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The Koromong Art as a Medium for the Expression of Cultural Identity and Spirituality for the Outer Baduy Community

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ABSTRACT

Koromong is a traditional performing art of the Outer Baduy community in Lebak Regency that has been preserved despite increasing exposure to modernization. However, growing interaction with the outside world has the potential to reshape the cultural and spiritual values embedded in this tradition. This study examines Koromong as a medium for expressing cultural identity and spirituality and explores its role in preserving the local wisdom of the Outer Baduy community. Specifically, the research investigates the meanings, functions, and symbolic values of Koromong within the community's social, cultural, and religious life. It analyzes its role in sustaining collective identity and spiritual beliefs amid ongoing social change. This study adopts an ethnographic approach that views artistic practices as integral to the community's cultural system. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation of artistic performances, and field recordings. To enhance the credibility of the findings, data were triangulated across multiple sources and methods, including observations, interviews, and documentary evidence. The data were analyzed using a descriptive-interpretive approach to identify the symbolic meanings, social functions, and cultural values represented in Koromong performances. The findings demonstrate that Koromong serves not only as a form of folk entertainment but also as a ritual and spiritual practice that symbolizes the relationship between humans, nature, and Sang Hyang Karesa. Its musical rhythms, poetic expressions, and ceremonial sequences represent the cultural identity of the Outer Baduy community while providing a space for collective spiritual expression. Furthermore, each instrument in the Koromong ensemble embodies symbolic meanings associated with cosmology, social order, and communal solidarity. As a result, Koromong functions as an important medium for transmitting cultural values across generations and strengthening cultural resilience, enabling the Outer Baduy community to preserve the balance between tradition, belief, and social life in the face of modernization.

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■ INTRODUCTION

Music is an art form that uses sound as a medium to express human emotions and inner values, and is believed to be one of the oldest art forms. Through hearing, people can appreciate the beauty contained in musical works. Vocal art, or music, emerged alongside the development of human culture worldwide (Dinh, 2023). The evolution of music is strongly influenced by the perspectives, attitudes, working methods, and lifestyles of musicians and practitioners, as well as by the natural environment and the society that supports various aspects of life, such as beliefs, family, social structures, and governance (Jannah et al., 2021). In the realm of music, there exists what is known as traditional art.

The study of traditional music is understood not merely as an aesthetic expression that uses sound to convey human emotions and inner values, but also as a component of cultural practice that reflects the systems of meaning within a society. In the evolution of music studies, various research findings affirm that music is one of the oldest forms of cultural expression in the history of civilization, with an existence inseparable from its surrounding social and cultural contexts Nevertheless, existing approaches to the study of music have yet to provide an in-depth explanation of how musical practices function within the context of indigenous communities,

which possess distinctive social structures and belief systems (Morgenstern, 2021).

Traditional arts in the modern era play an important role as guardians of cultural values and local identity amid increasingly strong globalization (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). Currently, traditional art is no longer considered a static cultural heritage but rather a dynamic asset that can adapt to current developments to remain relevant and in demand. Amid rapid global technological and cultural developments, the existence of traditional arts serves as an important reminder of the nation's cultural roots. It needs to be protected, preserved, and continuously developed so that it is not lost to the times (Gwerevende & Mthombeni, 2023).

In Indonesian society, Koromong art has evolved alongside the community's way of life, giving rise to different names across regions. However, the musical instruments are almost the same across this traditional Koromong art. One of them is the Koromong Baduy Luar art. This art was born of the community's agrarian traditions, closely tied to nature, beliefs, and customary systems held in high esteem. Tradition is a similarity in materials and ideas that originate from the past, still exist today, are carried out and used as a legacy from generation to generation, and recur, whether by chance or on purpose (Prabowo & Sudrajat, 2021).

