



PEUSIJUEK AS TRADITION: CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION AND ITS MEANING FOR THE PEOPLE OF ACEH SELATAN

Anida*✉, Ristawati**

*Universitas Islam Kebangsaan Indonesia, Indonesia
E-mail: anidaaja767@gmail.com

**Universitas Islam Kebangsaan Indonesia, Indonesia
E-mail: ristawati28@gmail.com

Abstract

The *Peusijuek* tradition in Aceh Selatan represents a cultural construction that integrates Islamic values with Hindu cultural heritage. The historical process of *Peusijuek* is rooted in the peaceful Islamization that occurred since the 7th century AD, allowing local practices to assimilate with Islamic teachings. This research is a field study aimed at examining how the construction of the *Peusijuek* tradition is manifested in Aceh Selatan society. The findings indicate that although Hindu elements initially influenced this tradition, *Peusijuek* has transformed into a ritual that emphasizes prayers for safety and Islamic teachings. The implementation of *Peusijuek* is led by community leaders or village imams, with each element, from materials to movements, possessing profound symbolism that embodies harmony and fertility. This construction of tradition reflects the adaptation and transformation of cultural heritage within a religious context, maintaining the relevance of *Peusijuek* in the modern era through integration into various events. As a medium for imparting noble values, *Peusijuek* plays a crucial role in strengthening the cultural identity of the Aceh Selatan community, creating a bridge between the current generation and the past.

Keywords: Construction; Tradition; *Peusijuek*; Aceh Selatan.

✉Corresponding author:

Email Address: anidaaja767@gmail.com

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Abstrak

Tradisi Peusijuek di Aceh Selatan adalah representasi konstruksi budaya yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam dengan warisan kebudayaan Hindu. Proses sejarah Peusijuek berakar pada Islamisasi damai yang terjadi sejak abad ke-7 M, yang memungkinkan praktik-praktik lokal berasimilasi dengan ajaran Islam. Penelitian ini merupakan kajian lapangan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana konstruksi tradisi peusijuek pada masyarakat Aceh Selatan. Hasil peneliti menunjukkan bahwa meskipun tradisi ini awalnya dipengaruhi oleh unsur-unsur Hindu, Peusijuek telah bertransformasi menjadi ritual yang mengedepankan doa-doa keselamatan dan ajaran Islam. Pelaksanaan Peusijuek dipimpin oleh tokoh masyarakat atau imam desa, dengan setiap elemen dari bahan hingga gerakan memiliki simbolisme yang mendalam, melambangkan keharmonisan dan kesuburan. Konstruksi tradisi ini menunjukkan bagaimana masyarakat Aceh mengadaptasi dan mentransformasikan warisan budaya dalam konteks keagamaan, menjaga relevansi Peusijuek di era modern dengan mengintegrasikan ke dalam berbagai acara. Sebagai medium pendidikan nilai-nilai luhur, Peusijuek berperan penting dalam memperkuat identitas budaya masyarakat Aceh Selatan, menciptakan jembatan antara generasi sekarang dan masa lalu.

Kata Kunci: Kontruksi; Tradisi; Peusijuek; Aceh Selatan.

INTRODUCTION

Aceh is one of the 38 provinces in Indonesia, rich in customs and culture. One of the traditions of the Acehnese people is the *Peusijuek* tradition, also known as the plain flour (*tepung tawar*) ceremony.¹ *Peusijuek* is a tradition commonly practiced among the Malay and Acehnese ethnic groups, particularly.² This tradition is widely recognized in Aceh as a custom and culture that must be preserved. The Acehnese, known as a predominantly Muslim community, uphold their customs and are rich in cultural heritage. For generations, *Peusijuek* ceremonies have been consistently performed in various activities deemed necessary for its observance. Among the Acehnese, the *Peusijuek* tradition is considered a cultural heritage that must be preserved and performed at specific moments.

In Aceh Selatan specifically, the *Peusijuek* tradition is conducted during various events, such as weddings, building a new house, performing Hajj, before slaughtering sacrificial animals, for women divorced by their husbands, in cases of shock or extraordinary events (falling from a tree, accidents, fights that require reconciliation), and many other occasions.

