

Intergenerational Communication and the Transmission of Local Wisdom in the Ruwah Tradition

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Abstract

This study examines intergenerational communication within the Ruwah Dusun tradition in Kembangore Hamlet, Mojokerto, East Java. The research is motivated by the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Society 5.0, which tend to marginalize traditional practices and widen the intergenerational gap. This study aims to identify communication patterns between elders, religious leaders, and younger generations in the Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet, analyze the role of younger generations through their creative contributions in the field, and explain the process of passing on local wisdom values in intergenerational interactions. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation from December 2024 to March 2025. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation. The results of the study show that, first, intergenerational communication patterns take place in a participatory and layered manner through deliberative forums, ritual processes, and communal activities. Second, the role of the younger generation is manifested in the organization of activities, technical management of implementation, and digital media-based documentation as a form of adaptation of tradition. Third, the inheritance of local wisdom values occurs through shared practices in the Ruwah tradition, which embodies the values of mutual cooperation, religiosity, and togetherness transmitted through symbolic interactions and collective activities between generations.

Keyword: Intergenerational communication; Ruwah tradition; local wisdom; communication ethnography, cultural preservation.



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1. Introduction

The world has entered the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This era is defined by technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), advanced robotics, cyber-physical systems, cloud computing, big data analysis, and smart factories. These technologies enable automation, real-time data exchange, and autonomous machine decision-making, as well as highly flexible and efficient manufacturing and production processes (Mahdi Hamad & Jawad, 2024). Their impact goes beyond expanding social interactions to disrupting various aspects of human life. This revolution has given rise to Society 5.0, a human-centered, technology-based societal framework. In short, these two elements bring about drastic changes in social behavior and lifestyle patterns, making every aspect of societal life easier thanks to advanced technology (Fadli, 2021).

Life in society has ultimately become fast-paced, competitive, and technology-based, which encourages individualistic lifestyles (Putri et al., 2023). This phenomenon has impacted local values, often marginalizing them and considering them irrelevant cultural heritage from ancestors. This is not only the case in Indonesia. A research report from Vietnam highlights that one direct impact is a change in the work environment and communication methods. This leads to a greater reliance on technology and a reduced interest in social relationships within the community. Additionally, there has been a shift in cultural value systems, creating conflicts between traditional values and modern lifestyles. While there is an opportunity to absorb values from various cultures, there is also a risk of losing national cultural identity (Tri & Dung, 2021).

The transmission of local values through traditions such as Ruwah Dusun plays an important role in character building, while also existing within the dynamic of the generation gap between Generation X, millennials, and Generation Z, who have different communication styles and habits in their use of technology (Budi,

2021). Rituals such as the arak-arakan anak gunung procession and communal prayers serve as social gathering spaces involving various age groups. However, younger generations tend to view these practices as part of an annual agenda, without always connecting them to their underlying philosophical dimensions. This condition places this study in a relevant position to examine the sustainability of local wisdom in intergenerational relations amid the strengthening of digital culture and changes in communication patterns. Unlike previous studies, which generally focus on the symbolic or ritualistic aspects of the Ruwah tradition, this study offers something new through the use of a communication ethnography approach to specifically examine patterns of intergenerational interaction, while also analyzing the process of meaning negotiation between elders and the digital native generation. Ultimately, this research contributes to the formulation of a strategic model of cultural resilience by positioning communication as a means of adapting local wisdom so that it can continue to thrive in modern society.

In this study, the Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet is positioned as a cultural ritual that is transmitted across generations as well as a space of intergenerational communication that brings together village elders, religious leaders, and the younger generation within a shared arena of interaction. Within this procession, there is a process of conveying values, knowledge, and local wisdom by the older generation, the integration of the religious dimension by religious leaders, and the involvement of the younger generation through their contributions of creativity in the field, including the organization of activities, documentation, and technical management of the implementation of the tradition.

Based on this context, this research is directed to address the following questions: (1) how the communication patterns between village elders, religious leaders, and the younger generation take place within the Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet; (2) how the role of the younger generation is manifested through field-based creativity in the implementation of the Ruwah tradition; and

(3) how the process of transmitting local wisdom values occurs through intergenerational interaction within the tradition.

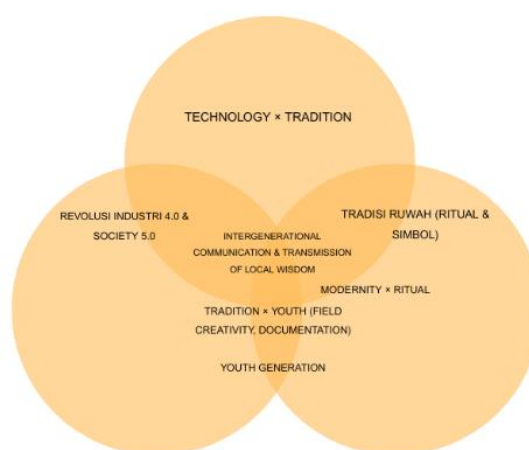


Figure 1. Venn Diagram: Core Focus of the Study

Theoretical Framework

This study employs an integrated theoretical framework that combines Intergenerational Communication Theory (ICT), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), Cultural Transmission Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism to analyze intergenerational communication, the role of the younger generation, and the process of transmitting local wisdom within the Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet.

Intergenerational Communication Theory (ICT) serves as the main framework for explaining communication patterns between different age groups, particularly among village elders, religious leaders, and the younger generation. Intergenerational communication is understood not merely as an exchange of messages, but as a social process influenced by age-based perceptions, norms, and stereotypes (Giles et al., 2003). In this study, ICT is used to examine relational structures, role distribution, and patterns of intergenerational interaction in the implementation of the Ruwah tradition.

