



Actualization of Da'wah And Communication Values in the *Nilekka* Tradition Among The Makassar Tribe In Makassar City

Rintoh^{1*}, Nurdin², Akbar Ista³, Hikmawati Sultani⁴, Rawati⁵

¹ Universitas Syekh Yusuf Al Makassar Gowa, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Darud Da'wah Wal-Irsyad A.G.H. Abdurrahman Ambo Dalle, Indonesia

³ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Pelita Buana, Indonesia

⁴ IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo, Indonesia

⁵ Balai Diklat Keagamaan Makassar, Indonesia

Corresponding Author ✉ rintoh2019@gmail.com^{1*}

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the actualization of da'wah and communication values in the *Nilekka* tradition among the Makassar ethnic community in Makassar City. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach and was conducted in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. Research participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, involving traditional leaders, religious leaders, and married couples who had recently undergone the *Nilekka* procession. Data were collected through participant observation, interviews, and documentation studies, and subsequently analyzed using the interactive qualitative data analysis model. The findings reveal that the *Nilekka* tradition functions as a medium of cultural da'wah communication that integrates customary practices with Islamic law. The da'wah messages conveyed encompass aspects of aqidah (Islamic creed), reflected in the intention of worship and submission to divine destiny; aspects of sharia, manifested through the public announcement of marriage and the transition of mahram relationships; and aspects of akhlaq (Islamic morality), expressed through respect for in-laws and the strengthening of social bonds (*silaturahmi*). These messages are articulated through structured communication patterns, namely symbolic communication in the handover of *pakmattoang* and *pannimbarangi*, verbal communication through *pappaseng* advice and *pakkiok bunting* poetry, and non-verbal communication through the modification of the traditional *Baju Bodo* attire complemented by the wearing of the hijab. Therefore, the *Nilekka* tradition demonstrates a strong capacity to synergize with religious teachings without losing its essential values, enabling it to remain preserved as a cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Da'wah Values; Communication; Nilekka Tradition; Makassar Ethnic Group*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 20 February, 2026

Revised 1 March 2026,

Accepted 30 March, 2026

Journal Homepage

<https://ojs.staiafurqan.ac.id/IJoASER/>

This is an open access article under the CC BY SA license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, particularly the South Sulawesi region, possesses a rich cultural heritage that has harmoniously acculturated with Islamic values and teachings. The Makassar ethnic group, as one of the largest ethnic communities in South Sulawesi, upholds a philosophy of life that places great importance on customs and traditions, which are represented through the concepts of *pangngakkang* and *siri' na pacce* (Rahmi R et al., 2025). In every aspect of life in Makassar society, cultural communication practices always go hand in hand with moral

and religious messages. This makes local traditions not just ceremonial rites, but they transform into an effective medium for da'wah (Muslimin, 2025). According to Aisyah & Irwanuddin (2025), the integration of Islamic values and local culture can create a communication pattern that is both transcendental and social, where religious messages are transmitted through symbols, expressions, and customary actions that are easily accepted by the community without losing their sacred essence.

One of the most important spaces in the actualization of da'wah and cultural communication is fully presented in the Makassar traditional wedding procession. According to Alimuddin et al (2025), marriage for the Makassar community is not just a legal bond uniting two individuals, but rather the integration of two extended families tied together by divine values and communalism. This long wedding series includes stages rich in symbolic meaning, and one of its important stages is the *nilekka* tradition. The *nilekka* tradition is a post-marriage ceremony where the bride is officially escorted and visits the groom's family's home for the first time (Lilis, 2024). This ceremony is very socially significant because it marks the bride's full acceptance into the groom's family circle. The visit is accompanied by the handover of traditional belongings, the giving of honor gifts, and is welcomed with recitations of poetic verses or *pakkiok bunting* performed by the customary guides.

According to Nisa (2026), the study of communication and Islamic preaching in the *nilekka* tradition carries messages that are very precise and deep. Both verbally and non-verbally, every step, the choice of *Baju Bodo*, and even the greeting poems recited in *nilekka* serve as a medium for exchanging meanings that emphasize respect, gender equality in customs, and the commitment to new family ties (Praharani, 2025). Meanwhile, Fitriani (2021) stated that the perspective of Islamic preaching in *nilekka* is a real-world application of religious advice to strengthen family bonds, maintain kinship lineage, and honor guests. The preaching messages in this tradition are also implicitly recorded through prayers for safety and marriage advice that accompany the *appabajikang* procession, reflecting Islamic teachings in building a harmonious, loving, and merciful family (Antika, 2025). Therefore, *nilekka* goes beyond cultural formality and becomes a spiritual communication space that educates the community about social ethics based on Islamic law.

Along with the rapid currents of modernization, urbanization, and digitalization in Makassar City, which has positioned itself as the largest metropolitan city in Eastern Indonesia, the existence of traditional customs is often confronted by the practicality and efficiency-oriented lifestyle of urban society. According to Kusumaaningrum et al (2025), the latest sociological data and trends show a tendency among young people in Makassar to simplify wedding ceremonies to save time, effort, and costs. This pragmatism affects the shift in the essence of symbolic meaning, modifications in the event format, or even trimming some traditional stages.

