

**Islam and Traditional Fabrics:
Symbolic Da'wah in Sambas Malay Weaving Motifs, West Kalimantan**

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Keywords

*Symbolic Da'wah,
Weaving Motifs,
Sambas Malay*

Abstract

This article aims to analyze symbolic da'wah through the weaving motifs of Malay Sambas, West Kalimantan. This study uses an interpretive paradigm with a semiotic method. The data sources in this study were 22 motifs of Sambas Malay woven fabric. Data was obtained through observation and interviews. The data obtained were then analyzed using the semiotic triangle meaning model of Charles Sander Peirce. This study finds that the woven fabric motif is formed through a long process and closely relates to the socio-cultural construction of the Sambas Malay society. At this level, the Sambas Malay weaving motif is created from three elements: beauty, cultural identity, and the ethnoreligious reality of the Sambas Malay society, and efforts to internalize Islamic teachings in Sambas Malay life through the meaning and symbolic message of the motif. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Sambas Malay weaving motif is not only a cultural product of the Sambas Malay society but also a symbolic da'wah medium in the Sambas Malay society through a cultural approach.

Kata kunci

*Dakwah Simbolik,
Motif Tenun,
Melayu Sambas*

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dakwah simbolik melalui motif kain tenun Melayu Sambas, Kalimantan Barat. Kajian ini menggunakan paradigma interpretif dengan metode semiotika. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah 22 motif kain tenun Melayu Sambas. Data diperoleh melalui observasi dan wawancara. Data yang diperoleh, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model semiotika triangle meaning Charles Sander Peirce. Kajian ini menemukan bahwa motif kain tenun terbentuk melalui proses yang panjang dan memiliki hubungan erat dengan konstruksi sosial budaya masyarakat Melayu Sambas. Pada tataran ini motif tenun Melayu Sambas terbentuk dari tiga unsur yaitu keindahan, identitas kultural dan realitas etnoreligius masyarakat Melayu Sambas, dan upaya internalisasi ajaran Islam dalam kehidupan Melayu Sambas melalui makna dan pesan simbolik motif tersebut. Berangkat dari temuan tersebut dapat disimpulkan bahwa motif tenun Melayu Sambas tidak hanya produk budaya masyarakat Melayu Sambas, tetapi juga sebagai medium dakwah simbolik dalam masyarakat Melayu Sambas melalui pendekatan budaya.

Introduction

Indonesia has a diversity of ethnic groups and cultures. Indonesia's cultural diversity has implications for the variety of cultural products. These products range from language, culinary, architecture, and traditions to weaving crafts. Especially for woven fabrics according to Suwati Kartiwa (2007), woven fabrics are the work of the Indonesian people, which are spread throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Kartiwa's opinion shows that each region has its own woven fabric; it is just that the shape and pattern are different. The decorative motifs of woven fabrics in Indonesia are countless. The richness of woven fabric motifs in Indonesia is due to each region's socio-cultural background. Differences in socio-cultural backgrounds then cause differences in expressing their culture in woven fabric motifs (Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, 1983).

Woven fabric motifs are a form of visual communication. Barnard (2013) states that decoration in clothing is a human way to construct and communicate their identity. At this level, the decorative motifs in woven fabrics highlight more than just the beauty aspect. Behind all the weaving motifs contain a specific message to be conveyed. The message is closely related to the construction of the reality of the people who own the woven fabric. This construction of the existence of society then causes the batik motifs or woven fabrics of each region to be different.

The socio-cultural construction of each society is different. This social construction has implications for a society's life system and mindset. Socio-cultural construction is then represented in the cultural products of a society. In other words, the social construction of a liberal society will give birth to a product of liberal culture. The Muslim community's social construction will birth Islamic cultural products. This assumption shows that the social construction of the society will give birth to various cultural products, including the woven cloth of the Sambas Malay society.

The woven fabric motif is one of the Sambas' Malay cultural heritages. Malay identity is represented in the motifs on the weaving. The interaction between the culture and teachings of the Sambas Malay Islamic religion forms the weaving motifs. The interaction between Islam and culture is a natural thing. This reality is because Islam cannot be separated from Malay Sambas. Even Islam is the difference between Malays and non-Malays. The prominence of the Islamism of Malay Sambas is illustrated in a famous phrase in Sambas, namely if someone (Dayak and Chinese) converts religion by embracing Islam, it is not called *muallaf* but is called *Masuk Melayu* (converting to Malay) or *turun Melayu* (descending Malay). Vice versa, if a Malay converts to another religion, it is not called *murtad* but a *keluar Melayu* (Lathifah, 2018; Mualimin, 2020; Wahab, 2017).

The above reality shows that Islam is part of the Sambas Malay identity. In other words, the Malay people of Sambas firmly hold Islamic values. So in every aspect of life, Islamic values become the spirit of the identity of the Malay Sambas. Malay identity is an identity that shows the Malay Sambas' civilization (Fitriyani, 2002). This identity is reflected in various Sambas Malay cultural products, including woven fabric

motifs. In other words, the weaving motif represents the identity of the Malay Sambas. Therefore, it can be said that the Sambas Malay weaving motif is loaded with messages of Islamic teachings.

The weaving motif in communication studies can be classified as a sign (Vera, 2014). In the view of Sobur (2013), clothing with its parts is a marker related to signs as something that has meaning. In other words, fashion decoration (motif) is a sign representing a message from the wearer. Alek Sobur's opinion shows that the sign has an essential role as a medium and material in communication. Therefore, the interpretation process plays a significant role in exploring the meaning and message contained in a sign.

