

## Negotiating the Identity of the Village Ruwah Tradition in MoJORUNTUT Village as Local Wisdom

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The problem raised in this study is how identity negotiations take place in the implementation of Ruwah Desa and how the community interprets this tradition in the modern era. This research aims to reveal the role of Ruwah Desa in preserving local wisdom as well as a strategy to strengthen the community's cultural identity. **Method:** The research method used is qualitative descriptive with a phenomenological approach, with the research subject of the MoJORUNTUT Village community and the research object in the form of identity negotiation practices in the Ruwah Village tradition. Data was obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation of five key informants, including religious leaders, village officials, community leaders, youth organization leaders, and local residents. **Results:** The results of the study show that identity negotiation in the Ruwah Desa tradition takes place through four stages, namely the formation of individual identity through direct involvement in ritual processions, maintaining traditions collectively as cultural heritage, identity change through the reinterpretation of the younger generation that emphasizes socio-cultural aspects, and interaction in the modern era through the use of social media for cultural documentation and promotion. **Novelty:** The Ruwah Village tradition in MoJORUNTUT Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency, is a form of local wisdom that still exists in the midst of globalization and modernization. This tradition is not only interpreted as a tribute to ancestors, but also serves as a space for negotiating community identity in strengthening social solidarity, the value of mutual cooperation, and spiritual connection with the surrounding environment. In conclusion, the Village Ruwah Tradition is a dynamic and adaptive tradition, able to maintain the essence of local wisdom values while adapting to the times, so that it remains relevant as a support for the cultural identity of the MoJORUNTUT community.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a variety of traditions and cultures. The diversity of traditions that they have reflects the identity and identity of the Indonesian people. With this diversity, traditions in Indonesia have become an extraordinary cultural attraction and a symbol of the nation's wealth [1]. Therefore, understanding and preserving traditions in Indonesia is the main thing in maintaining the nation's cultural wealth.

According to Soejono Soekanto [2] In his book Dictionary of Customary Law, tradition is defined as an action that is carried out repeatedly in a similar pattern. Traditions are studied as a cultural heritage that lives and thrives in a society, reflecting the complexity of knowledge, values, and social practices that are inherited from generation to generation [3]. In an anthropological context, tradition is not just a legacy of the past, but a dynamic system that continues to evolve through social interaction and a process of continuous adaptation. Each society has a unique mechanism for preserving, reproducing, and reinterpreting its traditions according to the changing social, economic, and cultural contexts they face [4].

The current of globalization has brought fundamental transformations in the social and cultural structure of Indonesian society [5]. The main challenge faced by the

community is how to maintain its cultural identity in the midst of these changes. [6] Globalization is seen not only as a threat, but also as an opportunity to reconstruct and reinterpret traditions. In this context, societies are required to develop wise adaptation mechanisms, where societies are able to select, filter, and adapt global influences without eliminating the substance of indigenous cultures [7].

One of the traditions that still exists in the midst of the rapid flow of globalization is the Ruwah Village Tradition which is carried out by the people of Mojaruntut Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency. The Ruwah Desa procession involves a series of activities, including the khataman of the Qur'an at the tomb of the ancestors, thanksgiving (barikan), cultural arts performances such as puppets, and grand recitations by inviting famous religious leaders as the closing of this series of traditions. The implementation of this tradition is a collective practice that involves all residents in a series of traditional ceremonies with the aim of strengthening social relations between villagers and expressing gratitude to the forces of nature and ancestors and becoming a space where people collectively reflect, build solidarity, and affirm their cultural identity [12]. The sustainability of the Village Ruwah Tradition has a very deep meaning, so that its preservation is a shared responsibility to be inherited to the younger generation. Through this inheritance, noble values such as togetherness, respect, and concern for the environment can be embedded in the younger generation, shaping their personalities and maintaining local wisdom in the midst of changing times [14].

The phenomenon of Ruwah Desa itself is not only found in Mojaruntut village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency, but also present in various regions of Indonesia by showing rich variations in interpretation and implementation [15]. Each region has its own uniqueness in organizing rituals, which are influenced by historical background, geographical conditions, social structure, and local belief systems [16]. This shows that local wisdom is not a uniform entity, but rather a dynamic expression of the creativity and cultural intelligence of local communities [10].

In practice, the Ruwah Desa tradition involves four main elements that are interrelated, namely belief systems, rituals, equipment for ceremonies, and cultural arts [13]. The interaction between these elements strengthens social behavior that shows a sense of solidarity and kinship, as reflected in the people of Mojaruntut Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency, who enthusiastically help and cooperate with each other. This principle of social solidarity strengthens the relationship between citizens while affirming the collective identity of their community.