To explain the mechanisms of these communication practices, this study employs Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). This theory explains how individuals adjust their communication styles through strategies of *convergence* and *divergence*, including the phenomena of *overaccommodation* and

underaccommodation (Giles, 2016). In the context of the Ruwah tradition, CAT is used to analyze how village elders, religious leaders, and the younger generation adjust their language, communicative behavior, and use of media to sustain ongoing interaction (Handayani et al., 2025).

The outcomes of intergenerational communication are further analyzed through Cultural Transmission Theory. This theory views culture as a form of social heritage transmitted through learning processes within social life. Cultural transmission occurs through three main pathways: vertical transmission (from parents to children), horizontal transmission (among individuals within the same generation), and oblique transmission (from non-parent older generations to younger generations) (Michod, 1983). This theory is used to explain the inheritance of values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), religiosity, and social solidarity within the series of Ruwah traditions.

To deepen the analysis of meaning within these cultural practices, this study also employs Symbolic Interactionism. This theory holds that meaning is constructed through processes of symbolic interaction among individuals, particularly through language and social symbols (Fuller, 2016). In this study, ritual symbols such as *ancak gunung*, communal prayers, and processions are understood as products of meaning construction that are continuously negotiated between the older and younger generations.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a communication ethnography method to comprehensively examine intergenerational communication within the Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet. This method is selected because the research focuses on understanding communication as a cultural practice that is embedded in daily social interactions, ritual activities, and the transmission of local wisdom. Communication ethnography allows researchers to explore not only observable communication behaviors but also the meanings, values, and symbols constructed through intergenerational interactions. Through

this approach, the study is able to capture how communication patterns between village elders, religious leaders, and younger generations are formed, negotiated, and sustained within the tradition. The research was conducted in Kembangore Hamlet, Petak Village, Pacet District, Mojokerto Regency, East Java. The research subjects were purposively selected based on their roles and involvement in the tradition, including village elders (Baby Boomers) as custodians of traditional values, religious leaders (Generation X) who integrate religious dimensions into cultural practices, and younger generations (Millennials and Generation Z) who represent contemporary perspectives and creative participation in the preservation of the Ruwah tradition.

Data collection was carried out from December 2024 to March 2025 to encompass the entire series of the Ruwah Dusun traditional ceremony, beginning with discussions to establish a committee, determining the concept and date, preparation stages, and culminating in the implementation of the main event. Primary data was obtained through participatory observation, where the researcher was present and actively involved in the traditional process to observe communication practices from an insider's perspective; in-depth interviews to delve into perceptions, understandings, and motivations from various generations regarding the meaning of the tradition; and documentation in the form of photographs, field notes, and local archives that were utilized to reinforce the findings.

Data analysis was conducted descriptively, qualitatively, and interpretatively by following the model of Miles and Huberman (1992), which includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction was performed by selecting and focusing on data related to communication patterns, generational roles, and symbolic meaning within traditions. The reduced data was then presented in the form of narrative descriptions, enhanced with interview citations and field notes, while conclusion

drawing was conducted inductively by interpreting communication patterns and the process of tradition transmission occurring in the field, with verification performed repeatedly to maintain the validity of the findings. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, that is, by comparing perspectives across generations, as well as method triangulation, which involves comparing results from observations, interviews, and documentation. The results of the data analysis are presented informally in a descriptive narrative form through narratives, expressions, interview quotes, and field notes.

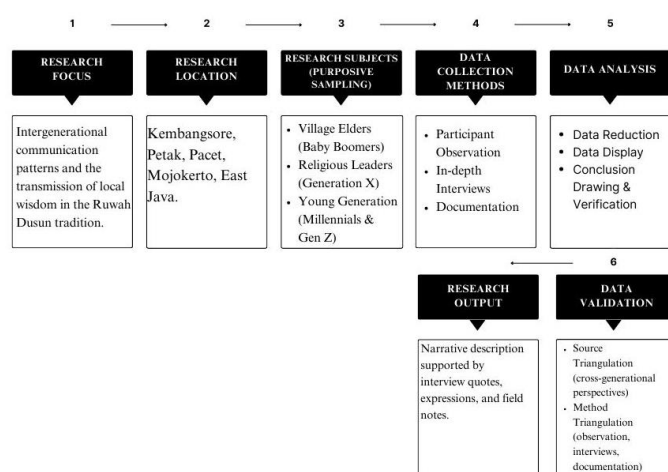


Figure 2. Research flow.

3. Result and Discussion

Description of the Ruwah Dusun Tradition

Etymologically, the term Ruwah is derived from the name of the month of Sha'ban in the Islamic calendar, which has deep spiritual significance. In Javanese belief, this month is considered a sacred moment to offer prayers to the spirits of ancestors, with the hope that they will receive forgiveness and a noble position in the sight of Allah SWT.

The Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet is a cultural ritual that has been transmitted through successive generations and is still preserved in the present day. This tradition is observed in the month of Ruwah (Shaban) prior to Ramadan, serving as a gesture of respect for ancestors and a means of fostering

social solidarity. The historical underpinnings of this tradition can be traced to the belief system of the ancestors, who held the conviction that fostering a connection with the deceased through collective prayer would bestow blessings upon the living. The active participation of the community in the preparatory and operational aspects of the event serves to reinforce social cohesion within the community.

The stages of implementing the Ruwah tradition begin with gathering all elements of society, from village officials, community leaders, religious leaders, and youth organizations. The purpose is to hold discussions among residents to determine the date, concept of the event, and the composition of the organizing committee. In this forum, religious leaders provide religious legitimacy, ensuring that Islamic values are integrated with cultural practices. After that, the community works together to make preparations and organize the series of events.

During the preparatory stage, the value of mutual cooperation was particularly evident, especially during the construction of the gunungan. The event garnered active and enthusiastic participation from a wide range of community members, including children and youth, as well as religious leaders and elders. The involvement of the younger generation was of paramount importance, serving not only as a form of participation, but also as a conduit for the transmission of values and a platform for cultural creativity. This observation is evidenced by the diverse forms of gunungan that were created.



