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Religious Controversy in the Tiban Tradition: Perspectives of Islamic Scholars and Indigenous Leaders in Jajar Village, Trenggalek

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Abstract

This study explores the perspectives of Islamic religious leaders and traditional community leaders in Jajar Village, Gandusari District, Trenggalek Regency, on the practice of the *tiban* tradition. This ritual, historically intended to invoke rain through physical self-flagellation, remains significant despite the Islamic practice of *salat istisqa'* for rain prayer. The research employs a descriptive-analytical comparative approach based on fieldwork. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and literature review to understand the evolving meaning and social significance of the *tiban* tradition within the predominantly Muslim community. Findings reveal two divergent views among Islamic leaders one opposes *tiban*, considering it harmful and contradictory to Islamic teachings is the other accepts it as a permissible cultural practice serving as a means of invoking divine mercy while emphasizing prayer to Allah. Traditional leaders regard *tiban* as an important cultural art form reflecting local heritage. Over time, *tiban* has shifted from a spiritual ritual for rain to a cultural celebration during village anniversaries or other ceremonies. This study uniquely highlights the dynamic negotiation between religious doctrine and indigenous cultural practices in a Muslim-majority rural setting, emphasizing the coexistence and contestation of tradition and religion. Understanding these perspectives provides valuable insights for cultural preservation policies and interfaith dialogue, promoting respectful engagement with local customs while considering religious sensitivities.

Keywords: Tiban Tradition; Traditional Leaders; Rain Rituals; Islam and Culture; Islamic Law.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji pandangan tokoh agama Islam dan tokoh adat di Desa Jajar, Kecamatan Gandusari, Kabupaten Trenggalek, terhadap tradisi *tiban*. Ritual ini, yang awalnya bertujuan untuk memohon turunnya hujan melalui pencambukan diri, tetap

dilestarikan meskipun masyarakat mayoritas Muslim juga menjalankan salat *istisqa'* untuk memohon hujan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis-komparatif berdasarkan penelitian lapangan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan studi pustaka untuk memahami makna yang berkembang dan signifikansi sosial tradisi *tiban* di komunitas yang mayoritas beragama Islam tersebut. Temuan menunjukkan adanya dua pandangan berbeda di kalangan tokoh agama Islam: satu menolak *tiban* karena dianggap merugikan dan bertentangan dengan ajaran Islam; yang lain menerima sebagai praktik budaya yang diperbolehkan dan berfungsi sebagai sarana memohon rahmat Allah dengan tetap menempatkan doa kepada Allah. Tokoh adat memandang *tiban* sebagai kesenian tradisional yang penting sebagai warisan budaya lokal. Seiring waktu, *tiban* bergeser dari ritual spiritual untuk memohon hujan menjadi bagian dari perayaan hari jadi desa atau acara adat lainnya. Penelitian ini secara unik menyoroti dinamika negosiasi antara doktrin agama dan praktik budaya lokal dalam komunitas muslim pedesaan, menampilkan keberadaan serta pertentangan antara tradisi dan agama. Pemahaman terhadap pandangan ini memberikan wawasan penting bagi kebijakan pelestarian budaya dan dialog antaragama, guna mendukung penghormatan terhadap kebiasaan lokal sekaligus mempertimbangkan sensitivitas agama.

Kata Kunci: Tradisi Tiban; Tokoh Adat; Ritual Hujan; Islam dan Budaya; Hukum Islam.

Introduction

Societal changes continuously occur over time, particularly in the modern era where many communities tend to adopt new cultural practices while gradually abandoning traditional ones inherited from their ancestors. This phenomenon has triggered a cultural identity crisis, especially among younger generations who show decreasing interest in preserving their local cultural heritage (Bui et al., 2020; Daly et al., 2021; Garcia, 2021). The strong influence of foreign cultures further exacerbates this condition by displacing long-standing values and customs that characterize a community (Hossain, 2024). However, culture plays a crucial role not only as a historical legacy but also as a means of promoting local tourism concepts, such as village tourism (Shen & Chou, 2022; Yanan et al., 2024). Developing village tourism based on local culture aims not only to improve the local economy but also to instill a sense of love, pride, and awareness of cultural identity among the younger generation (Wanitchakorn & Muangasame, 2021). Therefore, cultural preservation is essential for sustainable social and economic development in many regions (Purwanti, 2013).

