

The Kojan Dance as A Manifestation of Living Hadith in The *Maulid Nabi* Tradition of Mlangi

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Abstract: Modernization and rapid technological advances have opened wide access to foreign cultures, resulting in the increasing attraction of communities—especially younger generations—to external cultural practices. This shift has contributed to the gradual fading of traditional customs and rituals in many regions of Indonesia. However, such a tendency does not apply to the people of Mlangi, Sleman, who have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to preserving their ancestral heritage. One of the most prominent examples is the Kojan Dance, a traditional performance presented during the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*Maulid Nabi*) at the Pathok Negoro Mosque. More than an artistic expression, the Kojan Dance functions as a medium for religious devotion and social solidarity. This study aims to comprehensively examine the origins of the Kojan Dance, its implementation practices, and its meaning as a representation of hadith values within the *Maulid Nabi* tradition. By employing a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods, the research seeks to uncover not only the external form of the performance but also the lived experiences and spiritual meanings perceived by its practitioners. Data were collected through indirect observation, semi-structured interviews with key community figures and participants, and documentation of textual and visual materials related to the event. The findings reveal that the Kojan Dance embodies a unique blend of spiritual, aesthetic, and social values. It reflects the Mlangi community's enduring love for the Prophet Muhammad, expressed through coordinated bodily movements, rhythmic chants, and the recitation of shalawat from the Syarafil Anam text. Beyond its function as part of the *Maulid* celebration, the Kojan Dance stands as a tangible manifestation of "living hadith"—the practice of translating prophetic values into everyday life—while simultaneously strengthening intergenerational transmission of Islamic teachings and local wisdom. This study thus contributes to the growing discourse on Living Hadith by demonstrating how local cultural expressions can serve as effective vehicles for preserving religious values in the context of modernization.

Keywords: cultural preservation, kojani dance, living hadith, *Maulid Nabi* tradition, phenomenology.

Introduction

Indonesia is a nation endowed with remarkable cultural diversity, encompassing a wide range of traditions, languages, arts, and religious practices that have emerged through a long history of interaction between local values and Islamic teachings (Panamuan et al., 2025). However, the rapid development of technology and the swift currents of modernization have brought significant changes to people's mindsets, lifestyles, and cultural preferences. The younger generation—being the group most frequently engaged with technology—has become the most vulnerable to

shifts in cultural orientation. This phenomenon is reflected in the growing interest in global popular cultures such as K-pop, Western lifestyles, and various forms of digital entertainment, which often divert their attention away from local cultural heritage (Ayu & Bela, 2023).

Concerns over the erosion of ancestral traditions are not without basis. Research indicates that without systematic preservation efforts, modernization can lead to a reduction in the meaning of traditional practices and weaken local identities (Panamuan et al., 2025). In the Islamic context, modernization has also reshaped the ways in which young people express their religiosity:

traditional religious practices are increasingly being replaced by more modern or popular forms of expression, especially among youth (Rasyeed Asshiddiqi et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, this phenomenon does not occur uniformly across all communities. In Mlangi Hamlet, Nogotirto Village, Gamping, Sleman, the community continues to uphold the tradition of commemorating the Prophet's birthday (*Maulid Nabi*) through performances of the Kojan Dance. This religious art form serves not only as a cultural expression but also as a medium for spiritual internalization and the strengthening of religious values within the community. The Kojan tradition in Mlangi stands as an example of how a local practice can persist and remain relevant amid the pressures of modernization.

The Kojan performance is particularly relevant to be examined through the framework of living hadith, which explores how the values of hadith are revitalized within cultural practices rather than being treated merely as static texts. Because Kojan integrates elements of music, *maulid* chants, bodily movements, and prayers into a collective ritual, it becomes an effective medium for reproducing hadith messages—such as love for the Prophet, proper conduct, and communal solidarity—among younger generations while shaping a shared religious identity.

However, academic literature on Kojan from the perspectives of phenomenology and living hadith remains scarce. Existing studies largely focus on historical aspects or artistic functions, without examining how hadith is concretely integrated into ritual practices. Therefore, this study is crucial in addressing this gap: using a phenomenological approach, it seeks to uncover the deeper meanings of practitioners' religious experiences, the social structure of the performance, and the transformation of hadith values within the Mlangi community.

