

Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul as Religious Tradition of Banjar Society in the Perspective of Cultural Communication

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Abstract: This research analyzes the tradition of Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul as a form of cultural communication in Banjar society in Martapura, South Kalimantan. This tradition is not only a religious commemoration of the figure of KH Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Ghani (Abah Guru Sekumpul), but also a medium for conveying cultural and religious values symbolically and collectively. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, this study highlights how ritual elements such as Maulid recitation, collective prayer, pilgrimage, and community social participation represent symbolic communication that strengthens cultural identity, social cohesion, and communal spirituality. Values such as gotong royong, respect for ulama, exemplary living, and ukhuwah Islamiyah are internalized and passed on across generations through this tradition. In addition, social media plays an important role in expanding the reach of haul cultural communication globally, enabling virtual participation and distribution of cultural values to various regions. Thus, Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul functions as a dynamic cultural communication space, connecting the local community with the wider community within a religious and cultural framework

Keywords: Haul abah guru sekumpul, cultural communication, symbolism

1. Introduction

The Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul tradition according to (Anwar et al., 2023) is one of the religious events that has deep meaning for the Banjar people, especially in Martapura, South Kalimantan. This annual event not only serves as a means of remembering the services and struggles of KH Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Ghani, known as Abah Guru Sekumpul, but also as a medium of cultural communication that strengthens social and spiritual ties among Muslims (Nasih, 2025).

The first Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul was held on 5 Rajab 1427 AH (2006 AD) and has since become an annual event that is always anticipated. The event usually lasts for three to four days, with its peak on 5 Rajab (Musyarapah & Hidayati, 2025). During this period, thousands to millions of pilgrims from various regions, even abroad, gather in Martapura to take part in a series of activities such as the recitation of Maulid Al-Habsyi, wirid, prayer together, and pilgrimage to the grave of Abah Guru Sekumpul.

According to (Ihsan & Tengah, 2014) haul Abah Guru Sekumpul has become an integral part of the social and religious life of the Banjar people. The event is not only attended by local people, but also attracts pilgrims from outside Kalimantan and abroad. From a cultural communication perspective, Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul is not just a religious ritual, but also a form of symbolic communication that strengthens the cultural values of the Banjar people. Through this tradition, values such as gotong royong, unity, and respect for the ulama are passed on and practiced collectively. In addition, with the advent of social media, the expression and documentation of haul events have also been transformed, expanding the reach and impact of this tradition to a wider audience. (Zaini & Bashori, 2025)

According to (Bakar & Prayogo, 2023) this research aims to analyze Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul as a religious tradition of the Banjar community from the perspective of cultural communication. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, a deeper understanding of the role and meaning of this tradition in shaping the cultural and social identity of the Banjar community is expected. In addition, through this study, it is expected to understand how this tradition functions as a medium of cultural communication that strengthens religious and social values in Banjar society.

2. Research Objectives

- To analyze the meaning of the Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul tradition as a form of cultural communication in the life of the Banjar people.
- To understand how Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul shapes and strengthens the cultural identity and religious and social values of the Banjar people.
- To examine the role of social media in transforming forms of communication and cultural expression in the implementation of Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul.

3. Research Questions

- How is the Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul tradition interpreted by the Banjar community from a cultural communication perspective?
- What are the cultural and religious values that are strengthened through the implementation of this tradition?
- What is the role of social media in expanding the reach of cultural communication related to Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul?

4. Literature Review

4.1 Cultural Communication: Concept and Theoretical Frameworks

Cultural communication is the process of spreading, maintaining, and transforming meaning through cultural symbols in society. According to (Rogers, 1976), cultural communication includes the exchange of information that shapes social identities and values. In the context of Banjar society, the Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul tradition functions as a medium of cultural communication that strengthens social cohesion and religious identity.

4.2 Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul: Tradition and Meaning

Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul is an annual commemoration in memory of KH Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Ghani, a charismatic scholar from Martapura, South Kalimantan. According to (Wulandari et al., 2023), this event not only serves as a means of remembering his services, but also as a medium of cultural communication that strengthens social and spiritual ties among Muslims. During the event, various activities such as the recitation of Maulid Al-Habsyi, wirid, joint prayers, and a pilgrimage to the grave of Abah Guru Sekumpul are carried out, which reflect the values of mutual cooperation, unity, and respect for the ulama.

