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The Tahlilan Culture of Darupono Village That is Still Preserved by the Community

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Abstract. Tahlilan is an Islamic tradition that is carried out as a form of communal prayer to pray for the souls of the deceased. This culture is very strong in various regions in Indonesia, including in Darupono Village. This article aims to analyze how the tahlilan culture is still preserved by the people of Darupono Village amidst social change and modernization. This study uses a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach, where data is collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that tahlilan in Darupono Village not only functions as a religious ritual, but also as a means of strengthening ties and maintaining local cultural identity.

1. BACKGROUND

Tahlilan culture is one of the traditions that has been going on for a long time in Indonesia, especially among the Javanese people. This tradition has deep historical roots, with practices that include joint prayers for the spirits of the deceased. Tahlilan is usually performed on the evening after a person dies, with the practice starting from the first night to the 7th day, then continuing on the 40th, 100th, and 1000th days after death. In addition, tahlilan is also often held every year as a form of death commemoration known as haul (Geertz, 1976).

Darupono Village, Kendal Regency, Central Java, the tahlilan tradition is still strongly maintained. This village is an example of how rural communities still hold fast to their customs and traditions despite the pressures of modernization and social change. The people of Darupono Village, the majority of whom work as farmers and live a simple lifestyle, make tahlilan an integral part of their lives. The preservation of this tradition reflects the close relationship between culture, religion, and social life of the local community (Koentjaraningrat, 1985).

Tahlilan not only serves as a religious ritual, but also as a form of expression of a deep cultural identity. In the context of Darupono Village, tahlilan is a means for the community to strengthen friendship, strengthen solidarity, and strengthen cultural identity inherited from generation to generation (Soekanto, 1982). Each stage of the tahlilan, from the first night to the annual haul, involves all family members and the community, providing an opportunity to gather and share in important moments.

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However, the preservation of tahlilan in the midst of changing times is not without challenges. Modernization, urbanization, and shifting mindsets of the younger generation often threaten the preservation of local traditions such as tahlilan. Many traditions have changed shape or disappeared because they are considered irrelevant to modern life. Therefore, it is important to understand how the people of Darupono Village can maintain tahlilan and the factors that support the sustainability of this tradition (Susilo, 2017).

The main challenge in preserving tahlilan is the change in the mindset of the younger generation who are exposed to global values and technology. The younger generation is often more interested in the modern lifestyle and may see tahlilan as an outdated practice. Modernization is also affecting the implementation of tahlilan, with the advent of technology that is changing the way events are coordinated and executed. Nevertheless, the people of Darupono Village showed resilience in facing this challenge, while still maintaining the essence of tahlilan while adapting to the changing times.

The conservation strategy implemented in Darupono Village includes involving the younger generation in the implementation of tahlilan. Through education and active participation, communities ensure that traditional values and practices remain understood and passed on. Education about the meaning of tahlilan and the involvement of the younger generation in the planning and implementation of the event is key to maintaining this tradition. In addition, the public also utilizes technology such as social media to coordinate events and inform schedules, which helps maintain the relevance of tahlilan in the modern context.

Thus, the tahlilan culture in Darupono Village is a clear example of how tradition can survive and adapt in the midst of changing times. Despite facing various challenges, the people of this village have managed to keep tahlilan as an integral part of their lives. This tradition not only serves as a religious ritual but also as a means to strengthen cultural identity and social solidarity. The preservation of tahlilan demonstrates the importance of maintaining a connection with cultural roots in facing the challenges of modernization, as well as how communities can maintain and adapt their traditions to ensure their sustainability in the future.

2. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Structural Functionalism Theory

The theory of structural functionalism, developed by Auguste Comte and further developed by Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton, emphasizes that every element in society has an important function in maintaining social balance and stability According to this theory,

society functions like a complex organism in which each part is interdependent on each other to ensure the continuity and balance of the overall social system (Parsons,1951)

In the context of tahlilan culture, this tradition can be seen as a cultural element that has an important function in maintaining social cohesion and strengthening collective norms in society. Tahlilan, as a religious ritual, not only has a religious but also a deep social function. This tradition provides a forum for the community to gather and interact, strengthening social relations and solidarity in the community (Merton, 1968).

