

Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era

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Abstract

*This study aims to reveal the symbolic significance of the Bugis Lontara copying tradition (palontara) and its subtle dakwah messages as represented in the documentary film *Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: The Tale of Knowledge Preservers Enduring the Digital Age*, particularly in the context of the tension between cultural preservation and the dominance of digital technology. Employing a qualitative interpretive approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis and Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic framework, the research examines visual motifs, narrative structures, and cinematic elements of the film, supported by in-depth interviews with director Andi Musran and protagonist-palontara Andi Oddang To Sessungriu. Findings show that everyday acts of copying dripping bamboo-pen ink, page stamping, cellakeng as divine calling, silent workspaces, and the shift from manual to digital typing are not merely technical processes but multilayered symbols connoting sincerity (ikhlas), steadfastness (istiqamah), relentless effort (reso temmangingi), honor-compassion (siri' na pacce), mutual humanizing-strengthening (sipakatau-sipakalebbi-sipatokkong), and upright honesty (malempu). These symbols harmoniously fuse Bugis philosophical values with Islamic ethical principles, transforming the palontara figure into an exemplar of dakwah bil hal (propagation through exemplary action) and cultural jihad in the digital era. The documentary itself functions as a contemporary palontara, successfully bridging ancestral wisdom with younger generations without compromising authenticity. This research recommends that Islamic broadcasting institutions, educational bodies, and cultural activists develop more documentary-based and hybrid-media dakwah strategies that prioritize local wisdom, contemplative aesthetics, and intergenerational dialogue to counter the erosion of intangible heritage while strengthening moderate, inclusive, and contextual Islamic propagation in Indonesia.*

Keywords: palontara, Lontara copying tradition, dakwah bil hal, Bugis-Islamic symbolism, cultural preservation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a nation endowed with immense cultural, linguistic, and scriptural diversity, harbors intellectual legacies that encapsulate centuries of communal wisdom and spiritual depth (Prihatin & Nugraha, 2025). Among these,

the Bugis people of South Sulawesi stand out for their Lontara copying tradition a ritualistic practice of manually transcribing ancient manuscripts on palm leaves using the Lontara script (Druce, 2021). Far beyond a mere writing system, Lontara serves as a repository of history, life philosophies, social values, and Islamic teachings that have profoundly shaped Bugis identity (Nursaadah et al., 2025). Crafted by palontara hereditary scribes these manuscripts chronicle indigenous knowledge encompassing customs, agriculture, maritime lore, astronomy, royal histories, and holistic worldviews, functioning as a portal to the ancestral essence of Bugis society (Hamsiati et al., 2021). Yet, in the relentless tide of modernization and digitalization, proficiency in reading and copying Lontara has dwindled alarmingly (Budiasti, 2025). Younger generations risk severance from their literate heritage, rendering these manuscripts functionally obsolete and symbolically endangered (Laskar, 2025). This erosion is exacerbated by the perception of Lontara as archaic and inaccessible, with many texts sequestered in royal vaults or overseas museums, depriving contemporary audiences of their relevance to modern challenges, particularly local wisdom on environmental stewardship and sustainable livelihoods (Ayu et al., 2024).

Concurrently, the evolution of media, particularly documentary filmmaking, emerges as a potent conduit for resurrecting and disseminating cultural patrimony to broader publics. Documentaries transcend mere documentation; they constitute visually interpretive mediums laden with symbols and layered meanings, capable of bridging temporal and epistemological divides. In this vein, the documentary *Andi Oddang to Sessungriu: The Tale of Knowledge Preservers Enduring the Digital Age* produced by Cella Eja Art with funding from Daana Indonesia (initiated by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in collaboration with LPDP) premiered at the Auditorium of Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Parepare on June 19, 2023. Its synopsis traces the life of Andi Oddang to Sessungriu, a dedicated palontara from Parepare, whose childhood affliction interpreted in Bugis lore as the auspicious cellakeng omen prophesied his mantle as a knowledge custodian. Tabulated by his father at age 21, Oddang has since transcribed paternal manuscripts, assimilated communal lore, and innovated

documentation methods to perpetuate this lineage amid digital flux, albeit not without tensions against ancestral covenants.

Oddang's praxis exemplifies adaptive resilience: he imparts Lontara literacy through youth workshops, dons contemporary attire like jeans and motorcycles to resonate with millennials, and contrasts this with regal finery during Dewan Adat duties in Luwu. His authorship of "Bertahan di Tengah Gempuran Budaya" Massa eschews lamentation for pragmatic revitalization strategies, while his Facebook posts democratize Lontara-embedded ethics, underscoring accessibility as vital to cultural vitality (Muttaqin et al., 2020). This figure's urgency for documentation lest his erudition vanish aligns with broader imperatives in Islamic communication and broadcasting, where da'wah (proselytization) transcends verbal rhetoric to manifest through contemplative symbols and cultural enactments, fostering spiritual communion via indigenous idioms.