Koromong Outer Baduy art is a traditional art form that developed in the Luar Baduy community in Lebak, Banten. This art not only serves as a form of entertainment but also becomes a symbol of the cultural and spiritual identity of indigenous peoples in Indonesia. For the Luar Baduy indigenous community, Koromong art serves as a medium of cultural expression, reflecting the values of ancestral heritage, beliefs, and social norms (Dadan & Naf'an, 2022).

Traditional art reflects Indonesia's local cultural identity (Nabilatunnisa & Salsabilah, 2022). One of them is the traditional art of Koromong Baduy Luar. The traditional Koromong art of the Outer Baduy is a form of musical art that not only presents the beauty of tradition but is also rich in symbolic meaning related to the spiritual life of the Outer Baduy community. Through Koromong performances, the community expresses its cultural identity, preserves customary values, and conveys its relationship with nature and the supernatural forces believed to maintain the balance of life (Hudaepah, 2025).

With the passage of time and modernization, Koromong art faces challenges in maintaining its role as a means of cultural and spiritual expression. The increasingly strong flow of modernization and openness in the Outer Baduy community has placed it in a more adaptive position towards economic, trade, and technological developments, resulting in a shift in the younger generation's activities from cultural activities towards economic and tourism activities (Encep & Ali, 2025). If the younger generation's interest in traditional arts declines due to the influence of digital media, tourism, or other economic activities, the regeneration of Koromong artists and heirs will face obstacles (Yuono, 2024). This condition threatens the continuity of Koromong art because Koromong is not only an art performance but also a medium for transmitting the Baduy community's cultural, religious, and identity values. Changes in lifestyle and social dynamics have the potential to threaten the continuity of this tradition, so it is necessary to conduct a study to understand how the Koromong art of the Outer Baduy continues to function as a medium for preserving the cultural and spiritual identity of the Outer Baduy community.

This study employs Stuart Hall's theory of representation as a conceptual framework to examine how the Koromong art form constructs and represents the Baduy community's cultural identity. According to Hall, representation is a process of meaning production, facilitated through language, symbols, and cultural practices that enables a community to construct and communicate its social reality. From this perspective, cultural practices are understood not merely as reflections of reality, but as processes of meaning formation that continuously evolve within social life. Consequently, the Koromong art form is viewed not simply as a traditional musical performance, but as a representational practice that embodies the cultural values, collective identity, and social relations of the Baduy people. This theoretical framework is used to analyze how musical structures, performance practices, and interactions among performers reflect customary values and demonstrate how the Baduy community preserves its cultural identity amid the dynamics of social change (Indah et al., 2023).

Previous research on the traditional arts of the Outer Baduy community has largely framed them as mere components of a conservative system of rituals and traditions. While such studies have emphasized the role of music in preserving customary values and cosmological harmony, they have been limited in explaining the internal dynamics of musical practice, specifically regarding variations in form, the roles of performers, and the diversity

of artistic practices within the Outer Baduy community. Furthermore, existing research tends to view Outer Baduy traditional music as a relatively homogeneous entity, thereby failing to adequately explore how social change and openness to the outside world have influenced the community's musical practices (Muhibah & Rohimah, 2023).

Based on the aforementioned study, a more contextual approach is required to gain a dynamic understanding of traditional music within Baduy society. This research seeks to address gaps in existing studies on Baduy Koromong traditional music by employing a musical ethnography approach that focuses on the interplay between social structure, cultural identity, and performing arts practices. Through this approach, the study examines not only the ritual functions of Koromong music but also analyzes how differing social structures within Outer Baduy society contribute to variations in traditional music practices, patterns of appreciation, and the construction of meaning associated with the art form. Consequently, this research aims to deepen understanding of the dynamic relationship between social systems and musical expression in the context of the Outer Baduy indigenous community.

