



Mongilalo and the Prophet's Hadith: Reception in Gorontalo Marriage Rituals and Its Implications for Family Resilience

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Abstract

This study examines the crisis of family resilience in the modern era, marked by increasing divorce rates in Indonesia. In response, it aims to reconstruct the *mongilalo* tradition in Gorontalo as a preventive strategy grounded in local wisdom. *Mongilalo* refers to a family-based evaluation of a prospective spouse to assess character readiness, ethics, and social background in order to prevent the formation of dysfunctional families. This study employs a qualitative-analytical approach. The findings show that *mongilalo* functions as a preventive social mechanism in strengthening family resilience through discreet assessment of prospective partners. This practice demonstrates theological coherence with the Prophet's hadith, particularly those narrated by An-Nasa'i and At-Tirmidhi, which encourage knowing a prospective spouse to ensure marital harmony and continuity. From a juridical-philosophical perspective, *mongilalo* can be categorized as a valid custom that does not contradict Islamic law, as it promotes public benefit and aligns with Gorontalo philosophical values. The study concludes that *mongilalo* represents a relevant form of local wisdom consistent with the Prophetic Sunnah and has the potential to strengthen family resilience amid modern challenges. Therefore, integrating local wisdom and hadith should be further developed through interdisciplinary approaches to enrich culturally grounded models of family resilience.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji krisis ketahanan keluarga di era modern yang ditandai oleh meningkatnya angka perceraian di Indonesia. Sebagai respons, penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi tradisi *mongilalo* di Gorontalo sebagai strategi preventif berbasis kearifan lokal. *Mongilalo* merupakan praktik penilaian calon pasangan oleh keluarga untuk menilai kesiapan karakter, etika, dan latar belakang sosial guna mencegah terbentuknya keluarga disfungsi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-analitis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *mongilalo* berfungsi sebagai mekanisme sosial preventif dalam memperkuat ketahanan keluarga melalui peninjauan calon pasangan secara tersembunyi. Praktik ini memiliki koherensi teologis dengan hadis Nabi, khususnya riwayat An-Nasa'i dan At-Tirmidzi, yang menganjurkan untuk mengenal calon pasangan demi menjamin kelanggengan dan keharmonisan pernikahan. Secara yuridis-filosofis, *mongilalo* dapat dikategorikan sebagai adat yang tidak bertentangan dengan syariat karena mengandung kemaslahatan publik dan sejalan dengan falsafah Gorontalo. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa *mongilalo* merupakan kearifan lokal yang relevan dan selaras dengan Sunnah Nabi, serta berpotensi memperkuat ketahanan keluarga di tengah tantangan modern. Oleh karena itu, integrasi antara kearifan lokal dan hadis perlu terus dikembangkan secara interdisipliner untuk memperkaya model ketahanan keluarga berbasis budaya.

INTRODUCTION

The crisis of family resilience in the modern era is becoming increasingly complex, marked by a rise in domestic issues that lead to divorce (Ismiati et al., 2016). Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) for 2024 recorded 438,168 divorce cases in Indonesia, (BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2026) indicating a weak foundation of domestic harmony. This crisis is further exacerbated by social pathologies such as the normalization of divorce on social media, economic conflicts, and domestic violence triggered by online gambling. Other phenomena also reinforce this situation, such as the prevalence of more than 60 wives who are Civil Servants (ASN) or Government Employees with Work Agreements (P3K) filing for divorce from their husbands (Khairurrizki, 2025), as well as social media trends that display pride in divorce. Whereas divorce was once considered a disgrace, it is now flaunted without shame, reflecting a shift in moral values and perspectives regarding the sanctity of marriage.

The rising number of divorce cases indicates that many marriages are entered into without adequate preparation or guidance. The pattern of getting to know each other through dating often leads couples to show only their best sides without truly understanding each other's character. As a result, many only realize their partner's differences in principles, habits, and temperament after marriage. Yet there are still many alternatives to dating, such as local traditions that have long provided wiser ways to get to know a prospective partner.