Materials And Methods

Study Area

This study employs a qualitative approach using a phenomenological framework to understand the

subjective experiences of Kojan Dance practitioners, as well as the religious and cultural meanings embedded within the tradition. The phenomenological approach is chosen because it enables an exploration of the essence of human experience as it is lived through consciousness, the body, and interaction with the surrounding environment. Merleau-Ponty (2012) emphasizes that the body is the primary medium through which the world is perceived, making this approach particularly relevant for examining religious practices expressed through bodily movement, such as the Kojan Dance.

The research was conducted in Mlangi Hamlet, Nogotirto Village, Gamping, Sleman, Yogyakarta—an area known as a center of Javanese religious traditions and strongly associated with *Maulid Nabi* practices. The fieldwork took place from October to December 2024.

Research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, targeting informants who have direct involvement in and substantial understanding of the Kojan Dance. These informants consisted of primary informants, key informants, and additional informants. The key informants were religious figures in Mlangi and members of the Kojan Dance troupe. The primary informants were local residents who possess knowledge of the history and development of the Kojan tradition. Meanwhile, the additional informants were community members who actively participate in Kojan Dance activities.

Procedures

The data collection techniques used in this study include indirect observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Indirect observation was conducted by examining performance videos, digital documentation, and recordings of the *Maulid Nabi* event at the Pathok Negoro Mosque. This technique was chosen because the research period did not coincide with the scheduled performance. Semi-structured interviews allowed informants to provide personal narratives and perspectives that developed naturally. This method enabled the researcher to capture the dynamic layers of meaning that could not be obtained through observation alone.

Documentation—consisting of photographs, videos, local archives, and relevant manuscripts such as *Majmu'ah Maulid Syarafil Anam*, which serves as the primary textual source for the Kojan Dance chants—was also used to support the analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process employed source triangulation to verify the consistency and validity of information obtained from various informants and documents. Phenomenological analysis was carried out through the following stages: (1) Epoche (bracketing): suspending the researcher's initial assumptions to allow a clear understanding of the phenomenon; (2) Phenomenological reduction: identifying the essential meanings embedded in the informants' narratives; (3) Imaginative variation: exploring possible structural meanings from multiple perspectives; and (4) Essential description: formulating a deep understanding of how *Tari Kojan* represents the practice of hadith within the Mlangi community. Through this method, the study not only provides a descriptive account of *Tari Kojan* practices but also reveals how this tradition shapes religious experience, social identity, and the internalization of hadith values in community life.

Results And Discussion

As an effort to comprehensively understand the practice of *Tari Kojan* within the *Maulid Nabi* tradition in Mlangi, this results and analysis section presents the research findings derived from observations, in-depth interviews, and the examination of literature sources and local historical documents. The empirical data collected were subsequently interpreted through the frameworks of living hadith and ritual anthropology, allowing each dimension of the practice—from social structure, movement, and music to emotional experience—to be analyzed as a representation of hadith embodiment within the cultural context of the Mlangi community. The analysis is presented systematically, beginning with the sociocultural background and history of

Kojan, followed by its performative practices, and finally the meanings and hadith values embedded within it. Thus, this section not only provides a descriptive account of the phenomenon but also offers an interpretive reading that demonstrates how the *Kojan* tradition functions as a religious, cultural, and social medium in the life of the Mlangi santri community.

General Overview of the Location and the Sociocultural Context of Mlangi

Mlangi Hamlet, located in Padukuhan Mlangi, Nogotirto Village, Gamping Subdistrict, Sleman, Yogyakarta Special Region, is widely known as a santri community characterized by strong and enduring religious traditions. Observations conducted in this study indicate that the community's religious life is centered around the Jami' An-Nur Mlangi Mosque (Masjid Pathok Negro), which serves daily as the site for worship, Qur'anic study sessions, and various socio-religious activities. These field findings are consistent with the works of (Imawan & Ghazali, 2023) and (*Pathok Negara Mlangi – Jogja Heritage Society*, n.d.) both of which describe Mlangi as one of the key nodes in the pesantren network and a center of Islamic education since the eighteenth century.

