

PEUSIJUEK RITUAL: EMBEDDED CUSTOMS AND THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY IN ACEH



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Abstract

The *peusijuek* ritual is a deeply embedded custom in the lives of the Acehnese people, serving as a symbol that shapes social and cultural identity. This study aims to analyze the historical aspects of *peusijuek* and its role in forming social identity in Aceh. Through a qualitative approach, data were collected via in-depth interviews with community leaders and literature studies. The results show that *peusijuek* is not merely a ceremonial ritual but a bridge connecting individuals with the community, creating solidarity, and strengthening the harmony between local traditions and Islamic religious values. The ritual involves symbolic elements such as rice and leaves, representing prosperity and peace. As a practical implication, this study recommends integrating *peusijuek* values into a local wisdom-based education curriculum to maintain the cultural identity of the younger generation amidst modernization.

Keywords: *Peusijuek*; Customs; Social Identity; Local Wisdom-Based Education.

INTRODUCTION

Aceh is renowned for its cultural diversity and customs that have existed since ancient times, even preceding the arrival of Islam (Kamila 2024). Customs play a vital role in the social and religious life of the Acehnese people. This is clearly reflected in the proverb “*Hukoem Ngoen Adat Hanjeut Cree Lagee Zat Ngoen Sifeut*,” which means that customs and Islamic Sharia law are inseparable, like substance and its properties (Majelis Adat Aceh 2013). This analogy is akin to the inseparable connection between a fingernail and the flesh, demonstrating that Islamic principles have become an integral part of local customs (Majelis Adat Aceh 2013). This philosophy asserts that within the collective consciousness of the Acehnese people, Islam is not merely a religion but the soul that animates every cultural practice (Alfian 1992:34). This profound integration makes

Acehnese identity difficult to separate from the religious values that color every aspect of life.

The term “*peusijuek*” is derived from the word *sijuek* (Acehnese for cold), with the prefix *peu* (to make something), meaning to make something cold or to cool down (Marzuki 2022). This ritual, also known as *tepung tawar*, is a traditional ceremony of great significance for the Acehnese people. *Peusijuek* is considered a symbol of petition for safety, tranquility, happiness, unity, and mutual forgiveness. Almost all customs in Aceh involve the *peusijuek* procession in various important moments, such as weddings, circumcisions, dispute resolution, and other activities, such as rice planting, building new houses, or celebrating holidays (Marzuki 2022). Furthermore, *peusijuek* is frequently performed on objects such as new vehicles, new residences, and shops (Rahmah 2023). This ritual is also conducted during the change of leaders—from the village level, often called *keuchiek*, to the gubernatorial level—and when welcoming important guests from outside the region (Wisata Aceh 2025). The existence of *peusijuek* provides evidence of how the Acehnese people engage in cultural negotiation by absorbing traditions and transforming them into an Islamic monotheistic (*tauhid*) framework (Reid 2010).

Peusijuek has rich meaning and serves as a bridge to maintain social and spiritual relationships among individuals, the community, and the surrounding environment. Additionally, this ritual strengthens Acehnese cultural identity and serves as a reminder of traditional values such as *gotong royong* (cooperation), mutual respect, and care for others (Aulia 2026). During *peusijuek*, a *Tengku* (religious scholar) or a traditional leader is usually present to lead the ritual. Their presence is considered vital as they are believed to bring blessings. After the ritual is completed, a collective prayer led by the *Tengku* is often held to invoke blessings and mercy from Allah SWT. This ritual truly reflects the strength and depth of Acehnese tradition (Dialeksis 2025).

However, in the era of globalization that brings massive modernization, the existence of traditional rituals like *peusijuek* faces significant challenges. Shifting values and lifestyles can degrade the younger generation’s understanding of the philosophical meaning of their own cultural identity (Robertson 1992:102). Therefore, this research becomes relevant to re-examine how *peusijuek* works as a social glue and a form of collective identity that remains relevant to the Acehnese people today. To strengthen the analysis of this phenomenon, the following section will present a literature review regarding the position of this ritual within the dialectic between customs, religion, and the formation of community character.

