



Malay Wedding Hantaran Pantun in West Kalimantan: The Preservation of Malay-Islamic Admonitions as Traditional Cultural Imagery

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Abstract

This study examines the cultural and religious values embedded in hantaran pantun recited during the Malay wedding gift-giving procession in Pontianak, Sambas, and Melawi, West Kalimantan. Although pantun plays a central role in Malay ceremonial life, limited studies integrate cultural semantics and metaphor analysis to explain how these verses transmit worldview and moral norms in performative contexts. A total of 46 pantun was collected through participant observation, interviews, and audio recordings, from which six were selected for in-depth analysis based on representativeness and symbolic density. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the study applies cultural semantic analysis and metaphorical examination of both sampiran and isi lines to interpret meanings from emic and etic perspectives. The findings identify six core admonitory values: respect for tradition, honor and humility, remembrance of Allah, honesty, friendliness, and social harmony. These values construct a relational worldview that emphasizes ethical responsibility toward self and community. The study contributes by integrating cultural semantics with metaphor analysis in oral tradition research and supports cultural preservation and value-based education in Malay society.

1. Introduction

The encounter between Islam and local cultures through processes of acculturation has shaped the development of Malay cultural expressions, including wedding traditions (Al-Qutuby et al., 2020). In West Kalimantan, one significant element of this tradition is pantun hantaran, recited during the wedding gift-giving procession. The hantaran ritual symbolizes responsibility and readiness for marriage (Firdaus, 2022; Husin et al., 2022) and forms part of a structured ceremonial sequence culminating in the akad nikah (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Hendra, 2025). Within this context, pantun functions as a medium of customary communication, articulating moral and religious values aligned with the aspiration to form a sakinah family (Faishal, 2024; Hajar et al., 2024; Sultan, 2019).

Pantun was recognized by UNESCO (2020) as an Intangible Cultural Heritage and is widely regarded as a cultural symbol of the Malay world. For the Malay community of West Kalimantan, however, pantun is not merely an artistic artifact but a living performative practice used in sermons, customary speeches, and wedding ceremonies (Ab-Rahman & Mahamod, 2022). It conveys moral and social norms and reflects Malay worldview and civilization (Hidayatunnur et al., 2021; Roziah, 2023). Expressed through aesthetic diction and natural symbolism (Ghani & Mohamed, 2020; Amat, 2024).

Structurally, a pantun consists of two preparatory lines (*sampiran*) and two content lines (*isi*). The *sampiran* typically presents imagery drawn from nature or daily life, while the *isi* conveys the central message. Meaning emerges from the symbolic and metaphorical relationship between these two parts (Mawarti, 2025; Zawawi et al., 2022). In wedding hantaran pantun, this structure encodes Malay-Islamic admonitions concerning faith, virtue, and social harmony (Masrura, 2020; Sung & bin Hussein, 2020; Ulviani, 2025).

Previous studies have demonstrated that *pantun* occupies a significant position in the Malay wedding tradition of West Kalimantan; however, their focus and approaches differ from the present study. Aslan (2020), employing a library research method, affirmed that *pantun* has become a hereditary tradition in Malay Sambas wedding ceremonies, yet the study remained descriptive-historical and did not examine in depth the structure of meaning and symbolism. Agustina (2016), through a content analysis of the book *Pantun dan Budaya Adat Istiadat Tata Cara Perkawinan Kabupaten Sambas*, emphasized the analysis of the physical structure of *pantun*, including diction (denotation and connotation), imagery, concrete words, and figurative language, thereby concentrating primarily on textual linguistic aspects.

Similarly, Yuliansyah (2019), who investigated *pantun* in the traditional Malay wedding ceremony of Tanjung Hulu using an interactive model analysis, focused on elements of diction, imagery, rhyme, and function. While these studies provide an important foundation, they have not specifically addressed *hantaran pantun* as an integral component of the customary procession that symbolically

