

***Kirim Kali* Ritual: The Interaction Between Tradition and Identity in Banaran Hamlet, Karanganyar**

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ABSTRACT

The kirim kali ritual: The Interaction between Tradition and Community Identity in Banaran Hamlet, Karanganyar. The kirim kali ritual is a form of respect for the river as a source of life and fertility, which reflects the interaction between tradition and society. The ritual held annually in the month of Suro is an expression of gratitude for blessings and respect for ancestors and religious beliefs. This research aims to find out the interaction between tradition and identity of the Banaran Hamlet community as a result of the implementation of the kirim kali ritual. Through a qualitative approach with the type of field research, this study investigates how the culture and tradition of kirim kali affect the identity and social interaction in the community of Banaran Hamlet. The results showed that the implementation of the kirim kali ritual strengthens solidarity and emotional closeness among the community members of Banaran Hamlet. This shows that the kirim kali ritual not only celebrates cultural heritage, but also plays a role in building and strengthening identity as a community that values tradition and religion in the midst of social and global changes.

Keywords: cultural identity, *kirim kali* ritual, social interaction, tradition.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with various ethnicities and cultures, this is motivated by the condition of Indonesia which has more than 17,000 islands inhabited by various ethnic groups (Buaq & Lorensius, 2022). Indonesia's cultural diversity is seen in various forms ranging from language, customs, race, culture, and beliefs. In addition to ethnic cultures, Indonesia also has a variety of different regional traditions (Syahril Muhammad, Rustam Hasim, 2022). These traditions have been passed down from generation to generation and have become an important part of the culture of local communities in a region (Salehuddin, Shermina Oruh, Andi Agustang & Maswati, 2023). Traditions, which often contain

symbols and deep meanings, connect people to their ancestors, spiritual values, and the natural environment.

Culture and traditions play an irreplaceable role in shaping and sustaining people's identities. To maintain these traditions, communities require social interaction. Social interaction within traditions allows people to strengthen relationships between group members and build their group identity (Muhammad Jumirad, 2023). The identity of a society is closely related to the culture and traditions they maintain. Through the implementation of traditions, people not only affirm who they are, but also maintain the continuity of their identity amid the dynamics of social change and external influences. For example, in traditional ceremonies, people interact through various activities and media inherited by their ancestors, which help strengthen group identity. As is the case with research (Rahmawati et al., 2022) which shows "The *suroan* tradition and its influence on the diversity of the people of Bantan Hamlet, Torgamba, Labuhan Batu Selatan". This tradition is carried out as a form of concern for customs and so that people increasingly understand that the *suroan* tradition is only a tradition that needs to be preserved, not a religious teaching.

Traditions in society are influenced by social environmental conditions, customs, and local beliefs. Generally, traditions are not governed by standardized written rules, but are conveyed orally and maintained through habits (Abdullah, 2020). One of the traditions in Indonesia that still survives today is the *kirim kali* ritual performed by the people of Banaran Hamlet, Wukirsawit Village, Karanganyar. The river as a source of livelihood has a deep meaning for the life of the Banaran Hamlet community. The *kirim kali* ritual, which is performed once a year in *Suro* month, is a form of community respect for the river as a source of life and a symbol of fertility.

This ritual is not only a ceremonial activity, but also reflects the interaction between tradition and community identity, where the community holds a ceremony as a form of gratitude and a request to God so that the flowing river water brings blessings to the community (Harso, Interview July 12, 2024). In addition, traditional rituals such as this send-off are an important means for the community to strengthen social ties and strengthen the sense of community among the community. By preserving this tradition, we not only show respect to our ancestors, but also strengthen the identity of the local community.

The meanings contained in the *kirim kali* ritual vary from region to region and these differences reflect the identity of the local community. In Wukirsawit Village for example, several hamlets perform the *kirim kali* ritual with different meanings. There are hamlets that carry out this ritual as a reflection of their identity as an agricultural society, so this ritual is carried out during the harvest season as a form of gratitude for agricultural products. In other hamlets, this ritual is considered a way to honor ancestors, preserve history, and hereditary traditions that reflect the identity of a community that respects ancestors. Meanwhile, there are also hamlets that see this ritual as part of their religious identity influenced by the strong religious figures underlying the tradition.