The imperative of this inquiry lies in its dual address of existential cultural peril and scholarly lacunae. First, interrogating the symbolic significance of Lontara copying in Andi Oddang to Sessungriu is paramount amid Indonesia's accelerating digital schism, where traditional epistemologies interwoven with Islamic akhlak (ethics) like siri' (honor) and paccé (solidarity) face obsolescence, yet hold untapped potential for sustainable da'wah attuned to local ecologies and social fabrics. As (Farooq, 2022) posits in his framework for Islamic socio-economic resilience, such traditions embody timeless principles of equity and stewardship, indispensable for navigating modernity without cultural amputation a urgency amplified by UNESCO's 2023 alerts on intangible heritage erosion in Southeast Asia.

Scholarly precedents illuminate facets of this terrain yet reveal conspicuous voids. (Nur et al., 2021) delineates Lontara as a Bugis-Makassarese cultural heirloom, while (Nuraeni et al., 2024) unpacks Islamic-inflected symbols in rituals like Maudu Lompoa, affirming synergies between adat and syariah. (Gill, 2020) theorizes documentary aesthetics as semiotic vessels, and Cella Eja Art's production documentation (2023) sketches the film's genesis rooted in ethnographic fieldwork on Andi Oddang To Sessungriu's Lontara copying practices as a mandated knowledge preserver amid digital encroachments yet scant analyses probe its representational depth. Recent interventions, such as (Jamaluddin et al., 2022) *Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era* | 175

exploration of Lontara Pappaseng as a tolerance philosophy and (Hughes, 2019) on manuscript variations, enrich symbolic exegeses, while (Munawarah et al., 2024) review of Lontara Pananrang in Islamic pedagogy and (Hady et al., 2025) on manuscript-driven religious moderation highlight preservation's da'wah valence. Nonetheless, as (Schmid, 2012) critiques in methodological discourses, prior works often privilege textual philology over visual media, sidelining how documentaries like this negotiate tradition-technology dialectics a gap this study redresses by centering semiotic decoding of Oddang's acts within Bugis-Islamic symbology, thereby augmenting cultural da'wah scholarship per (Sholihin, 2019) integrative paradigms.

Employing qualitative content analysis with semiotic lenses, this research dissects visual motifs in the film to unveil layered significances. Subsequent sections delineate representational schemata, unpack cultural-spiritual connotations, and appraise da'wah affordances, culminating in propositions for hybrid media strategies. Anticipated outcomes promise not only theoretical buttressing for Bugis studies but practical scaffolds for culturally resonant Islamic broadcasting, fortifying heritage amid digital deluges.

2. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive design anchored in Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, systematically examining denotative, connotative, and mythical layers embedded within the documentary film *Andi Oddang to Sessungriu: The Tale of Knowledge Preservers Enduring the Digital Age*. The interpretive paradigm prioritizes subjective meaning-making, construing human actions through actors' emic perspectives and elucidating how significations crystallize via socio-cultural symbols and interactions. This reflexive stance enables the researcher to forge culturally nuanced interpretations from media artifacts.

Fieldwork unfolds in Parepare City, South Sulawesi, engaging Andi Musran (director-screenwriter) and Andi Oddang to Sessungriu (principal palontara subject) as primary interlocutors. Analytical core revolves around the 2022 soft-file version of the documentary, supplemented by theoretical scaffolding from library resources. The investigation spans an estimated two months, flexibly calibrated to emergent analytical demands.

Inquiry narrows to the 2022 documentary soft file and in-depth interviews with the director and lead protagonist, centering the symbolic praxis of Lontara transcription (palontara tradition).

Data accrue through primary and secondary sources. Primary data are harvested directly via observation systematic sensory engagement with Andi Musran's directorial creative processes, Andi Oddang's palontara dedication, ancillary community figures interfacing with Oddang, and symbolic configurations within the film as well as in-depth interviews. These dialogic exchanges, conducted face-to-face and in writing with the director and protagonist, are audio-recorded for fidelity, yielding contextualized insights into intent, praxis, and signification. Secondary data derive from soft-file film analysis, literature review encompassing books, journals, and prior theses, and digital archives, fortifying theoretical triangulation and interpretive depth.

Data collection techniques encompass informal conversational interviews, participant observation, audiovisual document analysis, and bibliographic study. Interviews unfold organically in relaxed settings, fostering spontaneity; field notes capture keywords and thematic kernels post-session. Himawan Pratista's *Memahami Film* (2008) guides cinematic decoding protocols.

Analysis adheres to (Miles, 1994) interactive model, iterated across sequential yet overlapping phases. The process commences with subject delineation, identifying Andi Musran and Andi Oddang as focal agents, followed by aspect specification centered on the symbolic meanings of palontara transcription. Data aggregation collates interview transcripts and film segments, succeeded by data reduction that prunes extraneous material while retaining topically germane elements. Data display organizes findings into systematic tabular and narrative matrices of semiotic strata. The final phase involves conclusion drawing and verification, yielding triangulated synthesis of denotative, connotative, and mythical inferences, cross-validated against primary accounts and secondary texts. This rigorous semiotic triangulation illuminates how visual-narrative symbols mediate Bugis-Islamic epistemologies against digital encroachment, yielding transferable insights for culturally embedded da'wah media.