Historically, Mlangi's religious identity has been profoundly shaped by the figure of Kyai Nur Iman (R.M. Sandiyo), a central figure in the spread of Islam who received *tanah perdikan* (tax-exempt land) from the Yogyakarta Sultanate. Interviews with local figures for this study show that the community continues to regard Kyai Nur Iman as a spiritual axis—reflected in the high frequency of pilgrimage to his tomb, particularly on major Islamic occasions. This narrative aligns with Imawan (Imawan, 2020) yang menempatkan kompleks makam Nur Iman sebagai ruang sakral yang membentuk identitas religius warga Mlangi who identifies the Nur Iman burial complex as a sacred space that constructs the religious identity of Mlangi residents.

Field observations further reveal that Mlangi possesses a distinctive social atmosphere as a *kampung* santri, characterized by the presence of several pesantren, regular Qur'anic study

traditions, and disciplined engagement in religious activities. These findings correspond with reports and studies by (Rokhim et al., 2020), which note that practices such as *Ngelik*, *Maulid*, and routine *pengajian* serve as markers of communal identity. Interviews with residents indicate that these collective activities not only fulfill religious functions but also strengthen social solidarity and communal cohesion.

From the perspective of material culture, this study notes architectural acculturation in the Pathok Negoro Mosque—evident in its *limasan* roof form, traditional Javanese ornamentation, and structural features that preserve classical elements. These observations align with architectural analyses by (Murti, 2020) which argue that Pathok Negoro mosques represent a synthesis of Islamic and Javanese values within the cultural landscape of Yogyakarta. Additionally, several sites in Mlangi—including the mosque, the tomb of Kyai Nur Iman, and the ceremonial gateways—have been designated as cultural heritage sites, as recorded in the Yogyakarta Cultural Heritage Database, indicating state recognition of the area's historical value.

Field observations also show that religious traditions such as *Maulid*, *Ngelik*, and *Tari Kojan* not only persist but constitute a vital part of the community's collective identity. Many informants emphasized that Mlangi is not merely a place of residence but a “living religious learning space” in which Islamic values are transmitted across generations through rituals, the arts, and social interaction. This reinforces the analysis that Mlangi's sociocultural context functions as a religious ecosystem that strongly supports the continuity of religious cultural practices, including *Tari Kojan*.

History and Origins of Kojan Dance

The history of *Tari Kojan* in Mlangi Hamlet cannot be traced to any definitive written document; its origins live primarily in oral tradition, religious practices of the community, and collective memory passed down across generations. In-depth interviews with local figures, including elders and Kojan practitioners, indicate that the people of Mlangi generally do not know precisely when

Kojan first emerged or who initiated it. They simply affirm that Kojan has “existed since long ago” and developed alongside the tradition of celebrating the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi*) at the Pathok Negoro Mosque. This finding aligns with (Lubis, 2019) which notes that the chronology of religious traditions in Mlangi is often undocumented and instead preserved through repeated practice and oral transmission.

Beyond local narratives, this study identifies several variations in explanations regarding how Kojan came to Mlangi. Based on interviews, some informants believe that Kojan is connected to *hadrah* or *rodat* traditions known in pesantren communities and coastal regions of Java, transmitted through networks of scholars (*ulama*) and students (*santri*) engaged in scholarly travels. Meanwhile, other informants mention the possible influence of *habaib* and Arab-descended communities who introduced rhythmic forms of *shalawat* to the inland regions of Yogyakarta. These differing perspectives correspond with findings from (Lubis, 2019) and other studies, which conclude that no single, universally accepted historical version of Kojan exists; thus, it is more accurate to understand this tradition as the outcome of gradual cultural encounters and integrative processes across communities.

A review of literature and field documentation reveals at least three main narrative patterns that can be used to interpret the origins of Kojan. First, Kojan is viewed as the result of acculturation with *shalawat* or *rodat* traditions long established in Java and reinforced through the mobility of the pesantren scholarly network. Second, Kojan developed as a religious expression and medium of devotional love for the Prophet, maintained by Mlangi's local *santri* networks, particularly due to their strong attachment to *Maulid* traditions and religious expressions surrounding the Pathok Negoro Mosque. Third, Kojan is seen as a local cultural creation inspired by *Maulid* texts such as *Majmu'ah Maulid Syarafil Anam* and *al-Barzanji*, whose use was also documented during field observations of Kojan performances. This aligns with the analysis of (Imawan & Ghazali, 2023) which notes an integration between classical

Maulid texts and local expressive forms within *Ngelik* and Kojan practices in Mlangi.

