

Kantika Ngara Practice: Marriage Validity under Islamic and Positive Law in Ambalawi Regency Local Wisdom

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|| Submitted: Juni 12, 2025 || Accepted: Agustus 20, 2025 || Published: Desember 15, 2025 ||

Abstract:

This study examines the practice of Kantika Ngara in Ambalawi Subdistrict, Bima Regency, a local pre-marital tradition involving the symbolic adjustment of the bride's and groom's names, which is believed to bring harmony, prosperity, and blessings to married life. The purpose of this research is to describe the implementation of Kantika Ngara, analyze it from the perspectives of Islamic law and positive law, and assess the harmony between religious norms, state regulations, and local wisdom. This study employs a qualitative approach using normative and empirical methods. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and analyzed using NVivo to identify key themes. The findings show that Kantika Ngara is practiced through symbolic methods such as counting name letters, interpreting names, observing palm lines, and measuring finger length as indicators of fortune. From the perspective of Islamic law, this tradition does not invalidate the marriage contract because the name adjustment is symbolic and does not affect legal identity. From the perspective of positive law, the practice does not cause administrative or legal problems since official identities remain unchanged. This study demonstrates that Kantika Ngara represents local wisdom that harmonizes religious values, state law, and community culture, contributing to discussions on legal pluralism and cultural accommodation.

Keywords: Kantika Ngara; Validity of Marriage; Islamic Law; Positive Law; Local Wisdom.

1. Introduction

Indonesia, as a pluralistic legal state, has a rich culture that influences socio-religious practices, including the marriage contract. The blending of religion and culture in marriage often gives rise to diverse views, even confusion in determining the role of religion and culture in daily life¹. In Ambalawi District, Bima Regency, there is a local cultural practice called Kantika Ngara, a tradition of changing the bride's name to match the groom's name. This tradition is unique because it is found only in this region and is based on specific calculations derived from the Tajalmuluk book to ensure the harmony of the couple and the direction of the household. This name change is believed to bring peace, blessings, and happiness to the marriage². For the Ambalawi people, *Kantika Ngara* holds profound religious, social, and cultural significance, reflecting the family's hope that their children's marriages will be blessed and protected from disaster. Research into this tradition is crucial in Ambalawi because it represents a living law practice that has not been widely studied from the perspective of Islamic law and positive law, making it a significant contribution to the framework of legal pluralism in Indonesia.

However, from an Islamic legal perspective, a marriage contract must fulfill certain requirements and pillars, including the clarity of the identities of the prospective husband and wife in the *ijab* and *qabul*

¹ Ahmad Ibrizul Izzi, Adang Djumhur Salikin, and Siti Fatimah, "RELASI AGAMA DAN BUDAYA DALAM PERNIKAHAN DI KERATON CIREBON PERSPEKTIF HUKUM ISLAM DAN FILSAFAT SOSIAL BUDAYA," *INKLUSIF (JURNAL PENGKAJIAN PENELITIAN EKONOMI DAN HUKUM ISLAM)* 6, no. 1 (April 2021): 35, <https://doi.org/10.24235/inklusif.v6i1.8434>.

² Anne Lieke Ebberts-Pardijs, Juliette Alenda-Demoutiez, and Natascha Wagner, "Legal Reforms, Norms, and Child Marriage: Observational Evidence on Behavioral Responses in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics* 120 (January 2026): 102499, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2025.102499>.

(contract of acceptance and acceptance of marriage). A marriage is considered valid if it fulfills the pillars and requirements according to Islam³. Ambiguity in the mention of names in the contract is feared to raise doubts about the validity of the marriage contract, given its central role in marriage⁴. Furthermore, under Indonesian positive law, specifically Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and the Compilation of Islamic Law, a marriage is considered valid if it is conducted according to the laws of each religion and belief⁵. This issue is important to study because it concerns the legal status of marriage, child legitimacy, inheritance, and other civil rights. Furthermore, this practice indirectly impacts local wisdom studies, which sometimes has the potential to create overlapping legal systems. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the practice of *Kantika Ngara* is needed to find common ground or harmonization between national legal values, Islamic law, and local wisdom. Legal harmonization can be achieved in two steps: the first refers to the formulation of a harmonized legal system, and the second refers to the formulation of harmonized norms (legal material)⁶.

