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Asosiasi Dosen Peneliti
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TRADITION OF MERISIK AND PRACTICE OF RESTRICTING THE SOCIAL MEDIA OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN BANDAR SONO VILLAGE, BATU BARA DISTRICT

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the practice of the merisik tradition within the Malay community of Bandar Sono Village, Batu Bara Regency, and how this tradition plays a role in shaping social boundaries for young people. The method used is a qualitative approach with data collected through in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, religious figures, the village head, couples who have experienced the merisik tradition, parents from both families, and members of the local community. The findings indicate that the merisik tradition is still actively practiced and not only serves as an initial stage before engagement, but also represents a form of respect toward the woman's family and an effort to preserve the honor of both parties. This tradition plays an important role in maintaining social order, particularly in regulating interactions between young men and women to align with cultural norms and Islamic teachings. It carries educational values such as responsibility, respect for parents, modesty, religious values, appreciation for tradition, and the regulation of interactions between males and females. Therefore, the merisik tradition remains relevant today as a form of character education rooted in local cultural values.

Keywords: *Merisik Tradition; Malay Culture; Educational Values; Youth Social Interaction.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji praktik tradisi merisik dalam masyarakat Melayu di Desa Bandar Sono, Kabupaten Batu Bara, serta bagaimana tradisi ini berperan dalam membentuk batasan interaksi sosial bagi para remaja. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap tokoh adat, tokoh agama, kepala desa, pasangan yang menjalani tradisi merisik, orang tua dari kedua belah pihak, dan masyarakat umum. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi merisik masih aktif dijalankan dan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai tahap awal sebelum lamaran, tetapi juga sebagai bentuk penghormatan terhadap keluarga perempuan serta upaya menjaga kehormatan kedua belah pihak. Tradisi ini memainkan peran penting dalam menjaga keteraturan sosial, khususnya dalam membatasi interaksi sosial remaja agar tetap sesuai dengan norma adat dan ajaran Islam. Tradisi ini mengandung nilai-nilai edukatif seperti tanggung jawab, penghormatan kepada orang tua, kesopanan, nilai-nilai religius, penghargaan terhadap adat, serta pembatasan interaksi antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Oleh karena itu, tradisi merisik masih relevan untuk diterapkan saat ini sebagai bentuk pendidikan karakter berbasis budaya lokal.

Kata kunci: *Tradisi Merisik; Budaya Melayu; Nilai Edukasi; Pergaulan Remaja.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country with diverse cultures, has unique traditions in each region that need to be preserved so that they do not become extinct due to the development of the times. Culture plays an important role in people's lives because through culture, moral, social, and customary values can be passed on to the next generation.(Mardian, 2024). The merisik tradition, one of the cultural heritages of the Malay Islamic community, reflects the social values and manners that have been passed down from generation to generation. Despite facing challenges due to modernization, the Malay Islamic community continues to strive to maintain and preserve this tradition which is full of noble values.

The merisik tradition is the first step in the wedding process. Based on the Big Indonesian Dictionary, "merisik" is defined as the act of groping or investigating(Sugono, 2008). In tradition, merisik is the initial stage of exploration where the man's family seeks information from the woman regarding her status, such as whether she already has a potential partner. This tradition aims to understand the character of the prospective partner and ensure compatibility before moving on to the proposal stage. Apart from that, merisik is also a form of respect for customs and social values in Malay Islamic society.

Hanafi(Rofiq, 2019)expresses that tradition is all kinds of things that are inherited in the past to us and are used, used and still valid in the present or present time. Meanwhile, according to Funk and Wagnalls, tradition is a hereditary legacy both in the delivery of doctrine and its practice is the same, the legacy can be a doctrine, habit, practice and also knowledge.