Various traditions in Indonesia embody values of well-being in building a household, such as nontoni in Java, maso minta in Maluku, and mongilalo in Gorontalo (Rahim et al., 2023). The mongilalo tradition involves reviewing and gathering information about a prospective partner before marriage, conducted with a high regard for ethics and etiquette. The values embedded in this tradition serve as social and spiritual strategies to strengthen family resilience.

Although various studies have examined family resilience, social pathology, and the role of premarital counseling in preventing divorce, research that specifically explores the integration of local wisdom and the Prophet's hadith as a preventive strategy remains limited. Studies on marriage traditions in Indonesia generally stop at cultural descriptions or normative religious analyses in isolation, without linking the two within an integrative analytical framework. In particular, the mongilalo tradition in Gorontalo has not been widely studied as a form of living hadith that not only reflects cultural values but also possesses theological and juridical foundations in Islam. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing mongilalo through an interdisciplinary/ approach that combines hadith studies, cultural anthropology, and the perspective of uṣūl al-fiqh, in order to demonstrate its contribution as a preventive strategy in strengthening family resilience amid modern crises.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a qualitative research that combines two approaches: a literature review and field research. The literature review is conducted by collecting scientific journals obtained

through various search platforms using keywords such as *mongilalo*, marriage, living hadith, and other themes related to the research title. Additionally, the collection of literature data includes other written sources such as classical texts, books, and other relevant literature.

Meanwhile, the field research is conducted to supplement primary data by gathering information regarding *mongilalo*. Observations are carried out by directly witnessing how this practice occurs within the community. As for the interview method, in-depth interviews are conducted with several traditional and religious leaders who understand the intricacies and philosophy of the *mongilalo* tradition.

The data obtained are then presented descriptively to provide an objective overview and explanation of the issues the research focuses on. This study utilizes an anthropological approach to deconstruct the cultural meanings, symbols, and functions within the practice of *mongilalo*, as well as to examine its relevance to the religious values enshrined in the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Furthermore, this research also applies the *takbrij* hadith method through the tracing of the *isnad* (chain of narrators) and *matn* (text) of hadiths related to the practice of observing a prospective partner before marriage. Through the integration of cultural anthropology, hadith studies, and the *usul al-fiqh* approach, this study seeks to demonstrate the practical value of the *mongilalo* tradition in fostering family resilience within Gorontalo society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Pathology and the Crisis of Family Resilience

The rising divorce rate in Indonesia cannot be separated from the social reality that reveals the increasingly fragile resilience of families. The phenomenon of many wives filing for divorce after their husbands become civil servants (ASN) or contract workers (P3K) is just one of many examples of the decline of the family in modern life. This picture shows that changes in social status are often followed by changes in mindset and attitude toward one's partner (Maulida & Indrawati, 2025). In fact, marital breakdown has become an open secret frequently flaunted on social media, as if divorce is no longer a family shame, but has instead become a trend proudly displayed in public (Putri, 2024). According to the latest BPS records, the divorce rate reached 399,291 cases in 2024 (Statistik, 2025). This data indicates that family resilience has become a critical issue threatening many parties, including children and the families of both spouses.

It cannot be denied that the root of most marital problems often stems from the early stages of marriage. Sociologically speaking, a resilient family is formed through the process of selecting a suitable partner who is of good character and responsible (Astana et al., 2023). However, in reality, many couples enter marriage not out of genuine readiness both emotionally and mentally but rather due to emotional impulses, social pressure, or simply the fleeting euphoria of love, driven by the fear of being labeled as unmarriageable or unworthy of marriage (Sari & Sunarti, 2013). It is from here that the seeds of social pathology begin to grow and develop, which are interpreted as forms of

deviation that disrupt the balance of family and community life (Galang Gemilang Putra et al., 2024). It is this lack of readiness that gives rise to various conflicts after a person gets married.

