

Cultural Acculturation Found in the Practice of Tradition *Petik Laut*

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ABSTRACT

Petik Laut practice, which is carried out in coastal areas of East Java, Indonesia, is an expression of appreciation and prayer for protection by fishing communities. This study investigates cultural acculturation that occurs in the *Petik Laut* tradition in Payangan Beach, Jember, with a focus on the integration of various cultural and religious aspects. This study uses qualitative approaches such as interviews and a literature analysis to explore the two-day event's diverse agenda, which combines Hindu, Islamic, and Javanese cultural activities. This study emphasizes the *Petik Laut* tradition's function in conserving cultural identity, promoting communal cohesion, and adapting ancestral history to current situations. The findings show the tradition's ability to integrate spiritual, cultural, and social values, demonstrating its long-standing significance in Indonesia's diverse cultural environment. The tradition of *petik laut* is carried out for two days where there is a combination of Islamic and Javanese traditions in the ritual. This research illustrates that in a culture there is acculturation in its practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity can be defined as a social identity related to groups of people who share common origins, culture, historical traditions, and a sense of community. As posited by Smith (in Cornell & Hartmann, 2007) which states that ethnicity is a social construction based on categories related to origin, culture, and physical characteristics that are considered different. Cornell and Hartmann (2007) further reinforce this perspective by framing ethnicity as a social construct shaped by perceptions of difference, whether in origin, cultural norms, or physical appearance, that are socially recognized and symbolically meaningful. This underscores that ethnicity is relational, it gains significance through interactions between groups and within broader societal structures. The symbols and cultural markers associated with ethnicity, such as language, dress, rituals, and myths, serve as tangible manifestations of this identity, enabling group members to assert belonging and distinguish themselves from others.

Indonesia is a country with many tribes. There will be a lot of different traditions from each of the tribes. Each tribe has a different culture, sometimes you can tell that some of the cultures are people from the land, and coastal people (Cahyana *et. al*, 2023; Chakim, 2022). Both of them display different cultures. Like history, Indonesia's past glory as a maritime power with its vast and strategic territory called the "Nusantara" has been the focus of many sailors, traders and scholars and was well-established on the map of the world before the turn of the century, Indonesian history did not begin with the power of the land, but rather

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with the wisdom of its rulers and the persistence of ancestors to conquer the seas and oceans and establish glorious maritime kingdoms (Ali & Sulistiyono, 2020).

In Indonesia, specifically in Puger District, Jember Regency, East Java, there is a beach known as Payangan Beach. The majority of the local population adheres to the Islamic faith, yet many of them engage in a traditional practice called *Petik Laut*. According to Winanti et al. (2023) *petik laut* is a tradition found in Puger sub-district. This tradition can be said as a form of request from the community so that their lives are kept away from all dangers. In addition, this ceremony is a form of expression of gratitude for the abundance of sea products.

This research was conducted to dissect cultural acculturation that occurs when the sea picking tradition is carried out. This aims to add insight into a tradition that experiences acculturation of many existing community cultures. This research was conducted with a qualitative method. The data collected is based on the results of interviews with researchers with one of the sea picking committees.

Several studies have explored the *petik laut* ritual as an integral part of coastal community identity and cultural heritage. Research on the *petik laut* tradition of the Payangan coastal community in Sumberejo Ambulu Village conducted by Fitria et al. (2024) highlights its role as a local cultural practice symbolizing gratitude and protection against harm. This study utilized a historical research method comprising heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography to uncover the meaning and values associated with the ritual. It reveals that the tradition has been preserved across generations, serving as a form of cultural continuity and community identity, particularly for fishermen.

Another study focuses on the *petik laut* tradition in Puger by Winanti et al. (2023), emphasizing its symbolic significance in reflecting communal beliefs and identities. Employing George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism theory, the research examines how mystical experiences at sea influence collective behaviors and external expressions in the form of the ritual. Through a qualitative ethnographic approach, the findings underscore that *petik laut* is not merely a spiritual practice but also a defining cultural identity for the Puger community.