This study aims to clarify the relationship between *Kantika Ngara* as living law with Islamic law and positive law, and to ensure its compliance with legal principles, considering the important purpose of marriage, namely creating a happy and peaceful family⁷. Given that marriage has legal implications for marital status, children, inheritance, and maintenance⁸, this study seeks to find common ground and conduct an in-depth analysis of living law from the perspective of applicable law.

2. Method

This type of research uses a legal-sociological approach, not only focusing on the substance of law according to positive law (*ius constitutum*), but also discovering the cultural construction of law that exists in society⁹. This study focuses on the validity of marriages that use *Kantika Ngara*, which is the result of the Marriage Law that exists in the Bima community, especially in the Ambalawi sub-district. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the local wisdom that exists in the community, which indirectly intersects with existing positive law and Islamic law relating to marriage. Given this, the researcher felt it necessary to analyze the validity of this practice using indicators of marriage law as stipulated in positive law and Islamic law, as well as to analyze the position of *Kantika Ngara* in the harmonization of positive law and Islamic law within the framework of local wisdom inherent in the community.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to increase the accuracy of the research and the reliability of the data and results, which were in line with the methodology, objectives, and goals of the study. The primary data sources for this research include six types: 1) community leaders directly involved in the practice of *Kantika Ngara*, 2) KUA officials who have encountered/often encounter marriage contracts with name changes, 3) couples who have been married through the practice of *Kantika Ngara*, 4) Islamic scholars or local religious leaders who can provide Islamic perspectives on this practice, 5) Village or sub-district officials who are familiar with the administrative/sociological aspects of this marriage practice,

³ Toha Ma'arif, "(Analisis dengan Pendekatan Qiyas, Istihsan, Sadd al-Dzari'ah, Maslahah Mursalah dan Hukum Positif di Indonesia)," n.d.

⁴ Muhammad Sodik, "DUALISME HUKUM DI INDONESIA: Kajian Tentang Peraturan Pencatatan Nikah dalam Perundang-Undangan" 7, no. 2 (2014).

⁵ Tim Redaksi Nuansa Aulia, *Kompilasi Hukum Islam: Hukum Perkawinan, Kewarisan, dan Perwakafan: disertai dengan: Undang-undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan, Undang-undang Nomor 41 Tahun 2004 Tentang Wakaf, Undang-undang Nomor 38 Tahun 1999 Tentang Penggunaan Zakat* (Nuansa Aulia, 2009).

⁶ Aditya Yuli Sulistyawan, "URGENSI HARMONISASI HUKUM NASIONAL TERHADAP PERKEMBANGAN HUKUM GLOBAL AKIBAT GLOBALISASI" 7, no. 2 (2019).

⁷ Taurat Afiati, Ani Wafiroh, and Muhamad Saleh Sofyan, "UPAYA PASANGAN SUAMI ISTRI TIDAK MEMILIKI KETURUNAN DALAM MEMPERTAHANKAN KEHARMONISAN RUMAH TANGGA (Studi Kasus Di Desa Siru Kabupaten Manggarai Barat NTT)," *AIHKAM Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Jurusan Ahwal Al-Syakhshiyah Fakultas Syariah IAIN Mataram* 14, no. 2 (April 2022): 161–84, <https://doi.org/10.20414/alihkam.v14i2.6927>.

⁸ Imam Faishol, "Implementasi Pencatatan Perkawinan Di Indonesia (Studi Atas Undang-Undang Perkawinan No. 1 Tahun 1974)," *Ulumul Syari': Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Hukum Dan Syariah* 8, no. 2 (April 2019): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.52051/ulumulsyari.v8i2.53>.

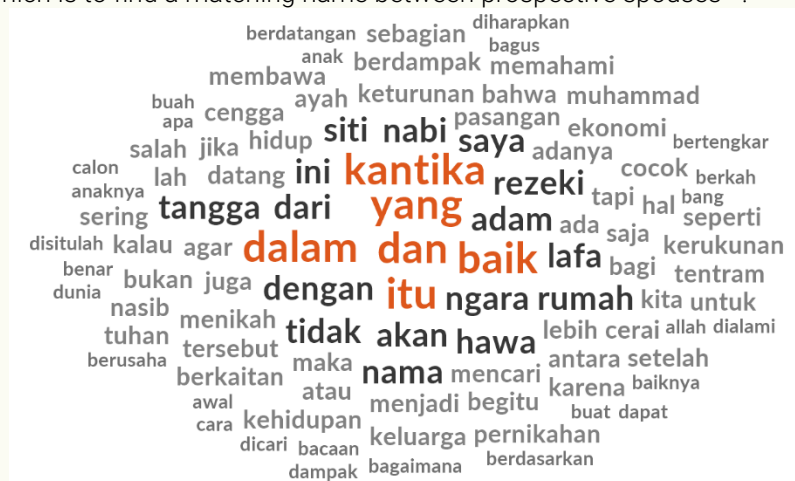
⁹ Muhammad Chairul Huda, *METODOLOGI PENELITIAN HUKUM (Pendekatan Yuridis Sosiologis)* (Semarang: The Mahfud Ridwan Institute, 2021).