From mental disorders stemming from hereditary factors (Hariyadi & Rusdianah, 2021), to the rise of online gambling within society. The addiction to gambling drives individuals to engage in this activity continuously, time and again, even after suffering losses and setbacks (Rafiqah & Rasyid, 2023). This inevitably impacts their families; when someone becomes frustrated due to the online gambling they engage in, they often take it out on their spouse or family members at home. The family's finances are ruined, basic needs are neglected, and many cases lead to acts of violence (Indrawati et al., 2015). Domestic violence becomes the most severe form of harm inflicted upon a partner, whether through physical or psychological abuse. This is recognized as such because the state has provided legal protection for any partner affected by domestic violence (Indonesia, 2004). Additionally, cases of infidelity and a habit of heavy drinking can also trigger prolonged conflicts.

It is these various forms of social pathology that ultimately lead households to the brink of divorce. According to divorce statistics released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), which were analyzed in the previous discussion, the most common contributing factors stem from the household's poor economic conditions and constant arguments that escalate into physical or psychological violence (Statistik, 2024). This picture indicates that social pathology is not merely a theoretical issue, but rather a structural phenomenon that must be taken seriously from the very beginning of family formation. This is attributed to the fact that one of the primary causes is the lack of a mature counseling process before marriage, whether from religious leaders, traditional figures, or the community (Suhayati & Masitoh, 2021). This is further supported by data from the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN), which also reveals that many prospective couples have not completed pre-marital counselling (Muchamad Zaid Wahyudi, 2024). Such a lack of seriousness poses a threat to the quality of the household. Therefore, full commitment and awareness in carrying out the premarital counseling process must be prioritized by every prospective couple, so that marriage is not merely a formality but becomes a solid and harmonious foundation for life.

Departing from the issues outlined above, the presence of an adequate social system is crucial in preventing the decline of family resilience, beginning with the careful selection of a suitable partner from the outset. In several regions, local wisdom continues to be preserved as an essential tradition prior to entering marriage. For instance, the *nontoni* tradition in Java provides an opportunity for families to ensure compatibility between prospective partners through direct meetings, allowing the bride and groom to mutually assess one another before the formal proposal process (Aziz, 2017). Similarly, the *maso minta* tradition in Maluku serves a comparable purpose, namely to gather information, create space for dialogue between both families, and ensure alignment in the couple's shared vision and aspirations prior to proceeding to marriage (Satia, 2024). Meanwhile, in

the Gorontalo region, the *mongilalo* tradition functions as a strategic bridge for understanding the character, habits, and readiness of a prospective bride in daily life (Tine et al., 2017). These traditions collectively serve as key foundations in fostering the principle of family resilience, as they embody forms of local wisdom that are regarded as beneficial and consistent with the prescriptions of religious law.

Mongilalo as a Social Strategy for Building Family Resilience

The increasing complexity of family life, which often leads to divorce, reflects the continued weakness of efforts to optimize premarital counseling within the community (Suhayati & Masitoh, 2021). Culturally, there exists a wiser system within society for maintaining the integrity and resilience of the family. In Gorontalo tradition, there is a practice known as *mongilalo*, which refers to the process of observing and getting to know a prospective partner before actually marrying them. In an interview with an academic and cultural expert, Abdul Wahab Thomas, he stated that *mongilalo* is an intellectual activity, namely the act of seeking to understand or predict what will happen in the future. It also refers to an individual's effort to discover something that is not yet known. From this interview, it can be understood that *mongilalo* is an activity undertaken to obtain prior knowledge about a person who is to be married (Tahir et al., 2024).

This tradition represents the community's effort to preserve the culture passed down through generations by their ancestors in Gorontalo. *Mongilalo* is not merely a cultural tradition but also an embodiment of local wisdom rich in profound philosophical meaning and values. This traditional process places great emphasis on the readiness of the prospective bride and groom (Baruadi & Eraku, 2018), beginning with ensuring the prospective bride is not already engaged to another man, while also assessing whether she is suitable as a life partner based on her character and daily habits.