Figure 3. The Process of Creating an Ancak Gunungan (Researcher documentation, 2025)

The mountain, constructed from locally sourced produce such as fruits and vegetables, symbolizes the community's profound connection with nature and functions as a medium for artistic expression. The process of making these objects fosters a collaborative environment conducive to creativity, in addition to providing an opportunity for the cultivation of emotional regulation skills, particularly among young individuals. This tradition, in its essence, serves a multifaceted purpose that extends beyond the mere preservation of heritage. It is a living vessel for the practice of noble values such as deliberation, mutual cooperation, solidarity, and social responsibility in maintaining the sustainability of community culture (Researcher's observation, 2025).



Figure 4. implementation of the *ancak gunung* parade (Researcher documentation, 2025)

The series of rituals in the Ruwah tradition, including the *gunungan* parade, Tayub performances, *kenduri*, *tahlil*, and *istigasah*, constitute a symbolic system that articulates complex cultural meanings and values. The *gunungan*, a central manifestation of the system, comprises agricultural produce. From a semiotic perspective, the *gunungan* signifies prosperity and functions as a theological expression of gratitude to God as the origin of life. It is imperative to acknowledge that these symbolic meanings are not static; rather, they are socially constructed and reproduced through communal interaction.

In a similar vein, Azizah Nur Laili and Imam Ibnu Hajar, in their paper presented at the National Conference of Islamic Civilization History Students, articulated that the fundamental nature of the ruwah tradition is a ceremonial practice of offering prayers to ancestors, a tradition that continues to be observed by the community. This tradition is believed to have originated during the Hindu-Buddhist era and has been influenced by Islam, resulting in a synthesis of animism, Javanese mysticism, Hindu-Buddhism, and Islam. The origins of Ruwah Desa can be traced to the Sradha or Nyadran tradition that emerged during the Majapahit era. This tradition subsequently evolved into a ritual of thanksgiving observed in the month of Ruwah (Sha'ban). The community's adherence to this tradition is believed to be rooted in a profound sense of gratitude and respect for their ancestors. The Ruwah Desa procession in Sukowati comprises a series of communal activities, including prayers at the ancestral tomb (Mbah Gemi), the offering of sesaji and gunungan food, a communal meal, the distribution of crops, and the tradition of throwing flowers at the crossroads as a symbol of warding off evil. This activity is accompanied by folk entertainment such as ludruk or campursari, which also serve as a medium for preserving local arts and culture. In the context of the ritual, each food offering in the procession is imbued with a specific spiritual significance. For instance, the offering of tumpeng signifies tribute to ancestors, while yellow rice embodies the earth and prayer. Kangkung vegetables are presented as a symbol of smooth fortune, anchovies represent love, and spinach symbolizes tranquility. This tradition is also characterized by strong social values, including mutual cooperation, togetherness, unity, and a love of culture (Laili & Hajar, 2024).

Furthermore, it is important to note that rituals such as istigasah and tahlil that accompany gunungan have a dual function. On the one hand, these rituals function as a conduit for offering prayers for the souls of ancestors, thereby expressing a form of transcendental respect. Conversely, these traditions are a

tangible expression of gratitude for the bountiful harvest of the earth. Consequently, this tradition inherently conveys an ecological message emphasizing the significance of maintaining ecological balance and preserving nature as the foundation of life.



Figure 5. Ancak gunung (Researcher documentation, 2025)



Figure 5. The Kenduri procession and suguh ritual (Researcher documentation, 2025)



Figure 6. Istighosa and Tahlil as well as General Religious Lectures (Researcher documentation, 2025)

The Ruwah tradition is characterized by its emphasis on the imperative to maintain equilibrium and conserve nature as an integral component of existence. The incorporation of the "transcendent" element is a salient feature that merits further examination. The discourse on this phenomenon is referred to as ecotheology, which is the study of the relationship between religion, humans, and the natural environment. The objective of ecotheology is to promote the maintenance and preservation of the environment as part of the spiritual and moral responsibility of religious individuals ([Ridwanuddin, 2017](#)). Sayyed Hossein Nasr, a prominent figure in the field, conceptualizes ecotheology from an Islamic perspective as the integration of the values of monotheism (tauhid), the duty of being a caliph, justice, and wisdom. Nasr asserts that humans bear a moral and spiritual responsibility to safeguard nature as an integral component of their worship and the embodiment of their love for God. He underscores the notion that the bond between humans and nature is not merely a material connection, but rather a profound spiritual alliance ([Seci Vella & Ahmad Rizal, 2024](#)).

Consequently, the Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet is not merely regarded as a religious or cultural ritual, but also as a symbolic space for communication that facilitates connection between older and younger generations. Through their active engagement in each phase, residents assimilate and disseminate moral tenets concerning collective spirit, religious devotion, and reverence for tradition, thereby fortifying social cohesion within the community.

Patterns of Intergenerational Communication

The ruwah dusun tradition functions as a ritual to honor ancestors while also providing a primary platform for intergenerational interaction and communication. Within this tradition, a harmonious and complementary pattern of communication is established between elders, community leaders, religious leaders, and the

younger generation. In the implementation of the ruwah Dusun tradition, the older generation, consisting of elders and community leaders, plays a central role as guardians of local values and wisdom. The communication pattern exhibited by these groups is characterized by a vertical structure, encompassing educational and normative content. The elders, as the custodians of customary authority and guided by the directives of the village head, initiate a series of proceedings involving deliberations.

