

## Remuneration Practices in Funeral Rites in Parit Culum 1 Village: An Islamic Law Perspective

Rendi Pratama<sup>1</sup>, Kurniawan<sup>2</sup>, Alisyah Pitri<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak (IIMS) Tanjung Jabung Timur, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak (IIMS) Tanjung Jabung Timur, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak (IIMS) Tanjung Jabung Timur, Indonesia

\*Correspondent Author: [rendiipratama2003@gmail.com](mailto:rendiipratama2003@gmail.com)

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### Abstract:

This study analyzes remuneration practices associated with funeral rites in Parit Culum 1 Village from the perspective of Islamic law. The research responds to the social reality that payments to individuals involved in funeral management have become an established local custom, yet remain underexplored within the fiqh frameworks of *ijarah* and *ujrah*. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, the study combines primary field data gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation with a deductive analysis of relevant principles in muamalah fiqh. Findings indicate that funeral rites in the study area are organized through communal cooperation, and that remuneration, provided voluntarily in cash or in kind, is offered as an expression of appreciation for the services of funeral workers. These practices align with the key elements of *ujrah* under Islamic law, as they are grounded in voluntary consent, clear service provision, and the absence of coercion or commercialization of religious duty. The study contributes to fiqh muamalah scholarship by extending the application of *ijarah* to social-religious practices and by highlighting the legitimizing role of local custom (*urf*) in shaping legally acceptable, context-sensitive religious practices; it also offers an evidential basis for religious leaders and local policymakers to formulate normative guidance that reconciles sharī'ah principles with lived social realities.

### Keywords:

*Remuneration Practice; Funeral Rites; Islamic Law; Ujrah; Ijarah.*



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## INTRODUCTION

The practice of funeral arrangements is an important part of the social and religious dynamics of society. Globally, the issue of funeral poverty shows that funeral costs are often a heavy burden for families, including among Muslim communities that manage funeral funds without clear formal regulations (Mirza et al., 2022; Zakaria, 2023). In Indonesia, the practice of providing wages (*ujrah*) to those who assist in the funeral process has developed as a socio-religious tradition, but has not been conceptually studied within the framework of Islamic law, especially in local contexts such as certain neighborhoods or villages.

An academic gap emerges between the social practice of wage payment in funerals and the ideal principles of fiqh muamalah. Previous studies have discussed the concept of *ujrah* in general (Safwan, 2023; Tiana, 2022; Aktualita, 2023) or institutionalized funeral fund systems (Zakaria,

2023; Mirza et al., 2022), but none have examined the practice of funeral wages at the community level. Therefore, it is important to examine how the wage mechanism in funerals is actually implemented and how it conforms to the principles of fiqh ijarah/ujrah. This research takes the case of Parit Culum 1 Village as a concrete example of the integration between social practices and Islamic legal norms.

Theoretically, the provision of ujah in funeral arrangements is rooted in the concept of ijarah contracts in Islamic muamalah. Ujah is a valid reward for services if it meets the shar'i requirements, namely the existence of clear benefits, agreement between the two parties, and without coercion (Aktualita, 2023; Safwan, 2023). In this context, the practice of funeral wages can be seen as a social, not commercial, implementation of ijarah. The contemporary muamalah approach emphasizes aspects of justice, social acceptability, and legal compliance in every form of compensation (Tiana, 2022; Al Fasiri, 2021), so this practice needs to be analyzed by taking into account the social context and Islamic normative principles.

Empirical studies show that the practice of paying wages in the context of Muslim religious rituals is still rarely researched. Some studies discuss community funeral funds (Mirza et al., 2023), the use of inherited property for funeral expenses (Suarto et al., 2024), and the flexibility of ijarah contracts in the context of modern economics (Juhrotul, 2025). However, research on local practices that position wage-giving as a social and religious expression is still minimal. This indicates a research gap regarding how people interpret the religious legitimacy of the practice and how it is carried out voluntarily as part of fardhu kifayah worship.

This research occupies an important position as a local empirical study that combines a qualitative approach and deductive fiqh analysis. By examining the practice in Parit Culum 1 Village, this research not only complements the conceptual literature but also enriches the understanding of the application of ijarah/ujrah in a socio-religious context. Methodologically, this research follows the trend of a normative qualitative approach that combines muamalah theory with field data (Dudang et al., 2025; Juhrotul, 2025). The results are expected to explain how the principles of justice and voluntariness in ujah are actually applied in the social practices of Indonesian Muslim society.