In Jajar Village, Gandusari Subdistrict, Trenggalek Regency, East Java, the tradition of *tiban* continues to be practiced and preserved by the local community, despite the majority of its population being Muslim. This tradition involves a ritualistic form of whipping until bleeding, primarily conducted during the dry season to invoke rain. Although Islam prescribes the *istisqa'* prayer as the proper method for requesting rain (Jones, 2023), the people of Jajar Village maintain *tiban* as part of their customary practices. Over time, the ritual has evolved from a purely spiritual ceremony to a cultural event performed during celebrations or the village's anniversary. This tradition also

positively contributes to the local economy through trade activities during the ritual's implementation. This phenomenon raises critical questions about how Islamic religious leaders and customary leaders perceive the existence and practice of this tradition, especially given the potential conflicts between religious teachings and local customs. Thus, this study aims to explore the perspectives of these two key community figures in navigating the dynamics of maintaining tradition amid modernization and religious adherence.

Existing literature indicates that customs and traditions in Indonesia are deeply rooted and transmitted orally through generations, forming the foundation of social life in many communities (Lutfi, 2018). Nevertheless, some traditional practices conflict with Islamic teachings, particularly among the majority Muslim population (Padela & Zaidi, 2018). Islam recognizes the concept of *urf* (customary practice) as part of the sharia, provided it does not contradict religious principles (Fauzi, 2024). Scholars generally agree that customs promoting public welfare may be upheld, while harmful practices should be abandoned. However, there is limited research focusing on the views of religious and customary leaders concerning traditions like *tiban*, which involve physically extreme rituals. A notable gap exists in comprehensive studies that analyze how practitioners and community leaders assess the continuation of such customs within the framework of Islamic values and social modernization. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by adopting a comparative approach to examine the perspectives of customary and religious leaders in Jajar Village.

This study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how Islamic religious leaders and customary leaders in Jajar Village perceive the *tiban* tradition. The primary objective is to explore their evaluations of the sustainability of this long-standing tradition, despite its ritual elements conflicting with Islamic teachings. Additionally, the research seeks to analyze how the meaning of *tiban* has shifted from a spiritual rain-making ritual to a cultural symbol that supports social identity and the local economy. Through descriptive-analytical and comparative methods, this study intends to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the tensions and harmonization between religious values and local culture, and how these perspectives influence the preservation of tradition in a socially and religiously dynamic community.

Investigating the *tiban* tradition in Jajar Village is significant because this custom serves not only as a cultural symbol and communal identity but also as a social glue that strengthens interpersonal relationships within the community. Furthermore, *tiban* contributes tangibly to the local economy through various activities generated during the ritual, such as commerce and services. However, the existence of this tradition raises dilemmas due to its physically harsh rituals, which are perceived to contradict Islamic

principles regarding the proper methods for requesting rain. Consequently, understanding the viewpoints of religious and customary leaders is crucial for finding a middle ground that allows cultural preservation while respecting religious doctrines. This study is expected to offer valuable recommendations for developing harmonious cultural and religious policies in pluralistic and dynamic societies such as Jajar Village.

Methods

This study is a field research employing a descriptive comparative analysis approach. It aims to describe the object of study and provide an overview of the *tiban* phenomenon by comparing the perspectives of customary leaders and Islamic religious leaders regarding the *tiban* tradition. Data collection techniques include literature review, direct observation of ongoing activities, and interviews with Islamic religious leaders (two individuals), customary leaders or *tiban* practitioners (two individuals), a former village head, and a neighborhood chief. This research uses a normative approach based on Islamic norms. The data processing involves several stages: initially, identifying themes and research problems, followed by searching for relevant references. The implementation phase consists of collecting data, conducting interviews, then compiling, analyzing, and comparing the data. The final step is drawing conclusions based on the analysis results. The theory applied in this study is the theory of *'urf* (customary law), which serves as the analytical framework for examining the *tiban* tradition within the community of Jajar Village, Gandusari Subdistrict, Trenggalek Regency.

