

# Transforming Tradition into Spiritual Harmony: A Study of the Bangbarongan Ritual in Bandung Regency, West Java

## ABSTRACT

Diversity in Indonesia, with its various ethnic groups, religions, cultures, and traditions, constitutes a fundamental part of the nation's social structure. The Bangbarongan tradition in Kampung Cipondoh, Desa Cileunyi Kulon, West Java, represents one example of this cultural richness. This study investigates three main aspects of the Bangbarongan tradition: its embedded religious system, the influence of religion on its rituals, and the conveyed meaning of religiosity. Employing a qualitative method with a field-based approach, the research incorporates direct observation, Personal Communications, and documentation to explore these dimensions. The findings reveal that the Bangbarongan tradition embodies a profound intertwining of cultural and religious elements, transcending its role as entertainment to serve as a moral compass, a medium for social unity, and a spiritual guide. Its religious system encompasses rituals, religious emotions, and belief systems that dynamically integrate cultural practices with Islamic values. Rituals such as placing the Bangbarongan at graves to symbolize the expulsion of human vices, combined with religious emotions fostered through prayer and reflection, highlight the tradition's capacity to promote moral and spiritual growth. Additionally, the tradition balances the preservation of cultural identity with adaptation to the needs of a modern and heterogeneous community, maintaining ancestral wisdom while fostering unity and harmony. This study contributes to the broader understanding of how traditional rituals can sustain cultural identity, reinforce social cohesion, and promote local wisdom amidst modernization. The dual-purpose role of the Bangbarongan tradition as entertainment and education demonstrates its value in instilling moral and spiritual values in the community. These insights underline the importance of preserving traditional practices as vital cultural and spiritual assets in rapidly changing societies.

**Keywords:** *Bangbarongan* Tradition, Local Wisdom, Religiosity, Religious Influence, Social Harmony.

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## INTRODUCTION

Cultural, traditional, racial, ethnic, and religious diversity is an unavoidable and tangible aspect of life. Every group inevitably has its own differences and associated issues. On the other hand, cultural, traditional, and religious pluralism represents Indonesia's wealth. However, a lack of tolerant and respectful attitudes toward this diversity may escalate cultural, religious, and traditional pluralism into prolonged conflicts or even violence (Bauto, 2016; Dadang Kahmad, 2011). Differences in beliefs, whether in culture, religion, or tradition, often cause conflicts in society when people fail to approach pluralism and tolerance with maturity and wisdom (Hadikusuma, 1993). Fanaticism without an expanded understanding will only foster egoism within certain groups and become a divisive force within a nation and religion (Raharjo, 2011). Therefore, pluralism becomes a concept that can bridge these differences. With tolerance, it becomes easier to navigate this diverse societal life. If we consider this concern stems from theological fears about the relationship between the sacred and the profane.

Existentially, if religion is understood and experienced as an ultimate goal that then results in actualization, the actualization of divine awareness becomes a manifestation of tolerance (Marina, 2019). Culture, as an expression of society, holds its values in life. Religion, as a guide for living, must be able to confront the reality of different cultures within society (William, 1985). Similarly, cultures with their values of goodness are likely to be in harmony with religion. However, living in a diverse society will inevitably present different patterns. Therefore, understanding how religion and culture can address these aspects of social life and coexist harmoniously is crucial (Kahmad, 2006).

Cultural changes and dynamics require religious communities to develop collective awareness of the need for structural and cultural adjustments in understanding religion. Rather than placing religion at the center of social, cultural, political, or economic development, the focus should be on fostering a dialectical, dynamic, accommodative, and productive relationship that contributes to societal welfare. Before reaching the stage of societal welfare, it is important to understand the meaning of tradition in culture. Running a tradition within a culture typically involves specific groups or ethnicities in Indonesia (Sulasman & Gumilar, 2013).

Indonesia hosts diverse ethnicities, with the Sundanese ethnic group predominantly populating almost the entire region of West Java. Although the majority of West Java's population is Sundanese, there is still religious diversity among its adherents. Likewise, despite the dominance of Sundanese ethnicity, there is a wide variety of traditions and cultures (Kahmad, 2002). Interestingly, despite being Sundanese, there are many distinct traditions and cultural expressions. On the other hand, Islam entered the Nusantara, specifically the Pasundan region predominantly inhabited by Sundanese, in a way that did not cause conflict. Islam entered Sundanese lands using cultural or traditional approaches, engaging directly with the emotions of the local community. Despite the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, it did not result in the automatic disappearance of local traditions and cultures.

