

## Dowry from the Perspective of Islamic Law and Local Culture has Been Critical of Society Practices

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### Abstract

The problem in the study of dowry lies in the tension between normative concepts in Islamic law that emphasize simplicity and justice, and local cultural practices that often view dowry as a symbol of social status and prestige. This difference raises the need to understand how sharia norms and cultural constructions are integrated into marriage practices. This study aims to analyze dowry from the perspective of Islamic law and local culture and explain the forms of interaction between the two in the context of contemporary society. The research method used is a qualitative approach with library research that combines juridical-normative and sociological approaches. Data are analyzed descriptively and analytically to examine the concept of dowry, cultural practices, and the social dynamics that influence its implementation. The analysis results show that dowry has multidimensional functions, namely as a legal obligation, a symbol of respect, and a socio-economic instrument. The integration between Islamic law and local culture can occur harmoniously as long as cultural practices do not conflict with sharia principles, such as justice, willingness, and welfare. However, in some cases, the dominance of cultural values leads to a distortion of the meaning of dowry from its normative purpose. The contribution of this research is to offer an integrative understanding of dowry that places Islamic law and local culture within a complementary framework, making it relevant for the development of contemporary Islamic family law studies.

### Keywords

Dowry; Islamic Law; Local Culture; Marriage.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage in Islam is a social and religious institution that plays a strategic role in shaping a harmonious social order. As part of Sharia teachings, marriage is understood not only as a biological relationship between a man and a woman, but also as a sacred bond grounded in spiritual, moral, and social values. One inseparable element of the marriage contract is the dowry, which in Islamic law is positioned as an obligation that must be fulfilled by the prospective husband to his prospective wife. The dowry has a strong symbolic dimension as a form of respect, responsibility, and commitment in



building a household. In contemporary studies, the dowry is seen as a crucial legal institution in safeguarding women's rights within the modern Islamic family law system. (Amar et al., 2025)

In a normative perspective, dowry is an exclusive right of women as affirmed in the Quran and hadith. Scholars agree that dowry is not just a formality in a marriage contract, but an integral part of the validity of marriage. Thus, dowry has a significant legal function as one of the conditions in the formation of a valid marriage bond. In addition, dowry also reflects the value of justice and balance in the husband-wife relationship, where women have the right to gifts that cannot be taken without their consent. Recent research shows that the concept of dowry in Islamic law provides protection for women from economic exploitation in marriage. (Zubair et al., 2020)

However, although the concept of dowry is clearly regulated in Islamic law, its practice in society shows significant diversity. This is due to the influence of local cultures, which also shape how dowries are viewed and implemented in everyday life. In a social context, dowries are often understood not only as a religious obligation but also as a symbol of social status, family honor, and cultural identity. This phenomenon demonstrates the dynamic interaction between religious norms and cultural values in dowry practices in society. (Musthafa et al., 2025)

In Indonesia, a country with high cultural diversity, the practice of dowry varies widely. Each region has its own traditions and customs in determining the form and value of the dowry. For example, in the Bugis-Makassar community, the dowry (panai' money) is determined based on social factors such as education, descent, and the family's economic status. Meanwhile, in Lampung society, the dowry is often highly valued as a symbol of family prestige and honor. This variation demonstrates that local culture has a strong influence on shaping dowry practices in Indonesian Muslim communities. (Muhammadonga, 2026)

Furthermore, in Sundanese society, the dowry is often part of the traditional dowry offering (seserahan) with symbolic and aesthetic significance. This tradition reflects the integration of Islamic values and local culture that has been passed down through generations. In this context, the dowry serves not only as a legal obligation but also as a means to strengthen social ties between the two families involved in the marriage. Studies show that this practice is acceptable under Islamic law as long as it does not conflict with the principle of consent and is not burdensome. (Irfani & Hamidah, 2020)

However, in practice, the meaning of the dowry is often shifted due to cultural influences and modernization. In some cases, the dowry is used as a symbol of excessive prestige, resulting in its value becoming excessively high and burdensome for the groom. This phenomenon can negatively impact the marriage process, as it can create economic and social barriers. Recent research shows that social pressures in determining the dowry often conflict with the principle of modesty taught in Islam. (Riyansyah, 2025)