This study aims to examine the role of Koromong art as a medium for expressing cultural and spiritual identity within the Outer Baduy community. By exploring the meanings and functions of Koromong within its socio-cultural context, this research is expected to support cultural preservation efforts and deepen understanding of the traditional values embedded in this art form. Based on the background presented, this study formulates the following research problems: first, how the Koromong art form of the Outer Baduy functions as a medium for expressing the cultural and spiritual identity of the Outer Baduy community in Banten Province, given that Koromong is a traditional art form deeply embedded in the lives of the Outer Baduy indigenous people. Second, what is the relationship between social structure, cultural identity, and musical practices in shaping how the Outer Baduy community interprets Koromong? Third, what values are represented through musical elements such as rhythm, instruments, and performance patterns within Koromong, and how these values are understood within the context of Baduy community life

■ METHOD

Research on Outer Baduy Koromong Arts as a Medium for Expressing Local Cultural Identity and Spirituality in the Outer Baduy Community is a qualitative study employing ethnographic methods and a holistic approach (Ninip, 2014; Sari et al., 2023). According to Ahimsa, ethnography is a research method that focuses on social and cultural phenomena, including political aspects, kinship systems, social organizations, religion, and other domains. This approach aims to understand and explain the condition of a society by linking it to other phenomena, thereby obtaining a representative picture of that society's socio-cultural life (Ahimsa Putra, 2014).

This study was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles, involving the Outer Baduy community in Kadu Ketug hamlet, Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar District, while respecting the values, norms, and governance systems prevailing in the Outer Baduy customary territory. Prior to data collection, the researcher sought permission from a local customary leader, Mr. Rasudin, and obtained approval as a mark of respect for customary authority regarding the conduct of the study. Following this approval, the researcher explained the study's objectives, benefits, procedures, and expected forms of participation to all prospective informants, as well as their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Voluntary informed consent was obtained prior to conducting interviews, observations, and documentation. Throughout the research process, participants' identities were kept confidential, and all information obtained was used responsibly and solely for research purposes and scholarly publication.

In using the ethnographic method, there are several stages of the research process that systematically describe research informants as data sources, research approaches, data collection techniques used during field research, and data analysis techniques used to interpret research findings.

Informants

In this research, the informants were the head of the art studio, elders, traditional leaders, and the Outer Baduy community in Kadu Ketug Village, Kanekes Village, Leuwidamar District, Lebak Regency, Banten. This community consists of the younger generation and parents who were interviewed in the data collection process. According to Spradley, the role of informants is very important in data collection, where ethnographers collaborate with informants in the process of data collection and cultural understanding (Koeswinarno, 2015).

Informants for this study were selected through purposive sampling based on criteria

relevant to the research objectives (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). These criteria included individuals belonging to the Baduy community who possessed in-depth knowledge of local cultural practices and traditions and played active roles within the customary social structure, such as customary leaders, village elders, and managers of cultural centers. Based on these criteria, the study involved fifteen informants, comprising cultural center heads, customary elders, and community figures with the authority and experience to uphold and practice Baduy customary values, as well as male and female members of the Outer Baduy community. This selection process aimed to gather in-depth information regarding the phenomenon under study from the perspective of the Baduy community.

Research Design

This research employed an ethnographic, holistic approach. A holistic approach was used to study Koromong art in the Outer Baduy community as part of the entire cultural system. With this approach, Koromong Baduy Luar art is understood not only as a musical expression but also as a set of belief values, social relations, ecological conditions, cultural inheritance processes, and the dynamics of change in Outer Baduy society. According to Spradley, the basic concept in ethnographic research is understanding the whole society, particularly its linguistic aspects, both during the research process and when presenting the results verbally. Although researchers should study the language of the local community, Spradley offers an alternative: using ethnographic questions as a research approach (Spradley, 2007).