This study upholds strict ethical standards in accordance with qualitative research principles and the cultural sensitivities of the Bugis community. Informed consent was obtained verbally and in writing from both key participants Andi Musran (director) and Andi Oddang To Sessungriu (main protagonist) prior to interviews, observations, and the use of film materials. They were fully informed about the research objectives, the academic purpose of the study, the possibility of publication, and their absolute right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Personal identities, voices, images, and traditional knowledge shared during the research are used solely for scholarly purposes and are presented respectfully, avoiding any sensationalism or decontextualization. Audio recordings and field notes are stored securely with restricted access, and all identifiable data will be anonymized or destroyed after the mandated retention period. Particular care was taken to honor Bugis concepts of *siri'* (honor/shame) and the sacred nature of Lontara manuscripts; no original manuscripts were handled without permission, and representations of palontara practices were cross-checked with the participants to ensure cultural accuracy and prevent misrepresentation. The researcher maintained a reflexive stance throughout, acknowledging his positionality and striving to amplify rather than appropriate the voices of the researched community. This study received no external funding that could compromise its independence, and all citations and references are accurately acknowledged to uphold academic integrity.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Preserving Lontara in the Digital Age

The documentary film Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Kisah Penyalin Ilmu Bertahan Di Tengah Era Digital, produced by Cella Eja Art in 2023 and directed by Andi Musran, runs for 1 hour and 22 minutes (Parepos, 2023). It premiered at the Auditorium of IAIN Kota Pare-Pare, attracting approximately 500 attendees, as noted by the director in an interview: “Saya juga tidak menyangka bahwa bisa serame itu pengunjung sekitar 500 an orang yang datang di auditorium di IAIN Kota Pare-Pare” (PortalInsiden, 2023). The film centers on Andi Oddang To Sessungriu, a palontara (traditional Lontara script copyist) who persists in manually copying ancient manuscripts amid digital advancements.

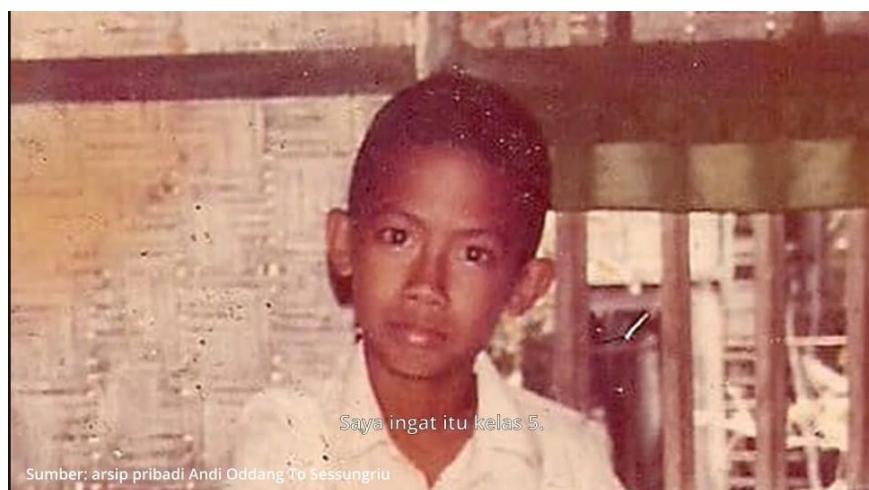


Figure 1. Andi Oddang contracted Cellakeng at the age of 10.

At age 10, Andi Oddang experienced cellakeng a red abdominal lump interpreted in Bugis tradition as a divine sign marking him as a successor palontara. This narrative, common in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, targets all audiences through its documentary genre, blending cultural themes with everyday reflections and subtle critiques.

Andi Oddang's journey from a 10-year-old child struck by the mysterious red abdominal swelling known as cellakeng to a lifelong Lontara copyist carries deep symbolic meaning. In Bugis belief, cellakeng is interpreted as a divine sign marking the child as a chosen successor (palontara) destined to preserve sacred knowledge. The illness thus transcends the physical realm and becomes a spiritual calling. Cinematographically, the act of copying is rendered sacred through warm color tones, silent spatial composition, and dim, gentle lighting whenever Andi Oddang writes. These visual choices envelop the seemingly mundane task in an atmosphere of reverence and worship, transforming each stroke of the bamboo pen into an act of devotion

Key symbolic representations emerge through visual, narrative, and audio elements. The page stamp connects manuscript sheets to prevent forgery, symbolizing integrity and authenticity in knowledge preservation.



Figure 2. Page Stamp. Source: Andi Oddang Documentary Film.