On the other hand, modernization has also significantly influenced the transformation of dowry practices. Changes in education, economics, and technology have influenced how society views dowries. In modern society, dowries take more than just material forms like money and gold, but can also take the form of innovative symbols with personal meaning for the couple. However, modernization also has the potential to encourage the commercialization of dowries, shifting spiritual values toward materialistic ones. (Khalil et al., 2025)

From an economic perspective, the dowry also has significant implications for family well-being. It can serve as an economic asset for women, particularly in emergency situations such as divorce. Thus, the dowry serves not only a symbolic function but also a practical one, providing financial protection for women. Empirical studies show that proper dowry management can contribute to family economic resilience. (Musthafa et al., 2025)

Globally, the practice of dowry has undergone similar dynamics in various Muslim countries. In many countries, dowry exists at the intersection of tradition and modernity, where local cultural values interact with Islamic legal principles. This demonstrates that dowry is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be understood from a single perspective. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach is needed to study dowry, encompassing legal, social, and cultural aspects. (Nawaz, 2025)

Although numerous studies have examined dowry, most studies focus on one aspect, either Islamic law or local culture, separately. However, to comprehensively understand the phenomenon of dowry, an integrative approach that combines both perspectives is necessary. This research gap highlights the need for more in-depth study of the integration of Islamic law and local culture in dowry practices. (Amar et al., 2025)

Furthermore, there is a need to examine how Islamic legal principles can be maintained in dowry practices influenced by local culture. This is crucial to ensure that dowry practices do not deviate from fundamental Islamic values, such as justice, simplicity, and welfare. In this context, the concept of *maqasid sharia* can be used as an analytical framework to assess whether a dowry practice aligns with the objectives of *sharia*. (Zubair et al., 2020)

On the other hand, local culture also plays a crucial role in maintaining the sustainability of traditions and community identity. Therefore, the integration of Islamic law and local culture must be carried out wisely, so as not to eliminate positive cultural values. In this regard, the concept of *'urf* in Islamic law allows for the development of local cultures as long as they do not conflict with *sharia* principles. This approach allows for the creation of dowry practices that are contextual and relevant to community needs. (Irfani & Hamidah, 2020)

Thus, studying dowry from the perspective of Islamic law and local culture is crucial. This study not only has academic relevance but also has practical implications for community life. By

comprehensively understanding the dynamics of dowry, it is hoped that a model of dowry practice can be found that aligns with Islamic values and the needs of modern society. This is crucial for realizing a marriage that is not only legally valid but also brings blessings and prosperity to the couple. (Riyansyah, 2025)

Based on this description, this study seeks to examine dowry in depth from the perspective of Islamic law and local culture. This research is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of Islamic family law and provide practical recommendations for the community in implementing dowry wisely and proportionally. Therefore, this research is expected to serve as a reference in efforts to strengthen the integration of religious and cultural values in community practices (Musthafa et al., 2025).

## **2. METHOD**

This study is a qualitative study using a library research approach. Qualitative research is used to understand the phenomenon of dowry in depth through an analysis of concepts, norms, and practices that develop within society. This literature study was chosen because this study aims to examine the concept of dowry based on written sources such as scientific journals, books, and legal documents related to Islamic law and local culture. (Musthafa et al., 2025)

The approaches used in this research are: 1) A normative (juridical) approach, to analyze dowry from an Islamic legal perspective based on the Qur'an, hadith, and the opinions of scholars. 2) A sociological approach, to understand dowry practices within the context of local culture and societal dynamics. The combination of these two approaches is used to examine the integration between Islamic legal norms and cultural practices in social reality.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative analysis methods, with the following stages: 1) Data reduction: selecting and simplifying data relevant to the research focus, 2) Data presentation: compiling data in a systematic narrative form, 3) Conclusion drawing: interpreting data to gain an understanding of the integration of Islamic law and local culture in the practice of dowry. In addition, comparative analysis was also used, namely comparing the concept of dowry in Islamic law with its practice in various local cultures to find similarities, differences, and forms of integration.

## **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Discourse on Dowry from an Islamic Legal Perspective**

From an Islamic legal perspective, the dowry is an essential element of the marriage contract, possessing strong normative and philosophical dimensions. In the jurisprudence of *munakahat* (Islamic jurisprudence), the dowry is defined as a mandatory gift from the man to the woman as a consequence of a valid marriage contract. This obligation is not merely a formality, but an integral part of respecting

women's rights in marriage. Normatively, the dowry serves as evidence of the man's seriousness and responsibility and strengthens the legal legitimacy of a marriage. Contemporary studies indicate that the dowry holds a crucial position as an instrument of protection for women within the framework of modern Islamic family law (Amar et al., 2025).

