Preserving Local Traditions in the Digital Age: Adapting the 'Mapak Tanggal' Ritual as an Intergenerational Solution

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Abstract:

This research focuses on the preservation of the "Mapak Tanggal" tradition in Mojo Village, East Java, amidst the challenges of the digital era. This tradition is an annual religious ritual that has an important role in strengthening social cohesion and maintaining the community's cultural identity. However, modernization and digitalization bring significant changes in participation patterns, especially among the younger generation who are more interested in technology than physical-based traditions. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation, involving religious leaders, community leaders, and cross-generational communities as key informants. Data analysis was conducted through a process of data reduction, data display, and verification to ensure the validity of the findings. The results showed that although digitalization affected the younger generation's participation in the tradition, the Mojo Village community successfully integrated technology as a preservation tool. Social media is used to document and promote the tradition of "Mapak Tanggal," thus attracting the interest of the younger generation and expanding audience reach. Religious leaders play an important role in maintaining a balance between cultural values and religious teachings through a moderate, inclusive approach. The findings suggest that technological adaptation can support the sustainability of local traditions without compromising their cultural and spiritual essence. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of an adaptive approach in the preservation of local traditions in the digital era.

Key Words: *Tradition Preservation, Digitalization, Mapak Tanggal, Religious Ritual, Social Media*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini berfokus pada pelestarian tradisi "Mapak Tanggal" di Desa Mojo, Jawa Timur, di tengah tantangan era digital. Tradisi ini merupakan ritual keagamaan tahunan yang memiliki peran penting dalam memperkuat kohesi sosial dan mempertahankan identitas budaya masyarakat. Namun, modernisasi dan digitalisasi membawa perubahan signifikan dalam pola partisipasi, terutama di kalangan generasi muda yang lebih tertarik pada teknologi dibandingkan tradisi berbasis fisik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, dan dokumentasi, melibatkan tokoh agama, pemimpin komunitas, dan masyarakat lintas generasi sebagai informan utama. Analisis data dilakukan melalui proses reduksi data, display data, dan verifikasi untuk

memastikan validitas temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun digitalisasi memengaruhi partisipasi generasi muda dalam tradisi, masyarakat Desa Mojo berhasil mengintegrasikan teknologi sebagai alat pelestarian. Media sosial digunakan untuk mendokumentasikan dan mempromosikan tradisi "Mapak Tanggal," sehingga menarik minat generasi muda dan memperluas jangkauan audiens. Tokoh agama memainkan peran penting dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara nilai-nilai budaya dan ajaran agama melalui pendekatan moderat yang inklusif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa adaptasi teknologi dapat mendukung keberlanjutan tradisi lokal tanpa mengurangi esensi budaya dan spiritualnya. Implikasi penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pendekatan adaptif dalam pelestarian tradisi lokal di era digital.

Kata Kunci: *Pelestarian Tradisi, Digitalisasi, Mapak Tanggal, Tradisi Keagamaan, Sosial Media*

INTRODUCTION

Local traditions have a vital role in shaping the social and cultural identity of Indonesian society (Firman & Haramain, 2022; Sulaeman et al., 2022; Suprapto et al., 2024). In the midst of cultural diversity, Mojo Village in East Java is one example of a community that has successfully maintained a unique tradition called "Mapak Tanggal" (Ilma & Susilawati, 2024; Kharisma, 2024; Wahab et al., 2024). This tradition is an annual religious ritual that not only functions as a form of worship but also as a means of strengthening social cohesion (Bhatt et al., 2024; Shalihin & Sholihin, 2022; Wahid, 2022). This tradition is an annual religious ritual that not only functions as a form of worship but also as a means of strengthening social cohesion (Al Zahra, 2024; Jeremiah, 2021; Sumbulah et al., 2022). However, in the modern era marked by technological development and globalization, challenges to the preservation of local traditions are increasing. Changes in the mindset of the younger generation, who are more familiar with technology, often make them less interested in traditions that are considered ancient (Shah et al., 2023; Tănase et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2022; Farwati, 2024). On the other hand, the people of Mojo Village have utilized technology to document and promote these traditions, primarily through social media. This reflects how traditional communities can adapt to maintain their cultural values amidst the pressures of modernization and digitalization.