Cellakeng represents spiritual calling and destiny, integrating physical, cultural, and divine dimensions (Figure 2). In the Lontara copying tradition, the page stamp physically links one sheet to the next so that pages cannot be replaced or forged. Symbolically, it represents honesty, integrity, and the unbroken wholeness of knowledge. Far more than an administrative mark, the stamp embodies the palontara's sacred responsibility to preserve the absolute authenticity of the text. Each impression becomes a visible pledge of trustworthiness and a safeguard against distortion of ancestral wisdom.

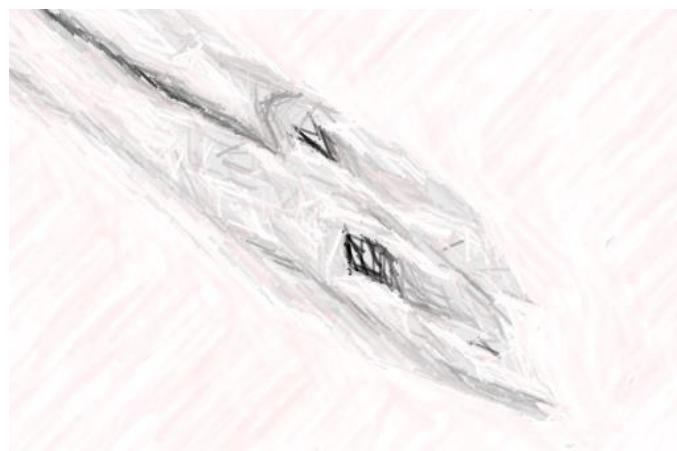


Figure 3. Page Stamp. Source: Andi Oddang Documentary Film.

Traditional tools like the bamboo pen (kaluku), natural ink, and special paper (Figure 3) signify resistance to instant culture and reverence for ancestral methods. Despite the availability of advanced technology, Andi Oddang deliberately continues to use the traditional bamboo pen and natural ink during the initial stages of copying. This choice functions as a quiet act of resistance against the instant culture of the digital age and as a profound gesture of reverence for ancestral methods. The traditional writing tools are not mere instruments; they form an *Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era* | 180

essential part of the sacred ritual of transcription. Every dip of the pen and every slow, deliberate stroke transforms the mechanical act of writing into a meditative rite that honors both the knowledge being preserved and the generations who transmitted it before him.



Figure 4. Andi Oddang copying Lontara (ink dripping from the bamboo pen).

Dripping ink from the pen (Figure 4) embodies unwavering dedication and the continuous flow of wisdom as amal jariyah (ongoing charity). The image of ink steadily dripping from the bamboo pen transcends its literal function as a writing tool. It powerfully symbolizes Andi Oddang's unbroken consistency and lifelong dedication. Each falling drop visually represents the uninterrupted flow of knowledge and wisdom being transmitted to future generations, as well as the perpetual reward of amal jariyah (ongoing charity) that continues long after the writer's death. In Islamic teaching, the dissemination of beneficial knowledge is regarded as one of the highest forms of worship whose blessings never cease. Thus, the dripping ink becomes a living metaphor for spiritual and intellectual continuity an enduring river of sacred learning that Andi Oddang keeps flowing through every deliberate stroke.

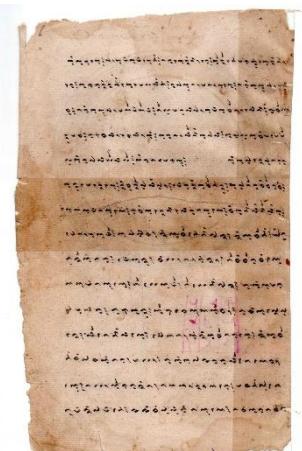


Figure 5. Worn Lontara Manuscript in an Old Cabinet

An old cabinet housing worn manuscripts (Figure 5) preserves collective memory and timeless relevance. The weathered wooden cabinet filled with fragile, yellowed manuscripts is far more than a storage place; it serves as the silent guardian of the Bugis people's collective memory and intellectual heritage. The visible signs of age on the manuscripts (faded ink, brittle palm leaves, and gentle creases) do not indicate decay but rather testify to authenticity and the long journey through time. These marks symbolize ancestral wisdom that has endured centuries and remains profoundly relevant today. The cabinet and its contents together affirm the sacred value of honoring history, roots, and steadfast perseverance in safeguarding knowledge, reminding viewers that true wisdom is not found in pristine new objects but in treasures that have been lovingly preserved across generations.



Figure 6. Andi Oddang Makan Nasi dan Telur Saat Menyalin

Simple meals of rice and eggs during copying (Figure 6) highlight humility and sincerity. On the surface, the plate of plain rice and a single boiled egg is merely Andi Oddang's modest meal to sustain his strength while copying manuscripts. Symbolically, however, this simple food eaten quietly on the porch amid the slow rhythm of writing represents profound humility (*tawadhu'*), absolute sincerity (*ikhlas*), and contentment with little (*zuhd*). The scene gently critiques the instant, consumer-driven modern lifestyle by celebrating a life of purposeful simplicity: spiritual richness achieved through cultural devotion rather than material abundance. Together with Andi Oddang's calm, patient facial expression throughout the act, it becomes a powerful visual sermon on inner peace, steadfast perseverance, and finding sacred meaning in the most ordinary moments.