Conceptually, the dowry in Islam differs from the practice of dowry in other traditions, which is often transactional. Islam emphasizes that the dowry is not a form of "price" for a woman, but rather a symbol of respect and affection. Within the framework of the *maqasid sharia* (Islamic principles), the dowry serves as a means of maintaining honor (*hifz al-'irdh*) and economic protection for women. Research shows that this concept is the key difference between the Islamic dowry system and other cultural practices that often reduce women to mere objects of transaction (Amar et al., 2025).

From a classical Islamic legal perspective, scholars agree that the dowry is a woman's absolute right (*haq al-mar'ah*) and may not be taken by anyone without her permission. This demonstrates the recognition of women's economic autonomy in Islam. The dowry can also be given in various forms, including money, goods, or services of value. This flexibility demonstrates that Islam allows room for adaptation to the socioeconomic conditions of society, as long as it does not violate the principles of justice and consent (Stowasser & Abul-Magd, 2004).

Furthermore, Islamic law does not stipulate a minimum or maximum dowry. This freedom reflects the principle of convenience (*taysir*) in Islamic law. Numerous hadiths recommend that the dowry not be burdensome for the man, so that the marriage can proceed easily and be filled with blessings. In the contemporary context, this principle is relevant to prevent the commercialization of marriage, which can hinder the formation of a harmonious family (Nurlaelawati, 2013).

From a sociological perspective, dowry not only serves as a legal obligation but also has symbolic meaning within the social structure of society. It often reflects social status, family relationships, and the cultural values held by a community. In various Muslim countries, including Indonesia, dowry practices vary significantly, ranging from simple forms to highly valued ones, depending on the social and cultural context. This demonstrates that Islamic law dynamically interacts with social realities (Riyansyah, 2025).

However, in practice, the meaning of the dowry is often distorted. In some communities, the dowry is used as a symbol of social prestige or even as a measure of a family's economic status. This phenomenon has the potential to place a heavy financial burden on prospective husbands and can hinder marriage. Recent research shows that social pressures in determining the dowry often contradict basic Islamic principles that emphasize simplicity and fairness (Musthafa et al., 2025).

In the context of modern Islamic family law, the dowry is also viewed as an instrument of economic protection for women. It can serve as an asset that provides financial security, particularly in situations

of divorce or marital instability. Thus, the dowry serves not only a symbolic function but also has practical implications for improving women's well-being. Empirical studies show that proper dowry management can contribute to family economic resilience (Malik et al., 2025).

From a philosophical perspective, the dowry reflects the principles of justice and balance in the relationship between men and women. The dowry is not a tool of domination, but rather a form of moral responsibility on the part of men towards women. Within this framework, the dowry becomes a symbol of equality, positioning women as subjects with rights and dignity. This approach aligns with Islamic principles of gender justice, which emphasize the protection of vulnerable groups (Muhammadonga, 2026).

Furthermore, modernization has also significantly influenced dowry practices. Social, economic, and educational changes have led to transformations in the form and value of dowries. On the one hand, modernization opens up room for creativity in determining dowries, but on the other hand, it also has the potential to shift spiritual values toward materialism. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding is necessary to ensure that dowry practices remain aligned with sharia principles (Zubair et al., 2020).

Thus, an analysis of the dowry from an Islamic legal perspective demonstrates that this institution has complex dimensions, encompassing legal, social, economic, and philosophical aspects. The dowry serves not only as an obligation within the marriage contract but also as an instrument of protection, a symbol of respect, and a means of establishing justice in the marital relationship. Therefore, an integrative approach that combines sharia values with the social context of society is necessary to ensure the dowry's meaning remains intact and relevant in modern life (Khalil et al., 2025).

### **Dowry in Local Cultural Perspective**

From a local cultural perspective, the dowry is a social phenomenon inseparable from marriage practices in Muslim societies. Although the dowry is normatively regulated in Islamic law as a husband's obligation to his wife, its implementation in various regions shows adaptations to local cultural values. In Indonesia, the practice of dowry has developed dynamically along with the interaction between religious teachings and local traditions, resulting in a rich variety of forms, values, and meanings. This phenomenon demonstrates that the dowry is not only understood as a religious obligation but also as a social symbol containing specific cultural values (Mir-Hosseini, 2003).