Data Collection

Data collection techniques in this research were participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and field recording. Participatory observation was used to directly observe the community's cultural activities and practices. At the same time, in-depth interviews were conducted with elders, traditional leaders, artists, the younger generation, and the Outer Baduy community to understand the meaning, function, and values associated with the phenomenon under study. Data documentation in the form of photos, videos, and previous research results. This technique is used to obtain comprehensive data in accordance with the ethnographic method, using a holistic approach that examines the relationships among social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects, as well as the community environment. According to Creswell, ethnography is a qualitative research strategy in which researchers study a cultural group in its original environment over a relatively long period by collecting primary data through observations and in-depth interviews with community members (Creswell,2017).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using a holistic approach. Data from observations, interviews, and documentation were analyzed through data reduction, presentation, and verification (Kamarusdiana,2019). Researchers identified themes related to the function of Koromong art, cultural values, belief systems, inheritance processes, relationships with the environment, and the dynamics of cultural change in the Outer Baduy community. Next, these themes are interpreted as a whole to understand the position and role of Koromong in the cultural system of the Outer Baduy community as an interrelated unit.

The data analysis technique in this study follows the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, comprising three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the data reduction stage, all transcribed interview results were selected and focused on information relevant to the research objectives, specifically regarding the practices and meanings associated with the Koromong art form within the Outer Baduy community. Subsequently, during the data display stage, the reduced data were organized into thematic categories to facilitate the identification of patterns linking informant roles, social structures, and musical practices. This stage also involved organizing key excerpts from interview transcripts to reinforce data interpretation. The final stage, conclusion drawing and verification, entailed an ongoing process of interpreting meaning by comparing various data sources (interviews, observations, and documentation) to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. Thus, the analysis was conducted in an interactive and continuous manner until stable, scientifically defensible conclusions were reached (Miles et al., 2014).

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Outer Baduy Community

The Outer Baduy community is more open to the influences of modernization and has more intensive interaction with the outside world. They live in areas located closer to non-Baduy settlements. In responding to changing times, the Outer Baduy demonstrate a more flexible and open attitude toward external

developments. The Outer Baduy community is more accepting of modern technology, such as mobile phones, demonstrating an adaptation to changing times without entirely abandoning the traditional values they still uphold. This technology is primarily used for communication and accessing information, particularly to support economic activities, education, and social interactions with people outside their customary territory. Nevertheless, the adoption of such technology remains within prevailing customary norms, ensuring that their cultural identity as members of the Baduy community is not fundamentally altered (Setiawan et al., 2023).

The Outer Baduy community can also establish connections with the outside world through trade and the exchange of goods. Nevertheless, they continue to preserve their cultural identity and ancestral values, while demonstrating a greater capacity to adapt to changing times. Both the Inner and Outer Baduy communities share strong spiritual values and beliefs regarding the management of natural resources and the balance of eco-spiritual life. Together, they serve as a clear example of how indigenous communities can maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to the changes occurring around them (Abduh et al., 2023).

The Outer Baduy community can also engage with the outside world through trade and the exchange of goods. Nevertheless, they maintain their cultural identity and ancestral values while demonstrating a greater capacity to adapt to changing times. The Outer Baduy possess strong spiritual values and beliefs regarding natural resource management and the balance of an eco-spiritual life. They serve as a tangible example of how an indigenous community can preserve its cultural heritage while adapting to the changes occurring around it (Yuono, 2024).

The Baduy indigenous community adheres to a belief system known as *Sunda Wiwitan* (Ikmalludin et al., 2025). In this belief, they recognize a supreme deity called Batara Tunggal and acknowledge Prophet Adam as their first prophet. In addition, they honor ancestral spirits (*karuhun*), which are believed to deserve respect and maintain relationships (Dadan & Naf'an, 2022).

According to this belief, Prophet Adam is considered the first human created by Batara Tunggal, who later settled in the Baduy region, regarded as the center of the earth. This belief forms the foundation for the Baduy community's commitment to preserving nature, as the environment is seen as a sacred trust from Batara Tunggal that must be cared for and protected from damage. One member of the Inner Baduy community explained that *Sunda Wiwitan* essentially represents the origin of the Baduy people's way of life. The word *wiwitan* in Sundanese means "the beginning" or "origin (Jasmine et al., 2023).