This study uses the structural functionalism theory approach that developed in the mid-20th century, especially in the 1950s to 1960s. This theory emphasizes that every social element has an important function in maintaining the balance and

stability of society. In the context of the merisik tradition in Bandar Sono Village, this practice is seen as a social mechanism that functions to maintain harmony, order, and customary and religious values in relationships between individuals and between families. This theory is a framework for understanding how the practice of merisik and restrictions on young people's relationships support the creation of social integration in society. According to Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism theory, the main objective of this theory is to maintain social order in society. The merisik tradition has a function to help realize this goal by supporting the creation of harmonious relationships between families and society. This process also plays a role in ensuring strong integration between individuals and communities, so that social order can be maintained (Ritzer, 2011).

Merisik is not just the first step in the marriage process, but also reflects the social and religious values respected by the Malay Islamic community. This tradition has a deep meaning, because it not only unites two individuals, but also strengthens the relationship between two large families. Even though it originates from ancestral times, the merisik tradition is still maintained today. In practice, the merisik is not carried out directly by the male candidate, but is represented by his parents or relatives. This is in accordance with rules that limit direct interaction between potential partners. Instead, prospective men must go through a search process first before establishing a closer relationship.

Spying is done to get to know more about the character and background of the prospective partner, including the values and principles of life that he or she adheres to. Usually, the families of both parties play a role in ensuring this compatibility, so that the relationship that is established can be harmonious and sustainable. (Takari, 2019).

After the merisik stage is complete, the Malay Islamic community applies rules that limit interactions between couples who have received approval. In this rule, men and women are not allowed to meet frequently or associate freely until an official marriage takes place. This reflects the responsibility of parents in maintaining family morals and honor. These restrictions aim to prevent behavior that violates religious norms and customs, while maintaining the dignity of the community. This tradition, thus, becomes a symbol of strong moral values and manners in Malay Islamic society.

Malay Islamic culture is rich in social values that are reflected through the traditions, lifestyle and behavior of its people.(Martinelli, 2023). The merisik tradition and rules regarding social restrictions reflect the commitment of the Malay Islamic community to upholding customs in order to maintain family honor. These values are passed down from generation to generation as guidelines for building dignified social relationships. Apart from that, this tradition is also a means of moral education for the younger generation in establishing healthy relationships. By continuing to preserve this tradition, the Malay Islamic community has succeeded in maintaining its cultural identity amidst globalization.

In Bandar Sono Village, the Malay Muslim community still maintains the tradition of merisik and social restrictions quite strictly. Traditional leaders and parents play an important role in ensuring that this tradition continues to be carried out. However, some of the younger generation are starting to ignore this tradition due to the influence of outside culture and modern lifestyles. Social media and technological advances have changed the way the younger generation interacts and socializes.(Haris, 2024). This creates challenges in maintaining tradition while facing the changing times. This phenomenon shows a gap in understanding between the older and younger generations regarding the importance of maintaining

customs.

In Islamic Malay culture, the concept of family honor is highly respected. This can be seen from the regulation of interactions between young men and women which are strictly supervised. Restrictions on socializing are applied as a form of anticipation of the negative impacts of free association which can damage cultural values and violate customary norms.(Haniah, Siti Umi, 2022). Therefore, this rule is one way for the Malay Muslim community to maintain social stability and preserve their cultural heritage. In the context of education, the tradition of risik and social restrictions can be used as a medium to teach moral values. Education plays an important role in introducing this tradition to the younger generation in a relevant way. Through education, the younger generation can understand the importance of tradition as part of cultural identity and an effort to maintain social harmony. In addition, education can be a bridge to integrate traditional values with the demands of modern life.(Novianto, 2023). With this approach, the tradition of merisik and limiting social interactions can remain alive amidst changing times.

In this tradition, the decision not only involves the individual getting married, but also requires the approval and views of the family, which has a great influence on the future of the couple. The family plays a major role in raising children and ensuring that the values and ethics in society are passed on from parents to children, keeping up with the times. The family also plays a role in improving the quality of human resources through instilling moral education from an early age. Thus, decisions in the merisik process not only affect the individual, but also the values inherited by the family and the successful development of society as a whole.(Amalia, 2023).