Thus, the Village Ruwah Tradition in Mojaruntut Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency is not only interpreted as an annual celebration that coincides with the seventh month in the Hijri calendar, which is Nisfu Sha'ban, but also as a space Identity negotiation where the community actively reproduces and reinterprets its cultural heritage [19]. Through the negotiation process, this tradition is not seen as something static, but rather as a dynamic practice that continues to be adapted to the evolving social context. The complexity of the Ruwah Desa tradition lies in its ability to integrate various dimensions of life: spiritual, social, ecological, and cultural. The series of rituals starting from the preparation stages, the implementation of the procession, to the closing, have a symbolic meaning that is rich in noble values, such as mutual cooperation, care, humility, and respect for nature.

In this context, the people of Mojouruntut Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency, carry out identity negotiations as part of their social and cultural dynamics. Identity negotiation is a dynamic process in which individuals or groups seek to understand, adjust, and express their identity in a variety of social and cultural contexts [17]. Identity is not static, but rather is formed through an individual's social interaction, communication, and experience with their environment [18]. This process often involves the challenge of balancing personal identity with social expectations, so identity negotiation becomes an important element in building interpersonal relationships and group dynamics. In the Ruwah Village tradition, identity negotiation plays a role in forming a culture of solidarity and a sense of togetherness that is characteristic of the people of Mojouruntut Village.

The Ruwah Village tradition can also be understood as a form of Local Wisdom which has relevance in the context of sustainable development. Local wisdom such as Ruwah Desa has significant potential as social capital to encourage community participation while strengthening cultural development [21]. In addition, these traditional practices also store ecological knowledge that has been tested in maintaining environmental balance, regulating natural resource management, and developing adaptation strategies based on local wisdom [22].

Local wisdom can be defined as a system of knowledge, values, and practices developed from local communities from generation to generation in managing the environment, regulating social relations, and building survival strategies [8]. This concept does not simply refer to static traditions, but rather to dynamic systems that continue to evolve through a process of intergenerational dialogue and interaction with the context of change [9]. One of the tangible forms of the application of this local wisdom is the Ruwah Village tradition, which is a manifestation of the complexity of cultural values inherited from generation to generation [10]. As a cultural practice that lives in various rural communities, this tradition contains a very rich spiritual, social, and ecological dimension [11].

In line with this understanding, a number of previous studies have sought to examine the Ruwah Desa tradition and other local wisdom practices as part of the social and cultural dynamics of the community. Relevant previous research has been conducted by several previous researchers, including a study entitled "Efforts to Preserve the Tradition of Ruwah Dusun Pacet Made Pacet Village, Pacet District, Mojokerto Regency" about the Ruwah Dusun ceremony in Pacet Village in showed that cultural rituals are not just symbolic practices, but complex systems that contain social and cultural mechanisms[23]. The research with the title "Social and Cultural Values of the Village Ruwah Tradition in the Era of Globalization" Quoting from the results of the interview, the informant revealed that "traditional ceremonies are a tradition that comes from the community's thinking and then turns into a belief that by carrying out the tradition will get abundant produce" [24]. Another study titled "Village Ruwah Tradition: Procession, Meaning and Social Value in the Perspective of the Community in Mojouruntut Hamlet" provides an important perspective on how tradition functions as a survival strategy and maintains communal solidarity[25].

The research with the title "Local Wisdom of the Indigenous Peoples of Sinar Resmi as National Identity" shows a major contribution to understanding the complexity of local

traditions. Through a series of comprehensive studies, it has been shown that ritual practices do not only function as spiritual expressions, but also as social mechanisms in maintaining community cohesion and solidarity[26]. In addition, the research entitled "A Study of Local Wisdom Values in the Mystical Tradition: Cimaragas Ciamis Regency" revealed that in each traditional ceremony, there is a complex network of social relations and cultural strategies to maintain social balance[27].

With previous researches, it is clear that cultural preservation is not just the responsibility of one party, but requires the involvement of all parties. Not only the older society, but also the active role of each generation is crucial. Various new approaches can be used to maintain cultural uniqueness in the midst of modernization.

In this study, the researcher used the theory of identity negotiation popularized from Ting-Toomey (1986) [28]. This theory explains that identity negotiation theory is a condition in which individuals already have an attachment to a certain identity, so they try to manage it through negotiation. Identity is closely related to a sense of connectedness to a broader cultural group, encompassing origins, races, religions, and languages. This connectedness forms the basis for the formation of cultural and ethnic identities. Therefore, Competence in identity negotiation is very important, as it involves a deep understanding of identity, awareness of the environment or group with which individuals interact, as well as communication skills such as politeness, empathy, listening skills, emotional control, and openness to the environment which are important factors in identity negotiation [30]

