

Cultural Preservation Efforts: Case of *Reyog* Art Performance at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University, Indonesia

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Abstract

The local cultural arts reflect the wisdom of a region and should be preserved. The *reyog* dance is a cultural heritage originating from Ponorogo regency. It holds historical, artistic, and social significance that is crucial to safeguard. This paper aims to describe the preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* cultural arts at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University, outline future preservation challenges, and explore the Islamic value of the art. The research methodology used is qualitative. Data was collected through interviews and supported by literature related to *Reyog Ponorogo*. The study results demonstrate that the preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo's* local cultural arts at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University is facilitated through the Student Activity Unit of *Paguyuban Seni Reyog Mahasiswa Simo Budi Utomo* and via a literary collection housed in the *Reyog Corner* at the university library. To preserve the *Reyog Ponorogo* culture, the *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit plans to use communication strategies, education, legal protection, community involvement, technological innovation, and explore the meaning of this art form. *Reyog Ponorogo* dances hold Islamic meaning. Islamic values are ingrained in the preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* in *Simo Budi Utomo* unit, namely love for Allah, the spirit of struggle and hard work, discipline, solidarity, and cohesiveness in teamwork.

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INTRODUCTION

The existence of Muhammadiyah as an '*amr ma'rūf nahy munkar*' 'enjoining good and forbidding evil' movement has helped promote cultural moderation (Anwar, 2005). One cultural element that KH Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah, used in preaching was the violin (Fanani et al., 2021). The use of the violin symbolized several meanings, such as the courage to stand out, the ability to convey instrumental da'wah, and the breakthrough in breaking tradition. It's important to note that the violin represents a spirit, not sharia (Beck, 2014). It is also not a standard but an inspiration to create religious harmony, signifying the ability to do things that go beyond the ordinary. The violin is not a standard that must be revered, but rather the courage to be open to accusations of being a *kāfir* for breaking traditional norms (Kusumawati et al., 2023).

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic organization that follows the Qur'an and Hadith while also valuing culture (Bush & Fealy, 2014). This duality is reflected in official documents such as the Cultural Da'wah, Islamic Cultural Arts, and the Guidelines for Islamic Life of Muhammadiyah Citizens. Despite being seen as a puritanical Islamic movement (Afandi, 2022), Muhammadiyah promotes a pure Islamic interpretation by purifying elements deemed syncretic (Susilo & Dalimunthe, 2019). The organization's approach involves cultural purification and an appreciation for art that aligns with its Islamic principles (Afandi, 2022). This positions Muhammadiyah between radical puritanism and radical culture, aiming to develop an appreciation for art that is in harmony with its beliefs (Aprillianti et al., 2022).

Muhammadiyah has been criticized for being "anticultural", but during the 2000 *Tanwir* Session in Bali, it adamantly promoted cultural propaganda by declaring that art and culture are not only eternal but also the gift of God (Anwar, 2005). This mindset was established at the National

Conference XXII in Aceh in 1995, where it was determined that: (1) art is inherently human; (2) the law of art is acceptable as long as it does not harm, endanger, or separate people from God; and (3) art meant to elevate the standard of faith is considered worship. In 2000, at the National Conference XXIV in Jakarta, this attitude was further emphasized, leading to the continuation of cultural propaganda, which persists to this day (Kurnianto et al., 2020). Human life and cultural products are inseparable. Art, as a part of culture, is a human nature gifted by Allah to express beauty, truth, and goodness creatively (Rizali, 2012). Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic movement advocating for good deeds and discouraging wrongdoing with the spirit of renewal, carries out its mission in various aspects of human life, including education, health, social, economics, arts and culture, and other areas (Fanhas & Khomaeny, 2018).