The sociological urgency of examining traditional practices in contemporary Indonesia rests on the compounding pressures of asymmetrical global modernization. In the context of Acehese society, cultural preservation has historically been framed in an affirmative light, asserting a seamless syncretism between customary norms (*adat*) and formal religious doctrines (*Sharia*) as encapsulated in the foundational socio-legal proverb: “*Hukoem Ngoen Adat Hanjeut Cree Lagee Zat Ngoen Sifeut*”. This ideological consensus holds that Islamic theology serves as the animating force behind every visible cultural practice. However, this normative framework frequently obscures the hidden socio-political frictions, generational fissures, and structural transformations that traditional rituals undergo when forced to adapt to secular, globalized urban spaces. Modernity does not merely displace tradition through outright eradication; rather, it often subjects sacred rituals to a process of cultural commodification and bureaucratic co-optation, flattening their historical depth into superficial institutional displays.

A rigorous mapping of the existing literature reveals a significant state-of-the-art landscape that remains heavily localized and descriptively bounded. Extant studies in Acehese sociology tend to isolate traditional mechanisms either for environmental management or to purely pedagogical applications. For instance, contemporary research by Chadijah (2017) meticulously unpacks the ecological sustainability of forest conservation by examining the *Panglima Uteun* institution within the Nagan Raya community, showing how local wisdom serves as an extra-legal regulatory mechanism for social and environmental balance. While Chadijah (2017) successfully conceptualizes the structural functions of custom in natural resource governance, her framework leaves a notable analytical vacuum regarding non-institutional, symbolic rituals that regulate collective identity rather than material ecology. On the other hand, cultural educational literature, such as the study conducted by Prasetyo and Kumalasari (2021), emphasizes the instrumental value of the *peusijuek* tradition as a passive pedagogical asset for history education in formal schools, helping cultivate nationalistic characters. Similarly, Marzuki (2022) and Rahmah (2023) limit their sociological inquiry to the ritual’s theological compatibility, framing it primarily as an affirmative vehicle for Islamic proselytization (*dakwah*) and the reinforcement of spiritual networks.

In the lights of this literature matrix, the novelty of this study becomes explicitly clear. This article fills a critical research gap by shifting the analytical paradigm away from normative-theological descriptions and institutional ecological governance. Instead, it conceptualizes *peusijuek* as a highly dynamic, contested arena of identity negotiation,

symbolic power, and defensive cultural reproduction under the gaze of global modernity. By conducting a critical sociological critique, this study explicitly deconstructs the structural mechanisms by which local actors weaponize traditional symbols to maintain rigid communal boundaries against secularizing homogenizing forces. Furthermore, it addresses an overlooked sociopolitical phenomenon: the urban regression of sacred ceremonies into formalized “ritual packaging” designed to fulfill bureaucratic and political legitimacy rather than genuine communal solidarity. Thus, this study offers a fresh, critical contribution to the discourse on the “Indigenization of Islam” (*pribumisasi Islam*) by demonstrating that local wisdom is not a static cultural relic, but an evolving, conflicted site of social contestation.

Theoretically, the social function of local wisdom is fundamentally intended to foster collective solidarity and maintain communal harmony within a society. As demonstrated in previous sociological research within the Acehnese context, such as Chadijah’s (2017) study of the *Panglima Uteun* tradition, local wisdom serves as a vital mechanism for ecological and social stability. However, while Chadijah focuses on environmental governance, there is a noticeable research gap regarding how the *peusijuek* ritual serves as a dynamic arena for identity negotiation and symbolic power amid rapid globalization. This study moves beyond normative documentation by critically analyzing *peusijuek* not just as a preserved relic, but as a practice of cultural reproduction that actively filters external influences. By positioning *peusijuek* within the dialectic of ‘Indigenization of Islam,’ this research provides a sharper theoretical contribution to understanding how local identity maintains its boundaries amidst modern pressures (Wahid 2006).

The focus of this research will center on the history of *peusijuek* and the role of this ritual in the formation of social identity within Acehnese society. This study aims to address questions regarding how the historical aspects of *peusijuek* reflect local values and strengthen relationships among community members, as well as its impact on social solidarity and cohesion. The primary objective of this research is to uncover the profound meaning of the *peusijuek* ritual and analyze its function in shaping social identity. I intend to demonstrate that this ritual is not merely a part of culture but an essential element that reinforces social bonds among the Acehnese people. By understanding this ritual, the community is expected to further appreciate and preserve the traditions that constitute their identity, while recognizing the importance of maintaining the values embedded in these traditions, especially amidst rapid contemporary changes.