This tradition is understood as a preliminary review or process of observing the prospective bride before she is officially accepted by the prospective groom (Baruadi & Eraku, 2018). The *mongilalo* tradition is generally conducted discreetly by the groom's family, without the prospective groom being present. They visit the prospective bride's home at four in the afternoon and are allowed only one hour. However, if the conversation has already become serious and continues, it may still proceed, provided they return before sunset. During the vetting process, the prospective bride's habits are assessed without her knowledge (Tine et al., 2017). They visit as ordinary guests, then gather information and observe the prospective bride's behavior from her attire, how she treats guests, her speech, manners, and various other behaviors all of which are considered by the groom's family.

In the *Mongilalo* traditional customs of Gorontalo, a number of requirements have been established that are believed to form the basis for determining an ideal spouse according to time-honored traditions. Among these, the first is ensuring that the prospective bride is Muslim, as shared religious beliefs form the primary foundation for building a

household (Botutihe & Daulima, 2003). If the prospective bride follows a religion other than Islam, the groom is expected to wholeheartedly accept the established customary rules. Second, considering educational background she must possess at least a good and progressive outlook, as the woman will serve as the first school for her children. This is consistent with an interview conducted with Mr. Syafrudin Hasan, a traditional leader from Tilamuta Subdistrict (Botutihe & Daulima, 2003).

Third, evaluating physical beauty, simplicity, and both physical and mental strength to ensure the prospective bride's maturity in managing married life. Fourth, examining the prospective bride's family status within the social sphere. The aim is to avoid the potential emergence of social pathologies that could prove detrimental in the future (Botutihe & Daulima, 2003). These criteria demonstrate that in Gorontalo tradition, an ideal match is not merely a matter of love, but a harmonious blend of religion, reason, character, and social environment. In an interview with an academic from Gorontalo, it was explained that "social pathology" here refers, for example, to someone who has a trait that could become a problem in the future such as a person identified as having a family history of mental illness, in which case the condition might be hereditary, or someone with a history of theft, in which case that tendency might also be inherited. Mongilalo is here to identify these issues, so that the person you plan to marry does not turn out to have various problems or carry the potential to cause problems in the future.

In addition to the above requirements, there are several observations from another perspective that also hold their own significance. During the review process, the groom's family will pay close attention to the details of the prospective bride's behavior and attire. For instance, if during the review the girl is found with disheveled hair or wearing a top and bottom that do not match, this will be interpreted as a sign of disorganization and a lack of self-care (Tine et al., 2017). Furthermore, if during the review, which takes place in the afternoon, the girl is found sleeping, combing her hair for lice, or even gossiping with neighbors, she will be perceived as unskilled at work or considered lazy (Tine et al., 2017).

Once the review process is complete, the reviewer will return and share the information with the prospective groom's family for their consideration, without adding to or omitting any details. However, all decisions rest with the prospective groom, according to his own judgment. If the information is accepted, the next step in the process will proceed, signaling that the man will propose to the prospective bride who has been reviewed. As for the attire in the Mongilalo tradition, the prospective groom wears a bo'o kini (Chinese-style collar), batik pants, and a basket-weave cap; this ensemble is referred to as "bo'o lo mongo tiyamo." As for the woman, she wears a kebaya, followed by a sarong used as a skirt known as "bide-bide lo lipa-lipa" then a batik sarong (wulo-wuloto lo bate) as a cover, and a konde (Tine et al., 2017).

This process indicates that the mongilalo tradition is not merely a cultural practice, but a social strategy that embodies local wisdom rooted in the common good. When viewed from an anthropological perspective, the practice of mongilalo in Gorontalo can be

analyzed using Clifford Geertz's theory, which emphasizes that cultural practices are symbolic systems that give meaning to social actions, as well as Malinowski's theory, which views tradition as a means of maintaining the balance of communal life (Adi et al., 2023). Based on these two theories, mongilalo can be understood as living local knowledge passed down through generations, serving as a social mechanism to assess a prospective partner's readiness. This tradition not only protects an individual from an unsuitable marriage but also prevents the household from becoming a dysfunctional family. By prioritizing the observation of character, values, and social background conducted discreetly yet meaningfully it serves as a preventive measure in fostering family unity. Thus, the mongilalo tradition deserves to be interpreted as the primary gateway to the formation of a family characterized by *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *warahmah* a family rooted in cultural awareness and aligned with the demands of sharia, such as the Prophet's guidance to "examine" the prospective spouse.

