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Media Construction Of The Streothy Of Expensive Panai Money And Its Implications On Gender Power Relations In Bugis Tribal Traditions

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the media's construction of the stereotype of expensive bridewealth and its implications for gender power relations in Bugis tradition. The tradition of bridewealth was originally interpreted as a form of respect for women and their families, as well as a sign of the man's commitment to building a household. However, in news reporting and public discourse, this tradition is often reduced to a symbol of the high cost attached to Bugis women.

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a critical discourse analysis approach to media texts discussing dowry. The results show that the media tends to emphasize the nominal value, luxury, and economic burden, thus reinforcing the stereotype that dowry is synonymous with expensive dowry. This construction is not neutral, as it also reproduces gender power relations within a patriarchal social structure. Women are positioned as symbols of family honor as well as objects of social and economic evaluation, while men are burdened with standards of masculinity measured by their ability to meet the dowry's needs. Thus, the stereotype of expensive dowry is the result of the interaction between tradition, media representation, and gender power relations.

Keywords: Bride price; media construction; stereotypes; gender power relations; Bugis tribe

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of dowry in Bugis society is part of the customary marriage system, signifying respect for the woman and her family, as well as a sign of the man's commitment to building a household. Ideally, dowry is not merely understood as a material obligation, but rather as a

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symbol of honor, responsibility, and social legitimacy within the marriage [1].

However, in the development of public discourse, the meaning of the dowry often shifts, becoming a symbol of "expensiveness" attached to Bugis women. This shift gives rise to the stereotype that women are valued economically, so the dowry is often understood as a financial burden rather than a cultural practice. As a result, the philosophical and cultural meaning of the dowry tends to be diminished by popular narratives that emphasize the high nominal value and perceived burden [2].

Previous research has also shown that the size of the bride price is often linked to the woman's education and status, often placing women as objects of social evaluation. Meanwhile, men bear the burden of meeting this amount as a measure of sincerity and masculinity. Thus, the bride price functions not only as a customary practice but also as a mechanism of power relations that reproduces gender inequality.[3]

This shift is closely related to power relations within a patriarchal social structure. Women are positioned as symbols of family honor, but they are also potentially reduced to objects of social and economic judgment. Meanwhile, men are under pressure to meet the dowry requirements as a measure of sincerity, worthiness, and masculinity. This situation demonstrates that the dowry is not only a customary practice but also an arena for the reproduction of gender inequality and social burdens [4].

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of the dowry tradition. Through the selection of issues, the emphasis on certain aspects, and the use of sensational narratives, the media can reinforce the stereotype that dowry is synonymous with high cost and women are synonymous with economic burden. Within the framework of agenda setting and framing, the media not only represents reality but also constructs social reality through repeated framing. Based on this, this research is crucial because studies on dowry tend to focus on aspects of custom and social status, while media construction and gender power relations have not been studied in

[1]AD Chaesty, "Panai Money in Bugis Makassarese Wedding Customs," *Sinestesia: Journal of Social and Cultural Studies* (2022).
[2] Mh. Fathurrahman, *The Shifting Meaning of Bride Prices in Bugis Marriage Traditions: A Perspective of Social Reality Construction in Watampone City, South Sulawesi* , 2025, http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/79815/.
[3] Mawadda Warahmah, Abdul Syatar, and Zaenal Abidin, "Women's Social Status and the Meaning of Bride Prices in Bugis-Makassar Marriages: An Islamic Law Perspective," *Qadauna: Scientific Journal of Islamic Family Law Students* 7, no. 1 (2025): 47–59, https://doi.org/10.24252/qadauna.v7i1.59289.
[4] Rizkyanti, Putri Ayu Ramadhani, and Al Fitrah Maharanny, "Bride Prices: Highlighting the Paradigm Shift in Contemporary Society from a Legal Perspective," *Sipakainge* 2, no. 1 (2024): 1–16.

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depth.

Unlike Fathurrahman's (2025) research, which focused on local community perceptions, this study examines how *online media* actively reproduces these stereotypes through framing techniques. This research is expected to enrich studies of media, culture, and gender by showing how the stereotype of "expensive dowry" is shaped, reproduced, and influences women's positions in Bugis tradition.