represents Malay-Islamic admonitions through a metaphorical approach integrating emic and etic perspectives.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyze the representation of Malay-Islamic admonitions in wedding *hantaran pantun* of the Malay community in West Kalimantan through a cultural metaphor analysis. Specifically, this study addresses the following questions: (1) how does the symbolic structure of the *preparatory lines* and *content lines* in *hantaran pantun* represent Malay-Islamic values? and (2) what metaphorical meanings reflect religious teachings and cultural norms within the context of customary marriage? This study is significant not only academically, in enriching scholarship on oral literature and cultural anthropology, but also culturally, as an effort to document and preserve the profound meanings of *hantaran pantun* as a religio-cultural identity of the Malay community in West Kalimantan.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design within a cultural semantics framework to analyze the meanings embedded in *hantaran pantun*. Fieldwork was conducted between July and November 2024 in three regions of West Kalimantan: Pontianak City, Sambas Regency, and Melawi Regency. Each wedding observation lasted approximately 3–5 hours, covering the full *hantaran* session from formal opening to closing exchanges.

All 46-pantun documented in this study were produced by four *pemantun* (customary spokespersons). Although 46 pantuns were recorded, six were selected for in-depth analysis based on recurrence, central ceremonial placement, metaphorical density, and confirmation of representativeness by the performers.

Table 1. Fieldwork Locations and Data Collection Timeline

No.	Initial	Age	Region / Location	Date of Data Collection	Regency / City
1	DAA	47	Siantan Hulu	20 November 2024	Pontianak City
2	Z	58	Paal, Nanga Pinoh	20 July 2024	Melawi Regency
3	PS	65	Sungai Kelambu	12 November 2024	Sambas Regency
4	MZ	55	Tebas Sungai	26 November 2024	Sambas Regency

Data collection included participant observation, audiovisual recording, semi-structured interviews, and field notes. Interviews explored interpretive meanings and performance intentions. Example guiding questions included: (1) What is the intended message behind this pantun? (2) How do the *sampiran* and *isi* relate symbolically? (3) Why is this pantun appropriate for the *hantaran* context?

Analytically, the study proceeded through (1) transcription and translation, (2) open coding of thematic categories (religiosity, honor, harmony, honesty, tradition, etc.), (3) identification of metaphorical expressions in *sampiran* and *isi*, (4) interpretation of symbolic correspondences between imagery and moral

message, and (5) synthesis into broader cultural-semantic patterns. The emic perspective was operationalized through informants’ explanations of meaning and performance context, while the etic perspective involved scholarly interpretation using cultural semantics and metaphor theory.

Trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation (four pemantun across three regions), method triangulation (observation, interviews, documentation), and member checking with two key informants. Oral consent was obtained from all participants, and documentation was conducted with respect for customary norms. Identities are anonymized, and materials are used solely for academic and cultural preservation purposes.

3. Result

Malay culture, from the past to the present, remains deeply rooted in the traditions of the people of West Kalimantan. Pantun constitutes an integral component of various social practices, employed by customary leaders and community figures in speeches, expressions of joy, and traditional ceremonies, particularly weddings. In the context of marriage, pantun generally contains advice and moral values addressed to the prospective bride and groom. During the hantaran procession and the exchange of goods, pantun functions as a symbolic medium for conveying messages between both parties. Thus, pantun serves not merely as an aesthetic element but also as a medium for the internalization of Malay–Islamic values within the social life of the West Kalimantan community.

Table 2. Classification of Value Findings in Malay Wedding
Hantaran pantun of West Kalimantan

Pantun #	Reciter	Location	Category of Admonition
1	DAA	Pontianak	Respect for Tradition and Celebration
2	DAA	Pontianak	Honor and Humility
3	PS	Sambas	Remembrance of Allah
4	MZ	Sambas	Honesty
5	Z	Melawi	Courtesy
6	Z	Melawi	Harmony and Unity

Admonition to Respect Tradition and Celebration

(Pantun #1 – DAA, Pontianak)

Table 3. Malay Wedding Hantaran Pantun of the Pontianak Region

Original Malay	Transliteration	English Translation
Di hari lebaran pegi ke pekan	Di hari lebaran pergi ke pekan	On the day of Eid, we go to the market;
Pasang lilin di atas peti	Pasang lilin di atas peti	a candle is placed upon the chest.
Barang hantaran diserahkan	Barang hantaran diserahkan	The offering gifts are presented;
Mohon diterime dengan senang hati	Mohon diterima dengan senang hati	may they be graciously received with sincere pleasure.