The differing versions found in interviews and literature strengthen the conclusion that Kojan's history is multiple and dynamic rather than linear or singular. The scarcity of written archives and the strong reliance on oral tradition make this practice prone to continual recontextualization according to the community's lived experiences. Field observations show that Kojan is continually updated by younger generations—whether in staging arrangements, movement formations, or event management—while still retaining its core tradition. For this reason, this study positions Kojan as a *living tradition*—a living cultural practice shaped by the interplay of pesantren cultural transmission, *Maulid* literary acculturation, and local creativity within the Mlangi community. This approach is consistent with (Lubis, 2019) and cultural anthropology scholarship that emphasizes that traditions should be understood as ongoing processes rather than static historical products tied to a single point of origin.

In addition to local narratives, the data from this study reveal several variations in explanations regarding how Kojan entered Mlangi. Based on interviews, some informants believe that Kojan is linked to the *hadrah* or *rodat* traditions known in pesantren communities and coastal regions of Java, transmitted primarily through networks of *ulama* and *santri* who traveled in search of knowledge. Meanwhile, other informants suggest the possible influence of *habaib* and Arab-descended communities who introduced rhythmic forms of *shalawat* to the inland areas of Yogyakarta. These differing perspectives are consistent with (Lubis, 2019) and several other studies, all of which conclude that no single, universally accepted historical version of Kojan exists; consequently, this tradition is best understood as the result of gradual cultural encounters and integrative processes that developed across multiple communities.

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The differing versions that emerge from interviews and literature reinforce the conclusion that the history of Kojan is multiple and dynamic rather than linear and singular. The scarcity of written archives and the strong dependence on oral tradition make this cultural practice prone to ongoing recontextualization in line with the community's lived experiences. Field observations show that Kojan continues to be renewed by younger generations—whether in staging arrangements, movement formations, or event management—while still maintaining its essential core. For this reason, this study positions Kojan as a *living tradition*—a living cultural practice resulting from the interplay of pesantren cultural transmission, *Maulid* poetic acculturation, and the local creativity of the Mlangi community. This perspective is consistent with (Lubis, 2019) and broader cultural anthropology scholarship, which emphasize that tradition should be understood as an evolving process rather than a static historical product tied to a single point of origin.

The Practice of Performing Kojan Dance in the *Maulid* Celebration

The performance of *Tari Kojan* within the series of events celebrating the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi*) in Mlangi constitutes a ritual-cultural practice that remains deeply alive in the community's lived experience and functions as both a religious and educational medium. Field observations reveal that Kojan performances are always centered in the

Pathok Negoro Mosque complex—specifically in the mosque's front courtyard—and are held on the peak night of the *Maulid* after the recitation of *maulid* texts has concluded. Interviews with *Maulid* committee members and Kojan performers confirm that this tradition has become a permanent component of the annual celebration and consistently involves all segments of the community—children, youth, and adults—each with inherited roles passed down through generations. These findings reinforce (Lubis, 2019) who identifies Kojan as an integral element of the *Maulid* structure at Pathok Negoro Mlangi.

Based on direct observation prior to the performance, preparations for Kojan are carried out collectively through a *gotong-royong* (communal cooperation) mechanism. Residents, mosque caretakers (*takmir*), and local youth share responsibilities in preparing musical instruments, lighting, sound systems, and the arrangement of participants. Interviews with the *mbowo* or *dalang* (chant leader) show that their role extends beyond initiating the chants—they also regulate the overall rhythm and flow of the performance. Behind them stand the chant responders, *rebana* players, and rows of dancers, who are organized according to age and skill level. This structure reflects the socio-religious hierarchy of the Mlangi santri community, in which religious authority and experience determine the distribution of roles. Observations additionally show the use of distinctive attire such as *sarung*, robes, and *kopiah*, which informants describe as symbols of “Mlangi santri identity.” Such organizational patterns are also documented by (Imawan & Ghazali, 2023) in their study of religious artistic structures at the Pathok Negoro Mosque.