Result and Discussion

History of the *Tiban* Tradition

The term *tiban* originates from the Javanese root word *tiba*, which means “to fall.” The concept of *tiban* refers to the sudden or unexpected appearance of something, the origins of which are not clearly understood (Ihtiar, 2016). Various accounts exist concerning the inception of this tradition. It began during a period when the local community experienced relative prosperity, particularly in the agricultural sector. The community traditionally cultivated their rice fields using manual and animal-assisted methods, notably plowing with oxen or buffaloes. However, a prolonged dry season caused a significant reduction in water availability. This shortage adversely impacted several aspects of life, including the irrigation of rice paddies, the feeding of livestock, and everyday household needs such as cooking. Faced with these hardships, the community sought methods to induce rainfall, leading to the adoption of the *tiban* ritual as a means of invoking rain (Head of RT Jajar Village, 2023).

According to local accounts, on one occasion, a group of farmers and herders brought their buffaloes to a limited water source. Due to the scarcity of water, tensions arose between the two groups, as the water supply was inadequate to meet the demands of both animals and humans. During this dispute, the whips used to herd the buffaloes were repurposed as weapons, causing physical injuries and bleeding. Remarkably, shortly after this violent altercation, the sky darkened, and heavy rainfall ensued. The community was both astonished and gratified by this occurrence. Initially skeptical about the connection between the violent ritual and the onset of rain, the community became convinced of the ritual's efficacy after its successful repetition. Consequently, the *tiban* ritual was embraced as a means to summon rain ([Head of RT Jajar Village, 2023](#)).

Over time, the *tiban* tradition has experienced significant transformation, including shifts in its underlying meaning and purpose. Originally conceived as a ritual solely intended to invoke rainfall, *tiban* has since evolved into a cultural performance and artistic expression that is actively preserved and celebrated by the residents of Jajar Village. In contemporary practice, *tiban* is performed not only during periods of drought but also during various communal events such as weddings, festivals, and the anniversary of Trenggalek City ([Head of RT Jajar Village, 2023](#)). This evolution reflects both the community's commitment to maintaining cultural heritage and the adaptation of traditional practices to modern social contexts.

The Implementation Process of the Tiban Tradition

The *tiban* tradition typically begins during the midday period when the sun is at its peak intensity, generally conducted from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM Western Indonesian Time (WIB). The ceremony is held in an open field and commences with offerings and a request for permission from the customary leaders of Jajar Village, led by the head of the adat council. The offerings prepared for the *tiban* ceremony consist of *nasi tumpeng* (cone-shaped rice dish), *ayam ingkung* (traditional boiled chicken), and three petals of *bunga telon* (frangipani flowers). There is no fixed limit to the number of participants; anyone willing and physically able to endure the whip strikes used in the ritual may take part. Prior to the commencement of the *tiban* procession, a committee is formed to ensure the safety and fairness of the ritual. This committee is responsible for inspecting and verifying the whips carried by the participants to prevent cheating among players and for overseeing the smooth execution of the event according to customary rules ([Customary Leader of Jajar Village, 2023](#)).

Aspect	Description
Process of Implementation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Ceremony: Led by the village head or customary leader; participants are introduced and divided into groups. They parade around the ritual area carrying their whips (<i>ujung</i>) and introduce themselves along with their origin. 2. Main Ritual: Participants whip each other under the supervision of a referee (<i>landang</i>), who ensures strikes are within the regulated area (neck to navel). Groups usually consist of about 10 participants, often based on their regions. 3. Closing Ceremony: Players and committee members shake hands to foster goodwill and reduce tension. The customary elder leads a prayer for blessings and rainfall. The ritual is accompanied by <i>gamelan</i> music to create a sacred atmosphere.
Rules and Regulations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Dress Code: Participants must be topless from the head to the navel to facilitate accurate whip strikes that often result in bleeding. B. Whip Requirements: Participants must bring a clean whip (<i>ujung</i>) made from <i>lidi aren</i> (palm leaf midribs). Whips must not be coated with irritants or harmful substances such as chili extract to maintain fairness. C. Compliance: Participants must respect and obey the referee's decisions. Non-compliance can lead to expulsion. These rules uphold sportsmanship, prevent post-ritual conflict, and ensure the ritual proceeds according to custom.