The reciprocal relationship between the representation of Islam and the cultural identity of the Sambas Malay society shows that the weaving motif is not just decoration without having a specific message. The close relationship between Islam and Malay Sambas implies that the messages in the weaving motif are related to the message of Islam and efforts to internalize Islamic teachings in life. In other words, the close relationship shows that the weaving motif is part of a symbolic form of da'wah through the clothing culture of the Sambas Malay society.

This article examines the symbolic da'wah in the Sambas Malay weaving motif. Studies on the Sambas Malay woven fabric and its motifs have been carried out from various perspectives. Mee (2010), in his research, found that Sambas Malay weaving represents the existence of cultural interactions and exchanges between the Sambas Malay society and other social groups. In line with that, Natalia (2019), in her study, also found that the background of the Sambas Malay woven fabric is the result of the cultural interaction of the Malay society with other ethnicities, such as the Chinese and Dayak in Sambas. In addition, Natalia also found that the various motifs on the woven fabrics represent the socio-cultural reality of the Sambas Malay society. From an educational point of view, Anwaruddin (2010) found that developing cultural values in the Sambas weaving tradition can be done by integrating cultural values into social studies education learning. Likewise, Purnama, Utami, and Prihatiningtyas (2020) found ethnomathematics in the Sambas Malay woven fabric motif. Therefore, these motifs can be developed as a source of school mathematics learning materials.

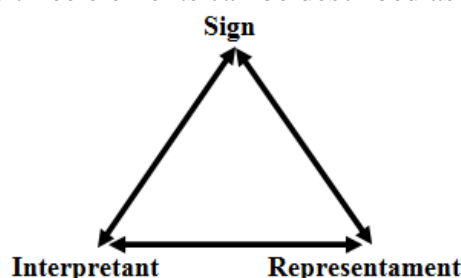
Cultural and educational perspectives have dominated previous studies on Sambas Malay woven fabrics and motifs. In other words, there is a void of studies that specifically analyze the relationship between messages in the traditional cloth motifs of society and the form of symbolic da'wah. Therefore, this article aims to fill this void by studying the Sambas Malay woven fabric motif.

Method

This study is a research with a qualitative-interpretive paradigm with semiotic research methods. The study was conducted from January to June 2022. Specifically, 22 weaving motifs became the data source in this study. The data in this study is the symbolic meaning of the Sambas Malay weaving motif. Data were obtained in two

ways. First, observing the Sambas Malay weaving motif. Second, conducting interviews with cultural figures and woven fabric conservationists related to the socio-cultural background of weaving motifs. There were six informants in this study. The informants are divided into two categories: the artisans and creators of the Sambas Malay weaving motifs. Second, the cultural figures of the Sambas Malay society. Informants with these two categories are considered relevant in this study because they have overall knowledge about Sambas Malay woven fabrics both in their manufacture and socio-cultural background related to woven fabrics.

The data obtained were then analyzed using the semiotic triangle meaning Charles Sanders Peirce model. Three elements are the focus of the triangle meaning analysis model, namely signs, representations, and interpretations. A sign is a physical form of a sign, either in the form of visuals, text, or other conditions. Representamen is a socio-cultural construction related to signs. In contrast, interpretation is the holistic meaning of a sign (Jappy, 2013; Vera, 2014). Peirce views that the three elements are interconnected with each other, so the meaning of a sign must pay attention to the relationship and continuity between these elements (Deledalle, 2000; Jappy, 2013). The relationship between these three elements can be described as follows:



Source: Nawiroh Vera “*Semiotika dalam Riset Komunikasi*”
Figure 1. The semiotic triangle meaning model

Results and Discussion

Weaving Motifs: Types and Classification

The Sambas Malays are an ethnic group that predominantly inhabits the border area between Indonesia and Malaysia, namely the Sambas district. Culturally, the Sambas Malay society has a very close relationship with Islam. This connection can be seen in Islam not only being a religion but also becoming the cultural identity of the Sambas Malays. Risa (2016) and Junaidi (2014) found that during the Sambas Malay sultanate, Islam was the kingdom's official religion.

The history of the journey of the Sambas sultanate recorded that before the entry of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism became the religions that the Sambas people widely embraced. When Islam entered Sambas, the Islamic da'wah movement was carried out by internalizing Islamic teachings in every dimension of people's lives (Musa, 2010). These efforts aim to promote the teachings of Islam so that those who have not embraced Islam are expected to be interested in embracing Islam. As for the people of Sambas who have embraced Islam, the internalization of Islamic teachings aims to

strengthen their faith further. This goal is realistic because, with this internalization, Islam will become essential to the Sambas people. It is possible with this internalization of every culture that breathes Islam into something prestigious for the people at that time (Mualimin, 2020).

In practice, da'wah is carried out through the internalization of Islamic teachings not only through the rules that apply in the kingdom but also on the cultural aspects of the Sambas Malay society, such as marriage, eating procedures, entertainment, agriculture, art, the motifs of Sambas Malay woven fabrics (Adnan *et al.*, 2019; Hidayat, 2018; Kurniawan & Suratman, 2018; Masrura *et al.*, 2020; Mualimin, 2020; Mualimin *et al.*, 2018; Risa, 2014; Wahab, 2017). This reality shows that through the internalization of Islamic teachings in the Sambas Malay society, this reality indicates that da'wah is not only through a structural approach but also a cultural approach. This reality is in line with previous studies which found that the practice of da'wah through an artistic process can be found in almost every region in Indonesia (Handayani, 2020; Junita *et al.*, 2021; Nurhikmah *et al.*, 2021).

The motif is a decoration owned by the Sambas Malay woven fabric. Weaving motifs can be said to be the crown of every sheet of woven fabric. This is because a piece of woven cloth's beauty and uniqueness are strongly influenced by its motif. The more attractive the woven motif and the difficulty in making it, the more expensive the price will be.