Nevertheless, an interesting phenomenon in Makassar City is that the tradition of *nilekka* is still maintained by most people, albeit with various modern adjustments (Kamaluddin, 2025). These cultural modifications and negotiations in the urban era raise critical questions about how far the essential values of communication and preaching in *nilekka* can still be actualized without being diminished by the increasingly secular and practical orientation of city communities.

This study aims to explore and deeply analyze the actualization of dakwah and communication values in the *nilekka* tradition among the Makassar people in Makassar City. This research is very important and relevant for filling the gaps in academic literature on the *nilekka* tradition, which is often overlooked in comprehensive studies of Islamic communication. Through this study, a constructive formulation can be found on how local traditions can continue to be empowered as tools for dakwah and educational communication across generations amid new trends, while also preserving the cultural identity of the Makassar community that upholds religious values

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive research type, aimed at exploring, understanding, and deeply interpreting the meaning of social and cultural

phenomena occurring in the community (Safitri et al., 2025). The qualitative approach is relevant for dissecting the construction of da'wah and communication values that are abstract, symbolic, and rich in philosophical meaning within the *Nilekka* tradition of the Makassar tribe. Through the lens of communication ethnography, this study not only captures the observable reality of the tradition but also delves into how the urban Makassar community produces, reproduces, and interprets religious messages and social ethics intertwined with customs amidst the rapid flow of metropolitan modernization. The research location is focused in Makassar City, South Sulawesi, considering that this area is the epicenter of Makassar tribal culture and also represents the most dynamic region facing the clash between tradition and modernity.

The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, meaning informants were chosen based on specific criteria and considerations deemed to have deep understanding and direct involvement with the focus of the study (Himam et al., 2026). The key informants in this study consisted of Makassar traditional leaders or cultural experts who possess a deep understanding of the structure and practices of traditional marriage customs, local Islamic preachers (*da'i*) or religious leaders who understand the integration of Islamic law and local culture, as well as several married couples and their extended families who had recently carried out the *nilekka* procession in Makassar City within the past year.

Data collection was conducted through the gathering of both primary and secondary data using three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies (Zahroh et al., 2025). The researcher carried out observations by directly watching the *nilekka* procession in several families in Makassar, in order to realistically record forms of verbal communication. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the rationality, motives, and interpretations of the informants regarding the dakwah values contained in each stage of the tradition (Zaman, 2025). Meanwhile, documentation studies were done by examining various supporting literature, photos of the procession, cultural archives, and previous relevant journals to strengthen the theoretical foundation and compare empirical data (Ahmad et al., 2024). All the collected data were then analyzed using the qualitative data analysis technique with an interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. This analysis process ran circularly through three main stages: data condensation to sort and focus on essential field data related to dakwah values and communication, data presentation in the form of systematic descriptive narratives, and finally drawing conclusions and verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis that has been conducted, the results found that the values of dawah and communication in the *nilekka* tradition among the Makassar people in Makassar city contain da'wah messages consisting of aqidah, sharia, and akhlak, and the communication patterns consist of symbolic, verbal, and non-verbal forms. The da'wah messages are explained as follows:

Da'wah Message

The da'wah message in the *nilekka* tradition is the delivery of noble values of Islamic teachings, which include aqidah, sharia, and akhlak, harmoniously wrapped through symbols, speech, and local cultural practices of the Makassar community. In the life philosophy of the local people, which integrates custom (*Pangngadakkang*) with Islamic law (*Sara'*), this process is not just an ordinary ceremonial celebration. *Nilekka* serves as a medium of culturally nuanced but highly effective da'wah communication to instill moral and spiritual messages to the newlywed couple. The da'wah message in *nilekka* proves that local wisdom can be a beautiful vessel to preserve and practice religious teachings without uprooting a community from its cultural roots.

1. Aqidah

Aqidah is defined as a firm and unwavering faith and conviction that is deeply rooted in the heart, completely free from even the slightest doubt regarding the pillars of faith and the fundamental teachings of Islam (Shubhie, 2023). This fundamental belief essentially binds the heart and consciousness of a Muslim to affirm the oneness of Allah, the existence of

angels, the holy scriptures, the prophets, the Day of Judgment, and His divine decree (*qada* and *qadar*). Consequently, it serves as the absolute theological foundation that guides an individual's worldview, life principles, and daily actions. Within the context of the *Nilekka* tradition, these values of *aqidah* are manifested through various practices that reflect human dependence upon Allah SWT.

Based on the results of an interview with Rahman (2026), it was found that the entire *nilekka* procession begins with the intention of worshiping Allah. He explained that "the bride along with her family entourage heads to the groom's house with the intention for Allah." This statement shows that the bride's journey to the groom's house is not merely seen as following family customs or traditions, but as a form of worship with spiritual value. An intention based on Allah SWT makes every step in the procession an act of worship and a form of obedience to religious teachings. Thus, marriage is understood as a sacred bond that not only connects two individuals but also serves as a form of devotion to God, hoping to receive His blessings and approval.