The implementation of *tiban* is regulated through several stages. First, the ritual opens with an introductory session led by either the village head or a customary leader. During this opening, the *tiban* participants are introduced. They are divided into groups and parade around the ritual area, each carrying their respective whips made from *sodo aren* (palm leaf midribs), while introducing themselves and their place of residence. Second, the *tiban* ritual itself involves participants striking each other with the whips under the supervision of a referee. The referee's role is to regulate and assess whether the whipping complies with the established rules. The permissible striking area is confined between the neck and the navel.

Participants are grouped, usually consisting of approximately ten members per group, often based on their respective regions. The ritual attracts not only villagers from

Jajar but also participants from neighboring areas such as Tulungagung and Blitar. Third, the ritual concludes with a closing ceremony where both players and committee members shake hands to reinforce social bonds and alleviate the tension and emotions generated during the event. The customary elder leads a prayer seeking divine blessing for the ritual and hoping for rainfall to follow. The *tiban* ceremony embodies a unifying value grounded in religious teachings, emphasizing that participants must not harbor grudges against each other. The ritual is accompanied by *gamelan* music, which adds a sacred atmosphere to the event. Overall, the *tiban* ritual symbolizes the community's respect for nature and their aspiration for environmental sustainability (Customary Leader of Jajar Village, 2023).

Several rules, agreed upon by all participants, must be strictly followed during the *tiban* ritual. First, participants are required to be topless; however, this does not mean complete nudity but only from the head down to the navel. This requirement facilitates the accuracy of whip strikes and ensures the whip can directly impact the body, often drawing blood. Second, participants must bring their whips, referred to as *ujung*, made from *lidi aren* (palm leaf midribs). The whips must be clean and free of harmful substances, as some unsportsmanlike players might attempt to coat them with irritants such as chili extract to inflict more severe injuries, a practice strictly prohibited to maintain fairness. Third, participants are obligated to respect and abide by the referee's decisions. Failure to comply with the referee's rulings may result in expulsion from the ritual. These regulations are essential to uphold the principles of sportsmanship, prevent post-ritual hostility, and ensure the ritual proceeds according to established norms, preserving its spiritual and communal significance. The *tiban* tradition thus involves critical elements that support the ritual's success and smooth execution.

Views of Traditional Leaders and Islamic Religious Leaders

a. Views of Traditional Leaders Regarding the Tiban Tradition

A traditional leader is an individual who leads normative customs and has established behavioral rules that apply within a customary law area, which are continuously maintained. The role of traditional leaders is crucial in various aspects, such as preserving culture or customs within Islamic communities, as exemplified in Jajar Village. In the Jajar community, traditional leaders play an important role in all matters related to daily life. They are respected elders regarded as knowledgeable and understanding of the customary traditions prevailing in Jajar Village.

Customary law traditions essentially develop and are adhered to as regulations for social conduct. Although the customary laws in society may be simple and the community small, they are nevertheless maintained and preserved because each society has its own culture with distinct characteristics and nature.

The manifestation of culture is art, which forms an integral part of the culture itself. Each culture influences the forms of art it produces, and the cultural background shapes the distinctive characteristics or identity of the art produced. Jajar Village has various forms of art that reflect their unique aesthetics and are well preserved by its residents. The arts in Jajar include *jaranan*, *jaman*, *megengan* shows, *hadrah*, and *tiban* itself (Customary Leader of Jajar Village, 2023).

According to Mbah Misyar, a traditional leader and promoter of the *tiban* tradition, *tiban* is permitted because the people of Jajar Village still preserve their customs to maintain the cultural heritage of their ancestors. The community believes that performing *tiban* will bring about rain. The *tiban* tradition can be considered an art form. Although *tiban* is not taught in Islam, within the customary belief system, it is practiced during prolonged dry seasons (Customary Leader of Jajar Village, 2023).