The Hadith Perspective on Mongilalo: A Solution for Family Resilience

The mongilalo tradition, which is still preserved today by the people of Gorontalo, reflects the harmony between local wisdom and religious teachings. This Sharia practice was directly commanded by the Prophet through his sayings. When a companion was about to marry, the Prophet instructed him to observe the prospective bride he intended to marry. This recommendation serves as clear evidence that the Mongilalo tradition is a relevant implementation of Sharia values, as well as an expression of an individual's effort to exercise caution and ensure mental readiness before entering into a marital relationship. This Hadith is narrated by al-Nasa'i in two different versions, yet both convey the same message regarding the importance of examining a prospective spouse before the marriage is consummated.

أَحْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مَرْوَانُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ وَهُوَ ابْنُ كَيْسَانَ عَنْ أَبِي حَازِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ خَطَبَ رَجُلٌ امْرَأَةً مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هَلْ نَظَرْتَ إِلَيْهَا قَالَ لَا فَأَمَرَهُ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَيْهَا

“Abdur Rahman bin Ibrahim reported to us, saying: Marwan reported to us, saying: Yazid that is, Kaysan reported to us from Abu Hazim from Abu Hurairah, who said: A man proposed to a woman from the Ansar, then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said to him, 'Have you seen her?' The man said, 'No.' Then the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, ordered him to look at her (Al-Nasa'i, n.d.).”

Based on the results of a hadith takhrij search in the Arabic version of the book *Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras*, authored by Muhammad Fu'ad Abdul Baqi', the findings indicate that this hadith was narrated only by Imam An-Nasa'i in his book *Sunan An-Nasa'i*, and is found in the book "Marriage," under the chapter "The Permissibility of Seeing the Woman to Be Married," (Wennsinck, 1943). The author then analyzed each narrator to verify their credibility as hadith transmitters. In the book *Tabzibul Kamal*, it is explained that the Companion Abu Hurairah, as the first narrator, was renowned among the

Companions and was the one who transmitted the most hadiths; he was also unanimously agreed upon by scholars as a just and trustworthy Companion. Then there is Abu Hazim, who is known to have narrated many hadiths from the Companions and is considered trustworthy by many scholars, such as Imam Bukhari and Ibn Ma'in (Al-Mizzi & Abi al-Hajjaj, 1992).

Next is Yazid bin Kaisan, who is known as a trustworthy narrator, though he has some minor shortcomings. According to Ibn Hajar, although Yazid is assessed in this way, he can still be categorized as *maqbul* (acceptable) by hadith scholars, so his status as a narrator is *shaduq* (verified).⁴⁶ As for the next narrator, Marwan bin Mu'awiyah, he is assessed as *tsiqah* by Yahya bin Ma'in and An-Nasa'i; he is known as a hadith scholar from Syria and is classified as a narrator with a strong memory. The final narrator is Abdurrahman bin Ibrahim, a hadith scholar from Damascus who transmitted many hadiths from renowned teachers, such as al-Walid bin Muslim. Abdurrahman is also rated as *tsiqah* by Al-'Ijli. Meanwhile, Ibn Hibban also considered Abdurrahman to be among the narrators whose reports can be used as evidence (Al-Mizzi & Abi al-Hajjaj, 1992).

