

Pekhanjangan* Money as a Sanction for Singkil Aceh's Customary Marriage in Review of *Maqasid Syariah

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of *pekhanjangan* money as a customary sanction in the marriage of the Singkil Aceh Tribe creates a dilemma between the fulfillment of the right to marry and customary obligations. This tradition requires the bride-to-be to compensate her unmarried brother before the wedding. This research aims to analyze the practice of *pekhanjangan* money and its relevance to maqasid sharia, especially in the aspects of maintaining religion, soul, offspring, mind, and property. The research method uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study in three sub-districts of Aceh Singkil District. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 informants (traditional leaders, religious leaders, perpetrators, and recipients of *pekhanjangan*), participant observation in three marriage cases, and documentation studies. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The results showed that the practice of *pekhanjangan* is still strongly implemented with a flexible system, where the value of compensation can be negotiated according to economic capacity, ranging from one *mayam* of gold to other forms of compensation. From the maqasid sharia perspective, this practice supports the maintenance of the soul and intellect through its function in maintaining family harmony and mental health. However, implementation adjustments are needed so as not to cause excessive hardship for the less well-off parties and remain in line with sharia principles.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage in Islam is a *sunatullah* that applies to all creatures, but its practice cannot be separated from the influence of local culture and customs (Fakhyadi & Samsudin, 2024; Jannah & Afifulloh, 2021; Nawawi et al., 2022; Siahaan et al., 2024) Artina, 2022). One of the unique traditions that is still strongly practiced today is the tradition of *pekhanjangan* in the Aceh Singkil community - an obligation to pay compensation to an unmarried brother when his younger brother will marry first. This phenomenon is crucial to study because it creates a dilemma between the fulfillment of the right to marry and customary obligations that can hinder or even cancel marriage plans if not fulfilled (Hasan & Khairuddin, 2021a; Khairuddin et al., 2024; Sirin, 2018). The complexity of this tradition is even more apparent when dealing with the diverse socio-economic realities of the community, where not all prospective brides can fulfill the *pekhanjangan* obligation (Chande, 2023; Haryanto et al., 2024; Kholiq & Zein, 2021).

Previous studies on marriage customs in Aceh Singkil generally focused on aspects of the procession and cultural values in general. Some studies have discussed the stages of traditional marriage, symbolism in marriage rituals, and the social functions of various accompanying traditions (Hasan, 2022; Khairuddin & Hidayah, 2022; Said et al., 2024) Charsley, 2006; Hedi et al., 2017). Meanwhile, in-depth analysis of the *pekhanjangan* tradition from the perspective of Islamic law, especially using the *maqasid al-syariah* approach, is still very limited. In fact, understanding the legal status and *maslahat* values of this tradition is important to provide clarity for the community in carrying out the practice, especially considering its potential impact on the implementation of marriage, which is part of worship in Islam (Kamal, 2024; Rohmawati, 2024; Bunyamin, 2021).

This study aims to analyze the *pekhanjangan* tradition within the framework of *maqasid al-syariah* to examine whether the practice is in line with the objectives of sharia, particularly in the context of the preservation of the soul and mind. Unlike previous studies (Kamarusdiana & Farohah, 2022; Ahmad et al., 2023). This research not only looks at the cultural aspects, but also explores the psychological and social dimensions of the tradition and its implications for the welfare of the parties involved. Furthermore, it seeks to identify mechanisms of adaptation and modification of the *pekhanjangan* tradition that can accommodate both the demands of custom and the capabilities of the community, without losing the essence and positive values contained therein.

The main argument to be tested in this research is the *pekhanjangan* tradition. However, it doesn't seem very easy; it has a *maslahat* value in maintaining family harmony and the mental health of its members, so it can be categorized as a practice that supports *maqasid al-syariah* in the aspects of *hifz al-nafs* (maintenance of the soul) and *hifz al-'aql* (maintenance of reason). This tradition is not merely seen as a financial burden but as a social mechanism that has an important function in maintaining psychological balance and family relations in the Aceh Singkil community..

