

Integrating Islamic Values and Local Wisdom: Ruwah Desa as a Multicultural Spiritual Response to Disasters

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the Ruwah Desa tradition in Kedungpapar Village as a form of local wisdom that strengthens the community's social, cultural, psychological, mystical, and religious life. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with observation, interviews, and documentation, analyzed thematically to explore the meaning and function of the tradition. Findings reveal that Ruwah Desa plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity, reinforcing social solidarity, and fostering a sense of security and togetherness. Moreover, it embodies mystical dimensions believed to maintain balance between humans and unseen forces, as well as religious dimensions expressed in gratitude to God and respect for ancestors. Thus, Ruwah Desa in Kedungpapar is not merely an annual ritual but also a medium for cultural preservation, value transmission, and the strengthening of social harmony that remains relevant amid contemporary life dynamics.

Keywords: Local Traditions, Ruwah Desa, Spirituality

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji tradisi Ruwah Desa di Desa Kedungpapar sebagai kearifan lokal yang memperkuat kehidupan sosial, budaya, psikologis, mistis, dan religius masyarakat. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik untuk mengungkap makna dan fungsi tradisi tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ruwah Desa berperan penting dalam menjaga identitas budaya, memperkuat solidaritas sosial, serta menumbuhkan rasa aman dan kebersamaan. Selain itu, tradisi ini mengandung dimensi mistis yang diyakini menjaga keseimbangan antara manusia dan alam gaib, serta dimensi religius berupa ungkapan syukur kepada Allah SWT dan penghormatan kepada leluhur. Dengan demikian, Ruwah Desa di Kedungpapar bukan sekadar ritual tahunan, tetapi juga menjadi media pelestarian budaya, transmisi nilai, dan penguatan harmoni sosial yang tetap relevan di tengah dinamika kehidupan modern.

Kata Kunci: Tradisi Lokal, Ruwah Desa, Spiritualitas

Introduction

In the culture of village communities in Indonesia, the *Ruwah Desa* tradition is a form of traditional ceremony that has been carried out for generations to maintain harmony between humans, nature and ancestral spirits. This tradition is usually carried out at certain times, especially before the month of *Ruwah* in the Javanese calendar, as a way for the community to ask for protection, safety, and blessings from the ancestors (Anggraeni & Puspytasari, 2023). . However, in addition to being part of the annual ritual cycle, the village ruwah is often carried out in response to specific events that cause anxiety in the community, such as natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or successive deaths that occur in the village.

In Kedungpapar Village, Sumobito, for example, the successive deaths of several residents within a month have caused unrest among the community. These events are considered a sign of supernatural disturbances or warnings from ancestors that require them to perform certain spiritual actions. The village ruwah tradition is then seen as a solution to restore the peace and spiritual balance of the village through rituals involving prayers, offerings (*sesajen*), and various forms of honouring ancestors (Pangestuningtyas et al., 2025a). *Ruwah Desa* is not only a traditional ritual that has been passed down from generation to generation, but also reflects the process of assimilation of Islamic values into the lives of the community. The communal prayer led by religious leaders consists of *tahlil* recitations, verses from the Qur'an, and *shalawat*, which reinforce the dimensions of tawhid and tawakal to Allah SWT (Choirunniswah, 2018). The alms given by each family are not merely a social symbol, but an actualisation of Islamic teachings on caring (*ukhuwah islamiyah*) and charitable deeds. Grave visits in this tradition are also in line with the Prophet's teachings on *dzikrul maut*, which is remembering death as a reminder to increase faith and piety (Indiana et al., 2020). Thus, *Ruwah Desa* is a concrete example of the acculturation of Islam and local wisdom that has given birth to a multicultural tradition, where religious and cultural values reinforce each other in building community solidarity (Tsauri et al., 2023).

In this context, *Ruwah Desa* is not only a means of purification and healing, but also strengthens social solidarity among residents who feel a shared responsibility to maintain the peace of the village. By performing *Ruwah Desa*, the community can release their anxieties, strengthen relationships between neighbours, and practice traditional values that are considered capable of protecting the village from mystical or supernatural threats (Zamzami & Aziz, 2025). The *Ruwah Desa* tradition offers an interesting case study of how Islamic teachings on tolerance and respect for local customs can be organically integrated with local wisdom (Huda et al., 2019). The grave pilgrimage and kenduri processions, although rooted in local practices, are filled with recitations from the Qur'an and *tahlil*, thereby gaining legitimacy and new spiritual meaning from an Islamic perspective (Makhrus et al., 2014). This integration creates a model of "cultural Islam" that is not only inclusive but also functions as an effective social glue in a diverse society, making the ritual a tool for promoting cohesion and harmony (Hanif et al., 2024).

