay customs and Islamic teachings in their social life. This research also aims to identify the dynamics and challenges faced in maintaining this integration in the midst of growing social changes. Thus, the results of the research are expected to make an academic contribution to the development of Islamic studies and Malay culture, as well as a reflection material for the community in maintaining harmony between Islamic customs and teachings as Malay cultural identity (Hafiz and Tafsiruddin 2022).

Research Methods

This study uses a *mixed method*, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. This approach was chosen to make the research results more comprehensive, where quantitative data provides a statistical picture, while qualitative data strengthens the understanding of phenomena that occur in the field (Creswell 2018). The research period was carried out between March and April 2026. Located in Pekanbaru. This study involved 3 Riau Malay tribes, who were selected by *purposive sampling* method based on the availability and willingness of the subjects to participate in this study. A research instrument is a tool used to measure observed natural and social phenomena. Specifically, all of these phenomena are called research variables (Sugiyono, 2022). The data collection instruments in this study include questionnaires, participatory observations, and in-depth interviews. The study involved 26 questionnaire respondents as well as 3 key informants from the Riau Malay Tribe who were selected through *purposive sampling* based on the relevance of their experiences. All data collection will be carried out directly in the field (*fieldwork*) in March-April 2026 in Pekanbaru.

The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 26 respondents regarding the perception of the integration of Riau Malay customs with Islamic teachings. This data was analyzed descriptively through the calculation of average, percentage, and frequency distribution of answers to illustrate the respondents' view patterns on customary-Islamic relations (John W. Creswell 2018). Observation was carried out in a participatory manner to observe the practices and interactions of the Malay community related to Islamic customs in the natural environment (Bungin 2015). In-depth interviews were conducted with 3 key informants to explore the experiences and deep meanings of the integration. Qualitative data from observations and interviews were analyzed using a thematic approach by identifying, grouping, and interpreting the main themes: (1) the harmony of Malay customs with Islamic teachings, (2) the dynamics of the relationship between Riau Malay customs and Islam, and (3) changes in the meaning, values, or goals of customs that were originally aligned with Islam over time (Braun & Clarke, 2006 : Sa'adah and Mufidah 2025)).

Results and Discussion

The results of the questionnaire given to 26 respondents showed that Malay customs and Islamic teachings were seen as harmonious, but in practice there were still dynamics and inconsistencies. In addition, changes in the times also affect the sustainability of customs, although the role of the family and religious understanding remain important in maintaining the integration of the two.

Table 1. Harmony of Malay Customs and Islamic Teachings

No.	Indicators/Statements	Number of Respondents = (N)	Persentasion (%)
1	Harmony of Malay customs with Islamic teachings	26	92,30%
2	Application of the principles of <i>syarak</i> joint customs	26	80,80%
3	The value of good manners reflects Islamic morals	26	92,40%

4	There is no conflict between customs and Islam	26	92,30%
5	The relationship between Riau Malay customs and Islam	26	73,10%
6	Integration of customs and Islam strengthens identity	26	80,80%

Based on the first table, it can be seen that the level of harmony between Malay customs and Islamic teachings is in a very high category. After the Malays came into contact with Islam and they were attracted to this new religion that they abandoned the old beliefs. There are at least two main reasons for their interest in this new religion, namely, first, that Islam is able to provide satisfactory answers to problems that have not been answered by previous religions or beliefs, such as the mystery of life and death. Second, Islamic teachings highly value spiritual cleanliness, high ethics and the appearance of refined language. All of this is very much in line with the customs of the Malays, who uphold the good manners. Therefore, in the view of the Malays, this is a religion that can be used to live and can be ridden to die (Nuh et al. 2024).

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This can be seen from the percentage of respondents' approval which reached 92.30% on the indicator of customary harmony with Islamic teachings, and 92.40% on the indicator that the value of manners reflects Islamic morals. In addition, 92.30% of respondents also stated that there is no conflict between customs and Islam. These figures show that conceptually the community has a very strong belief in the harmonious relationship between customs and religion. In the view of the Malay people, one of the most avoidable things is to be considered to not understand customs or not customs. The term does not simply mean reproach, but contains a deeper meaning culturally, such as rude, uncontrollable, disrespectful, and unethical behavior. More than that, the condition of non-customs is also interpreted as non-religious, because in the life of the Malay community, customs are rooted and based on religious teachings. Thus, a person who is not customary is in essence seen as having no religious beliefs (Tenas Effendy 2004).

