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Revitalization of Sahur Procession: Preserving Cultural Heritage with an Innovative Touch in Kuala Tungkal, Jambi Province

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Abstract:

This research paper seeks to examine the revitalization of the Sahur procession as part of the cultural heritage in Kuala Tungkal, Jambi Province. The research employs qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and direct observation of community practices. This methodology facilitates a thorough analysis of both the cultural significance of the Sahur tradition and the innovative approaches developed to engage the local community.

The findings indicate that incorporating modern elements—such as music, visual arts, and social media—has greatly boosted community participation and heightened awareness of the Sahur procession. By embracing these contemporary influences, the event has managed to captivate younger generations, who are eager to contribute their ideas and creativity. This transformation not only revitalizes the tradition but also cultivates a sense of ownership among community members, ensuring the preservation of this important cultural event.

Additionally, the study underscores the necessity of balancing traditional values with modern adaptations, illustrating how innovation and cultural heritage can coexist. By responding to the changing interests of community members, the Sahur procession is well-positioned to thrive in an era of modernization. Ultimately, this research enhances our understanding of how innovation is essential in preserving cultural heritage, offering valuable insights into community engagement and cultural sustainability. These findings provide guidance for other communities aiming to rejuvenate their cultural practices while maintaining historical authenticity, reinforcing the idea that traditions can evolve and prosper in modern contexts.

Keywords: *revitalization, Sahur procession, cultural heritage, innovation, Kuala Tungkal.*

A. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, cultural heritage practices have encountered considerable challenges due to the impacts of modernization and urbanization (Gunawan, 2024). One such tradition is the Sahur procession in Kuala Tungkal, Jambi Province, which plays a key role in the cultural life of the community during Ramadan. This practice embodies local values and strengthens communal bonds, serving as a critical part of the community's identity. However, decreasing participation from younger generations has raised concerns about the preservation of this valued tradition. As noted by (Hariati, 2021), "the decline of cultural practices often stems from shifts in social dynamics and lifestyles," highlighting the need to address these changes and find ways to revitalize cultural expressions like the Sahur procession.

Although there is widespread recognition of the importance of cultural heritage, research specifically focusing on the revitalization of traditional practices like Arakan Sahur in Jambi remains limited. Much of the existing literature centers on general strategies for cultural preservation, without exploring innovative methods that engage communities and attract younger participants. This points to a significant gap in the conversation about cultural sustainability, as understanding how to integrate modern elements into traditional practices is crucial for their continued relevance.

The main objective of this study is to explore the revitalization of the Sahur procession by introducing innovative elements while preserving its cultural essence. The research aims to bridge the divide between tradition and modernity, providing insights into how traditional practices can evolve without losing their core significance. Specifically, the study seeks to answer key questions: How can modern influences be successfully integrated into the Arakan Sahur tradition? What strategies can boost community participation and engagement in this cultural event?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute to the broader discussion on cultural preservation and innovation. The findings could offer valuable frameworks for other communities facing similar challenges, demonstrating that, with the right strategies, cultural heritage can be both preserved and revitalized in a way that resonates across generations. This approach not only strengthens community ties but also ensures that traditions remain relevant and vibrant in a rapidly changing world.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework that underpins this research is rooted in cultural sustainability and innovation theory. Cultural sustainability emphasizes the importance of preserving cultural practices while adapting to changing social contexts (Hawkes, 2001). This framework is crucial for understanding how traditional practices, like the Sahur procession, can evolve without losing their core significance. Additionally, innovation theory suggests that integrating modern elements into cultural traditions can enhance community engagement and participation (Schilling, 2013). By grounding this study in these theories, the research highlights the dynamic relationship between tradition and innovation.

Existing literature on cultural heritage preservation reveals various strategies for maintaining traditional practices. Several studies emphasize community involvement as a key factor in sustaining cultural events (Smith, 2015). However, much of this research tends to focus on static preservation methods, often overlooking the potential for innovation. While some scholars have explored the integration of modern technology in cultural practices, they

frequently fail to address the specific needs and preferences of local communities (Jones & Williams, 2018). This limitation indicates a need for more nuanced approaches that consider both heritage preservation and contemporary relevance.