The family has an important role in educating children and ensuring that the values and norms that exist in society can be continued. This is related to the

selection process, where the family is involved in looking after and ensuring that the prospective partner has a background that is in accordance with these values.(Almanda, 2021). Apart from that, the ceremonial process also functions to ensure that the prospective partner has sincere intentions and is ready to build a life together, so that the marriage can run well and be profitable for both parties.(Budiawan, 2021).

Apart from that, the merisik tradition also has high educational value, especially in instilling a sense of responsibility and respect for customs. Parents act as the main educators in the family to ensure that the younger generation understands the importance of maintaining social and religious norms. By implementing this tradition, the Malay Islamic community teaches their children the importance of upholding moral values and customs as a guide to life.

Spying and social restrictions complement each other in maintaining social harmony in Malay society. This tradition not only serves to protect couples from unmanaged relationships, but also becomes the first step in building a dignified marriage in accordance with local religious and customary values. Thus, this tradition can be seen as a form of character education that instills moral values in the younger generation.

This study aims to examine in more depth how the process of the tradition of merisik and social restrictions are implemented in Bandar Sono Village. In addition, this study will explore the views of the younger generation, parents, and traditional leaders towards this tradition. Thus, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the relevance of this tradition in the life of the Malay Muslim community. This study also aims to contribute to the preservation of Malay culture in the modern era.

To strengthen this research, several relevant studies were reviewed. One of them is the research of Prayogo, Rozanna Mulyani, and Eddy Setia which discusses the Speech Transfer Pattern in the Merisik Tradition in the Batubara Malay Community. This study shows the ABAB structured communication pattern in the merisik tradition, where questions and delivery are the core of the process. Although it does not directly discuss the practice of limiting social interaction, this study is relevant because it highlights the aspect of structured communication in merisik.

Another relevant study is a study conducted by Luluk Nur Azizah Haris on Social Restrictions of Prospective Husband and Wife During Engagement from the Perspective of Sadd Al-Dzari'ah in Ambat Village, Tlanakan District, Pamekasan Regency. The results of the study indicate that the social restrictions implemented by parents in Ambat Village aim to prevent evil (mafsadah) such as solitude or making out, which are contrary to religious teachings. These restrictions are based on the principle of sadd al-dzari'ah, which emphasizes the importance of rejecting evil (mafsadah) rather than achieving good (maslahah). Although this study does not fully discuss the Merisik Tradition and Social Restrictions of Young Malay Men and Women in Bandar Sono Village, there is a connection in terms of social restrictions implemented in the merisik tradition in the Batubara Malay community. These restrictions aim to maintain the honor and sanctity of the relationship before marriage, by following the same principle, namely prioritizing the rejection of evil rather than achieving good. In both studies, there is a clear concern for moral and ethical values in society, which reflect customary traditions that are in harmony with religious principles.

The research conducted by Prayogo, Rozanna Mulyani, and Eddy Setia only discusses how the tradition of reciting rhymes in the merisik ceremony not only involves formal communication, but also has a distinctive interaction pattern, thus

reflecting the richness of Malay culture which is now rarely done. The research on speech acts only touches on the communication aspect in the merisik tradition, while the research on the Merisik Tradition and the Practice of Restricting the Socialization of Young Malays in Bandar Sono Village, Batu Bara Regency includes a broader discussion of social values, customary norms, and cultural practices that regulate the relationships of young people in Malay society. Likewise, the research conducted by Luluk Nur Azizah Haris, in her research only when associated with the Merisik Tradition and the Practice of Restricting the Socialization of Young Malays in Bandar Sono Village, can only be in the section on the socialization of young people in the merisik tradition.

Given the differences in context between previous studies that discussed the tradition of merisik and restrictions on young people's social interactions, further research is needed to follow up on these findings. This study will discuss in more depth how the tradition of merisik functions in forming social norms and limiting interactions between men and women, by considering other influencing factors.

