

PEMALI IN PENGANAN IBAN AT SARAWAK

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ABSTRACT One of the dominant beliefs in Iban culture, especially for those still living in longhouses, is *Pemali* or forbidden order. Therefore, this research is ethnographic, focusing on *Mali* beliefs in Iban culinary by looking at their ideas and beliefs in the concept of traditional food. This research approach uses qualitative methods by doing fieldwork, documenting and interviewing informants who have expertise in Iban culture. The research areas in Lubok Antu, Betong, Sri Aman and Limbang were selected as research locations to obtain a variety of data from each geographical settlement of the Iban community. The purpose of this research is as an effort to archive and conserve *Mali*'s beliefs. The findings found that the *Pemali* beliefs are still a heritage in the form of collective memory and practised in the life of the Iban community today even though they have embraced a new religion, namely Islam and Christianity. Through this research, it is hoped to provide a comprehensive understanding of the customs and beliefs of the Iban in Sarawak.

Keywords: Beliefs, Iban, *pemali*, *penganan*, Sarawak culture.

INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy studies the relationship between culture and food (Csoban & Konyves, 2015). The definition of gastronomy is often misunderstood as a study that refers exclusively to the art of cooking. The fact is the study of the art of cooking is only a tiny part of this discipline. The study of gastronomy encompasses the various cultural components that makeup food the axis of research. Gastronomy is also defined as recognizing various relevant factors about the food and drink consumed by a group of people in a local area, a

region, or a nation itself. Food is crucial for life and influences conveying the message through cultural communication implicitly. (Santich, 2004; Nopiah et al., 2018).

Human culture in the culinary field has developed since humans are already good at using fire to process the food they consume daily. The use of fire in the preparation of human food has led them to innovate with various cooking techniques such as frying, simmering, grilling, steaming or boiling. In addition, the use of fire in food preparation has given taste and texture in dishes such as crunchy, soft, chewy, and smooth. In line with the development of time and era, techniques and ingredients in cooking have become increasingly complex and inherited hereditarily by a group of people (Farhat, 1996).

Generally, human culture can be categorized into two elements, namely tangible culture, and intangible culture. Tangible human culture is related to human objects that can be touched, moved through the human physical and not static (except monuments and relics). In contrast, intangible culture refers to human activities in the abstract such as traditional literature, performing arts, food, beliefs, and taboos (Yussof et al., 2011; Kiyai & Tugang, 2020). Traditional gastronomic cuisine is one of the intangible aspects of heritage that UNESCO has outlined. Gastronomy refers to studying culture and food in a group of people. Food is a symbol of society's identity and way of life. The debate on food as an element of heritage has been discussed by many scholars in defining traditional food and heritage. Vadi (2017) says food is the lifeblood of human civilization. Food plays a vital role in shaping a community with unique characteristics distinguishing them from others. According to Kuhnlein and Chan (2000), traditional food includes all types of food from natural sources prepared in a particular culture. Nathalie (2007) states that traditional food is always related to local food and artisan food which refers to the ingredients, knowledge and location of a particular product.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Indonesia, *Pamali* is one of the knowledge systems of the Sundanese indigenous people. *Pamali* is still preserved in the culture of the Sundanese

indigenous people. Indigenous people still rely on their way of life on traditions or customs passed down from generation to generation or inherited from one generation to the next. In the past, the Sundanese believed in the consequences that would befall if someone violated a taboo or *cadu*. For example, the prohibition of building house walls and mirrors makes a lake. Case it was meant because the land in that place was still in an unstable state looking at the land in the Java was an old place. When the prohibition, during the Dutch colonial, the sound of the gong and the sound of the swan is a symbol of the crowd and existing life (Rohaeni & Listiani, 2013).

In Javanese culture, *Pamali* is an incomparable ancestral heritage. *Pamali* can also be interpreted as a rule inherited by the ancestors of Kampung Naga, which is used as a guide for the indigenous people of Kampung Naga in preserving their lives with nature. *Pamali* contains the meaning of the word prohibits and the meaning of restriction whose limits cannot be measured. Moreover, this *Pamali* is a sign of managing nature. In this research study, looking at the residents' beliefs in the community of Kampung Naga is very obedient in carrying out their ancestral heritage customs that respect their ancestors or ancestors. Everything that does not come from the teachings of the ancestors of Kampung Naga, and something that the ancestors do not do. They are considered taboo. If the residents of Kampung Naga do these things, it means violating customs disrespecting their ancestors, according to them, is based on the belief that they believe will bring disaster (Nurdiansah, 2017).