Local culture is an ancestral historical heritage that needs to be preserved (D' Costa & Habib, 2024). In the age of globalization, westernization is seen as a threat to local culture, with younger generations showing less interest. According to Nurhasanah et al., (2021), the *Reyog Ponorogo* art is a significant cultural heritage of the Ponorogo regency, and it should be preserved by the people, especially those from the Ponorogo Regency (Clara van Groenendael, 2008). Irianto highlighted the importance of traditional arts evolving into entertainment commodities with commercial elements in line with the development of national civilization (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). The history and development of *Reyog Ponorogo* have resulted in various models of *reyog* art performances, including: (1) Traditional *Reyog*, which serves as the foundation for the art form and has gained recognition from all sectors. (2) *Reyog Pelajar*, focused on preserving *reyog* within the school environment. (3) *Reyog Pusaka*, a performance based on strict rules encompassing equipment, attire, and dance art. (4) *Reyog Obyog*, prioritizing togetherness and entertainment. (5) *Reyog Santri*, an art performance developed by Islamic boarding schools in Ponorogo, emphasizing modesty and Islamic values (Nurhidayah et al., 2017) (Susanto et al., 2023).

Traditional art is closely associated with ritual processions and is not only a form of entertainment, but also a means of sacred collective expression (Arifianto, 2021). During *reyog* performances, it is believed that magical assistance from other realms is used to initiate the performance (Damayanti et al., 2020). *Reyog* performances involve sacred power that is manifested through the use of verbal power in the form of mantras and magical rituals closely associated with the role of shamans (Andini & Alfary, 2023)(Harsono et al., 2020)(Yurisma & Bahrudin, 2020). As a result, the phenomenon of trance and possession is often observed in *reyog* performances, leading the *reyog* dancers to perform extreme acts, such as eating broken glass (Andini & Alfary, 2023).

The history of *Reyog Ponorogo* has multiple versions, one of which is related to the Islamization led by Bathoro Katong in Ponorogo. Bathoro Katong adopted Islam under the guidance of Ki Ageng Mirah, and together they worked to spread Islam (Idha et al., 2022). During this period, *Reyog Ponorogo* art already existed, and Bathoro Katong used it as a means for Islamic outreach. The *Taşbîh* bead hanging from the peacock's beak is considered a sign of Bathoro Katong's strategy to convey da'wah messages through the visual elements of *Reyog Ponorogo* art, intending for people to always remember dhikr (Nurhidayah et al., 2017).

Over time, the symbol of Islamization has become the foundation for several *Reyog Ponorogo* art groups to incorporate Islamic elements into *reyog*. This has led to the appreciation of *Reyog Ponorogo* art by Islamic boarding schools and educational institutions, making it a significant cultural art form among students (Izharuddin, 2011). For instance, Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University has been actively involved in preserving local cultural arts by establishing the Student Activity Unit of *Paguyuban Seni Reyog Mahasiswa Reyog Simo Budi Utomo* (*Simo Budi Utomo* Unit). Additionally, the Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University library houses a collection of literature related to *reyog* culture known as the *Reyog Corner*. Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University is even referred to as "The *Reyog* University," with the word "*Reyog*" being an acronym for "Religious, Excellent, Objective, Great" (Humas UMPO, 2021).

There are several studies discussing local cultural preservation that have been published in international journals. These include a review on cultural heritage preservation through dance digitalization by Reshma et al. in 2023 (Reshma et al., 2023), a study on the conservation and preservation challenges and threats in the development of cultural heritage: The case of the Kawo Amado Kella Defensive Wall (KAKDW) in Wolaita, Southern Ethiopia by Abebe & Madda Gatisso in 2023 (Abebe & Madda Gatisso, 2023), a paper on the digitization of myth: The HimmapanVR Project's role in cultural preservation by Chernbumroong et al. in 2024 (Chernbumroong et al., 2024), and a preliminary study on the use of a hydrotalcite isopropanol dispersion for deacidification and preservation of cellulose cultural heritage objects by Králik et al. in 2024 (Králik et al., 2024). In addition, there are several articles about the cultural preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* art. Nurhayati wrote an article titled "Assistance in Preserving *Reyog Kendang* Local Wisdom: Character Education Efforts and Art Skills in Sidomulyo Pagerwojo Tulungagung Elementary School Students" (Nurhayati, 2022). Aulia and Setyaningsih also contributed an article entitled "Communication Strategy of SMPN 1 Jetis in Preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* Cultural Arts" (Rila Setyaningsih, 2019). Kurniawati and Sultoni wrote an article titled "Extracurricular *Reyog* in Fostering a Love of *Reyog* Art in Students in Ponorogo" (Kurniawati, 2017).