In legal anthropology, the dowry is often viewed as part of a society's symbolic system. It functions not only as a material gift but also as a representation of kinship, social status, and cultural legitimacy within a marriage. In many local communities, the dowry serves as a means of symbolic communication between the two families involved in the marriage, and its value is often determined through family deliberation. This demonstrates that the practice of dowry is a social product shaped by the norms and values that exist within the community (Welchman, 2007).

In Indonesia, cultural variations cause dowry practices to vary widely across regions. For example, in the Bugis-Makassar community, the dowry (bride price) is determined based on the woman's social status, education level, and family background. The higher the woman's social status, the higher the dowry value. This practice reflects the strong values of honor and social stratification within that culture. Thus, the dowry serves not only as a religious obligation but also as a symbolic indicator of one's social standing within society (Gibson, 2005).

Beyond the Bugis Makassarese, the practice of dowry in Lampung society also demonstrates a strong cultural dimension. Dowries in Lampung tradition are often highly valued, seen as a symbol of family pride and a man's commitment to marriage. However, this practice also has significant social implications, such as economic pressure on the man. In some cases, high dowries can even hinder the marriage process, sparking a debate between cultural values and the Islamic principle of convenience (Zuhdi, 2022).

In Sundanese culture, the dowry is known as part of a series of gifts, symbolizing gifts from the groom to the bride. This tradition demonstrates the harmonious integration of Islamic values and local culture. The dowry reflects not only religious obligations but also aesthetic, symbolic, and social values in Sundanese society. Research shows that this practice does not conflict with Islamic law as long as it does not involve coercion and upholds the principle of consent (Nurlaelawati, 2013).

Sociologically, the practice of dowry in local cultures is also influenced by economic factors. The economic conditions of a community often determine the value and form of a dowry. In modern society, a dowry can serve as an economic asset for women, particularly in the context of financial protection. However, in practice, the value of a dowry can also be influenced by lifestyle, modernization, and changes in consumption patterns. This demonstrates that dowry has a complex economic dimension within the social structure (Wahyudi, 2018).

Modernization is a significant factor influencing the transformation of dowry practices in various regions. Changes in education, technology, and the economy have altered society's perspective on dowries. On the one hand, modernization encourages flexibility and creativity in dowry forms, such as the use of unique symbols or non-material objects. On the other hand, modernization can also lead to the commercialization of dowries, where their value is measured based on highly materialistic standards. This phenomenon indicates a shift in values within dowry practices (Irfani & Hamidah, 2020).

Globally, the practice of dowry has also experienced similar dynamics in various Muslim countries. Research shows that dowry often lies at the intersection of tradition and modernity. On the one hand, dowry maintains traditional values as a cultural symbol, but on the other, it must also adapt to the increasingly complex demands of the times. As a result, dowry practices have become increasingly

dynamic and contextual, depending on the social and cultural conditions of the local community (Musthafa et al., 2025).

However, local cultural practices have the potential to distort the original meaning of the dowry in Islam. While the dowry should be simple and unburdensome, it often becomes an economic burden due to social and cultural pressures. In some cases, the dowry is used as a means of demonstrating social status or even as a means of competition between families. This situation has the potential to obscure the spiritual value of the dowry as a form of worship and respect for women (Azis & Rahman, 2009).

Furthermore, a gender perspective is also an important aspect in analyzing dowry in local culture. In some communities, dowry practices reflect the power relations between men and women. Although theoretically a dowry is a woman's right, in practice, women do not always have full control over how it is used. However, in the modern context, there is a growing trend of awareness of women's rights, so that dowry is starting to be seen as an instrument of economic empowerment for women (Mir-Hosseini, 2003).

From an Islamic legal perspective, custom ('urf) can be used as a basis for determining dowry practices as long as they do not conflict with sharia principles. This demonstrates that Islam allows room for local cultures to develop, as long as they remain within the bounds of Islamic values. In this context, dowry practices in various regions can be viewed as a form of inculturation between religion and culture, enriching the treasury of Islamic law (Kamali, 2003).