and 6) Islamic Law or Positive Law academics. Data collection was conducted through literature study, observation, in-depth interviews using purposive sampling, and documentation.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. *Kantika Ngara* Values and Philosophy

Kantika Ngara is not just a name change without reason; the philosophy behind this practice is nothing less than an in-depth study of the concept of marriage itself. In understanding *Kantika Ngara*, the Ambalawi community understands that this concept has existed since ancient times¹⁰, and has become a tradition or custom before marriage, which is necessary for *Kantika Ngara* so that the marriage will be blessed, harmonious, and bring much fortune¹¹. Philosophically, the practice of *Kantika Ngara* is interpreted as finding compatibility between the names of the couple. From the community's perspective, *Kantika Ngara* is interpreted as a gift from God (Allah), while *Kantika Ngara* itself is only an effort or attempt to match names and palm lines in order to obtain blessings. Because life exists because of God (Allah)¹², it is not us who give sustenance, but it comes from God (Allah). However, if your names are not compatible, sustenance will not come, and even if it does, it will pass you by. If the couple often quarrels or does not get along, sustenance will also pass them by¹³. That is the representation. In addition, the essence contained in *Kantika Ngara* is interpreted as the marriage of Adam and Eve. According to the community, the essence of *Kantika Ngara* comes from a big question, namely, did Eve and the Prophet Adam recite the marriage vows (lafadz nikah) with the names Eve and the Prophet Adam? Of course, they did not recite the vows with the names Eve and the Prophet Adam. Then who married Siti Hawa and Prophet Adam? Based on this, there are clues in understanding *Kantika Ngara*¹⁴. Another meaning is likened to Adam and Muhammad, where there is a process of lafa (the wording when marrying), certainly not with the names Adam and Muhammad, but there is its own lafa reading, and that is the meaning of *Kantika Ngara*, which is to find a matching name between prospective spouses¹⁵.



Picture 1. Word Frequency

Overall, the Word Frequency display of the *Kantika Ngara* philosophy and its values shows that *Kantika Ngara* is an effort to bring marriage to a good place and bring fortune to the meaning contained in the tradition, which is indirectly believed and trusted to be the essence of *Kantika Ngara*.

3.2. The Practice of *Kantika Ngara* as a Socio-Cultural Heritage

For the Ambalawi community, the practice of *Kantika Ngara* is a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation by most of the community. This is reinforced by the fact that the community still practices it in the hope of blessings and abundant fortune for their marriages¹⁶.

¹⁰ Umi, "Interview with the Nipa village community," 2025.

¹¹ Bimansyah Bimansyah, "Interview with the Talapiti village community," 2025.

¹² Sirajuddin, "Interview with the Nipa village community," 2025.

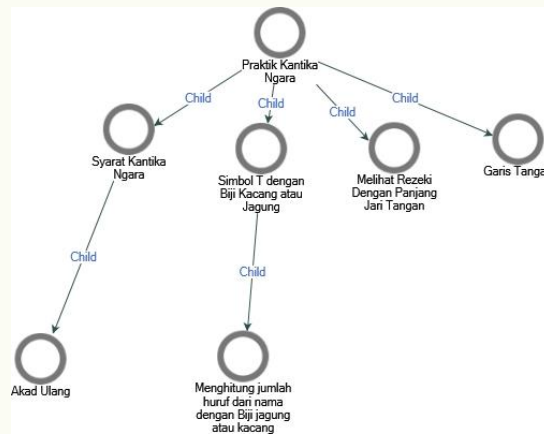
¹³ Ama Sao, "Interview with community leader Ama Sao," 2025.

¹⁴ Sirajuddin, "Interview with the Nipa village community"; Sao, "Interview with community leader Ama Sao."

¹⁵ Sao, "Interview with community leader Ama Sao."

¹⁶ Umi, "Interview with the Nipa village community."