Based on this theoretical framework, the researcher analyzed the Village Ruwah Tradition in Mojoruntut Village, Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency, as a space for identity negotiation in the midst of modernization. Through the perspective of identity negotiation, this research seeks to explain how individuals and communities shape their identity, maintain local traditions, face identity changes between generations, and adjust to interactions in the modern era. The formulation of the problem in this study is how the Ruwah Desa tradition plays a role as a space for identity negotiation for the community in maintaining and adjusting their cultural identity through the practice of living cultural traditions. Thus, the purpose of this research is to explain the role of the Ruwah Desa Tradition as a strategy for preserving local traditions that not only maintain cultural heritage, but also strengthen the identity of the community in the modern era.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study applies a qualitative descriptive approach of phenomenological studies to understand the negotiation of the identity of the Ruwah Village tradition in Mojoruntut Village. [31] As stated by Creswell (1998), the phenomenological approach aims to explore the essence of the life experience of individuals or groups related to certain phenomena. Subject The research is the community in Mojoruntut Village, while the object of this research is the negotiation of the identity of the Village Ruwah Tradition in Mojoruntut Village as local wisdom. The sampling technique utilizes purposive sampling, as described [32], that is, choosing a subject based on certain considerations according to the purpose of the research. In this study, the researcher appointed five (5) informants, including: 1. Religious leaders, 2. Village officials, 3. Community leaders, 4. Chairmen of the youth organization, and 5. Residents in Mojoruntut Village.

In the data collection technique, the researcher applied interview, observation, and documentation methods. The interview method was used to dig up information from the selected informants, with open-ended questions that allowed them to express their experiences and views related to identity negotiation in the Ruwah Village Tradition. Furthermore, through the observation method, the researcher conducted direct observation of the process of implementing the Village Ruwah Tradition and the social interaction that occurred among the people of Mojaruntut Village, so that they could obtain contextual data and real experience in the field. The documentation method complements data collection by collecting photos and videos.

The data analysis process is carried out through three main stages, namely: first, data collection, where the researcher collects various information and materials from the results of interviews, observations and documentation that has been carried out. Second, the presentation of data, which is the stage of systematically grouping data to facilitate understanding the meaning that emerges from the data. Finally, the conclusion drawing stage is carried out by interpreting and interpreting the information that has been prepared, so that a deep understanding of identity negotiation in the Village Ruwah Tradition in Mojaruntut Village in Mojaruntut Village is obtained, as well as answering the formulation of research problems comprehensively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

Mojaruntut Village, located in Krembung District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java Province, is about 20 km from the center of Sidoarjo and can be reached in about 30 minutes. This village is divided into five hamlets, namely Biting Hamlet, Jabon Hamlet, Buntut Hamlet, Simorowo Hamlet, and Kesimbukan Hamlet. The majority of the population makes a living as farmers and still maintains various traditions, one of which is the Ruwah Village tradition.

Ruwah Desa is a tradition that reflects the combination of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. This tradition is interpreted as a form of expression of gratitude to God Almighty and respect for ancestors, which is carried out every month of Ruwah, one month before the fasting month. The word "Ruwah" comes from the Arabic word "spirit," which means spirit. In the Javanese calendar, the month of Ruwah coincides with the seventh month in the Hijri calendar, namely Nisfu Sha'ban, which is believed to be a time to remember ancestors who have died. This month is also considered a moment to purify oneself, both physically and mentally, through mutual cooperation activities, such as cleaning villages and ancestral graves.

*"The Ruwah Village tradition in Mojaruntut Village remains an important part of people's lives as a form of respect for ancestors and a space to understand each other's identity, One of the main activities in this tradition is the pilgrimage ritual to the tomb of the ancestors and the barikan (tasyakuran) event which is carried out as a whole by the villagers"* (Subanho interview: a resident of Mojaruntut Village).



**Figure 1.** Ancestral tomb of Mojouruntut Village.



**Figure 2.** Barikan (Tasyakuran).

This research obtained the results of interviews that "As part of the procession of the Village Ruwah Tradition in Mojouruntut Village, residents prepare sataman flowers, offerings (offerings) in the form of coffee and sugar, and water that symbolizes life" (interview with Abah Arifin, as a religious leader).

The Ruwah Desa tradition has a significant role in strengthening social solidarity and affirming the cultural identity of the local community. "The implementation of the Ruwah Village Tradition reflects noble values such as the spirit of mutual cooperation, concern for the environment, and respect for ancestors. With several activities starting from Khataman (recitation of the Qur'an at the tomb of ancestors), thanksgiving (barikan), cultural art performances (puppets), and closed with a large recitation event as the closing of the series of Ruwah Village Traditions" (interview with Mr. Wanto, as the village official).



**Figure 3.** *Khatam Al-Qur'an.*



**Figure 4.** *Joint Prayer and Tasyakuran.*

The people of Mojoruntut Village always look forward to the Ruwah Desa procession every year. This tradition has a deep and colorful meaning, making it a highly anticipated moment for citizens. Every month of Ruwah, the community enthusiastically participates in a series of events that strengthen togetherness. All community groups, from children to the elderly, are actively involved in various activities. The community has made various adjustments to ensure that this tradition remains relevant to the younger generation. Based on the results of the interview, one of the strategies implemented is *"I as a village official here have a strategy that is applied to invite village youth to actively participate in this activity, not only as spectators, but also as the organizers of the event"* (Mr. Wanto, as the village official).