## METHOD

This research uses a descriptive-analytical qualitative research strategy, namely, field research that describes the social phenomenon of wage practices in funerals in depth and then analyzes it according to the theoretical framework of fiqh ijarah/ujrah. Within the framework of Islamic law, this research is at the wasfī (descriptive) as well as normative (mi'yārī) level, with a deductive approach from fiqh principles to empirical phenomena (Fauza, 2021), where ushul fiqh analysis serves as the basis for legal identification. Such a research model is typical of contemporary Islamic legal research that combines empirical and normative aspects of law (Darmalaksana, 2022) and is in accordance with recommendations for the use of mixed normative-empirical methods in modern Islamic legal studies (Gemala Dewi, 2022), although operationally, this research remains predominantly qualitative.

The data sources in this research consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews (semi-structured and unstructured), and field documentation with research subjects including village officials, RW heads, RT heads, community leaders, religious leaders, gravediggers, and the people of Parit Culum 1 Village. Secondary data was obtained from open academic literature (journals, books, government documents), as well as the arguments of the Qur'an, hadith, and works of scholars related to *ijarah/ujrah* as a normative basis. Data collection instruments included interview guidelines, observation sheets, and documentary checklists. The inclusive criteria for secondary literature were open-access materials published in the last five years (2020-2025) with relevance to *muamalah*, Islamic law, *ijarah/ujrah*, and social practice; literature that was not peer-reviewed, methodologically irrelevant, or not openly available was categorized as exclusive. The field unit of analysis was the concrete practice of each stage of the funeral (bathing, shrouding, praying, burying) and the transaction of paying the executor in the local community. Data analysis used thematic analysis techniques for qualitative data (manual coding and theme categorization) and normative deductive analysis that compared empirical themes with *fiqh ijarah/ujrah* criteria.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The results of this study were obtained through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews with village officials, religious leaders, gravediggers, RT/RW heads, and the community, as well as field documentation in Parit Culum 1 Village, Muara Sabak Barat Sub-district. Based on the qualitative data collection and analysis process, three main themes were found that describe the phenomenon of wage practices in the funeral process, namely: (1) the mechanism of the funeral process; (2) the form and pattern of wages; and (3) the community's perception of wages in religious and social views.

The first theme, mechanisms for conducting funerals, shows that the funeral process in Parit Culum 1 Village is carried out in cooperation by the community, under the coordination of religious leaders and neighborhood administrators. The process includes four main stages: bathing, shrouding, praying, and burying the body. Each stage is carried out by residents who have experience or expertise in the task. Based on interviews with community leaders and gravediggers, it is known that this activity has become a hereditary tradition and is carried out as a form of social worship (*fardhu kifayah*). The structure of the implementation usually involves a clear division of roles, where the bathers and shrouders generally consist of the same community groups from time to time, thus forming a kind of informal structure of death ritual implementers in the neighborhood. This phenomenon is similar to the findings in the study by Prasetyo et al. (2023), who explained the role of informal leadership in organizing community-based social and religious activities in rural Indonesia (Prasetyo et al., 2023).

The second theme, forms and patterns of remuneration, shows that the community provides remuneration to the funeral director after the funeral process is completed. These rewards vary, including cash, rice, or shrouds, depending on the economic means of the bereaved family and the

customs of the neighborhood. Based on interviews, the average amount of money given ranges from Rp100,000 to Rp300,000 per executor, although no official standard is set. In certain cases, families who have more means provide additional rewards as a form of alms. Some informants confirmed that this practice has been going on for a long time and is considered a local tradition inherent in the social life of the Parit Culum 1 community. This finding is in line with research by Hasanah and Rofiq (2022), who found that the practice of providing wages in social religious activities is often not based on formal contracts, but on social and symbolic values that are mutually recognized (Hasanah & Rofiq, 2022).