In the deliberation forum, participants engage in discourse on various technical aspects, including the conceptual framework of the event and the designated date for its implementation. Additionally, the forum serves as a medium for the transmission of noble values. The manner in which they communicate frequently employs meaningful language, manifesting in traditional expressions, prayers, and counsel articulated with an authoritative intonation. This interaction is a vital mechanism that ensures not only the continuity of tradition, but also the effective passing on of local wisdom from one generation to the next. This suggests that the communication established by the elders is not only informative, but also educational and normative, thereby serving as a moral guide for future generations. This perspective is further substantiated by the remarks of a prominent village elder, who has made the following observation:

"Bagi kami orang tua, tradisi ruwah Dusun itu bukan hanya sekadar pelaksanaan ritual tahunan saja, melainkan ini cara kita 'nguri-uri paugeran', atau mengingatkan yang muda agar tidak lupa dengan asal-usulnya. Waktu musyawarah, kami sambil menyampaikan pesan 'le, nduk, acara ini pada intinya untuk mengenang dan mendoakan para leluhur yang sudah membabat alas Dusun kita ini, sebagai bentuk kita menghargai dan berterimakasih mengingat akan jasa-jasanya' selain itu dalam ritus tradisi ini juga terdapat arak ancak gunung, atau sedekah desa, pada intinya itu adalah bentuk rasa syukur sekaligus harapan agar Dusun dan

masyarakatnya tetap selamat." (Interview with Mbah Mun (village elder), 2025)

The role of religious leaders is to serve as a conduit between tradition and religious values. The role of religious leaders is not confined to leading prayers or tahlil; rather, they are responsible for imparting a religious significance to the entirety of activities undertaken. Through istighasah, prayers, and tahlil, as well as public recitations, religious leaders fortify the legitimacy of tradition while elucidating that the Ruwah tradition constitutes more than a mere custom; rather, it is an integral component of the praxis of Islamic values such as praying for the souls of ancestors, fostering cohesion, and disseminating blessings. Consequently, the discourse orchestrated by religious leaders functions as a conduit, facilitating the alignment between local cultural norms and religious precepts. This, in turn, fosters the continuity of tradition across generations, thereby reinforcing its cultural and spiritual significance. As articulated by a local religious leader:

"seringkali saya mendapatkan pertanyaan dari anak-anak muda yang kritis seperti: apakah tradisi ini tidak menyimpang dari ajaran?. Saya selalu jelaskan, bahwa hakikat dari ruwahan ini adalah kirim doa berupa tahlil dan istighasah serta doa bersama. Kita memohonkan ampunan kepada Allah SWT. untuk arwah para pendahulu. bentuknya memang tradisi namun dikemas secara Islami dan isinya adalah ibadah sosial. Sedekah dari hasil bumi serta makanan yang dibawa oleh warga itu memperkuat silaturahmi dan mendatangkan brokah. Jadi, syariat dan adat bisa berjalan beriringan dengan harmonis." (Interview with Mr. Wiwin (religious leader), Kembangore, 2025)

Concurrently, the younger generation, comprising millennials and Gen Z, adopts a more technical and participatory role. These individuals are involved in community service activities, which include preparing equipment, documenting events with cameras or cell phones, and helping to disseminate information

through social media. Their interactions with elders and religious leaders demonstrate a pattern of reciprocal communication, whereby they receive guidance and advice from the older generation, while concurrently contributing novel ideas, particularly in the domains of creativity and event effectiveness. The active involvement of younger generations in the Ruwah tradition suggests that it functions not only as a repository for preserving traditional values, but also as a dynamic process of adapting traditions to the evolving socio-cultural landscape.

Thus, the interaction between elders, religious leaders, and youth in the Ruwah Dusun tradition forms a complementary communication pattern: elders emphasize local wisdom, religious leaders reinforce the spiritual dimension, and youth bring enthusiasm and innovation. The three interact in a harmonious and interdependent relationship, so that the tradition not only survives as a ritual, but also becomes a medium for passing on values across generations.

In the Ruwah Dusun tradition, communication is not only expressed through spoken language, but also through various nonverbal expressions that reinforce the sense of togetherness between generations. Verbal communication is evident in community meetings led by village elders, where instructions, advice, and decisions are conveyed using Javanese language full of traditional expressions. Religious leaders communicate verbally through prayers, *tahlil*, and brief advice that emphasizes religious values. Meanwhile, young people use verbal communication to express their opinions, coordinate committees, and engage in more practical and technical daily conversations to support the smooth running of events. This cross-generational verbal interaction not only serves to convey information but also to reinforce the authority of the elders, strengthen the legitimacy of religious leaders, and foster a sense of involvement among young people.

Concurrently, nonverbal communication assumes an equally pivotal role in fortifying social bonds within the Ruwah Dusun tradition. The younger generation's respectful attitude towards elders is indicative of a nonverbal communication that

is evident in their actions. This respect is demonstrated by behaviors such as sitting politely during meetings, nodding their heads in agreement, or kissing their hands as a sign of respect. Expressions of togetherness emerge through community service as well, manifesting in activities such as grave cleaning and environmental maintenance. In these practices, physical participation becomes a symbol of solidarity and mutual cooperation among the participants. At the event's zenith, communal prayers—conducted in a solemn manner—in addition to sitting in a circle and partaking in meals, which are the by-products of collaborative endeavors, serve as nonverbal communication channels that are replete with the significance of collectiveness and fraternity. Consequently, the integration of verbal and nonverbal communication in the Ruwah tradition not only orchestrates the procession, but also fosters social cohesion, upholds the hierarchical structure of respect among generations, and serves as a conduit for the transmission of local wisdom values.

The interaction between elders, religious leaders, and young people in the Ruwah Dusun tradition is not limited to technical coordination of events; it also serves as the primary mechanism for transmitting local wisdom values. Elders, through the medium of advice, guidance, and direct example, impart the significance of mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, and adherence to social norms. Religious leaders play a pivotal role in the transmission of values by endowing them with religious significance. They facilitate the comprehension of the younger generation regarding the significance of practices such as praying together, sharing food, and maintaining good relations, which are not merely cultural traditions but also integral components of Islamic practice. Conversely, the younger generation acquires these values through direct involvement, whether by

following instructions, listening to advice, or imitating the actions of the older generation.