Mrs. Siti, former head of Jajar Village, argues that the *tiban* tradition is allowed despite Islamic teachings that forbid self-harm or harm to others. This tradition is inherited from the ancestors and remains strongly believed by the Jajar community. Additionally, it serves as entertainment during social events such as weddings, village anniversaries, and other celebrations (Former Village Head Jajar Village, 2023).

The *tiban* tradition impacts the economic, social, and cultural aspects of Jajar Village. Economically, *tiban* increases activity as vendors flock to set up stalls near the ritual site, generating higher income than usual. Socially, it fosters community cohesion as many gathers to observe the ritual, serving as an occasion for social bonding. Culturally, it supports the preservation of arts and serves as entertainment for the entire community (Head of RT Jajar Village, 2023). *Tiban* is an art form that has become a customary tradition passed down through generations. Its purpose is to request rainfall, which is vital for the community's agricultural livelihood. The ritual also contains artistic elements, including dance and gamelan music accompaniment, and reflects religious aspects through prayers recited during the ceremony (Masrokhah et al., 2021).

From an Islamic perspective, *tiban* is not a practice taught by the Prophet. However, this does not imply that practices not directly taught by the Prophet are inherently bad; such cultural traditions should be preserved properly. The Prophet's Hadith clarifies that associating partners with Allah (*shirk*) includes praying to entities other than Allah or diverting acts of worship such as sacrifice, vows, and prayer to others besides Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever swears by anything other than Allah has committed disbelief or *shirk*." (Hadith narrated by at-Tirmidhi and authenticated by Al-Hakim).

Islam strictly prohibits worshiping anyone besides Allah. Thus, in assessing acts of *shirk*, humans often focus on visible acts such as idol worship or seeking guidance from

jinn or spirits, which are clearly shirk. However, there are more subtle forms of shirk that are not as easily visible (Ihtiar, 2016).

b. The Tiban Tradition from the Perspective of Islamic Religious Leaders in Jajar Village

Islamic religious leaders in Jajar Village hold differing opinions about the permissibility of the *tiban* tradition. The first opinion prohibits it, while the second permits it under certain conditions.

The first view, expressed by Mr. Barno, an Islamic religious leader in Jajar, asserts that *tiban* is forbidden because it contradicts Islamic teachings. Islam forbids harmful acts to oneself or others. In the *tiban* tradition, participants whip and hurt each other, which clearly harms themselves and others, thus contradicting Islamic principles. Therefore, Mr. Barno maintains that *tiban* should not be performed. However, over time the tradition has become normalized and embedded as a cultural practice in the Jajar community (Islamic Leader of Jajar Village, 2023).

The second view, held by Mr. Saeen, an Islamic religious leader and caretaker of the Al-Falah TPQ Madin in Jajar, argues that *tiban* is permissible if intended to preserve tradition and cultural identity, rather than mere physical contest. He emphasizes that Islam provides multiple paths for the ummah, and if one path is not feasible, another can be taken (Islamic Leader of Jajar Village, 2023).

The tradition is allowed as long as it contains no elements of shirk. Any practices involving belief in powers other than Allah must be removed or replaced with non-shirk elements. *Tiban* is a local wisdom tradition unique to Jajar Village and can be preserved provided it is free from shirk. If shirk is detected, it is strictly prohibited, as Muslims are only permitted to ask from Allah alone. All traditions are acceptable provided they contain no shirk (Islamic Leader of Jajar Village, 2023).

From a fiqh perspective, the *tiban* phenomenon is complex. It involves self-harm and harm to others. The fiqh principle states that “all rulings ultimately return to the welfare (*maslahah*) of the ummah in this world and the hereafter.” (Al-Muthahhiri et al., 2023; Yamamah, 2022) Accordingly, fiqh encourages safeguarding five essentials: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. If one seeks welfare, these five aspects must be protected. Islam has established many regulations and norms for the welfare of all creation. Allah and His Messenger have created laws for human welfare in both this world and the hereafter (Asmani, 2021). The five essentials are: preservation of religion (*hifdz al-dīn*), life (*hifdz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifdz al-‘aql*), property (*hifdz al-māl*), and lineage (*hifdz al-nasl*). Modern scholars agree to add environmental preservation (*hifdz al-bī’ah*) as a sixth essential (Al Syatibi, 1997).