The third theme, community perceptions of wages, showed variations in views among residents. Most respondents considered that the payment of wages is a form of appreciation and gratitude to those who have helped the bereaved family, not a commercial transaction. However, there is also a minority view that wages should be avoided because funeral arrangements are a *fardhu kifayah* act of worship that should be done voluntarily. Even so, the majority of the community still considers that as long as the intention of giving wages is sincere and does not burden the family, then the practice is valid and does not contradict Islamic teachings. This pattern of views is consistent with the results of Taufiq and Supriadi's research (2023), which states that people tend to interpret religious activities based on locally developed social and moral values (Taufiq & Supriadi, 2023).

From field observations, it was also found that the undertakers in this area consist of a select group of individuals who are considered to have expertise in this field and are usually involved in every funeral process. Gravediggers, pallbearers, and funeral prayer attendants have a high social reputation within the community. Their involvement is considered a socio-religious calling, but in practice, the community often provides rewards as a form of moral appreciation. This phenomenon of non-material and material rewards is in line with the findings of Rohman (2021), who identified a relationship between symbolic and material rewards in the social religious practices of rural Muslim communities (Rohman, 2021).

Documentation data shows that the funeral is held immediately after the funeral prayer at the mosque, and the surrounding community spontaneously comes to help. During the interview process, some religious leaders explained that the provision of wages is considered a custom that contains the value of alms, not an obligatory wage. Meanwhile, some community leaders emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between the intention of worship and appreciation for the labor contributed. This shows the existence of a contextual and flexible normative understanding among the community. This result confirms the observation from Arifin et al. (2022), which states that Indonesian Muslim communities tend to combine the value of worship and local traditions in social religious practices (Arifin et al., 2022).

In addition, this study found that the practice of giving wages does not only apply to burial activities, but also to the bathing and shrouding of the corpse. Some informants mentioned that female pallbearers sometimes receive wages in the form of cloth or rice given by the bereaved family. In this case, the motivation for the gift is more symbolic and not based on a formal contract, but rather respect and gratitude. This finding reinforces Suryani and Muchtar's (2023) research, which shows that social relations in traditional Islamic societies are often realized through reciprocal

mechanisms that are moral-expressive rather than transactional economic (Suryani & Muchtar, 2023).

Based on the results of data categorization, it was also found that economic factors and the level of religiosity of the community influence the form and number of rewards. Communities with higher economic levels tend to give larger rewards, while low-income communities usually give in-kind. However, all informants emphasized that there was no coercion in the giving. This aspect shows high social flexibility in maintaining a balance between religious norms and social solidarity, as described by Haryanto (2024) in a study on Islamic social ethics in rural Indonesian communities (Haryanto, 2024).

In addition to interviews and observations, photo documentation of the activity shows that the role of women in bathing female corpses is very central, and they often come from the same family as the corpse or the surrounding community. The interview results also show that there is no formal institution or special governing body that regulates the funeral wage mechanism in Parit Culum 1. This practice purely takes place based on social customs (urf) that have been mutually accepted. This finding is in line with the results of Mutmainnah's study (2020), which emphasizes that urf in Islamic law can function as a basis for legal considerations if the practice does not contradict the Shari'ah (Mutmainnah, 2020).

Overall, the results show that the practice of wages in the funeral process in Parit Culum 1 Village has become part of an institutionalized socio-religious tradition. The process runs with a system of gotong royong, social respect, and the value of sincerity. There are no significant social conflicts related to the payment of wages, and the community agrees that the practice does not change the meaning of worship in funeral arrangements. These findings form the basis for the normative analysis in the following discussion regarding the suitability of the practice with the principles of fiqh ijarah and ujah.

## Discussion

The main result of this research shows that the practice of wages (ujrah) in the funeral process in Parit Culum 1 Village operates as a socio-religious tradition that is flexible and morally valued without a formal contract. The theme of the funeral mechanism and the form of wages reflects that the community divides ritual roles based on local expertise and provides compensation as a symbol of appreciation, not as a commercial transaction. These findings are consistent with the research objectives of explaining the funeral mechanism (problem 1) and wage practices from the perspective of Islamic law (problem 2). The empirical practice confirms that although not formalized, there is a social consensus in the community regarding the voluntary provision of wages upon completion of the burial process.

