



Social Prestige and Islamic *Maslahah* in Marriage Gift Traditions: A Socio-Legal Study of Coastal Muslim Communities

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Abstract

The tradition of wedding gift-giving remains a crucial component of marital practices in many Muslim societies, serving not only as a cultural ritual but also as a social institution that shapes relationships, status, and communal recognition. This study examines the socio-legal dimensions of the tradition of wedding gift-giving (*seserahan*) among coastal Muslim communities, with particular attention to the interplay between social prestige and Islamic *maslahah* (benefit). Using a qualitative socio-legal approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving religious leaders, community leaders, wedding officiants, family members, and local residents. The findings indicate that wedding gifts serve as a form of symbolic capital through which families gain social recognition, maintain family honor, and strengthen communal legitimacy. This tradition contributes to social cohesion by strengthening kinship ties, fostering solidarity, and supporting family integration. However, the study also found that contemporary socio-economic changes increasingly link wedding gifts to prestige competition, leading to increased social expectations and, in some cases, financial burdens on families. The tradition of wedding gift-giving aligns with Islamic principles when it promotes social welfare, protects family dignity, and strengthens social harmony. Conversely, when prestige-oriented motivations override welfare considerations, the tradition risks giving rise to forms of social and economic hardship that contradict the aims of Islamic law.

Keywords: *Seserahan*, Social Prestige, *Maslahah*, Coastal Muslim Communities, Social Cohesion

Article History:

Received: February 2026; Revised: April 2026; Accepted: May 2026

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/edsojou.v4i1.2163>

How to Cite:

Syaikhoni, M. A., Hamid, P., & Wahab, A. (2026). Social Prestige and Islamic *Maslahah* in Marriage Gift Traditions: A Socio-Legal Study of Coastal Muslim Communities. *Education and Sociedad Journal*, 4(1), 110-121.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a universal social institution that transcends its legal and religious dimensions, functioning as a mechanism for preserving social order, cultural continuity, and communal identity. In Muslim societies, marriage is not merely a contractual relationship between two individuals but a social institution embedded within religious values, customary norms, and collective expectations. Consequently, various traditions surrounding marriage continue to be maintained across generations, reflecting the interaction between Islamic teachings and local cultural practices (Azhari & Hidayat, 2024; Liyew, 2024; Omotayo, 2023). These traditions often serve not only ceremonial purposes but also broader social functions related to family solidarity, social recognition, and community cohesion.

One of the most enduring practices associated with marriage across different cultures is the exchange of marriage gifts. Anthropological scholarship has long recognized gift



exchange as a fundamental social institution that creates obligations, reinforces reciprocity, and strengthens interpersonal relationships (Han, 2023; Nuroniyah & Maula, 2022). Within marriage contexts, gifts symbolize commitment, responsibility, and respect, while simultaneously acting as instruments that establish social ties between families. Therefore, marriage gifts cannot be understood merely as material transfers; rather, they represent cultural symbols through which social meanings, moral values, and collective expectations are communicated and reproduced.

In many Muslim communities, marriage gift traditions operate alongside the Islamic institution of mahr. While mahr is a religious obligation explicitly prescribed in Islamic law as a gift from the groom to the bride, customary marriage gifts often emerge from local traditions and cultural practices (Bukido et al., 2022; Sunarti, 2025). Historically, these traditions have functioned as expressions of sincerity, responsibility, and family commitment. Despite their positive social functions, marriage gift traditions have increasingly attracted scholarly attention due to their complex relationship with social status and economic inequality. Contemporary studies indicate that marriage-related expenditures frequently operate as markers of prestige and social distinction. Families often perceive the quality and quantity of marriage gifts as reflections of their social standing within the community (Dudziak et al., 2025; Patricia & Murtini, 2025). In many cases, marriage ceremonies and gift exchanges become public arenas in which honor, reputation, and social recognition are displayed and negotiated. Consequently, practices originally intended to symbolize commitment and solidarity may gradually evolve into mechanisms of social competition.