The principle of *customary joint syarak, syarak joint with Kitabullah* is also still recognized with an approval rate of 80.80%, which shows that this principle is still relevant in people's lives, although not as strong as the belief in harmony in general. Islam is made the main principle of Malay culture. One of the Malay cultural heritages that clearly explains the unity of Islam and Malay culture is Malay Tutoring. In the Malay Teaching Guide, it is revealed that the customs of the Malays must be in accordance with

Islam as contained in the expression "*Adat bersendi svarak, syarak bersendi kitabullah*" This means that all aspects of human life are based on the law of Allah. Customs, thoughts, semantics, traditions and all aspects of culture created by humans must be completely in accordance with Islam (Juhar & Sar'an, 2022).

Islam and Malay culture are harmoniously integrated with each other, making it difficult to separate the Islamic element from the original Malay element. In contrast to Java, where the local culture is more dominant, Islam has to adapt slowly. This process is reciprocal—the Malays embrace Islam or Islam adapts to the Malays. Both are not just hereditary identities, but cultural mindsets (Juhar & Sar'an, 2022).

The Malay customs of Riau are heavily influenced by Islamic values. Malay customary law, known as "*Adat Bersendikan Syara, Syara Bersendikan Kitabullah*," reflects the integration between customary norms and Islamic law. This principle emphasizes that customs must be in accordance with Islamic teachings. Some examples of customs influenced by Islam are, marriage ceremonies in the Riau Malay society involve various stages of combining elements of Islam and customs. Starting and the marriage contract ceremony which is carried out according to Islamic sharia to the tradition of plain flour and bennat which is part and culture of the Second Malay Second, the birth ceremony after the birth of a child, aqiqah is carried out which is the Sunnah in Islam. Birth customs in Riau Malay culture include several important ceremonies, such as shaving and aqiqah. On the seventh day after birth, a hair-shaving ceremony is usually held, in which the bayi's hair is shaved as a symbol of purification. In addition, aqiqah is also carried out by slaughtering goats as a sign of gratitude to Allah for the birth of children. Third, the custom of death, the process of managing the body follows Islamic law, starting and bathing, shrouding, praying, and burying. In addition, there is a tradition of tahlilan that is carried out for several days after death as a form of joint prayer for the deceased. The death ceremony in Riau Malay culture follows Islamic teachings with a process involving bathing the body, shrouding the body, praying it, and burying the body in accordance with the guidance of the sharia of Riau Malay customary law rooted in traditional values that are inherited from generation to generation, with strong influence and Islamic teachings (Billah & Mawaddah, 2025).

Meanwhile, 73.10% of respondents stated that there is a close relationship between Riau Malay customs and Islam, and 80.80% believe that the integration of the two can strengthen the identity of the Malay community. The Malays and Muslims have a close interest can be observed from two perspectives, namely the way of thinking and behavior. And in terms of thought, the presence of Islam in Malay society has encouraged the development of rationalism and intellectualism by overcoming stagnation and regression. Malay culture, which has a strong spirit of tolerance and values diversity, including differing opinions, streams, and views, is considered wisdom. The Malay community also tends to accept various new ideas and cultures openly. For example, Sultan Syarif Kasim II expressed his love for culture, art, and customs dating to Siak in 1915 (Liza et al. 2023).

Malay culture as a maritime culture not only refers to the love of the sea, but also reflects the inclusion of various elements of world civilization, both large and small. The same thing happens with Islam as a universal religion, which also respects diversity in

flow, thought, understanding of views Therefore, from a point of view, Malay culture is very close to Islam, so it is able to absorb the universal values of Islam easily. This facilitated the process of acceptance of Islam by the Malay community and created an integration between Islam and Malay culture, so that the view that Islam is synonymous with the Malays emerged (Fitri, et al. 2024). Overall, this data shows that customs and Islam are understood as a unit of values that support each other in the social life of the community.