These articles discuss the preservation of *reyog* cultural arts in various educational institutions. However, there seems to be a gap in discussing the preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* cultural arts in higher education. Therefore, this paper focuses on the following topics: First, the preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University. Second, the future challenges of the university in preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* culture. Third, the meaning of *Reyog Ponorogo* dance in Islam and its preservation.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological studies research type. In this case, the researcher describes the human life experience of a particular phenomenon. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences of several individuals who have experienced this phenomenon. This design has a solid philosophical basis and involves conducting interviews (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative research, data collection is carried out by asking informants questions, collecting specific data from informants, analyzing data, and interpreting the meaning of the data. The setting of this research is in Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University, especially in the Student Activity Unit of *Paguyuban Seni Reyog Mahasiswa Simo Budi Utomo* and in *Reyog* corner of the library in Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University. In order to explore the data, qualitative data sampling was done purposively, using a combination of collection techniques known as triangulation. The data analysis approach employed was inductive/qualitative, with an emphasis on deriving meaning from the research results. The researcher conducted observations and interviews with the Chairperson of the *Simo Budi Utomo* unit and the librarian at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University in November 2023. Additionally, data related to *Reyog Ponorogo* was collected from various literature sources. The data analysis used the Interaction Analysis Model by Miles and Huberman, which involves several steps including data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification (conclusion) as outlined by Sugiyono (Sugiyono, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* Cultural Art at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University

One way to preserve local culture is by supporting educational institutions (Priatna, 2017). Muhammadiyah is an organization and movement involved in promoting good deeds and preventing vices, which is open to artistic and cultural influences. The Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University is part of the Muhammadiyah Higher Education Research and Development Council, and actively works to preserve local cultural arts, specifically *Reyog Ponorogo*. Located in the city of *Reyog*, Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University participates in sustaining local culture through the

Student Activity Unit of *Paguyuban Seni Reyog Mahasiswa Simo Budi Utomo*, which performs at various events, and *Reyog Corner*, which houses literature related to *reyog* culture.

Hendra Cahyono, as the leader of *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit, established the unit based on the Department Student Association of Management. The idea for founding the *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit emerged during a generational crisis when there was a growing awareness of the need to preserve local art and culture. The unit was officially established on March 8, 2004, with the approval of the Rector Decree Number 079/1.I/N/III/2004. The name */Simo/* is derived from the 'tiger', which is the main symbol in the *reyog* art, representing a tiger's head. */Budi Utomo/* comes from the campus address, located on *Jalan Budi Utomo*. The name */Budi Utomo/* attached to the student *reyog* serves as a reminder to the entire community, especially the Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University academic community, that the art of *Reyog Ponorogo* embodies noble messages and encourages the development of virtuous individuals, known as *wong Ponorogo; akhlāqul-karīmah* (UKM Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, 2007).

Simo Budi Utomo Unit was initially created to honor *Reyog Ponorogo* and to involve the academic community on campus. The organization was established as a Student Activity Unit under the Rector's Decree of Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University. As a unit, *Simo Budi Utomo* has a formal document containing guidelines, technical implementation, and organizational rules. A supervisor lecturer in the unit acts as a guide, director, and liaison between the *reyog* unit management and the University (Cahyonno, 2023).