The deaths of five people within a month in Kedungpapar Village, Sumobito, have caused deep unrest among the community. Residents began to worry that this series of deaths was no ordinary occurrence, but a bad omen or the result of an imbalance in the spiritual relationship between the village and the supernatural forces that protected it. These fears were exacerbated by various stories circulating in the community, such as that one of the villagers had made a fatal mistake or had been disturbed by the supernatural world, which made the villagers feel the need to take

special measures to prevent similar calamities in the future. While some residents attribute this to health factors, many others feel that this is a warning from their ancestors. This condition not only makes people live in anxiety, but also affects social life in the village, where people are increasingly cautious in their actions so as not to aggravate the situation. In this case, it can be reviewed in various disciplines, including socio-culture, psychology, religion, and mysticism (Alfianita & Sukarmen, 2024). Although the Kedungpapar community is demographically dominated by Muslims, the diversity of internal perspectives in understanding Islam has become a space where the *Ruwah Desa* tradition plays its role as a unifying force (Jannati et al., 2021). This tradition successfully unites various interpretations of Islam, ranging from the “*Santri*” community, which emphasises orthodoxy, to the “*Abangan*” community, which prioritises cultural aspects. In the *Ruwah Desa* ritual, Islamic prayers led by religious leaders harmoniously coexist with elements of ancestor worship preserved by traditional leaders (Woodward, 2011). However, existing studies on *Ruwah Desa* have generally focused on its role in cultural preservation or religious symbolism, while paying less attention to how it functions as a mechanism of intra-religious reconciliation amid internal diversity within muslim communities. This gap is significant, since the Kedungpapar case shows that local traditions can mediate tensions not only between different religious but also within one religious group. Thus, Kedungpapar presents a valuable model of intra-religious harmony, where differences in interpretation and practice do not divide, but are instead connected through inclusive local wisdom. This model has universal relevance for building social cohesion in internally diverse societies (Tsauri et al., 2023).

In previous research, there are several literatures that discuss the *Ruwahan* tradition, one of which is an article written by Tsauri, Ardiansyah Et al with the discussion of the *Ruwahan* Tradition is one of the cultural heritages that continues to be maintained and preserved by Muslim communities in various regions, such as Java, Madura, Malay, and Bugis, including in Pontianak City. This article dives deeper into how the implementation of the *Ruwahan* tradition in Pontianak is carried out by the local community. The focus of the study includes various important variables, such as the social, cultural and economic dimensions surrounding this tradition, as well as reviewing the extent to which the practice is in line with the values in Islamic teachings. Through a deeper understanding of *Ruwahan*, it is hoped that the community can see the richness of the meaning and function of this tradition in strengthening relations between citizens, maintaining cultural identity, and strengthening religious values in everyday life (Tsauri et al., 2023c). however, while this study provides valuable insights into the cultural richness and religious significance of *ruwahan*, it tends to remain descriptive and does not explore in depth how the tradition operates as a mechanism for negotiating differences within muslim communities themselves. In contrast, the present article goes further by analyzing the *Ruwah Desa* in Kedungpapar not only as cultural preservation, but also as a medium of intra-religious reconciliation that bridge diverse interpretations on islam. This contribution highlights a novel dimension of *ruwah* studies, showing that local traditions can function as unifying forces within internal religious diversity,

Research conducted by Pratiwi et al with the title From Ritual to Commercial: Shifting the *Ruwahan* Tradition in Sukorejo Village, Wonosari District, Klaten Regency. The *Ruwahan* tradition originally came from Hindu teachings that have long developed in the archipelago. Along with the entry of Islam into Java, this tradition underwent transformation and adjustment so that it was in harmony with Islamic teachings, especially in the practice of Javanese society. This research aims to reveal the dynamics of shifts or changes in the form and meaning of the *Ruwahan* ritual that

occurred in Sukorejo Village, Wonosari District, Klaten Regency. The focus of the study lies on the local community who still carry out this ritual until now. The approach used in this research is a sociological approach, to understand how social interactions, community values, and religious influences shape these cultural practices (Pratiwi, 2019).