It is hoped that this research can enrich understanding of the relationship between the merisik tradition and restrictions on social interactions between young people in Malay society. It is also hoped that the findings from this research can provide a strong basis for policies or programs that support the preservation of traditional culture, while ensuring traditional values remain relevant amidst the social and cultural developments occurring in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used by the researcher is a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is research that is intended to understand a problem or phenomenon experienced by the research subject. In this case, the qualitative research used by the researcher is intended so that the

information and data that have been obtained from the research subject by utilizing qualitative methods during the research are expected to provide clear research results in the form of descriptions. This research was conducted in Bandar Sono Village, Batu Bara Regency, which still maintains the practice of the "Merisik" tradition and restrictions on socializing as part of local cultural values. The data collected are in the form of words, pictures and not numbers (Moleong, 2016).

This study uses two data sources, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through observation and interviews with traditional figures, young men and women, and parents who were selectively selected based on their knowledge and experience related to the research topic. Traditional figures provide cultural understanding, young men and women represent the views of the younger generation, and parents contribute insights from their life experiences. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from long-standing traditions in the community, previous research results, and books on Malay customs. These sources provide a broader context regarding the norms and traditions studied.

In this study, data collection techniques were carried out by means of interviews, documentation and also observations related to the research issue of this study, namely the tradition of merisik. Data analysis techniques used in this study were data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. In this study, reduction was carried out by filtering data by only taking information that was truly related to the tradition of merisik and the rules of social interaction between young people. Data from traditional figures, parents, and young people were grouped according to themes to make them easier to understand and analyze. The goal was for researchers to be able to focus on seeing how the tradition of merisik is carried out and its influence on social relations in society. After that, researchers drew conclusions by re-examining all data obtained from interviews, observations, and

documents. The existing notes were studied again to ensure that the contents were appropriate and consistent. The conclusions made were also reconfirmed with the main sources such as traditional figures, parents, and young people, so that the final results truly describe the actual situation in society.

The data validity test in the study was carried out using one of the data validity techniques, namely the triangulation technique. This technique is carried out by checking the truth of the data through various different sources. The goal is to test the credibility of the data, by comparing information obtained from several sources to ensure its accuracy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Young people in Bandar Sono Village.

Bandar Sono Village is one of the villages in Nibung Hangus District, Batu Bara Regency, North Sumatra Province. This sub-district was formed in 2017 as a result of the expansion of Tanjung Tiram District. This village consists of 9 hamlets, with a population of approximately 3,570 people, consisting of men and women (Ginting, 2023)

The origin of the name "Bandar Sono" is related to the existence of the sono tree or angšana (also known as sonokembang), a type of tree that produces high-quality wood. In the past, in the area of this village, a very large sono tree grew and became the main marker of the area. From there, the community then called this area Bandar Sono. The average population of Bandar Sono Village is a Malay community that embraces Islam. Malay culture and Islamic teachings are two things that strengthen each other in forming social values in society, including in regulating social relations between young people. Restrictions on social relations between men and women are carried out not only for customary reasons, but also

as a form of implementation of religious values that teach politeness, honor, and responsibility.

The community believes that interaction between the opposite sexes must be carried out in a clear way and must not violate religious or customary norms. Therefore, the tradition of merisik is one form of guarding the social order and morals of young people before they step into marriage. This tradition also reflects the role of the family in the process of exploring relationships, which is considered safer and more focused. In the midst of the development of the times, the attitude of the young people of Bandar Sono towards customs is still quite strong. They continue to show compliance with the prevailing norms of social interaction, although they are not free from external influences that enter through social media and social interactions outside the village. However, with the support of the family and the active role of traditional and religious figures, cultural and religious values remain the mainstay in shaping their character.

In terms of work, the residents of Bandar Sono have diverse backgrounds. Most work as fishermen, considering the village area is near the coast. In addition, many also work as plantation farmers, traders, laborers, and employees. Although the economic backgrounds and jobs vary, the community still upholds customary and religious values in everyday life.