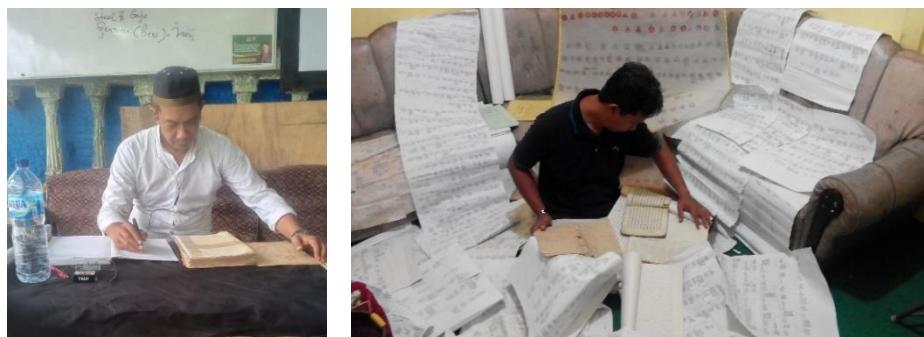


Figure 7 & 8. Andi Oddang while copying Lontara script

The calm, serene expression on Andi Oddang's face as he writes is far more than a mere facial feature; it is a living symbol of profound patience (*sabr*) and heartfelt sincerity (*ikhlas*) in preserving tradition and performing silent *dakwah*. In Islamic teaching, patience is repeatedly described as the key to success and divine reward. This quiet, unwavering countenance visually embodies steadfastness amid the challenges of the digital era, offering viewers a gentle yet powerful reminder that true cultural and spiritual guardianship is rooted in inner tranquility and complete submission to a higher purpose. The hushed, uncluttered room where Andi Oddang works functions as a sacred space of contemplation, spiritual serenity, and total concentration. Its silence is not emptiness but a protective sanctuary that shields the act of copying from the noise and haste of the outside world. Within this stillness, knowledge is deeply contemplated, wisdom is reborn, and closeness to

Allah is nurtured. The quiet workspace thus becomes a visual metaphor for the inner peace required to receive, preserve, and transmit sacred learning an oasis of focus where the soul meets both ancestral voices and divine presence.

Andi Oddang's patient expression (Figure 7) and silent workspace (Figure 8) evoke contemplation, spiritual focus, and Islamic values like patience. The film contrasts tradition with modernity: Andi Oddang transitions to typing on a laptop, symbolizing adaptive preservation without losing essence. His attire traditional for cultural events, jeans and motorcycle otherwise bridges old and new worlds. Community classes for youth represent regeneration, countering exclusivity in Lontara access, as Ilham Mustamin states: "Kehadiran Pung Oddang... membuka akses-akses pengetahuan... yang eksklusif" (Budiman, 2025). Cinematography employs warm tones, dim lighting, and ambient sounds to sacralize copying, positioning the film itself as a modern palontara via visual documentation.

Andi Oddang To Sessungriu serves as a visual reinterpretation of the near-extinct Lontara copying tradition, portraying the palontara not merely as a scribe but as a guardian of Bugis values and spirituality. Director Andi Musran emphasizes this persistence in a modern era: "Di era modern saat ini serba digital... ada ternyata masih ada tradisi penulisan dan penyalinan di masyarakat Bugis". The film's success, with screenings across regions and positive local reception, underscores its role in raising awareness among youth about Bugis culture beyond myths like I La Galigo.

Symbolically, elements like the page stamp and cellakeng reinforce ethical and spiritual integrity, aligning with Islamic principles of sincerity and knowledge dissemination. Ilham Mustamin notes Andi Oddang's non-dogmatic approach: "Dia tetap melestarikannya tapi konteksnya bisa berubah", allowing tradition to evolve. Tools and rituals critique digital haste, promoting manual copying's benefits for memory and contemplation. Modern integrations, such as digital typing and youth classes, illustrate hybridity tradition reincarnated rather than obsolete fostering inclusivity and collective responsibility.

Cinematographically, symbolic visuals (e.g., dripping ink, silent rooms) build reflective immersion, transforming the film into a cultural archive. It avoids didacticism, inviting diverse viewers from scholars to novices to reinterpret identity. *Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era* | 184

Ultimately, the documentary bridges generations, proving visual media can sustain oral traditions in a fast-paced world, ensuring Bugis heritage endures through shared stewardship.

The Symbolic Meaning of Andi Oddang's Actions in the Context of Bugis Culture and Islamic Values

The actions of Andi Oddang in the documentary film *Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Kisah Penyalin Ilmu Bertahan Di Tengah Era Digital* transcend mere functionality, embodying profound symbolic meanings within Bugis tradition and Islamic principles. Employing Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, these actions function as signs with dual layers: denotative (literal copying of Lontara scripts) and connotative (preservation of cultural identity and spiritual devotion), extending to cultural myths of endurance (Simanungkalit et al., 2025). Through Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics, they are interpreted contextually, intertwined with Bugis historical, spiritual, and communal frameworks harmoniously aligned with Islam.