This pattern of communication serves to instill certain values in the younger generation, including mutual cooperation, religiosity, solidarity, and respect for ancestors. Consequently, the Ruwah tradition functions as an effective medium for the transmission of values. This is due to the fact that each generation not only hears or sees, but also directly experiences the process of cultural communication that occurs in the ritual practice.

The Function of Tradition as a Medium for Passing on Values

The Ruwah Dusun tradition in Kembangore functions as both an annual ritual and an effective medium for the transmission of local wisdom values. One of the primary values imparted is the principle of mutual cooperation, which is embodied by the spirit of the ruwah dusun tradition. The manifestation of this spirit occurs well in advance of the event's zenith. This phenomenon, characterized by the collaborative efforts of residents of all ages and genders, appears to be a natural outcome of the community's cohesive structure. The pendopo watu anyang, the designated venue for the tradition, is meticulously cleaned by the collective. The gunungan, the mountain-shaped offering, is meticulously crafted. The festivities are participated in collectively until the conclusion of the event.

Mr. Brojo, the head of Kembangore Hamlet, underscores this point:

"Disini itu semangatnya sak iyek sak eko proyo. Artinya, kerja bareng untuk tujuan bersama. Tidak ada yang dibayar, semua murni karena rasa memiliki dusun ini. Anak-anak muda melihat kami yang tua, akhirnya mereka ikut tergerak. Inilah cara kami mengajar mereka tentang tanggung jawab sosial tanpa perlu banyak ceramah."

Nonverbal knowledge transfer occurs in these interactions. The younger generation is not only receptive to counsel emphasizing the significance of collective action, but they also assimilate the notion that collaborative efforts are

indispensable for preserving social cohesion. They observe firsthand the dissolution of barriers related to age, status, and other differences, which occurs in the context of collaborative endeavors. This pedagogical practice instills in them a profound understanding of how a sense of belonging to the village is manifested through tangible contributions.

The Ruwah tradition, in addition to fostering a sense of communal collaboration, also incorporates religious values that are imparted through the solemn atmosphere of the joint prayer and tahlil procession, led by religious leaders. This moment is imbued with a sense of sacredness, wherein the younger generation is instructed that respect for the ancestors is not solely embodied in cultural processions but also in the practice of Islamic teachings, such as praying for the souls of the deceased and fortifying relationships.

Ustadz Erwin, a local religious leader, elucidates this combination:

"Pada intinya acara tradisi ini itu untuk mendoakan arwah leluhur kita, itu kan ajaran Islam. Adat nguri-nguri budoyo, agomo nguatke imane (adat memelihara budaya, agama menguatkan imannya). Jadi ruwahan ini menjadi wadah dimana budaya dan spiritualitas berjalan serasi dan saling menguatkan."

Through prayers offered for the spirits, they learn about the importance of serving their ancestors and maintaining ties of kinship that are not severed by death. It is at this juncture that a harmonious dialectic between local traditions and Islamic teachings commences. Consequently, the religiosity observed in this tradition functions as a conduit for the integration of local culture and spirituality. This integration is a two-way street, ensuring that future generations develop a nuanced understanding of the tradition as a harmonious entity that neither conflicts with nor diminishes religion, but rather serves to enhance its appreciation.

Another salient value that is deeply ingrained is social solidarity, which is manifest in the attitudes of mutual assistance and cohesion throughout the

procession. If mutual cooperation is the process, then the pinnacle of this solidarity is reflected in the kenduri or tumpengan event that occurs after the series of tahlil and prayers have been completed. The younger generation has come to understand that solidarity is not merely an abstract concept, but rather is manifested in concrete actions such as sharing food, working together, and maintaining social harmony.

The Ruwah tradition serves as a conduit for the internalization of values across generations by leveraging three pillars: mutual cooperation, religiosity, and social solidarity. These values are not only transmitted verbally through the counsel of elders or lectures by religious leaders, but more importantly, they are also passed down practically or non-verbally through active involvement in activities and accompanying cultural symbols. Consequently, this tradition fulfills a dual role: firstly, it serves to safeguard and perpetuate the cultural heritage of ancestors. Conversely, it proactively safeguards the younger generation from the pervasive influence of individualism, thereby preparing them to uphold the cultural and spiritual identity of the Kembangore hamlet community.

Ethnographic Analysis of Communication in the Ruwah Tradition

The ethnographic approach to communication posits that the comprehension of communication practices necessitates an examination within the context of culture, social roles, and symbols utilized by the community. In the Ruwah Dusun tradition, each generation partakes in distinct yet complementary patterns of communication, thereby establishing a milieu for intergenerational interaction that reflects both Javanese cultural values and the religiosity of the local community.

Initially, an examination of language and discourse patterns is imperative. Elders employ Javanese with a polite register (*krama*) when offering counsel, engaging in discourse, or reciting concise prayers. This phenomenon extends beyond mere information transmission, incorporating normative messages

concerning etiquette, respect, and social hierarchy. Religious leaders employ religious language in the form of prayers, Qur'anic verses, and tahlil to reinforce the spiritual meaning of the tradition. Concurrently, the younger generation employs a blend of Javanese and Indonesian in technical coordination, signifying an adaptation of tradition to contemporary contexts.

Secondly, an examination of speech events in the Ruwah tradition reveals that these events exhibit distinct communication functions at each stage of the activity. During the deliberation stage, communication assumes the form of formal discussions that serve to reinforce the authority of elders. During the communal prayer stage, communication is characterized by its ritualistic and religious nature, with the leadership role being assumed by religious leaders. During the community service and communal meal stages, communication occurs in an informal atmosphere that fosters emotional closeness among residents across generations. The collective experience is shaped by each of these communication events, which contribute to its formation.