A third study, Sudrajat et al. (2024) examines the dynamics of contestation and negotiation in the implementation of the *petik laut* tradition in Watu Ulo, Payangan Hamlet. Utilizing qualitative methods such as observation, interviews, and literature review, the research explores the interplay between traditionalist Islamic groups, who advocate for the preservation of the ritual as cultural heritage, and modernist Islamic groups, who view it as conflicting with Islamic teachings. This study demonstrates how the community integrates Islamic values, including prayers and recitations, into the ritual, creating an inclusive cultural practice that harmonizes diverse spiritual and cultural elements. The *petik laut* tradition thus remains a unifying force, reflecting a blend of spiritual, cultural, and social dimensions while fostering social harmony amidst modern influences.

In comparison, this research could fill the gaps by exploring how the *petik laut* ritual functions as a site of identity negotiation amid shifting cultural, religious, and economic landscapes, and how different community actors engage with or resist these changes. Additionally, incorporating perspectives on gender roles, youth participation, or intergenerational transmission could enrich understanding of the ritual's evolving social significance.

In summary, while previous studies have effectively highlighted the *petik laut* ritual's cultural, spiritual, and religious facets within specific communities, this research has the potential to bridge these insights by offering a comprehensive, intersectional analysis of the ritual's role in contemporary community identity formation and resilience. This approach would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how traditional rituals adapt and persist in dynamic social contexts. These studies collectively demonstrate the crucial role of the *petik laut* ritual as a multifaceted cultural practice that serves to preserve community identity, navigate religious tensions, and integrate ancestral heritage with evolving social dynamics.

METHOD

In order to find the data and to analyze it, the researchers use qualitative method in this research. According to Parkinson and Drislane, qualitative research is research using methods such as participants observations or case studies which result in a narrative, descriptive account of a setting or practice (Guest et al., 2012). In broad terms, qualitative research is an approach that allows you to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, and life histories or biographies (Hennink et al., 2010)

The main data was obtained from interviews with Payangan Beach community leaders. These interviews aimed to capture rich, contextualized narratives about the ritual's cultural significance, contemporary practice, and community perceptions. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in the local language, recorded with consent, and later transcribed verbatim. Observational notes were also taken during community events, when possible, to capture non-verbal cues and contextual factors. The results of intensive reading and understanding of both data are then processed and analyzed to determine the result of the research questions. Then the results of the analysis are finally described to form a complete conclusion.

Language and cultural nuances may affect the interpretation of interview data, despite efforts to ensure accurate transcription and translation. Additionally, access to participants was constrained by time and logistical factors, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives captured. Future studies could address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal designs, broader participant samples, and mixed-method approaches.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Based on the interviews conducted, it was found that a lot of cultural acculturation occurs in the implementation of Petik Laut. We will describe the Petik Laut schedule at Table 1:

Table 1. *Petik Laut Schedule in Payangan*

No	Name	Length in Percent
1	Day 1	Burning <i>sesajen</i> at several points in the village
2	Day 1	Recitation of al-qur'an
3	Day 1	Istighosah
4	Day 1	Recitation of Macopat

No	Name	Length in Percent
5	Day 2	Puppet Show
6	Day 2	Ruwat
7	Day 2	Remong
8	Day 2	Opening
9	Day 2	Ribbon cutting
10	Day 2	Prayer
11	Day 2	Larung/Release of miniature ships

Petik Laut is usually conducted over two days. The first day of the *petik laut* agenda starts at noon with the burning of offerings and ends with the reading of *Macapat*. The second day is a busier agenda that begins with a *wayang* performance and ends with the release of a miniature ship. The analysis of cultural acculturation based on the above agenda will be explained further in the discussion chapter.

Petik Laut tradition has been carried out in several seas in Java and of course each implementation has a different agenda and schedule. The cultural acculturation analyzed in this research is based on the Petik Laut agenda found in the Jember area, especially Payangan beach.

The first agenda of the first day of *Petik Laut* at Payangan Beach was the burning of *sesajen* at several points in the village. *Sesajen* is a traditional cultural heritage commonly practiced to worship the gods, certain spirits or guardians of places (trees, rocks, intersections, etc.) that they believe can bring good luck and reject bad luck (Humaeni: 2021). The second agenda on the first day was the reading of the Qur'an and *istighosah*. *Istighosah* is a prayer recitation that is done together or in groups (Saputra: 2023). The last agenda on the first day of Petik Laut is the reading of *Tembang Macapat*. *Tembang Macapat* is a description of the human journey from the womb to death (Anto, Anita: 2019). Usually, the *Tembang Macapat* told in the Petik Laut tradition are legendary figures from the past. Based on the three agendas carried out on the first day, it is clear that cultural acculturation has occurred. Cultural acculturation that occurs on the first day of Petik Laut is cultural acculturation from the first agenda which comes from Hindu culture, the second agenda which comes from Islamic culture, and the third or last agenda which comes from Javanese/Madurese culture.