This phenomenon is particularly relevant within the framework of social prestige. According to the theory of symbolic capital developed by Pierre Bourdieu, social recognition, honor, and prestige constitute valuable resources that individuals and groups continuously seek to acquire and maintain within social fields (Kartal et al., 2024; Suar et al., 2024). Symbolic capital is often expressed through culturally recognized practices that communicate status and legitimacy. Marriage gift traditions represent one such practice because they provide opportunities for families to demonstrate economic capability, social influence, and cultural respectability. Through the public presentation of gifts, families seek not only to fulfill cultural obligations but also to secure recognition from the wider community.

The growing influence of prestige considerations in marriage gift traditions has generated significant social consequences. Studies conducted in various regions of Asia and Africa demonstrate that escalating expectations regarding marriage-related expenditures often create economic burdens for prospective spouses and their families (Kalpaklıoğlu, 2024; Pallathadka et al., 2022). Social pressure to conform to community expectations may encourage families to incur debt, postpone marriages, or prioritize symbolic status over economic sustainability. Such developments indicate that marriage gift traditions possess a dual character. On the one hand, they promote social cohesion, solidarity, and mutual responsibility. On the other hand, they may reinforce social stratification and generate financial hardship when prestige becomes the primary motivation behind their implementation.

Indonesia offers an important context for examining these dynamics due to its rich diversity of customary traditions and Islamic cultural practices. Across the archipelago, various forms of marriage gift traditions continue to play central roles in wedding ceremonies. Previous studies have explored practices such as *uang panai* in South Sulawesi, *bhen ghiben* among Madurese communities, and *seserahan* in several Javanese regions. These studies generally emphasize cultural symbolism, ritual significance, and legal permissibility within Islamic law (Lay et al., 2023; Nwabude, 2022). While such scholarship contributes valuable insights into local traditions, it often overlooks the broader socio-legal implications of marriage gift practices, particularly concerning their relationship with social

prestige and public welfare.

The case of coastal Muslim communities in Situbondo presents a particularly interesting example of these issues. Situated along the northern coast of East Java and characterized by strong interactions between Javanese and Madurese cultural traditions, these communities maintain a vibrant tradition of *seserahan* as an integral component of marriage ceremonies. Traditionally, *seserahan* functions as a symbol of sincerity, responsibility, and readiness for marriage. The gifts exchanged during the process signify respect toward the bride and her family while strengthening social bonds between kinship groups. In this sense, the tradition contributes to maintaining social harmony and reinforcing communal solidarity.

However, contemporary social and economic transformations have altered certain dimensions of this practice. Increasingly, the value, presentation, and visibility of marriage gifts are associated with family reputation and social prestige. Community expectations regarding appropriate gift standards often influence how families prepare and conduct marriage ceremonies (Noortyani et al., 2023). Consequently, marriage gift traditions may become mechanisms through which social status is communicated and evaluated. In some instances, these expectations generate economic pressure and contribute to delays in marriage among individuals with limited financial resources. Such developments illustrate the tension between cultural preservation and socio-economic realities within contemporary Muslim communities.

From the perspective of Islamic legal thought, these tensions invite critical reflection through the concept of *maslahah*. One of the fundamental objectives of Islamic law is the promotion of human welfare and the prevention of harm. Legal and social practices should contribute to the protection of essential human interests, including religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Farid et al., 2023; Ozer et al., 2024; Tarihoran, 2025). Marriage customs that strengthen family stability, encourage social solidarity, and support mutual responsibility may therefore be considered beneficial and consistent with Islamic objectives. Nevertheless, when such customs create excessive economic burdens, social exclusion, or obstacles to marriage, questions arise regarding their compatibility with the broader goals of Islamic welfare.