METHODS

This study applies a qualitative descriptive approach to dissect the meaning of the *peusijuek* ritual as an instrument for shaping the social identity of the Acehnese people. The selection of this method is based on the need to understand social phenomena from the natural perspective of the actors involved, with the researcher serving as the key instrument for interpreting contextual data (Creswell 2014). The use of a descriptive design allows the researcher to provide a comprehensive overview of how local values are internalized through traditional practices.

Although this study relies on three primary informants, the selection was strategically conducted through purposive sampling to ensure ‘data saturation’ from authoritative perspectives. In qualitative sociological research, the depth of information from key actors—representing community (KA), ritual (BI), and religious authority (RI)—is prioritized over numerical representativeness to capture the ‘thick description’ of the ritual’s social meaning (Geertz 1973:93). These informants act as ‘custodians of tradition’ whose narratives provide the necessary philosophical density to analyze the ritual as a strategic form of social capital (Coleman 1988:S98). This selection is further justified by the historical structure of Acehnese society, where the integration of religious and customary authority has long been the primary pillar of social stability (Hurgronje 1906:44). The data analysis follows a systematic thematic coding—comprising data reduction, display, and verification—to identify dominant patterns of cultural persistence amidst social change (Miles and Huberman 1994:10).

To complement the field data, the researcher also conducted documentation studies by analyzing classical literature, historical records, and relevant prior research on the development of Acehnese culture (Alfian 1999:112). To ensure the empirical integrity and validity of the qualitative findings presented above, the research design’s structural composition must be explicitly clarified. Although this study relies on three primary key informants, the selection was rigorously conducted using a purposive sampling framework to guarantee comprehensive data saturation from authoritative institutional perspectives. In qualitative sociological research, numerical representativeness is secondary to the philosophical and structural density of the data.

To build a thorough “thick description” of the ritual’s social meaning, data collection targeted key institutional actors who embody the historical divisions of Acehnese social authority: religious authority (RI), practical ritual execution (KA), and secular community leadership (BI). This strategy is anchored in the historical architecture

of Acehnese society, where social balance has long depended on the integration of customary and religious leadership. By extracting deep narratives from these key actors, the research achieves empirical saturation, ensuring that the qualitative data provides a reliable foundation for macro-level theoretical analysis.

No.	Informant's Initials	Sex	Role/Background	Data Contribution
1	BI	Male	Community Leader	Perspectives on social cohesion and community stability.
2	KA	Male	Ritual Practitioner	Technical insights on the procession and symbolism of ritual elements.
3	RI	Male	Religious & Traditional Authority	Philosophical basis and historical-spiritual aspects of <i>peusijuek</i> .

Table 1. Informant Data

The coding process was carried out systematically to identify dominant themes emerging from the informants' narratives, enabling this research to provide a theoretical explanation of the contribution of local traditions to strengthening the community's collective identity (Miles and Huberman 1994:10).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The empirical investigation into contemporary Acehnese social dynamics demonstrates that the *peusijuek* ritual continues to operate as an essential socio-cultural anchor across diverse strata of community life. Field data obtained through qualitative interviews with key traditional custodians—comprising community leaders (BI), active ritual practitioners (KA), and high-level religious-customary authorities (RI)—indicate that the enactment of *peusijuek* transcends basic ceremonial performance. It serves as an active, living structural bridge designed to synthesize micro-level individual milestones with macro-level communal integration.

To fully understand how this structural cohesion is formed, the empirical analysis must engage directly with the vernacular language used by the social actors themselves. When questioned about the existential role of this practice amidst shifting societal

structures, Informant KA provided a crucial narrative in the native Acehese tongue:

“Peusijuek nyoe ialah bagian daripada identitas tanyoe seubagoe ureung Aceh. Nyoe bukoen sebatas tradisi mantoeng, leubeh nibak nyan adalah simbol harapan keu keselamatan dan kedamaian. (Peusijuek is part of our identity as the Acehese people. It is not just a tradition, but a symbol of hope for safety and peace)”.

Translated into English, KA asserts that *peusijuek* constitutes an inseparable dimension of our identity as Acehese people, functioning not merely as a superficial custom but as a profound symbol of collective hope for social safety, existential equilibrium, and structural peace. This explicit vernacular conceptualization proves that within the native worldview, *peusijuek* is an active cognitive schema through which community members map their social realities, express mutual aspirations, and validate emotional attachments within their immediate social networks. This statement indicates that *peusijuek* is not merely a ritual performed to fulfill social obligations but a representation of community aspirations and hopes embedded in every procession. This ritual functions as a bridge between individuals and the community, creating a strong sense of solidarity and attachment among community members.