The pantun opens with a reference to hari lebaran and concludes with the formal delivery of hantaran. The reference to Eid situates the ceremony within a sacred temporal frame. The candle and chest in the preparatory lines symbolize reverence and valued exchange. The content lines emphasize respectful acceptance of the offering. This pantun represents the integration of religious temporality and customary protocol. Tradition is framed as sacred, and hantaran becomes an ethical act grounded in respect.

Admonition to Uphold Honor and Humility

(Pantun #2 – DAA, Pontianak)

Table 4. Malay Wedding Hantaran Pantun of the Pontianak Region

Original Malay	Transliteration	English Translation
Air tak minum, nasi tak makan	Air tidak minum, nasi tidak makan	No water is drunk; no rice is eaten;
Dapat emas berkati-kati	Dapat emas berkati-kati	gold is obtained in abundant measure.
Barang hantaran diserahkan	Barang hantaran diserahkan	The offering gifts are presented;
Mohon diterime dengan senang hati	Mohon diterima dengan senang hati	may they be graciously received with sincere pleasure.

The pantun contrasts deprivation with the acquisition of gold before presenting the hantaran. Gold symbolizes honor and responsibility rather than material wealth. The message stresses humility in receiving gifts and safeguarding what is valuable. Honor in this pantun is linked to responsibility and modest acceptance, reinforcing ethical reciprocity in marriage exchange.

Admonition to Always Remember Allah

(Pantun #3 – PS, Sambas)

Table 5. Malay Wedding Hantaran Pantun of the Sambas Region

Original Malay	Transliteration	English Translation
Kalau bukan burung Ketiter	Kalau bukan burung Ketitir	If it were not the Ketitir bird,
Tentu gerangan si burung Nuri	Tentu gerangan si burung Nuri	it would surely be the Nuri bird.
Kalau bukan karne berzikir	Kalau bukan karena berzikir	If it were not for the recitation of dhikr,
Tentu rombongan tak sampai kemari	Tentu rombongan tak sampai kemari	the delegation would not have arrived here.

The preparatory lines mention two birds; the content lines attribute safe arrival to dhikr. Bird imagery metaphorically parallels vocal remembrance. The pantun frames spiritual devotion as the foundation of safe passage and ceremonial success. Religiosity is embedded within metaphor. Spiritual practice is presented as integral to customary action.

Admonition to Be Honest

(Pantun #4 – MZ, Sambas)

Table 5. Malay Wedding Hantaran Pantun of the Sambas Region

Original Malay	Transliteration	English Translation
Padi kabarkan padi	Padi kabarkan padi	Convey the message about the paddy,
Biar kame' akan menjemurnya	Biar kami yang akan menjemurnya	so that we may dry it.
Kalau sudi kabar kan sudi	Kalau sudi kabarkan sudi	If you are willing, convey your willingness,
Supaye kame' senang mendengarnya	Supaya kami senang mendengarnya	so that we may receive it with ease.

The pantun uses agricultural imagery to request clarity regarding acceptance. Paddy symbolizes something requiring processing. The metaphor conveys the need for explicit and honest communication in the proposal process. Honesty is framed as clarity and decisiveness, ensuring social order between families.

Admonition to Be Courteous

(Pantun #5 – Z, Melawi)

Table 6. Malay Wedding Hantaran Pantun of the Melawi Region

Original Malay	Transliteration	English Translation
Daun selasih kami' larutkan	Daun selasih kami larutkan	The basil leaves are dissolved,
Di perapi untuk sarapan	Di masak untuk sarapan	prepared for breakfast.
Sedikit barang yang kami' bawakan	Sedikit barang yang kami bawakan	A modest offering we have brought,
Sebagai adat jadi persyaratan	Sebagai adat jadi persyaratan	as custom prescribes as a requirement.

Food preparation imagery precedes the modest presentation of hantaran. Basil leaves symbolize preparation and attentiveness. The pantun communicates modesty and proper etiquette in fulfilling customary requirements. Courtesy is expressed through modest presentation and procedural respect for custom.