Despite the growing body of literature on marriage customs and Islamic family law, limited attention has been devoted to exploring the intersection between social prestige and Islamic *maslahah* within marriage gift traditions. Existing studies tend to examine these traditions either as cultural practices or as legal phenomena, without sufficiently addressing how prestige, social recognition, and welfare considerations interact within everyday social life. This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the socio-legal dimensions of marriage gift traditions in coastal Muslim communities of Situbondo. Specifically, it examines how marriage gifts function as instruments of social prestige and how their consequences can be evaluated through the framework of Islamic *maslahah*. By integrating sociological perspectives on symbolic capital with Islamic theories of public welfare, this research contributes to broader discussions on legal pluralism, customary law, and the transformation of marriage practices in contemporary Muslim societies. The study argues that marriage gift traditions simultaneously operate as mechanisms of social cohesion and arenas of prestige competition, creating a dynamic relationship between cultural legitimacy and the welfare-oriented objectives of Islamic law.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative socio-legal approach to examine the relationship between social prestige and Islamic *maslahah* within marriage gift traditions among coastal Muslim communities in Situbondo, East Java, Indonesia. A socio-legal approach was selected because the phenomenon under investigation cannot be adequately understood solely through

doctrinal legal analysis or sociological observation. Instead, it requires an integrated examination of how legal norms, religious values, customary traditions, and social practices interact within everyday community life. Socio-legal research enables scholars to explore law as a social phenomenon, emphasizing the dynamic relationship between normative frameworks and lived experiences (Noor, 2023).

The study was conducted in several coastal villages of Situbondo Regency, East Java, an area characterized by strong Islamic traditions and a distinctive cultural synthesis of Javanese and Madurese influences. These communities were selected because marriage gift traditions (*seserahan*) continue to play a significant role in marriage ceremonies and remain closely connected to issues of family honor, social reputation, and communal recognition. The research setting provided a relevant context for exploring how customary marriage practices are maintained, negotiated, and transformed amid contemporary socio-economic changes (Hamzani et al., 2023).

A qualitative research design was adopted to capture participants' perceptions, interpretations, and experiences regarding marriage gift traditions. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for investigating social meanings and cultural practices because they facilitate an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena from the perspectives of those directly involved. Rather than measuring variables statistically, the study sought to uncover how individuals and communities construct meanings surrounding marriage gifts and how these meanings relate to social prestige and Islamic welfare principles.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary method of data collection because they allowed participants to express their views while enabling the researcher to explore emerging themes in greater depth. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in marriage ceremonies and their knowledge of local customs. The participants included religious leaders, customary leaders, marriage officiants, community elders, married couples, family members, and local residents who possessed direct experience with marriage gift traditions. This purposive sampling strategy ensured that the study captured diverse perspectives regarding the social, cultural, and religious dimensions of *seserahan* practices. The interview process focused on several key themes, including the symbolic meaning of marriage gifts, social expectations surrounding *seserahan*, perceptions of prestige and social status, economic implications of marriage-related expenditures, and understandings of Islamic values concerning marriage customs. Interviews were conducted in locations convenient for participants and were recorded with their consent to ensure accuracy and reliability in data interpretation.

Participant observation was employed to complement interview findings and provide contextual understanding of actual marriage practices. The researcher observed marriage ceremonies, gift presentation rituals, interactions among family members, and community participation during wedding events. Through observation, the study examined how social prestige was publicly expressed and negotiated through marriage gift exchanges. Observational data also helped identify discrepancies between participants' verbal explanations and actual social practices, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings. In addition to interviews and observations, document analysis was undertaken to provide supplementary evidence and contextual information. Relevant documents included local records, marriage-related materials, photographs of marriage gift presentations, community archives, and previous studies concerning marriage traditions in Madurese and coastal Muslim communities.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method involved systematically organizing, coding, and interpreting data to identify recurring themes and patterns relevant to the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The analysis began with

data familiarization through repeated reading of interview transcripts and field notes. Subsequently, initial codes were generated and grouped into broader categories reflecting issues of social prestige, symbolic capital, social recognition, economic burden, social solidarity, and Islamic *maslahah*. These categories were then refined into overarching themes that explained the socio-legal dynamics of marriage gift traditions within the studied communities.