The ritual’s genealogy further highlights a complex process of cultural adaptation. Rather than experiencing a historical rupture upon the expansion of monotheistic structures, *peusijuek* underwent an internal philosophical reorganization. Before the regional consolidation of Islam, primitive iterations of the ceremony relied heavily on animistic frameworks, treating natural elements as direct sources of supernatural power and cosmic appeasement. However, the institutionalization of Islamic Sharia did not eradicate these forms; it fundamentally recalibrated their internal meanings. Informant RI provided an authoritative, historical justification to clarify this transition:

“Peusijuek nyoe bukoen berasal daripada Hindu, walaupun na padum-padum boeh hal yang meuhie. Tapi, filosofi peusijuek nyoe dicok dari Rasulullah waktee Beliau geupeukawen Ali dan Fatimah, yang mana pada masa nyan, Beliau geureutek ie untuk geulakee keberkahan. (Peusijuek does not originate from Hinduism, although there are some similar elements. The philosophy of peusijuek is taken from the actions of the Prophet when he married Ali and Fatimah, where he sprinkled water to seek blessings)”.

RI explicitly decouples the contemporary practice from its historic Hindu or animistic associations, despite superficial structural similarities in the physical performance. By retroactively tracing the ritual’s philosophy back to the actions of the Prophet Muhammad—specifically his symbolic use of water to invoke divine blessings

(*barakah*) during the marriage of Ali and Fatimah—the religious elite creates a clean break from pre-Islamic paganism. Field observations confirm that this theological re-anchoring is practically maintained through the rigid incorporation of Islamic liturgy. Every step of the contemporary *peusijuek* procession is explicitly bracketed by the systematic recitation of the *basmalah* (*Bismillaahirrahmaanirrahiym*), *doa selamat* (petitions for divine protection), and collective *salawat* (praises upon the Prophet). The presence of a *Tengku* as the mandatory administrator ensures that the ritual's spiritual orientation is preserved within strict monotheistic boundaries.

Peusijuek serves as an integrated symbol of hope and spirituality, strengthening the bond between local tradition and Islamic teachings. Although *peusijuek* does not originate from Hindu teachings, Aceh's history as an international trade hub played a significant role in rich cultural exchanges. Following the arrival of Islam, many traditional practices were adjusted to align with Islamic values. Today, every activity begins with *bismillah*, *doa selamat*, and *salawat*, showing how Islam has integrated with existing customs to create harmony. BI added:

“Peusijuek nyoe geupeudeuh bawawa adat ngoen agama nyan jeut saleng melengkap. Peusijuek nyoe adalah simbol harapan yang ka menyatu ngoen ajaran Islam. (This ritual shows how custom and religion can complement each other. Peusijuek is a symbol of hope integrated with Islamic teachings)”.

This structural syncretism is visually and materially embedded within the specific elements utilized during the ritual procession. Each physical object behaves as a non-verbal linguistic signifier representing distinct socio-philosophical desires. Informant RI outlined this material taxonomy:

“Setiap alat peu manteng yang na lam peusijuek, na makna keudroe-keudroe. Miseu lagee breuh padee yang melambangkan kemakmuran ataupun oen kayee yang mencerminkan kedamaian. (Every element in peusijuek has its own meaning. For example, rice symbolizes prosperity, while leaves reflect peace)”.

To ensure scientific clarity and empirical transparency, the specific structural meanings, vernacular categories, and philosophical orientations of these ritual components are systematically mapped in the table below:

No.	Ritual Element (Vernacular)	Core Symbolic Meaning & Social Hope	Philosophical Reference & Theoretical Orientation
1	Rice (<i>Breuh Padee</i>)	Symbolizes material prosperity, societal success, and the unhindered abundance of economic sustenance.	Represents the collective welfare and socio-economic stability of Acehnese society.
2	Leaves (<i>Oen Kayee</i>)	Reflects absolute structural peace, psychological coolness (<i>sijuek</i>), and community harmony.	Acts as a material representation of soul tranquility and environmental balance.
3	Splashed Water (<i>Ie Reutek</i>)	Serves as a symbol of structural purification, moral cooling, and the active pursuit of divine blessing.	Directly references the Prophet's historical example in seeking divine favor (<i>barakah</i>).