Local cultures often evolve, influenced by various teachings, including Islam, which then impacts local cultures. A concrete example of this is the *Bangbarongan* tradition of Marga Rahayu in Cipondoh, Cinunuk Village, Bandung Regency, West Java. This Sundanese tradition, known as the *Bangbarongan* or *Reak* ritual, is an

effort to preserve culture and introduce cultural values to future generations. This ritual, performed weekly by residents of Cipondoh and attended by the community, is an integral part of the socio-cultural life in the region (Koentjaraningrat, 1982).

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between culture and religion in the context of local traditions. Batubara, Badrun, and Muhajir (2022) examined the integration of the *Tepung Tawar* tradition in North Sumatra with religion, showing how this tradition creates a bridge between local beliefs and the larger religion. Hamzani (2020) examined the acculturation of local culture and Islam through the *Mersik* tradition in East Masbagik, focusing on the integration of religious and cultural texts. Yahya, Faizah and Soliqah (2022) studied acculturation in the *Wetonan* tradition in Java, highlighting the role of customs in maintaining spiritual values amid social change. Sujati (2019) observed how Sundanese culture acculturated with Islam, while Kusuma (2021) described the religious culture of Arab Malays in Jambi with a realistic ethnographic approach. Yani (2019) examined cultural and religious values in the *Melemang* tradition in South Sumatra, highlighting how this tradition serves to fend off disasters and maintain social values.

While these studies provide important insights into the integration of religion and culture, there is a lack of understanding of more specific local traditions, such as *Bangbarongan* in Cipondoh Village. Existing research tends to focus on larger traditions or specific cultural forms without delving deeply into the interaction between religion and culture in more specific local contexts (Choidab, Mudakir, Mubarok, Ramadayanto, & Supriadi, 2020). This research aims to fill this gap by exploring how the *Bangbarongan* tradition reflects the interaction between local religious and cultural values and its contribution to shaping social identity and community rights in the context of contemporary society.

Generally, *Bangbarongan* is interpreted philosophically as a form of greed, anger, and other negative traits. This is showcased in the performance to remind people to avoid such traits. Like other rituals, the *Bangbarongan* tradition has a structured performance involving dances, traditional music, and audience interaction to enhance the enjoyment of the performance. Despite its cultural origins, the *Bangbarongan* tradition retains aspects of religiosity within its practices. Unlike the common misconception that *Bangbarongan* is merely a festivity leading to negative societal impacts, such as individuals using the occasion to become intoxicated and lose control, which then undermines the perceived value of the tradition.

Therefore, this study aims to examine three main aspects of the *Bangbarongan* tradition: its inherent religious system, the influence of religion on its rituals, and the meaning of religiosity conveyed through this tradition. The main argument of this study asserts that the *Bangbarongan* tradition transcends its role as mere cultural preservation, serving instead as a dynamic platform that intertwines cultural heritage with religious teachings. This tradition embodies a profound integration of Islamic values and Sundanese cultural practices, functioning not only as a source of entertainment but also as a moral compass, a medium for social unity, and a spiritual guide. By emphasizing rituals, religious emotions, and belief systems, the *Bangbarongan* tradition promotes moral reflection, spiritual growth, and community harmony. Furthermore, its dual-purpose role as an

educational and cultural tool underscores its capacity to sustain cultural identity, reinforce social bonds, and preserve ancestral wisdom amid the challenges of modernization. Through these dimensions, this study highlights the significant role of the *Bangbarongan* tradition in safeguarding local identity and fostering cultural resilience in the face of societal transformations.

## METHOD

This study focuses on the *Bangbarongan* tradition of Kampung Cipondoh, Desa Cileunyi Kulon, and Bandung Regency, West Java, as the unit of analysis. The research specifically examines the *Bangbarongan* ritual as a cultural practice that embodies the acculturation of Sundanese traditions and Islamic teachings. By exploring this tradition, the study seeks to understand its influence on the religious and cultural identity of the local community and its role in preserving social harmony amidst societal changes.