Table 2. Dynamics and Inconsistencies in Indigenous Practices

No.	Indicators/Statements	Number of Respondents = (N)	Presentation (%)
1	Not all customs have an Islamic basis	26	53,90%
2	Customs are maintained despite the opposition	26	57,70%
3	Customary adjustment is symbolic	26	50,00%
4	The existence of customs that are not in accordance with Islam	26	34,60%
5	The Importance of Islamic Teachings in the Traditional Way	26	77,00%

In the second table, it can be seen that although there is a strong belief in the harmony of customs and Islam, in practice there are still dynamics and inconsistencies. As many as 53.90% of respondents stated that not all customs have a clear basis in Islamic teachings. In addition, 57.70% of respondents admitted that there are still customs that are still maintained even though they have the potential to be contrary to Islamic teachings. The lack of conflict in the spread of Islam in the archipelago is influenced by several factors. First, Islam prioritizes peace and compassion, avoiding violence, so that it is easily accepted by the community without opposition. Second, Islam does not abolish local traditions as long as they do not contradict monotheism, such as limiting polygamy to a maximum of four wives as an adaptation to the Arab tradition of *jahiliyah*. Third, Islam is able to adapt to local culture, creating variations such as Malay Islam, Batak, Javanese, Bugis, and Banjar, each of which displays a unique character according to the local culture (Syifa 2024).

The Malay customary expression explains, let the child die, do not die the custom reflects how important the existence of the custom is in the life of the Malay community. In the concept of Malay ethnosience, it is said that the death of a child is a sad one, a death of a country due, which affirms the virtue of customs that are the role models of all levels of society in the life of society, nation, and state. On the other hand, the meaning of the expression customary let the child die does not die customary contains the meaning that the custom (customary law) must be enforced, even if it has to be sacrificed by one's own family. The meaning is that customs are a fundamental aspect in maintaining harmony and internal consistency of culture, which maintains the sustainability of the structure social and cultural continuity in general. If the custom dies, the civilization of the people who support the custom will also die (Purnama 2021).

Furthermore, as many as 50.00% of respondents considered that customary adjustments to Islam are often only symbolic and not completely substantial. Meanwhile, 34.60% of respondents directly stated that there were customs that were not in

accordance with Islamic teachings. This data shows that there is a gap between the ideal values believed in and the real practices that occur in society.

However, 77.00% of respondents stated that Islamic teachings remain a priority over customs when there are differences. The importance of *adat* in the life of the Malay community is to function to regulate almost all aspects of life, providing direction and foundation in all activities, from the big to the smallest things. Customs teach people to be civilized, polite, tolerant, respectful, self-aware, and helpful in order to create an atmosphere of harmony and peace in the life of society, nation, and state. In addition, Malay customs are sourced and refer to the teachings of Islam. Therefore, the custom is used as the identity of every Malay person. In accordance with the teachings of Malay customs, if you want to know the glory of the ummah, look at the customs, language shows the nation, the customs show the ummah (Billah & Mawaddah, 2025).

Muhammad Naguib al-Attas in his book "Islam and the History of Malay Culture" also explained that Islam had a very large, deep and widespread influence in the Malay realm so that it succeeded in uprooting the roots of Hindu and Buddhist influence. The arrival of Islam marked the beginning of a new era and the end of an old era in the region. This means that the changes brought by Islam to the Malay natural civilization are not only in terms of appearance but also penetrate into the soul. among the development of Malay civilization influenced by Islam (Al Attas 1984). This shows that despite the compromise in social practice, religion still has a more dominant position in determining people's values and decisions. Thus, the relationship between customary and Islamic is not entirely consistent in practice, but is still based on the dominance of religious values.

Table 3. Social Change, Identity, and Conservation Efforts

No.	Indicators/Statements	Number of Respondents=(N)	Persentation (%)
1	Customary law as a social guideline	26	73,10%
2	The role of religious understanding in maintaining tradition	26	80,80%
3	Changes in the times affect customs	26	73,10%
4	The influence of social media on customs and Islam	26	76,90%
5	Malay identity is not entirely dependent on customs	26	73,10%
6	Malay identity is more determined by Islam	26	65,40%
7	Customs as a cultural symbol	26	69,20%
8	The role of family education	26	80,80%
9	Efforts to maintain integration going forward	26	42,30%

The third table shows the influence of social change on the sustainability of Malay customs. As many as 73.10% of respondents stated that customary law is still a social guideline, but at the same time, 69.20% of respondents consider that customary currently functions more as a cultural symbol than a guideline for life. This shows a shift in the function of customary in people's lives. According to social scientists, although there are different understandings of the Malay world and Malay identity, these differences will be less significant when compared to the growth of *Malay consciousness* that has begun to develop recently. The awakening of Malay consciousness is related to various factors, among which the most prominent is the feeling of unease because they

feel oppressed or marginalized by a greater power even though it is often invisible or abstract that can appear in the form of "globalization", state bureaucracy, and multinational business competition (Jadidah et al. 2023).