The *Peusijuek* tradition in Acehnese society has become a long-standing practice, rooted in ancestral heritage and unlikely to disappear. It consistently accompanies social and religious ceremonies. In Acehnese culture, the *Peusijuek* tradition primarily functions

¹Dhuhri, S. *Peusijuek: A Social Ritual Tradition of Pasee Society in Traditionalist and Reformist Perspectives (Peusijuek: Sebuah Tradisi Ritual Sosial Masyarakat Pasee dalam Perspektif Tradisionalis dan Reformis)*. Presented at the International Conference on the Development of Aceh (ICDA-3), Lhokseumawe, Unimal Press, 2008, 636-656.

²Maimun, A. A. *Peusijuek in Islamic Law Perspective (A Study of Tafa-ul Theory) (Peusijuek Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam: Kajian Teori Tafa-ul)*. *Kalam*, 7(1), 2019, 55-64.

to seek safety, tranquility, and happiness in life. However, its specific practices can be categorized into several types, such as sprinkling unhusked rice (*breuh padee*), sprinkling plain flour (*tepung tawar*) water, adorning the right ear with sticky rice (*bu leukat*), and giving money (*teumutuek*).

The procedures employed in *Peusijuek* ceremonies are generally similar across different events, though variations may exist depending on the occasion. These differences include the preparation of *Peusijuek* materials, which are arranged on a tray and consist of items such as a bowl of rice (*breuh padee*), a large plate of sticky rice in white and yellow colors (*bu leukat puteh kuneng*), *tumpoe* (a delicacy made from flour, bananas, and coconut), the plain flour (*tepung tawar*) water, plain water, *oun sineujuek* (special leaves used in *Peusijuek* rituals), *on manek-manok* (a type of foliage), *on naleung samboo* (a type of grass with strong roots), *glok ie* (handwashing bowl), and *sangee* (food cover).

The *Peusijuek* tradition has become an integral part of Acehese culture, whose existence continues to be preserved due to its religious and philosophical values. It is regarded as a sacred customary process that must be performed during specific activities believed to require the *Peusijuek* ritual. It is even observed in extreme circumstances, as it is considered a religious practice that must not be abandoned. If neglected, it is believed that the blessings and grace associated with the activity will not be obtained. The high enthusiasm of Aceh Selatannese society in preserving the *Peusijuek* tradition has inspired researchers to delve deeper into the construction and essence of this tradition within the cultural context of Aceh Selatan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have discussed the *Peusijuek* tradition within the context of Acehese traditions from various perspectives. However, the approaches and objectives of these studies differ from this research. One example is the study conducted by Risma titled “Dekonstruksi Makna Peusijuek dalam Fenomena Sosial Masyarakat Aceh pada Kajian Jaques Derida”. The findings indicate that since the advent of Islam in Aceh, the *Peusijuek* tradition, which holds social value for the Acehese people, has undergone significant transformations over time. The tradition has been modified to incorporate Islamic teachings, such as prayers for safety, blessings, and other Islamic teachings.³

Another study by Marzuki, titled “Tradisi *Peusijuek* dalam masyarakat Aceh: Integritas Nilai-Nilai Agama dan Budaya”, revealed that Islam possesses a universal concept capable of merging with various civilizations and cultures.⁴ Islam integrates and is accepted by different nations and civilizations. *Peusijuek* is believed by the Acehese to be a ritual intertwined with religious beliefs due to its rich religious values that must be observed. This is evident from three aspects: first, the performers of *Peusijuek*, usually religious figures like *tengku* (male clerics) and *tengku inong* (female clerics); second, the occasions for *Peusijuek*, such as Hajj departures, weddings, and circumcisions; and third, the prayers during

³Risma, D. Deconstruction of Peusijuek Meaning in Social Phenomena of Acehese Society Using Jacques Derrida's Perspective (Dekonstruksi Makna Peusijuek dalam Fenomena Sosial Masyarakat Aceh pada Kajian Jacques Derrida). *Community*, 9(1), 2023, 135.

⁴Marzuki. Peusijuek Tradition in Acehese Society: Integrity of Religious and Cultural Values (Tradisi Peusijuek dalam Masyarakat Aceh: Integritas Nilai-nilai Agama dan Budaya). STAIN Malikussaleh Lhokseumawe, 2011. Retrieved from <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/23732-ID-tradisi-Peusijuek-dalam-masyarakat-aceh-integritas-nilai-nilai-agama-dan-budaya.pdf>

Peusijuek, which are directed to Allah SWT and use verses from the Qur'an and Sunnah. These aspects indicate that *Peusijuek* is deeply embedded with Islamic values and faith, thus becoming a societal belief.