Traditional Koromong Art of the Baduy as an Expression of Cultural Identity

Traditional art often reflects the values and social norms that develop within a society. For example, *wayang kulit* from Indonesia, Javanese batik, and Balinese gamelan all contain symbols rich in cultural meaning. These art forms are not merely entertainment but also serve as media for conveying beliefs, folklore, and philosophies of life. Through traditional art, cultural heritage can be preserved and passed on to future generations.

Traditional art is an integral part of society, providing not only entertainment but also guidance and direction. It embodies elements of spectacle, moral instruction, and social order, while also reflecting values practiced in daily life. Thus, traditional art is not only a form of entertainment but also carries deep moral values and life philosophies. Through various forms such as dance, music, theater, and traditional ceremonies, it reflects how a community perceives nature, humanity, and the Creator. Every movement, rhythm, and symbol within it carries meanings that teach togetherness, simplicity, and respect for others and the environment. Therefore, preserving traditional art is an important effort to safeguard cultural heritage so that it remains alive, continues to develop, and stays relevant amid the currents of modernization (Mulyana & Dwiningrum, 2024)

Traditional art is a tangible reflection of cultural richness passed down through generations by a community's ancestors. For the Outer Baduy community, art holds significant meaning as a medium for expressing identity while maintaining harmonious relationships among humans, nature, and ancestral spirits. One form of art that still exists among the Outer Baduy is Koromong, a traditional musical art performed with metal percussion instruments that produce distinctive, rhythmic, and harmonious sounds. Koromong art does not merely serve as entertainment but also functions as a spiritual and social medium that strengthens bonds among community members.

The Baduy community is known for its strong adherence to customary law, traditions, and social norms. Their way of life remains traditional, relying on natural resources to meet their daily needs (Nurcahyani, 2023). They live

simply, uphold cooperation, and maintain a balance between humans and nature. In addition, the Baduy people limit interaction with the outside world to preserve their local culture and environment.

One form of cultural preservation is the Outer Baduy's traditional art. Through Koromong, the Outer Baduy community expresses noble values such as togetherness, simplicity, and respect for tradition. Amid the currents of modernization that are beginning to influence their lives, Koromong stands as a symbol of their resilience in maintaining the authenticity of their cultural identity. This art form reflects the community's commitment to preserving ancestral heritage amid change. It demonstrates that traditional art continues to play an important role in strengthening the cultural character of the Indonesian nation.

According to Jaro Rasidin, the Koromong art of Outer Baduy is usually performed at important traditional events such as weddings and circumcisions. Through traditional Koromong art, the Baduy people express their gratitude for the marriage of the Outer Baduy bride and groom and ask for protection to keep their lives harmonious. Each note of the musical instruments produced by traditional Koromong art contains symbolic meaning, depicting the simplicity and steadfastness of the Baduy people in maintaining balance in life.

Jaro Rasidin's account of the Koromong musical instrument of the Outer Baduy serves a musical function and also represents the philosophical values that live in society. The tones of Koromong Baduy Luar musical instruments serve a musical function and also represent the philosophical values that are part of society. Koromong, as the main instrument, plays melodic and rhythmic patterns repeatedly, symbolizing the continuity of customs and intergenerational relationships in maintaining ancestral heritage. The gongs that sound in certain parts serve as markers of changes in musical cycles and symbolically represent the balance of the cosmos, the order of life, and the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and spiritual forces. The drums that regulate the game's tempo and dynamics reflect the values of discipline, order, and adherence to traditional norms that guide the life of the Outer Baduy community. Meanwhile, the kecrek, which provides a rhythmic accent and strengthens the integration of playing between instruments, illustrates the importance of cooperation, togetherness, and social solidarity in the life of the Outer Baduy community. The integration of the sounds of koromong, gong, kendang, and kecrek in a single ensemble shows that a harmonious life can be achieved only when each element plays its role in a balanced, complementary manner. Thus, the musical elements in Koromong art not only serve as a means of artistic expression but also function as a symbolic medium representing the values of continuity of tradition, balance in life, adherence to customs, respect for nature, and strengthening social solidarity in the Outer Baduy community (Suhada, 2003).Bottom of Form