Based on the assessment of the five narrators mentioned above, it can be concluded that the quality of this hadith falls under the category of *hasan li zatih*, and has the potential to be upgraded to *shahih* if there is corroborating evidence from another chain of transmission. This is because nearly all of the narrators are considered *tsiqah*, while one narrator is considered *shaduq*. This means that the narrator is truthful but still has some minor weaknesses in his memory. However, since there are no narrators classified as *matruk* or accused of lying, and the chain of transmission (*sanad*) is continuous from the Companion Abu Hurairah all the way to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), this hadith is worthy of being used as evidence and falls under the category of religious recommendations (*syara'i*) to be practiced.

According to al-Nawawi's theological perspective, this hadith serves as evidence for the permissibility of the recommendation to look at a woman before marrying her, as this can lead to a lasting marital relationship, and this view has also been agreed upon by the majority of scholars (Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, n.d.). The meaning of the word "look" here derives from the Arabic root *nazara-yanzuru-nazran*, which signifies the act of seeing or observing something. That is, it can mean looking verbally and perceiving an object with both eyes (Fathurrohman, 2024). In this regard, there are several opinions from the imams of the schools of thought regarding the recommendation to look at a woman one intends to marry based on the hadith above. According to the majority of scholars, including the Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi'i schools of thought, as well as some followers of the Hanbali school, it is permissible to see the face and hands of the bride-to-be (Umami, 2019).

Something similar also happened to the Companion al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah. When Al-Mughirah intended to propose to the woman of his choice, he conveyed his desire to marry her to the Prophet, and the Prophet instructed him to see her first before marrying

her. This advice was given with the aim of fostering a sense of motivation to marry, while also ensuring the longevity of their marriage. This hadith was narrated by Imam al-Tirmidhi, hadith number 1.087.

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مَنِيعٍ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي زَائِدَةَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَاصِمُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ هُوَ الْأَحْوَلُ عَنْ بَكْرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْمُزَنِيِّ عَنْ الْمُغِيرَةِ بْنِ شُعْبَةَ أَنَّهُ حَظَبَ امْرَأَةً فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ انظُرْ إِلَيْهَا فَإِنَّهُ أَحْرَى أَنْ يُؤَدَمَ بَيْنَكُمَا

Ahmad bin Mani' narrated to us, saying: "Ibn Abu Za'idah narrated to us, saying: 'Ashim bin Sulaiman Al-Ahwal narrated to me from Bakr bin Abdullah Al-Muzani from Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah, who proposed to a woman, so the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Look at her! for that will make your marriage more lasting (Al-Tirmidzi, n.d.)."

The instruction in the hadith above is very clear, and some scholars have even put it into practice. According to them, it is permissible to look in order to ensure suitability and fertility, provided it is within reasonable limits and does not involve looking at prohibited parts (Ramadana, 2025). In the context of "looking," as intended by the Prophet, there are specific limits, and it must be done in accordance with Islamic ethical standards. The limits of what may be seen of a prospective bride, as agreed upon by the Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafi'i schools of thought, are limited to the face, both hands, and the wrists. This is because these three parts are not considered aurat. However, there is also a view within the Hanafi school that permits looking at both legs down to the ankles, as the legs are not considered aurat (Nizar, 2020).

In addition, there is a relatively extreme view within the Zāhirī school. According to Ibn Hazm, it is permissible to look at the entirety of a woman's body whom one intends to marry, even those parts considered 'awrah. This opinion is based on the argument that the Prophet's hadith does not explicitly specify which parts must be observed. However, this view has been rejected by the majority of scholars (jumhūr al-'ulamā') (Muslim, 2012). Meanwhile, the meaning of the term "to perpetuate" in the hadith, according to Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Ishaq ibn Rahwayh, refers more to the دوام (enduring nature) of affection between husband and wife. From this understanding, it can be inferred that such a principle contributes to the establishment of family resilience.

Nevertheless, the permissibility of observing a prospective bride does not imply unrestricted freedom. There are prescribed conditions: when a man seeks to see and ascertain, he must possess a genuine intention to marry. This regulation is also articulated by Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi in his work al-Mughnī, stating that the act of looking is considered valid only when it is undertaken with a sincere intention of marriage, not merely driven by desire (Al-Maqdisī, n.d.). This opinion remains highly relevant in the contemporary context, emphasizing that such actions are not to be undertaken casually, but only when one truly intends to marry the woman of his choice.