Levin & Mamlok (2021), technology can be an effective tool to spread cultural awareness among the younger generation, who are more accustomed to the digital world—another research study found that social media plays an important role in promoting local traditions without compromising their core values (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Qalati et al., 2021; Tajpour et al., 2022; Ataman et al., 2024). However, this positive impact is not free from challenges, as highlighted by Laor (2024), who stated that digital media often emphasizes visual aspects over cultural substance, thus eroding the meaning of the tradition itself. In the context of religious traditions, a moderate approach that emphasizes harmony between religious and cultural values, as exemplified by the Walisongo, has proven effective in maintaining the continuity of local traditions. This literature provides a strong basis for understanding how technology can be utilized in cultural preservation without losing its essence.

This research aims to understand how the tradition of "Mapak Tanggal" in Mojo Village is preserved amidst the challenges of the digital era. The main focus of the research is to analyze how local communities adapt to social and technological changes while maintaining their traditions. The problem formulations raised in this study include: (1) what is the role of religious leaders in the preservation of this tradition? (2) to what extent does the participation of the younger generation affect the sustainability of this tradition? Moreover, (3) how can digitalization be both a challenge and an opportunity for the preservation of local traditions? This research also wants to explore the strategies used by the Mojo Village community in integrating cultural values with modern technology. Through this analysis, it is hoped that new insights can be found into the relationship between culture, religion and technology in the context of tradition preservation in the era of globalization.

This research assumes that the sustainability of local traditions is highly dependent on the community's ability to adapt to changing times, including the integration of technology in their implementation. The research also argues that religious figures play a central role as mediators between local traditions and religious teachings, allowing traditions such as "Mapak Tanggal" to remain relevant in a modern context. The provisional answers from this research show that although digitalization brings significant challenges, the tradition of "Mapak Tanggal" can still survive through creative and innovative adaptations. With an approach that combines modern technology and traditional cultural values, the people of Mojo Village have proven that the preservation of local culture is not only possible but can also be strengthened in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to understand the dynamics of preserving local traditions in Mojo Village, primarily related to the "Mapak Tanggal" activity. The focus of the research lies in analyzing the cultural practices and social interactions of the local community related to the adaptation of traditions in the digitalization era. This research design was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the social and cultural contexts that shape community perceptions and participation in religious and cultural activities (Abbas, 2020). This case study allows the researcher to explore the complexity of the phenomenon at a specific local level, as well as identify factors that influence the sustainability of traditions in the midst of changing times.

Sources of information in this study were obtained from interviews with a number of religious leaders, community leaders, and members of the Mojo Village community. Respondents consisted of religious leaders who are directly involved in religious and cultural activities, as well as people who actively participate. The selection of respondents was done using a purposive sampling technique, where informants were selected based on criteria of relevance to the

research theme and the depth of information that could be obtained from them. Informants provided diverse perspectives on the preservation of local traditions and the influence of digitalization on the practice.

The techniques used to collect data included in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation of activities. Interviews were conducted with religious leaders, community leaders, and the community to explore their views on the preservation of traditions and the use of technology in cultural activities. Observations were made during the activity to directly observe community participation and the adaptation of traditions to the times. Documentation in the form of photos and videos was also collected to document the process of preserving the tradition through social media.

Table 1. Coding of Interviewees in Data Collection Techniques

Source Code	Type of resource	Data Collection Technique
I_KHL	Religious Figure 1	Interview
I_KHS	Religious Figure 2	Interview
I_M1	Society - Young Generation	Documentation
I_M2	Society - Older Generation	Observation
I_LD	Community Leader	Observation

Table 1 shows the coding of the sources used in data collection. This code aims to maintain the privacy of the source while ensuring the relationship between the type of source and the data collection technique applied. In this study, the sources coded I_KHL and I_KHS are religious leaders who gave interviews and also played a role in observing the "Mapak Tanggal" activity. Meanwhile, interviewees I_M1 and I_M2 are community representatives who gave interviews related to the role of tradition in their lives and how technology is starting to be integrated into cultural activities. I_LD is a community leader who also provided interviews and direct observations related to social dynamics in the preservation of traditions.