In the face of globalization, it remains a considerable challenge in maintaining the sustainability of the Ruwah Village Tradition. As a result of the interview with (Akbar as, the chairman of the Mojoruntut Village karangtaruna), *"most of the teenagers in Mojoruntut Village tend to see this event as just a traditional activity without having a deep religious meaning. Even so, there is also encouragement from village elders who actively invite us teenagers to be involved in this event which is an important factor in keeping the tradition going."*

The elders managed to attract the younger generation to continue participating, albeit with different meanings.

The people of Mojouruntut Village showed their ability to negotiate with their identity. They not only maintain the traditional elements in the Ruwah Village tradition, but also adapt certain aspects to be relevant to the evolving social and cultural changes. One form of negotiation that is seen is the integration of religious values into ritual practices, which reflects the ability of the community to adapt to tradition without losing the essence of its local wisdom. According to Mbah Nar, as a village elder, "*The process in the Ruwah Village Tradition is not just a temporary cultural heritage, but also a culture that must continue to develop even though the times have changed*".

According to (Abah Arifin, as a religious figure) "*For the continuation of the Village Ruwah Tradition, it involves various generations of people, including religious leaders, village officials, community leaders, youth organizations, as well as villagers in general*". This collective involvement not only strengthens the relationship between citizens, but also creates a space for cultural dialogue integrating local values with external influences, thus making this tradition relevant in the dynamics of modern society.

## **Discussion**

### **1. Ruwah Desa as a Negotiation of Local Identity and Wisdom**

#### **1.1. Formation of Individual Identity through the Village Ruwah Tradition**

According to Stella Ting-Toomey's theory of identity negotiation, individual identity is formed through social interactions that connect individuals with larger cultural groups, encompassing aspects such as religion, language, and communal values [28]. In the context of Ruwah Desa in Mojouruntut Village, this tradition serves as a primary space for individuals to form their identity through participation in collective rituals. Processions such as pilgrimages to the graves of ancestors, istighosah readings, and barikan tumpeng allow residents to internalize Javanese cultural values, such as mutual cooperation and respect for ancestors. This activity not only strengthens the sense of togetherness, but also instills a sense of attachment to the history of the village, especially to Mbah Canggih, the founding figure of the village. Through interactions within these traditions, individuals develop a sense of belonging to a local cultural identity that is rich in spiritual and social values.

Participation in Ruwah Desa also fosters intercultural communication competencies, as described by Ting-Toomey, which include empathy, politeness, and openness to differences [30]. For example, citizens from different religious backgrounds participate in rituals according to their beliefs, such as the recitation of Islamic prayers or prayers according to other religions, without triggering conflict. This reflects the ability of communities to negotiate in cultural diversity, which reinforces the individual's identity as part of an inclusive community. This process is also in line with research on identity formation through collective rituals, which suggests that communal activities can enhance a sense of social connectedness [41]. Thus, Ruwah Desa is an important means to form individual identities rooted in local values.

The symbols in the Ruwah Desa, such as telon flowers and mountains of food, have a deep meaning that strengthens individual identity. Telon flowers, which are used to repel the baltid, symbolize efforts to maintain spiritual and social balance in people's

lives. The mountain of food, which consists of fruits and vegetables, reflects abundance and gratitude to nature and ancestors. Participation in the creation and procession of mountains allows individuals to feel a direct involvement in the preservation of cultural values. This process helps individuals understand their role in the community, which ultimately shapes their identity as part of the Mojouruntut community.

The process of forming individual identity through Ruwah Desa is also influenced by intergenerational interaction. Children and youth involved in activities such as tomb cleansing or cultural arts performances learn about noble values from parents and village elders. These interactions create cultural dialogues that reinforce the understanding of local identity. According to Kim, intergenerational interaction in cultural contexts can strengthen cross-cultural adaptation and the formation of balanced identities [41]. Thus, Ruwah Desa not only forms individual identity through rituals, but also through the transmission of values between generations.

Challenges in the formation of individual identities arise from the influence of globalization, which brings individualistic values that can weaken attachment to local traditions. However, the Mojouruntut people showed the ability to balance external influences by maintaining traditional practices. For example, young people involved in Ruwah Desa often view this tradition as part of their social identity, even though they do not fully understand its spiritual aspects. The inclusive approach of indigenous figures, which does not impose certain beliefs, helps young individuals to remain connected to traditions. This reflects the flexibility in identity negotiation as described by Ting-Toomey [28].