According to Pain and Kartini (2015), most societies practice taboos in their lives. However, the form or type of taboo may differ from one society to another. For example, there is a taboo or prohibition in Malay society on mentioning the names of certain animals such as tigers, elephants, and snakes when in the forest. Instead, the animals are referred to as '*Pak Belang*', '*orang besar*', and '*akar*'. If the names of these animals are mentioned, it is feared that it may cause misfortune to the speaker. In their study of the Dusun community of Kampung Bundu Tuhan, Ranau, Sabah says individuals who commit customary violations, language violations, or utter taboo words will be subject to *sogit* or customary fines by village heads if found guilty. The purpose of the *sogit* imposed on the offender is to restore the harmony of the village and a sign of apology for the problems that arose due to the violation.

According to Smart (1998), Taboo is the beliefs, feelings, and things in an individual's mind that serves as the driving force of the engine for survival and social and moral change. Meanwhile, Smith (2001) says that Taboo is a belief system closely related to the reality of the human self, reality, and the meaning of existence. Generally, humans see and respond to what is present in the universe, especially those highly dominant in their living environment. The dominant factors come in various types, such as culture, philosophy, religion, beliefs, and societal values. The breadth of man's view of the scope of life is dependent on the dominant factors that influence him to think to a higher level.

Frazer (2000) divides taboos into (i) taboos related to actions or deeds, (ii) taboos related to people, (iii) taboos related to things and (iv) taboos related to words. Word-related taboos include the prohibition of pronouncing or uttering certain words or expressions, which are considered inappropriate, uncivilized, which may cause shame or disgrace, and believed to have a negative effect if violated by the speaker. According to Allan and Burridge (2006), taboos strongly influence human emotions and are the most emotionally evocative of all language expressions.

In the study of Hassan et al. (2021), Taboo or *Pamali* is a form of Taboo that exists due to customary factors, culture, and beliefs. In the context of Malaysian society, which consists of various races, ethnicities and ethnicities, much taboo information, especially language taboos, are stored among the races or ethnicities themselves and are not known by the outside community. As a result, any speaker's inadvertent use of taboos to his opponent for the lack of in-depth information about the taboo of language invites facial threats, and the speaker is considered impolite in speaking. Thus, a study that aims to explain the mutual knowledge (mutual/shared knowledge) about taboos to ensure the use of polite language by speakers is highlighted.

According to Pawi (2013), worldview or worldview are known as *weltanschauung*, which refers to the framework of ideas and beliefs of individuals, groups, and cultures in interpreting their world. In the ethnic of Sarawak, each has thoughts built into the living environment of their environment. In addition, the views of the indigenous people in Sarawak before the advent of Islam and Christianity were influenced by the belief

system of animism, which believed in subtle beings, spirits, and spirits, which were the basis of the beliefs of traditional society. The traditional Iban community has its own beliefs in understanding the universe's origins. They believe that all living or non-living things have spirits, such as mountains, rivers, and trees—the idea narrated for generations in the Iban oral tradition. According to Béguet (2012), based on Kedit (1993), the belief of the spirit has given a dimension to the Iban community that good ghosts and evil spirits dominate the world. The Iban community can feel the presence of good ghosts and evil spirits through dreams, bird signs and pig heart signs, which are the mediating medium between the Iban community and *Petara* (God) to convey the message explicitly and implicitly.

Based on all the literature highlights explained by the researchers, the study of *Pemali* was previously more dominant in linguistic and customary aspects in the local community's culture. Studies on *Pemali* in traditional food preparation ethics are microscopic to focus on in research discussions, especially for the culture of indigenous peoples in Borneo.

METHODOLOGY

This research is an ethnographic study that focuses on *Pemali* in *Penganan* Iban, a traditional dessert in Sarawak. In general, ethnographic research is a scientific study describing, analysing, and interpreting cultural forms shared by a group of people such as behaviour, language, beliefs and practices, social structure, economy, cultural interaction and life (Hanson & Creswell, 2005).



Figure 1 Fieldwork to the Iban longhouse in Lubok Antu and Sri Aman

Source: Gregory Kiyai

Therefore, this research method is to use a qualitative approach that is to collect data by doing fieldwork that has been done in three longhouses of the Iban community, namely in Rumah Liam, Rantau Kembayau Manis, Lubok Antu, Rumah Kunjang, Entawa Asal, Undop Sri Aman and Rumah Bujang, Rantau Kiran, Nanga Medamit Limbang in phases. The first phase in August 2019, fieldwork was conducted in Lubok Antu for four days, while the second phase in October 2019 has conducted in Entawa, Sri Aman, for three days and the third phase was conducted on November 1, 2019, in Nanga Medamit, Limbang for five days. The purpose of selecting the location of this research is to obtain a variety of data based on the settlement of the Iban community by river, namely Batang Ai (Lubok Antu), Batang Lupar (Sri Aman) and *Bilak Sedik*. *Bilak Sedik* refers to the Iban community who live in Bintulu, Miri, and Limbang. Where they were known as Iban new migrations came from Batang Rajang, Batang Ai, and Batang Saribas to find a new settlement during the Brooke era. Second migration happened after the formation of Malaysia in 1963 by seeking employment as timber workers in logging companies in Brunei and Ulu Limbang in the 80s to 70s.