Figure 1. Basecamp of *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit

Simo Budi Utomo unit was established with several goals in mind: First, to nurture the talents and interests of students in the art of *Reyog Ponorogo*. Second, to actively preserve and develop the art of *Reyog Ponorogo* as a form of concern for campus residents. Third, to restore the image of *Reyog Ponorogo*, which had been negatively impacted by irresponsible elements, and reclaim it as a symbol of artistry and cultural significance (UKM Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, 2007).

In a well-organized manner, *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit conducts studies and developments in the field of *reyog* art based on *pakem* 'standart', which is currently a subject of debate and contention among different parties. The organization adopts a scientific approach to ensure that their studies and art creations are not confined to any single *pakem* recognized by specific parties. Instead, they consider all existing *pakem* without discrimination, using them as the foundation for their research (Cahyonno, 2023).

The innovative approach of *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit in interpreting *reyog*, incorporating aesthetic, philosophical, educational, and religious elements while honoring the traditional *pakem* 'standart', has received positive recognition from a wide range of groups, including the *warok*, the *Reyog Ponorogo* Foundation, various government and private organizations, and the broader

community (Clara van Groenendael, 2008). The strong demand for performances from these groups serves as tangible evidence of this positive reception.

Since being officially established according to the Rector's Decree, *Simo Budi Utomo*'s students have been able to participate and achieve notable success in various *reyog* festivals. This is supported by twice-weekly rehearsals, which consist of *reyog* training and creative dance training. The regular rehearsals are organized independently by the unit management and members, but for certain events such as performance rehearsals, external trainers are brought in by the unit management. The work of *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit is showcased in various events on their YouTube page, including the National *Reyog Ponorogo* Festival, *Grebeg Suro*, and others.

As a *reyog* studio affiliated with an Islamic campus, *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit aims to integrate Islamic culture into its practices. This includes beginning rehearsals with prayers for Allah's blessing, incorporating Islamic values into the characters' portrayals, and abstaining from alcohol consumption before performances (Subagyarjo, 2022). *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit is part of *Reyog Santri*, a form of *Reyog Ponorogo* performance art that incorporates Islamic symbols and values into its system (Kurnianto & Lestarini, 2016)(Kurnianto, 2017)(Nugroho & Sungkowo, 2016). *Reyog Santri* is distinguished from other forms of *reyog* by its dress code, which adheres to principles of modesty by covering all limbs and including a headscarf for the *jathil* 'horse dance' dancer, and its depiction of characters is very mindful of individualistic and shirking (associating partners with Allah) behaviors (Kurnianto, 2017).

In addition to preserving *reyog* culture as an art form, Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University also aims to preserve *reyog* as a literary art. The university library plans to establish a dedicated section featuring local Ponorogo content and *reyog* art. *Reyog* has become the signature art form of Ponorogo Regency in East Java, making Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University's library a hub for information about Ponorogo and *reyog* art (Priatna & Pratiwi, 2021). The collection in this section will encompass research, books, scientific articles, teaching materials, and any other information related to Ponorogo and *reyog*.



Figure 2. *Reyog* Corner at Library of Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University

The Future Challenges of Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University In Preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* Culture

Preserving the cultural heritage of *Reyog Ponorogo* presents several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its sustainability and relevance in the future. One critical aspect is the need for effective communication strategies and educational initiatives to raise awareness and instill a sense of pride and responsibility toward preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* (Rila Setyaningsih, 2019). Additionally, one of the key challenges is the need for collaborative efforts from various stakeholders, including governments, institutions, and communities, to ensure the preservation of

cultural heritage for future generations (Abd Rahman et al., 2023). This collaborative approach is essential to overcome obstacles and develop effective strategies for maintaining *Reyog Ponorogo* as a vital part of Indonesian cultural heritage (Riyadi et al., 2023).

Legal protection and recognition are crucial for safeguarding cultural expressions such as *Reyog Ponorogo* (Asri, 2018). Legal frameworks that focus on traditional cultural expressions as regional assets provide a basis for their protection and support. For example, regulations emphasizing the urgency of protecting traditional cultures, as seen in the case of Gorontalo, highlight the importance of legal safeguards for national cultural heritage. *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit has been actively involved in preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* since 2004 when the Rector's Decree was issued regarding the establishment of the cultural community. Over the past two decades, *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit has made significant progress and achievements.