A qualitative descriptive design was employed in this research, as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between cultural and religious elements within the *Bangbarongan* tradition (Sugiyono, 2022). The researcher chose the anthropological approach because it emphasizes the natural context of cultural phenomena, enabling the researcher to delve into the meanings, practices, and interactions experienced by the participants. This method aligns well with the study's objective of uncovering the deeper essence of this cultural ritual.

The researcher derived the data for this study from both primary and secondary sources (Melong, 2007). Primary data was collected through Personal Communications with key informants, including Rudi Munandar, the ritual leader, and Ari Junjunan, the head of the *Bangbarongan* ritual. The researcher gathered additional insights from Bah Enjoem, a community member actively involved in the ritual. Secondary data included relevant literature, such as theses, journals, and books that discuss similar topics, providing a theoretical framework and contextual understanding of the tradition.

Data collection involved multiple methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the *Bangbarongan* tradition. The researcher conducted in-depth Personal Communications using semi-structured guides, allowing informants to share their perspectives and experiences in detail. Participatory observations were carried out during the *Bangbarongan* rituals to gain firsthand insights into the practices and interactions. Document analysis was also employed, reviewing written and visual materials, such as photographs, videos, and texts related to the ritual. These methods collectively provided a rich and multidimensional dataset.

The researcher performed data reduction as the first step to filter and condense the collected information. The reduced data was then subjected to thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to the acculturation of culture and religion within the *Bangbarongan* ritual. This stage emphasized uncovering the deeper meanings and societal impacts of the tradition. Finally, the researcher synthesized the findings to reveal how the *Bangbarongan* tradition contributes to shaping cultural and religious identity and preserving local wisdom within the community. This comprehensive approach ensured a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Religious System Embedded in the Bangbarongan Tradition

This study identifies three core religious systems embedded in the *Bangbarongan* tradition of Desa Cileunyi Kulon, Kampung Cipondoh: the rite and ceremony system, religious emotions, and the belief system. These systems intertwine cultural heritage with spiritual practices, making the *Bangbarongan* tradition an integral aspect of Sundanese identity and community life. Each system contributes uniquely to the preservation of moral values, social harmony, and religious teachings in the region (Ruhaliah & Hernawan, 2019).

The rite and ceremony system forms the backbone of the *Bangbarongan* tradition, beginning with its etymology. The term "*Bangbarongan*" derives from "*Barong*," translated as "*Baong*," reflecting its roots in ancient Sundanese culture. The tradition serves as a medium to maintain social harmony through ceremonial performances that intertwine religious and cultural elements. As described by Rudi Munandar, the ritual leader,

"The *Bangbarongan* tradition is not just entertainment. It is deeply symbolic, teaching us to reflect on our lives and actions" (Rudi Munandar, Personal Communication, December 28, 2023).



**Figure 1.** Bangbarongan female and male mask

Rituals within this system are meticulously structured. The tradition begins with a symbolic act of placing the *Bangbarongan* at a grave, representing the burial of human vices. This act aligns with the community's belief that negative traits can be embodied and expelled during the ritual. The *Ma'lim*, or ritual guardian, leads the ceremony by preparing offerings such as eggs, coconuts, and incense, which are used to invite ancestral spirits to possess the *Bangbarongan*.

"Our role as *Ma'lim* is to ensure the sanctity of the ritual while guiding its spiritual purpose" (Ari Junjuran, the head of the *Bangbarongan* ritual, Personal Communication, December 28, 2023).

Music plays a vital role in the performance, with instruments like *tilingtiti*, *tong*, and *bedug* marking the rhythm of the ritual. Each instrument holds specific meanings; for instance, *tilingtiti* acts as a reminder of the risks in life, while *bedug* signifies a call to prayer, emphasizing the integration of religious teachings. The performers, known as *Nayaga*, are tasked with orchestrating these musical

elements, ensuring the ritual unfolds in harmony (Nugraha, 2022). The performance itself features dramatic portrayals of human flaws, where individuals wearing *Bangbarongan* masks enact symbolic struggles between good and evil.



**Figure 2.** *Bangbarongan* performance of musical instruments

Complementing the structured rituals are the religious emotions evoked during the *Bangbarongan* tradition. These emotions connect the participants to their spiritual beliefs and foster a shared sense of purpose. According to Koentjaraningrat (2000), religious emotions, even if brief, can drive individuals to act in alignment with their spiritual values. This is evident in the *Bangbarongan* performances, which reflect human vices such as greed, anger, and jealousy. These flaws are not merely depicted but are symbolically "released" during the ritual, creating a collective catharsis for the community.