The Sambas Malay weaving motif is not only related to the beauty of the decoration in each sheet of woven cloth. The motifs in each fabric sheet also have meaning, namely as a form of symbolic da'wah in the Sambas society. This is because the weaving motif has a message related to the practice of Islamic teachings. Some weaving motifs even have stories and history associated with the reality of the Sambas Malay society in practicing Islamic teachings.

The number of Sambas Malay weaving motifs is estimated to be more than three hundred. However, the weaving motif that is the object of this research is a motif that has been registered with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights to obtain intellectual property rights (HAKI). These motifs are as follows:





Table 1. The name of the Sambas Malay Weaving Motif

No	Motif Name	HAKI Registration Number
1	Bintang Timur	C00200403322-3450
2	Tabur Bintang Bunga Sebangar	C00200403322-3451
3	Tabur Awan	C00200403322-3452
4	Pucuk Rebung Bunga	C00200403322-3453
5	Kain Bekasad (beturus)	C00200803374
6	Padang Tibakar Dagin Kote Mesir	C00200803375
7	Kain Lunggi Betabor Mate Ayam	C00200803376
8	Kain Lunggi Anggon Rantai S	C00200803377
9	Kain Padang Tibakar Dagin Serong Mawar	C00200803378
10	Kain Padang Tebakar Dagin Serong Pita	C00200803379
11	Kain Becual Parang Mannang	C00200803380
12	Lunggi Betabor Sapar Peranggi	C00200803381
13	Kain Padang Tibakar Dagin Ragam Banji	C00200901317

14	Kain Betabor Bunga Cempaka	C00200901318
15	Kain Serong Sisik Ikan	C00200901319
16	Kain Betabor Bunga Anggur	C00200901320
17	Kain Betabor Bunga Selimpau	C00200901321
18	Kain Padang Tibakar Daging Lunggi Pucuk Daun Galli	C00200901322
19	Kain Padang Tibakar Daging Sawa' Melakko	C00200901323
20	Kain Betabor Bunga Cengkeh	C00200901324
21	Kain Betabor Garam Sibukkok	C00200901325
22	Bunge Kunyyik	C11201600262

Overall, the Sambas Malay weaving motifs can be classified into two. First, motives that do not have a specific background of occurrence. Weaving motifs that do not have a background in this emergence are dominated by objects related to the philosophy of life. In addition, this motif that does not have a specific background of emergence is inspired by various things that are directly related to the life activities of the Sambas Malay society. The weaving motifs in this first classification are as follows :

Table 2. The Sambas Malay Weaving motif does not have a specific origination background

Motifs Name	Picture	Existence of Malay Sambas
Tabur Bintang Bunga Sebangar		This motif relates to the beauty of the stars at night and the sebangar flowers for the Sambas Malay society.
Pucuk Rebung Bunga		This motif is related to the philosophy of bamboo shoots in the Sambas Malay society. For the Malay community of Sambas, bamboo shoots symbolize optimism in realizing their dreams but are always humble when they have achieved success, as bamboo shoots always grow to the top. However, after becoming hard, bamboo will bend down when old.
Kain Bekasad (beturus)		Bekasad is a Sambas Malay language which means alternating. While beturus means upright, straight, or elongated. Thus, the primary form of the motif is in the form of an arrangement of alternating strands of floral motifs between each row. The shape of the lines in the motif has a close relationship with consistency and accuracy in the manufacture of woven fabrics.
Kain Lunggi Anggon Rantai S		This motif relates to the philosophy of kinship in the Sambas Malay society. Family relationships are analogous to chains that bind and connect at this level.

Kain Padang
Tibakar Dagin
Serong Mawar



This motif is related to the roses favored by Malay Sambas women.

Kain Padang
Tebakar Dagin
Serong Pita



This motif is related to the function of the ribbon for the Sambas Malay society in making decorations, handicrafts, and beautifying various objects.

Linggi Betabor
Sapar Peranggi



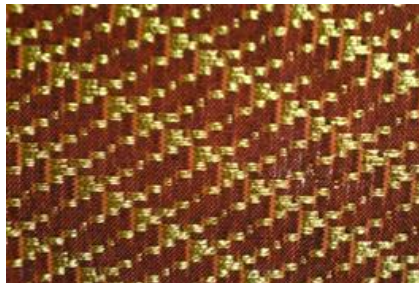
This motif is inspired by the vegetable plant, named by the Malay society of Sambas with Peranggi. These vegetables can be processed into a variety of traditional Malay food products. In addition, this vegetable can thrive in almost all areas of Sambas.

Kain Betabor
Bunga Cempaka



This motif is related to the habit of Sambas Malay women using Cempaka flowers to beautify themselves and as a bun decoration.

Kain Serong
Sisik Ikan



This motif relates to the reality of the life of the Sambas Malay society in the past, in which it was easy to get fish in the river to meet their daily needs. At that time, there were so many fish in the river that to get fish, even did not have to use tools such as fishing rods or nets, but you could use your bare hands, which the Sambas Malays call *ngammal* activities. The number of fish is due to the sustainability of the rivers in Sambas.

Kain Betabor
Bunga Selimpau



This motif is related to a tree called the Sambas Malay society by the name selimpau. This tree grows by itself and is often found on the banks of rivers and has many benefits, especially the function of its roots in resisting erosion, and the fruit can be consumed.

Kain Padang
Tibakar Daging
Sawa' Melakko



This motif is inspired by the python, found in rice fields, gardens, and forests in Sambas. The Sambas Malays call this snake the Sawa' snake. This snake is easy to find because the ecosystem in Sambas is still well preserved.