In addition, this research also uses documentation methods in archiving the *Penganan* manufacturing process based on the local wisdom of the Iban community in the longhouse. The documentation process took pictures using a digital single-lens reflex camera (DSLR) while the informant was cooking *Penganan* Iban.



Figure 2 *Penganan* Iban documentation

Source: Gregory Kiyai

The research method also conducted interviews with the informants in the longhouse. The interview method was conducted using snowball sampling and focused on the Iban community with expertise in Iban history and culture, such as *Lemambang* (priests), Iban elders and women's bureau known as *Serakup Indu Dayak Sarawak* (SIDS) is a women's organization for the Dayak ethnic group in Sarawak. These groups of informants were selected based on their knowledge and experience related to making *Penganan* and its significant value to the culture of the Iban community in Sarawak.



Figure 3 Interview with informants at Liam's longhouse, Lubok Antu
(Source: Gregory Kiyai)

The researcher used data collection methods through collective memory to find out about *Pemali* in the culture of the Iban people in Sarawak. Data collection was done based on the collection of pieces of informant memory. Collective memory is an action that incorporates factors of collective representation (symbols, meanings, narratives, and rituals existing in a society), cultural structures, and individual memories that are personal and shaped by socio-culture (Olick, 1999; Kiyai, 2021). The memory of the selected informants was assessed into three categories based on the diagram above. The first is the memory of reflection, a personal memory of a person that involves interaction with people around him. It is difficult to forget the person who experienced the event. Second, the generation's memory was passed down by an older generation to the next or younger age. The Memory continues to live in the culture. Third, the memory of tradition is a static, past-oriented memory, and conservative.

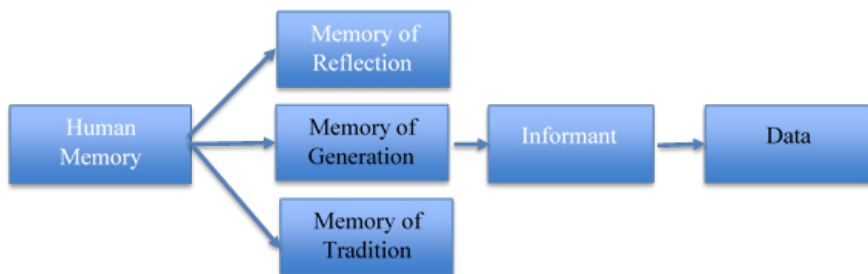


Diagram 1 *Collective Memory*

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Pemali or *Mali* is a term in the Iban language that means an act or speech that can invite elements that are not good and contrary to a taboo in society. In Iban culture, the belief in the term *Mali* is very much feared by the Iban community, and they will never have to question if the elders forbade or reprimanded by saying the term *Mali* while doing something. The Iban community believes that the term *Mali* can have a detrimental effect on themselves and the entire Iban population in longhouses if violated either intentionally or unintentionally.

The Origin of Pemali

According to informant Datuk Seri Edmmund Langgu, Mali belief in Iban culture started from the story of a bird, *Pung Kapung*. *Pung Kapung* lives with his wife and their children. God has endowed them with the power to fertilize all the trees and bring forth fruit that blooms. One day, while bathing his son in the river, one of his son's legs was eaten by *Ikan Juak* (fish). The incident resulted in her son's legs becoming short, sideways and deformed. *Pung Kapung*, who was very sad, took himself and his family to flee to Sumatra Island. The departure of *Pung Kapung* has caused other animals to feel restless, as the tree becomes dry and starving because there is no fruit to eat.

The animals who were very upset with the departure of *Pung Kapung* were angry with *Ikan Juak* heartless actions. They had made talks to persuade and bring *Pung Kapung* back to Borneo Island. Then there was a debate among the animals to choose who should go to the island of Sumatra to find *Pung Kapung*. Fish living in the river say they are not strong enough to cross colossal sea waves, while snakes withdraw because they do not have legs to cross the island. Lizards also say that their habitat does not eat fruit, so they don't need to look for *Pung Kapung*. The animals who felt insulted by the arrogance of the Lizards then cursed the animals that the entire descendants of the lizards could not climb the wooden tree until any time. The discussion almost ended as no animal was able to travel far across the ocean from Borneo Island to Sumatra Island. Birds that could fly high also rejected the wishes because the sea was too big, and there was no place for them to perch to rest.