On the other hand, the shift in generations in understanding the essence of *Kantika Ngara*, which was once interpreted as an effort to keep marriages strong, peaceful, and always blessed, is not always understood by the current generation, but has become something that is not really paid attention to¹⁷. Nevertheless, the practice of *Kantika Ngara* remains alive in the Ambalawi community, which believes that it brings blessings and peace to the family, as experienced by their respective parents¹⁸.



Picture 2. Mapping of *Kantika Ngara* Practices in the Ambalawi Community

In practice, *Kantika Ngara* is not carried out in a single standardized form, but rather in various ways and approaches according to the beliefs and traditions of the Ambalawi community. This is clearly seen in the NVivo coding results visualized in the form of maps. The visual display shows that the practice of *Kantika Ngara* has various patterns of application, all of which are oriented towards finding compatibility between the names of prospective spouses who are about to marry. First, some communities implement *Kantika Ngara* by adding a requirement in the form of a renewal of vows, which is interpreted as strengthening the marriage bond as well as legitimizing customs and spirituality. Second, there is a symbolic approach using beans or corn kernels arranged to form the letter T, which is then used to count the number of letters in the names of the prospective bride and groom. This practice is believed to be a traditional way of weighing the compatibility of a couple. Third, another method involves reading physical signs, such as finger length or palm lines, which are understood as indicators of future fortune, destiny, and marital harmony¹⁹.

Thus, NVivo visualization confirms that *Kantika Ngara* is a complex and pluralistic traditional practice system, in which the Ambalawi community not only considers names but also associates them with symbols, rituals, and interpretations of physical signs. This diversity of methods shows that the *Kantika Ngara* tradition functions not only as a name matching ritual, but also as a means of bringing belief, harmony, and blessings to married life.

1. Counting the number of words in the names of the couple and their parents;

In the practice of *Kantika Ngara*, one method widely used by the Ambalawi community is to count the number of letters in the names of the prospective couple. This process is usually carried out by community leaders or people who are considered to have special knowledge about *Kantika Ngara*. The mechanism begins with counting the number of letters in the names of the prospective bride and groom, then adding the names of their parents. For the prospective groom, the father's name is used, while for the prospective bride, the mother's name is used.

Once the number of letters has been obtained, the result of the calculation is then entered into a T-shaped symbol. The top of the T symbol is filled with the numbers 1–3, while the bottom is filled with the numbers 4–6. The names of the couple are counted in sequence with the help of corn or beans, until the last bean determines the final number of the couple²⁰.

¹⁷ Umi.

¹⁸ Umi.

¹⁹ Oday Hatem Falih et al., "Exploring Customer Loyalty in Islamic Banking: A Model for the Iraqi Market," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 16, no. 9 (November 24, 2025): 2543–68, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-04-2024-0148>.

²⁰ Hamzah Abu Mu, "Interview with community leader Abu Mu," 2025.



Picture 3. Example of viewing names with beans

The meanings of the numbers obtained are as follows: numbers 1, 2, and 3 are considered good omens (good numbers), especially number 1, which is believed to bring blessings and harmony. Meanwhile, numbers 4, 5, and 6 are interpreted as numbers that bring less luck. Although this does not mean that they will not receive sustenance, these numbers are considered to indicate that the couple's household will not be abundant in sustenance or blessings²¹. Numbers 6, 7, and 8 are often interpreted as bad numbers, because they are considered to be "below" or lacking in blessings²². Thus, the process of calculating the letters of a name in *Kantika Ngara* is not merely a mathematical symbol, but part of a belief system that unites names, symbols, and numerical interpretations as determinants of the prospects of a good or bad household life. The meaning of the numbers 1–6 in *Kantika Ngara* is not understood rigidly, but rather as symbols of belief. Low numbers (1–3) are interpreted as bringing optimism and blessings, while high numbers (4–6) signal caution and awareness that family life requires more effort and patience. This tradition also shows how the Ambalawi people interpret marriage not only from a legal perspective, but also through a cultural and spiritual approach.

2. Looking at the palms of the couple;

In addition to calculating the letters of the name, the *Kantika Ngara* practice is also carried out by looking at the palms of the prospective couple. Community leaders who are considered to understand this tradition will pay attention to the lines and shape of the palms, then give a simple assessment of the couple's temperament and character.

²¹ Sirajuddin, "Interview with the Nipa village community."

²² Abu Mu, "Interview with community leader Abu Mu."