Kain Betabor
Bunga Cengkeh

This motif is related to the cloves that some Sambas Malay society planted. In



ancient times clove was an essential spice for cooking and traditional medicine. Cloves were a trading commodity in ancient times. Traders came to the Sambas area looking for cloves to be traded in several places, such as Singapore and China.

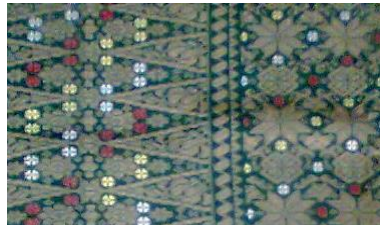

Kain Betabur
 Garam
 Sibukkok



This motif is inspired by the daily life of Malay Sambas, who uses salt as the main ingredient in every dish. Salt in ancient times was sold in lump form. The people of Sambas call this lump of salt a "situkok" or "sibukkok." Experiences and twists and turns often use the term salt in the Sambas Malay society. The word salt shows this meaning, for example, in the term "asam garam kehidupan," which means the twists and turns of life. Another term related to salt is "orang yang lebih banyak makan garam", which means people with much experience.

Second, weaving motifs that have a background in appearance. In this group, motifs are not merely decorations of woven fabrics but also become a medium for telling certain events or history. Nine weaving motifs specifically have the background of their emergence, which are as follows:

Table 3. The Sambas Malay Weaving Motif, which has a background of the emergence

Motifs Name	Picture	Emergence Background
Bintang Timur		The background of the appearance of the bintang timur motif is related to the old Sambas Malay habit of estimating the arrival of the Fajr prayer time. In ancient times, the clock was an item that was difficult to obtain and could even be considered a luxury item. This view is because not everyone in ancient times could have a clock. Therefore, to predict the entry of prayer times, the Sambas Malays use natural signs, including looking at the stars. For the Sambas Malay society, if the eastern star has appeared, the time for the morning prayer has entered.
Tabur Awan		The Tabur Awan motif is inspired by the daily life of Malay Sambas who work as farmers. Most of the Sambas Malays work as farmers. On a sunny day, the sun makes the farmers hot, so they take shelter intermittently. However, farmers are often assisted by clouds that cover the sun to protect farmers from the heat caused by the hot sun. The existence of this cloud makes farmers more enthusiastic to complete their work. This condition inspired the weaving

Padang Tibakar
Dagin Kote
Mesir



artisans to meditate on it in a weaving motif.

This motif is motivated by the history of the development of Islam in the Sambas kingdom to become the center of Islamic civilization in the archipelago. This motif tells of a young Sambas Malay, Muhammad Basiuni Imran, who studied religion at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. After returning from Egypt, Basiuni Imran told his family about the beauty of the fence surrounding the palace in the Egyptian city. Basiuni Imran, while telling the story, also drew the shape of the fence of the Egyptian city palace on a piece of paper.

Kain Becual
Parang
Mannang



This motif is motivated by the history of the battles carried out by the Malay Sambas in expelling the rebels. In several battles, the Malays always experienced defeat. Then representatives of the Malays went to the Sultan to ask for his advice and prayers. During the meeting, the Sultan ordered the Malays to use machetes as weapons. The Sultan also ordered them to read verses of the Qur'an when there was going to be a battle and put his trust in Allah SWT. After that, the Malay Sambas won the next battle, and the rebels were expelled.

Kain Betabor
Bunga Anggur



This motif is motivated by the reality of trade in the Sambas kingdom in the past. The existence of grapes in the past indicates a fairly busy trading activity in Sambas. At that time, traders who came from outside brought goods not produced by the people of Sambas, such as grapes and silk thread. Meanwhile, the traders buy spices and natural products, primarily made in Sambas, to be traded to other communities.

Bunge Kunyyik



This motif is motivated by the importance of turmeric plants for the Sambas Malay society. In everyday life, the turmeric plant is used not only as a spice but also as medicine, vegetables, health, and even as an ingredient in making yellow rice which Malay Sambas commonly use as a symbol of safety, prosperity, and spirituality.

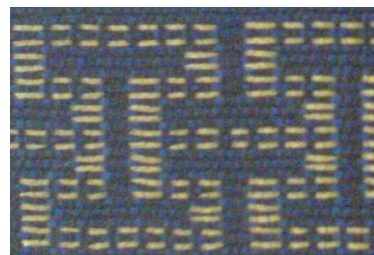
Kain lunggi
betabor mate
ayam

This motif is motivated by the history that occurred in the village of Seberang related to a dispute between two immigrant tribes in ancient times. The disagreement between these two tribes caused each tribe not to approve if one of its tribe members wanted to marry another tribe. Once upon a time, there was a love affair between a man and a



woman from the two tribes. This couple's relationship is certainly not approved by their respective tribes. However, because their love was big enough, this couple met with traditional leaders to ask for a solution. To solve this problem, traditional leaders called representatives of these two tribes. The traditional leaders ordered the two tribes to fight the rooster, agreeing that if the chicken from tribe A won, the marriage was annulled, but if the chicken from tribe B won, the marriage continued. After the fight, it turned out that the chicken from tribe B won and the chicken from tribe A was declared defeated because his eyes were pecked until they were blind. Upon the defeat of tribe A, then the marriage was carried out. However, tribe A provided a condition that the head of tribe B had to make lunggi cloth with a chicken eye motif as a *hantaran* (wedding gift).

Kain Padang
Tibakar Dagin
Ragam Banji



This motif is motivated by the history of the struggle of the Sambas Malay youth against Dutch colonialism. After hearing the news about Indonesia's independence, he took the initiative to lower the colonial flag flying in the courtyard of the Al-Watzikhubillah palace and replaced it with the Red and White flag. When they were about to raise the Red and White flag, they were shot by the allied soldiers and died. Then the blood flowed from the young man's body and formed an irregular line. The tragedy occurred on 27 October 1945. The youths who were shot were Ahmad Sood and Tabrani Ahmad. In subsequent developments, 27 October is commemorated as the day of the resurrection of Sambas.