Video documentation and field notes indicate that the sequence of the Kojan performance follows a consistent pattern each year. The event begins with an opening prayer and introductory remarks, followed by the recitation of *Maulid* verses from *Majmu'ah Maulid Syarafil Anam*. Once the *rebana* rhythm stabilizes, the dancers enter, form their rows, and move in accordance with the musical cues. The climax occurs during the *mahalul qiyam*, when the entire congregation rises to offer symbolic reverence to the Prophet. The

performance then concludes with a closing prayer and the recitation of Al-Fatihah. This dramaturgical structure aligns with (Lubis, 2019), though field observations in this study reveal additional details—such as tempo adjustments made by the musical leader and spontaneous congregational responses—which highlight the emotional engagement of participants.



Figure 1. The Chant Leader and the Rebana Drummers in the Kojan Dance

Field findings indicate that the movements in Kojan are highly structured and transmitted through direct practice. The basic movements observed include placing the right hand on the chest, nodding the head in accordance with the rhythm of the chant, performing controlled swaying motions, and executing a partial prostration at specific moments. According to the performers interviewed, these movements are not merely synchronized with the music but embody values of reverence, devotion, and the experiential expression of love for the Prophet. This aligns with (Soviatun Siti, 2019) who explains that Kojan movements serve a pedagogical function as a medium for internalizing proper conduct (*adab*) among younger generations. Observational data show that children learning Kojan generally imitate the movements of senior practitioners through informal practice sessions held after Maghrib, demonstrating a process of embodied value transmission.



Figure 2. One of the movement sequences in the Kojan Dance

From a phenomenological perspective, interview data with practitioners indicate that the *mahalul qiyam* segment is the most emotional moment. Several informants described experiencing “deep emotion,” a “spiritual connection,” or “goosebumps” when the entire congregation stands together while reciting *shalawat*. This experience is not only emotional but also intentional—directed toward the figure of the Prophet and the religious values being internalized. Field observations show a noticeable shift in the atmosphere during this moment: the sound of the *rebana* intensifies, the voices of the participants grow louder, and the tempo of the chants tends to increase. This illustrates how Kojan creates a religious experience that engages the body, voice, rhythm, and communal togetherness. This interpretation is supported by (Lubis, 2019) and other ethnographic studies on the Mlangi *Maulid* tradition.

A combined analysis of observations and interviews shows that Kojan serves a dual function: as a medium of religious propagation that reinforces teachings (*shalawat* and love for the Prophet), and as a social mechanism that reproduces community solidarity. The resilience of this tradition is maintained through intergenerational transmission, the role of the mosque institution, and the ongoing spiritual relevance felt by both practitioners and observers. The findings in this section will serve as the empirical basis for the next chapter, which will explicitly discuss the relationship between Kojan movements and hadith values (living hadith) (Imawan & Ghazali, 2023).

Values of Hadith in the Kojan Dance

The Kojan dance in Mlangi is not understood merely as an artistic performance, but as a religious practice that embodies hadith values in a living form (*living hadith*) through its chants, music, movements, and social togetherness. Findings from observations and interviews show that the community interprets Kojan as a concrete expression of love for the Prophet, reverence, and a medium of religious education for the younger generation. In the context of *living hadith*, values that are usually accessed through textual study become “alive” because they are enacted through the body, voice, rhythm, and collective social space. This finding aligns with the study by (Imawan & Ghazali, 2023) which describes Kojan as one of the forms of religious praxis among the Mlangi community.

Interviews with the chant leaders (*mbowo*) and responders show that all chants used in Kojan originate from *Majmu'ah Maulid Syarafil Anam*, a text long used in the *Maulid* tradition of Mlangi. During observations, performers recited parts such as praises to the Prophet, supplications for safety, and narratives of the Prophet's birth. The practice of reciting these chants and *shalawat* directly refers to the Qur'anic and Prophetic commands regarding the virtue of invoking blessings upon the Prophet: Qur'an, Surah al-Ahzab 33:56: “Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet. O you who believe, send blessings upon him and greet him with salutations.” This verse becomes a key normative source in the *Maulid* tradition and all practices of praising the Prophet. In addition, the hadith narrated by Muslim states: “Whoever sends blessings upon me once, Allah will send blessings upon him ten times.” (HR. Muslim). In the field, practitioners emphasized that reciting the chants in Kojan is considered an act of *shalawat*, making it both an act of worship and an aesthetic expression. This finding corresponds to documentation of the Ngelik tradition in Mlangi, which also uses *maulid* chants as a medium of *dhikr* and religious education (Rokhim et al., 2020).