Denotatively, Andi Oddang is a palontara, meticulously copying ancient Bugis manuscripts. Connotatively, he symbolizes perseverance, guardianship of ancestral heritage, and practical dakwah (propagation of faith). His copying on an old wooden table with traditional tools in a silent room evokes contemplative spirituality, reflecting Islamic values of *ikhlas* (sincerity) and *sabr* (patience). As he states, adaptability is key: "Anda harus tanggap terhadap laju perkembangan zaman. Maka punahlah kita. Punahlah nilai-nilai", emphasizing substance over form.

Ritualistic acts, such as stamping pages, careful reading, and wrapping copies in white cloth, ritualize Bugis *ade'* (structured etiquette) and honor knowledge as sacred. In Bugis culture, originality yields to essence: "Yang diutamakan oleh orang Bugis itu adalah substansi... nilai-nilai. Itulah jati diri". Barthes' ideology frames this as resistance to oblivion amid modernization, where transitioning from bamboo pen to laptop signifies sacred adaptation, not betrayal.

Hermeneutically, Andi Oddang's role binds him to *pappaseng* (ancestral messages), blending moral and spiritual norms. His childhood *cellakeng* a red lump seen as divine calling mirrors Islamic *ikhtiyar* (effort) and *takdir* (destiny), affirmed by his father's succession rite. Teaching youth via Rumah Baca Qalam's Sekolah Bugis, including 11 Zoom modules, embodies *dakwah bil hal* (propagation through

deeds), instilling *istiqamah* (steadfastness), *tawadhu'* (humility), and *adab* (etiquette toward knowledge).

Attire shifts jeans and motorcycle for casual teaching, traditional garb for rituals symbolize dual identity: flexible yet rooted, bridging generations without compromising Bugis-Muslim essence. Consistent attendance at youth events underscores *ikhlās*. Storing manuscripts in old cabinets or white cloth signifies *ta'dzim* (reverence) for knowledge as *nur* (light) in Islam.

Copying letter by letter reflects *tazkiyah* (soul purification) and *ihsan* (excellence), aligning with Quranic praise of the pen: "Nūn. Demi pena dan apa yang mereka tulis" (QS. Al-Qalam: 1). This *amal jariyah* (perpetual charity) counters digital haste, promoting Bugis *malempu* (honesty) and Islamic *sabr*. Sharing on social media extends *hikmah* (wisdom), making *dakwah* inclusive (Sirait, 2025).

Intergenerationally, classes regenerate culture, countering exclusivity. Andi Oddang's lineage of copying "Bapak saya pun menulis... termasuk saya punya bapak" represents sustained *bessi* (purification) and Islamic *mujahadah* (inner struggle). Silent workspaces and slow pacing symbolize *tafakkur* (reflection) and spiritual proximity to God.

Ultimately, Andi Oddang's actions forge a cultural myth of heroic guardianship through quiet devotion, merging Bugis *siri'* (honor) and *lempu* (integrity) with Islamic *jihad* (striving) in cultural preservation. They critique instant modernity, advocating *tajdid* (renewal) while safeguarding core values. As *fardhu kifayah* (collective obligation), his deeds invite dialogic interpretation, transforming viewers into active participants in heritage revival. These symbols affirm that small, sincere acts rooted in faith and culture yield eternal reward, ensuring Bugis-Islamic identity thrives amid change.

Preaching Messages in the Film Andi Oddang To Sessungriu

The documentary *Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Kisah Penyalin Ilmu Bertahan Di Tengah Era Digital* conveys subtle yet profound *dakwah* messages through cultural practices and symbols, embodying *dakwah bil hal* propagation via exemplary actions rather than sermons or explicit Quranic recitations. Andi Oddang's daily life as a *palontara* reflects Islamic values intertwined with Bugis *Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era* | 186

wisdom, inviting viewers to contemplate preservation of knowledge as spiritual devotion.

a. Ikhlas, Istiqamah, dan Ketekunan

Universal values of ikhlas (sincerity), istiqamah (steadfastness), and perseverance form the core of Andi Oddang's dedication to copying Lontara scripts. His selfless, independent efforts driven purely by the intent to safeguard ancestral knowledge exemplify ikhlas. Daily routines of consistent copying and teaching, despite minimal external recognition, manifest istiqamah and perseverance. These interconnected virtues create a robust spiritual foundation, portraying his role as a guardian of tradition aligned with Islamic emphasis on sincere, enduring worship.

b. Reso Temmangingi (Usaha Pantang Menyerah)

Andi Oddang's commitment vividly reflects the Bugis philosophy of Reso Temmangingi relentless effort without fatigue. Every stroke of his pen, copied page, and teaching session demonstrates unyielding resilience against modern challenges. This ethos sustains Lontara's relevance, underscoring dakwah through tireless cultural preservation as a form of striving (jihad) in knowledge.

c. Siri' na Pacce (Harga Diri dan Empati)