Islam and Sambas Malay Relations: Socio-Cultural Background Messages of Symbolic Da'wah Weaving Motifs

The Sambas Malays initially adhered to the Hindu-Buddhist religion. The existence of Hindu-Buddhist is based on the history of the ruling kingdom in Sambas influenced by Hindu-Buddhist under the rule of Majapahit (Musa, 2010). Islamization in the Sambas kingdom began with the arrival of the Raja Tengah from the Brunei Darussalam sultanate in the 16th century. This Islamization began with the matchmaking of Ratu Sepudak's son, Raden Mas Ayu Bungsu, with the son of the Raja Tengah, Raden Sulaiman. It was Raden Sulaiman who later became the founder of the Alwatzikhubillah Sambas sultanate. Raden Sulaiman, during his reign, held the title Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin I. During his reign, Raden Sulaiman made Islam the official religion of the sultanate (Risa, 2014, 2016). The Sultan's policy facilitated the

process of peaceful Islamization of the people of Sambas. Through this policy, Islamization took place intensively in people's lives through internalizing Islamic values in the social and political system.

After the Islamization pioneered by Raden Sulaiman, Islam became the way of life for every people of Malay Sambas. The presence of Islam in the life of Malay Sambas gradually shifted the Hindu-Buddhist influence in Sambas. In subsequent developments, Sambas became an icon of Malay and Islamic Civilization on the island of Borneo. The brilliance of Islamic civilization in Sambas is evidenced by the fact that this area was once the center of Islamic studies. This glory occurred during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Syafiuddin Sambas II. Sambas has produced many scholars from various regions as a center for Islamic studies. These scholars include Maharaja Imam Muhammad Basiuni Imran and Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas. Even Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas is the founder of the Qadariyah Naqsabandiyah order.

The Sambas Malay society makes Islamic teachings a cultural identity and spirit in every dimension of life (Fitriyani, 2002; Ishak & Abdullah, 2012; Mee, 2010, 2012). Islamic teachings in every dimension of people's lives are also reflected in the various cultural products of the Sambas Malay society (Ibrahim, 2018). At this level, Islam is a religion adhered to by Malay society and a differentiator between Malays and non-Malays (Collins, 2005; Din, 2011; Junaidi, 2014; Solihin, 2017). The prominence of their Islam is reflected in a famous phrase in Sambas, namely the entry of someone (Dayak and Chinese) into Islam is called *Masuk Melayu* (entering Malay) or *turun Melayu* (descending Malay) (Alfath, 2015; Chua, 2007; Mualimin *et al.*, 2018; Mualimin, 2020; Wahab, 2017; Wu, 2015).

The above reality shows that Islam is part of the Sambas Malay identity. Religious symbols in the Sambas Malay society are used as reinforcement and pride. The close relationship between Islam and the Sambas Malay identity is in line with Azra's view that religion has, to a certain extent, become a specific characteristic for certain ethnic groups or communities (Haryanto, 2012). Azra's view indirectly shows that religion, under certain conditions, tends to be communal. At this level, religion becomes inherent in specific ethnic social systems and structures.

Sambas Malay culture is closely related to Islamic teachings. There is a diversity of Sambas Malay culture in each region, especially in the implementation procedures. However, the essence of the culture is still the same. This is because the spirit in the culture is the same, namely the teachings of Islam. Among the Sambas Malay culture that still survives today, namely *ratib*, *tepung tawar*, *pungngas taon*, *berobat kampong*, *zapin lembut*, and *tandak Sambas*.

The Symbolic Meaning of the Motif: Capturing the Message of Da'wah in the Sambas Malay Weaving Motifs

Natural conditions strongly influence Sambas Malay weaving motifs. This influence can be seen clearly from plant motifs' dominance over the overall weaving

motifs owned. The supremacy of plant motifs is not only influenced by the natural conditions in which the Sambas Malays live but also by the beliefs held by the Sambas Malays to Islamic doctrine. This reality is in line with Alfath's (2015) view that there is a mutual identification relationship between Islam and the cultural identity of Malay society. Departing from Alfath's perspective, the Islamic teachings behind the dominance of plant motifs in Malay Sambas weaving motifs show that the feasibility of culture in Sambas Malay is measured based on Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is unsurprising that various attempts to dialectic culture with religious teachings are made.

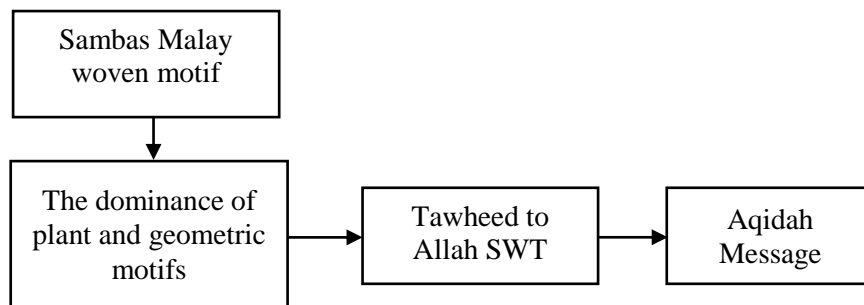
The above reality shows that Islam is closely related to the socio-cultural life of the Sambas Malays. For Malay Sambas, Islam is not only a religious doctrine that regulates human relations with God but also regulates human relations horizontally. Not only that, but Islam is also the primary support for the existence of culture in Malay Sambas (Mee, 2012, 2010; Martin, 2014; Frith, 2000; Nagata, 1974). Therefore, it is natural that the weaving motif, a cultural product, the basic form accepted by the Sambas Malays, does not conflict with Islamic teachings. At this level, Islam is transformed into an ideology in the social culture of Malay Sambas.