4.3 The Role of Social Media in the Transformation of Tradition

With the presence of social media, the expression and documentation of haul events have also undergone a transformation. (Supriansyah, 2020) explains that social media expands the reach and impact of this tradition to a wider audience. Abah Guru Sekumpul related content circulated increasingly massive through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, allowing pilgrims from different regions and countries to follow and participate in this tradition virtually.

4.4 Sosial and Culture Values Haul Tradition

Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul also reflects the social and cultural values of the Banjar people. According to (Hariyanto, 2022), this tradition contains social values from local wisdom, such as gotong royong and togetherness. The Banjar community is actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the event, including setting up a post, providing free food and drinks, and assisting in various logistical aspects. This shows that haul is not only a religious commemoration, but also a social event that strengthens community solidarity.

4.5 Haul as a from of Symbolic Communication

According to (Barthes & Lavers, 2000), symbols in culture have meanings that can be analyzed to understand the messages they contain. In the context of Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul, elements such as Maulid recitation, pilgrimage, and collective prayer function as communication symbols that convey religious and social messages to the community. A semiotic analysis of these elements can provide further insight into how this tradition functions as a medium of cultural communication.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Type and Approach

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to provide an in-depth description of the meaning, function and cultural values in the Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul tradition as a form of cultural communication of the Banjar community. This approach allows researchers to explore social reality naturally and understand the symbolic meaning attached to this religious tradition.

5.2 Data Collection Technique

5.2.1 Participatory Observation

The researcher was directly involved in the Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul activities to naturally observe the various social and cultural aspects that took place, such as interactions between participants, the implementation of rituals, and the forms of symbolic communication that occurred in the event. Observations were made at several important activity points such as the main haul location, pilgrimage area, and community service posts.

5.2.2 Document Analysis

Data were collected from various sources of written and visual documentation, such as pamphlets, posters, haul guidebooks, as well as digital documentation (photos, videos, social media uploads). These documents were used to identify symbols, cultural messages, and forms of non-verbal communication in the context of the haul tradition.

5.3 Data Analysis Technique

5.3.1 Data Reduction

Filtering data based on categories relevant to the research focus, such as religious values, cultural symbols, and forms of social communication.

5.3.2 Data Presentation

Compile the results of observations and documentation in the form of narrative and thematic descriptions, which describe the dynamics of haul implementation and its meaning in the context of cultural communication.

5.3.3 Inference

Summarize the cultural communication patterns, social values, and symbolic meanings of the implementation of Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul, and answer the research questions systematically.

6. Finding Discussion

6.1 Research Question 1: How is the Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul tradition interpreted by the Banjar community from a cultural communication perspective?

Guru Sekumpul's haul is interpreted as a symbolic communication full of religious and cultural meanings. The Banjar people interpret the various activities in the haul (such as Maulid recitation, wirid, pilgrimage, and prayer together) as symbols that strengthen Islamic values and show love and respect for their great scholar, Abah Guru Sekumpul.



Figure 1. Hundreds of pilgrims reading prayers together

In Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, each element is a cultural myth that conveys messages of religion, piety and social solidarity. From the documentation, it can be seen that hundreds of people gathered at Miushola Ar-Raudah to recite prayers, which can be categorized as symbolic communication. The haul tradition functions as a medium to affirm the cultural identity of the Banjar people. Values such as gotong royong, kinship and togetherness can be seen from the involvement of the Banjar people.

The community's collective efforts in preparing for the event range from setting up a post, providing free refreshments, to serving guests. This strengthens social cohesion and emphasizes the Banjar's identity as a religious and communal society.



Figure 2. One of the haul posts of abah guru sekumpul

The photo shows that Haul Guru Sekumpul is not only a religious commemoration, but also a tradition with a close-knit family. The Banjar community in general showed their hospitality in welcoming pilgrims or haul pilgrims who came from various regions by setting up aid posts. The initiative to establish these posts is voluntary and spread along the route traveled in the context of Guru Sekumpul's Haul.