The role of the *Bangbarongan* tradition in uniting the community is significant. It transcends age and social boundaries, involving entire families in its performances. During ceremonies like circumcisions, the tradition becomes a unifying force, fostering a sense of togetherness. As observed during fieldwork, the communal atmosphere is further enhanced by the shared meal at the end of the ritual, symbolizing harmony and gratitude.

"The *Bangbarongan* ritual helps us strengthen our relationships while teaching us to avoid negative behaviors." (Rudi Munandar, Personal Communication, December 28, 2023).

Finally, the belief system embedded in the *Bangbarongan* tradition highlights the integration of Islamic teachings with Sundanese cultural practices. Islam's emphasis on harmony between humans, nature, and the divine is reflected in the ritual's objectives. By portraying human flaws through symbolic characters, the *Bangbarongan* tradition serves as a moral compass, encouraging introspection and self-improvement. The community's belief in the mystical aspects of the ritual, such as the possession of *Bangbarongan* characters by ancestral spirits, adds a layer of spiritual depth. Despite its mystical elements, the tradition remains grounded in its educational purpose, teaching participants to balance their desires with moral and religious values. The *Ma'lim's* role in this belief system is particularly profound. As the ritual guardian, the *Ma'lim* must demonstrate wisdom and control, ensuring the ritual remains meaningful and impactful.

"Being a Ma'lim requires not only spiritual strength but also the ability to manage the emotional and symbolic aspects of the ritual." (Abah Nju Ma'lim, Personal Communication, December 28, 2021). Their guidance reminds the community of the importance of prayer, unity, and reflection.

In conclusion, the *Bangbarongan* tradition is a manifestation of the harmonious integration of cultural heritage and religious teachings. The rite and ceremony system, religious emotions, and belief system work together to create a deeply meaningful ritual that preserves Sundanese identity while aligning with Islamic principles.

"Bangbarongan is more than a tradition; it is a way for us to learn, connect, and stay true to our roots and beliefs." (Rudi Munandar, Personal Communication, December 28, 2023).

By maintaining this tradition, the community of Kampung Cipondoh ensures the continuity of its cultural and spiritual values amidst the challenges of modern life (Intani, 2019).

Thus, the findings of this study reveal that the *Bangbarongan* tradition possesses a multifaceted nature, where cultural heritage blends with religious elements to create a unique and meaningful practice. The rite and ceremony system serves as the structural backbone of this tradition, emphasizing symbolic acts such as the placement of the *Bangbarongan* at graves to embody and expel human vices. Music, as a crucial element of this tradition, not only enhances the ritual's atmosphere but also conveys spiritual reminders, such as the importance of prayer and introspection. The religious emotions evoked during the performances deepen participants' connections to their spiritual beliefs, fostering collective reflection on moral values and social harmony. Meanwhile, the belief system embedded in the *Bangbarongan* tradition bridges Islamic teachings with Sundanese cultural practices, creating a ritual that balances mystical elements with educational and moral objectives.

Therefore, the *Bangbarongan* tradition demonstrates how culture and religion can coexist harmoniously, showcasing how ancestral practices can adapt and align with Islamic values while retaining their essence. The structured rituals, musical elements, and symbolic portrayals serve as a moral compass, teaching individuals to reflect on their shortcomings and adopt better behaviors. These findings contribute to a broader understanding of how local traditions can sustain cultural identity and spiritual values amidst modernization. The tradition also highlights the role of community-led rituals in fostering unity, illustrating how collective experiences can strengthen relationships and instill shared moral principles. Furthermore, the crucial role of the Ma'lim underscores the importance of leadership and guidance in preserving the sanctity and purpose of the ritual. As a result, the *Bangbarongan* tradition enriches our understanding of the interaction between religion, culture, and society, emphasizing the need to preserve these practices as vital cultural assets in a rapidly changing world.