A final relevant study was conducted by Prayetno, titled “Nilai-Nilai Tradisi *Peusijuek* Sebagai Pembelajaran Sejarah Berbasis Kearifan Lokal”. The findings show that local wisdom represents local ideas that are wise, full of prudence, and valuable, embedded within and followed by the community.⁵ This aligns with the Acehnese belief that the *Peusijuek* tradition reflects local wisdom passed down by ancestors, teaching culture and religion that should coexist with the goodness inherent within. Thus, the values emerging from the *Peusijuek* tradition as historical lessons include tolerance, religiosity, social values, and cooperation.

From these studies, it can be understood that research on *Peusijuek* is not new. However, the findings reveal no studies have specifically examined the construction of *Peusijuek* practices in the traditions of Aceh Selatannese society.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical method. Descriptive analysis functions to describe or provide an overview of the research object through the collected data or samples as they are. Therefore, this research is categorized as field research, as the data required is obtained directly from the field through the observation of *Peusijuek* traditions in Aceh Selatannese society.⁶ The data is gathered from community leaders, *Peusijuek* performers (*tengku Peusijuek*), and residents of Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan Regency. Specifically, this research is conducted in villages within the Kota Bahagia subdistrict of Aceh Selatan.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. The History of the *Peusijuek* Tradition in Aceh

Discussing the history of *Peusijuek* cannot be separated from the history of Islamization in Aceh. Islam entered Aceh peacefully, brought by Arab traders around the 7th century AD. Historians agree that Islam entered Aceh without coercion or conquest. Consequently, the Islamization process in Aceh required a long period to achieve the perfection of Islamic teachings in society. According to some historians, the Islamization process reached its peak during the reign of Iskandar Muda, particularly under Nuruddin Ar-Raniry, while others argue it reached completion much earlier during the Kingdom of Pasee, Samudra Pasai.⁷

The *Peusijuek* tradition is one of Aceh's long-standing cultural practices. Historical records suggest that the *Peusijuek* tradition is a cultural heritage from Hinduism in Aceh. Before the arrival of Islam, Hinduism had already made its presence in Aceh, as evidenced by various historical and cultural Hindu artifacts. Although Hinduism did not spread extensively, it influenced the culture and traditions of Aceh. Consequently, some of Aceh's

⁵Prayetno, et al. *Peusijuek Tradition as a Mediation Tool in Upholding Sharia in Aceh (Tradisi Peusijuek Sebagai Sarana Mediasi di Tengah Penegakan Syariat Islam di Aceh)*. *Temali: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, 4(1), 2021, 16-26.

⁶Moleong, L. J. *Qualitative Research Methodology (Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif, Edisi Revisi)*. Jakarta: PT Remaja Rosda Karya, 2017.

⁷Dhuhri, S. *Peusijuek: A Social Ritual Tradition...*, 636-656.

cultural practices have assimilated Hindu cultural elements, such as the *Peusijuek* tradition (blessing ritual), *boeh kaca* ceremony (henna application), *kanduri blang* (harvest thanksgiving), and *peutren aneuk* ceremony (child's first steps).⁸

Several Acehese traditions, including *Peusijuek*, are considered to have been influenced by Hindu cultural elements. During the Hindu period, the *Peusijuek* tradition involved the use of mantras or specific prayers. However, with the arrival of Islam in Aceh, the *Peusijuek* tradition was adapted to incorporate Islamic elements such as prayers for safety, *salawat* (praises for the Prophet Muhammad), and other Islamic teachings. Most Acehese cultural practices begin with the recitation of Bismillah (in the name of Allah), collective prayers, and *salawat*. Thus, after the spread of Islam, Acehese culture, which previously contained Hindu cultural elements, was realigned with Islamic teachings, including the *Peusijuek* tradition examined in this study.⁹

The evolution of *Peusijuek* has faced various challenges. Reformists through the PUSA (All Aceh Ulama Association) organization in 1939, founded by Abu Daud Beureueh, issued a declaration urging Muslims in Aceh to abandon practices deemed superstitious and unsupported by the Quran and Hadith.¹⁰ Disputes between reformists and traditionalists persisted until 1965 when the MPU (Ulama Consultative Assembly), a government-formed body at the time, issued a fatwa prohibiting discussions of controversial issues in public places, sermons, and allowed religious practices according to individual beliefs.¹¹

To this day, the *Peusijuek* tradition continues to be preserved and practiced by the Acehese community as an Islamic cultural practice. The *Peusijuek* tradition is still carried out, both individually and collectively, especially among the Aceh Selatan community.