To strengthen analytical rigor, the findings were interpreted through two complementary theoretical frameworks. First, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital was employed to examine how marriage gifts function as mechanisms of prestige, honor, and social recognition within community life (Bourdieu, 2020). Second, the theory of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly the concept of *maslahah* developed by Al-Shatibi, was used to evaluate the extent to which marriage gift traditions contribute to or undermine social welfare and justice. The integration of these perspectives enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the intersection between cultural legitimacy, social status, and Islamic ethical principles.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied data triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary sources. Member checking was also conducted by verifying selected findings with participants to enhance interpretive accuracy. Through these procedures, the research sought to provide a credible and nuanced account of how marriage gift traditions operate as both instruments of social prestige and expressions of Islamic social welfare within contemporary coastal Muslim communities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Marriage Gifts as Symbolic Capital and Social Prestige in Coastal Muslim Communities

The findings of this study demonstrate that marriage gift traditions (*seserahan*) within coastal Muslim communities of Situbondo extend far beyond their conventional role as ceremonial exchanges preceding marriage. Rather than functioning solely as material contributions from the groom's family to the bride's family, marriage gifts operate as socially recognized symbols through which honor, legitimacy, prestige, and communal acceptance are constructed and negotiated. Within the local social structure, the significance of *seserahan* lies not primarily in its economic value but in its capacity to communicate social meanings that are collectively understood and culturally validated.

This finding supports a growing body of anthropological and sociological scholarship that interprets gift exchange as a mechanism for producing and maintaining social relations rather than merely transferring material resources. Gifts function as symbolic instruments through which individuals and groups establish obligations, express mutual recognition, and reinforce social cohesion. The practice of *seserahan* among coastal Muslim communities reflects these characteristics. Participants consistently described marriage gifts as representations of sincerity, responsibility, and respect, emphasizing that the symbolic value attached to the gifts often outweighs their practical utility. Consequently, the social meaning of marriage gifts cannot be reduced to their monetary worth; instead, their significance emerges through collective interpretations embedded within local cultural norms.

A central finding of this study is that marriage gifts serve as an important source of symbolic capital. Symbolic capital refers to socially recognized forms of prestige, honor, and legitimacy that provide individuals and groups with status within a particular social field. Unlike economic capital, symbolic capital derives its value from collective recognition. In the context of coastal Muslim communities, marriage gifts represent a culturally legitimate means through which families acquire and display symbolic capital. The presentation of elaborate *seserahan* is widely interpreted as evidence of familial responsibility, economic capability, and social respectability. Consequently, marriage gifts become powerful markers

of social distinction that contribute to the construction of family reputation within the community.

The public nature of marriage ceremonies significantly strengthens this process. Marriage gift presentations are not private transactions conducted solely between two families; rather, they are highly visible social performances witnessed by relatives, neighbors, religious leaders, and community members. Through these public displays, families communicate messages regarding their social standing and cultural competence. Informants frequently emphasized that community perceptions influence decisions concerning the quantity, quality, and presentation of marriage gifts. Such findings suggest that *seserahan* functions as a performative act through which symbolic recognition is sought and validated by the wider social environment.

These dynamics closely resemble what Bourdieu describes as struggles for distinction within social fields. Families participate in culturally structured competitions for recognition, utilizing marriage gifts as symbolic resources that enhance their social visibility. Importantly, this competition is rarely articulated in explicit terms. Participants seldom acknowledged prestige as their primary motivation. Instead, they framed their actions through culturally accepted narratives of responsibility, respect, and family honor. Nevertheless, the empirical data indicate that social recognition remains a significant outcome of marriage gift exchanges. In this sense, symbolic capital operates precisely because it is often disguised as moral obligation or cultural necessity rather than overt status-seeking behavior.