Furthermore, the integration of Islamic law and local culture in the practice of dowry demonstrates the flexibility of the Islamic legal system. This flexibility allows Islamic law to remain relevant in various social and cultural contexts. However, a comprehensive understanding is required to ensure that cultural practices do not deviate from Sharia principles. Therefore, public education is crucial to maintaining a balance between religious and cultural values (Feener & Cammack, 2007).

Overall, the dowry from a local cultural perspective is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. It serves not only as a religious obligation but also as a social symbol, cultural identity, and economic instrument within society. The variations in dowry practices across regions demonstrate the cultural richness of Muslim communities. However, this dynamic also demands ongoing reinterpretation to ensure that dowry practices remain aligned with Islamic values and the needs of modern society (Hefner, 2011).

### **Integration of Islamic Law and Local Culture in Dowry Practices**

The integration of Islamic law and local culture is an inseparable phenomenon in the practices of Muslim communities, particularly in the area of family law. Islam, as a universal religion, allows local cultures (urf) to play a role as long as they do not conflict with sharia principles. In this context, the practice of dowry is a concrete example of how religious norms interact with cultural values.

Conceptually, Islamic law does not exist in a vacuum but is always in dialogue with existing social realities, thus giving rise to diverse and contextual forms of religious practice (Nasir, 2009).

In the study of *ushul fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), the concept of *'urf* (inheritance) is recognized as a secondary source of law that can be used to establish laws as long as it does not contradict the texts. This demonstrates Islam's flexibility in responding to socio-cultural dynamics. This integration reflects an adaptive approach to Islamic law that accommodates the diversity of societal practices. Thus, local culture is not seen as a threat, but rather as a means of implementing Islamic values in real life (Mulia, 2019).

In the practice of dowry, this integration is evident in the variations in the form and value of dowries across regions. In Indonesia, local customs play a significant role in determining how dowries are given. For example, in Minangkabau society, dowries have symbolic value related to the matrilineal system, while in Bugis-Makassar society, dowries are determined based on social stratification. This variation demonstrates that dowries are not only normative but also reflect the socio-cultural constructs that develop within society (Burhanudin, 2012).

The integration of Islamic law and local culture can also be seen in the negotiation process between religious values and social interests. In many cases, determining the dowry involves family deliberations that consider economic, social, and cultural aspects. This process demonstrates that Islamic law is not applied rigidly, but through a dynamic social process. Thus, the practice of dowry is a result of the interaction between religious norms and the social needs of the community (Goody & Tambiah, 1973).

However, this integration is not always without conflict. In some cases, local cultural values actually conflict with basic Islamic principles, such as when the dowry is set at an exorbitant amount, placing a heavy burden on the groom. Such practices have the potential to hinder marriage and contradict the Islamic principle of convenience. Therefore, a critical approach is needed to assess whether a cultural practice is still in accordance with Sharia values (Al-Qaradawi et al., 1985).

From a sociological perspective, the integration of Islamic law and local culture reflects the existence of legal pluralism in society. This pluralism allows for the coexistence of various normative systems, such as religious law, customary law, and state law. In the practice of dowry, these three systems often interact and influence each other. This demonstrates that Islamic law does not stand alone but is part of a broader social system (Wahyudi, 2018).

In the modern context, this integration has undergone a transformation due to the influence of globalization and modernization. Changes in the educational system, economy, and technology have influenced how society views the dowry. In some cases, the dowry is no longer seen solely as a religious obligation but also as a symbol of lifestyle and social status. This transformation indicates a shift in

values that requires critical examination to avoid obscuring the original meaning of the dowry in Islam (Mir-Hosseini, 1996).

On the other hand, the integration of Islamic law and local culture can also positively contribute to the sustainability of traditions and cultural identity. By incorporating Islamic values into cultural practices, communities can maintain their traditions while simultaneously aligning them with religious teachings. This process is known as the Islamization of culture, where local values are adapted to Sharia principles without losing their cultural identity (Wahyudi, 2018).

However, the Islamization of culture also faces challenges, particularly in maintaining a balance between tradition and religious teachings. In some cases, what is known as "syncretism" occurs, a blending of religious and cultural values that can blur the boundaries between the two. Therefore, a thorough understanding of sharia principles is necessary to ensure that the integration remains within the proper framework (Wahyuni, 2018).