Table 2. Symbolic Meaning of Elements in the Peusijuek Ritual

Peusijuek plays a significant role in shaping social identity by binding community relationships. KA stated:

“Deungoen peusijuek, kamoe peukuat hubungan ngoen ureung lingka. Waktee tapeusijuek pih, na rasa solidaritas yang ditimoeh antara kamoe. (Through peusijuek, we strengthen our relationships. In every procession, a sense of solidarity grows among us)”.

In a sociological perspective, this can be analyzed as the formation of social capital. The ritual acts as a bridge for spiritual relations with God and social relations between individuals, creating trust and reciprocal norms (Putnam 2000:19; Fukuyama 1995:26; Coleman 1988:S98). This social capital is evident as the ritual's unifying of various social layers through organic solidarity (Durkheim 1995:217; Turner 1969:96).

Despite the enduring nature of these material arrangements, contemporary field data reveal a deep anxiety about the systemic transmission of these values to the next generation. The acceleration of digital networks has altered the social landscape, introducing an unmediated clash between ancestral knowledge and global lifestyle paradigms. Informant RI expressed this critical vulnerability with urgent concern:

“Aneuk muda inoe leubeh diturie teknologi dibanding adat. Menyoe sangkira jih tanyoe hana tapeurnoe nilai-nilai nyoe keu awak nyan, peusijuek nyoe akan gadoeh. (The youth today are more familiar with technology than tradition. If we do not teach them these values, the peusijuek ritual could disappear)”.

RI highlights a structural shift in which contemporary youth exhibit greater familiarity with globalized digital technologies than with their localized customary heritage. This dynamic threatens the physical ritual with existential extinction and risks stripping it of its internal philosophical depth. In response to this imminent cultural rupture, Informant KA put forward a strategic structural intervention, stating:

“Tanyoe peurlee tapeurnoe aneuk-aneuk muda tanyoe akan peuntengnya budaya nyoe. Nyoe pih adak jeut beu dipeutamoeng u dalam kurikulum pendidikan. (We need to educate our youth about the importance of our culture. It should be included in the education curriculum)”.

KA argues for the formal institutionalization of customary values, explicitly calling for the integration of *peusijuek* principles directly into the state-sponsored formal education curriculum. This empirical call for institutionalization demonstrated that local actors recognize the limitations of informal oral transmission within modern family units and seek to utilize state structures to execute organized cultural preservation.

Discussion

When analyzed through a sophisticated sociological framework, the empirical realities of *peusijuek* offer deep theoretical insights into how local societies manage identity under global modernizing strains. The systematic reinterpretation of the ritual—shifting its genealogical roots from pre-Islamic frameworks into an explicit prophetic lineage—serves as a clear example of the “Indigenization of Islam” (*pribumisasi Islam*). As theorized by Abdurrahman Wahid (2006:162), this socio-religious dynamic does not imply a shallow syncretism that compromises orthodoxy. Rather, it reflects an active dialectic where universal, unalterable Islamic tenets (*tauhid*) engage with localized cultural structures, adopting native forms to express monotheistic truths without losing theological substance.

This dialectical capacity highlights the presence of “local genius” within the community’s historical consciousness. Following Haryati Soebadio’s (1986:18) conceptualization, local genius represents the internal cultural capability of a society to encounter external influences, actively filtering, neutralizing, and reshaping foreign elements to align with its native matrix. In this case, Acehnese society did not passively

yield to external historical forces. Instead, as Informant BI observed, they engaged in a sophisticated negotiation in which custom and religion became structurally interdependent, ensuring that cultural practices served as the visible manifestation of Islamic ethics.

However, to avoid falling into a purely affirmative narrative, we must view this practice through critical sociological lens to uncover the hidden symbolic power configurations embedded in it. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Pierre Bourdieu (1991:170), language, symbols, and rituals are never neutral systems of meaning; they are primary instruments of social domination and social classification. The mandatory presence of the *Tengku* or traditional leader, as the only authorized administrator of *peusijuek* is not merely an innocent traditional requirement. It reflects an organized concentration of symbolic capital.