Picture 4. Looking at palm lines

The assessment usually focuses on things related to domestic life, such as whether the prospective couple has a good nature, is not easily angered, is not talkative, and does not like to yell²³. These characteristics are considered important because they are believed to have a direct influence on the harmony of the household in the future.

Thus, the practice of palm reading in *Kantika Ngara* is not merely a form of fortune telling, but part of an effort to find spiritual and character compatibility between couples. The Ambalawi community believes that this compatibility will be the basis for a peaceful, harmonious, and blessed household.

3. Seeking a suitable and auspicious name during the marriage ceremony

Another method used in *Kantika Ngara* is to search for the names of each prospective partner to find the most suitable names. In this practice, the names of the prospective bride and groom are usually written down on a piece of paper first. Community leaders will then examine or “read” these names to see if there are any words or parts of the names that are considered “too high” or less suitable²⁴.



Picture 5. Determining suitable names for ijab qabul during marriage

If a name or syllable is found to be unbalanced, it may be suggested that it be removed or replaced. This process is carried out with the belief that balance in the couple's names will bring harmony, smoothness, and blessings when the marriage contract is carried out.

Thus, name divination in *Kantika Ngara* is not merely a symbolic activity, but also reflects the belief of the Ambalawi people that harmony in names will influence harmony in married life.

²³ Sao, “Interview with community leader Ama Sao.”

²⁴ Sirajuddin, “Interview with the Nipa village community.”

4. Divining fortune by calculating the length of the fingers

In addition to name divination, the practice of *Kantika Ngara* is also carried out by calculating the length of the fingers of the prospective couple. In this method, community leaders measure the distance between the five fingers by pressing or clasping the fingers from the tip of the palm to a certain point on the hand²⁵.



Picture 6. Seeing sustenance by calculating finger length

The results of this finger length measurement are then interpreted as a sign of the couple's sustenance and blessings in their household life. If the finger measurements show results that are considered "good," then it is interpreted that the couple's fortune will be smooth, abundant, and bring blessings. Conversely, if the measurement results are considered less than ideal, then it is believed that the couple's fortune will be more limited, although not completely closed off.

Thus, the practice of calculating finger length in *Kantika Ngara* shows how the Ambalawi people associate physical aspects of the body with projections of household economic life, so that this tradition not only concerns the harmony of names, but also includes beliefs about the blessings of sustenance.

3.3. *Kantika Ngara* in Married Life

For the Ambalawi people, *Kantika Ngara* is understood not merely as a ritual performed before marriage, but as an initial step to ensure that the compatibility of the couple will bring blessings to their future married life²⁶. This tradition is believed to serve as a spiritual and social foundation that strengthens the couple's conviction before they get married. However, some people argue that *Kantika Ngara* does not always guarantee a peaceful and harmonious household. They emphasize that the key to household harmony lies in mutual care, affection, and good communication between family members. In other words, although *Kantika Ngara* is considered important, it is not the only factor that determines household happiness²⁷. On the other hand, the community still respects and believes in this practice. However, *Kantika Ngara* is not mandatory. Prospective brides and grooms are usually asked in advance whether they want to undergo the *Kantika Ngara* process or not²⁸.

For married couples, it is generally not recommended to perform *Kantika Ngara*²⁹. This is because community leaders worry that this practice could actually cause estrangement, or even separation, if the

²⁵ Sao, "Interview with community leader Ama Sao."

²⁶ Abu Mu, "Interview with community leader Abu Mu."

²⁷ Bimansyah, "Interview with the Talapiti village community."

²⁸ M.Pd Nasruddin, "Interview with the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) of Ambalawi Subdistrict, Bima Regency," 2025; Umi, "Interview with the Nipa village community"; Bimansyah, "Interview with the Talapiti village community."

²⁹ Abu Mu, "Interview with community leader Abu Mu."

results are considered unsatisfactory. Even so, under certain conditions, *Kantika Ngara* can still be performed after marriage through a remarriage ceremony, in which the marriage guardian recites the marriage vows again, mentioning the name that has been adjusted based on the results of *Kantika Ngara*³⁰. Thus, *Kantika Ngara* occupies a dynamic position in the life of the Ambalawi community: on the one hand, it is believed to bring blessings, but on the other hand, it is recognized that marital harmony still depends on the efforts of the couple in building love, care, and togetherness.