Finally, together with *Indu Bebari*, the butterflies agreed to find *Pung Kapung* on Sumatra Island. After a few days of flying across the ocean, they saw a floating stick flowing according to the seawater flow, so the butterflies advised them to rest and perch on a post and then follow the direction of the drifting shaft. The journey took weeks, bringing butterflies and *Indu Bebari* to the shores of Sumatra Island. There, they had met the bat and asked if he had seen *Pung Kapung*. The bat then stated that *Pung Kapung* and his wife and child lived in a substantial wooden tree, *Puchuk Ragai Tebelian*. Hearing this, the butterfly and *Indu Bebari* found *Pung Kapung* and persuaded him to return to Borneo Island. *Pung Kapung* reluctantly refused the request, but he managed to inform that his wife had left three of her eggs in the Temesu Wood tree at the top of Mount Kinabalu. Give the egg to the *Tuk Tarau* bird to incubate it until his heir is born to continue the legacy of *Pung Kapung* on the island of Borneo.

After listening to the order from *Pung Kapung*, the butterfly and *Indu Bebari* returned to bring good news to Borneo Island. The eggs entrusted by *Pung Kapung*'s wife were fermented by *Tuk Tarau* birds safely. While waiting eggs of *Pung Kapung* to hatch, all the animals and humans on the island of Borneo, including the Iban community, gathered to choose a king for each tribe. Because there are no lions on Borneo Island, *Aji Bulan* (a kind of white

rat) has been appointed the King of the Jungle. However, *Aji Bulan* reckless attitude has led to his appointment being rejected, and the animals and the Iban community have side-lined him. The chicken, who has a charming appearance level and a loud voice, offers himself to be the King. However, his request was rejected due to the nature of the chicken, which is unable to feed itself and expecting to become a human pet. The chicken that did not accept the protest then flew and stepped on all the heads of the animals that were there. All the animals were shocked then cursed the chicken by saying, if a human being is sick or has a nightmare, then chicken blood will be sacrificed as a symbol of purification. To this day, the Iban people use chicken blood as a sacrifice in ritual ceremonies. Then, the Iban people asked everyone: what about *Ikan Juak*, who had eaten the legs of *Pung Kapung*'s child? What was the punishment given to him?

The animals are unanimous in laying down the law to *Ikan Juak* that starting from now so that in the future, the *Ikan Juak* family may not eat fruit that falls into the river. If they deny, they will die. Then, *Ikan Juak* said to the Iban people for the last time that this mistake would not repeat itself. *Ikan Junk* noted that if the Iban people want to bathe their children in the river, they must perform the Miring ceremony and sacrifice chicken blood in the future. The chicken wings are tied with red thread and connected to a wooden pole near the riverbank. They also must ask for prayer by calling all *Bunsu Ikan* (spirits) such as *Raja Genali*, *Raja Lelabi*, *Raja Ikan*, *Raja Gemian*, *Raja Semah*, and *Raja Tapah* to ask for blessings. Through this custom, *Ikan Juak* will know that the baby's gender is male and then pray for him to grow up to be a brave, agile and powerful hero on the battlefield.

The end of the conversation has completed, and the eggs that the *Tuk Turau* bird has ripened have hatched safely. All animals and humans on the island of Borneo rejoice in receiving the inheritance of *Pung Kapung* because finally, their land can be fertile again and produce a lot of food for them. To prevent incidents like this from happening again in the future, all animals and the Iban people agreed by placing *Penti Pemali* in doing any work to maintain the balance of nature between humans and animals and the natural environment.

THE CONCEPT OF *MALI*

According to informant Kiyai Uri, the implications of the *Mali* beliefs can be categorized into three things depending on the actions of the Iban community towards the *Pemali* beliefs, namely *Puni*, *Jelungan*, and *Alah Ayu*. Implications *Mali* has a very significant meaning in the Iban community to educate, teach and shape their children, especially to behave more politely and orderly in carrying out social activities with other Iban communities. In addition, the *Mali* belief culture is a mechanism of the previous Iban community in preserving and maintaining the balance of the cosmological world between the Iban community and the environment to be balanced and live in harmony and peace.