By acting as the singular agent capable of transforming physical water into a sacred vehicle for *barakah*, the *Tengku* reinforces a traditional power asymmetric within the social order. Their presence provides a vital “spiritual seal” that legitimizes social changes. Whether validating political leadership transformations, environmental interventions, or individual milestones, every transition must pass through this ritual filter to receive moral authority from the religious elite. This institutionalized hierarchy enables the community to execute an organized defensive cultural reproduction. By using natural elements like rice and leaves as a non-verbal symbolic language, the society constructs an exclusive cultural territory, building a protective boundary that shields collective consciousness from the secularizing, individualizing pressures of global modernity (Geertz 1973:93).

To fully comprehend the durability of this institutionalized hierarchy, Bourdieu’s (1991) sociology of fields provides an essential analytical instrument. Within the specific cultural field of contemporary Aceh, the *peusijuek* procession serves as a primary site where religious authority is actively converted into undisputed symbolic capital. The traditional elite, represented by the *Tengku*, does not operate in a social vacuum; rather, they hold a monopolistic control over the instruments of cultural consecration. When a *Tengku* manipulates the material signifiers—such as the *breuh padee* and *oen kayee*—they are performing a form of symbolic labor that reshapes participants’ subject positions toward one. The participants do not merely witness a ceremony; they internalize a specific social classification where the moral guidance of the religious class is accepted as a natural, necessary component of social life.

This dynamic explains why political figures, corporate actors, and regional bureaucrats within urban centers consistently seek the presence of religious figures to administer the ritual. In Bourdieu's (1991) terms, these secular actors lack the intrinsic symbolic legitimacy required to secure emotional attachment from the lower social strata. Therefore, they must temporarily borrow the traditional authority of the *Tengku* to validate their institutional transformations. This strategic alliance demonstrates that *peusijuek* is not merely an innocent survival of ancient folklore, but an active socio-political apparatus that reproduces internal power relations. The ritual ensures that any structural modification within the community—whether it belongs to state governance or individual milestone transformations—cannot achieve complete social recognition unless it is formally consecrated through this localized symbolic filter. Consequently, the practice actively maintains the societal boundaries by continually reminding the community that secular transitions must always remain subordinate to the historical moral framework established by the syncretic alliance of *adat* and Islam.

From a structural perspective, this ritual infrastructure acts as a potent engine for generating social capital. As empirically described by Informant KA regarding the spontaneous growth of collective networks during the ceremony, *peusijuek* functions exactly as Robert Putnam (2000:19) and James Coleman (1988:S98) conceptualize social capital: it builds robust networks of social trust, establishes mutual norms, and secures social reciprocity.

By gathering diverse social layers into a shared sacred space, the ritual transforms fragmented private actors into a cohesive unit bounded by organic solidarity. Following Émile Durkheim's (1995:217) sociology of religion, the physical gathering around shared totemic elements (the *breuh padee* and *oen kayee*) triggers a state of "collective effervescence," a heightened social energy that temporarily erases internal conflicts and rebuilds communal harmony. This experience creates what Victor Turner (1969:96) identifies as *communitas*—a transient, non-hierarchical state of pure social togetherness where individual social status is suspended, allowing the structural restoration of collective identity.

Yet, a rigorous critical evaluation must acknowledge that this structural harmony is facing intense modern deformation. In contemporary urban settings, the authentic communal experience of *peusijuek* is increasingly threatened by a shift toward "ritual packaging". Under the demands of an administrative-secular lifestyle, the sacred depth of the custom is frequently flattened into a formalized aesthetic commodity. Political actors

and state bureaucrats frequently co-opt the ceremony, transforming it into a decorative public performance designed to accumulate traditional legitimacy without respecting its underlying moral obligations. This co-optation detaches the ritual symbols from their organic community roots, reducing a profound spiritual encounter into an institutionalized requirement for administrative branding.

This systematic flattening of sacred traditions can be further scrutinized through Robertson's (1992) theoretical concepts regarding the dialectic of globalization. Globalization does not simply impose a universal standard that obliterates local identity; instead, it triggers a complex process where the local and global are aggressively interpenetrated. In urban Acehnese spaces, this tension manifests as a structural pressure to adapt communal traditions to match the pragmatic speed of an internationalized, secular lifestyle. When *peusijuek* undergoes ritual packaging, it is a defensive reaction to this modern pressure, yet it carries a latent risk of hollow structural reduction. The temporal length of the ceremony is compressed, the material components are mass-produced or commodified for rapid commercial consumption, and the collective prayers are often transformed into a standardized bureaucratic opening act.