Preservation efforts stem from Siri' na Pacce: profound siri' (honor/shame) at the potential extinction of heritage propels his struggle, while pacce (empathy/pain) for threatened traditional knowledge and future generations' loss of roots motivates dissemination. This duality frames dakwah as empathetic guardianship, blending personal dignity with communal compassion.

d. Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi, Sipatokkong (Saling Mem manusia kan, Menghargai, dan Menguatkan)

Interactions with youth embody Sipakatau (humanizing others), Sipakalebbi (elevating dignity), and Sipatokkong (mutual strengthening) (Yuliyanna et al., 2024). Andi Oddang humanizes learners regardless of background, dignifies Lontara in modern society, and bridges past-present generations for collective resilience. These principles promote inclusive dakwah, fostering intergenerational bonds.

e. Malempu (Kejujuran dan Kelurusuan)

Malempu honesty and uprightness shines in Andi Oddang's fidelity to original texts, ensuring no distortions, and his pure motives in transmission. This integrity models ethical scholarship, aligning with Islamic amanah (trustworthiness) in knowledge stewardship.

Beyond these, the film subtly integrates dakwah via actions, atmosphere, and symbols. Primary messages emphasize safeguarding knowledge as prophetic inheritance: "Barang siapa menempuh jalan untuk mencari ilmu, maka Allah akan mudahkan jalannya ke surga." Careful copying repeated reading, slow writing, stamping to prevent forgery highlights amanah and scholarly honesty, a fardhu kifayah (collective duty).

Istiqamah persists despite digital irrelevance, echoing QS. Fussilat: 30:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ لَا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزُنُوا وَابْشِرُوا
بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

"Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remained on a right course the angels will descend upon them, [saying], 'Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised'''.

**Table 1. Core Islamic and Bugis Cultural Values Conveyed through the Film
Andi Oddang To Sessungriu**

No	Core Value Conveyed	Explanation	Example Scene from the Film	Relevant Qur'anic Verse / Hadith
1	Sincerity (Ikhlas), Steadfastness (Istiqamah), and Perseverance	Copying the lontara manuscripts every day sincerely, without seeking reward, payment, or public recognition.	Andi Oddang copies lontara on his porch every morning for decades.	Qur'an – Al-Insyirah 94:6-8; Hadith – Bukhari no. 6462: "The best of people are those who benefit others the most."
2	Reso Temmanggingi (Relentless Effort and Never Giving Up)	Every stroke of the pen is a tireless struggle to prevent the extinction of Bugis cultural heritage.	Andi Oddang continues copying even when his body is frail and his eyesight fails.	Qur'an – Al-Baqarah 2:286; Hadith – Muslim no. 2662: "Allah does not burden a soul beyond its capacity."

3	Siri' na Pacce (Sense of Honor and Compassion)	Feeling deep shame if ancestral heritage is lost (siri') and profound empathy for future generations (pacce).	Andi Oddang cries when he realizes almost no one can still read lontara.	Qur'an – Al-Hujurat 49:13; Bugis proverb: "Mappasiri' sibawa pacce, sipakatau sipakalebbi."
4	Sipakatau, Sipakalebbi, Sipatokong (Humanizing, Honoring, and Mutual Support)	Treating young people as fellow humans, dignifying them, and strengthening one another in learning lontara.	Andi Oddang patiently and lovingly teaches village children.	Qur'an – An-Nahl 16:125; Hadith – Tirmidhi no. 1924: "Make things easy, do not make them difficult; give good news, do not drive people away."
5	Malempu (Honesty and Integrity of Heart)	Remaining faithful to the original text without altering a single letter, preserving knowledge with full integrity.	Andi Oddang refuses to "beautify" or rush the writing for speed or aesthetics.	Qur'an – Al-Ahzab 33:70; Hadith – Muslim no. 2607: "Speak the truth even if it is bitter."
6	Heritage and Intergenerational Responsibility	Preserving lontara means safeguarding Bugis-Makassar identity, history, and moral values.	Young people finally come to learn after witnessing Andi Oddang's sincerity.	Qur'an – Al-Hasyr 59:18: "Let every soul consider what it has sent forth for tomorrow (the Hereafter)."

This table summarizes the six main moral and da'wah messages embedded in the documentary film *Andi Oddang To Sessungriu*. It highlights how the lifelong dedication of Andi Oddang a humble Makassar elder who manually copied ancient Bugis-Makassar lontara manuscripts for decades beautifully reflects universal Islamic values (sincerity, perseverance, honesty, compassion) while remaining deeply rooted in noble Bugis philosophical concepts such as siri' na pacce, reso temmangingi, and malempu. Each value is supported by a specific scene from the film and reinforced by relevant verses from the Qur'an or authentic hadiths, making the table a practical resource for educators, researchers, religious speakers, and film discussion groups.