The role of religion as a supporter of cultural existence is a necessity. According to Setiawan (2012), faith, on the one hand, can be a source of morals and ethics as well as absolute. However, on the other hand, religion can become a cultural system when humans respond to revelation and undergo a transformation process in human consciousness and cognition systems. In this context, religion then becomes a cultural phenomenon. In the next turn, religion becomes the primary support and power of cultural mobilization in society as a cultural system.

The influence of Islam in the Malay Sambas weaving motif shows that the meaning contained in the weaving motif comes from Islamic teachings. This meaning comes not only from the motif itself but also aspects related to it, such as color and cultural values in the process of making it. The meaning contained in this is a message both for users, makers, and people who have weaving—referring to the opinion of Anshari (2005), who stated that the message of da'wah is Islamic teachings. Therefore, the message in the Malay Sambas weaving motif can be said to be a message of da'wah because it contains Islamic teachings.

The message of da'wah in the Sambas Malay weaving motif can be mapped into three classifications: messages of aqidah, messages of shari'a, and messages of morality. First, the message of faith. The meaning of each Sambas Malay weaving motif does not explicitly contain the message of faith. However, if photographed as a whole, the Sambas Malay weaving motif is based on the message of faith. This can be seen from the dominance of plant and geometric motifs and very few human or animal motifs in the Sambas Malay weaving motifs. Animal or human motifs are feared to cause shirk. This concern is given to specific communities; animal or human motifs worship ancestors and the creatures who become the motif.

The reality of the dominance of plant and geometric forms has become the basic concept in making Sambas Malay weaving motifs. This understanding remembers that since Islamization in Sambas until now, it has been challenging to find weaving motifs in the form of animals, let alone humans. Although there are several animal motifs, they are not identical to the original form. Thus, weaving motif design avoids polytheism for the Sambas Malays, which incidentally is identical to Islam.



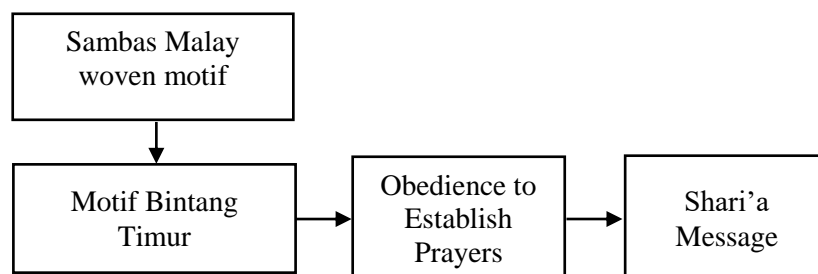
Source: Research results

Figure 2. Aqidah Message Scheme in Weaving Motif

Second, the message of the Shari'a is related to the rules regarding worship and muamalah. The Sambas Malay weaving motif only conveys a little of the message of the Shari'a. Several motifs specifically lead to the message of shari'ah, the Bintang Timur motif. This motif tells the Sambas Malay custom in ancient times in determining the time of the dawn call to prayer. The appearance of the eastern star is used as a benchmark that the time for the dawn prayer has entered. This is as stated by NZ:

"...In the past, clocks were a luxury. Not everyone had a clock. So to determine the time for the morning prayer, usually by looking at the sky. If the star in the east is visible, it is considered to have entered the time for the dawn prayer. This habit is the inspiration for creating the Bintang Timur motif."

This information shows that prayer is essential for Sambas Malay society worship. Although it has limitations in determining prayer times, Malay Sambas use natural signs to determine prayer times. The message of Islamic da'wah in the Bintang Timur motif can be described as follows:



Source: Research results

Figure 3. Shari'a Message Scheme in Weaving Motif

Third, the moral message is the message that is most commonly found in the Sambas Malay weaving motif. Almost all message in the Sambas Malay weaving motif

is related to moral nobility. This reality shows that moral nobility is essential for Malay Sambas. The importance of morals for Malays is in line with Venus' (2015) view that the core of the system of ideas and beliefs of Malay behavior is the concept of *hati* and *budi*. In this context, Venus terms morality for Malays with the term *budi*.

According to Sibarani, as quoted by Hui (2010), the heart and *budi* for the Malays have both an emotional and spiritual dimension. In this context, Sibarani divides the concept of the heart epidemiologically into two categories. First, the heart is the core, like a small heart, heart, and heart of stone. Second, the heart is a barrier, such as envy, kindness, and heart content. This view shows that a person's moral nobility reflects his faith. Therefore, the moral message in the Malay Sambas weaving motif does not mean ignoring the message of faith. It indirectly emphasizes that faith is fundamental to producing noble character.

There are eight moral messages in the Sambas Malay weaving motif. First, morality is related to tolerance in religious practice. Sambas Malays live side by side with various ethnic groups around them. The reality of this life is depicted in weaving motifs. The Sambas Malay weaving motif, whose message is explicitly about tolerance in diversity, is the motif of *tabur mate ayam* and *pucuk rebung enggang gading*. The motif of *tabur mate ayam* explains the dynamics of the social life of people consisting of different ethnicities.

Sambas Malays are very open with other people who have different cultural backgrounds. This openness can be seen in the acceptance of the Sambas Malays towards the arrival of other tribes to Sambas. The Sultan of Sambas facilitated the arrival of the tribe by making a unique village for each of his tribes. The village is currently known as the Javanese village, the Bugis village, the Dagang village, and the Seberang village.