The Practice of Merisik Tradition in Youth Socialization in Bandar Sono Village.

The merisik tradition is a form of local wisdom that is still maintained in the social life of the Malay Islamic community in Bandar Sono Village, Batu Bara Regency. This merisik tradition is a traditional activity carried out by men's families to politely seek information about a woman who will be their future wife. This tradition is not just about "asking", but is also an initial form of introduction between families in a formal but polite atmosphere.

The main aim of this tradition is to investigate the background of the prospective bride, including social status, education, personality, and willingness to accept the groom's further arrival for the application procession. This tradition is carried out according to custom, with the male family sending a messenger to carry out the risk to the female family. Usually, men want to know whether the female candidate already has a relationship or bond with someone else. If the survey results show discrepancies, the male family has the right to cancel their intention to proceed to the next stage.

Merisik is also considered a step to respect a woman's family before proceeding to the proposal or engagement stage. In this context, *risk* is more about efforts to ensure that the relationship that will be established is not only personally beneficial, but also in accordance with the traditional values held by both families.

According to traditional leaders, this tradition has been carried out for generations as part of Malay customary etiquette in building relationships towards marriage. Meanwhile, religious figures stated that the merisik tradition is in line with Islamic teachings because it aims to maintain personal and family honor, as well as preventing male and female relationships from practices that are contrary to Islamic values, such as promiscuous dating.

Based on the results of interviews with several traditional figures, religious figures, village heads, parents, young couples, and the general public, it was obtained that merisik is not just a formality or hereditary custom, but also an important foundation in maintaining values of politeness, family honor, and boundaries of social interaction before marriage. In the implementation of the tradition of merisik in Bandar Sono Village, the parties involved are not only limited to the prospective couple, but are more dominantly carried out by the extended family, especially from the man's side. The main party carrying out this tradition is

the man's family, especially parents or trusted close relatives, who serve as representatives to carry out the merisik process. Usually, the person appointed is an elder or wise family member so that the discussion takes place politely and is respected by the woman's family.

Meanwhile, from the woman's side, those who receive the arrival of the messenger of the spy are the parents and close family of the woman. They will provide the information needed, such as their daughter's status, educational background, work, attitudes, and *character* in daily life. The prospective partner himself is generally not directly involved in this process, because the spy is an initial step of introduction that is polite and full of caution.

Religious and traditional figures, although not directly involved in the merisik process, have a very important role in supporting and giving value to this tradition. Religious figures provide an understanding that the merisik tradition is in accordance with the principles of Islamic teachings, namely to maintain the honor and purity of relationships between men and women before marriage, as well as a way to avoid the practice of promiscuous courtship which is contrary to religious teachings. Thus, merisik is considered a form of positive social control in maintaining relationships in accordance with religious values.

On the other hand, traditional figures emphasized that merisik is part of the Malay customary etiquette that has existed for a long time, which regulates how the introduction process between families must be carried out with full respect and politeness. They ensure that this tradition is maintained as part of the cultural identity of the local community.

According to the results of interviews with the parents of the prospective couple, both from the male and female sides, they feel that family involvement in this process is very important as a form of respect for customs and family values.

This tradition is also considered a more honorable way than getting to know a prospective partner through free association.

In Bandar Sono Village, the tradition of merisik is usually carried out when a man or his family feels sure and serious about taking the relationship to the level of marriage. This merisik process is not a random step, but is carried out after there is a clear intention to go further in the relationship. The time of the marriage ceremony generally depends on how close the relationship is between the two parties. It can be started after there are signs from the man to propose, when they feel they know their prospective partner well enough and are sure to proceed to marriage.

Cheering is often done after both parties feel attracted to each other and are ready to commit. Usually, this occurs at the beginning of family introductions which are carried out informally and carefully. Even though the process can be carried out in varying amounts of time, merisik still begins with good intentions and discussions between the man's family to find out more information about the prospective woman they are targeting. If the results of the survey show compatibility, then the man's family can proceed to the next stage, which is the proposal or engagement. So, surveying is an important first step to ensure that this relationship goes well according to custom and religion.