Field observations show that Kojan movements are standardized and passed down from generation to generation, with patterns such as: the right hand on the chest as a symbol of respect,

nodding the head in accordance with the chant's rhythm, gentle swaying movements, semi-standing or deep bowing in certain parts, and small prostrations at specific points in the chants. When interviewed, practitioners explained that these movements are not merely aesthetic but symbolize *ta'dzim* (reverence), *tawadhu'* (humility), and expressions of love for the Prophet. These findings are consistent with (Soviatun Siti, 2019) who affirms that Kojan movements function as a means of instilling *adab*, especially for youth and children. Within the framework of bodily phenomenology, these movements make the body a medium for "reading hadith"—that is, embodying values such as respect, humility, and etiquette through concrete action.

Kojan always involves multiple age groups—children, adolescents, adults, and elders—forming a social space that reflects the Prophet's teaching on *ukhuwah* (brotherhood). Interview data reveal that some participants return to their hometown specifically to join the *Maulid* and Kojan, indicating strong social bonds. The collective structure of Kojan—from the roles of *rebana* players, chant responders, dancers, to the organizing committee—reinforces the hadith: "The believers, in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion, are like a single body" (HR. Bukhari). This is evident in observations: each row supports the rhythm and movement of the others, and senior members guide the younger generation. This phenomenon is also noted in the study by (Rokhim et al., 2020) which shows that Kojan serves as a reinforcement of shared identity among the people of Mlangi.

Interview and observational results indicate that the *mahalul qiyam* portion of the performance is the most emotional moment. Many participants described feelings of "goosebumps," "deep emotion," "longing for the Prophet," and a sense of "spiritual connectedness." This emotional experience relates to the hadith: "None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than himself." (HR. Bukhari). This phenomenon confirms that love for the Prophet is not only taught cognitively but experienced collectively through the rhythm of the *rebana*, the intensifying chants, the shared moment of standing, and the atmosphere of reverence. (Lubis, 2019) notes that

this affective dimension is what makes the *Maulid* and Kojan traditions so influential and long-lasting across generations.

Synthesizing these findings, Kojan functions as: (a) a medium for transmitting hadith values (*shalawat*, ethics, brotherhood), (b) an embodied practice that transforms text into action, (c) an informal educational space for the younger generation, and (d) a mechanism for strengthening community identity. Studies on Ngelik/Kojan acculturation, character education in Kojan, and *Maulid* documentation in Mlangi all support the claim that Kojan is an effective form of *living hadith* because it combines text, body, voice, and social interaction within a yearly ritual that is continuously reproduced. Therefore, the study of *living hadith* in Mlangi must understand hadith as a praxis phenomenon—the translation of textual values into meaningful and enduring cultural practices (Imawan & Ghazali, 2023).

Discussion

The research findings on the practice of the Kojan Dance within the *Maulid* tradition in Mlangi show that this tradition not only survives amid currents of social change but also undergoes selective transformation in response to the dynamics of modernity. Within modernization theory, the social changes occurring in society—including increasing rationalization, social differentiation, and the expansion of popular culture—generally pose challenges to community-based religious practices. However, as expressed by (Giddens, 1991), modernization does not automatically eliminate tradition; rather, it produces a process of reflexive adaptation in which communities renegotiate cultural practices to remain relevant within new social structures. This pattern is clearly visible in the Mlangi community, which does not regard the Kojan tradition as a static inheritance but as a religious expression continuously kept alive through renewal in form, generational involvement, and community-based event organization.

The resilience of Kojan as a tradition can be understood through the framework of "tradition resilience" discussed by (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012) in the theory of invented tradition. According

to them, a tradition survives when it is able to provide continuity of meaning amid social change. In the case of Mlangi, this continuity is manifested through the functions of Kojan as a medium for strengthening religious identity, transmitting moral values, and articulating love for the Prophet. Although technical changes have occurred—such as the use of modern sound systems, more structured staging, and increased documentation through digital media—the ritual core, namely the recitation of shalawat, symbolic bodily movements, and shared emotional experience, is preserved. This kind of transformation aligns with (Sahlins, 1999) who argues that culture does not disappear in the face of modernity; instead, it adapts while continuing to reproduce inherited structures of meaning.