Research on cultural identity suggests that rituals such as Ruwah Desa can be a means to strengthen social cohesion and individual identity [44]. In Mojouruntut, involvement in this tradition allows individuals to feel pride in being part of a community that has a rich cultural heritage. This process is also supported by the involvement of community leaders, such as religious leaders and village officials, who guide residents in understanding the meaning of traditions. Thus, Ruwah Desa becomes an effective tool to form individual identities rooted in local wisdom. This process continues through dynamic and inclusive social interaction.

The formation of individual identity through Ruwah Desa also has an ecological dimension, which strengthens the relationship between humans and nature. Rituals such as the cleaning of tombs and the use of offerings in the form of unsweetened coffee and water reflect respect for the environment as part of cultural identity. According to Toledo, local wisdom often includes ecological knowledge that helps communities maintain a balance with nature [45]. Participation in these rituals allows individuals to develop ecological awareness, which is part of their identity as members of rural communities. Thus, Ruwah Desa not only forms cultural identity, but also the ecological identity of individuals.

## **1.2. Maintaining the Village Ruwah Tradition**

The people of Mojouruntut Village maintain the Ruwah Desa tradition as the core of their cultural identity by maintaining key elements such as customary rituals, belief systems, and social values, as explained in Ting-Toomey's theory of the importance of maintaining cultural characteristics (salience) to maintain identity [28]. The collective involvement of all levels of society, including religious leaders, village officials,

community leaders, youth organizations, and the general public, is the key to the sustainability of this tradition. Village government support, such as the provision of funds and promotion of activities, strengthens efforts to preserve traditions [21]. Symbolic elements such as telon flowers to repel reinforcements and mountains of food as a symbol of abundance are still maintained as the core of local wisdom. Thus, this tradition remains relevant as a form of cultural identity of the Mojaruntut people.

Intercultural communication competencies, such as politeness, listening skills, and openness, as described by Ting-Toomey, allow people to manage differences of opinion without conflict [30]. For example, residents from various religious backgrounds can participate in Ruwah Desa according to their respective beliefs, such as praying according to Islam or other religions, without triggering tension. This attitude of tolerance reflects the ability of societies to negotiate their identities in an inclusive context. Research on the preservation of local traditions shows that inclusive community involvement is a key factor in maintaining cultural sustainability [42]. Thus, Ruwah Desa is a successful example of cultural preservation through social collaboration.

Cross-generational involvement in Ruwah Desa ensures that the values of this tradition are passed down from generation to generation. Children and youth are involved in activities such as tomb cleaning, mountain-making, and cultural arts performances, which help them understand the meaning of traditions. This process is in line with Koentjaraningrat's view that cultural transmission through active participation is an effective way to preserve tradition [37]. Traditional leaders and village elders play an important role in guiding the younger generation to appreciate noble values such as mutual cooperation and respect for ancestors. Thus, this tradition lives on through continuous intergenerational dialogue.

The support of the village government is also an important factor in maintaining the Village Ruwah. Funding for events, such as art performances and recitations, allows this tradition to be held in a lively manner every year. In addition, the promotion of activities by the village government increases public awareness about the importance of cultural preservation. According to UNESCO, institutional support is a key element in preserving intangible cultural heritage [42]. In Mojaruntut, collaboration between the community and the village government creates an ecosystem that supports the continuation of traditions.

The main challenge in maintaining Ruwah Desa is the influence of globalization, which brings modern values that can weaken attachment to local traditions. However, the Mojaruntut people showed the ability to balance external influences while maintaining the core elements of tradition. For example, although some young citizens began to question the spiritual aspects of the tradition, they still participated because of its social and historical value. The flexible approach of indigenous leaders, who do not impose certain beliefs, helps maintain community involvement. This reflects the dynamic negotiation of identity as described by Ting-Toomey [28].

Preservation efforts are also supported by the strong symbolic meaning of the elements of the Ruwah Village. The mountain of food, made up of fruits and vegetables, not only symbolizes abundance, but also strengthens people's relationship with nature. Telon flowers, which are used in the ritual of throwing the bait, reflect local wisdom in maintaining spiritual balance. According to Rahmawati et al., symbols in local traditions

such as Ruwah Desa have an important role in maintaining community identity [12]. By maintaining this symbolic meaning, the Mojouruntut people ensure that traditions remain relevant in the midst of changing times.

Research on local wisdom shows that traditions such as Ruwah Desa can be social capital for sustainable development [21]. In Mojouruntut, collective involvement in the preparation and implementation of traditions strengthens social solidarity and a sense of community. This process also reflects the ability of people to adapt without losing their cultural essence. Thus, Ruwah Desa is not only a cultural heritage, but also a strategy to maintain community identity in the modern era. These efforts show that this tradition is a dynamic system that continues to evolve through identity negotiations.