The tradition of merisik in Bandar Sono Village is generally carried out at the prospective bride's house, which is the main place for conversations between families. The prospective bride's house is considered the right place because there the woman's family gathers and can provide information needed by the groom. The merisik process takes place in a more relaxed atmosphere, but still maintains politeness and caution. Merisik is carried out to avoid misunderstandings and ensure the compatibility of values between both parties, especially in preparing for

married life. Apart from that, this tradition is also a form of respect for women's families and shows seriousness on the part of men, while maintaining relationships within the norms upheld by society. Merisik is also a form of etiquette in Malay society, and respect for parents. By asking, parents will know that the relationship has reached a serious stage, not a random relationship. Likewise with society, they will see the relationship between young men and women as a good relationship, without any negative views. By having a marriage, both men and women can feel confident that their relationship is running with clear intentions and good goals. This provides a sense of security for both families that they are taking the right steps towards family life.

The process of searching is divided into two important stages in determining a prospective life partner. The first stage is called small searching, where an unmarried young man seeks information about a girl who also does not have a partner. At this stage, the young man does not directly ask the girl, but asks for help from his parents to gather further information. The young man's parents will usually ask for help from an intermediary, often called a matchmaker(Cici, 2022). This small checking process was carried out secretly so that the girl would not know, just to gather basic information(Carrollin Melliani, 2020).

After getting the necessary information from the small merisik, if the young man's family feels that the girl is suitable and does not have a partner yet, then the process continues to the second stage, namely the big merisik. At this stage, the young man's family will visit the girl's house to convey their intention, namely to officially propose to the girl. This is a more open step and is usually accompanied by a formal meeting between the two families. The young man's family usually brings several family members or representatives to show their seriousness in proposing to the girl. The woman's family will then consider the proposal and

discuss further about their future relationship plans.

A big wedding is often the first step towards engagement. After that, there may be an exchange of rings or other tokens as a symbol of commitment to continue the relationship to marriage. Although there is an agreement at this stage, there are often further, more formal discussions before the two decide to marry. All of these stages show the importance of the family's role in ensuring that the decision to marry is made with careful consideration and full support. It also emphasizes that parental supervision and guidance are mandatory. Although children are given the freedom to choose and are responsible for their choices, parents must still provide direction, guidance, and counseling. Providing advice, supervision, and direction to children is an obligation that must be carried out.(Jamaluddin, 2019).

The tradition of bribing in Bandar Sono Village is carried out in a fairly careful and ethical manner. Usually, this process begins after the man feels sure about the prospective woman he wants to propose to. The initial step is for the man to inform his parents, then the parents or close relatives who are trusted will make a plan to visit the woman's house. Although this tradition is 'secret bribing', as time goes by, most young men today have confirmed in advance to the woman that her family will come to the house. This is done to maintain comfort and so that their arrival does not seem surprising. This spying visit is not done openly like a proposal. Usually, the man's family only comes with a few people, and the atmosphere is made simple and relaxed. They will start with light conversation, such as asking how they are or discussing general matters, then slowly move on to the main goal of asking about the woman's status, educational background, character, and readiness to be proposed to.

The implementation time is usually chosen at night. The reason is *that* the night is considered quieter, the family is gathering, and there is no work activity.

This makes the discussion atmosphere more comfortable and not rushed.

Apart from being the first step towards marriage, merisik also has ethical values and respect for parents. By coming officially, the man shows seriousness, so that the woman's parents know that this relationship is not just a joke. This also gives a good impression in the eyes of society, because the relationship between the two is carried out with the supervision and blessing of the family, not secretly.