This shows that Islam has a more dominant position in determining the values and social behavior of the community. In line with that, identity as a Malay is also more associated with Islam than with the full implementation of customs, which indicates a shift in the meaning of cultural identity. The Malays are dislocated due to various pressures (languages that are no longer used, literature that is not preserved, culture that is not preserved, whether symbols, artifacts or others. Even if there is a movement, it is just Malay romanticism (nostalgia), there is no revitalization, there is no reinvention of the Malay tradition itself (Fitri, et al. 2024). The Malays have changed to Indonesia, so the Malays have disappeared. For example, if it is called Indonesian based on itself (source), but in reality now it is not Malay. The end is the loss of Malay identity. However, if traced in the historical spectrum, the Malay identity has been lost since the beginning of its history, especially due to the dual identity with Java at that time, namely when the Srivijaya kingdom faded, and the influence of Pajang and Majapahit (within certain limits) (Abdullah 2006).

The change of the times was also acknowledged to be influential by 73.10% of respondents, while 76.90% of respondents stated that social media also influenced people's views on customs and Islam. Robert J. Lieber and Ruth E. Weisberg have stated that until recently, "globalization analysis has emphasized economics and politics rather than culture." When he spoke against the definition of globalization, he revealed that there are actually many, even abundant definitions that exist, but for the purpose of analysis of his article entitled "Globalization, Culture and Identity in Crisis" he stated that Globalization is interpreted as the integration of the increasing global economy, information technology, the global spread of popular culture, and other forms of human interaction. Thus, "the process of globalization is characterized by the integration of local culture into a global order" (Lieber, 2002).

According to Bambang Purwanto, when globalization becomes one of the main vocabulary words in daily life, at the same time the word local wisdom, in this case Malay culture is present as a counter culture to build balance so that there are no shocks in life. Globalization tends to be interpreted as a foreign intervention or current external elements that threaten the future, while local culture is a representation of past heritage from within, which is positioned as a fortress that can guard and neutralize the existence of globalization (Luhfi, 2007).

This condition shows that modernization and technological development are important factors in the transformation of cultural values and practices. Globalization brought western culture to Indonesia. This can have both positive and negative impacts on local culture. The positive impact is that the community becomes more open to other cultures and can enrich the local culture, while the negative impact is the marginalization and extinction of local culture. Globalization also brought a change in people's values and attitudes from irrationality to rationality. As a result, society becomes more open to change and innovation, and society becomes less respectful and protective of local culture. As a result, there is a change in old cultural values and the entry of new cultural

values. It is good that the community is open to change and innovation, but the worst of it is that old cultural values are neglected and lost (Jadidah, et al. 2023)

In the era of globalization, information has become a very powerful force in influencing human mindsets. Western culture today is identified with modernity (modernization), and eastern culture is identified with traditional or conventional. People not only adopted Western science and technology as part of their culture but also imitated all the styles of Westerners, to the point that those in the West were considered bad cultures but after reaching the East were blindly adopted (Armihim & Fernadi, 2025).