Moreover, the use of digital technologies can significantly contribute to the preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo*. Digital preservation and access of heritage knowledge can ensure that cultural resources are documented and secured for future generations (Ahmad & Sharma, 2020). *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit also documents its activities through its Instagram account @simobudiutomo_official and its official YouTube account, Simo Budi Utomo Official. Additionally, implementing digital marketing strategies can help promote *Reyog Ponorogo* equipment and products, reaching a wider audience and ensuring its sustainability (Wijayanto et al., 2022).

Preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* culture requires a multi-faceted approach. Education and awareness are crucial in this effort. Integrating cultural education into the curriculum of educational institutions can help instill pride and appreciation for local traditions among the younger generation (Kurniawan & Sitaviana, 2022). Promoting historical literacy and cultural tourism through monuments and museums dedicated to *Reyog Ponorogo* can further raise awareness and interest in this traditional art form (Rohim et al., 2023). To fulfill this initiative, UMPO aims to collect and provide various literature related to *Reyog Ponorogo*. The library of Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University participates in educating the younger generation to preserve local culture.

Addressing the future challenges of preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* culture requires effective communication strategies, educational initiatives, legal protection, community involvement, technological innovation, and a deeper exploration of the cultural significance of this art form. Collaboration, digital innovation, education, and cultural promotion need to enhance attractiveness to the public, especially the younger generation. By combining these efforts, stakeholders can work towards ensuring the longevity and relevance of *Reyog Ponorogo* for future generations.

The Meaning of *Reyog Ponorogo* Dance in Islam

In *reyog* performances, several main dances include *warok*, *jathil*, *bujangganong*, *dadakmerak*, and *klanasewandana*. In each of these dances, the value of Islamic Education is evident. Each component carries significance from an Islamic perspective. The *warok* figure in *reyog* art is a charismatic figure, serving as a role model for the Ponorogo community in their way of life. *Warok* holds a central position in the art of *Reyog Ponorogo*. Thus, in the *reyog* dance performance, *warok* always appears at the beginning of the stage or as a guard/retainer of King Klana Sewandana (Kencanasari & Lisa, 2009)(Kurnianto, 2017). The *warok* figures usually consist of *warok sepuh* and *warok muda*. *Warok sepuh* embodies the "perfection" of a character. In this role, *warok sepuh* serves as a life model, advising on attitudes, words, and actions while motivating *warok muda* to continually strive for success and growth (Kurnianto, 2016)(Kurnianto, 2017).

The characteristics of a *warok* in general are as follows: 1) knowledgeable and influential; his knowledge and magic are not for himself but are used for the benefit of his family and community; 2) willing to sacrifice for the public interest; 3) a protector of family, community, nation and state; 4) likes to work hard selflessly, without thinking about profit and loss when it is his ability; 5) has an honest and responsible character; 6) is fair to anyone; 7) has a yielding character, is gentle but firm in his stance; and 8) has a *wirai* character, which means avoiding something vague or unclear

(Kencanasari & Lisa, 2009). *Warok* also means *tawadu* (humble and not arrogant), which is based on the word of Allah in Quran Surah Al-Isra' verse 37 (Kurnianto, 2017).



Figure 3. Five Main Dances of *Reyog Ponorogo* by *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit

Jathil dancers are an essential part of *reyog* performances, alongside *dadak merak* (Nugroho & Sungkowo, 2016). The *Jathil* dance embodies a patriotic attitude, drawing inspiration from the word of God QS. Al-Anfal verse 60 (Kurnianto, 2016). This dance symbolizes enthusiasm, agility, and alertness to life's challenges, reflecting the essence of the *Reyog Ponorogo* dance (Kurnianto, 2017). The *Jathil* dance in *reyog* portrays horse troops, symbolizing swiftness and agility (Nugroho & Sungkowo, 2016).