The next finding came from an interview with Rosdiana (2026), who emphasized that the ceremony of the mother-in-law welcoming the bride carries a meaning of faith in God's destiny and decree. According to her, "the meeting and acceptance of the bride by her mother-in-law is a form of surrender to God's will." This statement indicates that accepting a new family member is not just a form of social etiquette, but also a reflection of faith in God's divine plan. The willingness of the family to wholeheartedly accept a new member shows an awareness that the meeting and union of two families are part of God's predetermined plan. The attitude of trust and contentment with His decree becomes an important foundation in building harmony in family relationships after the marriage.

In addition, the value of *aqidah* is also evident in the practice of seeking blessings and protection from Allah SWT throughout the *Nilekka* procession. Nurhayati (2026) explained that, "from the moment participants leave their homes, throughout the journey, and during the welcoming ceremony, every stage begins with the recitation of the *Basmalah*, blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and prayers for divine guidance and approval." This finding indicates that the community believes the success and safety of each stage of the procession depend entirely upon the assistance of Allah SWT. The recitation of the *Basmalah*, *salawat*, and prayers serves as a symbol of servitude and an acknowledgment of human limitations. This tradition teaches that every activity, including the observance of customary practices, should begin with the remembrance of Allah in order to attain blessings and protection from various difficulties.

The next aspect of faith can be seen in expressions of gratitude, which are shown through giving gifts and celebration gatherings. Fauzi Ramli (2026) states that 'bringing gifts and holding welcoming celebrations in the *nilekka* ceremony is essentially a manifestation of gratitude for the smooth running of the wedding procession.' This data shows that the community sees the tradition of sharing and celebrating together as a way of thanking Allah SWT for the successful completion of the entire wedding process. This gratitude is expressed not only through words but also through real actions, such as sharing happiness with family and relatives. In this way, the *nilekka* tradition teaches that every blessing received should be appreciated as a gift from Allah SWT.

Based on all the research findings above, the researcher sees that the *nilekka* tradition is a strong form of harmonization between local culture and Islamic values. The messages of faith contained in each stage of the procession show that the people of Makassar do not separate cultural life from religious life. In fact, the two strengthen each other and shape a unique social identity. The researcher believes that the main strength of the *nilekka* tradition lies in its ability to convey Islamic teachings persuasively and contextually. Values of faith are not taught just through formal lectures but are expressed in real actions that are easy for people to understand and accept. Intentions for Allah, belief in destiny, the habit of praying, and expressions of gratitude throughout the entire procession are proof that preaching can come through cultural practices that live within the community.

Furthermore, researchers believe that the *nilekka* tradition can serve as a relevant cultural preaching model worth preserving. Amid the wave of modernization that often shifts local values, this tradition shows that culture and religion don't have to be in conflict. On the

contrary, local culture can be an effective way to strengthen understanding and practice of Islamic teachings as long as it doesn't contradict Sharia principles. Therefore, preserving the *nilekka* tradition is not only important as an effort to maintain the cultural heritage of the Makassar community, but also as a way to pass on Islamic faith values to future generations.

2. Sharia

Sharia is a set of laws, rules, values, and life guidelines that were sent by Allah SWT to humanity through the revelation brought by Prophet Muhammad SAW (Nurhayati, 2018). This fundamental legal framework derives exclusively from two primary sources: the Qur'an and the Hadith. Sharia is often misunderstood as merely a system of criminal law or formal judicial regulations. In reality, however, it constitutes a comprehensive and universal way of life that guides every aspect of a Muslim's existence, encompassing both private and public spheres.

Based on an interview with Rellung (2026), it was found that one of the main purposes of the *nilekka* procession is to "announce it to the public so that no slander arises in the community." This statement shows that the *nilekka* tradition serves as a way to publicize weddings in line with Islamic guidelines. In Islam, marriage is recommended to be announced to the community as a form of social transparency and a clear distinction between lawful and unlawful relationships. This announcement acts as a moral protection tool for both brides and grooms because the community gains certainty about the status of their relationship. In this way, the potential for prejudice, slander, or accusations that could damage family honor is minimized. This practice shows how local traditions can be a medium for implementing sharia values in maintaining honor and social order.

The next Islamic value can be seen in the change of legal status between the bride and her husband's family after the marriage contract is carried out. Mide (2026) explains that "before the marriage contract, the man's family is not a mahram to the bride. However, after the contract and then the meeting in the *nilekka* ceremony, that Islamic legal status changes permanently." This data shows that the *nilekka* tradition is not just a symbol of bringing two families together socially, but also represents a change in legal status from an Islamic perspective. Through a valid marriage contract, a relationship that was previously limited by rules of interaction between non-mahram men and women turns into a familial relationship with certain legal consequences. The meeting ceremony in *nilekka* becomes a symbol of the extended family's official acceptance of the bride's new status as a legitimate part of the husband's family. In this way, the tradition reinforces the community's understanding of the importance of the marriage contract as a legal tool that changes both social and religious legal status.