The significance of this research is increasingly relevant given the changing social dynamics, where local traditions often face modernization and changes in people's mindsets. In this context, an in-depth understanding of *maqasid al-syariah* values in the *pekhanjangan* tradition can be an important foundation for bridging the interests of cultural preservation with the demands of adaptation to changing times, while ensuring that the practice remains in line with the principles of sharia and the benefit of the people (Suhairi, 2021). This is all the more important given that the *pekhanjangan* tradition is not just a traditional ritual, but a social practice that has direct implications for the formation and maintenance of family ties in the community.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type to deeply understand the phenomenon of the *pekhanjangan* tradition in the Aceh Singkil community (Sugiyono, 2017). The case study design was chosen because it allows researchers to intensively explore the practice of *pekhanjangan* payments as a unique social phenomenon bound to the local cultural context. The research was conducted over a period of six months, from July to December

2024, in three sub-districts in Aceh Singkil District that still strongly practice this tradition, namely Singkil District, Gunung Meriah District, and Simpang Kanan District.

Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies (Moeloeng, 2017). In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 purposively selected informants, consisting of traditional leaders (3 people), religious leaders (2 people), couples who have made *pekhanjangan* payments (5 couples), and *pekhanjangan* recipients (5 people). Participant observation was conducted by attending and directly observing the negotiation and payment process of *pekhanjangan* in three different marriage cases. Documentation studies included a search for customary records, photographs of the procession, and documents related to *pekhanjangan* practices stored in the customary office and family archives.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Emzir, 2014). In the reduction stage, data from interviews, observations, and documentation were categorized based on themes relevant to the research focus, such as payment procedures, philosophical values, and socio-psychological impacts. The data were then presented in the form of matrices and diagrams to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships between themes. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (comparing data from various informants), method triangulation (comparing data from various collection techniques), and member checking (confirming the researcher's interpretation with informants). The final stage of analysis is conclusion drawing that connects the empirical findings with the *maqasid sharia* framework to produce a comprehensive understanding of the *pekhanjangan* tradition.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The Practice Of *Pekhanjangan* Money As A Sanction For Customary Marriage in The Singkil Tribe

The practice of *pekhanjangan* money is a tradition that has taken root in the Singkil tribal community. *Pekhanjangan* comes from the Aceh Singkil language, which means giving something from the male party to the older sister who will be proposed to. This tradition has existed since ancient times and is still preserved today. In practice, when a man wants to propose to a woman, he must first ask if the woman to be proposed to has an unmarried brother. If there is, the woman's family will inform the man, and the man is required to pay *pekhanjangan* money to the older brother who is not married.

The marriage process in the Singkil tribe has a long and complex series. It starts with a proposal or *mekhisik*, where a male family delegation comes to the woman's house to declare their intention to propose. At this stage, if the proposal is accepted, it will be followed by questions about whether there are unmarried siblings and how much *pekhanjangan* money must be given. After that, the process continues to the engagement stage or *tandek sintua*, where the two families deliberate to determine the amount of dowry and various other requirements.

The dowry bargaining process in Singkil is done in a very interesting and polite way. The male party will ask for the amount of dowry requested, and the female party will mention the nominal amount, for example twenty grams of gold and five million. If the man has any objections, they will propose a more reasonable offer, such as fifteen grams of gold and seven million. This deliberation process will continue until an agreement is reached that satisfies both parties.

After the engagement, the series of events continues with *mebagah* or inviting neighbors, which is done in a unique way using cigarettes and betel, instead of the usual paper invitations. As stated in the invitation tradition: "*en kami lako invite for acakha nikahan anak kami kuli mangan kilimalot khokh ke khatana*" (we come to invite in the wedding of our child eat and drink come all of you). This tradition reflects the local wisdom of the Singkil community in maintaining friendship and mutual cooperation.

Preparations for the wedding day involve all elements of the community. The young men work together to erect the wedding tent, while the women help in the kitchen to prepare the dishes. This system of gotong royong is still very strong in the Singkil community, where it is rare to find families who hire labor or tents for weddings. Everything is done together with a spirit of togetherness and mutual help.

According to Mr. Uler Berutu, an influential traditional leader in the community, explained the history of pekhanjangan:

“The history of *pekhanjangan* is due to the marriage that was preceded by his younger brother and the response of the surrounding community because his brother was not married to avoid things that have a negative impact and as an appreciation to please his brother, *pekhanjangan* was made as a form of apology and asking permission for the marriage that was preceded.”

This opinion was reinforced by Mr. Muktar as the village head who stated that pekhanjangan serves to maintain good relations between brothers and sisters, as well as a form of comfort from the sadness of being left married by his younger brother. Mr. Hantar Manik as the village head also emphasized that this tradition has been going on since ancient times and is important to preserve because it contains good values.