From the perspective of maqasid sharia, the integration of Islamic law and local culture must consider the primary objectives of sharia, such as justice, welfare, and protection of rights. In the context of dowry, the ideal integration is one that maintains a balance between religious values and the social needs of the community. Thus, the practice of dowry is not only legally valid but also provides tangible benefits to all parties involved (Bowen, 2003).

Furthermore, this integration can also be seen in the context of legal policies in Muslim countries. In Indonesia, for example, marriage law accommodates Islamic values while also taking into account societal customs. This demonstrates the recognition of cultural plurality within the national legal framework. Thus, the integration between Islamic law and local culture occurs not only at the societal level but also within the formal legal system (Masud et al., 1996).

From a gender perspective, this integration has significant implications for women's position in marriage. The dowry, as a woman's right, can be an instrument of empowerment if managed properly. However, if influenced by patriarchal culture, the dowry can become a tool of social control that harms women. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the integration between Islamic law and local culture upholds the principle of gender justice (Tucker, 1998).

Furthermore, this integration is also related to the economic dynamics of society. The determination of the dowry is often influenced by the economic conditions of both the man and the woman. In societies experiencing rapid economic change, the value of the dowry can experience significant inflation. This demonstrates that dowry practices are influenced not only by cultural factors but also by broader economic factors (Mulia, 2019).

In the context of religious education and literacy, the integration of Islamic law and local culture requires a sound understanding from the community. A lack of understanding of the concept of dowry

in Islam can lead to practices that deviate from Sharia values. Therefore, the role of religious scholars, academics, and educational institutions is crucial in providing a comprehensive understanding to the community (Wahyuni, 2018).

This integration can also be understood through a historical approach, where Islam has demonstrated its ability to adapt to various cultures from its inception. Throughout the history of Islam's spread, a process of acculturation has resulted in distinctive forms of religious practice in each region. This demonstrates that the integration of religion and culture is part of the dynamic development of Islam itself (Quisumbing & Hallman, 2005).

In critical analysis, the integration of Islamic law and local culture must be periodically evaluated. This is crucial to ensure that emerging practices remain compliant with sharia principles and do not harm any particular party. This evaluation can be conducted through an interdisciplinary approach involving legal science, sociology, anthropology, and gender studies (Burhanudin, 2012).

Overall, the integration of Islamic law and local culture in dowry practices demonstrates a complex and dynamic relationship. This integration can result in rich and contextual practices, but it also has the potential to lead to deviations if not managed properly. Therefore, a balanced approach is needed, combining respect for local culture with a commitment to sharia values (Mulia, 2019).

Thus, the integration of Islamic law and local culture is not a static phenomenon, but rather a continuously evolving process in line with social change. In this context, the dowry becomes a crucial arena for understanding how religious and cultural values interact. Therefore, further research is needed to delve deeper into these dynamics to contribute to the development of more contextual and relevant Islamic law in the future (Welchman, 2007).

### **Dowry Between Obligation and Social Prestige in Marriage**

The dowry in Islamic marriage is essentially a normative obligation with strong theological and legal foundations. In Islamic law, the dowry is understood as a mandatory gift from the man to the woman as a form of respect, responsibility, and a symbol of seriousness in building a household. In principle, Islam emphasizes that the dowry should not be seen as a burden, but rather should be adjusted to the man's ability. However, in social practice, this normative meaning often undergoes transformation due to the influence of culture and social structures (Buskens, 2003).

From a sociological perspective, the dowry is seen not only as a religious obligation but also as a social symbol representing status and prestige. In many societies, the value of the dowry is often an indicator of a woman's family honor and a measure of a man's success. This phenomenon indicates a shift in the function of the dowry from a religious to a socially symbolic aspect. This indicates that the practice of dowry is influenced not only by Islamic law but also by the value system that develops within society (Khalil et al., 2025).

In the context of local Indonesian culture, the practice of dowry (dowry) is often associated with social prestige. For example, in Bugis-Makassar society, a high dowry (panai') is seen as a symbol of respect for the woman and her family. The higher the dowry, the greater the social prestige of the woman's family. However, this practice also has social implications in the form of economic pressure on the man, which in some cases can hinder marriage (Amar et al., 2025).

A similar phenomenon is also found in Lampung society, where large dowries are often seen as a symbol of family pride. In practice, a high dowry not only reflects the man's economic ability but also represents the woman's family honor. However, high dowries often have negative consequences, such as delayed marriage and even social conflict between families (Goody & Tambiah, 1973).