In addition, the message of Sharia preaching is also seen in the transfer of responsibility for support and family leadership after the marriage contract takes place. Nurlaela (2026) states that "after the marriage vows are pronounced, the responsibility for guardianship and support shifts from the woman's biological father to the husband's shoulders." This statement shows a direct implementation of Sharia teachings regarding rights and obligations within the household. The marriage contract is not just a spiritual agreement between two individuals but also brings legal consequences in the form of the husband's obligation to provide support, protection, guidance, and proper housing for his wife. At the same time, the wife has the duty to build a harmonious household life based on obedience justified by Sharia. The *Nilekka* tradition serves as a symbolic space that publicly demonstrates the transfer of this responsibility before both the family and the wider community, enabling the values of accountability and responsibility within married life to be collectively understood and acknowledged.

Other Islamic aspects are reflected in the clothing worn during the *nilekka* ceremony. Rahmawati (2026) revealed that "for modern Makassar society, the value of da'wah in the Islamic aspect is very evident in the traditional attire used." This finding shows that the people of Makassar strive to maintain their cultural identity without ignoring Sharia rules regarding modesty and simplicity in dressing. Modifying traditional clothing while still observing the principles of covering the body highlights a process of cultural adaptation that harmonizes with Islamic teachings. This phenomenon demonstrates that preserving culture doesn't have to conflict with religious values. On the contrary, local culture can become an

effective medium for da'wah when developed in accordance with Sharia principles. Through modest traditional clothing that follows religious guidance, the *nilekka* tradition not only serves as a way to preserve culture but also as a means of spreading Islam that can be witnessed by the wider community.

Based on the research findings, the researcher sees that the *nilekka* tradition is a clear example of the successful integration between local culture and Islamic law in the life of the Makassar community. The Islamic values are reflected in announcing marriages to the community, legitimizing new mahram relationships, fulfilling rights and obligations within the household, as well as maintaining the limits of aurat in the practice of customs. The Islamic values contained within it are not presented in the form of strict rules, but are expressed through cultural symbols that are easily understood and accepted by the Makassar people.

3. Morals

Morals are a condition or psychological trait that is deeply and strongly ingrained in the human heart, from which various actions arise easily, reflexively, and spontaneously without needing prior consideration, thought, or coercion (Ramadhan & Setiawan, 2022). From an Islamic perspective, morals are an indicator of a person's faith quality because they reflect values that have been internalized in daily life (Akifah & Adami, 2025). Therefore, shaping noble morals becomes one of the main goals of Islamic preaching. Research shows that the *nilekka* tradition carries various moral preaching messages, manifested through respectful behavior towards parents and in-laws, strengthening social bonds, honoring guests and in-laws, and cultivating humility and politeness.

The first moral (*akhlaq*) value identified in the *Nilekka* tradition is respect and devotion toward parents and parents-in-law. Bambang (2026) explained that this form of respect is reflected when "the bride visits her husband's family residence bringing gifts or presents." This statement indicates that the presentation of gifts is not merely a customary practice but also a symbol of respect and appreciation for the family that is welcoming her as a new member. From the perspective of moral da'wah, this act reflects humility (*tawadhu'*), respect for elders, and an effort to establish harmonious relationships with the husband's extended family. The gifts symbolize sincerity, appreciation, and readiness to build familial relationships grounded in affection and mutual respect. Thus, the *Nilekka* tradition teaches that honoring one's parents-in-law is an important manifestation of Islamic moral conduct within family life.

In addition to respect for parents and parents-in-law, the *Nilekka* tradition also conveys moral messages related to strengthening kinship ties and social bonds (*silaturahmi*). This is reflected in the statement of Ruppa (2026), who noted that "the visit of the bride's family entourage to the groom's family residence serves to expand and strengthen ties of kinship." This finding demonstrates that *Nilekka* does not merely unite two individuals in marriage but also functions as a means of fostering closer relationships between two extended families. In Islamic teachings, *silaturahmi* holds a highly significant position because it is regarded as a virtuous act that brings blessings and sustains harmonious social relationships. The presence of extended family members during the *Nilekka* procession reflects the spirit of collectivism and togetherness that characterizes Makassar society. Through these interactions, social boundaries that previously separated the two families are transformed into stronger and more enduring bonds of brotherhood.

Another moral da'wah message is reflected in the practice of honoring guests and welcoming daughters-in-law through the reception ceremony. Danuang (2026) explained that this form of respect can be seen in the "welcoming procession at the front of the house, followed by the presentation of jewelry or valuable items by the mother-in-law." These findings indicate that the reception organized by the groom's family is not merely a symbol of social acceptance but also a reflection of noble moral values in honoring guests and appreciating new family members. In Islamic tradition, honoring guests is regarded as one of the defining characteristics of a faithful Muslim. Therefore, the warm and respectful reception extended to the bride represents the practical implementation of Islamic moral values within family life. The presentation of jewelry or valuable items by the mother-in-law also symbolizes affection, sincere acceptance, and a commitment to building harmonious and

caring family relationships.