Koromong is understood not merely as a traditional musical performance but also as a medium that represents the cultural values and identity of the Baduy community. This is reflected in the explanation provided by Jaro Oom, a customary leader, alongside Jaro Rasidin, who stated:

> *" Netelaken yen kasenian Koromong Baduy lain saukur hiburan, tapi miboga harti anu jero dina kahirupan sapopoe masarakat Baduy. Koromong dipake dina rupa-rupa kagiatan adat nu patali jeung rasa sukur ka karuhun jeung ka Nu Maha Kawasa, oge minangka sarana pikeun ngajaga kabersamaan, gotong royong, jeung silih hormat di antara warga." (Jaro's Oom interview , 5 July 2025).*

This statement indicates that the community perceives Koromong not merely as entertainment but as part of a cultural practice that embodies values of togetherness, respect



Figure 1. Koromong Baduy arts performance (Hudaepah, Documentation, 2025)



Figure 2. Koromong Musical Instrument of Outer Baduy Community (Hudaepah Documentation, 2025)

for custom, and the continuity of tradition. These findings are further supported by observations made during performances, which reveal the community's collective involvement in every stage of the Koromong event. A similar perspective was expressed by Jaro Rasidin, the head of the cultural troupe, who explained:

> *"Ayeuna mah kaayaan geus béda jeung baheula, tapi Koromong mah tetep aya jeung tetep dipaké. Ngan cara ngajarkeun ka budak ngora jeung prak-prakanana nu rada robah nuturkeun kaayaan. Nu penting mah Koromong ulah nepi ka leungit, kudu terus dijaga jeung diwariskeun ka generasi saterusna." (Jaro Rasidin's interview, 6 July 2025)*

These accounts explain that changes in the social context do not eliminate the function of the Koromong tradition; rather, they influence how the art form is practiced and passed down to the younger generation. Thus, interview data and observational findings complement each other in elucidating the dynamics of Koromong preservation within the Baduy community.

In addition to being a medium of cultural expression, Koromong also functions as a tool of social cohesion. In every performance, the community gathers, interacts, and strengthens its sense of togetherness. This art form represents the identity of the Baduy people, who resist excessive modernization in order to preserve the authenticity of their customs and ancestral traditions.

Cultural representation within the traditional art of Koromong reflects the social life, cultural values, and belief systems of the Outer Baduy community. Koromong serves not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a medium of representation that constructs and reproduces the cultural meanings alive within the community. Through its musical structure, instrumental symbolism, and performance practices, Koromong embodies the values of simplicity, togetherness, respect for nature, and adherence to customs that form the foundation of life for the Outer Baduy people (Syafira, 2024).

According to Hall, the concept of cultural representation can evolve. The meanings and interpretations of symbols and signs within representations may shift alongside social, political, and cultural changes. Identity within representation plays a crucial role in shaping both individual and group identities. The way a person is represented in media and culture influences how they view themselves and how others perceive them. The concept of the "subject" refers to the individual or group that observes and interprets these representations; their social and cultural positions influence how they understand and respond to them. Representations are not merely produced by creators, such as mass media, but are also reproduced by society through interpretation. Consequently, representations become part of a culture that is continuously maintained and reproduced through social practices (Indah et al., 2023).

The koromong instrument serves not merely as a musical tool; rather, its role must

be understood by examining how the instrument and its practice generate and represent cultural meaning within Outer Baduy society. From Hall's perspective, meaning is not inherent in an object but is instead constructed through a socially agreed-upon process of representation (Indah et al., 2023). Thus, the koromong can be viewed as a cultural artifact that possesses not only a musical function but also symbolic significance, reflecting the continuity of Baduy tradition and identity. The *gong* represents Baduy cosmology by serving as a marker of ritual transitions, bridging the profane and sacred realms. The *kendang* reflects traditional authority and social order by controlling the performance's rhythm, much as traditional norms govern social relations within the community. Meanwhile, the *kecrek* represents values of togetherness and cooperation by unifying the players' rhythmic patterns, thereby creating harmony throughout the performance.