3.4. Islamic Law Perspective

In Islamic law, a marriage contract is declared valid if the pillars and conditions are fulfilled, namely the presence of *ijab qabul*, a guardian, two witnesses, and the clarity of the bride and groom's identities. Differences of opinion among scholars arise in the context of modern marriage contracts, such as online marriage contracts. The majority of schools of thought (Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali) emphasize the importance of physical presence in *ijab qabul*, while the Hanafi school of thought allows for flexibility as long as *ijab qabul* is done simultaneously even if the parties are far apart, provided that the identities of the parties remain clear³¹. The basic principle of the validity of a contract is the fulfillment of the core requirements and the absence of elements of fraud or ambiguity. In practice, Islamic law strongly emphasizes the clarity of the identities of the parties involved in the contract, especially the names mentioned during the *ijab qabul*. However, there is flexibility in Islamic family law to accommodate local customs, as long as they do not conflict with the basic principles of sharia, such as justice, clarity, and protection of the rights of the parties concerned³². If there is a difference in the names mentioned in the *ijab qabul* and those officially recorded, the most important thing is that there is no doubt about who is getting married, so that the validity of the contract and the rights and obligations of the couple remain guaranteed according to sharia³³.

In addition, in the concept of *fiqh munakahat*, the *ijab qabul* or contract must be clear, such as the words "I marry" and "I wed," which refer to Surah Al Ahzaab: 37 and Surah an-Nisaa: 22³⁴. However, the point of emphasis in the contract process is that it is not permissible to use words of innuendo whose meaning and intent cannot be understood, especially by witnesses. Therefore, the scholars do not allow contracts with words of innuendo³⁵. In the view of the Bima community, names have more meaning than just identity; they are understood as prayers and symbols of blessing³⁶. This belief makes the mention of names in marriage contracts important, but it does not cause legal problems if there are variations or changes due to the practice of *Kantika Ngara*. The scholars in Bima never question this, as it is not considered contrary to religious principles³⁷. Therefore, the *Kantika Ngara* process does not invalidate the contract, and the marriage is still considered valid according to Islamic law³⁸. Therefore, Islamic jurisprudence recognizes name changes as long as they do not contradict Sharia law, such as changing a name with a bad meaning to a good one. In the context of contracts, the most important thing is the clarity of the identities of the contracting parties, so that a name change does not invalidate the contract as long as the identity can still be ascertained³⁹. Local customs or traditions can also influence the

³⁰ Sao, "Interview with community leader Ama Sao."

³¹ Habil Syahril Haj and Tutik Hamidah, "Online Marriage from the Perspective of Islamic Law and Positive Law at the Junrejo District Religious Affairs Office," *ISLAMIKA*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.36088/islamika.v7i1.5484>; F Faisal et al., "MARRIAGE CONTRACT THROUGH VISUALIZATION OF ONLINE VIDEO CALL COMMUNICATION MEDIA ACCORDING TO MARRIAGE LAW AND ISLAMIC LAW IN INDONESIA," *SMART: Journal of Sharia, Traditon, and Modernity*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.24042/smart.v1i1.9847>.

³² Lutfiyatut Tamamiyah, "The Evolving Practice of Marriage Contracts in Islamic Family Law: Customary Influences and Legal Implications," *Journal of Islamic Family Law* 1, no. 1 (February 17, 2025): 16–22, <https://doi.org/10.59784/jifl.v1i1.3>.

³³ Muhammad Iskandar Hamzah et al., "The Psychology of the Afterlife and Islamic Financing Adoption," *International Journal of Bank Marketing* 43, no. 8 (August 4, 2025): 1732–55, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-11-2024-0696>.

³⁴ Wahbah A4 - Saeed Zuhaili Ahmad, *Al Fiqh Al Islam Waadilatuhu*, vol. 9 (Bandung: Dar Fiqir, 2010).

³⁵ Zuhaili Ahmad.

³⁶ M.Pd.I Dr. Nasaruddin, "interview with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Bima Regency," 2025.

³⁷ Zuhaili Ahmad, *Al Fiqh Al Islam Waadilatuhu*.

³⁸ Satria Fadil Persada et al., "Experimenting with Innovative Content for Web-Based Technology in the Complex Islamic Sharia Market: The Influence of Quality and Credibility on Sharia Hotel Business," *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity* 11, no. 3 (September 2025): 100599, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2025.100599>.

³⁹ Tamamiyah, "The Evolving Practice of Marriage Contracts in Islamic Family Law: Customary Influences and Legal Implications."

acceptance of name changes as long as they do not violate the principles of sharia, as is the case in Ambalawi.