Another prominent moral value embodied in the *Nilekka* tradition is humility and courtesy. Azhari (2026) explained that “the bride walks respectfully, lowers her gaze, and kisses the hands of her parents-in-law and the elders of the groom’s family.” This finding suggests that each gesture performed by the bride carries profound moral significance. Lowering one’s gaze represents commendable modesty, the preservation of personal dignity, and an awareness of the importance of proper etiquette in social interactions. Meanwhile, kissing the hands of parents-in-law and family elders symbolizes respect for the older generation and acknowledgment of their position within the family structure. This act also reflects humility, a willingness to accept advice, and the hope of receiving blessings and prayers for a successful married life. Consequently, the *Nilekka* tradition serves as a medium of character education that instills values of courtesy and respect for others from the very beginning of married life.

Based on the data provided by the informants, the researcher concludes that the moral (*akhlaq*) dimension constitutes the most dominant and most observable da’wah message throughout the entire *Nilekka* procession. Nearly every stage of this tradition is filled with symbols of respect, politeness, affection, and appreciation for others. These values are not conveyed solely through verbal advice but are embodied in the concrete actions performed by all participants involved in the ceremony. Therefore, preserving the *Nilekka* tradition is important not only as an effort to maintain Makassar cultural identity but also as a means of sustaining and transmitting Islamic moral values to future generations.

Communication Patterns

Communication patterns in the *Nilekka* tradition are a highly structured, symbolic, and mediated process of sociocultural interaction, specifically designed to bring together two large families based on noble values of mutual respect and maintaining dignity. The communication that takes place is a comprehensive, sacred communicative event, legally bound by customary law, and full of emotions, combining the joy of welcoming a new family with the poignancy of parting from the old family.

1. Symbolic Communication

Symbolic communication is defined as anything whether an object, action, event, or language that functions as a representation or manifestation of an idea, value, abstract concept, or reality that is greater and more profound than its physical form. The communication pattern within the *Nilekka* tradition constitutes a sociocultural interaction process that is structured, symbolic, and rich in meaning. Communication is conveyed not only through verbal expressions but also through various cultural symbols that embody social, emotional, and spiritual messages. From the perspective of symbolic communication, every object, action, and ritual presented in the *Nilekka* tradition functions as a medium for conveying meanings collectively understood by the supporting community. Therefore, the symbols present in the *Nilekka* procession cannot be interpreted solely based on their physical appearance but must be understood through the cultural values that underpin them.

The first symbol identified is *pakmattoang*, or the gifts brought by the bride when visiting her husband's family home. Irdawati (2026) explained that “the gifts brought by the bride when visiting her in-laws are not merely ordinary souvenirs.” This statement indicates that the items carried during the *Nilekka* procession possess symbolic meanings far beyond their material value. The gifts function as a form of nonverbal communication that conveys respect, sincerity, and goodwill toward the new family. Through this gesture, the bride symbolically introduces herself while demonstrating her readiness to establish harmonious relationships with her husband's family. Thus, *pakmattoang* serves as an initial symbol of emotional closeness and the strengthening of familial bonds between both families.

Another symbol is found in the *pannimbaranngi* tradition, namely the welcoming of the bride through the presentation of gold jewelry or other valuable items. Kaswati (2026) stated that “the gold symbolizes the value of the daughter-in-law, who is regarded as highly precious.” This finding suggests that the act of adorning the bride with jewelry is not merely a gift-giving practice but a symbolic message expressing the family's full acceptance of the new daughter-in-law. The gold jewelry personally presented by the mother-in-law signifies

affection, appreciation, and social recognition of the bride's new status. This symbol also represents hopes for a prosperous and secure married life. In the context of symbolic communication, this act functions as a cultural language conveying the message that the bride has now become a legitimate and respected member of her husband's family.

Another form of symbolic communication is reflected in the presentation of traditional Makassar cakes served in a *bosara*. Yasiah (2026) explained that "sweet traditional Makassar cakes such as *cucuru bayao* and *barongko* are served in a *bosara* container." This finding demonstrates that the food served functions not only as hospitality for guests but also carries rich symbolic meanings. The sweetness of these traditional cakes symbolizes prayers and hopes that the couple's married life will always be filled with happiness, harmony, and prosperity. Meanwhile, the *bosara*, as a traditional serving container of the Makassar people, symbolizes the highest form of respect for guests. The presence of these two symbols illustrates that cultural communication within *Nilekka* takes place not only through spoken words but also through representations of values embodied in food and its presentation.

A symbol of social transition is also evident in the procession escorting the bride to her husband's family home. Rellung (2026) stated that "escorting the bride from her family home to her in-laws' residence symbolizes a transition of space and sociological status." This statement indicates that the physical journey undertaken by the bride actually represents a social and psychological journey into a new phase of life. The movement from her parents' home to her husband's family home marks a transformation of identity and social status. Through this process, the bride symbolically leaves behind her former role as a daughter under the responsibility of her natal family and enters a new role as a wife and member of her husband's extended family. Thus, the procession serves as a medium of cultural communication affirming the social transition experienced by the bride.