RESEARCH METHOD

Study This use method qualitative descriptive with approach analysis discourse critical approach This chosen For study how media constructs stereotype of expensive dowry money as well represent position Woman in Bugis tradition . Focus study This No lies in the measurement quantitative , but rather on interpretation meaning , ideology , and relations the power of presence in media text .[5]

Object study This is media text that discusses the tradition of dowry money , both in form online news , articles opinion , as well as relevant digital media content with issue stereotype of expensive dowry . Primary data obtained through documentation to texts selected media purposively based on relevance with focus research . Secondary data obtained through studies library from books , journals , and sources academics that discuss gender, patriarchy , relations power , and media [6]construction .

Data collection techniques in study This is text collected online news through technique *purposive sampling* with select 30 texts news that will based on several criteria strict inclusion For ensure the data taken truly represent discourse on dowry money in the room public :

1. Relevance Topic : News text must load in a way explicit the diction ' dowry money ' in title or *lead* news , to ensure focus framing in tradition the .
2. Range : Data analyzed covers period 2022 to 2025. Range time This chosen because in the period the there is improvement intensity news about viral Bugis-Makassar wedding , which is considered as phase crucial in formation the stereotype of 'expensive dowry ' in online media.
3. Credibility : News taken from online media channels that have range reader national or regional (such as Tribun Timur, Detik.com, Kompas.com, Fajar.co.id, etc.) which are consistent

[5]Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* , 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2018), 2–4
[6]Burhan Bungin, *Qualitative Research: Communication, Economics, Public Policy, and Other Social Sciences* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2007), 68–70

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produce news about issues social and cultural aspects in South Sulawesi. This done For see pattern *framing* from the media with background behind diverse audience .

4. Text Characteristics : Selected data in the form of news *straight news* and article opinions that have narrative descriptive enough For dissected use analysis discourse critical .

Curation process done through stage : (a) *searching* using the keywords ' dowry money ' and ' Bugis tradition ' on the machine Google News search ; (b) filtration beginning based on suitability title ; and (c) verification substance content news For ensure data is not duplicative (for example , reporting One the same event from various affiliated media channels in a way directly , so that selected one of the most representative). With criteria said , 30 texts collected news considered sufficient For interesting pattern generalization discourse (theme dominant) without reduce depth analysis required textual in approach analysis discourse critical

Data analysis was performed in a way thematic and interpretive through stage data reduction , categorization theme , interpretation meaning , and withdrawal conclusion [7]. In the analysis process , research This examine word choice , emphasis issues , as well as how the media frames dowry and women in relation more social wide .

For guard data validity , research This use triangulation sources and triangulation theory . Triangulation source done with compare various media text that discusses issue similar , whereas triangulation theory done with linking results analysis on theory construction social , relationships power , and gender. With Thus , research This expected capable produce critical , in-depth , and academic reading to upper media construction stereotype of expensive [8]dowry money .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings show that the stereotype of expensive dowry (panai) did not emerge spontaneously, but rather was shaped by the intersection of customary practices, social status, and media representation. In several studies, dowry is understood as a symbol of respect for the woman's family and social prestige, but at the same time, it has also shifted to increasingly demanding economic conditions [9]. These findings reinforce the notion that expensive dowry is

[7]Burhan Bungin, *Qualitative Research: Communication, Economics, Public Policy, and Other Social Sciences* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2007), 68–70
[8]Teun A. van Dijk, *Discourse and Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1–3
[9] Scholars, Fajrul Khaer, and Amal Akbar, "Deconstructing the Meaning of Bride Prices: A Semiotic Perspective in the Context of Gender and Culture," *Lektur: Journal of Communication Studies* 8, no. 2 (2025): 73–81, https://doi.org/10.21831/lektur.v8i2.23779.

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not simply a matter of tradition but also a social construct that is continually reproduced through public discourse and the media.