In a recent study, Rochmawati and Aisyah (2020) stated that religious practices such as tahlilan play an important role in maintaining social solidarity, especially in the era of rapid social change and modernization. This tradition serves as a balance between change and stability, where people find ways to maintain the essential elements of their culture while adapting to the times. Through tahlilan, the people of Darupono Village are able to strengthen their social bonds by gathering, praying, and sharing in significant moments (Rochmawati & Aisyah, 2020).

Structural functionalism also sees that cultural elements such as tahlilan survive because they meet the fundamental needs of society, such as the need for solidarity, identity, and social cohesion. This tradition is a means for the community to express common values and maintain social harmony. Thus, tahlilan not only serves as a religious ritual but also as a mechanism for maintaining a stable social structure.

Theory of Symbolic Interactionism

The theory of symbolic interactionism, put forward by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, emphasizes the importance of symbols and meanings in social interaction. According to this theory, individuals and groups interact based on the meaning they give to social symbols and their actions (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism focuses on how these meanings are constructed and maintained through social interaction.

In the case of tahlilan, each element of this ritual—such as prayer, dhikr, and the recitation of holy verses—has a profound symbolic meaning for society. This ritual not only serves to pray for the deceased, but also serves as a medium to strengthen collective identity and build social bonds among community members. Anwar and Wibisono (2019) show that tahlilan continues to function as a strong identity symbol in communities that are undergoing social change. These traditions accommodate the needs of communities to maintain important cultural meanings while adjusting to the changes around them (Anwar & Wibisono, 2019).

Symbolic interactionism also helps to understand how tahlilan functions in a broader social context. Through these rituals, people not only connect themselves with religious

traditions but also with a broader meaning of group identity and solidarity. Each participant in the tahlilan plays a role in establishing and reinforcing the social and symbolic meaning of the ritual, thus deepening their understanding of themselves and their group.

Cultural Theory and Tradition

Cultural and tradition theories argue that tradition is a cultural product that is inherited from generation to generation and is constantly adapted according to the social context and changing times. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their work *The Invention of Tradition* argue that many traditions that are considered ancient are actually the result of newer cultural constructions and are often created to meet specific social needs (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

In the context of tahlilan in Darupono Village, this tradition retains elements that are considered important by the community, while also undergoing adjustments to face contemporary challenges. Recent research by Suharto (2021) shows that the people of Darupono Village continue to adapt by maintaining the essential aspects of tahlilan while changing certain elements to adapt to new social conditions. This shows that tahlilan is not only a legacy of the past but also a practice that is relevant to current social conditions (Suharto, 2021).

This adaptation process reflects the dynamic between preservation and change in tradition. The people of Darupono Village manage their traditions in a way that allows them to maintain their cultural identity while adapting to changing social realities. Tahlilan, in this case, serves as a bridge between the past and the present, allowing people to stay connected to their cultural roots while confronting the challenges of modernity.

Theory of Modernization and Social Change

Modernization theory views that traditional society is undergoing changes towards a more rational, individualist, and technological form of society. However, the modernization process does not necessarily mean the elimination of old traditions. On the contrary, societies often retain cultural elements that are considered to have important values, even though they undergo modernization (Giddens, 1990).

Recent research by Fauzia and Syamsuddin (2020) shows that even though society is modernizing, they tend to maintain traditions that are considered important in their lives. In the case of tahlilan in Darupono Village, although the village has undergone significant social changes, this tradition is still maintained because it is considered important to maintain the identity and solidarity of the group. Tahlilan serves as a way to maintain valuable cultural elements in the midst of rapid social change and globalization (Fauzia & Syamsuddin, 2020).

Modernization theories also suggest that traditions such as tahlilan can undergo a change of form to adapt to the new social context without losing their cultural essence. For example, the use of technology to coordinate tahlilan events or changes in the duration and format of events are examples of how traditions can adapt to changing times while still retaining their original meaning and function.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods to provide a deep and comprehensive understanding of the preservation of tahlilan culture in Darupono Village. The qualitative approach was chosen because of its ability to reveal the subjective and contextual aspects of the social phenomena studied, as well as to provide a more holistic picture of the cultural practices that this research focuses on. Within the framework of a qualitative approach, ethnographic methods are used to investigate in depth how tahlilan is implemented, interpreted, and maintained in the social and cultural context of the local community.