B. The Philosophy of *Peusijuek*

At the grassroots level, *Peusijuek* is often seen as a routine cultural practice, albeit mandatory. Most people do not fully understand the meaning or significance of the *Peusijuek* process. Usually, the *Peusijuek* ritual is performed by older individuals or those considered to have spiritual or societal authority, such as a *Tengku* (religious leader) or *Umi Chik* (female elder with religious knowledge). The individuals conducting *Peusijuek* typically understand its purpose and the prayers recited during the process. There is no formal succession for those performing *Peusijuek*, and it is becoming increasingly challenging to find individuals well-versed in its procedures and symbolic meanings.

Peusijuek involves three crucial elements: the materials used (such as leaves, grasses, rice, flour, water, glutinous rice, and *tumpoe*), the movements performed during the ritual, the prayers recited, and the *teumutuek* (giving of money). The materials used in *Peusijuek* vary depending on the event.¹² Common materials include:

- 1) Leaves and grasses symbolize harmony, beauty, and unity, often tied together as a symbol of strength.

⁸Riezal, C. The Construction of the Meaning of *Peusijuek* Tradition in Acehese Culture (Konstruksi Makna Tradisi *Peusijuek* dalam Budaya Aceh). *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya*, 20(2), 2018, 145.

⁹Riezal, C. The Construction of the Meaning..., 145.

¹⁰Dhuhri, S. *Peusijuek: A Social Ritual Tradition...*, 636-656.

¹¹Dhuhri, S. *Peusijuek: A Social Ritual Tradition...*, 642.

¹²Kurdi, M., & Amirza, M. (Eds.). *Falsafah peusijuek masyarakat Aceh* [The philosophy of *peusijuek* in Acehese society]. LKAS, 2012. <https://lib.ui.ac.id/detail?id=20417288&lokasi=lokal>

- 2) Rice and paddy symbolize fertility, prosperity, and spirit.
- 3) Water and flour symbolize patience and serenity.
- 4) Glutinous rice symbolizes bonding and brotherhood.

According to Noviana, the movements during the *Peusijuek* ritual are unique and resemble Hindu worship practices.¹³ However, these movements merely follow a pattern of sprinkling water from left to right, right to left, and occasionally crossing. Many *Tengku* (religious scholars) argue that the resemblance between *Peusijuek* and Hindu worship rituals does not imply that *Peusijuek* is a Hindu religious ritual. The two differ in purpose, methods, and content. The prayers recited during *Peusijuek* are for safety and well-being, using Arabic or Acehese, and are tailored to the occasion. The prayers seek safety, peace, and sustenance from Allah. The *teumutuek* (giving money) follows the completion of the *Peusijuek* ritual, often involving envelopes of money given by the performers and relatives to the recipients. This commonly occurs during *Peusijuek* ceremonies for weddings, Hajj pilgrims, or circumcision.

Peusijuek embodies religious values with deep philosophical significance, making it a sacred ritual for events deemed significant. In extreme interpretations, *Peusijuek* is considered a religious practice that must not be neglected. This underscores the lengthy process of adopting and integrating foreign cultures into local practices. According to Hariadi,¹⁴ the term *Peusijuek* has two linguistic meanings:

- 1) A hereditary custom (passed down from ancestors) is still practiced in society.
- 2) The belief that existing practices are the best and most correct.

Riezal linguistically defines *Peusijuek* as originating from the root word *sijuek* (cooling or calming), with the prefix *peu*, meaning to make something cool or calm.¹⁵

C. Implementation of the *Peusijuek* Tradition

For Acehese society, customs hold a significant position in social and religious behavior. This is evident in the well-known Acehese adage or *hadih maja*: "*Hukom ngon Adat Hanjeut cre Lagee zat Ngon Sifeut*," meaning law and Islamic custom cannot be separated, like substance and its attributes. This expression highlights the esteemed positions of religion and custom in Acehese society. Almost all Acehese customs are imbued with Islamic elements, including the *Peusijuek* tradition.¹⁶

During its implementation, the *Peusijuek* ritual in Aceh is typically led by a religious or elder figure respected by the community. Due to its sacred nature, the ritual must be conducted by someone knowledgeable about the prayers and procedures of the *Peusijuek* tradition. For men undergoing *Peusijuek*, the ceremony is conducted by male leaders, such as ulama, *Tengku*, or *ustadz*. For women, the process is carried out by senior women, often

¹³Noviana, N. The Integrity of Local Wisdom in Acehese Culture through *Peusijuek* Tradition (Integritas Kearifan Lokal Budaya Masyarakat Aceh dalam Tradisi *Peusijuek*). *DESKOVI: Art and Design Journal*, 1(1), 2018, 29-34.