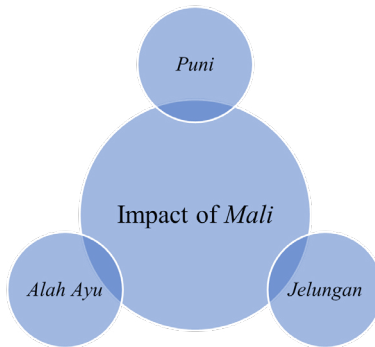


Diagram 2 The Impact of *Mali*
Sources: Interviews with Informants, (2020)

i. *Jelungan*

The term *Jelungan* means something planned or expected not to result from inappropriate and obscene actions and conversations. According to informant Lada Ukar, *Jelungan* beliefs were greatly feared when Iban men went down *Ngasu* (hunting) or *Berikan* (fishing in the river) to get food sources in the forest in groups. For the Iban community, forests and rivers have their spirit and are considered *Menua agi latung* (virgin forest that still has its spiritual elements), which refers to *kampung puang* (jungle) that is rarely explored by humans or settlements that humans have abandoned. According to informant Mat Minggan in Iban beliefs, *Menua agi latung* or *kampung puang* is described

as a sacred area inhabited by *Antu* (spirits). Some even say that *kampung puang* is described as a settlement of *Antu* who cannot be seen with the naked eye of ordinary human beings. However, sometimes the Iban community who are able to see and hear *Antu* involvement incarnates like ordinary human beings. or the incarnation of an animal at a glance.

According to informant *Lemambang* Buchaw Undan when entering the *kampung puang* (virgin forest) for hunting or fishing, every action and conversation must be guarded. While in the virgin forest, it is strictly emphasized not to rebuke any strange things or signs that happen. For example, when fishing or setting traps, do not be reprimanded for how many fish there are in the river, this will cause *Jelungan* to occur, and as a result, we will return empty-handed. Similarly, when hunting, if the men see an animal to be hunted, do not be reprimanded because the Iban community believes that *Antu* can incarnate as an animal to divert human eyes, and if unlucky, *Antu* can take revenge on humans. *Antu*, who often incarnates as deer, monkeys, and moths, will be known as *Bunsu Antu*. *Bunsu Antu* is often described as an evil spirit and often disrupts the lives of the Iban people by making them crazy, sick, and possessed. Therefore, to prevent *Jelungan* from happening while going down to the forest, the Iban community will use *Jaku Kelaung* (another word to replace the original meaning) to divert *Antu* hearing so as not to hear and interfere with their hunting activities.

ii. *Puni*

According to informant *Lemambang* Abang Entry, the Iban community believes that belief in *Puni* occurs when a person wants to eat something, but he does not have the opportunity to touch it, so he hurriedly left home to do activities such as hunting, farming, or fishing. In the Iban belief, those who are *Puni* will be at risk of facing severe injuries such as falling, being injured, or more serious that can lead to death such as being bitten by a snake or being eaten by a crocodile. Therefore, it is an obligation in the Iban community when they want to leave home, and they will go to the kitchen first to pinch the cooked rice by saying “*udah Aki, enggai ka Puni*” (already God, so as not *Puni*) so that *Puni* does not happen while they were doing work outside the home.

iii. *Alah ayu*

According to Kiyai (2019), the concept of *Alah Ayu* is highly feared in the *Mali* beliefs of the Iban community in Sarawak. *Alah ayu* carries the concept of bad omens that can cause a dangerous impact to an individual or the entire Iban population in a longhouse. The effects of *Alah Ayu* can result in sudden severe pain and death if ignored. According to informant, Maling Banta *Alah Ayu* will be associated with the concept of *Mali* in the implementation of high cultural rituals in Iban culture such as *Miring* Ceremony (offering ceremony), *Nyabak Bebuah* (mourning ceremony for the dead), and *Belian* (traditional medical ceremony). This ritual can only be performed by the Iban people who have high knowledge specialized in performing ceremonies and rituals with a high sacred value. Individuals who perform rituals with a high taboo value must adhere to *Mali* concepts that have been handed down from generation to generation by the Iban community in the past to avoid bad luck brought on by supernatural forces.

Thus, these groups are identified in two categories, first is refer to person who have skills in manufacturing cultural object and has won in wars before, such as women who specialize in weaving *Pua*, i.e., *Indu Ngar* while for men who managed to get enemy head in the *Ngayau* expedition (headhunting) will be called a brave bachelor. Next are those who have specialized skills in Iban sacred practices and rituals such as *Lemambang* (priest), *Manang* (shaman), *Tukang Sabak* (women who have expertise in mourning death), *Tuai Burung* (customary leader), and *Tuai Kayau* (war leader). In addition, according to informant Chermai Iri, *Alah Ayu* does not only occur in implementing Iban ceremonies and rituals but also while seeking and imparting knowledge to an individual. This knowledge is a way to maintain the local wisdom of the Iban. According to informant Biah Ngang, the teaching process of Iban customs has its ethics and must be adhered to to fulfill the concept of Iban cosmology and taboos, namely *Penti Mali*. The transmission of knowledge should be done by elders who have a high level of knowledge and are recognized for their skills in the Iban community with various taboos and conditions to avoid *Alah Ayu*.