Thirdly, cultural symbols function as a medium of communication. Tumpeng and communal meals serve as symbols of gratitude and togetherness. Community service to clean graves symbolizes respect for ancestors as well as social solidarity. Communal prayer symbolizes recognition of religious values. These symbols transcend mere material objects, serving as nonverbal languages that convey messages of togetherness, respect, and continuity of tradition. Fourthly, the function of communication in the inheritance of values must be acknowledged. The transmission of local wisdom values, including mutual cooperation, religiosity, solidarity, and respect for ancestors, occurs through both verbal and nonverbal means. This transmission is facilitated by intergenerational interaction, ensuring the continuity and preservation of cultural heritage from one generation to the next.

The younger generation does not merely receive counsel from elders and religious leaders; they also acquire knowledge through experiential learning. This

experiential learning takes place through activities such as community service, prayer, and the sharing of meals. Consequently, the communication process in the Ruwah tradition functions as an effective medium for the internalization of cultural values, as the subsequent generation is directly involved in shared experiences.

This ethnographic analysis of communication reveals that the Ruwah tradition can be understood as a dynamic cultural communication system. This practice not only serves to preserve the heritage of ancestors but also becomes a space for intergenerational dialogue, a place where cultural values are negotiated, adapted, and passed on. Despite the evolution of communication styles—illustrated by the younger generation's use of social media to document events—tradition serves as an anchoring element of identity, facilitating a balance between local culture, religiosity, and the challenges posed by modernity.

This finding is in line with research on the Perang Topat ceremony written by Subhan Abdullah Acim and Siti Nurul Yaqinah, which reveals that cultural symbols become a means of communication between groups (Muslim-Hindu) in forming mutual understanding (Yaqinah, 2019). However, different from Perang Topat, which emphasizes inter-cultural communication across religions, the Ruwah tradition emphasizes intergenerational communication within the same cultural community.

Research by Naufal Ikhsanul et al. on the Begawe tradition in Sokong Village also emphasizes that tradition is a means of passing on values such as mutual cooperation, deliberation, togetherness, and as a vehicle for contextual Pancasila education (Syahrina, 2024). The younger generation is encouraged to actively participate, demonstrating a lively and adaptive pattern of intergenerational communication.

Then there is research by Dhanurseto Hadiprashada which examines the wayang kulit performances held every Tuesday Kliwon by the Javanese community in Bengkulu City as a phenomenon of cultural communication. Using a

phenomenological approach, this research shows that wayang kulit is not merely a performing art, but an effective and dialogical medium of communication, especially in maintaining social harmony among residents ([Hadiprashada, 2021](#)).

Meanwhile, Nova Deria's (2020) research in her article *Communication Activities in the Mauludan Tradition in Kemuja Village, Bangka Belitung*, emphasizes the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication in maintaining the continuity of local culture. Nova demonstrates that in the Mauludan Tradition, the use of the Bangka Malay language and its distinctive Arabic dialect serves as a symbolic medium for transmitting cultural values from older to younger generations, reinforced by the practice of “nganggung” and the recitation of berzanji. This underscores the role of symbols and oral narratives as tools for transmitting cultural values ([Deria, 2020](#)).

Thus, this study confirms that intergenerational communication in local traditions, whether through oral storytelling, visual symbolism, or collective participation in rituals, is an important aspect in preserving the sustainability of cultural values and local wisdom. The Ruwah Dusun tradition is not merely a ceremony but a transgenerational communication medium that integrates educational, spiritual, social, and cultural practices. The presence of young people as active participants who initiate, package, and reinterpret the meaning of the tradition within their own community serves as an indicator of the dynamic reproduction of values.

The Role of Young People in Reproducing Cultural Values

The role of the younger generation in the Ruwah Dusun tradition in Kembangore Village demonstrates the active and creative dynamics of cultural value inheritance. This tradition provides ample space for young people to participate, not only in technical tasks but also in decision-making processes, design, and cultural creation. Young people are entrusted with designing the concept of the gunungan, creating mascots, and determining the theme and artistic

ornaments to be displayed. This is evident from the experience of the youth of RW 03, as shared by Hartoyo Saputra follows (Interview with Hartoyo (young man from RW 03), 2025):

Table 1. Excerpts from interviews with young man RW 03

Researcher	Kalau boleh diceritakan mas, yang membuat konsep icon di rw 03 itu siapa ya? Dan bisa diceritakan juga terkait asal usul mengambil tema itu bagaimana?
Informan	“Mulai dari 3 minggu sebelum hari H kita sudah mempersiapkan mencari bahan-bahan yang diperlukan mbak, kemudian kita lanjut membuat maskot karapan sapi. Kenapa kita memilih maskot karapan sapi? Karena warga rw 03 saat itu mengusulkan tema Madura, jadi biar lebih menarik makanya kita buat maskot karapan sapi yang merupakan corak tradisi dari pulau Madura. Anak-anak muda rw 03 punya ide sendiri. Kita buat pagar atau kereta untuk mengangkut patung sapi itu di cover menggunakan hasil bumi. Kita sudah mulai mempersiapkan jauh-jauh hari dengan tujuan agar tidak terburu-buru dan hasilnya biar bisa lebih maksimal mbak. Kalau untuk ide, pertama yang membuat ide ya mas khoirul, tapi kita akhirnya musyawarah untuk menentukan gimana enakunya.
Researcher	Apakah setiap rw ini tema dan konsepnya sama mas ?
Informan	Tidak harus sama mbak, untuk tema masing-masing rw jelas berbeda-beda tergantung kesepakatan warga per rw nya mau dibikin seperti apa . tapi untuk konsep, saya rasa hampir mirip-mirip antar rw satu dengan yang lain. Kita tu pemudanya termasuk kompak-kompak mbak, saya merasakan sendiri dengan adanya event-event desa, anak muda selalu semangat dan berantusias untuk berkreasi. Karena kan pemuda dusun kembangore ini terkenal dengan karya nya/kerajinan tangannya, ya memang pemudanya kreatif-kreatif. Sampai pemuda karang tarunanya itu punya produk kembangore art yang isininya berbagai macam kerajinan dari tangan-tangan pemuda dusun sini yan kemudian dijual. Peminatnya juga cukup banyak. Jadi kita cukup semangat dan merasa ikut berperan secara langsung dalam memeriahkan acara tradisi ruwah ini mbak.