The findings further reveal that family honor constitutes a crucial dimension of marriage gift traditions. Within coastal Muslim communities, social life remains strongly influenced by communal relationships and kinship networks. Under such conditions, reputation functions as a valuable social asset that shapes interactions between families and community members. Marriage therefore becomes a critical moment for affirming collective dignity and demonstrating adherence to social expectations. The exchange of marriage gifts contributes directly to this process by symbolizing a family's ability to fulfill culturally defined obligations. Families that successfully meet these expectations often experience enhanced social legitimacy, whereas those perceived as failing to do so may encounter subtle forms of social disapproval.

This emphasis on honor and prestige reflects broader patterns observed in many Muslim societies. Studies conducted in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh indicate that marriage-related expenditures frequently serve as mechanisms through which families communicate social status and negotiate communal recognition (Blanchard et al., 2009). Although cultural forms vary across regions, the underlying logic remains similar: marriage ceremonies provide opportunities for families to convert economic resources into symbolic recognition. The Situbondo case therefore illustrates a wider phenomenon in which marriage customs function as instruments of social positioning within local hierarchies.

At the same time, the findings demonstrate that symbolic capital generated through marriage gifts cannot be separated from religious and moral considerations. Unlike purely secular forms of status competition, prestige within coastal Muslim communities is often intertwined with ethical expectations derived from both Islamic teachings and local customs. Participants frequently associated marriage gifts with notions of responsibility (*tanggung jawab*), sincerity (*kesungguhan*), and respect (*penghormatan*). These values provide moral legitimacy for the practice and contribute to its persistence across generations. Consequently, symbolic capital in this context is not produced solely through material display but also through the successful embodiment of culturally valued moral virtues.

Another important finding concerns the role of marriage gift traditions in reproducing social norms. The continued practice of *seserahan* demonstrates how cultural institutions sustain collective identities by transmitting shared values across generations. Younger

members of the community learn appropriate standards of behavior through participation in marriage ceremonies and observation of family practices. Through this process, marriage gift traditions become mechanisms of cultural reproduction, reinforcing existing understandings of honor, respectability, and social responsibility. Such findings support Bourdieu's argument that symbolic practices contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of social structures by legitimizing particular forms of cultural capital and social distinction.

However, the study also identifies evidence of gradual transformation within the meaning of marriage gifts. Several participants acknowledged that contemporary socio-economic changes have intensified concerns regarding public image and social comparison (Haruna et al., 2024; Thoha, 2024; Yaqin et al., 2021). As access to consumer goods expands and economic differentiation becomes more visible, marriage gift traditions increasingly reflect broader processes of status competition. Under these circumstances, symbolic capital becomes more closely linked to material display, creating pressures for families to meet escalating social expectations. This transformation does not eliminate the traditional meanings of *seserahan* but rather introduces new layers of significance that coexist with older cultural values.

Taken together, these findings suggest that marriage gifts in coastal Muslim communities should be understood as multidimensional socio-cultural institutions. They function simultaneously as expressions of familial responsibility, mechanisms of social integration, instruments of symbolic capital, and markers of social prestige (Bourdieu, 2020; Shilfani et al., 2022). Their significance lies not merely in the material goods exchanged but in the social meanings generated through collective recognition and cultural validation. By serving as vehicles of honor, legitimacy, and distinction, marriage gift traditions continue to shape social relationships and communal identities within contemporary Muslim societies. Understanding these dynamics is essential for explaining why such traditions remain resilient despite ongoing social transformation and why they continue to occupy a central place within the socio-legal landscape of coastal Muslim communities.