3.5. Positive Law in Marriage

In Indonesian positive law, clarity of identity in marriage documents is a very important aspect to ensure legal certainty and protection of the rights of spouses, especially regarding legal status, inheritance rights, and child protection⁴⁰. If there is a difference in names, this has the potential to cause administrative and legal problems, such as obstacles in the marriage registration process or doubts in the recognition of marital status by the state. Therefore, both in Islamic law and positive law, clarity and consistency of names are highly recommended. However, Islamic law emphasizes the substance of the contract and intention, while positive law emphasizes administrative aspects and formal legality⁴¹. The Marriage Law in Indonesia (Law No. 1 of 1974) explicitly emphasizes the importance of marriage registration. The legality of a marriage is only recognized by the state if it is officially registered, provided that the identities of the parties match their valid identity documents⁴². The purpose of this registration is to provide legal certainty, guarantee the status of the marriage, and protect the rights of the couple and any children born from the marriage⁴³.

In practice, indigenous communities often face dual administration, namely the obligation to fulfill both customary and state requirements. For example, permission or blessing from traditional leaders is often used as a basis before couples obtain registration documents at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA)⁴⁴. Marriages that are only conducted according to customary law without state registration are considered invalid from a positive law perspective, meaning that the couple does not receive adequate legal protection⁴⁵. Name changes also have administrative implications. Any name change must be adjusted in official documents so that the identity remains consistent in the marriage registration process. If not done correctly, differences in names can result in the marriage not being legally recognized or cause difficulties in accessing administrative rights in the future⁴⁶.

In the context of *Kantika Ngara*, this practice does not affect official administrative data. Identity documents such as ID cards, family cards, and marriage certificates remain consistent with official documents issued by the state⁴⁷. Changes only occur in the substance of the name used in the marriage ceremony, which is usually a variation of the name without any significant difference from the bride and groom's original names⁴⁸. From the perspective of Indonesian positive law, both the Marriage Law (UUP) and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) do not prohibit variations or changes in the use of names as long as they do not alter the official administrative data that is a requirement for a valid marriage⁴⁹. This confirms that the practice of *Kantika Ngara* does not cause administrative problems, because the changes made are symbolic, limited to the realm of custom, and do not affect the legal documents that form the basis of state recognition of a marriage.

⁴⁰ Tamamiyah.

⁴¹ Dindin Syarif Nurwahyudin, "Review of Hadith in Marriage Agreements and Its Perspective in Indonesian Positive Law," *JURNAL AKTA*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.30659/akta.v12i1.44624>; Tamamiyah, "The Evolving Practice of Marriage Contracts in Islamic Family Law: Customary Influences and Legal Implications."

⁴² Y Lon and Fransiska Widyawati, "Customary Law Before Religion and State Laws Regarding Marriage In Manggarai, Eastern Indonesia," *Jurnal Cita Hukum* 9 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.15408/JCH.V9I1.16510>; M Mustafid et al., "Alternative Legal Strategies and Ninik Mamak Authority: Dual Administration of Malay Marriage in Koto Kampar Hulu, Riau," *Journal of Islamic Law*, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v5i1.1972>.

⁴³ Luqyan Tamanni et al., "Islamic Social Finance and Commercial Finance: A Marriage Made in Heaven?," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 13, no. 8 (September 26, 2022): 1216–33, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-01-2021-0018>.

⁴⁴ Mustafid et al., "Alternative Legal Strategies and Ninik Mamak Authority: Dual Administration of Malay Marriage in Koto Kampar Hulu, Riau."

⁴⁵ Christine Schenk, "Legal and Spatial Ordering in Aceh, Indonesia: Inscribing the Security of Female Bodies into Law," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 51 (2019): 1128–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X19836119>; Lon and Widyawati, "Customary Law Before Religion and State Laws Regarding Marriage In Manggarai, Eastern Indonesia."

⁴⁶ Mustafid et al., "Alternative Legal Strategies and Ninik Mamak Authority: Dual Administration of Malay Marriage in Koto Kampar Hulu, Riau."

⁴⁷ Nasruddin, "Interview with the Religious Affairs Office (KUA) of Ambalawi Subdistrict, Bima Regency."

⁴⁸ Ahmad, "Interview with the Tolowata village community," 2025.

⁴⁹ M H I Dr. Zuhra, "Interview with legal practitioners," 2025.