Interpretation of the results within the framework of ijarah/ujrah theory shows that this local practice can be categorized as a permissible form of service as long as it meets the sharia requirements: clarity of the object of work, agreement on remuneration, voluntary relations, and the absence of elements of gharar or oppression (Yasmeen, 2023) where the principle of wage justice is



emphasized in Islamic teachings as an obligation to pay a fair wage (Justice in the Workplace) (Yasmeen, 2023). Voluntary practices and no coercion indicate that the elements of an *ijarah* relationship are fulfilled, even though formal components such as a written contract are absent. On the other hand, the consistency of the community in respecting ritual performers can be studied as *urf* (local custom), which can be used as a legal consideration as long as it does not conflict with sharia.

When compared to previous studies, this finding is in line with the literature on wage giving in religious activities that emphasizes moral and symbolic values over economic aspects (Hasanah & Rofiq, 2022). However, this study differs in that it uses the case of funeral rituals, whereas many previous studies address general religious services or organizational funeral funds (Mirza et al., 2023). This local approach also shows that although money is the common form, alternative goods such as cloth or rice are accepted, depending on the socio-economic conditions of the community, a variation that is less discussed in conventional Islamic economic literature. Some *ijarah* literature discusses revitalizing contracts for modern services (Juhrotul, 2025), but this study adds the dimension of ritual services as part of traditional *muamalah*.

The scientific contribution of this article lies in the integration of local field data analysis with the *ijarah/ujrah* fiqh framework, extending the use of *muamalah* theory to the domain of death rituals. The study incorporates aspects of community law and local context as elements of practical legitimacy within the framework of Islamic law, which are rarely addressed in abstract *muamalah* contract studies. In this way, the study enriches *muamalah* theory with contextual empirical evidence and facilitates dialogue between fiqh norms and socio-religious practices in Indonesian Muslim societies.

This study has limitations that need to be acknowledged: firstly, the sample coverage is limited to one neighborhood so it may not be representative of variations in practice in other areas; secondly, the data is limited to the perspectives of implementers and local communities without involving formal religious authorities or fatwa institutions; thirdly, the absence of quantitative measurements that would allow statistical comparisons between groups. As qualitative methods are descriptive, generalization of results should be done with caution according to the local context.

Reflecting on these findings and limitations, implications for further research include expanding the study to other areas in order to obtain variations in practice and generalization of findings. For religious practitioners and community leaders, these results encourage the preparation of local guidelines so that the practice of giving ritual wages is more organized and *shar'i*. For policymakers (government and religious institutions), recommendations include consideration of local regulations or fatwas that accommodate local *urf* within the framework of sharia so that the practice of ritual wages becomes clear and does not become a burden on the community.

## CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the practice of wages in the funeral process in Parit Culum 1 Village is a socio-religious tradition that has been institutionalized and runs based on the collective understanding of the community. The funeral implementation mechanism is carried out in mutual

cooperation by the community with a clear division of tasks, including the stages of bathing, shrouding, praying, and burying the body. Wages are paid after the burial process is complete in the form of money, goods, or necessities, without any standard nominal provisions. Normatively, this practice fulfills the principles of *fiqh ijarah/ujrah* in Islamic law because it is based on willingness, clarity of service benefits, and does not contain elements of coercion or usury. Thus, the practice of giving wages to funeral executors can be considered valid according to Islamic law as long as it is done with the intention of appreciation and not a commercial transaction that tarnishes the value of *fardhu kifayah* worship.

The main contribution of this research lies in the integration of Islamic legal analysis with empirical findings on the social traditions of local communities. Theoretically, this research expands the understanding of the concept of *ujrah* in the context of socio-religious practices that have not been widely studied in *fiqh muamalah* studies, as well as showing the relevance of *urf* or community customs as a complementary legal source in determining the legitimacy of religious practices. Practically, this research provides an argumentative basis for religious leaders and local policy makers to formulate normative guidelines that are in harmony between Sharia values and the social reality of society in terms of providing wages for undertakers.

As a further implication, this research opens up opportunities for comparative studies in other regions to enrich the understanding of the dynamic relationship between social practices and *fiqh* provisions in the context of Muslim funerals. Future studies can be directed at a broader analysis of the socio-economic, gender and institutional aspects that influence the practice of funeral wages, so that the results can make a greater contribution to the development of contextual Islamic law and social religious policies at the community level.

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