If, after investigating, it turns out that the woman is not ready or is already in a relationship with someone else, then the man can back out without causing embarrassment. On the other hand, if it is suitable and both families feel comfortable, then the process can continue to the proposal or engagement stage.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the merisik tradition in Bandar Sono Village is still maintained as a polite way to ensure the relationship between prospective couples leading to marriage. Merisik is carried out to get to know the prospective partner and their family better before moving on to the application stage. Apart from that, this tradition shows the man's seriousness and maintains the relationship in accordance with traditional and religious norms. Even though times have changed, merisik is still important as a respectful first step and keeps relationships healthy.

Educational Values in the Merisik Tradition on Restricting Young People's Interactions

The tradition of merisik not only has cultural meaning, but also holds very important educational values in the social and religious life of the Malay community in Bandar Sono Village. These values indirectly become a tool for character and moral education for the younger generation. First, the Value of Responsibility. The merisik tradition in Malay culture contains strong educational values, one of which

is the value of responsibility. From the start, men who want to have a relationship with a woman have to go through stages that involve the family. The presence of parents or family representatives in this process is proof of seriousness and a form of respect for the woman's family. This teaches that building a relationship is not just a personal matter between two people, but involves the extended family which must be respected.

According to Mr. Jamli and Mrs. Rubiah, as the parents of the man, the process of *merisik* is a way to ensure that the intention to establish a relationship is based on a clear goal. This educates young people not to play around in relationships, but to be ready to take responsibility if the relationship continues to the level of marriage. This value of responsibility is also seen *in* how men must be ready to face the woman's family, showing courage and mental readiness to go further.

According to Zulham and Mizana, as a couple who have undergone the *merisik* tradition, they also revealed that this process had a positive impact on the views of the family and society. They stated that after the rumors, the family saw their relationship as something serious. "The family will see that the man is really serious about this relationship, so he has the courage to step into the marriage stage," they said. This shows that the *merisik* tradition not only functions as a form of traditional procedures, but also as a means of forming a responsible attitude in establishing relationships.

Second, Education in Ethics, Politeness, and Self-Control. The tradition of *merisik* teaches that relationships between men and women must be within the bounds of decency and supervised by the family. Through this process, the socializing of young people becomes more controlled, not careless, and avoids slander in the eyes of society.

After the registration process is carried out, young couples are no longer free to meet or communicate without limits. Meetings between the two are usually limited in order to maintain the family's good name. According to Mrs. Juriati, as the woman's parent, this restriction is a subtle but effective form of social supervision. Children become more careful in establishing relationships because they feel that they are under the supervision of the extended family.

If children violate the boundaries by often meeting secretly, parents do not immediately scold them. Usually, they will give advice first. However, if the child continues to be unruly or difficult to control, the parents will take a firm stance. One step that can be taken is to speed up the marriage process so that unwanted things do not happen. The tradition of *merisik* also contains values of politeness and ethics in relationships. After *merisik*, communication between couples is more limited to things that are reasonable and polite. Based on interviews with traditional and religious figures, this restriction aims to maintain the family's honor and the dignity of both parties.

The couple Zulham and Mizana, confirmed this. They said, “We communicate more often through social media. If we meet, we usually just sit for a while in front of the house. We deliberately try not to create various perceptions.” This shows awareness and self-control in maintaining social boundaries, as well as a form of respect for the prevailing customary values.

Third, the values of openness and respect. The tradition of *merisik* contains important values in building open communication between children and parents. Children are taught to be honest and open about their feelings and future plans, including in terms of establishing relationships. On the other hand, parents also become more active in providing guidance and ensuring that the relationships established by their children are on the right track. This process creates a

harmonious family atmosphere where openness is the basis for building trust and mutual support. The involvement of parents from the beginning of the relationship fosters respect for them, while strengthening appreciation for the customary values that have been passed down from generation to generation. The couple Zulham and Mizana also expressed that the involvement of the family in the merisik process made them feel calmer and more confident in their relationship. For them, the presence of parents is a form of moral support as well as reinforcement that the relationship is serious and has received recognition from the environment. Parents from both parties, namely Jamli and Rubiah (the man) and Abdullah and Juriati (the woman), agreed that this process strengthens the culture of communication in the family. Children are encouraged not to hide their relationship, but to establish honest and open communication. Parents do not remain silent, but actively provide constructive guidance. This creates a healthy family climate, full of mutual trust, and supports the moral development of children.