### **1.3. Identity Change through the New Generation**

The young generation in Mojouruntut Village shows a change in the interpretation of the Ruwah Village tradition, which reflects the dynamics of identity negotiation as described by Ting-Toomey, where cultural identity is dynamic and adapts to changing social contexts [28]. Many young people no longer view this tradition from a spiritual aspect, such as prayer at the tomb of Mbah Canggih's ancestors, but as a social and cultural event to strengthen relationships between citizens. The influence of globalization and access to modern information through social media has encouraged skepticism of mythological elements [35]. However, they still participate because of the historical and social value of this tradition, which reflects their attachment to the identity of the community. This process shows that the younger generation plays a role as agents of change in identity negotiations.

#### **Culture Lamat**

To maintain the involvement of the younger generation, traditional leaders and village elders integrate interesting elements, such as cultural arts performances (wayang) and social activities, such as cultural discussions. This approach keeps tradition relevant for young people who are more influenced by modern values. For example, cultural arts performances appeal to them because they fit into a contemporary lifestyle that values visual entertainment. According to Hayati et al., involving the younger generation in cultural activities through an engaging approach can increase their participation in the preservation of local traditions [39]. Thus, the young generation in Mojouruntut not only became the successor of the tradition, but also reshaped its meaning to fit the modern context.

The skeptical attitude of the younger generation towards the spiritual aspects of Ruwah Desa is influenced by the increasing access to modern information through social media and formal education. Many young people view this tradition as more of a cultural heritage that has historical value than a spiritual ritual. However, they still appreciate the social aspects of traditions, such as togetherness in mountain processions or recitation events. Research on cultural transformation shows that younger generations often adopt new interpretations of traditions to adapt them to modern values [43]. In Mojouruntut, this change does not eliminate tradition, but enriches its meaning with a new perspective.

Traditional leaders and village elders play an important role in directing the younger generation to remain involved in Ruwah Desa. They invite youth to actively participate as event organizers, not just spectators, through activities such as organizing art performances or cultural discussions. This approach reflects flexibility in identity

negotiations, where traditional values are integrated with modern elements to maintain the relevance of tradition [30]. According to Sofya et al., the active involvement of the younger generation in cultural activities can strengthen the sense of belonging to cultural heritage [38]. Thus, the younger generation becomes agents of change who maintain traditions while giving them new meanings.

The change in the identity of the younger generation is also influenced by the tolerance of the Mojouruntut community towards different views. The absence of compulsion to participate in the spiritual aspects of the tradition allows the youth to engage according to their own understanding. For example, some young people choose to focus on social aspects, such as gathering with other citizens, rather than pilgrimage rituals. This attitude reflects the intercultural communication competence emphasized by Ting-Toomey, which allows for harmony in diversity [30]. Thus, this tradition remains inclusive and relevant to the younger generation.

Research on the role of young generations in cultural preservation suggests that they can be a catalyst for cultural innovation [44]. In Mojouruntut, young people often propose new ideas, such as holding cultural arts competitions or social activities during Ruwah Desa, which attract the attention of their peers. This initiative strengthens their involvement in the tradition without eliminating core values such as mutual cooperation and togetherness. This process is in line with Hobsbawm and Ranger's view that traditions are often "reinvented" to remain relevant in the modern era [43]. Thus, the young generation in Mojouruntut plays a dual role as the successor and innovator of tradition.

The change in the identity of the younger generation also has an ecological dimension, which reflects local wisdom in maintaining balance with nature. Although some young people do not believe in mythological aspects such as telon flowers, they value ecological values in traditions, such as cleaning tombs as a form of concern for the environment. According to Berkes et al., local wisdom often includes ecological knowledge that is relevant to the younger generation who are concerned about environmental issues [40]. Their participation in these activities strengthens their identity as members of the community who are responsible for nature. Thus, Ruwah Desa is a means to form the identity of the young generation that is balanced between tradition and modernity.

#### **1.4. Interaction in the Modern Era in the Context of Identity Negotiation**

The interaction in the Ruwah Desa tradition in the modern era reflects adaptation to social and technological change, which is an integral part of identity negotiation according to Ting-Toomey [28]. One form of adaptation is the use of social media to document and promote this tradition to a wider audience. Residents capture ritual processions, such as mountain processions and art performances, in the form of photos and videos, which are then shared through digital platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. According to Zahrani et al., social media can be a tool to strengthen local culture in the midst of globalization by creating a space for cultural dialogue [39]. This approach allows the core values of Ruwah Desa, such as mutual cooperation and respect for ancestors, to be maintained even though the method of dissemination has changed.

The integration of religious values into the rituals of the Ruwah Desa also reflects a harmonious negotiation of identity. The recitation of the Qur'an and istighosah, which is

part of the procession, shows the synthesis between religious teachings and local wisdom. Citizens from various religious backgrounds are allowed to participate according to their beliefs, such as praying according to Islam or other religions, without triggering conflicts. This attitude of tolerance reflects the competence of intercultural communication emphasized by Ting-Toomey, which allows for harmony in diversity [30]. Thus, the interaction in the Ruwah Desa strengthens the collective identity of the Mojuruntut community as an inclusive community.