Negotiating Social Prestige and Islamic *Maslahah* in Marriage Gift Traditions

The findings of this study reveal that marriage gift traditions (*seserahan*) within coastal Muslim communities cannot be understood solely as cultural rituals or symbolic exchanges. Rather, they represent a complex socio-legal institution situated at the intersection of customary norms, religious values, social prestige, and communal welfare. While the previous section demonstrated that marriage gifts function as symbolic capital through which families acquire social recognition and prestige, this section argues that the sustainability and legitimacy of such traditions ultimately depend on their capacity to realize *maslahah*—the promotion of public welfare and the prevention of harm as envisioned in Islamic legal thought.

One of the most significant findings of this research is that local communities generally perceive *seserahan* as a beneficial institution that contributes to social harmony and family integration. Informants consistently emphasized that marriage gifts symbolize responsibility, seriousness, and mutual respect between families. The exchange of gifts establishes a moral relationship that extends beyond the marriage ceremony itself, creating obligations of reciprocity and strengthening social solidarity among kinship groups. These findings support sociological arguments that rituals function as mechanisms of social integration by reinforcing collective values and generating shared meanings within communities.

From an Islamic perspective, such functions correspond closely with the concept of *maslahah*. Classical Muslim jurists argued that legal and social practices should ultimately serve human welfare by preserving essential interests and preventing social disorder.

According to Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, the overarching objective of Islamic law is the realization of benefits that protect religion (*hifz al-dīn*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifz al-‘aql*), lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), and property (*hifz al-māl*). Within this framework, marriage gift traditions may be regarded as socially beneficial when they strengthen family institutions, facilitate marital commitment, and reinforce communal solidarity. The empirical evidence collected in Situbondo suggests that many aspects of *seserahan* continue to perform these welfare-enhancing functions.

Particularly important is the role of marriage gifts in supporting the protection of lineage (*hifz al-nasl*). Marriage occupies a central position within Islamic social organization because it provides the legitimate foundation for family formation and social continuity. Informants frequently described *seserahan* as evidence of a groom’s readiness to undertake marital responsibilities and provide support for future family life. Such perceptions indicate that marriage gifts contribute symbolically to the social legitimacy of marriage itself (Lwamba et al., 2022; Roqib, 2021). By reinforcing confidence in the seriousness of marital commitment, *seserahan* functions as a cultural mechanism that supports family stability and strengthens the institution of marriage.

Similarly, the findings indicate that marriage gifts contribute to the preservation of honor and dignity (*hifz al-‘ird*), which many contemporary scholars identify as an important extension of the *maqāṣid* framework. In coastal Muslim communities, family honor remains a highly valued social asset. Marriage ceremonies serve as public occasions through which families demonstrate moral responsibility, social respectability, and adherence to communal norms. The exchange of marriage gifts becomes an important symbol of respect toward the bride and her family, thereby reinforcing relationships characterized by dignity and mutual recognition (Karepesina, 2023; Mahmud, 2023). In this sense, *seserahan* functions as an instrument for maintaining social trust and communal harmony.

However, the study also reveals a parallel process through which marriage gifts increasingly operate as instruments of prestige competition. While symbolic recognition has always been embedded within marriage customs, contemporary socio-economic transformations appear to have intensified concerns regarding public status and social comparison. Many participants acknowledged that expectations surrounding the quantity, quality, and presentation of marriage gifts have expanded considerably over time. Families often perceive pressure to provide increasingly elaborate gifts in order to maintain social reputation and avoid negative judgments from community members.

This phenomenon illustrates the tension between symbolic capital and social welfare. As demonstrated in the previous section, marriage gifts serve as forms of symbolic capital that generate prestige and recognition within the local social field. Yet symbolic capital becomes problematic when the pursuit of prestige begins to overshadow the ethical objectives underlying the tradition itself. In such circumstances, marriage gifts cease to function primarily as symbols of responsibility and instead become mechanisms of social competition. The findings suggest that this transformation is occurring gradually within certain segments of coastal Muslim society, where public evaluations of marriage ceremonies increasingly emphasize material display rather than social meaning.