Playing Koromong is not only a matter of skill in playing Koromong music, but also a form of respect for traditions passed down from generation to generation. By maintaining its use, they reject the notion that traditional culture is outdated or irrelevant to the times (Murdiana et al., 2021). For the Outer Baduy community, Koromong is part of their cultural identity, which contains traditional values, community history, and a spiritual connection with their ancestors.

According to Jaro Rasidin l Koromong art of the Outer Baduy, the sound of the instrument is believed to carry spiritual meaning, serving as a connection between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits. When the koromong is sounded, indigenous people feel a vibration of togetherness that binds all members of their community. The sounds of koromong, gongs, drums, and kecrek are not perceived solely as musical elements but rather as media that actualize traditional values and connect society to its ancestral heritage. In the context of traditional ceremonies, each sound has a social and symbolic function that helps mark ritual stages, strengthens community awareness, and emphasizes the continuity of cultural identity. Therefore, the spiritual meaning of the Koromong instrument arises from the cultural processes that unfold in the ritual practices and social life of the Outer Baduy community.Bottom of Form

Spiritual Values in Koromong Art

The Baduy luar community is known for its uniqueness, which is reflected in various aspects of their daily life. This can be seen in the uniformity of their houses in shape and orientation, their distinctive white-and-black clothing, their consistent agricultural practices (*ngahuma*), and their strong adherence to their beliefs. In carrying out the mandates of their ancestors, the Baduy people are firm, disciplined, and resolute, yet without imposing their will on others. This is evident in the presence of a continuing generational community and customary rules that bind them together into a unified Baduy society (Dadan & Naf'an, 2022).

One form of art that reflects the unity of the Baduy community is Koromong. This traditional art is a cultural heritage rich in artistic beauty and spiritual values for the Outer Baduy people. As part of traditional artistic expression, Koromong serves not only as entertainment but also as a symbol that connects humans with higher spiritual forces. In practice, Koromong is performed during important events such as weddings and circumcision ceremonies. Its spiritual elements are reflected in its sacred musical tones, meaningful dance movements, and traditional instruments believed to be closely connected to the Creator. Every sound and melody becomes a medium through which the community experiences divine values, leading to inner peace and spiritual awareness.

In the traditional Koromong art of the Outer Baduy, the sound of the instrument is believed to carry spiritual meaning, serving as a connection between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits. When Koromong is played, the community feels a shared resonance that binds its members together. In this context, playing Koromong is not merely about musical skill but also an act of respect for traditions passed down through generations. By maintaining its use, the community challenges the notion that traditional culture is outdated or irrelevant.

According to Jaro Rasidin, one of the outer Baduy traditional elders, the sound of the outer Baduy Koromong musical instrument is not just an accompaniment to ceremonies but also has a spiritual function in the performance of traditional rituals. Jaro Rasudin explained that if Koromong Baduy arts are played during traditional wedding ceremonies, it is not just for entertainment, but as a sign that the Baduy people are carrying out their ancestral mandate. This statement shows that the sound of Koromong art is understood as a symbolic expression that connects society to traditional values and ancestral heritage. In this case, the sounds produced by koromong, gongs, drums, and kecrek serve as a medium of representation that emphasizes the spirituality of the outer Baduy community, reminding them of their

obligation to maintain a balance in life in accordance with customary provisions. The sound of the gong, which appears in certain parts, is understood as a sacred marker in a series of rituals, while the drums and kecrek play a role in maintaining rhythmic order that reflects social order in people's lives. Therefore, the spiritual meaning attached to the Koromong instrument does not lie in the sound itself, but in the cultural values, beliefs, and togetherness carried out through the musical practice of Koromong art in every traditional ceremony.