Petik Laut tradition is a multi-day event filled with meaningful activities, rather than a one-day celebration. On the second day, the activities illustrate a harmonious blend of tradition, beliefs, and Islamic principles cherished by the community. Each segment of the day's events carries unique symbolism and cultural significance, enriching the essence of this tradition.

The second day begins before the Dzuhur prayer with a *wayang* performance as the opening act. Not only as an entertainment, *wayang* serves as a medium for imparting moral values and life lessons. In the context of Petik Laut, the stories in *wayang* often related with the coastal community's life, such as fishermen's struggles or the importance of balance

between humans and nature. Following the *wayang* performance is the *ruwat* ritual, which aims to dispel bad luck or *sengkala*. This ritual, led by local elders or religious leaders in Islamic way, involves prayers to cleanse individuals and the community from negative influences. It symbolizes a fresh start, filled with blessings and safety, and expresses hopes for protection while at sea and in daily life.

After Dzuhur, the main events of the day commence with the *Remong* dance, a ceremonial opener that embodies bravery and enthusiasm. Performed by dancers in vibrant traditional attire, the dance's lively and dynamic movements energize the crowd, creating an uplifting atmosphere before the formal proceedings. This event is followed by speeches from prominent guests, including community leaders, government representatives, and religious figures. These speeches often focus on gratitude, aspirations for the future, and support for preserving the *Petik Laut* tradition. The formalities conclude with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially mark the next stage of the event. After that, the event continues with a *tasyakuran* that incorporates Islamic elements. This ceremony is an expression of gratitude to Allah for the blessings of the sea. It typically features communal prayers, Quranic recitations, and a short sermon that emphasizes maintaining spiritual connections with the Creator. Additionally, food prepared by the community is shared, fostering a sense of unity and mutual gratitude.

The day's highlight is the release of offerings into the sea, symbolizing humanity's gratitude and harmonious relationship with this vital resource. The offerings, which include agricultural products, food, and flowers, are placed on a vibrantly decorated boat. The boat is ceremonially carried to the sea by a dedicated team, often supported by modern entities like the Search and Rescue (SAR) team. Their involvement ensures safety during the procession while demonstrating the integration of tradition with contemporary practices. Accompanied by prayers and well-wishes, the act signifies a collective hope for the sea's continued blessings and protection. This final ceremony also reflects a deep respect for the sea, not merely as a resource but as a life-giving entity that must be honoured and safeguarded for future generations.

The events of the second day embody profound spiritual, social, and cultural values. The integration of artistic performances, rituals, and collective prayers showcases the synergy between local customs and religious beliefs. This tradition also strengthens communal bonds, as every member contributes to its preparation and execution. The inclusion of modern elements, such as the SAR team, highlights the adaptability of this tradition to contemporary contexts without losing its core meaning. The *Petik Laut* tradition, with its rich diversity, stands as a testament to local wisdom and cultural identity, which must be cherished and preserved for future generations.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge on the *petik laut* ritual by illuminating its multifaceted role in shaping coastal community

identity, social cohesion, and cultural continuity. Consistent with prior research, such as the study on the Kedungrejo Muncar Banyuwangi fishermen community (Ainiyah, 2017), this research affirms that *petik laut* functions as a powerful medium of ritual communication that transcends ethnic and ideological boundaries. Similar to how ritual communication in Puger fosters integration among a diverse multiethnic community, the *petik laut* ritual in the current study also acts as a unifying practice that mitigates social divisions and reinforces collective identity (Winanti et al., 2023). This underlines the ritual's capacity to serve as a social integrator in culturally heterogeneous coastal settings.