This research aims to fill the identified knowledge gap by focusing specifically on the revitalization of the Arakan Sahur tradition through innovative practices. By synthesizing insights from previous studies, this work not only acknowledges the importance of community engagement but also proposes actionable strategies for integrating modern influences into traditional events. The findings from this research are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on cultural sustainability, offering practical recommendations for other communities facing similar challenges.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Research Methodology section describes in detail how the study was conducted to explore the revitalization of the Sahur procession in Kuala Tungkal, Jambi Province. This study employs a qualitative research design (Denzin, 2009), specifically a case study approach, which is suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of cultural practices and the perspectives of community members involved in the tradition. The target population for this research includes local community members actively participating in the Sahur procession, cultural leaders, and younger individuals who may be less involved. A purposive sampling strategy was utilized to select participants with direct experience and knowledge about the Arakan Sahur, resulting in a total of 30 participants: 15 community elders, 10 younger community members, and 5 cultural leaders, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The semi-structured interviews aimed to gather detailed insights into participants' experiences and opinions regarding the Sahur procession, using an interview guide for consistency while allowing flexibility for participants to share their thoughts. Additionally, participant observations were conducted during the Sahur events to capture the dynamics of community engagement and the innovative elements being integrated into the tradition. For data analysis, the transcribed interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and patterns related to the revitalization efforts. The observations were also documented and integrated into the analysis, providing a comprehensive understanding of the cultural practices. This combined approach facilitated a richer interpretation of the data, highlighting the interplay between tradition and innovation in the Arakan Sahur.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the Findings section, we summarize the collected data and the analysis performed, focusing on the revitalization of the Sahur procession in Kuala Tungkal, Jambi Province. The qualitative research involved a total of 30 participants, comprising 15 community elders, 10 younger community members, and 5 cultural leaders. The analysis of the data revealed several key themes that illuminate the dynamics of community engagement, innovation, and the preservation of cultural identity.

Additionally, the local government has played a significant role in the development of the Sahur procession tradition by institutionalizing it as an annual event that must be carried out. This initiative not only reinforces the cultural significance of the Sahur procession but also aims to attract both local and international tourists. By promoting the Sahur procession as a

cultural identity of Kuala Tungkal, the government seeks to enhance community pride and participation, ensuring that this cherished tradition continues to thrive.

The collaboration between the community and local authorities has fostered a sense of ownership among the participants, leading to creative innovations that enrich the Sahur experience. These innovations include the incorporation of modern elements while maintaining the authenticity of the procession. The combined efforts aim to elevate the Sahur procession from a local practice to a celebrated cultural event, further solidifying its role as a vital aspect of Kuala Tungkal's identity.

Presentation of Findings

The thematic analysis identified three primary themes: (1) Community Engagement, (2) Innovation in Tradition, and (3) Cultural Identity Preservation. Table 1 summarizes the participants' responses regarding their involvement in and perceptions of the Sahur procession.

Theme	Elders (n=15)	Younger (n=10)	Members	Cultural (n=5)	Leaders
High involvement	13	5		5	
Interest in innovations	6	9		4	
Concern for cultural loss	12	8		5	

From the data, it is evident that a significant majority of community elders (13 out of 15) expressed high levels of involvement in the Sahur procession, reflecting their commitment to maintaining this cultural practice. Their deep-rooted connection to the tradition underscores the importance of cultural continuity and the transmission of values to younger generations. These elders not only participate actively but also serve as custodians of knowledge, ensuring that the rituals and meanings associated with the Sahur procession are preserved and respected. Conversely, younger community members displayed a strong interest in incorporating innovative elements into the tradition, with 9 out of 10 participants indicating a desire for modern adaptations. This shift highlights a generational difference in engagement, where younger participants are more open to changes that align with contemporary lifestyles. They see the potential for the Sahur procession to evolve while still honoring its historical significance. This perspective encourages a dialogue between tradition and modernity, fostering a more inclusive environment for participation.

Figure 1 illustrates the frequency of responses concerning the integration of modern elements into the Sahur procession. The data show a positive correlation between the younger generation's interest in innovation and their engagement in the event. This suggests that introducing new activities, such as social media campaigns and interactive events, could significantly enhance participation. By leveraging technology and contemporary trends, the Sahur procession could attract a wider audience, encouraging both community involvement and tourism.

Furthermore, these findings indicate that a collaborative approach involving both elders and younger members could lead to a more dynamic and vibrant Sahur procession. By merging traditional practices with modern innovations, the event could not only maintain its cultural

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integrity but also adapt to the evolving interests of the community. This synergy may

ultimately strengthen the cultural identity of Kuala Tungkal and ensure that the Sahur procession remains relevant for future generations.