The media tends to construct the dowry through two main frames: as a symbolic traditional tradition and as a costly economic burden. In the first frame, the dowry remains positioned as a form of respect for the woman and her family and a sign of the man's seriousness in the marriage. However, in the second frame, the media often emphasizes the nominal value, luxury, and difficulty of meeting the demands of the dowry. This emphasis on these aspects reduces the dowry tradition to a matter of cost, rather than a cultural practice imbued with values of honor and social responsibility.[10]

Analysis to media construction regarding stereotypes *expensive dowry* done through technique *coding* against 30 online news items discussing the tradition of dowry money in Bugis society during period research . *Coding process* done with identify themes dominant that appears in every news based on choice diction , focus issues , framing patterns , and representation relation power that the media builds . Furthermore , every news categorized to in a number of theme main , namely expensive, burden economy , prestige social , objectification women , traditions culture , and masculinity . Categorization the aim For identify media tendencies in represents the dowry , whether more emphasize aspect economy or precisely lift values inherent philosophy and culture in tradition the .

Coding results Then recapitulated in form tables and visualized through chart frequency For make things easier identification pattern news . Presentation of data in a this visual give description about most frequent themes media appeared at the same time show dominant framing tendencies in form perception public regarding the dowry . With Thus , the results *coding* No only show intensity emergence every theme , but also become base in analyze how media constructs reality social as well as reproduce relation gender power through news about the dowry . Here results *coding* theme media narrative about dowry money consisting of on table categorization theme , recapitulation frequency emergence theme , as well as visualization graph showing trend domination narrative in online media coverage .

[10] Ahmad et al., "Analysis of the Influence of Inflation in Determining the Nominal Value of Bride Prices in Bugis Society," *Journal of Islamic Law Nusantara* 8, no. 1 (2025): 1–23.

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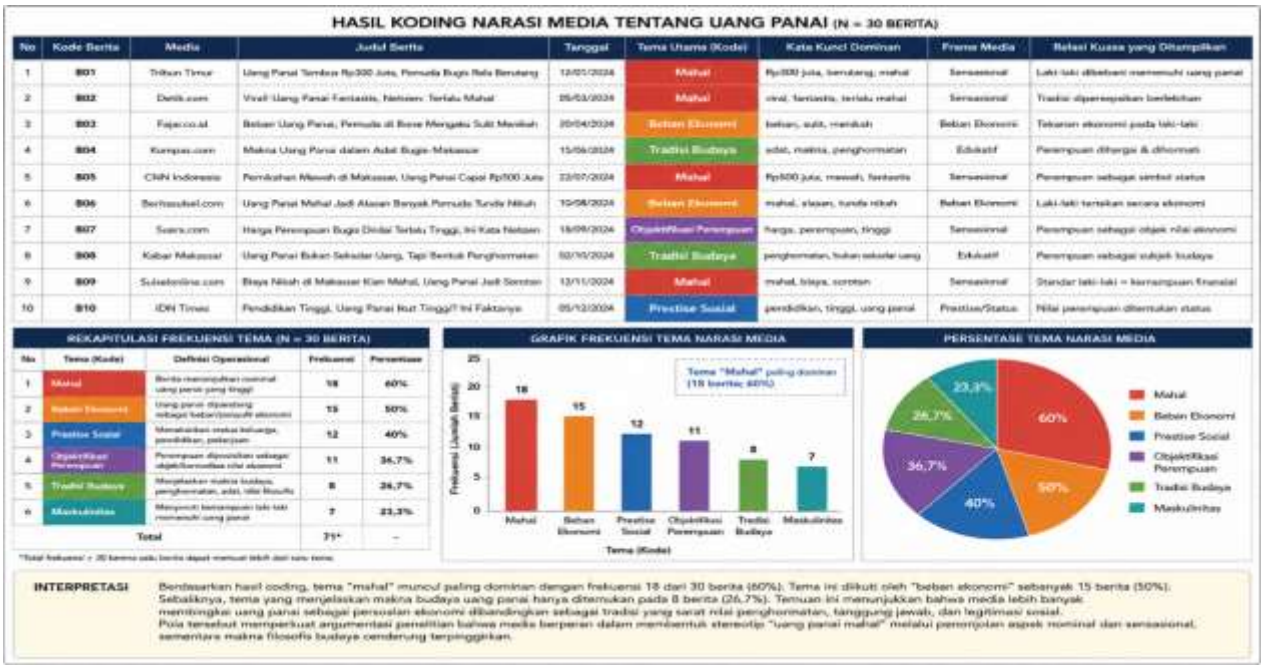


Figure 1. Results of Coding Media Narratives about Stereotype of Expensive Bride Prices
Source: Results of analysis of 30 online media news (2022–2025), processed by researchers in 2026.