The data collected in the study were analyzed through three main stages based on Miles and Huberman's data analysis approach: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification (Monaro et al., 2022). Data reduction, the researcher focused on coding data sources with the aim of maintaining confidentiality while ensuring a clear relationship between the type of source and the data collection techniques applied. In the data presentation stage, the information collected from various sources is presented in the form of a narrative that describes the social dynamics and changes in society related to the preservation of tradition. Drawing conclusions or verification is carried out by connecting the findings from interviews and observations, which are then analyzed to identify patterns or main themes related to the influence of technology on the preservation of tradition and the role of religious leaders and communities in this process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Dynamics of Preserving Local Traditions in the Digital Age

This research found that the preservation of local traditions in Mojo Village remains active despite the growing challenges posed by modernity and digitalization. Traditions such as "Mapak Tanggal", which is a religious activity that takes place every year, still show its existence and involve much participation from the community. This tradition is not only carried out as a religious ritual but also serves as a place to strengthen social cohesion between residents. In this activity, the community began to integrate religious values, especially Islam, into their cultural preservation practices. From the results of direct observation during the activity, it can be clearly seen that this tradition is able to survive and remain relevant to the community even though the growing digital world affects people's behaviour patterns and culture. The success in maintaining this tradition shows a relatively high cultural resilience in the midst of the swift flow of modernization.

From further observation, the "Mapak Tanggal" activity not only takes place in the form of rituals but also involves various layers of society of various ages, ranging from children to the elderly. In this tradition, the older community members act as directors, while the younger generation is more active and develops various aspects of the activity. This shows the importance of intergenerational cultural transmission. In addition, this activity also receives special attention from religious leaders who direct that the tradition is not only carried out as a habit but also as a means to get closer to God. Nonetheless, some younger generations show less interest in the implementation of this tradition due to their tendency to be more interested in technological developments. However, this observation also shows that there are adaptation efforts, where this activity has also begun to be promoted through digital platforms to attract the younger generation so that they remain connected to the inherited cultural values. To make it easier to understand the research findings above, it can be visualized as shown in Figure 1.
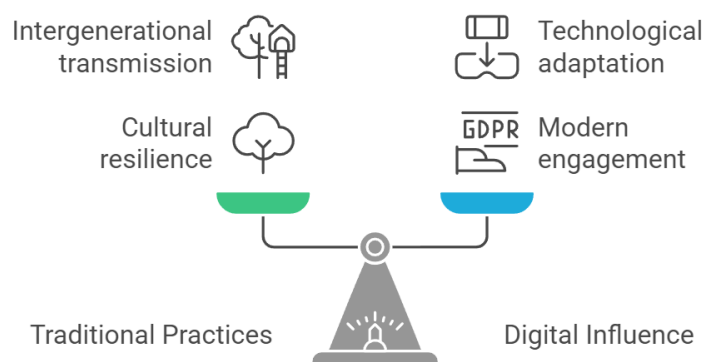

Figure 1. Balancing Tradition and Modernity in Mojo Village

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the tradition of "Mapak Tanggal" is still carried out with high enthusiasm by the people of Mojo Village despite the challenges of social change brought by digitalization.

Community participation in this tradition reflects that local religious and cultural values are still relevant and accepted by the younger generation, even though they live in an increasingly digitized world. The preservation of this tradition not only survives but also undergoes adaptation by using technology to attract the attention of more parties, especially the younger generation. This shows that local culture can be transformed to remain relevant in the modern era.