¹⁴Hariadi, J. The Meaning of the *Peusijuek* Tradition and Its Role in Intercultural Communication Patterns in Langsa City (Makna Tradisi *Peusijuek* dan Peranannya Dalam Pola Komunikasi Lintas Budaya Masyarakat di Kota Langsa). *Jurnal Simbolika: Research and Learning in Communication Study*, 6(2), 2020, 121-133.

¹⁵Riezal, C. The Construction of the Meaning..., 145.

¹⁶Riezal, C. The Construction of the Meaning..., 145.

referred to as *Ummi*, *Ustadzah*, or female elders respected by the community. This ensures blessings and mercy from Allah SWT.

The three critical elements in the *Peusijuek* tradition are the tools and materials, movements, and prayers. Tools and materials include trays, glutinous rice (*bu leukat*), red coconut (*umirah*), rice (*breueh pade*), flour mixed with water (*teupong taweue*), cocor bebek leaves (*on sisikuek*), assorted herbs (*manek manoek*), sacred grass (*naleueng sambo*), water vessel (*glok*), and food covers (*sangee*). Each material holds a specific philosophy and meaning for the Acehnese community.¹⁷

The act of sprinkling water in the *Peusijuek* tradition is of utmost importance due to its sacred nature, requiring precision in its execution. The movement of sprinkling water on the person undergoing *Peusijuek*, performed by an ulama (religious leader), involves hand gestures from right to left, and vice versa, as well as diagonal movements, using traditional *Peusijuek* materials. These gestures carry philosophical meanings, reflecting the depth of the ritual.

Prayers are the most essential element in this tradition, as the core of *Peusijuek* is a supplication to Allah SWT for the safety, happiness, and prosperity of the host or the person receiving the ritual. The prayers used are derived from Islamic teachings and are commonly recited during *Peusijuek* ceremonies in Aceh. Hence, the individual leading the ritual must be a respected religious or community figure well-versed in Islamic teachings, *Peusijuek* processes, and trusted by society.

D. Types of *Peusijuek* Traditions Commonly Practiced in Aceh Society

1. *Peusijuek Meulangga* (Reconciliation). This type of *Peusijuek* is performed when disputes occur between residents of a village or community. If such conflicts threaten to lead to bloodshed, a *Peusijuek* ceremony is conducted following reconciliation between the conflicting parties.¹⁸
2. *Peusijuek Pade Bijeh* (Blessing of Paddy Seeds). *Pade bijeh* refers to paddy seeds. This tradition involves farmers performing *Peusijuek* on paddy seeds before planting them in the fields.
3. *Peusijuek Peudong Rumoh* (New Home Blessing). *Peudong Rumoh* means constructing a new house. Since housing is a primary human need, the choice of a favorable day is essential. *Peusijuek* is also conducted for individuals moving into a new home.¹⁹
4. *Peusijuek* for New Vehicles. This ritual seeks blessings for sustenance and protection from future misfortunes.
5. *Peusijuek* for Religious and Family Events. This includes *Peusijuek* for Hajj pilgrims, weddings, circumcision, and the aqiqah ceremony for children.
6. *Peusijuek* for New Leadership. *Peusijuek* for leadership transitions occurs within Aceh's governmental structures, ranging from village and sub-district officials to regents, mayors, legislative members, governors, and vice governors.

¹⁷Riezal, C. The Construction of the Meaning..., 145.

¹⁸Sakdiah, & Yunaida. *Peusijuek* as a Media for Da'wah in Aceh (*Peusijuek* Sebagai Media Dakwah di Aceh). *Jurnal Al-Bayan*, 22(31), 2015, 37-55.

¹⁹Prayetno. *Peusijuek* Tradition as a Mediation Tool Amid Sharia Implementation in Aceh (Tradisi *Peusijuek* Sebagai Sarana Mediasi Ditengah Syariat Islam di Aceh). *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 1(2), 2021, 172-187.