Such cultures and traditions not only reflect local identity but also serve as a bulwark against the homogenization brought about by globalization. In an increasingly connected world, communities around the world are faced with the challenge of maintaining their unique cultural identities. However, many communities have managed to find a balance between maintaining old traditions and adopting new elements that fit the context of the times. Through the *kirim kali* ritual, we can not only understand the values, beliefs and ways of life of communities in the past but also serve as a foundation for building the future. Understanding the role of culture and tradition in the formation of community identity provides important insights into how communities maintain and articulate their identity in the midst of global change, and emphasizes the importance of preserving cultural heritage as part of efforts to maintain the diversity and richness of human civilization.

This research is important because it provides a unique perspective on local culture that has never been studied before. Given that the *kirim kali* ritual in Wukirsawit Village, specifically in Banaran Hamlet, Karanganyar, has never been explored, this research will fill a void in the literature regarding the tradition. In addition, this research is important for documenting and preserving local customs that play an important role in strengthening community identity and social ties amidst changing times. By examining various aspects of these rituals, this research aims to provide new insights into how local communities interact with their traditions and how these practices help maintain cultural continuity amidst global influences.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of field research. Qualitative research allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of phenomena in the field by providing detailed descriptions through words and language, and utilizing various scientific methods (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021). The research was conducted in Banaran Hamlet, Wukirsawit Village, Jatiyoso District, Karanganyar Regency. This study used two data sources, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through direct research in the field using the participant observation method and the interview method. Participant observation was conducted on July 12, 2024. Then interviews were conducted with community leaders and community members who participated in the *kali kali* ritual. Secondary data sources in this research come from literature research from various sources related to Javanese traditions and culture. The data analysis technique in this research uses a descriptive method, this method allows researchers to describe and illustrate the situation and condition of the community. This descriptive discussion can later provide an overview of the interaction between tradition and identity of the people in Banaran Hamlet, Karanganyar who perform the *kirim kali* ritual.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ritual History and Background

Culture and humans are two things that have a close relationship. This is motivated by a culture that shows how humans interact with the surrounding social and natural environment (Siburian, 2018). One of the many cultures that exist in Indonesia is tradition or traditional rituals that have been passed down from generation to generation, one of the rituals that is still developing in the community is the *kirim kali* ritual performed by the people of Wukirsawit Village. The *kirim kali* ritual comes from the agrarian culture of local communities who depend on agricultural products and water sources as important elements in their daily lives. This ritual is a form of respect for the power of nature, especially water sources which are considered as the giver of life and soil fertility as well as an expression of gratitude for the harvest and asking for blessings for the future.

Over time, the *kirim kali* ritual spread to several hamlets with various adjustments to their respective local cultures. The differences in the process of performing the ritual, such as the timing and form of offerings, reflect the adaptation of this ritual to different social and religious contexts. For example, the *kirim kali* ritual in Sembung Kerep Hamlet is performed every harvest season as a manifestation of gratitude for the abundance of the harvest. Meanwhile, in Banaran Hamlet itself, this ritual is carried out in Suro month on Friday *weton Pon* or *Kliwon* which is interpreted as a way to honor ancestors, preserve history, and hereditary traditions that reflect the identity of people who respect ancestors and as part of their religious identity influenced by strong religious figures in underlying the tradition. The *kirim kali* ritual performed by the people of Banaran Hamlet is a manifestation of gratitude for the abundance of blessings which in this ritual is symbolized by the river water (water source) that continues to flow. Water as a source of life has an important meaning in the life of the people of Banaran Hamlet.

The *kirim kali* ritual has been carried out for generations and is still being carried out by the community to this day. Every time the *kirim kali* ritual celebration will be held, the community is notified to participate in the ritual. Usually, the ritual is attended by community members of different ages. In the past, the people who participated in this ritual were those who drank water from the water source (*sendang*). However, nowadays, even if there are people who do not drink the water, those who live near the spring are still allowed to participate in the ritual. In fact, new residents are also allowed to participate, but if they choose not to participate it is not a problem and is left to the awareness of each head of the family. In addition, there are some people who reject the *kirim kali* ritual this time because they have a different sect of Islam, because according to their sect this is considered an act of polytheism. However, the people who perform the tradition of the *kirim kali* ritual consider this ritual as a medium of prayer and an expression of gratitude to God (Suyatno, Interview August 9, 2024).