These results reinforce Ki Hajar Dewantara's theory on the importance of maintaining local culture as an integral part of national identity that must be preserved despite the challenges of the times. The adjustments made in the "Mapak Tanggal" tradition through the use of technology reflect an adaptation strategy that allows local traditions to survive without losing their fundamental values. This is also in line with the view of Islamic preaching that prioritizes moderation and humanism, as taught by Walisongo, who adapted Islamic teachings to local culture. The success of the Mojo Village community in maintaining this tradition shows that local culture and religion can go hand in hand, enrich each other, and support each other even in the era of globalization and advanced digitalization.

The Role of Religious Leaders in Raising Religious Awareness

The research also found that religious figures in Mojo Village play an important role in strengthening the religious awareness of the local community. Through interviews with several religious figures, such as KHL and KHS, it can be concluded that they are not only spiritual leaders but also serve as a link between local traditions and Islamic teachings. The moderate approach they use in conveying religious messages is efficient in keeping local traditions in line with Islamic teachings. These religious leaders are actively involved in community activities and work to ensure that religious and cultural celebrations are in line with the peaceful and tolerant principles of Islam.

In an interview with KHL, he emphasized, "We prioritize a compassionate approach in conveying the teachings of Islam, so that people feel valued and encouraged to preserve traditions that are in accordance with the Shari'ah" (I_KHL, 2023). This opinion is in line with the view of KHS, who said, "Local traditions are often an entry point to build a deeper understanding of Islam" (I_KHS, 2023). According to them, activities such as "Mapak Tanggal", which are part of local traditions, should be implemented by understanding the meaning and values contained in them. In this case, religious leaders use a more open and less dogmatic approach to ensure that religious teachings and local culture can coexist without causing conflict (I_KHL, 2023). Religious leaders also emphasize the importance of maintaining the integrity of religious teachings while respecting and preserving local culture as part of community identity (I_KHS, 2023). From the interviews conducted with several informants, a thematic analysis was conducted to find themes and important findings so that they could then be categorized, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis

Theme	Findings	Category
The Role of Religious Leaders in Directing the Community	Religious leaders play an important role as a link between local traditions and Islamic teachings. They use a moderate and compassionate approach.	The Role of Spiritual Leaders
A Moderate Approach to Religious Preaching	Religious messages are delivered with a compassionate approach, avoiding harsh dogma and respecting local traditions.	A Moderate Approach to Religion
Synergy of Local Tradition and Islam	"Mapak Tanggal" and other local traditions are maintained and adapted to the peaceful and tolerant teachings of Islam.	Synergy of Culture and Religion
Active Involvement in Social and Religious Activities	Religious leaders are involved in every community activity and work to ensure harmony between local traditions and religious teachings.	Involvement in Community Activities

Table 2 shows that religious leaders in Mojo Village have a vital role in directing the community to preserve religious traditions that are in line with Islamic teachings. Although the world continues to develop and digitalization provides its challenges, religious leaders act as an effective link between local traditions and religious teachings. Through a moderate and compassionate approach, religious leaders have succeeded in making local traditions not only accepted but also valued as an important part of the community's social and religious life. Although there has been some decline in interest from the younger generation, especially with regard to more physically-based traditions, the approach used by these religious leaders has been successful in maintaining the continuity of local traditions and culture. Their active role in assisting the community, both in religious and cultural activities, shows that religious leaders are not only spiritual leaders but also protectors of social values that are important for community identity.

Digitalization Challenges to Religious Traditions

Digitization and rapid access to information bring significant challenges to the preservation of religious traditions in Mojo Village. Documentation collected from village archives and activity records shows a decline in participation in some local traditions, such as communal prayers before harvest. However, more extensive traditions such as "Mapak Tanggal" have survived, albeit with slight changes in the way they are carried out. Some of the younger generations are beginning to show a tendency to prefer technology-based activities over physically following traditions. In some cases, religious and cultural activities have begun to be carried out more practically, utilizing social media as a means of communication and promotion. Image documentation related to the "Mapak Tanggal" activity that can be accessed through various digital platforms shows the community's involvement in this tradition. However, there is a change in the pattern of participation of the younger generation, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. "Mapak Tanggal" tradition
(Source : Kompasiana.com)