Another important symbolic value is found in the *pappaenteng* ritual. Ruppa (2026) explained that "the bride is briefly stopped in front of the groom's family home before entering as a symbol of crossing territorial boundaries." This finding indicates that the temporary pause at the entrance is not merely a procedural break but a symbol of respect for the social space and authority of the family she is about to join. The ritual conveys the message that entering a new family environment requires mental readiness, awareness of prevailing norms, and respect for those who welcome her arrival. From the perspective of symbolic communication, the doorway represents the boundary between an old life and a new one. Therefore, the *pappaenteng* ritual functions as a symbol of transition that reinforces the bride's changing social identity and her readiness to assume her new role within her husband's family.

Based on the research findings, the researcher argues that the primary strength of the *Nilekka* tradition lies in its ability to facilitate meaningful communication through cultural symbols. Symbolic communication patterns within the *Nilekka* tradition are manifested through the exchange of gifts (*pakmattoang*), the presentation of jewelry or valuable items (*pannimbarangi*), the serving of traditional cakes in a *bosara*, the bridal procession, and the *pappaenteng* ritual before entering the husband's family home. Every object, gesture, and ritual performed within this tradition functions as a cultural language collectively understood by the Makassar community. These symbols enable values of respect, affection, acceptance, and kinship to be communicated in a subtle yet profoundly meaningful manner.

2. Verbal Communication

Verbal communication refers to a form of interaction, expression, or message delivery that utilizes a system of symbols in the form of language and vocabulary to transfer ideas, information, and emotions from a communicator to a recipient. Within the *Nilekka* tradition, verbal communication plays a crucial role as a medium for conveying cultural messages, moral values, social respect, and the reinforcement of the collective identity of the Makassar people. Unlike symbolic communication, which relies on objects and actions as carriers of meaning, verbal communication in *Nilekka* is manifested through advice, traditional poetry, greetings, and customary expressions that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The first form of verbal communication identified is *pappaseng*, namely the delivery

of moral messages when the bride is about to leave her parents' home and proceed to her husband's family residence. Nurhayati (2026) explained that "when the bride takes her first steps out of her parents' house toward her in-laws' home, there is usually a *pappaseng* procession involving the delivery of moral messages." This finding indicates that *pappaseng* serves as a form of verbal communication with both educational and transformative functions. During this moment, parents, family members, and respected elders convey various pieces of advice containing life values, household ethics, responsibilities as a wife, respect for the new family, and religious principles that should guide married life. From a communicative perspective, *pappaseng* functions not only as the transmission of information but also as a process of intergenerational cultural value inheritance. Through meaningful language rich in wisdom and counsel, parents provide moral guidance that is expected to serve as a life compass for the bride as she enters a new social environment. Thus, *pappaseng* represents a form of verbal communication that integrates emotional expression, character education, and local wisdom within a sacred communicative event.

Another form of verbal communication is found in the *pakkiok bunting* procession, which takes place when the bride's entourage arrives at the groom's family residence. Bambang (2026) explained that "a traditional elder from the groom's side recites verses in ancient Makassar language using a distinctive intonation." This finding demonstrates that language functions not merely as an ordinary communication tool but also as an instrument for cultural preservation and customary legitimacy. The verses recited by the traditional elder contain expressions of respect, prayers, hopes, and acknowledgment of the arrival of the bride's entourage. From the perspective of verbal communication, *pakkiok bunting* constitutes a form of performative communication possessing symbolic and social power. Its distinctive intonation, traditional vocabulary, and use of the ancient Makassar language create a sacred atmosphere that distinguishes it from everyday conversation. Through these recitations, the traditional elder not only conveys messages to those present but also reaffirms the cultural identity of the Makassar people that continues to be preserved today. Therefore, *pakkiok bunting* can be understood as a communicative medium that connects the past, present, and future through a cultural language transmitted across generations.

Another important form of verbal communication within the *Nilekka* tradition is *pappatabe*. Rosdiana (2026) explained that "the accompanying party offers greetings and the customary expression *Tabé'* as a sign of respect." This finding indicates that verbal communication in Makassar society places great emphasis on politeness and respect toward others. The expression *Tabé'* carries a meaning far broader than that of an ordinary greeting or salutation. It embodies values of humility, respect, seeking permission, and acknowledging the status of the person being addressed. In the context of intercultural communication, *pappatabe* functions as an opening interaction that creates an atmosphere of harmony and mutual appreciation. The use of greetings combined with traditional salutations reflects the integration of Islamic religious values and the local wisdom of the Makassar people. Consequently, the verbal communication that occurs does not merely transmit linguistic messages but also strengthens social relationships through expressions of respect that have become an integral part of the community's cultural identity.

Based on the research findings, the researcher argues that these three forms of communication perform distinct yet complementary functions. *Pappaseng* serves as a medium for transmitting moral values and character education, *pakkiok bunting* functions as a means of expressing respect while preserving cultural identity, and *pappatabe* acts as an interactional opening that emphasizes politeness and appreciation for others. Collectively, these practices demonstrate that verbal communication within the *Nilekka* tradition functions not only as a tool for exchanging messages but also as an essential instrument for maintaining the continuity of the cultural, social, and spiritual values of the Makassar community.

3. Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication encompasses all gestures, behaviors, physical attributes, and environmental arrangements that intentionally or unintentionally convey meaning to message recipients. Within the *Nilekka* tradition, non-verbal communication is manifested through various visual symbols that reflect the cultural identity, religious values, and

worldview of the Makassar people. The findings of this study indicate that one of the most prominent forms of non-verbal communication in the *Nilekka* tradition is the use of the *Baju Bodo*, which has been adapted to align with Islamic values. Ali (2026) explained that “the use of a modified *Baju Bodo*, designed to be more modest and complemented with a hijab for Muslim women, serves to communicate Islamic identity as well as adherence to sharia values without eliminating Makassar cultural identity.” This statement demonstrates that the traditional attire worn during the *Nilekka* tradition is not merely ceremonial clothing but rather a medium of non-verbal communication rich in meaning. Through its form, design, and manner of use, the modified *Baju Bodo* simultaneously conveys messages of both religious and cultural identity. The addition of the hijab and the more modest design reflect adherence to Islamic sharia principles, particularly the obligation for Muslim women to observe modest dress. At the same time, the use of the *Baju Bodo* preserves the distinctive cultural characteristics of the Makassar people that have been transmitted across generations.

This finding illustrates that non-verbal communication within the *Nilekka* tradition functions not only as an expression of cultural aesthetics but also as a medium for conveying ideological and religious messages to society. The attire worn by participants in the customary procession visually communicates that being a devout Muslim does not require abandoning one’s local cultural identity. On the contrary, culture can adapt and develop in harmony with religious values without losing its essential meaning. Furthermore, the transformation of the *Baju Bodo* serves as a symbol of non-verbal communication that reflects a dynamic process of cultural negotiation. The Makassar community does not reject the ancestral traditions that have been inherited over generations; rather, they make adjustments to ensure that these traditions remain relevant to the evolving religious understanding of contemporary society. Thus, traditional attire within the *Nilekka* tradition becomes a visual representation of the harmonization between custom (*adat*) and Islamic law (*sharia*), a principle that has long guided the life of the Makassar people.

Based on the research findings, the researcher argues that the modified *Baju Bodo* can be understood as a symbol of identity that communicates its message directly without requiring verbal explanation. Members of the community who witness the *Nilekka* procession are able to understand the values embedded within it simply by observing the attire worn by the participants. Therefore, non-verbal communication within the *Nilekka* tradition functions as an effective form of visual da’wah, conveying Islamic messages to the broader community. Consequently, non-verbal communication in the *Nilekka* tradition serves not merely as a complement to the customary procession but also as a symbol of the Makassar community’s success in maintaining harmony between cultural traditions and Islamic teachings.

CONCLUSION

The *Nilekka* tradition among the Makassar ethnic community in Makassar City serves as a medium of cultural da’wah communication that harmoniously integrates customary philosophy and Islamic law while comprehensively actualizing religious values through the dimensions of *aqidah* (faith), *sharia* (Islamic law), and *akhlaq* (morality). The dimension of *aqidah* is reflected in the sincere intention of worship and submission to divine destiny; the dimension of *sharia* is manifested through the legitimization of marital status, the transformation of *mahram* relationships, the transfer of guardianship responsibilities, and the observance of modesty requirements; while the dimension of *akhlaq* is embodied in profound respect for parents-in-law, the strengthening of kinship ties (*silaturahmi*), and the cultivation of courteous behavior and noble character.

These da’wah messages are communicated in a structured manner through symbolic communication patterns such as the presentation of *pakmattoang* gifts, the bestowal of jewelry in the *pannimbarangi* ceremony, and the serving of traditional delicacies in a *bosara*; verbal communication through *pappaseng* moral advice, *pakkiok bunting* ceremonial poetry, and the customary greeting *tabe’*; as well as non-verbal communication through the adaptation of the traditional *Baju Bodo* accompanied by the wearing of the hijab. Amid the forces of modernization and the pragmatic demands of urban society, this tradition has

demonstrated remarkable resilience as a space for cultural negotiation, where the noble values of *siri' na pacce* continue to coexist harmoniously with Islamic teachings without experiencing any erosion of their essential meaning. Consequently, the *Nilekka* tradition remains a valuable cultural heritage and civilizational legacy, playing an important role in educating future generations and guiding them toward the establishment of harmonious family life.