3.6. Harmony between Islamic law, state law, and local wisdom in viewing Kantika Ngara

The practice of *Kantika Ngara* in the Ambalawi community demonstrates the harmony between Islamic law, positive law, and local wisdom. From the perspective of Islamic law, the validity of a marriage contract is determined by the fulfillment of the pillars and requirements, such as the presence of a guardian, witnesses, and a clear *ijab qabul* (marriage vow)⁵⁰. As long as the mention of names in the *Kantika Ngara* procession does not cause confusion of identity, the contract remains valid according to Islamic law. In fact, Islamic jurisprudence allows for name changes as long as they are for good purposes and do not contradict Islamic law. From the perspective of positive law, the Marriage Law emphasizes clarity of identity and official registration as conditions of legality. However, *Kantika Ngara* does not affect official documents such as identity cards, family cards, or marriage certificates, because the name change is only symbolic in the traditional procession, so it does not conflict with state regulations⁵¹.

In the context of the Ambalawi community, which has a belief and behavior that characterizes the uniqueness of the region, namely *Kantika Ngara*, this tradition functions not only as a traditional ritual but also as a social and spiritual medium to ensure the blessings of the household. This local wisdom interprets names as prayers and sources of positive energy, so that the naming through *Kantika Ngara* is believed to determine the harmony of a marriage⁵². Thus, *Kantika Ngara* is a concrete example of how Islamic law preserves the substance of the contract, positive law enforces administrative certainty, and local wisdom enriches the spiritual meaning of marriage. The presence of this tradition shows that the three dimensions of law can work harmoniously as a form of living law that is alive, evolving, and practiced by the community without violating sharia or state regulations.

4. Conclusion

The practice of *Kantika Ngara* in Ambalawi society is applied in various ways, such as counting the number of letters in the names of the prospective bride and groom, reading palms, interpreting names, and measuring finger length. All of these methods are interpreted as symbolic efforts to find a compatible partner so that the marriage will bring blessings, household harmony, and prosperity. This tradition lives on as a socio-cultural heritage that is still believed in, even though its implementation is optional and not mandatory for every couple. From an Islamic law perspective, *Kantika Ngara* does not violate Sharia law because it does not change the substance of the marriage contract. The name in official documents is still used, while variations in the name in the contract are only symbolic and do not cause any doubt as to identity. Islamic jurisprudence even allows name changes as long as they have a good meaning. From a positive law perspective, particularly based on Law No. 1 of 1974 and the Compilation of Islamic Law, this practice does not cause administrative problems because the identity of the bride and groom remains consistent with their identity documents. Thus, *Kantika Ngara* is acceptable both religiously and under state law, as long as the marriage is registered according to procedure. Furthermore, this study shows the harmony between Islamic law, state law, and local wisdom in viewing the practice of *Kantika Ngara*. The Ambalawi community interprets this tradition as part of their cultural identity that gives the region its distinctive character, while Islamic law and state law provide flexibility as long as it does not conflict with the core principles, namely clarity of identity, validity of the contract, and legal certainty. Thus, *Kantika Ngara* is a concrete example of the harmonization between religious norms, state regulations, and local wisdom that can coexist dynamically within society.

⁵⁰ Seung-hun Chung, "Impact of Fundamentalism on Human Capital, Women's Social Status and Demographics: Evidence from Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Iraq," *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 228 (December 2024): 106785, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2024.106785>.

⁵¹ Muluneh Anmut Tilahun, Mellese Madda Gatisso, and Abdu Mohammed Ali, "Interreligious Marriage in Wollo, Ethiopia: Historical Factors Underpinning Its Development and Prevalence," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (2025): 101611, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101611>.

⁵² Iznaz Tarip, "Theorizing Islamic Entrepreneurship from an Islamic Governance Perspective," *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* 17, no. 2 (April 17, 2024): 274–91, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-05-2023-0172>.

Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

Syarif Hidayatullah: Conceptualization, Study Design, Theoretical Framework Development, Legal Analysis, Writing Original Draft. Muhammad Zia Ulhaq: Project Coordination, Literature Review, Writing – Review & Editing, Final Manuscript Preparation. Fitriani: Data Collection, Data Curation, Data Processing, Supporting Data Analysis.

Funding Statement

Thanks to Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Sains dan Teknologi, Direktorat Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (DPPM) through the 2025 Early Career Faculty Research Scheme grant program based on Contract Number 129/C3/DT.05.00/PL/2025; 2166/LL8/AL.04/2025; 024/KEP/8.IV/C/VI/2025 so that the implementation of this research activity can be carried out smoothly and successfully.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. No publicly archived datasets were used or generated during the current research.

Declaration of Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper

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