Admonition to Maintain Harmony and Unity

(Pantun #6 – Z, Melawi)

Table 7. Malay Wedding Hantaran Pantun of the Melawi Region

Original Malay	Transliteration	English Translation
Seiring balam dengan merebah	Seiring balam dengan merebah	As the balam bird settles to rest,
Makan bersama hidangan saprahan	Makan bersama hidangan saprahan	we partake together in the saprahan feast.
Diawali salam berakhir dengan sembah	Diawali salam berakhir dengan sembah	It begins with greetings and ends with reverence;
Sembah kami' jari sepuluh	Sembah kami jari sepuluh	our homage is offered with ten fingers joined.

The pantun combines bird imagery, communal feasting, and formal greeting expressions. The imagery constructs relational balance and shared participation. Saprahan functions as a symbol of structured togetherness. Harmony is represented through coordinated roles, shared meals, and ritual etiquette.

Across Pontianak, Sambas, and Melawi, the six pantuns display a similar structural pattern: the preparatory lines present concrete imagery drawn from daily life—such as Eid, birds, paddy, basil leaves, or communal meals—while the content lines state the intended moral message more directly. In each case, the imagery is linked to values articulated in the closing lines, including respect for tradition, humility, remembrance of Allah, honesty, courtesy, and harmony.

Although the symbolic elements vary by region, the overall pattern remains consistent, showing that hantaran pantun systematically pair metaphorical images with ethical instruction within the ceremonial exchange.

4. Discussion

The *hantaran pantun* in the Malay wedding gift-exchange custom of West Kalimantan functions as a medium for transmitting religious and social values. The analysis in tables demonstrates that the symbols within the pantun operate through metaphorical mechanisms that integrate custom (*adat*), Islam, and the social structure of Malay society. Overall, the findings indicate that *hantaran pantun* operates as a cultural instrument for the continuous reproduction of Malay–Islamic identity.

Structural Construction and Malay–Islamic Meaning

The findings confirm that hantaran pantun operate through a structured pairing between preparatory lines and content lines, where imagery precedes and frames moral articulation. The reference to Hari Lebaran reflects how Malay customary ritual is temporally anchored in Islamic sacred time. Anthropological studies of Eid al-Fitr in Indonesia demonstrate that Lebaran functions as a ritual space integrating spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions (Solikhin et al., 2025). In this context, the pantun does not merely mention religion but structurally situates custom within a religious framework.

Semiotic studies of Malay poetic traditions emphasize that pantun functions as a vehicle for transmitting faith and moral values through symbolic signs (Hidayat et al., 2025). Likewise, Islamic education research affirms that Malay pantun embodies ethical guidance aligned with Islamic principles (Sa’diah et al., 2025). The present study extends these findings by demonstrating that value transmission occurs through patterned symbolic mediation: preparatory imagery generates affective resonance, while content lines articulate normative direction. Thus, moral meaning emerges structurally rather than thematically alone.

Compared with Aslan (2020), who interprets pantun primarily as moral advice literature, this study highlights the semiotic mechanism that embeds advice within metaphorical pairing. Similarly, while Agustina (2016) and Yuliansyah (2019) identify pantun as carriers of social ethics and character education, the present research shows how those ethical values are constructed through relational alignment between symbol and directive, forming a consistent cultural-semantic pattern.

The value of humility and honor reflected in the gold symbolism aligns with research showing that pantun transmits courtesy and social cohesion implicitly (Husna et al., 2025; Osman et al., 2025). Within the Malay–Islamic concept of *adab*, humility constitutes moral prestige rather than material status (Arbi et al., 2025). Here, gold operates not as wealth symbolism but as ethical responsibility,

reinforcing gendered dignity within marriage relations (Hidayat et al., 2025; Osman et al., 2025).

The dhikr motif in Sambas pantun resonates with living traditions such as zikir nazam in communal rituals. Studies indicate that zikir nazam embodies educational and identity-forming values within Malay Sambas society (Suhari, 2025), while broader Indonesian scholarship affirms dhikr as a medium of spiritual reinforcement embedded in daily life (Arahman, 2025). The pantun therefore reflects not decorative religiosity but integrated devotional consciousness.

Rice symbolism similarly extends beyond agrarian imagery. Contemporary studies describe rice in wedding and ritual traditions as representing continuity, blessing, and collective life (Lubis et al., 2025; Lensi et al., 2025). In the Sambas context, paddy becomes a metaphor for honesty and clarity in social communication, reinforcing interpersonal ethics.