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, this development raises important concerns regarding the protection of property (*hifz al-māl*). One of the core objectives of Islamic law is the preservation of economic welfare and the prevention of unnecessary hardship. Classical jurists consistently emphasized that customs should not impose burdens that exceed the capacities of individuals or communities. Yet the evidence gathered in this study indicates that some families experience substantial economic pressure due to escalating expectations surrounding marriage gifts. Several participants reported situations in which families postponed marriage plans, relied on debt, or experienced financial difficulties in

order to satisfy perceived social obligations.

These findings resonate with broader discussions concerning legal pluralism and the relationship between religious norms and customary practices. Scholars of socio-legal studies have noted that living law often emerges through the interaction between formal religious principles and locally embedded social expectations. The Situbondo case illustrates precisely this dynamic. While Islamic teachings emphasize moderation, simplicity, and mutual ease in marital arrangements, local customs may simultaneously encourage practices oriented toward prestige and social distinction. The result is a continuous process of negotiation in which individuals seek to balance religious ideals with communal expectations.

Importantly, this study does not suggest that marriage gift traditions are inherently incompatible with Islamic principles. On the contrary, the findings demonstrate that *seserahan* continues to generate significant social benefits, including solidarity, cooperation, kinship integration, and communal recognition. The issue therefore lies not in the existence of the tradition itself but in the social meanings attached to it. When marriage gifts function as expressions of responsibility, respect, and social cohesion, they align closely with the welfare-oriented objectives of Islamic law. Conversely, when they become instruments of excessive prestige competition, they risk producing forms of *mafsadah* that undermine the very welfare they were originally intended to promote.

Theoretically, this finding contributes to contemporary debates concerning the relationship between culture and Islamic legal ethics. Much existing scholarship tends to evaluate customary practices either as cultural heritage requiring preservation or as legal phenomena requiring normative assessment. This study proposes a more dynamic perspective by demonstrating that the legitimacy of customary institutions depends upon their capacity to maintain equilibrium between symbolic recognition and social welfare (Hidayatullah, 2018). Marriage gift traditions should therefore be understood as evolving social institutions whose meanings are continuously negotiated within changing economic, cultural, and religious contexts.