The documentation further reveals that despite the decline in the participation of younger generations in traditional religious activities, community leaders and religious leaders have begun to adapt to the times. One example of such adaptation is the use of social media platforms to spread religious and cultural messages. Like, a short video about the "Mapak Tanggal" tradition was uploaded on social media to educate the community, especially the younger generation, about the importance of maintaining the tradition. Documentation taken during the execution of this tradition shows how social media has become one of the main channels for disseminating information about the activity to a broader audience. Although many younger generations are more interested in the digital world, they can still connect with the tradition through more accessible platforms. This shows that the tradition is adapting to the times despite significant challenges in terms of participation.
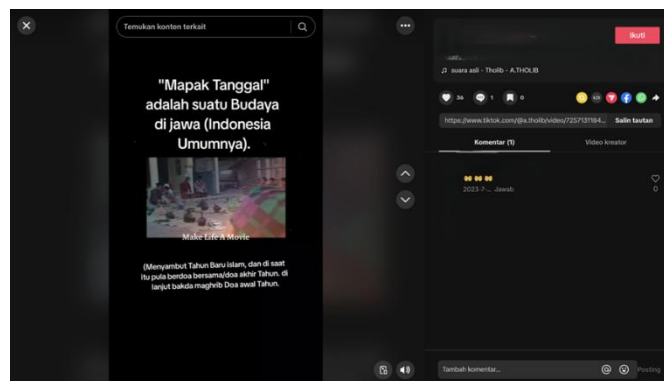

Figure 3. "Mapak Tanggal" tradition on social media
(*Source : Tiktok*)

Although digitalization brings significant challenges to the preservation of religious traditions in Mojo Village, efforts to adapt to technological developments can be considered quite successful. Documentation shows that despite a decline in the number of younger generations participating in traditional religious activities, adaptation measures such as the use of social

media to spread religious and cultural messages have helped bridge the gap. Videos and images uploaded to digital platforms show how the "Mapak Tanggal" tradition is being promoted in a way that is more accessible to the community, especially the younger generation. Traditions that have been carried out physically are now being introduced in digital form to attract the attention of more people, especially the younger generation, who are more familiar with the digital world. Therefore, the challenges faced do not hinder the preservation of traditions but rather demonstrate the ability of the community to transform with the times.

One of the important findings in this study is that the "Mapak Tanggal" tradition in Mojo Village is able to survive despite the challenges of digitalization. In particular, although some younger generations prefer technology-based activities, this tradition still shows significant participation from the community, with the support of technology that facilitates the preservation process. The findings imply that local traditions can adapt and evolve with the times. This is important because it shows that traditions do not have to be maintained in a rigid and static form but can be adapted to social dynamics and technological developments. By integrating technology, such as social media, into traditional practices, communities not only preserve cultural values but also introduce traditions to a broader audience, especially younger generations who are more familiar with the digital world. This implementation not only maintains the continuity of the tradition but also proves that cultural preservation can be done in a way that is relevant in a modern context.

The findings also show the important role of technology in bridging the gap between the younger generation and local traditions. The presence of technology, mainly social media platforms, allows people to connect with traditions that are increasingly marginalized in their daily lives. The previously observed decline in participation in the younger generation, as found in this study, suggests that they tend to be more interested in digital activities than physical activities associated with traditions. Therefore, the use of social media to promote the tradition of "Mapak Tanggal" becomes very relevant in maintaining the sustainability of the tradition. Technology can facilitate cultural exchange and allow communities to maintain their cultural identity without being trapped in outdated traditional forms (Finau & Scobie, 2022; Sansone, 2022; Shafi et al., 2021). As such, the adaptation of traditions through technology can create greater engagement from the younger generation and bring them closer to cultural values that they may have considered old-fashioned or irrelevant.