Figure 4. *Jathil* dancer of *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit

Pujangganong is the character of Pujangga Anom's chief minister, who is always tough, cheerful, funny, and humorous and always creates excitement, illustrating that life in the world is not always smooth and straight (Kurnianto, 2016). Pujangga Anom has been portrayed as someone who embodies self-sacrifice, the spirit of devotion to the state/kingdom, and is always ready to carry out tasks with full responsibility. The figure of *pujangganong* exudes high optimism, as mentioned in the Qur'an Surah Yusuf verse 87. The characteristics of Pujangga Anom's chief minister are reflected in *Pujangganong's* dance movements (Pujiani, 2009). In *pujangganong* dance performances, the dominant focus is often on humor and cuteness, overshadowing the important messages of noble life attitudes. More recently, there have been variations of the *pujangganong* mask that give off a "rude", "terrible" impression, tending to depict the character as rude, creepy, and immoral. However, the philosophy of *pujangganong* depicts the figure of a chief minister who is honest, modest, and patient (Kurnianto, 2017).



Figure 5. Warok Dance behind *Klanasewandana* in performing by Simo Budi Utomo Unit

The figure of *kelanasewandana* illustrates how a leader should exercise leadership fairly and wisely. In addition, leaders must also have scientific integrity and personality integrity. The scientific integrity staged through this dance is manifested in the figure of *klanasewandana* as a person who is *sakti mandra guna* (has reached the peak of perfection), so he deserves to be a leader (Kurnianto, 2016). In running the wheel of leadership, the *Klana* has the ultimate weapon (plenary weapon) called "*Pecut Samandiman*", which has magic and no other power that matches it. This is a depiction of a holy book that serves as a guideline and basis for the leader in carrying out his leadership. The value is based on Surah Al-Hasyr verse 21 (Kurnianto, 2017).

Dadakmerak or *reyog* comes from the Arabic word */riyāqun/*, which means 'beauty' or 'admirable goodness' (Kurnianto, 2016). The figure of the peacock, which is similar to a dense bamboo tree clump, twisting as if it is about to hit whatever is in front of it, illustrates the inevitability of a life test that must be accepted/faced by everyone. The meaning of this symbol is expected to give full awareness to the community of the existence of the test of life so that from the beginning they realize it and at the same time have prepared themselves to face it properly. This value is as in Surah Al-Baqarah verses 153-155 (Kurnianto, 2017).

The Significance of Muhammadiyah in Preserving Islamic Culture through the *Reyog Ponorogo* Tradition

Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations, has a significant role in shaping and influencing Indonesian culture (Fauzia, 2013). Although primarily a religious organization focusing on the development of Muslims, Muhammadiyah's activities and values also have a broad impact on Indonesian culture. One way Muhammadiyah influences Indonesian culture is through education. The organization's network of schools, colleges, and other educational institutions has greatly expanded access to education in Indonesia, including religious education (Anwar, 2005). The education provided by Muhammadiyah often includes moral values, ethics, and simplicity, indirectly shaping the mindset and behavior of Indonesian society.

In addition, Muhammadiyah is active in various social, humanitarian, and community empowerment activities. Through programs such as health services, economic empowerment, and humanitarian assistance, Muhammadiyah has significantly shaped a culture of *gotong royong* and concern for others in Indonesia. When it comes to culture, Muhammadiyah strongly advocates for moderate and inclusive Islamic values (Beck, 2001). This is evident in their approach to cultural and religious diversity in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah actively promotes interfaith tolerance and intercultural cooperation, which are integral to Indonesia's national identity.

Therefore, while Muhammadiyah is an Islamic organization, its influence on Indonesian culture goes beyond religious boundaries. It plays a positive role in shaping the values and mindset of Indonesian society as a whole. In the context of this article, the efforts of Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University in preserving *Reyog Ponorogo* also indirectly promote good values derived from Islamic principles and the ancestral values of the Indonesian nation.