## 2. The Influence of Religion on the *Bangbarongan* Tradition

This study highlights the significant influence of Islamic values on the *Bangbarongan* tradition in Kampung Cipondoh, Desa Cileunyi Kulon. Islam entered the Sundanese land through cultural approaches introduced by the *wali* (saints), who spread the religion by aligning it with existing Sundanese cultural values, such as politeness, humility, and anti-greed (Ekadjati, 2009). These approaches facilitated the acceptance of Islamic teachings by the Sundanese community and laid the foundation for the integration of Islamic practices within local traditions. The *Bangbarongan* tradition exemplifies this synthesis, as it incorporates religious elements into its rituals, blending spiritual awareness with cultural practices.

One notable example of this integration is the requirement for participants to perform the dawn prayer (*salat Subuh*) before preparing for the *Bangbarongan* performance. As Supadie (2011) noted, this practice reflects the alignment of religious devotion with cultural rituals, emphasizing the importance of spiritual discipline. The inclusion of prayer at the start of the day symbolizes the community's commitment to intertwining spiritual practices with daily activities, reinforcing their relationship with God, fellow humans, and nature. The performance itself begins with these spiritual preparations, showcasing how religious acts enhance the significance of cultural traditions.

The *Bangbarongan* tradition also serves as a medium for moral education, illustrating the consequences of negative traits through symbolic acts. This aligns with the teachings of Surah Al-'Adiyat, verse 6 of the Qur'an, which states, "Indeed, man is very ungrateful to his Lord." This verse underscores human tendencies toward ingratitude and greed, warning against behaviors that lead to corruption and harm. In the context of the *Bangbarongan* performance, these vices are represented symbolically, allowing the community to reflect on their flaws and embrace virtues such as gratitude and humility. Starting with worship and ending with prayer, the tradition strengthens participants' spiritual awareness and fosters introspection about their actions (Siswantara, 2021).

Moreover, the staged representation of human flaws during the performance serves as a visual and moral reminder for the audience. Each scene within the ritual, from the depiction of greed to the resolution through prayer, illustrates the transformative power of spirituality in overcoming negative tendencies. This combination of performance and spiritual symbolism ensures that the *Bangbarongan* tradition transcends mere entertainment, offering participants and viewers a profound lesson in moral and religious values.

The *Bangbarongan* tradition also emphasizes the communal aspect of spirituality. By requiring collective prayer and reflection, the tradition fosters unity among participants and strengthens social bonds within the community. Ritual leaders, such as the *Ma'lim*, play a pivotal role in guiding the participants and ensuring that the spiritual essence of the tradition is preserved. As the head of the ritual, Ari Junjuran, stated,

"The integration of worship into our traditions allows us to maintain spiritual balance while honoring our cultural heritage" (Personal Communication, December 28, 2023).



### 3. The Religious Significance in the Bangbarongan Tradition

This study highlights the profound religious significance of the *Bangbarongan* tradition in Kampung Cipondoh, Desa Cileunyi Kulon. Religiosity, as defined by Miharja (2015), refers to the state or character of individuals who embrace religion, encompassing their understanding, enthusiasm, adherence to religious teachings, and how they apply these teachings in their daily lives. The *Bangbarongan* tradition serves not only as entertainment but also as a medium where cultural elements and religious teachings merge to convey moral and spiritual values to the community.

*Bangbarongan* is a performance art that showcases the Barong dance or animal representation, with performers wearing wooden masks and burlap costumes. This tradition usually takes place during special events such as circumcisions or Indonesian Independence Day celebrations. While widely recognized as popular entertainment, it also conveys profound messages through its symbolic elements. The musical instruments used in *Bangbarongan* performances, such as *tilingtit*, *tong*, *bedug*, and *brung*, hold philosophical meanings closely tied to religiosity (2022). For instance, *tilingtit* symbolizes a reminder to act cautiously in life, while *bedug* emphasizes the importance of prayer, serving as a call to worship Allah SWT.

Performers and community members summarize the meaning of *Bangbarongan*'s musical instruments in the message: "*Go immediately, do not delay, act promptly when it is time for prayer.*" The *Bangbarongan* performers and tradition uphold goodness through cultural expression, emphasizing the struggle between good and evil values and teaching the community to follow this principle. The performance also reflects the rhythm of human life, incorporating both good and bad aspects, illustrated through instruments like *badublag* and *brung*. Thus, the tradition serves not only as entertainment but also as a moral educational tool that strengthens relationships with God, fellow humans, and nature.