Although the *Ruwahan* tradition has been extensively studied from historical, cultural, and religious perspectives, most research still focuses on the origins of this tradition or the meaning of its rituals in the religious and social context of Javanese society. However, not many studies have specifically highlighted how the socio-economic dynamics of the community - especially on a local scale such as in a village - play a role in maintaining and adapting this tradition to modern living conditions. In fact, the existence of a socio-community not only reflects social solidarity, but is also a practical solution in reducing expenses for ritual needs. Thus, this research is here to fill this void, examining the relationship between the implementation of the *Ruwahan* tradition and the local economic practices of the community and how this reflects cultural adaptation in the midst of social and economic change.

The purpose of this study is to examine in depth the meaning, function, and spiritual value of the *Ruwah Desa* tradition as a response to a series of disasters in Kedungpapar Village, Sumobito. This study also aims to understand how the community interprets these ritual practices from an Islamic and local wisdom perspective, as well as how this tradition shapes social solidarity and maintains the spiritual balance of the village community.

Method

This research employed a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning, values, and symbolic functions of the *Ruwah Desa* tradition in Kedungpapar village, particularly in the context of successive disasters. This approach enabled the researcher to capture community perceptions, subjective experiences, and social dynamics surrounding the practice. Purposive sampling was applied to represent the diversity of beliefs and social roles within the Kedungpapar community. The selection was not limited to formal leaders but also aimed to capture different spectrums of religiosity, from santri to abangan, as well as organisational affiliations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, or non-affiliated members, and generational perspectives including elders, adults, and youth. The voices of minority religious residents, although fewer in number, were also included to provide a comprehensive picture of tolerance and interfaith coexistence.

The main data collection methods were in-depth interviews and participatory observation. Interviews were conducted with religious leaders, traditional figures, and representatives of the general population. They focused on motivations for maintaining *Ruwah Desa*, underlying spiritual beliefs, and experiences in navigating communal anxiety after consecutive deaths. Ethical sensitivity was maintained by using respectful language, creating safe spaces, and allowing informants to freely express their views. Observations of ritual practices and community gatherings were also recorded to enrich contextual understanding.

In addition, secondary data from local history books, community records, and academic journals documenting *Ruwah Desa* and similar traditions were used to strengthen the validity of findings. Triangulation situated the Kedungpapar case within a broader historical and cultural context. Data were analyzed through qualitative descriptive analysis, where transcripts were thematically coded to identify recurring patterns and variations. Categories such as social solidarity, cultural

identity, religious expression, mystical beliefs, and psychological resilience emerged inductively.

The integration of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and religious studies provided a holistic interpretation of how the community perceives and practices Ruwah Desa. The study also followed multicultural research ethics by respecting local values, applying culturally appropriate communication, and ensuring confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and informants could withdraw at any stage. Overall, this methodological design allowed a nuanced exploration of Ruwah Desa as both a ritual and a collective mechanism for coping with trauma, anxiety, and social tension. (Roosinda et al., 2021). The research followed multicultural research ethics by respecting local values, using culturally appropriate communication, and ensuring confidentiality. Participation was voluntary, and informants could withdraw at any stage. Overall, this methodological design allowed for a nuanced exploration of how *Ruwah Desa* operates not only as a ritual, but also as a collective mechanism for coping with trauma, anxiety, and social tension (Haryono, 2020).

Aspect	Description
Criteria for participant selection	Representing diversity in age (elders, adults, youth), religious orientation (<i>santri, abangan</i>), organizational affiliation (NU, Muhammadiyah, non affiliated), gender balance, and inclusion of minority religious residents.
Data collection steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conducted 20 semi structured interviews2. Participatory observation of rituals and community gatherings3. Collection of secondary data (local records, literature, archivers)
Data analysis	Transcription and thematic of interview. Triangulation with observation and secondary data.

Result and Discussion

A. Socio-Cultur Perspective

Ruwah Desa is a tradition carried out by village communities as a form of gratitude to God for the harvest and as a hope for a better future. In an interview with the traditional leader, he said “*the Ruwahan tradition is expected to live on as a cultural heritage that contains moral and social values, which serve as guidelines in people's daily lives*”

The traditional leader and the surrounding community also said “*Ruwah Desa is also an important moment to strengthen relationships between neighbours*”.