The research also highlights the important role of religious figures in Mojo Village in maintaining harmony between local traditions and religious teachings. Religious figures in this village not only function as spiritual leaders but also play an active role in ensuring that religious and cultural traditions continue in a way that is in harmony with Islamic teachings. They use a moderate and compassionate approach in steering the community away from dogmatic

thinking, thus keeping local traditions acceptable within the context of religious teachings. This finding implies that religious leaders play a central role in facilitating the adaptation of traditions to religion, creating an inclusive space for communities to maintain their traditions without having to sacrifice religious teachings. As suggested by Farsi (2021), the Walisongo in the historical study of Islam in Indonesia, a moderate approach that prioritizes tolerance and integration of local culture, is one of the keys to success in effective Islamic proselytization.

The challenges faced by religious leaders in integrating local traditions with religious teachings remind us of the complexities involved in preserving cultural traditions in the midst of rapid social change. This research shows that the use of a moderate approach by religious leaders allows communities to maintain traditions without having to feel the tension between religion and local culture. This is in line with Islamic da'wah theory, which prioritizes an adaptation process that does not impose religious teachings on local culture but instead adjusts both harmoniously. A study by Muhdlor et al. (2021) in the context of da'wah in Indonesia underlines the importance of the role of religious leaders in managing differences and maintaining harmony between religion and culture. With a flexible and understanding approach, religious leaders can encourage people to see local traditions as part of religious practices that can be interpreted more deeply, not as practices that contradict religious teachings.

Furthermore, the findings of this study show that although digitalization brings challenges to the active participation of the younger generation in traditional activities, adaptive approaches through the use of social media have proven effective in increasing their involvement. Images and videos uploaded on digital platforms such as TikTok to promote "Mapak Tanggal" serve as concrete examples of how technology can change the way traditions are implemented and introduced. The findings imply that, despite the declining trend of participation in physically-based traditions, the presence of social media can be used to bridge generational differences and strengthen social bonds between citizens. The adaptation of traditions to digital platforms is not only beneficial for local communities who want to preserve their culture but also opens up access to a broader audience that was not previously exposed to the practice. In line with Del Soldato and Massari (2024) opinion, digitalization can act as a catalyst in the preservation of cultural traditions that facilitate the spread of social values, even in this globally connected era.

The decline in the younger generation's participation in physically-based traditions, described in this study, shows the tension between technological development and tradition maintenance. Nonetheless, efforts to adapt the "Mapak Tanggal" tradition through social media provide a practical solution to maintain its sustainability. Research by Leal-Rodríguez et al. (2023) shows that digital platforms, when used strategically, can increase cultural awareness, even among younger generations who prefer the digital world. Therefore, the

utilization of social media in this context not only encourages greater engagement from the younger generation but also facilitates the preservation of cultural traditions that are more inclusive and in line with the needs of the times. The technological adaptation undertaken by the people of Mojo Village, as seen in the documentation and promotion of the "Mapak Tanggal" tradition on social media, can serve as an example for other regions that face similar challenges in maintaining their traditions amidst the rapid development of the times.

CONCLUSION

This tradition not only functions as a religious ritual but also as a means of strengthening social cohesion in the community. This finding teaches that local culture can survive and transform, adapting to the times without losing the fundamental values contained in it. Utilizing technology, especially social media, can make this tradition relevant and accepted by younger generations who are more accustomed to the digital world. Therefore, cultural preservation requires not only conventional approaches but also openness to change and integration with technology, thus bridging the gap between generations and bringing wider social benefits.

This research makes a significant contribution to the understanding of local tradition preservation in the digital age. By focusing on the integration of technology in the implementation of religious and cultural traditions, this research introduces adaptive ways that allow culture to evolve without losing its essence. It also enriches the existing literature by introducing a new dimension in tradition preservation, namely through the active role of social media in promoting and sustaining cultural practices. Nonetheless, this research has limitations in terms of scope, which is limited to one village and a particular community group. Therefore, further research is needed to explore variations in a broader population, including gender differences, age, and more holistic research methods, in order to gain a more comprehensive insight into the adaptation of traditions in different social contexts.

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