In practice, the amount of pekhanjangan varies and does not have a fixed standard. As explained by Imam Syamsul Bahri S.PD.I: “*The payment of pekhanjangan varies in size and size, it is uncertain and not forced, but generally it is one mayam of gold, the smallest and the lowest, the highest depends on the ability of the man, the most common and low is one mayam.*”

A real experience of the practice of extortion can be seen in the case of Agusriani and her sister Sumarni. Initially asked for five grams of gold, but after negotiations it became two grams of gold with consideration of economic conditions. As Agusriani explained:

“*Pekhanjangan* does not necessarily have to be in the form of gold, it can also be clothes, or money, if the sister sees that the male party is lacking in economy, then she can ask for clothes or 500 thousand as a sign of having paid pekhanjangan money and carrying out the customary provisions that have been made and also regulated).”

The research also revealed that non-compliance with the *pekhanjangan* tradition can have serious social repercussions. Such repercussions are not only limited to the breakdown of family relationships, but can also cause psychological distress to the stepped sister. The brother who does not accept pekhanjangan may feel disrespected, experience depression, and limit interaction with the surrounding community. From the perspective of the perpetrator, non-compliance with this tradition can result in social sanctions in the form of ostracization from the community and family for having violated customs that have been passed down for generations.

It is important to note that although the amount and form of pekhanjangan can be negotiated according to the economic capacity of the male party, the obligation to provide pekhanjangan must still be fulfilled. This demonstrates the flexibility of Singkil adat in accommodating different economic conditions, while still maintaining important values such as respect for elders and maintaining family harmony. The pekhanjangan tradition is thus not just a traditional ritual, but a social mechanism that helps maintain balance and harmony in Singkil society.

Here is a table summarizing the research findings on the **Pekhanjangan** tradition in the **Singkil** tribal community:

Table 1. Summarizes the key aspects of the **Pekhanjangan** tradition

Aspect	Description
Definition of Pekhanjangan	A tradition where the groom gives something to the unmarried older brother or sister of the bride-to-be as a form of respect and permission.
Marriage Process in the Singkil Tribe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mekhisik (Proposal): The groom's family declares their intention to propose. 2. Tandek Sintua (Engagement): Discussion on dowry and <i>Pekhanjangan</i> payment. 3. Mebagah (Traditional Invitation): Invitations sent using cigarettes and betel leaves instead of paper. 4. Gotong Royong (Community Cooperation): The community works together to prepare the wedding.
Purpose of Pekhanjangan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A form of respect and permission for the elder sibling. 2. Preventing potential psychological and social impacts on the unmarried sibling. 3. Strengthening family ties.
Form and Amount of Pekhanjangan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No fixed standard amount. 2. Usually one mayam of gold (approximately 3.3 grams). 3. Can be replaced with money, clothes, or other items depending on the agreement.
Consequences of Not Fulfilling Pekhanjangan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family relationships may deteriorate. 2. Psychological distress for the elder sibling. 3. Social sanctions such as ostracization from the community.
Flexibility of the Tradition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The amount of <i>Pekhanjangan</i> can be adjusted according to the groom's financial capability. 2. It can be negotiated and substituted with other items like clothing or cash.
Views of Community Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uler Berutu: <i>Pekhanjangan</i> serves as permission and respect for the unmarried elder sibling. - Muktar (Village Head): Helps maintain good relationships between siblings. - Hantar Manik (Village Head): This tradition should be preserved as it upholds good values. - Imam Syamsul Bahri, S.Pd.I: The amount of <i>Pekhanjangan</i> varies but is usually around one mayam of gold.

Discussion

A *maqasid* sharia review of pekhanjangan money as a customary marriage sanction for the Singkil Aceh tribe

The discussion of the practice of *pekhanjangan* in the context of *maqashid* sharia shows a deep integration between customary traditions and Islamic values, especially in the aspect of preserving the mind (*hifz al-'aql*). Based on the research findings, it can be analyzed that every law prescribed by Allah has a specific purpose to achieve the benefits of human life, both in the spiritual and physical dimensions, individual and social. This is in line with Asy-Syathibi's thinking which emphasizes that laws are prescribed for the benefit of servants (*al-ahkam masyru'ah li mashalih al-ibad*) (Nurhayati & Sinaga, 2018).

In the context of *maqashid sharia*, research by (Irwan, 2021) outlines three main levels of objectives, namely *Dharuriyat* (primary needs), *Hajiyat* (secondary needs), and *Tahsiniyat* (complementary needs). The main focus of this analysis lies on the *Dharuriyat* aspect, especially in the context of *hifz al-'aql*, which is one of the five main components of *maqashid sharia*. This is reinforced by (Rahmawati & Soleh, 2024) research which explains that the maintenance of reason is a fundamental aspect in maintaining the mental health of Muslims.