Moreover, paralleling the findings of the Puger community study ((Winanti et al., 2023), this research corroborates the symbolic interactionist perspective that *petik laut* is not merely a ceremonial act but a lived expression of communal beliefs and identity. The ritual encapsulates the community's shared experiences and mystical interpretations of the sea, which are continuously constructed and negotiated through social interactions. The discourse surrounding the *petik laut* ritual within the Puger fishing community illustrates the complex interplay between tradition, religious belief, and social cohesion. As documented in the study on contestation in Puger Jember in Qomariyah and Sholihin research (2019), the ritual serves as both an expression of gratitude and a spiritual safeguard for fishermen seeking safety and bountiful catches. However, this practice faces opposition from religious leaders who view it as conflicting with Islamic monotheism, categorizing it as shirk (polytheism). This tension between fisherfolk and ulama highlights an important cultural negotiation where traditional beliefs intersect and sometimes clash with orthodox religious interpretations. Notably, despite these differing perspectives, the community maintains social harmony through mutual respect and cooperation, demonstrating that contestation does not necessarily lead to social fragmentation. This dynamic underscore the capacity of *petik laut* to function as a cultural practice that negotiates religious plurality while sustaining communal bonds.

Moreover, Juliana et al. (2023) find that the symbolic interactionist lens applied in studies of coastal communities in Puger reveals how *petik laut* operates as a living tradition embedded with local wisdom and religious elements. The ritual's integration of prayers and Quranic recitations alongside offerings reflects an adaptive cultural synthesis that honors both ancestral customs and Islamic faith. Although, ethnolinguistic analysis of the ritual's offerings exposes deep layers of cultural and educational significance (Jannah et al., 2022). Jannah et al. (2022) detailed examination of lexical, grammatical, and cultural meanings embedded in the ritual's offerings reveals that *petik laut* transcends mere ceremony; it embodies values of character education such as gratitude, responsibility, and social harmony.

Expanding on the comparative insights from the Pengambangan village study (Sariyani, 2021), this research further elucidates how *petik laut* accommodates religious pluralism by integrating diverse spiritual elements, including Islamic and Hindu practices, in a manner that fosters mutual respect and social harmony. The ritual's inclusive nature, as evidenced in the participation of different religious groups, reflects a broader cultural tolerance and

cooperative spirit that sustains community resilience. Sariyani (2021) enriches the understanding of *petik laut* as a complex cultural phenomenon that simultaneously embodies gratitude, religious devotion, social interaction, and tolerance.

Despite these convergences, this study also reveals gaps and emerging challenges not fully addressed in previous literature. Notably, while earlier studies emphasize ritual continuity and communal harmony, the present research identifies ongoing negotiations and adaptations within the community in response to modernization, religious reform movements, and socio-economic changes. These dynamics suggest that *petik laut* is a living tradition subject to reinterpretation and contestation, which opens new avenues for examining how traditional rituals evolve in contemporary contexts.

Furthermore, this study contributes to filling the literature gap concerning the interplay between ritual practice and identity politics in coastal communities. By foregrounding the voices of local leaders and community members, the research provides nuanced insights into how *petik laut* serves as a site for expressing collective agency and cultural resilience amid external pressures. This perspective invites future research to explore the ritual's potential role in community empowerment and cultural sustainability.

In summary, this study not only confirms the centrality of *petik laut* in fostering cultural identity and social cohesion as documented in previous research but also advances the discourse by highlighting its adaptive capacity and the complex socio-religious negotiations that shape its contemporary practice. These findings underscore the importance of viewing *petik laut* as a dynamic cultural resource that both preserves heritage and responds creatively to the challenges of a changing world.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia is a country with many tribes. There will be a lot of different traditions from each of the tribes. Each tribe has a different culture. In Indonesia, specifically in Puger District, Jember Regency, East Java, there is a beach known as Payangan Beach. The majority of the local population adheres to the Islamic faith, yet many of them engage in a traditional practice called Petik Laut. Petik Laut tradition has been carried out in several seas in Java and of course each implementation has a different agenda and schedule. Petik Laut tradition is a multi-day event filled with meaningful activities, rather than a one-day celebration. The first agenda of the first day of Petik Laut at Payangan Beach was the burning *sesajen* at several points in the village. On the second day, the activities illustrate a harmonious blend of tradition, beliefs, and Islamic principles cherished by the community. The day's highlight is the release of offerings into the sea, symbolizing humanity's gratitude and harmonious relationship with this vital resource. The events of the second day embody profound spiritual, social, and cultural values. The integration of artistic performances, rituals, and collective prayers showcases the synergy between local customs and religious beliefs. Despite everything, there's not much data about the Petik Laut tradition, so the researchers had to go to the place by themselves to search for information. For future research, researchers can find some connections with the locals, so for other research it will be easier.

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