Ruwah Desa creates opportunities for residents to gather and interact. It strengthens social networks, deepens relationships between residents, and encourages collaboration in various aspects of life, such as agriculture and other social activities. The traditional leader alsi added “*the presence of shared food or*

*alms from each family also adds to the nuances of togetherness, making *Ruwahan* not only a spiritual ritual, but also a social celebration full of meaning”*

In a socio-cultural context, *Ruwah Desa* is not only a ritual, but also a symbol of strong community identity. *Ruwah Desa* functions as a reinforcement of community identity. Through this ritual, villagers strengthen their sense of community and solidarity. This tradition serves as a reminder of the historical and cultural values upheld by the local community (Indiana et al., 2019).

This tradition is closely related to the belief system adopted by most people, especially the adherents of Abangan Islam, which is identical to the implementation of various rituals, one of which is in the form of kenduri as a form of respect for ancestors (Purwanti, 2014). However, *Ruwah Desa* is not limited to Abangan Islam; it demonstrates a multicultural integration where Islamic rituals such as tahlil, almsgiving, and collective prayers are harmonized with Javanese and Madurese cultural practices in Kedungpapar. This integration shows how Islamic teachings adapt and coexist with local customs, making the tradition inclusive and strengthening social solidarity across diverse groups (Good, 2025).

Changes in cultural values and behavioural patterns influenced by the process of urbanisation and the movement of people to big cities have had a significant impact on the preservation of traditions such as *Ruwahan*. This tradition is increasingly being marginalised and losing its place in the modern society. The younger generation now tends to be more familiar with global popular culture and urban lifestyles, so their interest in traditional practices such as *Ruwahan* is waning (Agustina, 2021). In addition, economic factors also play an important role in determining the survival of this tradition. Many families have to consider expenses and prioritise life's needs, so the implementation of *Ruwahan* is no longer the main thing. However, there are still certain communities that attempt to preserve this tradition in simpler and more efficient ways, such as through food saving programmes, as a form of adaptation to changing times (Bile et al., 2024).

The implementation of these values in traditional ceremonies strengthens community beliefs and activities so that community involvement has a major impact on the sustainability and meaning of these activities. This tradition has social values that are felt by the village community. With the growth of a sense of unity and togetherness. Carrying out this tradition brings out a sense of cultural love in oneself by inheriting local traditional ceremonial activities so that they are not eroded by modern times (Agustina, 2021).

Over time, *Ruwah Desa* has undergone a transformation. The community adapts to social and cultural changes without losing the essence of tradition. This process reflects the dynamics between tradition preservation and modernisation. The younger generation plays an important role in the continuation of *Ruwah Desa*. Their involvement in ceremonies and activities related to *Ruwah Desa* can provide a new spirit, as well as a place to learn and preserve traditions. From a socio-cultural perspective, *Ruwah Desa* is a phenomenon rich in meaning. It functions not only as a religious ritual, but also as a tool to strengthen social ties, identity and cultural values within the community.

This form of adaptation is crucial for traditions to survive and remain relevant amidst modernisation and global cultural influences (Wirdawati, 2024). Similarly, *Ruwah Desa* illustrates how Islam and local culture intertwine, producing a multicultural model of resilience. This can be compared to Nyadran in Central Java or Ruwahan in Pontianak, which also integrate Islamic prayers and remembrance of the dead with local customs. These comparisons highlight that Islamic-local traditions are not static but serve as cultural bridges that promote unity, tolerance, and continuity in plural societies (Knottnerus, 2025).



B. Mystical Perspective.

In interview, a local elder explained that the people of Kedungpapar still believe in maintaining balance between the physical world and the spiritual realm. He stated, “*The local community believes that harmony between nature and the spirit world must be preserved to ensure safety and prosperity. Consecutive deaths are viewed as signs of imbalance, creating fear and unrest. To restore balance and reduce anxiety, villagers hold traditional rituals such as ruwatan*”

The *ruwah desa* tradition is often carried out after several deaths occur within a short period. For some villagers, such events are perceived as signs of supernatural disturbance as a consequence of collective sins. To restore harmony, they perform rituals such as visiting ancestral graves, communal prayer, and preparing offerings.

A community leader said, “*Prior to the Ruwah Desa ritual, the community performs a symbolic act of seeking permission at ancestral graves. This practice reflects the belief that ancestors continue to influence the welfare and harmony of the village. In the context of successive calamities, such as consecutive deaths, the ritual*

serves as a cultural mechanism to restore balance. Importantly, this act is carried out only by specific individuals considered spiritually qualified”.