Furthermore, there is also a prohibition against seclusion (*khalwah*). When intending to observe a prospective bride, it is not recommended that this be done in private between the two individuals alone. Rather, it should be conducted in the presence of others, such as family members, or by sending a trusted representative to assess the prospective woman. In this context, it is preferable that the representative be a woman such as the mother or a female relative from the man's family who is permitted to observe aspects of the woman's 'awrah and may interact with her more freely, both in physical and non-physical respects (Fathurrohman, 2024). A similar practice is also reported from the time of the Prophet Muhammad. When he intended to marry, he sent Ummu Sulaim as an intermediary to observe and assess the prospective bride he was considering. This is mentioned in a hadith narrated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ حَدَّثَنَا عُمَارَةُ عَنْ ثَابِتٍ عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَرْسَلَ أُمَّ سَلِيمٍ
تَنْظُرُ إِلَى جَارِيَةٍ فَقَالَ شَمِّي عَوَارِضَهَا وَأَنْظُرِي إِلَى عُزْقُوبِهَا

Ishaq ibn Mansur narrated to us, Ammarah narrated to us, from Thabit, from Anas, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Umm Sulaym to look at a young woman. He said: "Smell her breath and look at her ankles." (Ahmad, 2019)

The hadith mentioned above serves as an explicit foundation for appointing a representative to observe a prospective woman prior to a formal proposal. The Prophet Muhammad himself practiced this approach in order to avoid incompatibility at the time of marriage. His conduct thus constitutes a model of exemplary social behavior for his community. The values demonstrated by the Prophet are also in harmony with the local wisdom embodied in the *mongilalo* tradition one that emphasizes deliberation, prudence, and respect toward the prospective spouse prior to the marriage contract.

From the perspective of the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *mongilalo* may be situated within the legal maxim *al-‘adah muhakkamah* (العادة محكمة), which signifies that custom may be recognized as a source of law (Tahir et al., 2024). More precisely, practices established within a particular community may serve as a legal basis. However, scholars are in agreement that such recognized customs must be sound practices that do not contradict Islamic law.

In this context, the customary principles underlying the *mongilalo* tradition are still considered to fall within the framework of the Shari‘ah, in accordance with the definition of the *fiqh* maxim *al-‘adah muhakkamah*. Thus, it is understood as a commendable custom that does not conflict with authoritative textual sources (naṣṣ). This is further grounded in the philosophical principle upheld in the Gorontalo region: *Adati Hula-Hula’a To Syara’a, Syara’a Hula-Hula’a To Quru’ani*, which means "custom is founded upon the Shari‘ah, and the Shari‘ah is founded upon the Book of God," (Kau & Wibawa,

2023). This philosophy reflects the strong foundational principles embraced by the Gorontalo community as a guide for life. Its scope indicates that custom is rooted in the Shari'ah, while the Shari'ah itself is grounded in the primary sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an and Hadith. Accordingly, the *mongilalo* tradition as an initial stage in the marriage process in Gorontalo is regarded as a virtuous custom that embodies public benefit (*maṣlahah*) and does not contradict the established shar'ī texts.

In terms of the derivative classifications within the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *mongilalo* may be categorized as a form of *'urf fi'lī*, that is, a customary practice manifested in communal actions (Tahir et al., 2024). Furthermore, in terms of its scope, it falls under *'urf khāṣṣ*, meaning a specific custom confined to a particular locality and not universally practiced elsewhere. From the perspective of qualitative assessment, the *mongilalo* tradition is classified as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ*, indicating a sound and commendable custom. This qualitative level is the most significant, as *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* is regarded as the most authoritative form of custom to be employed as a legal proof (*ḥujjah*). In other words, it refers to a good custom within a particular community that is also acceptable to sound reason (Kau & Wibawa, 2023). Accordingly, the *mongilalo* tradition is acknowledged among the people of Gorontalo as a practice that is both rationally acceptable and beneficial.