Based on the coding results as shown in Figure 1, the theme "expensive" was the most dominant, appearing in 18 of the 30 news stories (60%). This dominance indicates that the media more often framed the dowry as an economic issue rather than as a cultural practice that carries the meaning of respect, responsibility, and social legitimacy. This condition indicates a tendency for framing that prioritizes sensational value, thus contributing to the formation of the stereotype of "expensive dowry" in the public sphere. The media consistently used diction that reinforced the economic burden, such as the use of the words 'Tembus', 'Fantastic', and 'Terlalu Mahal' in news titles (B01, B02, B05). The use of the word 'Tembus' constructs the dowry as if it were a threshold or record that is difficult to achieve, rather than a symbol of sacred commitment. The use of titles that emphasize high figures, luxury, or the impression of "the most expensive wedding" reinforces the public perception that the dowry is synonymous with economic transactions.

In this context, the media not only conveys information but also shapes readers' orientations toward Bugis traditions. As a result, the philosophical values of the dowry, such as

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respect, sincerity, and family solidarity, become less prominent than narratives about financial burdens [11]. From the perspective of gender power relations, these media representations contribute to the production of women's positions as both symbols of social value and objects of economic valuation.

Bugis women are often portrayed as possessing a "worth" inherent in their education, occupation, or social status. This representation demonstrates how patriarchy operates through media language, positioning women as those being evaluated, rather than as subjects with authority over the meaning of tradition. In such circumstances, the dowry tradition becomes not only a cultural practice but also an arena where power relations are symbolically reproduced.[12]

On the other hand, the media also shapes the construction of masculinity through narratives about men's ability to meet the dowry. Men are portrayed as those who must be able to bear the economic burden as a measure of sincerity, worthiness, and self-respect. Consequently, masculinity is reduced to financial capability, rather than merely moral or social responsibility. This representation demonstrates that the stereotype of expensive dowries not only impacts women but also oppresses men through burdensome and competitive social standards.

In representing dowry money, online media is not merely an information channel, but an active actor constructing stereotypes through biased choices of diction. One of the most prominent examples is found in the news B07 with the title "Bugis Women's Prices Considered Too High, This is What Netizens Say" (Suara.com). This provocative reporting pattern indicates a discourse production process influenced by the economic logic of online media, where the issue of 'expensive dowry money' is packaged as a commodity that promises *virality* . This is evident from the choice of titles such as 'Viral! Fantastic Dowry Money, Netizens: Too Expensive' (B02) which directly involves public involvement (netizens) as legitimacy to strengthen the stereotype.

At the micro level, the use of the term "Price" in the title is the most crucial element. The word "price" semantically shifts women's position from being respected cultural subjects to market commodities with market value. The choice of the word "Too High" further emphasizes the framing that this tradition is no longer a matter of sacredness, but rather a matter of unfair economic transactions. The media chose a sentence structure that positions Bugis women as

[11] Ilmiawan, Khaer, and Akbar, "Deconstructing the Meaning of Bride Prices: A Semiotic Perspective in the Context of Gender and Culture."
[12] Mawadda Warahmah, Abdul Syatar, and Zaenal Abidin, "Social Status of Women and the Meaning of Bride Prices in Bugis-Makassar Marriages from an Islamic Law Perspective."

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objects to be "judged" by public opinion, which textually closes the space for women's voices to define their own authority over the tradition.