Interpretation of Results

The findings suggest that while community elders exhibit a deep commitment to cultural preservation, they are also aware of the need to adapt to modern contexts. Their concern for cultural loss, expressed by 12 out of 15 participants, indicates a recognition of the challenges posed by urbanization and changing social dynamics. This awareness highlights the delicate balance they must navigate between maintaining tradition and addressing the evolving landscape of community life. The elders' insights reflect a desire to safeguard their cultural heritage, yet they acknowledge that without adaptation, these traditions risk becoming obsolete.

In contrast, younger participants are eager to engage with the Sahur procession through innovative practices. Their enthusiasm demonstrates that revitalization efforts can effectively bridge the gap between preserving heritage and embracing modernity. By proposing fresh ideas and contemporary interpretations, the younger generation is not only showing their interest in the tradition but also actively contributing to its evolution. This dynamic exchange fosters a richer cultural dialogue, ensuring that the Sahur procession remains a relevant and lively expression of community identity.

This intergenerational collaboration aligns with the theoretical framework of cultural sustainability, which posits that traditions must evolve to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world. The integration of modern elements such as music, visual arts, and social media interactions can significantly enhance the appeal of the Sahur procession. These innovations not only attract younger audiences but also create a sense of belonging and community pride, reinforcing the importance of cultural practices in contemporary life.

By embracing both tradition and innovation, the Sahur procession has the potential to thrive as a vibrant cultural event. Such integration ensures that the procession remains engaging for all community members, allowing it to adapt while still honoring its historical roots. Ultimately, this approach contributes to a more resilient cultural identity, one that honors the past while confidently stepping into the future.

Comparison with Literature

When comparing these findings with existing literature, notable similarities and differences emerge. Research by Smith (2015) emphasizes the significance of community involvement in cultural preservation, a theme echoed in this study's results. The strong commitment of community elders and their active participation in the Sahur procession highlight the crucial role that local engagement plays in maintaining cultural practices. This alignment reinforces the notion that cultural heritage thrives when community members take ownership and actively contribute to its preservation.

However, this research diverges from previous studies by emphasizing the role of innovation as a critical factor in attracting younger participants. While earlier literature has acknowledged the importance of maintaining traditions, it often overlooks the necessity of adapting these practices to contemporary contexts. This study challenges the traditional view by demonstrating that innovation is not merely a complementary aspect of cultural heritage but an essential component for its sustainability. The findings reveal that younger generations are

not only interested in preserving cultural practices but are also eager to enhance them through modern interpretations.

Moreover, the research highlights a clear need for further exploration in this area, particularly regarding how innovative strategies can be effectively implemented to foster intergenerational engagement. Understanding the mechanisms by which innovation can facilitate participation among diverse age groups is crucial for ensuring the longevity of cultural traditions. By identifying best practices for integrating modern elements into traditional events, future studies could provide valuable insights into the dynamics of cultural sustainability.

In conclusion, the revitalization of the Sahur procession in Kuala Tungkal requires a balanced approach that respects traditional values while embracing innovation. By fostering community involvement and incorporating modern elements, the Sahur procession can thrive and adapt to contemporary societal changes. This dual focus not only bridges the gap between generations but also ensures that the cultural significance of the Sahur procession remains vibrant and relevant for future audiences. The synergy of tradition and innovation presents an exciting opportunity for communities to cultivate a rich cultural identity that resonates across time.

E. CONCLUSION

The main conclusions of the study highlight the importance of revitalizing the Sahur procession in Kuala Tungkal through innovative practices while maintaining its cultural significance. The research identified three key findings: (1) community elders demonstrate high involvement in the tradition, expressing concern over its preservation; (2) younger community members show a strong interest in integrating modern elements, indicating a generational shift in engagement; and (3) the successful incorporation of innovative strategies can enhance participation and foster a sense of belonging among younger generations.

The findings contribute to the understanding of cultural heritage preservation by illustrating the dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. This study addresses the identified gap in existing literature, emphasizing that revitalization efforts must not only focus on maintaining traditions but also on adapting them to contemporary contexts to ensure their sustainability.

Based on the results and limitations of this study, future research directions could explore the long-term impacts of innovative practices on community engagement in cultural events. Additionally, studies could examine similar revitalization efforts in different cultural contexts to identify best practices and effective strategies for preserving cultural heritage globally. Exploring the perspectives of various stakeholders, including local government and youth organizations, may also provide deeper insights into fostering intergenerational connections in cultural preservation.

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