The involvement of younger generations in Kojan is one of the main factors sustaining the tradition. Field findings show that children and adolescents are not merely participants but have become key actors in the transmission of Kojan movements, chants, and rhythmic structures. This reinforces Bourdieu's concept of cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Nice, 1977), which states that the continuity of a cultural practice depends heavily on how it is embedded within the habitus of the new generation. The Mlangi community consciously positions Kojan as part of informal education, particularly the cultivation of adab and love for the Prophet, enabling the tradition not only to endure but also to gain new relevance amid modern lifestyles.

In addition, the use of digital media by Mlangi residents to document Kojan—for example, through video uploads of performances on digital platforms—shows that this tradition has entered a phase of “modern symbolic reproduction.” This aligns with (Castells, 2010) idea of the network society, where cultural identity is increasingly negotiated and sustained through networked media. Digital documentation does not diminish the sacredness of Kojan; instead, it expands its sphere of existence into the virtual realm, strengthens community cohesion, and introduces the tradition to a wider audience.

From the perspective of living hadith, the adaptation of Kojan amidst modernization also

reflects the resilience of hadith values manifested culturally. Values such as love for the Prophet, brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), moral spirituality (*tasawuf akhlaki*), and reverence (*ta'zim*) do not experience erosion even as social structures shift. Rather, these values find new mediums through enhanced aesthetic expression, more systematic event organization, and broader engagement of younger generations. Thus, Kojan can be categorized as a religious tradition that not only survives but grows stronger amid modernity, as shown in the studies of (Imawan & Ghazali, 2023) and (Rokhim et al., 2020) regarding the robustness of *Maulid* and shalawat practices in Mlangi.

Overall, this discussion affirms that modernization does not threaten the continuity of the Kojan Dance; instead, it provides a context that enables the tradition to transform, discover new forms, and expand its base of participation without losing the substance of the hadith values that underlie it. Kojan serves as empirical evidence that Nusantara Islamic traditions possess strong adaptive capacity, allowing communities to continue presenting meaningful religious experiences amid rapid social change.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the Kojan Dance in Mlangi is a form of religious praxis that integrates art, ritual, and hadith values into a unified living tradition. Through ethnographic analysis based on observation, interviews, and field documentation, it was found that Kojan is not merely an artistic performance, but an embodied space in which the hadith values of *shalawat*, proper conduct (*adab*), love for the Prophet, and *ukhuwah* are practically realized. The *maulid* verses from *Syarafil Anam* function as a verbal medium for hadith teachings, while the movement patterns—hand on the chest, nodding, swaying, and small prostrations—serve as bodily expressions of those values. The combination of verse, music, and movement creates an intense emotional-spiritual experience, especially during the *mahalul qiyam*, thereby strengthening the affective and collective internalization of hadith values.

Kojan has also been shown to play a significant social role as a mechanism for reproducing the communal identity of the Mlangi santri. The involvement of multiple age groups, the hierarchical yet collaborative role structure, and the atmosphere of togetherness in every performance demonstrate that Kojan functions as an instrument for strengthening *ukhuwah* and social solidarity. This tradition endures and remains relevant amid modernisation because it possesses a strong spiritual foundation, is supported by mosque institutions, and is transmitted through direct intergenerational practice. Thus, the resilience of Kojan aligns with cultural resilience theories that emphasise that local traditions remain robust when they can provide contextual social and religious meaning for their communities.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the Kojan Dance is a comprehensive expression of *living hadith*: hadith texts do not stop at intellectual study but are transformed into action, aesthetics, experience, and collective identity. Kojan bridges normative teachings with the everyday life of the Mlangi community, making it an important example of how Islamic values are creatively reproduced within a local cultural context. This study also reinforces the argument that embodied religious traditions—such as Kojan—are able to endure and even strengthen in the modern era because they provide space for profound religious experience, value-based education, and strong social cohesion.

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