At the meso level, this news report reflects how the news production process relies heavily on "netizen engagement" as a basis for legitimacy. The headline, which includes the phrase *"This is What Netizens Say,"* demonstrates the media's strategy of provocative discourse mediation to provoke reader engagement . By framing netizen sentiment as a representation of "public opinion," the media is actually amplifying shallow stereotypes. This type of news production demonstrates an online media orientation that prioritizes *virality* over in-depth cultural analysis, thus distorting the original meaning of the bride price as a form of respect (women's dignity) into a sensational debate for public consumption.

At a macro level, the discourse produced by this media reinforces the existing patriarchal structure. The use of the term "price" is not merely a term, but a concrete representation of the objectification of women in contemporary Bugis society. This construction places women in a subordinate position, where their self-worth is determined by the nominal amount set by the social and economic system. On the other hand, men are positioned as the ones oppressed by this economic burden, which in turn redefines "masculinity" as financial capacity. Through the B07 news, the media systematically reproduces gender inequality by legitimizing that marital relations in Bugis society now operate under the logic of the market, no longer under the logic of human values and customary honor.

These findings suggest that the media's construction of the bride price is not neutral, but rather tied to a framing logic that selects, highlights, and repeats certain aspects of the tradition. Within the framework of agenda setting and framing, the media plays a role in determining which issues are deemed important and how those issues are perceived by the public. When the nominal aspect is presented more frequently than the cultural aspect, the resulting public perception tends to be shallow and stereotypical [13]. Thus, the media plays a significant role in shifting the meaning of the bride price from a symbol of respect to a symbol of high price.

Based on this analysis, the stereotype of expensive dowry can be understood as the result of an interaction between media construction, patriarchal power relations, and changing societal perspectives on tradition. This stereotype not only influences the image of Bugis women but also

[13] Nur Rohmah Sri Rezeki, "Gender Discourse in Social Media (Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis)," 2022, 1–89, https://eprints.uinsaizu.ac.id/17377/1/NUR ROHMAH SRI REZEKI_ANALISIS WACANA GENDER.pdf.

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influences the public's understanding of custom as part of cultural identity. Therefore, a more proportionate reporting approach is needed to prevent the dowry tradition from being reduced to a symbolic commodity stripped of its philosophical value.[14]

The media should act as cultural translators and not just focus on the surface or skin of a tradition. Good reporting must be able to explore the meaning behind a cultural practice, providing a deeper understanding to external audiences to prevent misunderstandings or stigmatization of certain ethnic groups. The media must break free from the trap of *clickbait.* exploit materialistic aspects or luxury A tradition. Stop use title news Which provocative like "Wedding "Most Expensive" or "Price of Bugis Girls". Focus on the narrative about the sacredness of the procession, the value of mutual cooperation mutual cooperation, or uniqueness customs its customs. The goal guard dignity tradition so that No considered as goods merchandise or event show off power economy.

CONCLUSION

Study This show that media construction towards dowry tradition tend form the stereotype of " expensive dowry " through protrusion nominal aspect , load economy , and impression luxury . Representation kind of This shift understanding public from meaning cultural dowry as form respect , responsibility responsibility and legitimacy social in Bugis marriage becomes more narrative oriented towards material values . With Thus , the media does not only reflect tradition , but also participate produce meaning new that affects method public looking at the dowry money and Bugis women .

In addition , research This find that stereotypes the related close with relation gender power in structure social patriarchal . Women often positioned as symbol honor family at a time object evaluation social and economic , whereas man burdened standard measured masculinity through ability fulfill the dowry . In context this , dowry money No only functioning as practice customs , but also becomes an arena for reproduction gender inequality reinforced by media construction .

Based on findings said , can concluded that the stereotype of expensive dowry money is results interaction between traditions , relationships power , and media representation . Therefore that , the media needs present more news proportional and contextual so that

[14] Arivia Girl, *Fighting Forgetting, Nurturing Resistance: Body Politics, Agency, and Memory in the Women's Movement from the New Order to the Reformation. Notes* , vol. 30, 2025.

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tradition local No reduced become commodities symbolic or source of social stigma . Research This at a time confirm importance reading critical to tradition culture in room public so that values philosophical , social and cultural aspects inherent in it still awake

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