Reyog Ponorogo art is not only creatively and aesthetically rich but also embodies noble principles that can influence the main character's demeanor and contribute to a better community (Kurnianto et al., 2020). The educational values encompass divine, ethical, physical, and spiritual education, as well as leadership, civic, patience, and optimism education.

Divine education involves rituals and ceremonies to invoke strength before performing *Reyog*. These rituals are inclusive of *Konco Reyog* from diverse religious backgrounds. Consequently, it is impractical to standardize the rituals (e.g., the Muslim version of prayer) due to varying ideological contexts. Nonetheless, despite the challenges of uniting in religious beliefs, there is still hope for unity in advancing *Reyog City* (Kurnianto, 2017)(Kurnianto & Lestari, 2016).

A noble education aspect is included in this tool. The main *Reyog Ponorogo* instrument, a tiger's head and *barongan*, takes center stage and is the focal point for all performing *Reyog Ponorogo* arts. The two primary pillars of a personality are strength and beauty, and it is believed that this message will permeate across *Ponorogo Reyog's* performing arts since it forms the foundation of all of *Reyog Ponorogo's* art ideas (Kurnianto & Lestari, 2016). Some symbolic meanings attached to the instrument *dadak merak* instrument that is understood and conveyed by the informant, namely the beautiful morals or manners, the victory of virtue over pride, and so on, all lead to the value or character of the personality that everyone should own, that the self-personality that everyone should own, that a strong self that is always wrapped in a strong that a strong self that is always wrapped in the beauty of morals will always give birth to the main community. Give birth to the main community (Kurnianto, 2017).

The peacock's beak is typically adorned with non-standardized beads in various shapes and materials according to the preferences of the *Konco Reyog* who owns it. These beads are intended to be used as a counting tool for *dhikr*, the remembrance of Allah, performed by Muslims. *Dhikr* typically involves reciting phrases such as *tasbīh*, *taḥmīd*, and *takbīr*, for a total of 33 beads in one round. This makes the beads a practical tool for introducing Islamic practices into the *Reyog Ponorogo* tradition.

Additionally, the beads symbolize inner and outer strength, depicting a person who is physically strong like a tiger and psychologically resilient. Such individuals are seen as charismatic leaders, capable of bringing forth valuable contributions to the world. This interpretation is derived from a study by Kurnianto and Lestari in 2016 (Kurnianto & Lestari, 2016).

The educational significance of this leadership aspect is exemplified in the *Klanasewandana* Dance. The dance is designed to showcase the charisma of *Prabu Klanasewandana*, a courageous and powerful leader, who, through his ultimate weapon called "*Pecut Samandiman*", was able to subdue *Singa Barong*, the embodiment of the fierce king of the forest. In the context of leadership, this dance can be presented with a rhythm that embodies trustworthy leadership. *Klanasewandana*, a symbol of a powerful king, can be regarded as a representation of a leader who should guide the people. Such a leader should possess extensive knowledge and experience, be physically fit, professional, trustworthy, and obedient to the Creator (Kurnianto, 2017).

The significance of this education is exemplified in the *Jathil* 'horse dance'. *Jathil* dance, originally performed by male dancers, symbolizes patriotism and heroism, embodying the generation of heirs to the Ponorogo civilization. It represents an attitude of readiness, equipped with various skills and life skills, to face the future and build a superior civilization. The dance signifies more than just the physical prowess of the nation's generation in confronting external enemies; it is a metaphorical battle against internal desires and lust. Therefore, the dance performance should convey firmness, vigilance, and precision. The focused gaze reflects a future-oriented mindset,

while the movement of the head signifies the intelligent consideration of the surrounding context. Given its symbolic nature, *Jathil* dance should not be performed weakly or contain eroticism, regardless of the gender of the dancer (Kurnianto, 2017).