Sambas Malay acceptance of the arrival of outsiders is a form of tolerance. According to Tamrin (2017), Malays are always open and help people who come to their hometowns as long as they maintain ethics and courtesy. This attitude is reminiscent of the Malay proverb "*biar rumah sempit, tapi hati lapang*" (let the house be narrow, but the heart is spacious).

Malay Sambas realized the consequences of acceptance of the arrival of outsiders. The result is that a multicultural social life will be created. Concerning this reality, every individual has a different point of view and thinking. Therefore, Malay Sambas view that differences in social life are natural. According to Venus (2015), this reality is generally a Malay character. According to him, many Malay proverbs emphasize differences in culture and customs as essential factors that must be considered in building human relationships. He gave an example of one of the Malay expressions, namely "*banyak udang banyak garam, banyak orang banyak ragam*" (much shrimp, much salt, many people, much variety).

Second, moral messages to the environment. Sambas is a maritime and agrarian area. The life of the Malay Sambas depends on the balance of the river ecosystem. In

this context, the Sambas Malay settlement pattern clustered on the river coast. This settlement pattern has been going on for generations. This reality shows that the river is the pulse of the life of Malay Sambas.

As the pulse of life, the sustainability of the river ecosystem is necessary to sustain the Sambas Malays' survival. In other words, if the river environment is polluted and damaged, the continuity of the Sambas Malay life will also be disrupted. Several weaving motifs, plants, and animals identical to the river illustrate the interaction between the Malay Sambas and the river environment. The motifs include galli leaf shoots, selimpau flowers, and fish scales.

The motifs of pucuk daun galli, sapor peranggi, and sisik ikan have a message about preserving the environment. Plants such as galli and peranggi will be tough to grow and develop properly in a polluted environment. Likewise, with fish, rivers polluted with waste will interfere with their breeding, so fish will look for cleaner streams to lay their eggs. The reality of this life is a message about preserving the environment that weaving artisans convey through their weaving motifs.

The river is a natural representation of where the Sambas Malays live. For Malay Sambas, nature is a place to live and a source of livelihood and culture (Mee, 2017; Yusriadi, 2015). In addition, for Malay society, rivers are part of their cultural identity (Abdullah *et al.*, 2022; Airriess, 2003; Hong, 2016; Nayan *et al.*, 2020).

Thamrin (2013) views the environmental crisis as a human moral and spiritual crisis. Thamrin's opinion shows that humans, on the one hand, are very dependent on the environment, but on the other hand, humans can often become environmental destroyers. Therefore, Malay Sambas do various ways to maintain the sustainability and balance of nature. These efforts are either through abstinence or through culture, such as weaving. Thus the message of protecting the environment in the weaving motif is a form of da'wah message related to morals to nature.

Third, messages related to usefulness and sincerity. Benevolence is an attitude to always provide benefits to others. Humans are social creatures. As a social creature, the existence of human life is related to the process of its life cycle from birth to death and also interactions with nature and fellow humans. At this level, human existence is determined by its usefulness to others and the environment. This usefulness is also an indicator of the human values that exist in him.

Messages about usefulness are part of the content of da'wah. The tabur awan, bunga kunnyik, and bunga selimpau motifs are messages about the usefulness of weaving motifs. The meaning of usefulness in this motif is based on the principle of sincerity. In other words, providing benefits to others is not based on a specific purpose. Selimpau, for example, was never planted intentionally but still provides benefits for protecting the river, which is the center of Sambas Malay life, so that it does not erode. Likewise, with clouds and flowers, turmeric, every part of which can provide benefits to anyone.

Fourth, messages related to independence. The Sambas Malay weaving motif is about building economic freedom through trade. The message is contained in the bunga anggur and bunga cengkeh motifs. The relationship between Bunga Anggur and Bunga Cengkeh motifs with trade is based on the background of the emergence of these motifs. This is as stated by SH and AL:

"...Grapes are not Sambas' original fruit. In ancient times, the Sambas Malays knew grapes from the Sambas people who returned to trade to other areas. Then home from trading, they brought gifts in the form of grapes. Grapes at that time were still considered rare fruit because it was challenging to find them in Sambas. People who want to eat grapes must first order from merchants both from Sambas and immigrants."

Likewise, the statement stated by SN:

"... Cloves were a trading commodity in ancient times. Traders came to Sambas looking for cloves to be traded in several places, such as Singapore and China. So cloves were one of the most sought-after trading commodities in the past."

These two motifs tell that the Sambas Malay society in ancient times was well known as a trader who sailed to several areas in the archipelago. The trade is a form of effort to improve the family's economic level. In addition, trade is carried out by sailing with merchandise and trading with outside traders who come to Sambas. Through this trading activity, economic dynamics were created, which impacted the welfare of the Sambas Malay society at that time (Roberts, 2012).

Fifth, messages related to maintaining kinship and friendship among human beings. The Sambas Malay society, according to Kaspullah (2015), is generally still dominant in extended families. Kinship is not only in the nuclear family but also consists of siblings, cousins, and brothers from the husband and wife's side. Kaspullah's opinion shows that families in Malay Sambas are not only related by direct blood but also through other causes such as marriage and adoption. This reality indicates that kinship is essential in the life of Malay Sambas.