The interview with Nur Enza, a sister who was stepped into marriage, provides a clear picture of the psychological impact that can occur when someone is stepped into marriage. This phenomenon is in line with the findings of (Triadhari et al., 2023) who identified various psychological impacts on individuals who experience marital stepping down, including anxiety, mild depression, and adjustment disorders.

The perspective of traditional leaders represented by Mr. Uler Berutu receives theoretical support from (Ardiyanti & Hanip, 2022) research on the role of *adat* in maintaining the psychological balance of the community. The study shows that *adat* traditions have a significant therapeutic function in the context of community mental health.

Further analysis shows that the practice of *pekhanjangan* has a positive impact on mental health. This is in line with (Frensain et al., 2017) study which found a positive correlation between the performance of customary rituals and the psychological well-being of individuals. The study also emphasized that mental health is not only related to the maintenance of the intellect but also relates to the benefit of religion, soul, offspring, and property. Kirana & Nurrohim, (2024) study on the concept of anxiety in the perspective of the Quran and modern psychology strengthens the position of *hifz al-'aql* as an important component in *maqashid sharia*. The study underlines that Islam places mental health as the third priority in *maqashid sharia*, after the preservation of religion and life, which shows the significance of mental health aspects in Islamic teachings (Koenig & Larson, 2001; Lubis et al., 2023; Mikšić et al., 2020).

The implementation of *pekhanjangan* practices in the Singkil Aceh tribe shows flexibility in line with *sharia* principles. Research by (Afdhal, 2023) confirms that the adaptability of customary traditions to the socio-economic conditions of the community is a key factor in the sustainability of cultural practices. This is reinforced by Ahmad's study (2022) which identified various forms of adaptation of the *pekhanjangan* tradition to contemporary social change.

Social sanctions in *pekhanjangan* practices, as explained in (Andri, 2024) study, function as an effective social control mechanism. The study revealed that customary sanctions have an important role in maintaining social cohesion and preventing intrafamilial conflict. Ibrahim & Taufiqurohman, (2023) research further explains that customary sanctions in the context of marriage function as a preventive instrument against family disharmony. The contemporary interpretation of *hifz al-'aql* receives theoretical support from (Tohari & Kholish, 2020) study which proposes a reinterpretation of *maqashid sharia* in a modern context. The study demonstrates how traditional concepts can be expanded to accommodate contemporary needs without losing their basic essence.

The harmonization between *adat* and *sharia* in the practice of *pekhanjangan* is comprehensively explained in (Hasan & Khairuddin, 2021b) study, which analyzes the integration of Islamic values in Acehese marriage traditions. The study confirms that *adat* can be a valid source of law as long as it is in line with the principles of *sharia*. The psychological and spiritual dimensions of *pekhanjangan* practices received empirical validation through Hamid's (2023) study, which examined the effectiveness of customary rituals as coping mechanisms. This finding was reinforced by (Rugebregt et al., 2020) longitudinal study which showed a positive correlation between the performance of *adat* rituals and long-term psychological well-being.

Ramli's (2023) study on the flexibility of customary practices in modern socio-economic contexts provides an in-depth understanding of how the *pekhanjangan* tradition adapts to changing times. It shows that the adaptability of the tradition is key to its sustainability in contemporary society. Based on a comprehensive analysis supported by various recent studies, it can be concluded that the practice of *pekhanjangan* has strong legitimacy, both from the perspective of adat and sharia. As emphasized by (Pramudyani, 2011), traditions that are able to maintain their relevance to the needs of contemporary society while maintaining the essence of their traditional values are worth preserving.

Kaka et al., (2024) on the flexibility of customary practices in modern socio-economic contexts provides an in-depth understanding of how *pekhanjangan* traditions adapt to changing times. This research shows that the adaptability of tradition is key to its sustainability in contemporary society. Based on a comprehensive analysis supported by various recent studies, it can be concluded that the practice of *pekhanjangan* has strong legitimacy, both from the perspective of adat and sharia. As emphasized by Zulkifli (2023), traditions that are able to maintain their relevance to the needs of contemporary society while maintaining the essence of their traditional values are worth preserving.