Hospitality and communal dining traditions such as saprahan further illustrate how social harmony is ritualized. Research confirms that saprahan embodies togetherness, equality, and communal solidarity (Pinem, 2025; Oriantanti et al., 2025). These findings support the interpretation that hantaran pantun encode social balance through familiar cultural symbols rather than abstract prescriptions.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited to six representative pantuns selected from a corpus of 46 and focuses on three locations in West Kalimantan (Pontianak, Sambas, and Melawi). Although these examples illustrate recurring structural and semantic patterns, they cannot fully represent the diversity of Malay hantaran traditions across Indonesia. The relatively small sample size restricts broader generalization.

In addition, interpretation partly relies on emic explanations from four performers. While triangulation was conducted, symbolic meaning in oral traditions remains context-sensitive and potentially variable across communities. Interpretive challenges are inherent in cultural-semantic analysis, particularly when metaphorical meanings are embedded within performative settings.

Future research should therefore expand the textual corpus and include comparative studies across wider Malay regions to examine whether the preparatory-content line pairing constitutes a pan-Malay structural pattern. Interdisciplinary approaches combining cultural semiotics, linguistic anthropology, and performance ethnography would further illuminate how hantaran pantun operate in live ceremonial contexts, including issues of authority, audience reception, and symbolic negotiation. Broader regional and methodological scope would strengthen theoretical modeling of pantun as a socio-religious semiotic system.

Implications and Practical Contributions

Theoretically, this study contributes to oral literature studies by demonstrating that hantaran pantun function as a patterned symbolic discourse rather than merely aesthetic expression. The consistent structural alignment between imagery and moral directive confirms that meaning is constructed relationally and systematically.

For cultural anthropology, the findings highlight wedding ritual discourse as a site where Islam and adat are continuously synthesized through performative language. Hantaran pantun illustrate how religious temporality, agrarian symbolism, and communal practices operate as integrated components of Malay cultural identity.

From the perspective of cultural semantics, the research shows that ethical values emerge through metaphorical mediation grounded in shared cultural objects such as rice, gold, birds, basil leaves, and communal meals. These objects function as semantic anchors linking everyday experience with normative guidance.

Practically, the findings support the integration of hantaran pantun into cultural and religious education programs as a medium for transmitting ethical values in culturally resonant ways. Documentation, digital archiving, and revitalization of hantaran pantun performances in West Kalimantan may also strengthen intergenerational continuity and preserve symbolic literacy within Malay communities. Recognizing pantun as living ceremonial discourse rather than static folklore enhances its relevance in contemporary social contexts.

5. Conclusion

The findings indicate that hantaran pantun within the Malay tradition functions not merely as an aesthetic element in customary ceremonies but as a symbolic construction integrating cultural, religious, and social values simultaneously. Its poetic structure frames moral messages implicitly, while its metaphorical meanings internalize norms of politeness, hospitality, respect, and moral responsibility as foundations of Malay–Islamic identity. The recurring use of symbols, harmony expressions, and associated social practices demonstrates how traditional texts cultivate social cohesion through metaphors of balance and complementarity, where differences in roles are positioned not as sources of conflict but as parts of a relational system.

Theoretically, this study contributes to oral literature and cultural semantics by demonstrating that pantun functions as a structured ideological medium reproducing value through persuasive, non-doctrinal aesthetic strategies, where meaning emerges through patterned symbolic mediation within ceremonial exchange. Practically, the findings highlight the need to safeguard hantaran pantun as living cultural discourse through systematic documentation, digital archiving, and community-based transmission to ensure intergenerational continuity. Integrating pantun into local curricula and religious education can strengthen

culturally grounded character formation, while workshops, performance revitalization, and collaboration between customary leaders and educational institutions may sustain its contemporary relevance.

This study is limited to a specific corpus and three local contexts; therefore, broader generalization should be approached cautiously. Future research may pursue comparative analysis across Malay subcultures, expand textual corpora, or adopt interdisciplinary approaches to explore the evolving dynamics of meaning, performance, and social change within the pantun tradition.

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