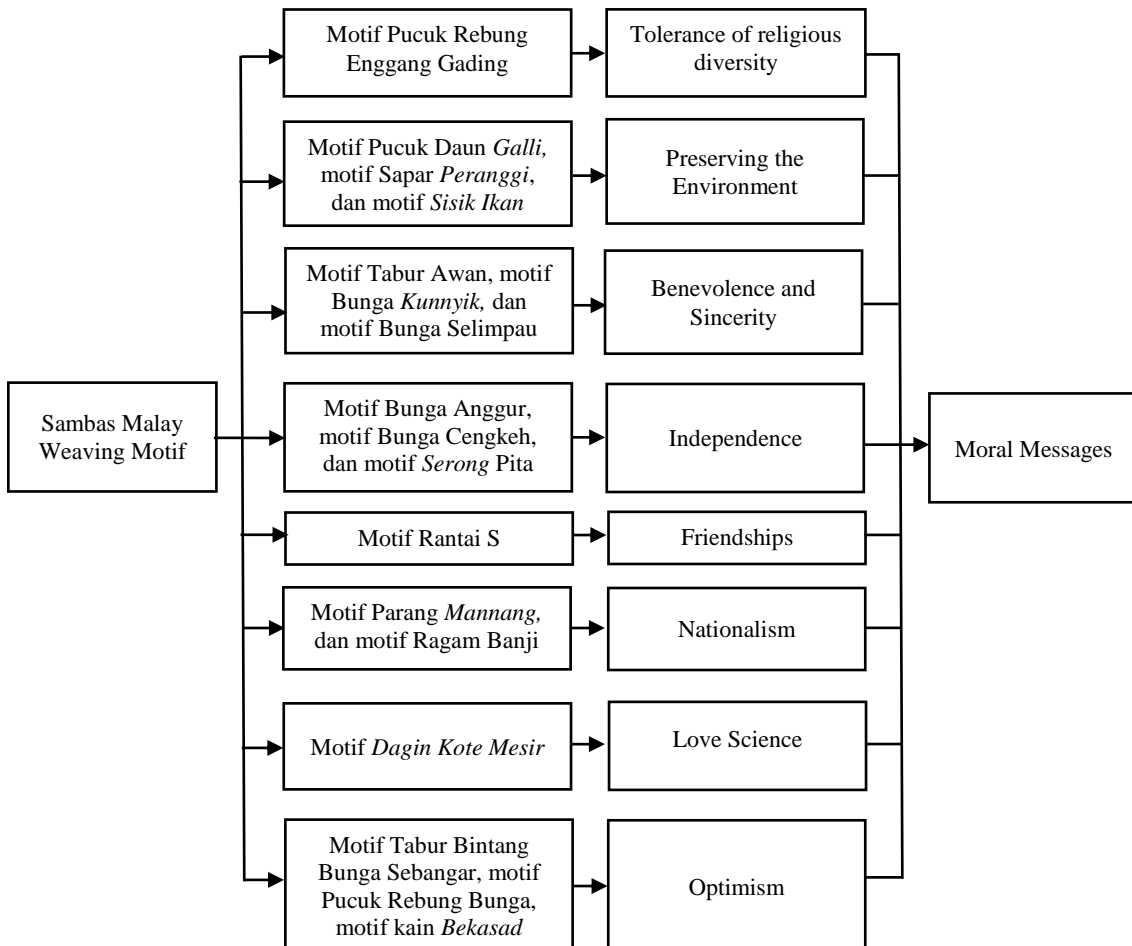
The message about the importance of kinship and friendship for the Sambas Malays in the weaving motif is found in the rantai S motif. This motif tells of family ties that have existed for generations in the Sambas Malay society. The relationship then builds emotional bonds between fellow members of the community. In turn, a sense of belonging will be developed between each other.

Sixth, messages related to a sense of nationalism. The message about nationalism in the Sambas Malay weaving motif is found in the ragam banji and parang mannang motifs. Both of these motifs have a historical background of their emergence related to the efforts made by the Sambas Malays to fight against rebellion and colonialism. The struggle was persistently carried out even though they had to give up their lives, as happened on the 27 October 1945 incident. The historical record told through the weaving motif is a message about the importance of idealism and nationalism for the Sambas Malays.

Seventh, messages related to loving science. The Sambas Malay weaving motif contains the message of loving science, namely the *dagin pagar kote Mesir* motif. This motif tells the journey and struggle of the young Sambas in studying Al-Azhar, even in minimal conditions. Returning from learning, the young man then carried out reforms in Sambas so that later, Sambas became the center of Islamic studies on the island of Borneo.

Eighth, the message related to optimism. The Sambas Malay woven motif that contains messages about optimism are the motifs of *tabur bintang*, *bunga sebangar*, *pucuk rebung bunga*, and *kain bekasad*. These three motifs are related to heights, such as stars which are celestial bodies, and flower shoots that always rise to the top. The form of this motif is a belief in ideals. To achieve this goal, consistency is needed as the shoots of bamboo shoots consistently grow upwards.

The explanation of the moral message in the Malay Sambas weaving motif can be simplified in the following scheme:



Source: Research results

Figure 4. Moral Message Scheme in Weaving Motif

Conclusion

This study found that the weaving motif did not arise by itself but was formed through a very long process in the life of the Sambas Malays. The Sambas Malay weaving motif is created from three elements. First, the element of beauty as the teachings of Islam and the Malay culture of Sambas, which highly upholds beauty. Second, the identity and cultural reality that lives and develops in the life of the Sambas Malays. At this level, weaving reflects the Sambas Malay life, such as being religious, respecting differences, helping each other, having high ideals, having low self-esteem, and loving nature. Third, efforts to internalize Islamic teachings through symbolic messages on the weaving motif. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the Sambas Malay weaving motif not only represents the relationship between Sambas Malays and Islamic teachings but is also a form of symbolic propaganda for the Sambas Malay society through a cultural approach. In a broader context, the use of cultural symbols in woven cloth motifs to internalize Islamic teachings is a form of cultural da'wah that can be found in almost every region in Indonesia which can be studied in future.

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