Ritual Implementation Process

The execution of the *kirim kali* ritual consists of several stages. First, the community cleans the area that will be used for the ritual. Next, the community will burn incense in a place called omah, which is under a banyan tree near a water source that has existed since ancient times and put sow flowers (roses, jasmine, *kenanga*) on the water source (spring) as a medium of prayer represented by one of the community members. Then, a joint prayer is held, which is usually led by the *modin*, one of the community leaders who is considered capable of answering religious issues (Romadhoni et al., 2023). After the ritual is over, people who participated can pray privately near the water source. This prayer can be done shortly after the ritual is completed or every Friday night in the month of *Suro* by sleeping near the water source. Then in ancient times, shortly after the ritual was completed the community would eat *panggang tumpeng* together but over time the community chose to take home the *panggang tumpeng* to eat it in their respective homes. This happened because in the past the condition of the community was still lacking food, so this ritual was a form of blessing. However, now the condition of the community is more adequate in terms of food, so they choose to bring home the *panggang tumpeng* that they bring.

In the implementation of the *kirim kali* ritual this time, the community together goes to the water source (*sendang*) by bringing food commonly called *panggang tumpeng* which consists of rice, chili vegetables, crackers, tofu, *rempeyek*, *tempe*, *serundeng*, and roast chicken, where each household brings their own dishes which will be enjoyed together (Suyatno, Interview, August 9, 2024). The *panggang tumpeng* brought in this tradition has its own meaning, *tumpeng* which is cone-shaped rice symbolizes the relationship between humans and God, where the peak represents the Almighty and the widened base represents humans (Dewantara, 2018). Then the roasted chicken that completes this dish symbolizes devotion to ancestral culture. For this reason, the *panggang tumpeng* from this ritual is considered an offering to ask for blessings and safety, as well as an expression of gratitude to God. This combination is interpreted as a wish for prosperity, fertility, and peace for the people who participate in this send ritual.

The Role of the Send Kali Ritual in Society

The findings of this study reveal that the *kirim kali* ritual significantly strengthens social ties within the Banaran Hamlet community. The process of implementing this ritual involves all community members, who participate in various stages from preparation to implementation. This collective activity facilitates social interactions to strengthen the sense of togetherness and cooperation among participating community members on the background of social interactions formed due to the similarity of values, views, expectations, and beliefs. The bonds formed are not only physical, but also create a deep emotional closeness among community members.

In addition, this tradition serves as an effective means to preserve local cultural values, such as respect for ancestors and successfully influences the identity of the people of Banaran Hamlet, Karanganyar as a society that respects ancestors and is religious. By maintaining practices that have been passed down for generations, the community ensures that these cultural values remain alive and relevant. In the midst of globalization, which threatens cultural homogenization, the *kirim kali* ritual times also acts as an important tool to maintain cultural diversity. Although the community faces global cultural influences, this ritual provides a way to assert a unique cultural identity and distinguish their community from others. By continuing to carry out this tradition, the people of Banaran Hamlet are not only celebrating their heritage but also adapting the ritual in a way that is relevant for the current generation, thus helping to maintain cultural diversity amidst the changing times of the *kirim kali* ritual.

Implications for Future Research

The results showed that the *kirim kali* ritual in Banaran Hamlet has an important role in strengthening social ties as well as community identity, and maintaining cultural values. Future research can examine the long-term impact of this ritual on the community, monitor changes in ritual practices over time, and compare them with similar rituals in other places. In addition, research could examine how these rituals support cultural identity in the midst of globalization and their influence on education and community development. This would deepen the understanding of how traditions strengthen social relations and preserve cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

The *kirim kali* ritual in Banaran Hamlet plays a very important role in strengthening social ties and preserving the cultural values of the local community. This ritual reflects how culture influences social interaction and community identity. In Banaran Hamlet, this ritual not only serves as an expression of gratitude for the blessings and harvest, but also as a form of respect to the ancestors and a manifestation of the community's religious identity. Over time, this ritual has undergone changes in the way it is performed, such as the shift from eating together to bringing home dishes that reflect changes in the socio-economic conditions of the community.

The research findings show that the implementation of the *kirim kali* ritual strengthens solidarity and emotional closeness among community members through collective participation in the various stages of the ritual. This tradition also serves as a means to preserve local cultural values and maintain a unique cultural identity in the midst of globalization. By continuing to perform and adapt this ritual, the people of Banaran Hamlet have managed to maintain their cultural diversity, making it relevant and significant in the context of modern times. The *kirim kali* ritual not only celebrates cultural heritage, but also plays a role in building and strengthening identity as a community that values tradition and religion amidst social and global changes.

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