Table. Ideal Partner Criteria in the Mongilalo Tradition

Assessment Aspect	Criteria Sought	Objective/Meaning
Religion	Must be Muslim	The primary foundation for building a household
Education	Good and progressive outlook	The woman serves as the first school (<i>madrasah</i>) for her children
Character	Etiquette, speech, manners, and treatment of guests	Assessing daily behavior, maturity, and ethics
Physical & Personality	Physical beauty, simplicity, and mental strength	Ensuring readiness and maturity in managing married life
Family Status	Clear social standing and background	Avoiding potential social pathologies or hereditary issues in the future

At this point, the various issues start to reveal a clear connection. The increasing rates of divorce, the ongoing occurrence of domestic violence, the growing lack of concern for marital harmony, and the rising vulnerability of children who risk losing spaces of affection collectively show the decline in family resilience. From this analysis, a response to the series of problems identified by the author emerges, offering a constructive solution to the current crisis facing the family institution. The strong conclusion is that preserving local cultural wisdom, such as the *mongilalo* tradition proven to align with the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad and consistent with the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh* serves as a relevant and practical solution to address the challenges of reducing family resilience

A sociological and theological analysis of the *mongilalo* practice demonstrates that this tradition is not merely a relic of the past, but a social verification instrument that holds high certainty in maintaining domestic harmony. By positioning the family as the initial evaluators, *mongilalo* effectively mitigates the risks of disappointment often found in modern dating patterns, where individuals tend to display only their best qualities. The success of this tradition lies at the intersection of local wisdom and religious guidance. The observational practices conducted are closely aligned with the spirit of the Prophet's Hadith, which encourages ensuring compatibility before the marriage contract to minimize potential conflicts in the future. As a virtuous custom rooted in the philosophy of *Adati Hula-Hula'a To Syara'a, Syara'a Hula-Hula'a To Quru'ani*, *mongilalo* offers a moral foundation that is deeper than mere formal premarital guidance. Therefore, revitalizing the values of *mongilalo* in the digital era represents a crucial step in cultural adaptation. This tradition provides social protection for the family institution, ensuring it remains sturdy amidst the widespread phenomenon of divorce and increasingly complex contemporary social challenges

CONCLUSION

Family resilience in the modern era faces numerous challenges. The rate of divorce continues to rise, one of the driving factors being economic crises. In a recent case, more than sixty wives employed as civil servants (ASN) or under government work agreements (P3K) filed for divorce from their husbands, illustrating the fragility of marital relationships when social and economic status undergo change. In addition, the proliferation of online gambling has contributed to domestic violence against wives, undermined family economies, and generated prolonged psychological stress.

Dysfunctional family conditions further exacerbate divorce, reflecting a form of social pathology that threatens family resilience.

The weakening of family resilience often originates at the very outset of marriage. Many couples lack an adequate understanding of the importance of establishing a strong marital foundation through premarital guidance provided by religious or customary leaders. In this context, local traditions such as *mongilalo* play a significant role. As an initial stage in the customary marriage process in Gorontalo, *mongilalo* emphasizes prudence in selecting a partner, involves family deliberation, and upholds ethical conduct before marriage. These values help prevent errors in partner selection while simultaneously strengthening social bonds between families. Its application in the modern era represents an adaptation of local wisdom in addressing challenges to family resilience.

From the perspective of the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, *mongilalo* aligns with the recommendation to observe a prospective spouse before marriage to foster certainty and avoid future regret. Within the framework of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, this tradition may be classified as *ʿurf ṣāliḥ*, namely a commendable custom that does not contradict the Shariʿah and serves as a means toward goodness. Accordingly, *Mongilalo is not merely a cultural heritage of Gorontalo, but also a reflection of Islamic values that remain relevant today*. Revitalizing it contextually entails harmonizing religious teachings with local wisdom to build harmonious and resilient families capable of navigating the complexities of contemporary life.

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