This transition signals a profound shift from what Durkheim (1995) classifies as organic solidarity—where rituals emerge spontaneously from the deep collective consciousness of the populace—to a mechanical, administrative performance designed for corporate consumption. The latent conflict within this transformation stems from the fact that while the ritual is explicitly celebrated as a pillar of identity, its internal social function has been heavily altered. It no longer builds a robust system of mutual social trust or serves as an active moral compass for community self-regulation. Instead, it operates as a decorative front, masking the deep individualization and fragmentation brought by capitalist modernization. This critical friction is what ultimately alienates the younger generation. The youth are trapped in an existential crossfire: they are structurally conditioned by state-sponsored narratives to respect *peusijuek* as an absolute representation of national heritage, yet their daily material experiences in a rationalistic-modernist world render the ritual's non-verbal, agrarian language completely obsolete. Without a profound structural reinterpretation that moves beyond static institutional displays, the ritual will continue to experience an interior erosion, transforming a living source of social capital into a superficial museum piece designed solely for external tourists and political branding.

This commodification process drives the severe “meaning gap” observed among the younger generation. For the contemporary youth, who operate within rationalistic-modernist cognitive frameworks, the traditional performance feels distant and disjointed. They perform the ritual merely as a habitual, automated script—treating it as *taken for granted*—stripped of any interiorized philosophical connection to its ancestral values. This generational gap creates a silent cultural resistance, where the youth do not openly challenge the ritual but quietly disengage from its spiritual core.

Consequently, *peusijuek* in modern Aceh can no longer be viewed as a static monument of unconflicted peace. It has evolved into a highly contested arena of identity negotiation. The modern survival of the custom depends entirely on moving beyond passive cultural reproduction. The empirical demand to integrate these values into the formal education curriculum must not be executed as a shallow, descriptive exercise. It must be approached critically, empowering the younger generation to re-evaluate traditional symbols not as dead historical artifacts, but as active tools of cultural agency capable of negotiating with the complex currents of globalization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the *peusijuek* ritual is not merely a ceremonial relic of the past, but a fundamental pillar in the construction of Acehnese social identity. This ritual represents a mature harmony between local traditions and Islamic values, where a process of “Indigenization of Islam” (*pribumisasi Islam*) occurs, placing custom (*adat*) and Sharia in an inseparable unity, as expressed in the philosophy *Hukoem ngoen Adat hanjeut cree lagee zat ngoen sifeuet*. This study confirms that *peusijuek* serves as a primary manifestation of *local genius*, where the community successfully filters and integrates external influences into a distinctive and dynamic Islamic cultural identity.

Sociologically, this research finds that *peusijuek* functions as an effective instrument for forming social capital within Acehnese society. Through this ritual, a network of trust and organic solidarity is created that transcends various social layers, from religious authorities to the general public. The symbolic meanings embedded in natural elements—such as rice (*Breuh Padee*) symbolizing prosperity and leaves (*Oen Kayee*) symbolizing peace—serve as a sophisticated nonverbal for communicating collective hopes for safety and blessings. Furthermore, the involvement of a *Tengku* or traditional leader as the ritual leader provides crucial spiritual and social legitimacy,

ensuring that the community's bond remains anchored in a monotheistic (*tauhid*) framework.

Critically, however, this study finds that the sustainability of *peusijuek* is currently at a crossroads. The heavy flow of globalization and rapid technological advancement do not merely threaten the ritual with extinction, but rather with a degradation of philosophical depth. There is a significant risk that *peusijuek* will be reduced to a decorative cultural performance or a formalized administrative requirement, losing its sacred essence and its role as an active moral compass for the community. The shifting lifestyle of the younger generation, which tends to favor rationalistic-modernist frameworks, creates a “meaning gap” where the ritual is performed as a matter of habit (*taken for granted*) without a deep internal connection to its underlying values.

Therefore, this study emphasizes that the transition of value inheritance into the formal education curriculum must move beyond descriptive narratives to a critical re-evaluation of cultural assets. It must encourage the younger generation to internalize *peusijuek* as a moral compass that can negotiate with, rather than simply surrender to, the dynamics of a changing era. This strategic integration is crucial to ensure that Acehnese cultural identity remains an active agent of social cohesion, mirroring the resilience of local wisdom seen in other sectors of Acehnese social life.

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