REFERENCES

- Aisyah, S., & Irwanuddin. (2025). Studi Proses Asimilasi Dan Adaptasi Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Dan Transformasi Budaya Lokal Di Indonesia Dalam Tradisi Masyarakat. *Integrative Perspectives of Social and Science Journal (IPSSJ)*, 2(2), 2693–2702. <https://ipssj.com/index.php/ojs/article/view/360>
- Ahmad, A., Fachrurrazy, M., Amalia, M., Fauzi, E., Gaol, S. L., Siliwadi, D. N., & Takdir, T. (2024). *Buku Ajar Metode Penelitian & Penulisan Hukum*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- Akifah, N., & Adami, F. (2025). Akhlak, moral dan etika perspektif islam. *AT-TAZAKKI*, 9(1), 27–40. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.47006/attazakki.v9i1.23975>
- Alimuddin, A., Basri, R., Syafruddin, R. A., & SR, N. (2025). Konflik Hukum Islam dan Adat dalam Kawin Lari: Studi Sosiologis Pada Masyarakat Bugis-Makassar. *QANUN: JURNAL HUKUM KELUARGA ISLAM*, 3(2), 105–124. <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.51825/qanun.v3i2.35495>
- Antika, W. B. (2025). *Analisis Nilai-nilai Islamic Parenting Education dalam Perkawinan Adat Nobat di Lombok Utara (Studi Kasus di Desa Anyar Kecamatan Bayan Kabupaten Lombok Utara)*. Universitas Islam Indonesia.
- Fitriani, F. (2021). *Studi Kritis Perspektif Dakwah Terhadap Tradisi Manre Sipulung Di Bulu Arawa Desa Kupa Kabupaten Barru*. IAIN Parepare.
- Himam, M. K., Anam, S., & Nashrullah. (2026). TEKNIK PEMILIHAN INFORMAN DALAM PENELITIAN KUALITATIF: STRATEGI DAN IMPLEMENTASI. *Pediaqu : Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 5(2), 1688–1696. <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/preliminary-report-february-6-2023-earthquakes-turkiye>
- KAMALUDDIN, N. I. (2025). *EKSISTENSI TRADISI DIO MAJANG DALAM PERKAWINAN MASYARAKAT BUGIS KELURAHAN PALANRO KECAMATAN MALLUSETASI KABUPATEN BARRU*. IAIN PAREPARE.
- Kusumaaningrum, S., Nasir, M. A., & Syarif, S. (2025). Fenomena Pernikahan Generasi Z di KUA (Studi Antropologi Tentang Perubahan Tradisi Pernikahan di Kalangan Muda Indonesia). *Jurnal Pendidikan IPS*, 15(4), 1392–1401. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37630/jpi.v15i4.3709>
- LILIS, N. (2024). *TINJAUAN HUKUM ISLAM TERHADAP TRADISI NINCAK ENDOG DALAM PERKAWINAN ADAT SUNDA (Studi Pada Masyarakat Adat Jawa Barat di Dusun Mataram Selatan Kecamatan Air Naningan Kabupaten Tanggamus)*. UIN Raden Intan Lampung.
- Muslimin, M. (2025). *Komunikasi Dakwah melalui Media Tradisional: Menghidupkan Kearifan Lokal dalam Menyampaikan Pesan Dakwah*. UMMPress.
- NISA, N. A. (2026). *PESAN DAKWAH MELALUI STYLE HIJAB NATASHA RISKYPADA AKUN INSTAGRAM@ natashariskynew*. UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SULTAN SYARIF KASIM RIAU.
- Nurhayati, N. (2018). Memahami Konsep Syariah, Fikih, Hukum Dan Ushul Fikih. *Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah*, 2(2), 124–134. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.26618/j-hes.v2i2.1620>
- PRAHARANI, S. T. R. I. M. (2025). *BENTUK DAN MAKNA SIMBOLIK KOREOGRAFI TARI PATTENUNG SUKU BUGIS-MAKASSAR= FORM AND SYMBOLIC MEANING OF PATTENUNG DANCE TRADISIONAL CHOREOGRAPHY OF BUGIS-MAKASSAR TRIBE: VISUAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS*. Universitas Hasanuddin.
- Rahmi R, N., Ruyadi, Y., & Wilodati, W. (2025). Aktualisasi Nilai Siri' Na Pacce Pada Masyarakat Suku Bugis-Makassar Di Kecamatan Rappocini Kota Makassar Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan. *JSPH (Jurnal Sosiologi Pendidikan Humanis)*, 10(1), 56–70.

- Ramadhan, R. A., & Setiawan, H. R. (2022). Pentingnya Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Untuk Membentuk Akhlak Siswa Di Sekolah SMA Swasta PAB 8 Saentis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Humaniora*, 1(2), 263–268.
- Safitri, A. V., Habsy, B. A., & Salim, M. N. (2025). ANALISIS KUALITATIF DALAM FENOMENA SOSIAL: PENDEKATAN PERCAKAPAN, DIALOGIS, WACANA, NARATIF, DAN SEMIOTIKA. *Jurnal Inovasi Pembelajaran Progresif*, 6(2).
- Shubhie, H. M. (2023). *Pendidikan Agama Islam-Akidah Akhlak*. Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia.
- Zahroh, N. I., Nasution, L. A., Tazqia, A. D., Faiha, H. A. I., & Nurhayati, D. (2025). STRATEGI PENGUMPULAN DATA DALAM PENELITIAN KUALITATIF: TEKNIK, TANTANGAN DAN SOLUSINYA. *TARBIYATUL ILMU: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan*, 3(6), 107–118. <https://languar.net/index.php/TARBIYATULILMU/article/view/256>
- Zaman, W. K. (2025). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Sebuah Penelitian Kualitatif untuk Rumpun Ilmu Dakwah*. PT. Revormasi Jangkar Philosophia.