The ethnographic method involves researchers who are actively involved in the daily lives of the communities being studied, allowing them to observe and understand cultural practices from the internal perspectives of community members. In the context of this study, the researcher conducted participatory observation to collect direct data on the implementation of tahlilan. Participatory observation allows researchers to attend and participate in the tahlilan event, paying close attention to each stage of the ritual, the social interactions that occur during the event, and the existing group dynamics. In this way, researchers can capture important details that may not be revealed through other observation methods.

In addition to participatory observation, primary data was also obtained through in-depth interviews with various key informants in Darupono Village. The key informants consisted of community leaders, religious leaders, and villagers who had first-hand understanding and experience of tahlilan. In-depth interviews were conducted to dig up more detailed information regarding the meaning, value, and perception related to tahlilan. Community leaders gave their views on the role of tahlilan in the social and cultural life of the village, as well as how this tradition is maintained in the face of changing times. Religious leaders provide a religious perspective on the meaning of tahlilan in the context of religious teachings and how this practice supports the spiritual life of the community. The villagers, who were

directly involved in the implementation of tahlilan, shared their personal experiences and how this tradition affected their daily lives.

Secondary data also played an important role in this study. Secondary data was obtained from various relevant literature, including studies on tahlilan culture, Javanese customs, and theories related to tradition preservation in the context of modernization. This literature review includes books, journal articles, and other academic publications that provide additional insight into the historical, social, and cultural background of tahlilan. This literature assists researchers in understanding the broader context of the tahlilan tradition and how this practice interacts with greater social change.

The data collection process involves several important steps. First, the researcher started by making an initial visit to Darupono Village to build relationships with the community and obtain permission to conduct observations and interviews. At this stage, the researcher also identifies key informants to be interviewed and plans a schedule for observation and interviews. During the data collection period, researchers carefully record each observation and interview, using tools such as field notebooks and audio recorders to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data.

After the primary data was collected, the researcher analyzed the data using qualitative analysis techniques. This technique involves encoding data, identifying key themes, and compiling findings in the context of relevant theories. Qualitative analysis allows researchers to identify patterns and relationships in the data, as well as provide an in-depth interpretation of how tahlilan is practiced and maintained in Darupono Village. The findings from this analysis are then compared with the secondary literature to ensure consistency and validity.

Ethnographic methods and qualitative approaches provide an advantage in capturing the complexity and nuances of tahlilan cultural practices. By combining participatory observation and in-depth interviews, researchers can gain a rich and in-depth perspective on how tahlilan functions in society and how society adapts to changing times. Secondary data from relevant literature enrich this understanding by providing important historical and theoretical context.

Overall, this approach provides a holistic and in-depth picture of the preservation of tahlilan culture in Darupono Village. By utilizing ethnographic methods and qualitative approaches, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the understanding of how religious traditions can survive and adapt in the context of social change and modernization. The findings of this study are not only relevant for cultural and anthropological studies, but can also provide insights for cultural preservation efforts in other communities facing similar challenges.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that there are several factors that support the preservation of tahlilan culture in Darupono Village, namely:

The Role of Religious Leaders in the Preservation of Tahlilan

Religious leaders in Darupono Village play a central role in preserving the tahlilan tradition. They not only act as the main organizers in tahlilan events but also as guardians and successors of the religious values associated with this practice. In the context of tahlilan, religious leaders have a responsibility to ensure that rituals are carried out in accordance with the correct ordinances and that the spiritual meaning of tahlilan is well understood by the community.

Religious leaders are usually involved in various aspects of the implementation of tahlilan, from planning to implementation. They often lead prayers, give sermons or lectures, and provide directions on how each stage of tahlilan should be performed. Their presence in every tahlilan event provides a guarantee that the ritual is not only carried out as a formality, but also with full appreciation and compliance with religious teachings.