The *Pujangganong* Dance (*Pujangga Anom*) embodies educational values of patience and optimism. It humorously portrays life's challenges, teaching us that life is not always smooth. In Islam, it is believed that those with stronger faith will face more and tougher trials. A person with strong faith faces life's tests with a steadfast heart and high optimism (Kurnianto, 2017)(Kurnianto & Lestari, 2016).

Islamic education plays a crucial role in preserving the cultural heritage of *Reyog Ponorogo*. The art of *Reyog Ponorogo* is closely connected with Islamic values, making Islamic education vital in upholding and passing on this cultural tradition to future generations. The values reflected in *Reyog Ponorogo*, such as leadership, togetherness, mutual respect, and community ties, are in line with the principles of Islamic education. These shared values lay a strong foundation for integrating *Reyog Ponorogo* into educational contexts, ensuring its continuity and relevance in contemporary society.

The enduring presence and cultural significance of *Reyog Ponorogo* in Indonesian culture highlight its importance in the lives of the people in Ponorogo (Riyadi et al., 2023). The efforts of the *Reyog Ponorogo* community to sustain this art form underscore the cultural, philosophical, religious, and educational values embedded within *Reyog Ponorogo*. Islamic education plays a key role in these preservation endeavors, stressing the value of cultural heritage and traditional art forms in society (Sukmawati, 2022).

Established in 2004, *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit has entered its second decade. As the oldest *Reyog Ponorogo* art unit on the campuses in Ponorogo Regency, *Simo Budi Utomo* continues to innovate to stimulate students' interest in preserving *reyog* cultural arts. Under the guidance of a supervising lecturer, *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit conducts regular training twice a week, including *reyog* dance and creation dance training. The students' skills are honed through weekly routines, and they often participate in festivals and competitions both locally and nationally. *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit also collaborates with other *reyog* art studios such as *Waote Dhakon* and the State Islamic Institute of Ponorogo.

In contrast to previous studies on the preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* cultural arts within educational institutions, the efforts of *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit have led to the preservation of dance, especially in *Reyog Ponorogo* performances. Over the past twenty years, *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit has actively participated in local and national events and competitions, including the National *Reyog* Festival, as well as various performances at both the local level in the Ponorogo district and in the province of East Java and nationwide in Indonesia.

The preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* art, particularly as carried out by *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University, embodies several Islamic education values. These values include: (1) Love for Allah, as the presence of art in human life can enhance a sense of gratitude for the power that Allah bestows. Through the existence of art, human life becomes more beautiful and meaningful, in line with the hadith of the Prophet, "*Indeed, Allah is beautiful and loves beauty*". (2) Spirit of struggle and hard work. A positive-values art community can foster the spirit of innovation to introduce new elements while upholding the essential values of Islamic teachings, which was the primary goal of establishing *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit. (3) Discipline, which is the foundation of success. Discipline in training has earned recognition for the performance of *Simo Budi Utomo* students from various quarters. As a result, students are always encouraged to maintain discipline in their training. (4) The collaboration and harmonization of music and dance can create art of great value. Solidarity and teamwork are crucial for the sustained preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* art and culture within higher education institutions, particularly at Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University.

CONCLUSION

The Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University is working to preserve the local *Reyog Ponorogo* culture through the Student Activity Unit of *Paguyuban Seni Reyog Mahasiswa Simo Budi Utomo*. The university is also promoting cultural preservation through literacy by establishing *Reyog Corner* in the library. To address future challenges in preserving the *Reyog Ponorogo* culture, *Simo Budi Utomo* Unit aims to adopt a multifaceted approach that includes effective communication strategies, educational initiatives, legal protection, community involvement, technological innovation, and deeper exploration of the meaning of this art form. The preservation of *Reyog Ponorogo* in *Simo Budi Utomo* unit Muhammadiyah Ponorogo University embodies several Islamic education values, namely love for Allah, spirit of struggle and hard work, discipline, and solidarity and cohesiveness in teamwork.

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