In practice, indigenous traditional mysticism teaches people to always maintain a balance between the real world and the spiritual world through various ceremonies and rituals, such as joint prayers, ancestral pilgrimages, and environmental cleaning (Abimanyu, 2021). This not only serves as a form of respect for ancestors and supernatural powers, but also strengthens social solidarity and a sense of community (Nabila et al., 2024). What makes *Ruwah Desa* unique is that mystical explanations coexist with Islamic elements (Fahmi, 2019). The rituals of seeking ancestral permission or interpreting natural signs (such as wind) are framed alongside tahlil prayers and Qur'anic recitations (Hashina, 2022), showing a syncretism that allows Javanese-Madurese beliefs and Islamic spirituality to interact within one communal framework (Crosweller & Tschakert, 2021).

This blending of mystical practices and Islamic rituals demonstrates the multicultural character of *Ruwah Desa*: while mystical traditions emphasize harmony with nature and the unseen, Islamic elements provide spiritual legitimacy and collective religious meaning. This duality strengthens the resilience of the Kedungpapar community in facing crises (Pangestuningtyas et al., 2025).

“In seeking ancestral permission, villagers visit graves regarded as spiritual centres of the community. Rituals such as prayers and acts of respect are performed, after which natural signs are awaited as ancestral responses. A breeze, for instance, is interpreted as approval, while the absence of signs suggests postponement. These natural phenomena are thus seen as a medium of communication between ancestors and their descendants”

*“After receiving ancestral approval, the next stage is determining the ritual day. This task, usually handled by the same custodians of ancestral graves, involves consulting traditional calendars and leaders’ advice. The chosen date is not merely practical but imbued with spiritual significance, believed to bring fortune and avert misfortune, thereby maximizing the positive impact of the *Ruwah Desa* ritual.”*

*“The day before *Ruwah Desa*, villagers prepare **offerings (sesajen)**—such as food, flowers, or symbolic objects—placed in sacred spaces. These offerings are intended to honor ancestors, secure blessings, and prevent disturbances during the ritual. They are also believed to neutralize negative energy in the environment. By preparing them a day earlier, the community symbolically provides time for ancestors to accept the offerings and acknowledge their descendants’ goodwill”*

C. Psychological Perspectives.

From a psychological perspective, this tradition serves not only as a form of honouring ancestors, but also as a collective mechanism to cope with the fear, anxiety and uncertainty that arises among residents (Arihakam et al., 2025). Multiple deaths within a short period of time, for example, can trigger social anxiety that impacts the mental well-being of the community. The *Ruwah Desa* allows residents to express their emotions, share their fears, and seek solace through ritual activities that are believed to appease ancestral spirits and keep the village safe (Adriansyah et al., 2019).

“Ruwahan feels like a time for us to gather, pray, and strengthen each other. When there are successive deaths, the atmosphere in the village becomes tense. But after Ruwahan, we feel calmer,” said a local community leader during an interview. This statement reflects the role of tradition as a collective means of processing trauma and restoring a sense of control in uncertain situations.

In terms of social psychology, indigenous traditions strengthen social cohesion and group solidarity. Indigenous ceremonies and rituals become moments of community gathering that strengthen relationships between members, reduce loneliness and increase a sense of belonging (Setiyani, 2017). This is important for collective mental health and preventing social conflict. For example, the horse racing tradition in Bima is not only entertainment, but also a means of strengthening social ties and building a sense of community pride that has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of the community (Bakar, 2023).

From a health perspective, deaths are often linked to untreated acute or chronic diseases and worsened by poor environmental conditions such as inadequate sanitation, contaminated water, and overcrowded areas. These factors accelerate the spread of infectious diseases and heighten health complications, particularly in communities with limited healthcare access, making them more vulnerable to mortality risks.

In the case of *Ruwah Desa*, psychological resilience is also built upon multicultural religious practices: the Abangan community emphasizes mystical aspects, while the Santri group emphasizes Qur’anic recitation and Islamic prayers. The coexistence of these practices in one ritual helps bridge different streams of Islam, fostering inclusivity and mutual reinforcement of coping mechanisms (Purnamasari & Zakiyah, 2025).