Furthermore, religious leaders play a role in educating the public about the importance of tahlilan. They explained that tahlilan is not just a social tradition, but a form of respect and prayer for the soul of the deceased, which is believed to provide benefits for the spirit in the afterlife. This explanation is important to ensure that the community understands the spiritual value behind tahlilan and continues to preserve it. According to Geertz (1976), religious leaders in Darupono Village often function as mediators between religious teachings and local cultural practices. They bridge the gap between religious values and the social needs of the community, so that tahlilan can be carried out in a harmonious way and in accordance with the beliefs of the community. Thus, the role of religious leaders is crucial in maintaining the continuity and validity of tahlilan as a religious tradition that is still relevant in the modern era

Involvement of the Young Generation in Tahlilan

The involvement of the younger generation in Darupono Village is one of the main factors that support the continuation of the tahlilan tradition in the midst of modernization. Although the younger generation is often exposed to global culture and rapidly changing technology, they still actively participate in tahlilan events. This shows that tahlilan is considered an important part of cultural identity that must be preserved.

The young generation in Darupono Village is not only present at the tahlilan event, but is also often involved in the planning and implementation of the event. They may be responsible for organizing logistics, such as putting together schedules, arranging venues, or preparing

material needs for events. Their involvement in these practical aspects shows that they have a sense of responsibility towards the preservation of this tradition and see it as part of a cultural identity that must be passed on. Koentjaraningrat (1985) emphasized the importance of the role of the younger generation in the preservation of cultural traditions. In the context of tahlilan, the young generation in Darupono Village is considered a link between the old tradition and the modern era. They have a role to play in integrating traditional values with the needs and realities of today's life. For example, the younger generation may use technology such as social media to disseminate information about tahlilan events, communicate with family members who live far away, or even organize events online if needed.

The involvement of the younger generation in tahlilan also shows that there is an effort to make this tradition relevant to their lives today. They often innovate in the implementation of events, such as introducing new elements that are in line with the times while still maintaining the essence of the ritual. In this way, the younger generation contributes to the preservation of tahlilan in a way that is appropriate to the contemporary context, without sacrificing the basic values of the tradition.

Tahlilan Social Function

Apart from being a religious ritual, tahlilan also has a significant social function in the community of Darupono Village. Tahlilan serves as a means to strengthen social relations among villagers. During the tahlilan event, the community gathers and interacts, shares stories, and strengthens a sense of community, which plays an important role in maintaining social solidarity and building a harmonious community.

During the implementation of tahlilan, community members often gather at funeral homes or places that have been prepared for the event. Their presence is not only to pray together, but also to provide emotional support to the bereaved family. The social interactions that occur during this event create opportunities to share experiences, provide support, and strengthen bonds between community members. Soekanto (1982) underlined that the social function of tahlilan is very important in the context of village communities. Tahlilan is a moment to strengthen the sense of togetherness and solidarity among community members. In the context of a relatively small village such as Darupono Village, the tahlilan event is often one of the important moments where people can interact with each other and build closer relationships. This creates a solid social network and supports the life of the community as a whole.

Furthermore, tahlilan also serves as a means to convey cultural and moral values to members of the community. During events, messages about religious values, ethics, and social behavior are often conveyed through lectures or sermons given by religious leaders. These messages help to reinforce social norms and promote expected behavior in society. Thus, tahlilan serves not only as a religious ritual but also as a social mechanism to shape and strengthen community identity.

Overall, tahlilan in Darupono Village plays a dual role as a religious ritual and social tool. Through this event, the community not only carries out religious practices but also strengthens social relationships, builds solidarity, and conveys cultural values. This social function is one of the main reasons why tahlilan remains persistent and relevant in the midst of changing times. Adapting to Changing Times: Although tahlilan is still carried out according to tradition, the people of Darupono Village also show the ability to adapt to changes. For example, the duration of tahlilan events that are adjusted to a shorter time and the use of technology to announce events (Susilo, 2017).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The tahlilan culture in Darupono Village is still preserved by the community because it is supported by various interrelated factors, especially the active role of religious leaders, the involvement of the younger generation, and the deep social function of the tradition. Despite facing various challenges due to modernization and globalization, tahlilan is able to survive and adapt to the changes that occur. This research illustrates how important the community's contribution is in maintaining and preserving local culture in the midst of challenging globalization.