For example, when learning to weave *Pua* (weaving pua), the weaver must provide *Piring* (food offerings) and iron as a condition for learning. The purpose is as a *Genselan* (wage) and a symbol so that the teacher and the student who is taught will be vital in spirit and strong like iron and avoid being affected by *Alah Ayu*. In addition, a beginner who is just learning should not overdo attitudes, speech, and skills (motives, dance, and movement) compared to his or her teacher. This matter, if denied, will bring disaster to both individuals.

PEMALI IN PENGANAN MAKING

For the Iban community, *Penganan* is a heritage food that has existed in the culture of their ancestors for generations. Dishes play an essential role in traditional Iban gastronomy to meet the necessities of life and ritual ceremonies. Generally, *Penganan* is a type of cake made from flour, and also a mixture of *gula apong* (palm sugar) has been a traditional dish of the Iban community since ancient times. *Penganan* is often found or presented as traditional dishes during the *Gawai Dayak* festive season in Sarawak and is used as ritual food in the *Miring* ceremony (banquet ritual) to *Petara* (God). *Penganan* in Iban culture has significant cultural manifestations from heritage and traditional wisdom.

According to informants Lada Ukar in the culinary arts of the Iban community in Sarawak, *Penganan* has been categorized into three types of traditional dishes, namely *Penganan Iri*, *Penganan Semut*, and *Penganan Chuan*. Types of *Penganan* are differentiated based on the shape, the way it is made, and the taste texture:



Figure 4 Types of *Penganan* Iban
Source: Gregory Kiyai

(i) *Penganan Iri*

According to the informant of Seli Akun, *Penganan Iri* has a round shape and is brownish brown as a result of a mixture of *gula apong* (sugar made from Nipah). In addition, its shiny and crunchy oily texture on the edges is due to cooking it through frying techniques using much cooking oil. The sweet, soft, and fatty taste make *Penganan Iri* very popular among the Iban community.

(ii) *Penganan Chuan*

According to informant Echa Sambau, *Penganan Chuan* a rose-shaped copper mold. The *Penganan Chuan* mold will produce an attractive flower shape when fried using cooking oil. The unique features of *Penganan Chuan* are rose-shaped and golden brown. In addition, the texture is crunchy and has a sweet taste as a result of a mixture of lime and *gula apong*.



(iii) *Penganan Jala*

Penganan Jala refers to a traditional cake shape that is finely striped and has small holes resembling ant nests or insect nests. According to informant Salmah Aning, making *Penganan Jala* is very difficult and requires a lot of technique and patience in producing it. The manufacturing technique uses the traditional tapping of the *Penganan* mold in the coconut shell to produce fine lines that resemble ant nests. The unique features of *Penganan Jala* are that it has a crispy, brittle, crescent-shaped texture (depending on the maker's taste) and has a golden-brown color (mixed with *gula apong*).

Apart from food during festive banquets such as the *Gawai Dayak* Festival and wedding ceremonies, *Penganan* does indeed have significant cultural value in customary practices, rituals, and beliefs. According to informants Lada Ukar, the Iban community has produced *Penganan* since time immemorial, especially for Iban women. At ten, Iban girls were exposed to household activities such as weaving, weaving, and cooking. The purpose is to teach and familiarize girls in doing household chores. Women who are diligent and skilled in doing housework and producing beautiful handicrafts have a bright potential to marry men from high-status families.

Therefore, Iban girls have been prepared since childhood to get used to doing household chores, including making *Penganan*. It was also acknowledged by informants Beol Dingin, who said his childhood experience was taught by his late mother to learn to cook using a wood stove when he was 12 years old. Since her parents went down to the farm as early as morning and returned home before dusk, she had assumed the responsibility as a daughter to manage the household affairs of washing, cleaning the house, and cooking. Making *Penganan* is a very taboo process and full of *Pemali* beliefs that the Iban community should emphasize while making it.

Table 1 *Pemali* in *Penganan* Iban

Figure	Action	<i>Pemali</i>
	<i>Nutuk Beras Baru</i>	<p>The wooden mortar used to pound rice powder as the basis of the <i>Penganan</i> ingredient should not be stepped on by the Iban community. The person being cursed to be a <i>Tara</i>. <i>Tara</i> refers to a disability that causes a person to walk on a straddle.</p> <p>Apart from that, if the mortar is trampled on using both feet deliberately, it is believed that it will cause the Iban community to end up and always be left behind in all good and profitable things.</p>
	<i>Nunyaw Tepung Penganan</i>	<p>According to informant Chermai Iri, in the process of making <i>Penganan</i>, especially <i>Penganan Jala</i>, it is not recommended to last until the evening (3 o'clock onwards) because she is worried that evil spirits will hear the sound of the mold to visit the longhouse. According to Iban beliefs, the sound produced by the Iban community will attract <i>Antu Jai</i> to come and visit, including Iban <i>Mali</i> birds. During dusk (especially at dusk), all activities that make noise, such as punching onions, nailing walls, and all forms of noise, should be stopped for a while.</p>