The use of technology in Ruwah Desa also includes cultural education for the younger generation. For example, digital documentation of the Ruwah Desa procession is used to create educational content, such as short videos explaining the meaning of rituals. This approach is in line with Sofya et al.'s findings that digitalization can be an effective means of preserving local culture [38]. This content appeals to the younger generation who are more familiar with digital media, thereby increasing their awareness of the importance of tradition. Thus, technology becomes a bridge between tradition and modernity in identity negotiations.

Modern interactions in Ruwah Desa also include collaboration with external parties, such as the arts community or cultural organizations, to enrich events. For example, art performances such as ludruk and wayang often involve art groups from outside the village, which bring a new perspective without compromising the essence of tradition. This collaboration reflects the openness of the Mojuruntut community to external influences, which is part of the identity negotiation [28]. According to Castells, this kind of interaction reinforces the identity of the community by creating a broader cultural network [44]. Thus, Ruwah Desa becomes a dynamic cultural dialogue space.

A challenge in modern interaction is the tendency of the younger generation to be more interested in popular culture promoted through social media. Many young people are more familiar with global trends than local traditions, which can weaken their attachment to Ruwah Desa [35]. However, the people of Mojuruntut overcome this challenge by utilizing social media to promote the tradition in an interesting way, such as through short videos or live broadcasts of events. This approach is in line with the findings of Hayati et al. that social media can be used to preserve local culture by attracting the attention of the younger generation [39]. Thus, modern interaction helps maintain the relevance of Ruwah Desa in the digital era.

The role of community leaders, such as religious leaders and village officials, is also important in directing modern interactions. They ensure that the use of technology remains in harmony with traditional values, such as mutual cooperation and respect for ancestors. For example, indigenous leaders often guide the creation of digital content to ensure that cultural significance is not lost in the digitization process. Research on cultural communication shows that the role of community leaders is crucial in maintaining the authenticity of traditions in the modern era [36]. Thus, modern interaction in Ruwah Desa reflects a balance between cultural preservation and adaptation to changing times.

Interaction in Ruwah Desa also has an ecological dimension, which strengthens the community's relationship with nature. Rituals such as cleaning the tomb and using offerings in the form of water and coffee without sugar reflect local wisdom in maintaining environmental balance. According to Berkes et al., local traditions often

include ecological knowledge relevant to sustainable development [40]. Digital documentation on this ecological aspect, such as videos on grave cleaning, can raise awareness among younger generations about the importance of environmental conservation. Thus, modern interactions in Ruwah Desa strengthen cultural identity while promoting ecological values.

### **1.5. Local Wisdom and Its Relationship with Ruwah Desa**

Local wisdom is defined as a system of knowledge, values, and practices developed from generation to generation by local communities to manage the environment, regulate social relations, and build survival strategies [8]. In the context of Mojouruntut Village, the Ruwah Desa tradition is a manifestation of local wisdom that integrates spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions. Rituals such as cleaning tombs, using telon flowers, and making mountains of food reflect values such as mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, and balance with nature. According to Rahmawati et al., traditions such as Ruwah Desa have an important role in strengthening social solidarity and community identity [12]. Thus, Ruwah Desa becomes a tangible manifestation of local wisdom that lives in Mojouruntut.

The relationship between local wisdom and Ruwah Desa lies in its ability to strengthen the cultural identity of the community in the midst of changing times. The process of identity negotiation, as described by Ting-Toomey, allows society to adapt these traditions to the modern context without losing its cultural essence [28]. For example, the use of social media to document the Ruwah Desa procession shows adaptation to modern technology while maintaining core values such as togetherness. Research on local wisdom shows that local traditions can serve as an adaptation strategy to social and environmental changes [40]. Thus, Ruwah Desa is a tool to maintain cultural identity in the era of globalization.

Local wisdom in Ruwah Desa also includes a strong ecological dimension. Rituals such as the cleaning of the tomb and the use of offerings in the form of natural materials reflect the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. According to Toledo, local wisdom often includes ecological knowledge that is tested to maintain environmental balance [45]. In Mojouruntut, this ritual teaches residents to respect the environment as part of their cultural identity. Thus, Ruwah Desa strengthens ecological awareness as part of local wisdom.

Collective involvement in Ruwah Desa strengthens social solidarity as one of the elements of local wisdom. *Gotong royong*, which is the core of the tradition, involves all levels of society in the preparation and implementation of rituals. This process reflects the communal values that characterize Indonesian local wisdom [37]. According to Ningrum, local wisdom such as mutual cooperation can be social capital for sustainable development [21]. Thus, Ruwah Desa not only preserves culture, but also supports sustainable community development.