This involvement serves as a means of internalizing values such as responsibility, cooperation, and pride in cultural identity through direct practice. In

this process, the younger generation not only absorbs knowledge from elders about history and symbolic meaning, but also processes and actualizes it in new forms that remain rooted in traditional values. According to Pierre Bourdieu, such involvement reflects the work of habitus, which is a system of dispositions formed from social experience and expressed in action. The Ruwah Dusun tradition serves as a medium through which cultural habitus is transmitted, reproduced, and contextually adapted by the younger generation. Thus, the younger generation not only preserves culture but also acts as agents of value transformation, keeping local culture alive and relevant amid the changes of the times.

The Dynamics and Challenges of Preserving the Ruwah Tradition

The Ruwah tradition in Kembangore Hamlet, an agricultural hamlet that is beginning to experience modernization, is an annual ritual to honor the spirits of ancestors ahead of the holy month of Ramadan. This tradition, transmitted through successive generations, is not static but evolves in response to societal changes and advancements over time. A salient dynamic is the discrepancy in response between generations. The older generation, particularly the elders, regard the Ruwah tradition as a moral and cultural obligation that must be preserved to maintain the village's blessings and honor their ancestors. This perspective is articulated by Mbah Kasmun, an elder of the Kembangore Hamlet, as follows:

"Ruwahan niku sanes acara sing sekedar kumpul-kumpul lo nduk, niki carane kita ngrumati sing sampun seda, khusus sing uwes mbabat dusun iki. Supados kita sedaya diparingi slamet lan kaberkahan. Nek para leluhure dilalekke, deso niki ilang angen-angene."

Mbah Kasmun's statement corroborates the understanding among the Kembangore Hamlet community that the Ruwahan tradition is regarded as a collective event and a manifestation of respect for their ancestors, particularly those who established and nurtured the village. Through this ritual, residents believe they will receive safety and blessings in their daily lives. This perspective

underscores the notion that the existence of the village is predicated on two fundamental aspects: the physical and social dimensions, in addition to the spiritual connection with their forebears. Ruwahan plays an instrumental role in the collective identity of the village community, serving as a means of maintaining equilibrium between the village's past, present, and future.

Religious leaders add religious legitimacy, as explained by Ustadz Wiwin, a teacher at the village mosque. He stated:

"Tradisi ini selaras dengan ajaran Islam yang mendoakan orang tua dan kerabat yang telah mendahului kita. Kita menyebutnya birrul walidain yang terus berlanjut. Acaranya memang berbentuk budaya, tapi isinya adalah doa dan dzikir."

Thus, this tradition is understood by the community as a cultural heritage rich in spiritual values as well as a religious practice that strengthens the relationship with ancestors. Unlike the older generation, who tend to view it as a moral and cultural obligation, some of the younger generation show an ambivalent attitude. This attitude arises from various factors related to social change. Modern economic demands emphasize time efficiency, while the implementation of Ruwahan requires lengthy collective preparation and involves many parties. In addition, exposure to formal education and digital media has given rise to new, more rational and pragmatic perspectives. For some of the younger generation, the Ruwahan tradition has come to be perceived as a ceremonial activity that is not always relevant to modern life. However, there are also young people who are still actively involved because they see the value of togetherness, friendship, and inherited cultural identity. This phenomenon of ambivalence illustrates a shift in cultural orientation, where traditions are still preserved, but their meaning is reinterpreted in accordance with the changing times. This is reflected in the words of Hartoyo, a young man from Kembangore Hamlet:

"Ya, kalau dibilang capek suda jelas capek mbak. Karena harus ikut persiapan, pagi nya saya kerja, sorenya saya langsung ikut persiapan bersama warga-warga untuk membuat gunung. Tapi saya tetap enjoy melakukannya, karena ini momen setahun sekali mbak. Bagi saya, intinya lebih ke kebersamaan sosialnya sih. Soal makna ritualnya saya ikut saja apa kata orang-orang tua."

This view shows that the younger generation tends to emphasize the social and communal dimensions rather than the symbolic ritual aspects. For them, the essence of Ruwahan lies in the interaction, mutual cooperation, and sense of kinship that grows among residents, while the spiritual and ritualistic dimensions are considered more as part of a heritage that is carried out following the guidance of the older generation. This shift in meaning shows cultural dynamics, where traditions are preserved but the focus of values emphasized begins to differ between generations.

Another challenge arises from the influence of globalization and modernization. The presence of social media, practical lifestyles, and exposure to popular culture have caused some of the younger generation to question the relevance of tradition. However, globalization also opens up new opportunities. Roby, an active youth leader, sees this as an opportunity:

"Dulu kan tradisi ini ya hanya untuk kita saja. Sekarang saya dan teman-teman berinisiatif membuat video pendek lalu di unggah ke media sosial seperti Instagram atau Tiktok. Banyak netizen yang berkomentar. Ini adalah cara kami menunjukkan bahwa yang tradisional itu keren dan bisa tetap eksis."