Hermeneutically (Ricoeur), this steadfastness transcends repetition, embodying meaningful consistency amid change. Andi Oddang's calm solitude assures angelic peace ("Jangan takut dan jangan bersedih"), viewing efforts as *Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era* | 189

rewarded amal jariyah. Paradise's promise symbolizes divine favor for sincere persistence, framing copying as spiritual struggle (jihad kultural) and amar ma'ruf (enjoining good).

Additional messages include tawadhu' (humility) in gentle teaching; adab toward knowledge in reverent handling; cultural-Islamic harmony in youth classes; resistance to oblivion via patient jihad; silent work's nobility; ukhuwah in sharing; simplicity (zuhd); identity revival; civilizational responsibility; and environmental harmony through natural tools. Visual silence fosters reflection, making dakwah contemplative and universal. Overall, the film's dakwah rooted in awareness, not obligation touches conscience through quiet exemplarity, proving local practices inherently embody Islamic universals without formal imposition.

This qualitative descriptive study elucidates social-cultural phenomena via Andi Oddang's perspective in the documentary, employing content analysis to detail messages without hypothesis testing. The film documents a Bugis palontara's manual-to-digital transition, portraying copying as spiritual-cultural practice. Qualitatively, symbols and narratives link to Islamic dakwah bil hal: exemplary sincerity, knowledge etiquette, and commitment. Cinematography silent rooms, slow motions evokes ihsan (excellence as if seen by God). Youth sharing ensures continuity (tajdid: form renewal, essence preservation).

Semiotically (Barthes) and hermeneutically (Ricoeur):

Pena yang Terus Meneteskan Tinta: Denotatively, a dripping pen; connotatively, unbroken dedication and flowing wisdom (amal jariyah). Myth: enduring knowledge guardian. Hermeneutic: past-present dialogue via intellectual-spiritual reinterpretation. Lemari Tua Berisi Naskah-naskah Usang: Denotatively, storage; connotatively, ancestral treasury and tested wisdom. Myth: hidden intergenerational bridge. Hermeneutic: eternal texts inviting contemporary relevance.

Suara Gesekan Bambu: Denotatively, friction sound; connotatively, perseverance rhythm and authenticity. Myth: contemplative ritual. Hermeneutic: non-verbal text dialogue in silence. Ekspresi Kesabaran Tokoh: Denotatively, calm demeanor; connotatively, steadfastness and sincerity. Myth: patient exemplar. Hermeneutic: existential response to calling. Cellakeng: Denotatively, red lump; *Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era* | 190

connotatively, divine sign. Myth: predestined heir. Hermeneutic: body-text revealing individual-tradition-divine interplay.

Stempel Halaman: Denotatively, page marker; connotatively, authenticity safeguard. Myth: knowledge purity. Hermeneutic: interpretive legitimization. Ruang Kerja yang Sunyi: Denotatively, quiet space; connotatively, contemplation sanctuary. Myth: protected wisdom oasis. Hermeneutic: intimate text-spirit encounter. Tension between tradition-digital resolves dialectically: technology aids access without eroding ethics/spirituality. Findings affirm documentaries as contemplative dakwah media, blending Bugis-Islamic values for affective impact, proving visual exemplarity surpasses rhetoric in heritage revival.

4. CONCLUSION

The documentary Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Kisah Penyalin Ilmu Bertahan Di Tengah Era Digital powerfully represents the symbolic tradition of Lontara copying through visual and narrative elements that transcend mere documentation. Symbols such as the dripping bamboo pen, page stamps, cellakeng as divine calling, old cabinets of worn manuscripts, and silent workspaces denote functional acts while connoting perseverance, authenticity, spiritual guardianship, and intergenerational continuity in Bugis culture. These representations, analyzed via Barthes' semiotics and Ricoeur's hermeneutics, highlight a contemplative ritual resisting digital ephemerality, reaffirming Lontara copying as a sacred bridge between ancestral wisdom and modern relevance.

Andi Oddang's actions embody profound symbolic meanings within Bugis traditions and Islamic values, merging local ethos like Reso Temmangingi, Siri' na Pacce, and Malempu with principles of ikhlas, istiqamah, sabr, and amal jariyah. His childhood cellakeng, meticulous manual-to-digital transitions, youth teachings, and humble demeanor symbolize divine destiny, adaptive integrity, empathetic regeneration, and sincere devotion, as echoed in QS. Fussilat: 30 and Al-Qalam: 1. This synthesis illustrates cultural preservation as spiritual dakwah bil hal, where quiet perseverance critiques instant modernity while fostering ethical knowledge stewardship.

Ultimately, the film serves as an effective medium for dakwah rooted in local wisdom, transforming visual storytelling into contemplative propagation that *Symbolic Meaning of Bugis Lontara Copying in Andi Oddang To Sessungriu: Knowledge Keepers in the Digital Era* | 191

harmonizes Bugis identity with universal Islamic teachings. By exemplifying knowledge as amanah and fardhu kifayah, it invites collective responsibility in heritage revival, proving documentaries can subtly evoke reflection and action across generations. This approach not only sustains endangered traditions but reinforces Islam's compatibility with cultural contexts, offering a model for inclusive, impactful dakwah in a digital age.

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