		<p>The Iban people believe that every sound of a bird or a wild animal that enters the house carries a sign. For example, suppose they hear the sound of a bird such as the <i>Ketupung</i> (Rufous Piculet). It is believed that the Iban people who go down to seek sustenance will get a double result, but if they hear the sound of <i>Ketupung</i> from the left, they will not bring home any sustenance on that day. Similarly, suppose the Iban community first hears the sound of the <i>Beragai</i> bird; it is interpreted that the sound is a sign that brings good luck and abundant paddy yield. However, if the sound of the <i>Beragai</i> bird is heard first from the <i>Bejampung</i> bird, it is interpreted as a bad omen and should be avoided by the Iban community. In addition, the Maroon Woodpecker and <i>Beragai</i> (The Scarlet-Rumped Trogon) are also known as birds that bring bad luck to the Iban community. The order must be followed and obeyed by the Iban community to avoid the wrath of <i>Petara</i> by spreading disasters and epidemics of infectious diseases.</p> <p>The Iban people believed that <i>Antu</i> roamed to hunt for human spirits at that time. This belief is closely related to the traditional belief system of the Iban community, i.e., the <i>Pengarap lama</i>, that this realm is shared with supernatural forces such as spirits and <i>Antu</i>. The activity can be resumed after the passage of quiet time in Iban culture, that is, <i>Maya Silau</i> (dusk until after maghrib time).</p> <p>After making the Penganan complaint en masse, an Iban woman would carry the batter to the end of the room and close the door so that no one entered to disturb, especially a small child. The purpose of Iban women having to cook the <i>Penganan</i> in secret is to avoid direct conversation with others and noise that can invite the presence of evil <i>Antu</i>. They believe that <i>Antu Jai</i> (evil spirits) will roam wildly during the <i>Gawai</i> season because they know that the Iban community is preparing many types of food and cakes.</p>
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	<p><i>Manduk Penganan</i></p>	<p>In the cooking of <i>Penganan</i>, some taboos must be emphasized; the pan to be used must be wiped with betel leaves first. The purpose is as a tip to avoid <i>Jelungan</i> during frying the <i>Penganan</i>. <i>Jelungan</i> means something planned or expected not to result from inappropriate and obscene actions and conversations.</p> <p>According to informant Sarimah Sunok, cooking <i>Penganan</i> is very taboo and depends on fate. Sometimes the making process will continue to be and run smoothly and well-produced, but sometimes, it does not become, and the dough becomes spoiled. Therefore, the spoiled pastry should be thrown to the ground and mentioned “<i>Tu ungkup nuan, badu ngacau kami, kami tu ka begawai</i>” or “<i>Maya manduk Penganan, anang ngelara, anang madah ka udah mansau. Enggai ke di dingga antu rua, antu kepapas.</i>” (Translation: This is your” (referring to the spirit of <i>Antu Rua</i>, <i>Antu Kepadap</i>), do not bother us anymore; we are busy preparing for the <i>Gawai</i> Festival”)</p>
	<p><i>Begawai tauka Pengawa Miring</i></p>	<p>In preparing the ingredients used for the Miring ceremony, dishes such as <i>Penganan Iri</i> and <i>Tumpi</i> (dishes made from rice powder) are essential to be served. According to informant Regina Tukat, <i>Penganan</i> is a kind of traditional cake that is very popular with the gods of the Iban community, especially <i>Keling</i> and <i>God of Bungai Nuing</i>.</p> <p>Finished the <i>Miring</i> ceremony at the <i>ruai</i> the day before the start of the <i>Gawai</i> feast, the <i>Piring</i> presentation was divided into several parts, the most important of which was to be presented to the ancestral spirits. The performance will close with <i>Pua Kumbu</i> as a sign that food has been prepared, then it will be given to <i>Antu Pala</i> hung on the ceiling of the house to keep the peace of the residents and the longhouse, while the last part is dedicated to <i>Antu jai</i> (evil spirits) wrapped using leaves and placed at the back</p>

		<p>end of the house. <i>Antu Pala</i> is the head of the enemy who was beheaded during the <i>Ngayau</i> expedition for customary purposes, revenge, and the courageous status of Iban warriors during ancient times.</p> <p>The purpose is to prevent evil spirits known as <i>Antu Rua</i> from entering the house and bringing about waste in terms of food, money, and other necessities. The Iban community believes that when the spirits of the ancestors are called through a <i>Piring</i>, they will be happy to see a feast containing food prepared by their grandchildren; giving a plate presentation is believed to bring good luck to the longhouse session.</p>
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The Iban culture was influenced by their traditional worldview and cosmology through the *Pengarap Lama* (traditional religion). They believe that the Iban people and the supernatural have a very close relationship, like the thinness of an onion skin. Therefore, based on the findings of this research, *Mali* had been seen a very significant influence on the indigenous Iban culture in Sarawak.