Haul is also interpreted as a means of preserving local wisdom. This tradition instills noble values to the younger generation, such as respect for scholars, exemplary life, and social responsibility. Cross-generational participation is a tangible form of how cultural communication occurs in the process of inheriting values.



Figure 3. A child holding a photo of guru sekumpul

This scene visually illustrates how the values of respect for the ulama and exemplary life are transmitted between generations. The small children brought along to the haul event represent the inheritance of noble values and local wisdom from an early age. The active participation of people of all ages in this event shows how Guru Sekumpul's Haul has become an effective forum for cultural communication, connecting the older generation with the younger generation in the spirit of respect and preservation of tradition.

In addition, technological developments expand the meaning of haul. Social media has become a new communication channel that allows for the widespread dissemination of haul values and spirit. The Banjar community and Banjar diaspora in various regions can follow the event information online, interact, and disseminate haul content, thus expanding the spiritual and social meaning of haul across geographies and generations.



Figure 4. Haul content on various social media platforms

In the moments before and after the Haul celebrations, it is common to find content on various social media platforms with the content of Guru Sekumpul's Haul. The sheer amount of content reinforces the idea of the event's large scale and wide range of participation, transcending physical and geographical boundaries thanks to the role of technology and social media. Thus, social media is not only a means of information, but also a platform to strengthen the social and spiritual bonds of Guru Sekumpul's pilgrims, wherever they may be.

Guru Sekumpul's Haul can also be interpreted as a space for spiritual and social reconciliation. Haul brings together individuals from different backgrounds in a common spiritual bond. This creates a space for cultural dialogue without having to be verbal through actions, symbols, and shared presence, a lively and meaningful cultural communication is formed.



Figure 5. Former vice president ma'ruf amin attends the 18th haul

The photo reinforces the idea that Guru Sekumpul's Haul is a space of spiritual and social reconciliation, where important figures from different backgrounds gather in an atmosphere of togetherness. The presence of former Vice President Ma'ruf Amin at Guru Sekumpul's 18th Haul shows how the event is a meeting point for national figures, while also reflecting the broad social and cultural dimensions of the haul. This photo provides visual evidence of how Guru Sekumpul's Haul creates a vibrant and meaningful space for cultural dialogue, where differences in background are overcome by spiritual similarities and respect for a revered religious figure. The presence of a national figure such as Ma'ruf Amin also shows how this event has a significance that transcends religious boundaries, becoming an important moment in the social and cultural life of the community.

6.2 Research Question 2: What cultural and religious values are reinforced through the implementation of this tradition?

From the observation of Guru Sekumpul's Haul celebration, this event is not only a form of religious commemoration of the death of a great scholar, but also a complex cultural and social religious event. In the context of Banjar society, the haul reinforces and reproduces various cultural and religious values that collectively shape community identity and solidarity.

6.2.1 Cultural Values

One of the most prominent cultural values in haul implementation is gotong royong. The Banjar community voluntarily cooperates in setting up posts, preparing meals, providing resting places for worshipers, and helping with traffic management and environmental cleanliness. These activities show that haul is not just a ritual, but also a place to strengthen social cohesion, where cooperation between citizens is built selflessly for the smooth running of the event and the comfort of guests.

6.2.2 Religious Values

The implementation of this haul is a concrete form of ta'dzim (respect) to KH Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Ghani (Abah Guru Sekumpul), a charismatic ulama figure who is respected not only for his religious knowledge, but also his exemplary character. Through the pilgrimage to his grave, the recitation of the Prophet's Maulid, and the joint wirid, the congregation expresses the value of the spiritual relationship between student and teacher (sanad ruhaniyah) which is highly upheld in the Islamic tradition of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah. The haul tradition also strengthens the value of collective spirituality, where worshipers gather to dhikr, pray, and deepen their appreciation of Islamic values. The involvement of the masses in a unified worship creates a strong and deep religious atmosphere, which not only strengthens individual faith, but also builds collective awareness as religious people.