Fourth, Acculturation and the Closeness of Malay and Islamic Values. The East Sumatran Youth Community in Batu Bara is a social group that is socio-culturally close to and influenced by Islamic teachings. (Ritonga, 2023). The tradition of merisik in Malay culture is in line with Islamic teachings, especially in maintaining boundaries between men and women. Relationships are not built on lust or trial and error, but are based on sincere intentions and clear goals, namely towards marriage. This tradition reflects religious values because it encourages relationships that are directed and in accordance with *Sharia*. Parents of both parties view merisik as a way to maintain honor and prevent actions that violate religious teachings. By involving the family from the start, this tradition helps form relationships that are halal, honorable, and full of responsibility. Fifth, Social Education and Respect for Customs. The merisik tradition is seen by the community

as an important part of social education which functions to maintain social order. By maintaining this tradition, the community participates in developing the younger generation to better understand the importance of maintaining the honor and good name of the family. Apart from that, the merisik tradition also teaches children to respect social values and customs. Parents believe that through this tradition, children are taught not to socialize carelessly and to appreciate the process of establishing relationships more. This is also a form of respect for the ancestors who have passed on this tradition. Even though the couple comes from different cultural backgrounds, the family still emphasizes the importance of respecting each other's customs. This is a form of relevant social education to foster an attitude of tolerance and respect for differences in society. Thus, the merisik tradition is not only part of traditional ceremonies, but also functions as an educational medium that teaches important values in household, religious, and social life. These values indirectly shape the character of the younger generation to be more responsible, polite, religious, and respectful of parents and existing customs.

Regarding the rules that limit the social gatherings of young couples after they have been married, the parents of the man believe that these rules are very good for maintaining boundaries and the direction of the relationship. These restrictions help maintain the honor of both parties and keep the couple away from unwanted things before there is a legal bond. These restrictions help avoid gossip and maintain the family's good name, while allowing the couple to get to know each other more maturely. Parents use a gentle but firm approach, giving advice and creating open communication. However, challenges arise with the ease of communication in the digital age and the difference in mindset between the older and younger generations, where children often feel these rules are too restrictive.

Differences in views between the older and younger generations in understanding customs like this are indeed unavoidable. However, parents still try to explain the meaning and purpose of the rules, and try to understand the children's point of view so that there is a balance in carrying out the tradition.

As an adaptation to the times, people are now trying to implement this tradition in a more flexible way, but still maintaining the essence of the tradition. For example, giving permission for communication via social media with supervision, or allowing open meetings in the family environment. In this way, the tradition is still preserved but remains relevant to the lives of the younger generation. The general public considers that merisik is a tradition that should be maintained because it has become part of the Malay cultural identity. In the midst of modernization, this tradition is a fortress against free association and maintains the good name of the family. In general, the practice of risik in Bandar Sono Village shows that the community still strongly upholds traditional and religious values. Although not all young generations fully understand the deep meaning of this tradition, the role of families, community leaders, and religion is very important to continue to instill and preserve these values.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Merisik tradition in Bandar Sono Village is part of the Malay Islamic culture that is still practiced. This process is carried out by the man's family to get to know the prospective woman politely before proceeding to the proposal stage. This tradition is a form of respect for the woman's family and an effort to maintain the honor of both parties. On the other hand, merisik also plays a role in limiting the social interaction of young people. With this tradition, the introduction between couples is carried out through an honorable path and in accordance with Islamic values and customs. The educational values in the merisik

tradition are related to the limitation of social interaction, namely the values of responsibility, ethics education, politeness, and self-control, the values of openness and respect, Malay Islamic values, then social education and respect for customs.

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