In the context of identity, 73.10% of respondents stated that Malay identity is not entirely dependent on customs, and 65.40% of respondents consider that Malay identity is more determined by Islam. This shows a shift in the meaning of cultural identity towards a more flexible and religious direction. Integration can be seen from the teachings of Islam covering almost all Malay life patterns that have been colored by Islam. From this emerged the view that "Islam is synonymous with the Malays". This expression has the meaning that the view of Islam is identical to that of the Malays, which can be seen from two sides, namely in terms of way of thinking (way of thinking), and from the side of behavior (attitude). On the one hand, the presence of Islam in Malay society has awakened 'dead ideas' and 'dead *tamaddun*', resulting in the emergence of a spirit of rationalism and intellectualism (Osman, Mohd. Taib 1989)

On the other hand, the role of family and religion remains very strong, with 80.80% of respondents stating that understanding religion helps maintain traditions, and another 80.80% emphasizing the importance of family education in inheriting traditional and religious values. However, only 42.30% of respondents expressed confidence in efforts to maintain the integration of customs and Islam in the future. This figure shows that there is a fairly high level of uncertainty in facing the challenge of social change. Overall, although customs and Islam still have a strong relationship conceptually, the results of the study show that both are experiencing dynamics and shifts due to the influence of modernization, social change, and technological developments. Therefore, continuous efforts are needed to keep the integration relevant and not only symbolic in people's lives.

To build a Malay identity towards a more promising future, two main approaches are needed. First, philosophically the Malays must free themselves from external influences in order to develop local wisdom through political will, affirmative cultural regulation, identification of Malay territorial areas, and public campaigns for Malay pride. Second, operational steps include three stages: mapping Malay local wisdom through multidisciplinary research such as archaeology, language, and anthropology for the reinvention of tradition and cultural revitalization as a source of change in Indonesia; then socialize the practice into a collective experience that increases community awareness, empathy, and daily integration; and finally analyze collective experiences into documented knowledge through manuscript translation, contemporary interpretation, with the involvement of various parties for cultural campaigns and mutual agreement on Malay values (Abdullah 2006).

The integration between Riau Malay customs and Islam is further supported by interviews conducted with members of the Malay community. The informants explained that Malay customs and Islamic teachings have become inseparable in everyday life. This integration can be observed in various stages of life, including birth, marriage, and funeral ceremonies, all of which contain strong Islamic elements. Furthermore, values such as respect for parents, modesty, proper manners, and good moral conduct are continuously transmitted through Malay cultural traditions. These findings indicate that Malay customs function not only as cultural practices but also as a medium for preserving and transmitting Islamic values within society (Tenas Effendy, 2004).

The interview results also revealed that although most Malay customs are aligned with Islamic teachings, certain practices may contain elements that are considered inconsistent with Islamic principles. Informants highlighted that the tradition of *balimau kasai* has, in some cases, experienced deviations from its original purpose, such as the mixing of men and women during communal bathing activities. In addition, some community members still maintain beliefs in mystical practices, including the use of amulets and seeking protection from supernatural beings. According to the informants, such practices contradict Islamic teachings because they may lead to acts associated with *shirk*. This finding suggests that the relationship between custom and religion remains dynamic and requires continuous evaluation to ensure that cultural practices remain consistent with Islamic values (Hasbullah, 2011).

Regarding the future preservation of the integration between Malay customs and Islam, the informants emphasized the importance of education from an early age. Children should be introduced to cultural traditions that are compatible with Islamic teachings while being encouraged to critically understand the values embedded within those traditions. Informants also stressed that customs should be selectively maintained, preserving beneficial traditions while modifying or abandoning practices that conflict with religious principles. In addition, the active involvement of traditional leaders and religious scholars is considered essential to maintaining harmony between culture and religion. These findings demonstrate that the sustainability of Malay-Islamic integration depends not only on symbolic expressions of identity but also on the practical implementation of Islamic values in everyday life (Azra, 2013)

Conclusion

Overall, this study shows that Riau Malay customs and Islamic teachings have an integral and harmonious relationship, as reflected in the principle of "*adat berjundi syarak, syarak berjundi kitabullah*". The majority of respondents view Malay and Islamic customs as a harmonious unit, both in the values of manners and in ritual practices such as marriage, birth, and death. However, in practice there are dynamics and inconsistencies, such as customs that are maintained despite the potential to be contrary to Islam and adjustments that are often symbolic in nature. Nevertheless, when there are differences, Islamic teachings remain a priority. Social changes, modernization, and social media also affect the sustainability of customs, so that the function of the customs tends to be more symbolic and Malay identity is more associated with Islam. Thus, the integration of Riau Malay customs and Islam remains strong conceptually, but

it needs to be maintained in a sustainable manner through education, the role of the family, and the function of traditional leaders and scholars so that they are not only symbols but truly become the reality of daily life.

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