Haul also strengthens the internalization of the exemplary value of the Prophet and the scholars, especially through the narration of Abah Guru Sekumpul's life and morals that are often told in haul lectures. The congregation is invited not only to commemorate, but also to emulate the simple, tolerant, and loving life attitude as exemplified by the teacher. The values of good manners, social responsibility, and obedience to religious teachings are the main substances that are instilled.

With the presence of millions of worshipers from various regions and backgrounds, haul becomes a symbol of binding the unity of Muslims (ukhuwah islamiyah). Interactions between worshipers in worship and social spaces form emotional and spiritual bonds that are not limited by ethnic, geographical, or social status differences. This proves that haul functions as a space for social and spiritual reconciliation, as shown by the presence of national figures who participated in the event.

6.3 Research Question 3: What is the role of social media in expanding the reach of cultural communication related to Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul?

Social media plays a very significant role in expanding the reach of cultural communication related to the Haul of Abah Guru Sekumpul. This digital transformation in religious and cultural practices shows that social media is not only a modern means of communication, but has also become a new medium in the transmission of cultural and religious values of the Banjar community. Platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have been actively utilized by the committee, the congregation, and the wider community to disseminate information, documentation of activities, and spiritual narratives surrounding the figure of KH Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Ghani.

First, social media functions as a tool for the documentation and distribution of cultural symbols. In the context of cultural semiotics, as proposed by Roland Barthes, images, videos and text uploads spread across social media have symbolic meanings that convey religious and cultural messages to a wider audience. Content such as Maulid readings, pilgrimage processions, joint prayers, and the community's welcome to pilgrims from outside the region become visual representations of the values of mutual cooperation, respect for the ulama, and collective piety. Thus, social media helped strengthen the cultural symbols of haul as a form of cultural communication that transcends geographical boundaries.

Second, social media has changed the character of haul from a local event to a global phenomenon. Through the online dissemination of information, pilgrims far from Martapura can still be spiritually and socially involved in the haul. This creates a virtual and inclusive religious experience, allowing the Banjar diaspora and Muslims from around the world to connect with the values and spirit of the haul. The interactivity of social media also opens up space for discussion, spiritual reflection and the strengthening of emotional bonds between congregants online, making social media a bridge of cultural communication between regions.

Third, social media strengthens the collective identity of the Banjar community. This identity is formed and reinforced through visual and textual narratives that are widely distributed and accepted by the virtual community. Posts about Guru Sekumpul's life story, preaching quotations. This shows how social media has become an arena for contestation as well as consolidation of the Banjar community's religious and cultural identity in the digital realm. This shows how social media has become an arena for contestation as well as consolidation of the religious and cultural identity of the Banjar community in the digital realm.

Finally, the role of social media can also be analyzed in terms of mobilization power and social participation. Ahead of the haul, various logistical information such as post locations, transportation routes, activity schedules, and health services were disseminated through social media groups. This shows how cultural communication that was originally oral and local has evolved into a communication system that is fast, efficient and reaches a wide public. Social media not only disseminates information, but also coordinates collective actions that support the sustainability of the haul tradition systemically.

7. Conclusion

The Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul tradition is a tangible form of cultural communication in Banjar society that is rich in symbols, values and collective meanings. This tradition is not only a religious commemoration of the death of a charismatic scholar, but also serves as a medium of symbolic communication that transmits cultural values such as gotong royong, kinship, respect for scholars, and the spirit of togetherness across generations. Through ritual symbols such as Maulid readings, pilgrimages, joint prayers and other social activities, the Banjar community actively maintains its cultural identity and strengthens social cohesion through religious cultural expressions.

In addition, cultural communication in this tradition has also expanded significantly through the role of social media. Digital platforms have become a new channel for disseminating the spiritual meaning and cultural value of haul to a wider audience, creating a virtual space for religious interaction and strengthening the collective identity of the Banjar people. Social media enables the active participation of the global community, making this tradition no longer local but a national and even international cultural phenomenon. Therefore, Haul Abah Guru Sekumpul not only strengthens the cultural heritage of the Banjar people, but also shapes a dynamic, adaptive and transformative cultural communication space in the digital era.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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