Although the *tiban* tradition aims to petition God for rain, Islam governs all aspects of human life, from acts of worship to social transactions (Ahmad et al., 2023). From a

Sharia perspective, tiban contradicts Islamic law due to its element of self-inflicted harm, as highlighted in Q.S. Al-Hud verse 101 (Ministry of Religious Affairs Quran, 2022):

"And We did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves. And their gods whom they invoked besides Allah did not increase them in anything, when the command of your Lord came; and they increased not except in loss."

Currently, acts of self-harm, such as tattooing, piercing, and even suicide, are increasingly observed and are clearly forms of injustice to oneself, which Islam forbids as haram.

Islam prescribes proper methods to seek sustenance from Allah. One way to request rain is through *Salat al-Istisqā'*—a prayer for rain. Linguistically, *Istisqā'* means asking Allah for rain in an absolute manner. Juridically, it is a supplication performed by a servant of Allah in times of need for rain (Al-Salami, 2021). The ruling on performing *Salat al-Istisqā'* is *Sunnah Muakkadah* (emphasized Sunnah). The consensus of scholars is that *Salat al-Istisqā'* is a prescribed act of worship, with the majority of scholars agreeing except Imam Abu Hanifah, who only recommends the supplication but not the prayer itself (Pratisti, 2024). Jurists agree that if no rain falls on the first day of *Istisqā'*, the prayer should be repeated on the second and third days. They also agree that if excessive rain causes harm, it is recommended to pray for cessation of rain (Al-Jazīrī, 2015).

The majority of scholars hold that there is no fixed time or day for performing *Salat al-Istisqā'*, nor is it confined to specific forbidden times for prayer. The majority of scholars state that the time for performing the *salat istisqā'* (prayer for rain) is not restricted to specific hours or particular days, nor should it be conducted during prohibited times. However, some scholars argue that it is preferable to perform *salat istisqā'* after the Friday prayer. Most scholars also agree that the place for *salat istisqā'* should be similar to that of the Eid prayer, namely in an open field. The establishment of a legal ruling based on '*urf* (custom) that meets the criteria for being a legal basis holds the same status as a ruling derived from explicit *nash* (textual sources). Abdul Wahab Khalaf defines '*urf* as customs or practices commonly accepted by society, whether expressed verbally or through actions. In his view, '*urf* holds a position in Islamic law as long as it fulfills certain conditions. He categorizes '*urf* into two main types: '*urf shahih* (valid custom that does not contradict Islamic law) and '*urf fasid* (corrupt custom that contradicts Islamic law, contains elements of polytheism, or involves violence). Legal rulings based on '*urf* can complement Islamic law in matters not explicitly regulated by *nash* (Qur'an and Hadith), provided they do not conflict with Islamic values.

Regarding the ritual of *tiban* involving the whipping of a person's body, this act falls under the category of self-harm and abuse, thus constituting an act of injustice (*dzalim*). Islam strongly upholds the welfare of the community, especially the protection of life.

Therefore, from the perspective of Islamic law, the tradition of *tiban* is impermissible. Consequently, as Muslim believers, we must fully adhere to and obey religious teachings, which are clearly stipulated in the Qur'an, Hadith, *Ijma'*, and other legal sources. This is supported by the verse in Surah An-Nisa' (4:48):

“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him [*shirk*], but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin.” (Qur'an, Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2022)

In society, actions and speech that are accepted as customs, or frequently practiced, constitute the basis for a custom to be considered as a legal foundation. According to the concept of '*urf*', if a tradition or custom contradicts *shari'a* and the *shari'a* has not explicitly ruled on it, then the matter can be returned to the custom, provided the custom is not classified as '*urf fasid*'. This concept provides an explanation for the persistence of certain old traditions, as Islam encourages adherence to customs that do not conflict with its principles. On the other hand, all customs can be incorporated into Islamic law except those that do not meet Islamic standards or fall under the category of '*urf fasid*' (Al-Suyuti, n.d.).