In the past, the natural environment of the settlement of the Iban community during ancient times was the dominant factor that led to the concept of *Mali* in Iban culture. The Iban community was lived near the river. The river had been the main transportation of the indigenous ethnic groups in Sarawak before the western colonial entry into their area. Indirectly, geographical forms such as jungles, rivers, and hills have formed a traditional Iban belief known as *Pengarap Lama*. In addition, the dependence of the Iban community on natural resources in finding food, innovating material culture, and living skills such as the use of traditional medicines, commodity transactions based on forest products, and subsistence economy such as planting paddy cause this *Mali* beliefs to be absorbed more effectively. In traditional Iban beliefs, this concept of *Mali* had been seen through tangible and intangible cultures such as literature, motif carvings, taboos, and many cultural objects that take on elements of nature close to themselves.

In addition, the traditional way of life of the Iban community actively explores new lands or settlements in the past created curiosity. Such curiosity has slowly created a *Mali* belief in the culture and led the Iban community to explore all corners of nature. Indirectly, the Iban community has made nature a vehicle to develop and shape identity to this day.

Convinced that, such a high curiosity has mobilized the traveling culture known as *Adat Bejalai* in Iban culture. The *Bejalai* traditional culture has indirectly led to the diaspora of the Iban community, which started from Kalimantan, Indonesia, and spread to all corners of Borneo to Peninsular Malaysia. Along with the development of advanced culture, *Adat Bejalai* has become an essential cultural manifestation in Iban culture. The Iban *Bejalai* culture can be categorized into several significant fractions: (i) exploring new settlements to find fertile land for paddy cultivation and rich natural products as a source of food, then the *Bejalai* custom is performed by an adult Iban man to seek knowledge. Knowledge or identity to lead into adulthood. The Iban people believe that when they perform the *Bejalai* custom, their spirits will also go on the journey together as a spiritual sign (Kedit, 1994). (ii) The last manifestation of *Bejalai* custom refers to the *Ngayau* expedition, which is a group expedition that gathers Iban men to carry out an expedition to hunt down the enemy's head.

SUMMARY

Thus, the concept of *Mali* in the beliefs of the Iban community is a reference to the ideas, intellectual powers, and views of the Iban community to care for and control its community through cultural activities. The concept of *Mali* has been based on nature and the spiritual elements associated with the supernatural world as a medium of balancing human-human or human relations with nature. The aim is to shape and cultivate the harmony, well-being, and security of the Iban community from evil things like strife. This belief has led the Iban community to understand human behaviour and natural space absolutely through experience, observation, and adaptation to continuing survival. They learn to be diplomatic and adapt to improve their quality of life at that point. Indirectly, these ideas have been manifested in cultural forms and inherited from previous generations to the present generation.

Although now the majority of the Iban community has embraced the new religion of Christianity and Islam, the Mali faith is still a collective memory in their lives, especially for the Iban community who still live in longhouses. Such beliefs are still practiced to this day in controlling their behaviour to be more polite, respectful, and obedient to the natural environment. Indirectly, the concept of *Mali* beliefs applied in Iban culture has become a social medium to create harmony and well-being among the Iban community living in longhouses. In addition, the Mali beliefs applied in the Iban community can be a method of preserving intangible cultural heritage, especially those involving Iban literature, local wisdom, taboos, and ancestral history through oral tradition to grandchildren and great-grandson. Indirectly, the *Mali* faith conserved for generations to come from extinction and being swallowed up by time.

One suggestion that should be considered in maintaining the survival of the *Mali* beliefs in Iban culture is through cultural bodies such as the Tun Jugah Foundation and Dayak Chair Foundation to be more collective in thinking of relevant ways in ensuring the continuity of this intangible heritage survives and flourishes as an identity. the Iban community in Sarawak. The organization of programs that involve academics such as symposia, conferences, talks, and research should be actively implemented so that these intangible cultures continue to be archived as an asset belonging to the indigenous community in Sarawak. Therefore, through this research, it is hoped to significantly impact celebrating the diversity and understanding of the plural society in Malaysia, especially the Iban community in Sarawak.

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