7. *Peusijuek* for Weddings. This includes *Peusijuek Intat Lintoe* and *Tung Dara Baroe* (wedding ceremony) and involves giving *peusunteing* and *seunemah* (gifts or money) to the bride and groom following customary traditions.²⁰

E. Construction of the *Peusijuek* Tradition in Aceh Selatan

1. History and Development of *Peusijuek* in Aceh Selatan

In general, discussing the history of *Peusijuek* cannot be separated from the history of Islamization in Aceh. Islam entered Aceh peacefully, brought by merchants from Arabia around the 7th century AD. Historians agree that Islam entered Aceh peacefully, not through the sword or conquest. Therefore, the process of Islamization in Aceh took a long time to reach the perfection of Islamic teachings within the society.

Some customs or traditions of the Acehnese people that were not in conflict with Islam were preserved and allowed by the ulama during the early period of Islam in Aceh. Some animistic practices (beliefs that deify) and Hindu teachings were also allowed to be practiced, with the rituals being modified according to Islamic teachings. This is evidence that Islam entered Aceh and Indonesia in general peacefully, not by force. This condition also proves that Islamic teachings are very flexible and can blend with various civilizations and cultures worldwide. Therefore, Islam can accept and appreciate human culture and civilization anywhere, in line with its mission of Islam *Rahmatan Lil'alamin*. Islam in Indonesia is not merely a replica of Islam from the Middle East or South Asia, but more than that, it represents the most dynamic and creative intellectual and spiritual tradition of the Muslim world.²¹

Peusijuek is one of the Acehnese traditions that has assimilated with Islamic teachings and is therefore still maintained today. Among the elements that have been modified are the mantras used in the *Peusijuek* ritual, which have been replaced with prayers in Arabic. During the reign of Sultan Alaudin Riayat Syah, he invited 70 prominent ulama to compile the qanun Syara' al-asyi to serve as a guideline for the royal court on the status of customs within the framework of sharia, which led to the transformation of mantras into prayers in *Peusijuek*. The long journey of *Peusijuek* was marked by various obstacles, with reformist groups through the PUSA (Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh) organization, formed in 1939 by Abu Daud Beureueh, issuing a statement urging the people of Aceh to abandon practices considered as shirk and not based on the Quran and Hadith.²²

This conflict continued between the reformists and traditionalists until 1965, when a body formed by the government at the time, the MPU (Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama), issued a fatwa prohibiting the public discussion of khilafiyah (differences of opinion) in public spaces, during sermons, and provided the freedom to follow religious understandings according to individual beliefs.²³ To this day, *Peusijuek* remains preserved and maintained by the people of Aceh as an Islamic cultural tradition. *Peusijuek* continues to be practiced by both individuals and groups.

²⁰Prayetno. *Peusijuek Tradition as a Mediation Tool Amid Sharia Implementation...*, 172-187.

²¹Nana, N. The Integrity of Local Wisdom in Acehnese Culture through *Peusijuek* Tradition (Integritas Kearifan Lokal Budaya Masyarakat Aceh dalam Tradisi *Peusijuek*). *DESKOVI: Art and Design Journal*, 1(1), 2018, 29-34.

²²Dhuhri, S. *Peusijuek: A Social Ritual Tradition...*, 636-656.

²³Dhuhri, S. *Peusijuek: A Social Ritual Tradition...*, 636-656.

Historically, the *Peusijuek* tradition is a legacy of Hindu culture. The Hindu culture in Aceh itself was influenced by the historical relationship between Aceh and India in ancient times, thus indirectly introducing Hindu culture into the Acehnese community. One of the influences is the *Peusijuek* tradition. When viewed from the movements during the *Peusijuek* ritual, they are unique, resembling movements during worship practices in Hinduism. However, these movements occur simply by following the direction of sprinkling water from left to right, right to left, and occasionally crossing. Nevertheless, as stated by M. Ilyah,²⁴ of the people of Aceh Selatan believe that *Peusijuek* is a cultural practice of value that aligns with Islamic principles and is a local custom that does not contradict Islamic values. This is reinforced by Razali,²⁵ who asserts that in *Peusijuek*, there is no element of associating Allah and His Messenger, but rather, it is filled with words and phrases as taught in the Quran and the classical Islamic texts.