“Through this activity, the community not only deepens religious devotion but also fosters solidarity, cooperation, and cultural identity. For some residents, Ruwahan is viewed as a way of spreading Islam that remains grounded in local wisdom. Shared meals and family contributions further enhance social bonds, making the tradition not merely a spiritual ritual but also a collective celebration of togetherness and cultural continuity,” explained a resident in an interview.

The performance of rituals in *Ruwah Desa*, such as collective prayers, grave pilgrimages and almsgiving, provides an opportunity for the community to express their feelings of grief, loss and worry (Rahma & Wantini, 2024). In psychology, this is known as catharsis, which is the release of emotions that can help relieve inner tension (Dwinanda et al., 2022). By involving the whole community in this ritual, pent-up emotions can be channelled in a healthier way. Successive calamities often create a sense of helplessness in the community. *Ruwah Desa* is a way for them to feel they have control over the situation through ritual actions that are believed to bring salvation.

The *Ruwah Desa* tradition has symbolism that acts as a psychological healing tool, as it can give meaning to events that cannot be fully understood, such as calamities (Anggreni & Pudjibudojo, 2022). It is in relation to calamities and spiritual meanings or ancestral traditions that communities gain a way to process loss and deal more wisely with uncertainty. Thus, from a psychological perspective, *Ruwah Desa* is an important tool in helping communities process trauma, strengthen social solidarity, give meaning to life, and create a sense of security in the midst of difficult situations (Safitri, 2020). It demonstrates how

aspects of culture, trust and social support work together to create psychological resilience at the community level.

Thus, psychologically, the multicultural integration of Islamic values and local traditions in *Ruwah Desa* provides not only emotional relief but also long-term social cohesion, making it a vital communal tool in crisis recovery (Ghofir, 2025).

D. Religious Perspective

Ruwah Desa reflects a combination of Islamic teachings, local customs and ancestral beliefs. From an Islamic perspective, this tradition can be seen as a means to increase spiritual awareness and trust in Allah SWT. By bringing people together to pray and give alms, *Ruwah Desa* involves aspects of worship that strengthen *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood) and the spirit of helping each other in the midst of suffering. One of the key elements in *Ruwah Desa* is collective prayer, which in religious teachings is a form of direct communication between humans and God (Indiana et al., 2020a). Prayer is a means of asking for protection and blessings. In a disaster situation, prayer contains a dimension of hope, an acknowledgement of human weakness, and a reminder that everything happens by His will. The collective prayers offered in *Ruwah Desa* emphasise the meaning of a form of *tawakal* in the face of trials (Amelda Zakiyya, 2024).

What makes *Ruwah Desa* distinct is its role as a multicultural bridge within Islam itself. It unites diverse expressions of religiosity—Santri with their strong textual Islamic practices, Abangan with their cultural-Islamic rituals, and even different Islamic schools of thought such as Sunni and Shia—into one communal event (Puspitasari, 2024). This shows how Islamic traditions in Indonesia are dynamic, tolerant, and capable of embracing diversity without losing their theological essence (Mukarromah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, when compared with other Islamic-local traditions across Indonesia and Southeast Asia, *Ruwah Desa* demonstrates the broader phenomenon of “Islamic multiculturalism.” Like Nyadran in Central Java or Tahlilan in Malaysia, *Ruwah Desa* balances tawhid (oneness of God) with local customs such as honoring ancestors. This highlights how Islam can adapt and integrate with diverse cultural contexts while still strengthening faith and social solidarity (Lestari et al., 2025).

“On the day of Ruwah Desa, the entire community gathers in collective prayer, reciting tahlil, Qur’anic verses, shalawat, and supplications for the deceased. Beyond remembrance of the dead, these prayers also embody a plea for divine protection. Villagers believe that through such devotion, Allah’s blessing will safeguard the community from misfortune and prevent recurring disasters”. This finding supported by one of the local religious leader.

Ruwah Desa is also often accompanied by grave pilgrimage activities. In Islam, remembering death (dzikrul maut) is a way to maintain piety and improve morals. Visiting the graves of ancestors is a reminder that life in this world is temporary and everyone will return to Allah SWT. This is relevant to the existence of calamities because it provides a meaning that all trials in the world are part of a life test that must be faced with patience. The multicultural character of *Ruwah Desa* shows that religion in practice is not only vertical (hablumminallah) but also horizontal (hablumminannas). The integration of Islamic faith with Javanese-Madurese cultural practices fosters interfaith tolerance, unity, and resilience in facing crises. This makes *Ruwah Desa* not only a religious ritual but

also a living model of Islamic multiculturalism in a plural society (Abdayillah et al., 2025).