From an economic perspective, high dowries due to social prestige can lead to unequal access to marriage. Men from lower-middle economic groups often struggle to meet the demands of high dowries, thus limiting their chances of marriage. This can lead to an increase in the age of marriage and the potential for other social problems. Therefore, it is important to understand dowries not only as a religious obligation but also as a complex economic phenomenon (Nurlaelawati, 2013).

Modernization and globalization have also strengthened the phenomenon of social prestige in the practice of dowry. Changes in lifestyle and rising social standards have influenced public perceptions of the value of dowry. In many cases, dowry is no longer simply a religious symbol, but rather a means of demonstrating social status and a modern lifestyle. This phenomenon indicates a commercialization of dowry practices that has the potential to diminish their spiritual value (Azis & Rahman, 2009).

In gender studies, the practice of dowry, influenced by social prestige, has complex implications for women's position. On the one hand, dowry can strengthen women's position as respected parties in marriage. However, on the other hand, high dowry practices can reinforce the stereotype that women are "valuable" objects based on economic standards. This can influence power relations between men and women within the household (Bowen, 2003).

Normatively, Islam rejects practices that use dowries as a means of demonstrating wealth or social status. The principle of simplicity in dowries is emphasized in various sources of Islamic law as a form of facilitation in marriage. Therefore, dowry practices driven by social prestige can be considered a deviation from the original purpose of sharia. This demonstrates the importance of educating the public to re-understand the fundamental value of dowries in Islam (Othman, 2006).

From the perspective of the maqasid sharia (Islamic law), the dowry should serve to achieve benefits and prevent harm. Excessively high and burdensome dowries contradict this goal, as they can create difficulties in marriage. Therefore, an approach that emphasizes a balance between normative obligations and social realities in dowry practices is necessary (Zuhdi, 2022).

Integrating religious values and local culture is key to understanding this phenomenon. Local culture plays a crucial role in shaping social practices, but it must remain within the bounds of Sharia values. Therefore, the practice of dowry, which reflects social prestige, must be reexamined to ensure it does not conflict with Islamic principles of justice and convenience (Hefner, 2011).

Furthermore, the role of family and society is crucial in shaping perceptions of dowry. In many cases, social pressure from the extended family is a major factor in determining the value of a dowry. Therefore, efforts to shift the paradigm regarding dowry must involve all elements of society, including religious leaders and educational institutions (Goody & Tambiah, 1973).

In the context of contemporary Islamic law, a reinterpretation of the concept of dowry is needed to make it more relevant to current social conditions. This reinterpretation does not mean changing the basic principles of dowry, but rather adapting its implementation to the realities of society. Thus, dowry can continue to function as an instrument of justice without becoming a social burden (Nurlaelawati, 2013).

The phenomenon of social prestige in dowries also indicates a shift in values within society. This change is influenced by economic factors, education, and popular culture. Therefore, analysis of dowries must be conducted interdisciplinary, incorporating sociological, economic, and legal perspectives to comprehensively understand this phenomenon (Indarwati & Syamsuddin, 2011).

Ultimately, the dowry, as an Islamic obligation, must be restored to its fundamental essence as a symbol of respect and responsibility, not as a means of demonstrating social status. A healthy dowry practice maintains a balance between religious values and social realities, thus supporting a harmonious and sustainable marriage.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results of the study, the dowry, from an Islamic legal perspective, is a normative and fundamental obligation in the marriage contract, serving as a symbol of respect, responsibility, and protection of women's rights. In Islamic law, the dowry has no minimum or maximum limit, but is instead adjusted to affordability and principles of simplicity. Furthermore, from a local cultural perspective, the practice of dowry varies, influenced by social, economic, and customary values, often taking on additional meaning as a symbol of social status and cultural identity.

The findings of this study indicate a dynamic interaction between Islamic law and local culture in the practice of dowry. This integration can occur harmoniously as long as cultural values do not conflict with sharia principles, such as justice, willingness, and welfare. Thus, the formulation of the problem related to the concept of dowry in Islamic law, its practice in local culture, and its forms of integration can be answered by stating that dowry is a flexible institution but still has normative boundaries that

must be maintained. Future research is recommended to take an empirical approach through field studies to identify dowry practices more contextually in various regions and examine their impact on gender relations and family well-being in modern society.

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