Roby documented the Ruwahan procession in the form of short videos and shared them on social media such as Instagram and TikTok. The response from netizens was very positive, with many comments showing interest in the cultural values displayed. This initiative proves that traditions can be packaged in a fresh

and appealing way, making them easily accessible to both the younger generation and the wider community. Such documentation serves not only as an internal archive but also as a cultural promotion tool capable of reaching a broader audience. Modernity, with all its digital challenges, can be creatively managed to strengthen the existence of local traditions, as long as they remain rooted in their authentic values.

In addition, dynamics can also be seen in the adaptation of traditional forms. For example, in food presentation, the younger generation has begun to introduce new, more practical variations, while the older generation continues to maintain traditional dishes such as tumpeng and nasi berkat. In communal prayers, some younger generations are more enthusiastic about participating because of the sense of togetherness, even though they may not fully understand the meaning of the prayers being recited. These small differences reflect a process of cultural negotiation, in which traditions continue but in a more flexible form in line with the times.

Thus, the dynamics and challenges of the Ruwah Dusun tradition can be understood as a dialectical process between generations. The older generation plays a role in preserving the authenticity of values, religious leaders provide religious legitimacy, while the younger generation brings creativity and innovation that keeps traditions relevant in the era of globalization. Despite the shift in meaning, the essence of tradition as a means of communication between generations and a medium for passing on local wisdom remains intact. It is precisely in this tension between preservation and change that tradition finds its vitality, namely as a living, dynamic, and adaptive cultural practice. In the future, the preservation of this tradition will greatly depend on the community's ability to continue to manage this intergenerational dialogue wisely, ensuring that innovation is not detached from its philosophical roots and that the authenticity of values can adapt to the demands of the times.

4. Conclusion

The Ruwah Dusun tradition in Kembangore Hamlet illustrates the dynamic interconnection between religion, culture, and intergenerational communication. Etymologically rooted in the month of Sha'ban, this tradition carries deep spiritual significance as a means of honoring ancestors while simultaneously strengthening social cohesion. Its continuity across generations demonstrates that cultural practices not only preserve heritage but also serve as living vessels for values such as cooperation, religiosity, solidarity, and ecological awareness.

Patterns of communication in the tradition show a complementary relationship between elders, religious leaders, and young people. Elders function as custodians of wisdom and authority, religious leaders provide spiritual legitimacy by aligning rituals with Islamic values, and the younger generation actively contributes creativity and innovation. Both verbal and nonverbal communication reinforce this process, ensuring that local wisdom is transmitted effectively across generations.

As a medium for passing on values, the tradition instills cooperation, spirituality, and solidarity through both counsel and lived experience. Rituals such as kenduri, gunungan, and communal prayers not only symbolize gratitude and respect but also serve as practical education for younger generations about responsibility and collective identity. The ethnographic analysis reveals that the Ruwah tradition operates as a cultural communication system in which symbols, discourses, and practices function as tools for negotiation, adaptation, and value transmission.

The involvement of young people highlights the adaptive and transformative dimension of the tradition. Through creative participation, decision-making, and cultural production such as designing gunungan, documenting events, and disseminating them via social media they reinterpret inherited meanings while keeping traditions relevant in the face of modernity. This reflects an active

reproduction of habitus, in which culture is not merely preserved but recontextualized in contemporary forms.

The dynamics and challenges faced by the tradition arise from intergenerational differences in perception, modernization, and globalization. While the older generation emphasizes ritual obligation and moral responsibility, younger people often focus more on social and communal aspects. However, digital media and global exposure also create opportunities for wider recognition and creative revitalization of tradition.

Table 2. Theoretical Integration of Intergenerational Communication Findings

Dimension of Analysis	Summary of Key Findings	Dialectical Relation with Theoretical Framework	Analytical Implications
Intergenerational Communication Patterns	Communication in the Ruwah tradition is organized in a layered structure: elders lead normative deliberation, religious leaders provide spiritual direction, and youth execute technical and operational tasks. The interaction is dialogical and role-based	Intergenerational Communication Theory (ICT) explains the structured relational pattern across age groups. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is reflected in the dominance of convergence strategies to maintain interactional harmony	Reinforces ICT as a relational model of reciprocal authority; CAT demonstrates that accommodation sustains ritual stability and intergenerational cooperation
Youth Roles and Field-Based Creativity	The younger generation functions as organizers, designers of ritual materials, and digital documentators, positioning them as both	ICT and CAT reposition youth from passive recipients to active communicative agents. Symbolic Interactionism explains the	Youth agency becomes central in sustaining tradition; creative accommodation enables continuity

	cultural inheritors and creative innovators	reinterpretation of ritual symbols through creative and digital expressions	without symbolic rupture
Transmission of Local Wisdom Values	Values of mutual cooperation, religiosity, and social solidarity are transmitted through collective ritual practices via intergenerational interaction	Cultural Transmission Theory confirms the operation of vertical, horizontal, and oblique transmission pathways. Symbolic Interactionism clarifies that values are internalized through shared symbolic practices	Value transmission is practice-based and interactional, not merely instructional; oblique transmission emerges as a dominant mechanism in community rituals
Negotiation of Meaning in the Context of Modernity	Ritual meanings are continuously negotiated: elders emphasize spiritual authority, while youth emphasize social, aesthetic, and media-oriented dimensions. Digital platforms reshape symbolic visibility	Symbolic Interactionism explains meaning as dynamic and negotiated. ICT, CAT, and Cultural Transmission Theory reveal how modern communication reshapes accommodation strategies and transmission modes	Digital media functions as a new arena of symbolic interaction; adaptive accommodation becomes essential to preserve core values amid innovation

In sum, the Ruwah Dusun tradition is not merely a ceremonial ritual but a living practice that bridges past and present, tradition and modernity, spirituality and culture. Its vitality lies in the dialectical process between preservation and innovation, ensuring that the values of local wisdom remain intact while continuously adapting to the changing times. The sustainability of this tradition

depends on maintaining intergenerational dialogue, where authenticity is upheld, creativity is embraced, and communal identity is reinforced.

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