The adaptation of technology in Ruwah Desa shows that local wisdom is dynamic and can evolve. The use of social media to promote traditions, as described by Sofya et al., allows local wisdom to reach a wider audience, including the younger generation [38]. Digital documentation of rituals and cultural arts makes these traditions more accessible and understandable. This approach strengthens the relationship of local wisdom with

modern life without sacrificing core values. Thus, Ruwah Desa is an example of local wisdom that is relevant in the digital era.

## **2. Challenges and Opportunities in the Preservation of Village Ruwah Traditions**

In facing the challenges of modernization and globalization, the people of Mojoruntut Village continue to strive to maintain the relevance of the Ruwah Desa tradition with various innovations and adaptive approaches. By maintaining core values that have been passed down from generation to generation, as well as adapting elements of tradition to remain attractive to the younger generation, this tradition can survive and develop in the midst of changing times. The identity negotiations that occur in the process of preserving Ruwah Desa reflect the balance between tradition and modernity, which allows the people of Mojoruntut Village to maintain their cultural heritage without losing relevance in the ever-changing social context.

In addition to internal changes in society, the Ruwah Desa tradition is also influenced by external factors, including village government policies, globalization, and technological developments. Based on the results of observations, the village government plays an active role in maintaining the sustainability of this tradition by providing support in the form of attendance at events, as well as facilitation in the form of financial assistance and promotion of activities. This step is important, because the support from the authorities can increase community participation in making the Ruwah Desa tradition part of the cultural identity that needs to be preserved.

However, globalization remains a considerable challenge in maintaining the sustainability of Ruwah Desa. The results of interviews with some of the youths showed that most of them no longer believed in the spiritual aspect of the Ruwah Desa. They tend to see these events only as traditional activities without having a deep religious meaning. Even so, the encouragement from village elders who actively invite them to be involved in this event is an important factor in keeping the tradition going. Through a more flexible approach and not imposing certain beliefs, the elders have succeeded in attracting the younger generation to continue participating, albeit with different meanings.

In addition to globalization, technological developments and social media have also had a considerable impact on this tradition [35]. Based on observations of people's activities on social media, it was found that more and more people are more interested in popular culture and modern trends compared to local traditions. Social media often presents information that makes people, especially the younger generation, doubt the relevance of traditional rituals such as Ruwah Desa. However, in Mojoruntut Village, preservation efforts are still carried out by utilizing technology as a promotional tool. Some residents began to use social media to document and share information about Ruwah Desa, with the aim of attracting the attention of the wider community and introducing this tradition to the younger generation in a more interesting way, so that its existence is still recognized and appreciated as part of the cultural heritage that must be preserved.

The people of Mojoruntut Village have high hopes that the Ruwah Village tradition will be sustainable in the future. In interviews with several residents, they said that Ruwah Desa is not only a traditional event, but also a means to strengthen social relations and strengthen the sense of togetherness between residents. They hope that this tradition can still be passed on to the next generation, so that it remains part of the life of the people

of Mojoruntut Village. In addition, they also hope that the Village Ruwah will be able to continue to develop and adapt to the changing times, without losing the ancestral values that have been inherited.

With the support from various parties and public awareness of the importance of cultural preservation, the prospects for the sustainability of Ruwah Desa in Mojoruntut Village remain optimistic. As long as this tradition is able to adapt to the times and remain relevant to the younger generation, Ruwah Desa will continue to be an important part of the cultural identity of the local community.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding :** The results of the study confirm that identity negotiation in the Ruwah Desa tradition takes place through four stages, namely the formation of individual identity through direct involvement in ritual processions, maintaining traditions collectively as cultural heritage, identity change through the reinterpretation of the younger generation that emphasizes socio-cultural aspects, and interaction in the modern era through the use of social media for cultural documentation and promotion. The sustainability of tradition is also strongly influenced by cross-generational involvement, integration of religious values, and adaptation to the influence of globalization and technology. The younger generation, although they tend to interpret tradition more on social aspects than spiritual, still play an important role as preservation agents through active participation. The use of social media is also a new strategy to document and promote Ruwah Desa, so that its existence is still recognized and appreciated. Thus, this tradition is not static, but dynamic and adaptive, as well as supporting the cultural identity of the Mojoruntut people in the modern era. **Implication :** This research can be concluded that the Village Ruwah Tradition in Mojoruntut Village is a manifestation of local wisdom that functions as a space for community identity negotiation. Identity negotiation in the Ruwah Desa tradition in Mojoruntut Village is an ongoing process. **Limitation :** This tradition is not only inherited as a form of respect for ancestors and an expression of gratitude to God, but also as a means of strengthening social solidarity, instilling the value of mutual cooperation, and maintaining spiritual and ecological attachment. **Future Research :** Through collective processions such as *khataman Al-Qur'an*, *barikan (Tasyakuran)*, cultural art performances, and grand recitations, the community actively reproduces cultural values to remain relevant to the ever-changing social context.

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