2. Implementation of *Peusijuek*

The *Peusijuek* ritual is led by respected elders or community leaders. During the ritual, the person receiving the *Peusijuek* typically sits while the individual performing the *Peusijuek* sprinkles a mixture of water over their head or body, accompanied by prayers and well-wishes for prosperity. In the general community of Kota Bahagia, the implementation of *Peusijuek* is entrusted to the village imam, as conveyed by Nurjannah.²⁶ The village imam is the person responsible for carrying out the various stages of the *Peusijuek* tradition. However, some village imams delegate the task to a respected *ustadz* (teacher) or elder who is considered more knowledgeable or deemed appropriate.

3. Symbolism

Each element in the ritual has its symbolism. For instance, turmeric rice symbolizes fertility and prosperity, while water is seen as the source of life and purification. In Aceh Selatan, particularly in Kota Bahagia, as stated by Maimun,²⁷ a local figure in Aceh's customs, there are three key aspects in the *Peusijuek* tradition: the tools and materials used in the ritual, the movements, and the prayers. The ritual tools and materials include a tray, *ketan* (sticky rice), *umirah* (red coconut), *breueh pade* (rice), *teupong taweue* (flour mixed with water), *on sisikuek* (a type of duckweed), *manek manoek* (a type of foliage), *naleueng sambo* (a type of grass), *glok* (a container for handwashing), and *sangee* (a traditional food cover). For the people of Aceh Selatan, each of these materials holds specific philosophical and symbolic meanings within the *Peusijuek* tradition.

4. Connection to Cultural Values

Peusijuek reflects the values within the Acehnese community, such as family, respect, and appreciation for traditions. It also serves as a way to strengthen social bonds within the

²⁴Ilyas, M. (n.d.). Traditional Leader of Gampong Beutong, Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan (Kepala Adat Gampong Beutong, Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan). [Personal Interview].

²⁵Razali. (n.d.). Imam of Gampong Bukit Gadeng, Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan, and *Peusijuek* Performer (Imam Desa, Pelaku *Peusijuek*, Gampong Bukit Gadeng, Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan). [Personal Interview].

²⁶Nurjannah. (n.d.). Performer of *Peusijuek* Tradition for a New House (Yang Melaksanakan Tradisi *Peusijuek* Rumah Baru). [Personal Interview].

²⁷Maimun. (n.d.). Traditional Figure of Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan (Tokoh Adat Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan). [Personal Interview].

community. As stated by Arahman, there are two key cultural values in this tradition: first, the value of family, as the tradition strengthens the bond between family, friends, and the community.²⁸ People gather to support the individual receiving the *Peusijuek*. Second, the value of respect, as the tradition teaches respect for elders, ancestors, and traditions. It instills in society the importance of honoring and preserving the culture passed down through generations.

5. Adaptation and Modernization

While *Peusijuek* has historically been known as a cultural heritage that no longer holds relevance in the modern era, the tradition in Aceh Selatan has undergone some adjustments, as noted by Tarmizi.²⁹ In the modern era, although the essence of *Peusijuek* remains intact, several adaptations have been made, including: first, inclusivity, as *Peusijuek* is now often integrated into larger events such as wedding receptions or other celebrations, making it more inclusive. Second, variations, where some people incorporate new elements such as poetry or traditional music to enrich the ritual experience.

6. Role in Cultural Identity

Peusijuek is a symbol of the cultural richness of Aceh Selatan. This ritual serves as an important moment in the lives of the people of Aceh Selatan and acts as a reminder of the importance of preserving traditions and cultural heritage. In this context, *Peusijuek* is not only a ritual but also a medium to impart noble values to future generations. The *Peusijuek* tradition is a significant inheritance for the people of Aceh Selatan, maintaining connections with ancestors and bridging the present generation with the past.

CONCLUSION

The *Peusijuek* tradition in Aceh Selatan represents a unique blend of local culture and Islamic teachings, emerging from a peaceful Islamization process since the 7th century AD. Led by community leaders or village imams, this ritual provides blessings while reinforcing social bonds and family values. Each element of *Peusijuek* holds profound symbolism, reflecting fertility and harmony. This tradition remains relevant in modern contexts by integrating into various events and incorporating new elements. *Peusijuek* plays a crucial role in preserving the cultural identity of Aceh Selatan and serves as a medium to impart noble values to future generations.

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²⁹Tarmizi. (n.d.). Community Member of Beutong, Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan (Masyarakat Beutong Kota Bahagia, Aceh Selatan). [Personal Interview].

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