The tradition of *tiban* is not merely viewed as a ritual for invoking rain, but also as a cultural practice encompassing social, economic, and spiritual values. Socially, this tradition plays a role in strengthening communal solidarity and fostering interpersonal interactions through activities that involve the community collectively. Moreover, the continuation of this tradition contributes positively to the local economy, particularly through commerce that takes place during the ritual. From a theoretical perspective, *tiban* reflects the dynamic syncretism between culture and religion, which can create tensions between the normative principles of Islam and entrenched local customs. The differing views between Islamic religious leaders and traditional authorities illustrate the dilemma of reconciling religious teachings with inherited cultural practices (Kay, 2024).

Tiban can be classified as a form of syncretism, where spiritual elements, such as supplications to Allah, are blended with customary practices like whipping, which are not entirely consistent with Islamic teachings. This tradition reflects how local communities interpret religion through their cultural lens, resulting in a unique practice that, however, triggers controversy. The Islamic concept of '*urf*' recognizes local traditions as long as they do not contradict *shari'a* principles (Zulkifli et al., 2024). However, in the case of *tiban*, the application of '*urf*' is contentious due to ritual elements considered incompatible with Islamic teachings, such as physical punishment.

In some respects, *tiban* may be considered '*urf shahih*'—for example, as a means of enhancing social solidarity through community participation in the event, preserving local culture, and generating positive economic impacts via trade during the event.

Nevertheless, this tradition does not fully satisfy the criteria for '*urf shahih*' because it contains elements contrary to *shari'a* principles. Its practice includes '*urf fasid*' components, such as acts of oppression involving whipping to the point of injury and beliefs that verge on polytheism, such as the conviction that the *tiban* method can directly cause rain to fall.

When examining the *tiban* tradition in Jajar Village, it is categorized as '*urf fasid*'. Although it is a customary practice within the community, it contradicts *shari'a* because it involves self-harm and harm to others, actions prohibited in Islam (Amin et al., 2024). This tradition has been carried out by the people of Jajar Village since ancient times as a form of honoring their ancestors. Thus, the *tiban* tradition in this community has become an established practice intended to invoke rain. The author concludes that the *tiban* tradition in Jajar Village does not align with the provisions stipulated in the Qur'an, Hadith, and other sources of Islamic law. According to Islamic texts, when seeking rain during prolonged drought, it is recommended to perform *salat istisqā'*, as clearly regulated by Islamic law.

Conclusion

This study reveals that Islamic religious leaders in Desa Jajar hold differing views on the *tiban* tradition. The first perspective strictly prohibits *tiban*, arguing that it involves acts of self-harm and harm to others, which clearly contradict Islamic teachings. In contrast, the second perspective permits *tiban*, considering it a customary means used by the community to invoke rain, albeit recognizing that the ultimate request should be directed to Allah SWT. Moreover, *tiban* is valued culturally for fostering social bonds and believed to enhance physical resilience. Meanwhile, local customary leaders view *tiban* not only as permissible but as a tradition that must be preserved, given its deep-rooted significance in community beliefs and as a cultural form of entertainment during celebrations. The ritual also holds economic importance, providing opportunities for local traders and the wider community.

This research contributes a novel approach by integrating the Islamic legal theory of '*urf*' to analyze the *tiban* tradition as a multifaceted cultural practice. This integration fills a gap in existing scholarship that typically examines either cultural or religious dimensions in isolation. By highlighting the ongoing debate surrounding the accommodation of local traditions within the framework of Islamic law, the study offers valuable insights for both the community and policymakers. It underscores the importance of managing traditional practices, so they align with religious values, thus promoting harmony between cultural heritage and Islamic principles. This study is limited by its focus on religious and customary perspectives, without extensive exploration of other dimensions. Future research could

adopt a multidisciplinary approach by examining the *tiban* tradition from social, cultural, economic, health, and legal perspectives. Investigating the physical health impacts of self-flagellation during the ritual and the psychological pressures participants face could provide a more comprehensive understanding. Such holistic insights would better inform community guidance and policymaking to balance tradition with well-being and religious adherence.

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