“Before the prayer starts, we always visit the graves. It’s like we are reminded that we too could be gone anytime. The disasters remind us that life is fragile, and the Ruwah Desa helps us prepare ourselves spiritually,” interview with local religious leader

The context of almsgiving is an important part of the *Ruwah Desa* tradition. In religious teachings, giving alms has great virtues, especially when one faces difficulties. In the midst of a disaster, this sharing activity strengthens social ties and becomes a tangible form of sympathy for others who are suffering (Niswah, 2018). Almsgiving, which is carried out jointly during the *Ruwah Desa* event, can foster a sense of solidarity in the community and show that religion teaches us not only to pray, but also to do real good (Nasiroh et al., 2025).

Ruwah Desa is a medium for Islamic propagation through strengthening traditions rooted in local culture. Many religious figures or kiai lead this activity by prioritising Islamic values that are in accordance with local wisdom. This tradition integrates spiritual values with the daily life of the community (Wardani, n.d.), so that its presence can strengthen the basis of religiosity in the midst of social dynamics and calamities. Theologically, *Ruwah Desa* reinforces the meaning of *taqwa* (obedience to Allah). Human beings are taught to reflect on the wisdom of the calamities experienced, affirm their faith, and increase good deeds. Through this ritual, the community is reminded that everything is part of a test to increase their piety to Allah SWT (Nuzula et al., 2024).

Through activities laden with prayers and dhikr, *Ruwah Desa* becomes a moment of spiritual reflection for *tafakkur* (pondering). The situation of successive calamities can cause anxiety and uncertainty, so *Ruwah Desa* is present as a forum to strengthen the belief that everything has a wisdom that only Allah knows. In this reflection, residents are taught to improve their relationship with God (*Hablummina Allah*) and fellow humans (*Hablumminan Nas*).

The relevance of *Ruwah Desa* in the context of disasters highlights the enduring importance of spiritual values in the modern era. Amid contemporary challenges, this tradition demonstrates how religion provides a space for collective gathering, the strengthening of faith, and the cultivation of social solidarity. As a form of local wisdom, it deserves preservation within the dynamics of rapid social change. *Ruwah Desa* represents harmony between religion and culture, offering spiritual responses to successive calamities. It teaches togetherness, sincerity, and steadfastness of faith, affirming that religion is not merely ritualistic but an integral part of daily communal life (Setiawan, 2025).

In conclusion, the religious perspective of *Ruwah Desa* highlights that this tradition is not merely a cultural ritual but also a form of da’wah through culture. It reflects the harmonious acculturation of Islamic values and local wisdom, where practices such as prayer, almsgiving, and grave pilgrimage serve as both acts of worship and cultural expression. As noted by Sholihin & Sirojuddin (2023), this integration strengthens Islamic faith, nurtures ukhuwah Islamiyah, and deepens spiritual awareness in times of crisis. Therefore, *Ruwah Desa* stands as a living embodiment of Islam Nusantara, showing how religion can interact dynamically with local traditions to foster resilience, gratitude, and collective solidarity (Sirojuddin et al., 2025).

Conclusion

Through qualitative analysis, this study confirms that the *Ruwah Desa* tradition in Kedungpapar fulfills the research objective of showing how cultural-religious practices foster resilience in diverse communities. The findings highlight how the tradition integrates Islamic values *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (brotherhood), *sedekah* (charity), and *tawakal* (trust in God) with Javanese local wisdom of ancestral respect and harmony with nature. This synthesis not only strengthens social solidarity but also promotes psychological healing and spiritual recovery, making *Ruwah Desa* a living model of resilience during communal crises.

The study implies that traditions rooted in spiritual and cultural heritage can serve as sustainable assets for policymakers and local leaders in strengthening social cohesion. Local governments may begin by mapping and documenting similar traditions as part of community-based disaster risk reduction strategies. Religious and civil society leaders can further promote this model for intra- and interfaith dialogue, while educators may integrate its multicultural values into character education to instill tolerance and cultural appreciation.

Future research should explore comparative models of tradition-based resilience across regions to identify universal principles for a national policy framework that respects local diversity. Preserving *Ruwah Desa* and similar traditions is therefore a strategic step toward a resilient, inclusive, and harmonious Indonesian society.

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