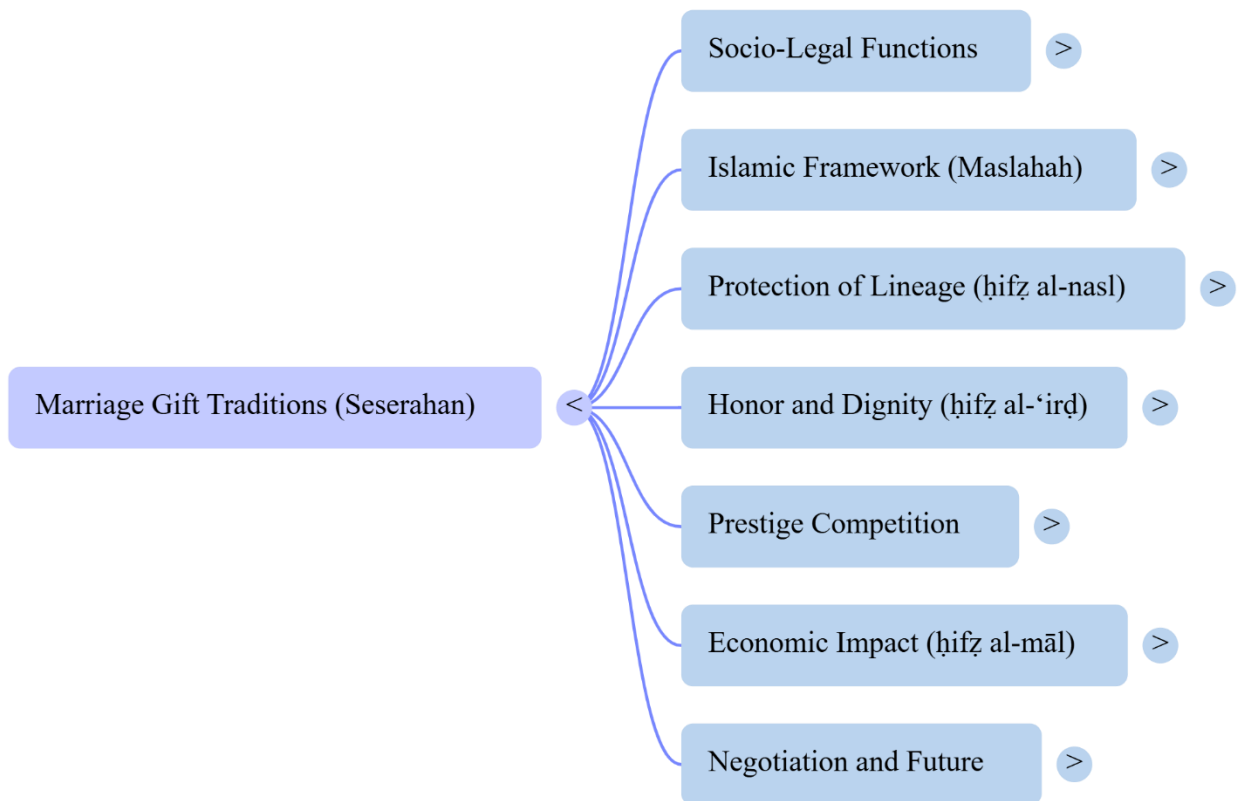


Figure 1. Prestige and Welfare in Islamic Marriage Gift Traditions

Ultimately, the evidence suggests that the future sustainability of marriage gift traditions within coastal Muslim communities depends upon their ability to remain connected to the principle of *maslahah*. Customs that strengthen family bonds, preserve dignity, and foster social solidarity remain valuable components of Muslim communal life (Lahmar, 2024; Nursanty & Wulandari, 2023). However, customs that prioritize prestige at the expense of welfare require critical reflection and contextual reinterpretation. In this regard, the concept of *maslahah* provides an important analytical framework for distinguishing between cultural practices that contribute to human flourishing and those that risk generating social and economic harm. The findings therefore highlight the need to reorient marriage gift traditions toward their original ethical foundations, ensuring that social recognition remains subordinate to the broader objectives of justice, welfare, and communal well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that marriage gift traditions (*seserahan*) in coastal Muslim communities are not merely ceremonial customs but socio-legal institutions through which cultural values, social relations, and religious meanings are reproduced. *Seserahan* functions both as symbolic capital—providing social recognition, legitimacy, and family honor—and as a customary mechanism that strengthens kinship, solidarity, and collective identity. However, contemporary socio-economic changes have shifted its meaning in some contexts toward prestige competition and public status, creating pressures that may burden families economically and socially. From the perspective of Islamic law, *seserahan* remains legitimate insofar as it promotes *maslahah* by preserving dignity, family stability, and social cohesion in line with the *maqāṣid* al-sharī‘ah; yet when it leads to inequality, hardship, or excessive social pressure, its practice must be critically reassessed. By integrating Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital with the *maqāṣid*-based framework of *maslahah*, this study shows that the

sustainability of *seserahan* depends on maintaining a balance between symbolic recognition and social welfare, so that the tradition continues to reflect the Islamic ethical principles of justice, moderation, and communal well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all participants from the coastal Muslim communities of Situbondo who generously shared their experiences, perspectives, and insights regarding marriage gift traditions. Special appreciation is extended to local religious leaders, community leaders, marriage officiants, and family members whose valuable contributions enriched this study. The author also acknowledges the support and guidance provided by academic mentors and colleagues throughout the research process.

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