Koromong Baduy Luar art is a form of cultural expression that depicts spiritual wealth and local wisdom. This traditional art not only serves as a form of performing art and a means of connection for the community but also holds symbolic and ritual significance that plays a part in the religious life of the Baduy community (Putri et al., 2025). In practice, Koromong is often played at important events, such as wedding ceremonies and circumcisions, that have spiritual significance. The distinctive rhythm of Koromong music reflects the balance and harmony between humans, nature, and the spiritual forces believed in by the community.

Interaction among Koromong players who play the koromong, gong, drum, and kecrek instruments together in a single traditional performance space. The players facing each other and paying attention to one another demonstrate the coordination and nonverbal communication needed to maintain rhythmic harmony during the performance. This interaction is visual evidence that Koromong art is not played individually but relies on cooperation, reflecting the values of togetherness and social solidarity in the Outer Baduy community. In addition, the involvement of performers in a single musical unit shows how Koromong performance practices serve as a space for the reproduction of traditional values and the strengthening of cultural identity. Outer Baduy Koromong art performances not only document musical activities but also show the social and cultural processes that unfold through interactions among artists as they implement the Koromong tradition.Top of Form*Bottom of Form*

The musical instruments used in Koromong art are made from natural materials such as bamboo and simple metals, reflecting the Baduy community's worldview that emphasizes simplicity and closeness to nature (Nurcahyani, 2023). Each sound is believed to carry ancestral messages that guide the community in living in accordance with customary law and maintaining inner purity. Therefore, Koromong is not merely a hereditary tradition but also a form of spiritual expression that strengthens the identity and resilience of the Baduy people in preserving the noble values of their ancestors.

In Koromong performances, a harmony of sound is created through which the Baduy community expresses gratitude, respect, and prayers to the Creator and the universe. This art reflects their worldview that sees nature as an inseparable part of human life. Every melody carries symbolic meaning, representing the interconnected relationship between humans, nature, and surrounding spiritual forces. The performance of Koromong is accompanied by meaningful rituals to achieve its intended purpose. Through this tradition, the Outer Baduy community maintains balance and harmony in life, demonstrating that Koromong is not only a form of artistic beauty but also a medium for honoring spiritual values and life philosophies passed down through generations.

■ CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Koromong art form of the Outer Baduy serves as a vital cultural representation in preserving the community's identity. Beyond its roles in entertainment and traditional rituals, Koromong serves as a cultural space that reproduces values such as simplicity, communal solidarity, respect for nature, and spirituality that form the foundation of Baduy life. Through performance, musical structure, instrumental symbolism, and community participation, Koromong acts as a representational space that reinforces the bonds between humanity, nature, and an ancestral belief system. These findings reveal that the sustainability of traditional art is not determined solely by physical preservation efforts but by its capacity to uphold cultural meaning amid social change.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates that the resilience of indigenous traditional arts is forged through cultural negotiation rather than through the rejection of modernity. Among the Outer Baduy community, limited openness to external influences does not erode the cultural function of the Koromong traditional art form; instead, it facilitates adaptation without compromising the fundamental values that underpin the community's identity. Thus, cultural resilience can be understood as a tradition's capacity to selectively integrate change while preserving the systems of meaning, symbols, and social practices that constitute its core identity. This perspective broadens understanding of the interplay among traditional art, cultural identity, and social change in ethnographic studies of traditional arts.

These findings expand the scope of musical ethnography regarding traditional arts and cultural representation by demonstrating that the traditional arts of indigenous communities serve as both a mechanism for reproducing cultural identity and a strategy for cultural resilience in the face of assimilation pressures. Consequently, the preservation of traditional arts must be understood as an effort to sustain the value systems, symbols, and social practices that underpin indigenous identity, rather than merely as a means of protecting material or performative cultural heritage. Furthermore, local government can facilitate the inventory and documentation of Koromong art as intangible cultural heritage without undermining the indigenous community's authority to manage and determine its own cultural practices. Thus, preservation efforts serve not only to safeguard the instruments and performances themselves but also to uphold the cultural value systems that underpin the continued existence of Koromong art within the life of the Outer Baduy community.

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