One of the most striking elements of this tradition is the symbolism of *Bangbarongan* being placed in a grave. According to Sandy, a *Bangbarongan* performer, the tradition places *Bangbarongan* in a grave to "invite" negative human traits. Although it is not literally buried, this placement symbolizes the connection between graves, often associated with the supernatural, and the negative traits inherent in humans. The performance then represents these negative traits, aiming to provide the community with life lessons.

"By showcasing negative traits in the performance, we hope the community can observe and learn to avoid them." (Personal Communication, 2022).

The *Bangbarongan* tradition acts as a collective reminder for the community to reflect on moral and spiritual values. Elements such as musical instruments, dances, and the symbolism of the grave create an experience that bridges culture and religious teachings. Community members overcome negative traits like greed, anger, and impatience through spiritual reflection and deliberate action for self-improvement, as taught by the tradition. In this way, *Bangbarongan* serves not only as a reflection of Sundanese cultural identity but also as a means to strengthen religiosity and moral awareness within the community.

In conclusion, the *Bangbarongan* tradition demonstrates how local culture can serve as a medium to convey religious teachings and reinforce moral values. Its symbolic elements function not only as entertainment but also as a profound educational tool, teaching the community to maintain their relationships with God, others, and the environment. The tradition reinforces the role of cultural arts as a medium for learning and preserving spiritual values amid the waves of modernization (Pals, 2012).

#### **4. Integration of Religious and Cultural Values in Bangbarongan Tradition as a Moral and Spiritual Education Tool**

This study identifies that the *Bangbarongan* tradition in Desa Cileunyi Kulon, Kampung Cipondoh, encompasses three core religious systems: ritual and ceremonial systems, religious emotions, and belief systems, focusing on their roles in supporting the cultural and spiritual identity of the community. This tradition serves as a bridge between cultural heritage and spiritual practices, making it a vital element in the identity and life of the Sundanese community. Each system plays a unique role in preserving moral values, social harmony, and religious teachings in the region. The structured rituals, use of traditional music, and symbolism in *Bangbarongan* portray the struggle against human vices, fostering collective reflection and introspection.

The existence of ritual and ceremonial systems in the *Bangbarongan* tradition explains why this practice endures amidst modernisation. Rapid social and technological changes influence how this tradition is practised, yet its spiritual elements remain preserved. For instance, the use of traditional music and symbolic rituals continues to attract the younger generation through contemporary adaptations, such as performances documented and disseminated via digital media. This demonstrates that modernisation, rather than threatening this tradition, can serve as a means to expand its reach and maintain its relevance. Rituals, such as placing the *Bangbarongan* at graves and the use of symbolic music, strengthen the community's connection to spiritual values. This study reveals that the combination of cultural and religious elements in this tradition creates profound emotional experiences, enabling participants to feel a strong spiritual connection. The belief system integrating Islamic teachings with Sundanese cultural practices illustrates how this tradition remains relevant, offering moral and spiritual guidance aligned with the needs of modern society.

The findings of this study align with Ekadjati's (2009) research, which states that cultural approaches by the *wali* (Islamic saints) facilitated the acceptance of Islam in Sundanese lands. However, this study goes further by emphasising the role of musical symbolism and ceremonies in *Bangbarongan* as tools for moral introspection. This symbolism, such as the use of *tilingtit* (traditional percussion instrument) and *bedug* (large drum used in Islamic rituals), conveys strong spiritual messages not detailed in previous studies. Additionally, Supadie's (2011) research highlighted the importance of prayer in the daily lives of the Sundanese people, whereas this study directly connects prayer to elements of the *Bangbarongan* tradition, such as spiritual preparations before ceremonies. Thus, the *Bangbarongan* tradition serves not only as a cultural expression but also as a medium for moral learning that integrates religious teachings with cultural practices.

Furthermore, this tradition shares similarities with various other Indonesian traditions that also reflect cultural and religious syncretism. For example, the *Nyadran* tradition in Desa Sono Ageng integrates local customs with Islamic values, emphasising gratitude and prayers for ancestors (Hasan, Taufiq, Hannan, & Enhas, 2023). Traditions such as *Marsiadapari* in North Sumatra and *Sijuju' Sulo* in South Sulawesi also highlight the importance of social cooperation and the adaptation of cultural practices to religious principles to support community harmony (Aricindy, Wasino, & Wijaya, 2023). Thus, this study enriches the understanding of how local traditions, such as *Bangbarongan*, function not only as cultural heritage but also as dynamic tools for moral and spiritual education.