The *Pekhanjangan* Tradition in the Perspective of *Hifz al-Nasl* (Preservation of Lineage)

Hifz al-Nasl, or the preservation of lineage, is one of the primary objectives in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which ensures the continuation of generations in a lawful and dignified manner. This principle emphasizes the importance of marriage, family harmony, justice in family rights, and the well-being of future generations (Hariyanto et al., 2021; Malczyk & Lawson, 2017; Sona, 2020). In the context of the *Pekhanjangan* tradition within the Singkil tribal community, this practice is closely related to the concept of *Hifz al-Nasl*, as it serves as a social mechanism that maintains family balance and harmoniously supports generational continuity (Dousin et al., 2021; Sar'an et al., 2024).

In practice, *Pekhanjangan* plays a crucial role in preserving family structure and harmony. In Islam, family balance is strongly emphasized to ensure that future generations grow up in a stable and nurturing environment (Daelmans et al., 2021). This tradition serves as a form of respect for the unmarried elder brother when his younger sibling marries first. This mechanism reflects values of appreciation and respect that strengthen family resilience, ensuring that sibling relationships remain harmonious. When family relationships are well-maintained, a conducive social environment for the upbringing and education of future generations is also established (Bakar et al., 2023; Krok, 2018; Muhith et al., 2023).

Beyond maintaining family ties, *Pekhanjangan* also functions as part of the marriage process in the Singkil community. Marriage is the legitimate way in Islam to continue lineage and establish a quality family. In Singkil society, *Pekhanjangan* is integrated into a series of marriage rituals, including *mekhisik* (proposal), *tandek sintua* (engagement), and communal cooperation in wedding preparations. Throughout this process, discussions between both families are crucial in determining the amount and form of *Pekhanjangan*. These discussions reflect the values of justice and balance in marital rights and obligations, ensuring that no party feels burdened or disadvantaged.

The social consequences of not adhering to the *Pekhanjangan* tradition should also be considered within the context of *Hifz al-Nasl*. The absence of this tradition in a marriage can lead to an imbalance in family relationships, particularly among siblings. An unmarried elder brother may feel unappreciated or neglected, potentially causing family conflicts (Aprilianto et al., 2024). Family disputes can negatively impact the stability of newly formed households and even affect future parenting patterns. Therefore, *Pekhanjangan* is not merely a symbol of respect but also a social mechanism for maintaining equilibrium in familial relationships (Naimah et al., 2024).

The flexibility in implementing *Pekhanjangan* is another crucial aspect in ensuring that this tradition does not become an obstacle to marriage. Islam emphasizes that marriage should be made easy and not burdensome, as reflected in the hadith of the Prophet, which states that *the most blessed women are those with the least demanding dowries*. In the *Pekhanjangan* tradition, there is no fixed standard for the amount given, and it can be adjusted according to the groom's economic capacity (Ash-Shabah et al., 2021). The gift may take the form of gold, money, or even clothing, depending on the groom's financial situation. This flexibility demonstrates that Singkil customs have an adaptive mechanism to accommodate the economic conditions of their community, thus enabling marriages to take place without jeopardizing the future well-being of the family.

From an Islamic perspective, as long as this tradition does not contradict Sharia, does not impose an excessive burden, and remains within the bounds of justice, *Pekhanjangan* can be categorized as a cultural practice that aligns with the principle of *Hifz al-Nasl* (Sofiana et al., 2024). This tradition not only reflects the value of respect within families but also serves as part of a social system that supports lineage preservation and societal harmony within the Singkil community.

4. CONCLUSION

This research produced significant findings on the transformation of *pekhanjangan* practices in the Aceh Singkil community. What was unexpected was the shift in the meaning of *pekhanjangan* from a customary sanction to an instrument for strengthening family cohesion. This phenomenon can be seen from the emergence of patterns of negotiation of the value of *pekhanjangan* and variations in the form of gifts tailored to the economic capabilities of the suitors, as well as cases of voluntary refusal of *pekhanjangan* by the older sibling to facilitate the marriage of his younger sibling.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in the development of an integrative perspective between customary law and *maqasid sharia*. The research presents new arguments showing that the practice of *pekhanjangan*, when applied flexibly, acts as a support mechanism for *maqasid sharia* in the dimensions of *hifz al-'aql* and *hifz al-nasl*. This finding revises the dichotomous view that positions the *pekhanjangan* tradition as an obstacle to the implementation of marriage in Islamic law.

The limitations of the study include three methodological aspects: the geographical coverage is limited to three kecamatan, the number of informants is limited (15 people), and the observation duration is relatively short (6 months). Further research is needed by expanding the geographical coverage, increasing the variety of informant characteristics, especially from the socio-economic aspect, and extending the observation period. Comparative studies with similar practices in other regions are also recommended to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of marriage tradition adaptation within the *maqasid sharia* framework.

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