Religious leaders in Darupono Village play a very crucial role in preserving the tahlilan tradition. They not only act as the main driving force in the organization of the tahlilan event, but also as the guardians and successors of the religious values associated with this ritual. Religious leaders ensure that each stage in the tahlilan ritual is carried out correctly and in accordance with the prevailing religious teachings. They lead prayers, give lectures or sermons, and direct the implementation of rituals, so that the spiritual meaning of tahlilan can be understood and passed on to the community. In addition, religious leaders also function as mediators between religious teachings and local cultural practices. They bridge the gap between existing religious traditions and the needs and changes in modern society. In this process, religious leaders strive to maintain a balance between preserving traditions and adapting to the times, so that tahlilan can continue to be relevant and in accordance with the contemporary context.

The involvement of the younger generation in Darupono Village is the main factor that supports the continuation of the tahlilan tradition. Despite being influenced by global culture

and modern technology, the younger generation still actively participates in tahlilan events and sees them as an important part of their cultural identity. Their involvement is not only in attending events but also in planning and carrying out tahlilan. The younger generation helps to arrange schedules, arrange venues, and prepare material needs for the event, which shows their sense of responsibility for the preservation of this tradition. Furthermore, the young generation in Darupono Village also plays a role in integrating traditional values with modern life. They use technology such as social media to coordinate tahlilan events, disseminate information, and communicate with family members who are unable to attend physically. The use of this technology helps to maintain the relevance of tahlilan in the modern context and ensures that this tradition remains alive in the era of globalization.

In addition to functioning as a religious ritual, tahlilan also has a significant social function. During the tahlilan event, the community gathers, interacts, shares stories, and strengthens a sense of togetherness. It is a moment where people can support each other, provide emotional support to bereaved families, as well as strengthen social bonds among community members. Tahlilan serves as a platform to convey cultural and moral values through lectures or sermons, which helps to reinforce social norms and promote expected behavior in society. However, the tahlilan tradition cannot be separated from the challenges faced in the modernization era. Modernization brings changes in people's mindsets, lifestyles, and social structures, which can affect the preservation of local traditions such as tahlilan. Changes in the mindset of the younger generation who are more exposed to global culture and modern technology can affect the way they see and carry out tahlilan.

To overcome this challenge, the people of Darupono Village are trying to involve the younger generation in the implementation of tahlilan and provide education about the importance of this tradition. The involvement of the younger generation in the planning and execution of the event helps ensure that they understand the meaning and value of tahlilan, and feel connected to the tradition. Adaptation to changing times also includes the use of technology to support the implementation of tahlilan, such as coordinating events and disseminating information through social media.

Globalization has had a significant impact on local cultures around the world, including in Darupono Village. The influence of global culture and technology can influence the way people live and preserve their traditions. However, globalization can also provide an opportunity to introduce local traditions to a wider audience. In the context of tahlilan, globalization allows people to promote these traditions as part of a high-value cultural

heritage, which can increase awareness and appreciation of tahlilan at the national and international levels.

This research emphasizes the importance of the role of the community in preserving local culture in the midst of globalization. The people of Darupono Village show that with the active role of religious leaders, the involvement of the younger generation, and deep social functions, traditions such as tahlilan can survive and adapt to the changing times. Through collective efforts and thoughtful adaptation, communities can ensure that local cultures remain alive and relevant in an ever-changing world. The references used in this study also reinforce the conclusion that tahlilan is not only a religious ritual but also has an important social function in strengthening community bonds and maintaining cultural identity. Several recent studies show that the younger generation, despite being exposed to global influences, still plays an active role in the preservation of this tradition, using modern technology to support the implementation and coordination of tahlilan events (Fauzia & Syamsuddin, 2020; Hidayat & Nurhadi, 2019; Kurniawati & Wibisono, 2021). In addition, other research reveals that religious leaders play an important role as guardians of traditional values as well as mediators between local traditions and the development of the times (Rahmawati & Zulkifli, 2019; Susilo & Prasetyo, 2019). The presence of modern technology is not only threatening but also provides an opportunity to promote the tahlilan tradition to a wider audience, making it relevant in the era of globalization (Wijayanti & Saputra, 2022; Yuliana & Harjono, 2020).

Thus, this study confirms that the collective efforts of all elements of society, including religious leaders and the younger generation, are very important in preserving local cultures such as tahlilan in the midst of a changing world.

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