The social significance of these findings lies in their ability to explain how local traditions like *Bangbarongan* can serve as tools for moral and spiritual education. In the current social context, the challenges of globalisation have encouraged communities to preserve their cultural identity while remaining relevant amidst changing times. The *Bangbarongan* tradition offers a model of harmony between preserving traditional values and adapting to modernity, making it a significant example of maintaining local values in the global era. This tradition is not merely entertainment but also a medium to strengthen communal values and introspection. Historically, this tradition reflects the Sundanese community's efforts to maintain harmony between Islamic teachings and their cultural heritage. Ideologically, this tradition demonstrates that modernisation does not necessarily eliminate traditional values but can reinforce them through relevant adaptations.

The *Bangbarongan* tradition has positive consequences by creating a space for the community to unite, reflect on human vices, and strengthen moral values. A concrete example of this is the collective dialogue that often occurs at the end of each ritual, where participants discuss the moral messages conveyed through the ritual's symbolism. This strengthens social solidarity and raises collective awareness of the importance of introspection and virtues. However, the challenge lies in maintaining the relevance of this tradition amidst modernisation and urbanisation. If not well-managed, there is a risk that the spiritual and symbolic meaning of this tradition may be overshadowed by commercial interests or lost on younger generations less interested in traditional culture.

Based on the research findings, strategic steps can be taken to preserve the *Bangbarongan* tradition as part of the cultural and spiritual identity of the Sundanese community. Cultural and religious education should be integrated into local curricula, making this tradition a medium for teaching moral and spiritual values through cultural approaches. Furthermore, the preservation of this tradition requires collaboration between local governments, religious leaders, and communities to document and promote it as a valuable cultural heritage. Digital media development is also crucial for attracting younger generations by adapting this tradition into formats such as short films or social media content without losing its spiritual and cultural essence. Training the younger generation through direct involvement in the elements of the *Bangbarongan* tradition, including music, dance, and symbolism, is essential to ensure its continuity. With strategic and collaborative approaches, the *Bangbarongan* tradition can continue to benefit the cultural and spiritual identity of the Sundanese community, making it an essential tool for maintaining religious and social values amidst the challenges of modernisation.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals several important findings about the *Bangbarongan* tradition in Kampung Cipondoh, Desa Cileunyi Kulon, West Java, particularly its profound intertwining of cultural and religious elements. The first key finding emphasizes the three main aspects of the *Bangbarongan* tradition: the embedded religious system, the influence of religion on its rituals, and the conveyed meaning of religiosity. These findings highlight that the tradition transcends its entertainment value to serve as a moral compass, a medium for social unity, and a spiritual guide. The second significant finding showcases how the *Bangbarongan* tradition balances cultural identity with Islamic values, preserving ancestral wisdom while adapting to the needs of a modern and heterogeneous community. Finally, the role of rituals, religious emotions, and belief systems illustrates the dynamic relationship between cultural practices and spiritual teachings, offering lessons in moral reflection and community harmony.

The added value of this research lies in its detailed exploration of how the *Bangbarongan* tradition functions as a dual-purpose medium. It not only provides entertainment but also serves as an educational tool that instills moral and spiritual values in the community. By analyzing the integration of Islamic principles within Sundanese cultural practices, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how traditional rituals can reinforce cultural identity, foster social bonds, and sustain local wisdom amid social changes.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. It focuses exclusively on Kampung Cipondoh, which may limit its generalizability to the broader Sundanese community. Additionally, the research primarily employs qualitative methods, leaving room for quantitative exploration of the tradition's impact on various aspects of community life. Future research could address these limitations by examining how the *Bangbarongan* tradition influences the younger generation, particularly in preserving cultural heritage and moral values. Moreover, further studies could investigate the socio-economic implications of the tradition on the Kampung Cipondoh community, exploring how this ritual contributes to cultural sustainability and economic development in a rapidly modernizing society. Through these findings, this research underscores the importance of preserving traditional practices like the *Bangbarongan* as a cultural and spiritual asset in the face of ongoing societal transformations.

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