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## ***Terbangan Menara Kudus: Musical Style, Community Perceptions, and Cultural Adaptation amid Socio-Cultural Change***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Traditional arts, such as *Terbangan Menara* in Kudus Regency, Indonesia, face both opportunities and challenges as a result of sociocultural shifts. This study looks at *Terbangan Menara*'s musical style, community attitudes, and cultural adaptation in the face of sociocultural change. Twenty two purposefully chosen informants, including performers, cultural leaders, members of the community, young people, Yayasan Menara Makam Sunan Kudus (YM3SK) management, and regional cultural stakeholders, participated in a qualitative study. Interviews, observations, and documentation were used to gather data. The results demonstrate that *Terbangan Menara* maintains its own musical qualities while adjusting to modern advancements. It is distinguished musically by interlocking percussion harmonization, slow tempo changes from adagio to allegro, repeating ostinato rhythms in 4/4 meter, and a dramatic progression from mild to climax intensity. The vocal style employs harmonic minor and pentatonic melodic patterns performed collectively through sholawat chanting, accompanied by rebana instruments such as *kemplong*, *telon*, *salahan*, *lajer*, and *jidur*. The integration of Javanese rhythmic elements, Islamic lyrics, and call-and-response percussion reflects the acculturation of Islamic and Javanese traditions. Community perceptions are generally positive; however, modernization and changing youth entertainment preferences have reduced participation. Therefore, cultural education, youth involvement, musical innovation, and digital promotion are essential for sustaining *Terbangan Menara* as Kudus cultural heritage.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional arts have an important role in the social and cultural life of Indonesian society. They function not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as a representation of cultural identity, collective values, and social cohesion within communities. In a culturally diverse society like Indonesia, traditional arts are an effective means of preserving local heritage and of passing cultural values from generation to generation Salsabilah (2022). However, rapid socio-cultural changes, caused by globalization, urbanization, and the development of information technology, are increasingly influencing the sustainability and public perception of traditional cultural expressions. These transformations influence how communities, especially younger generations, perceive, value, and practice traditional arts (Musthova et al., 2025).

One of the traditional arts that shows the integration of culture, religion, and community life is *Terbangan Menara*, which developed in the area of Menara Kudus, Central Java. The art was originally a product of Islamic religious traditions and served as a medium of religious preaching and spiritual expression in the local community Rosyid, (2019). The performance usually involves a group of musicians playing percussion instruments similar to the rebana, called *gunungan*, accompanied by the singing of shalawat and Islamic poetic lyrics. The performance, in terms of musicality, is characterized by rhythmic percussion patterns, collective vocal performances, and religious messages, generating a unique spiritual atmosphere. *Terbangan Menara* is a cultural practice that is a unique combination of an artistic performance, religious values, and local traditions that are closely related to the historical heritage of the Menara Kudus Mosque and the Muslim community of the surrounding area.

Despite its cultural importance, *Terbangan Menara* has faced several challenges to its sustainability in the last few decades. Current entertainment, digital media, and global cultural trends have shaped community tastes and patterns of cultural consumption.

Novaryandana et al. (2020). Consequently, traditional arts may seem less relevant or less appealing than contemporary forms of culture. This change of perception raises the question of the continuity of traditional cultural heritage and the transmission of local wisdom from one generation to another. There is also an important role for generational differences in shaping public perceptions of traditional arts. Older generations tend to consider traditional performances such as *Terbangan Menara* as a cultural heritage that is worth preserving, while younger generations might consider that these performances are less in line with the modern lifestyle and entertainment preferences. Sadewo et al. (2024) point out that regional arts are the most crucial cultural assets that reflect the historical and cultural development of a community. As the cultural consciousness and recognition in the younger generations erodes, the transmission and regeneration of culture is becoming more and more difficult, and the sustainability of the traditional art practices is under threat.

In addition, public attitudes towards traditional arts are affected by modernization, education, and exposure to global culture. The widespread use of information technology and social media has increased the public exposure to global cultural content and affected lifestyle trends and cultural choices. Ayu and Bela (2023). While globalization creates opportunities for cultural exchange and artistic innovation, it may also contribute to the marginalization of local cultural traditions. Fauzan (2025) notes that globalization and technological advancement have the potential to commercialize and standardize culture, potentially reducing the authenticity and identity of traditional arts.

Therefore, traditional arts such as *Terbangan Menara* must be continuously preserved and revitalized. This art is not entertainment but also a manifestation of social and spiritual values such as religiosity, togetherness, and community solidarity. These values are reflected in the performances of *Terbangan Menara*, which are often presented during religious ceremonies, community gatherings, and cultural festivals. Therefore, the sustainability of this art form is very important in maintaining the cultural identity and increasing the social cohesion in the Kudus community (Maladi, 2017).

Previous studies have examined traditional arts primarily from the perspectives of cultural preservation, religious function, educational integration, and social values. Rhythmic patterns in traditional Islamic arts are generally maintained across generations because they function as media for religious preaching and support religious activities Suhaya et al. (2020). Research by Lumbwe (2013) demonstrates that traditional musical performances in wedding ceremonies function as media for transmitting cultural values while simultaneously adapting to social change and intercultural interaction. Studies on *terbangan* music also indicate that its sustainability is influenced by the preservation of religious values, the authenticity of lyrics and musical forms, community participation, and youth involvement Nuraini,(2022). Furthermore, regeneration processes and effective group management play crucial roles in maintaining *terbangan* music as a medium of Islamic preaching and cultural preservation Mukti and Sinaga (2021). In music education, oral-based learning traditions and the integration of traditional music into formal education have been shown to increase student engagement and cultural appreciation (Hess, 2009).

However, prior research has not thoroughly examined the musical qualities of *Terbangan Menara* in relation to current socio-cultural change, instead focusing on the social roles, preservation initiatives, or educational components of traditional music. There are still few in-depth conversations about musical components including rhythm, pace, vocal style, harmony, and dynamics. Furthermore, the impact of sociocultural shifts on musical adaptation and community perceptions across generations has rarely been examined in prior studies. Therefore, there remains a lack of research on the connection between shifting cultural appreciation in society and musical evolution.

Thus, by combining research on musical style with community perspectives of *Terbangan Menara* within the framework of sociocultural transformation, this study overcomes these constraints. This study is innovative because it thoroughly examines musical elements such as rhythm, tempo, vocal performance, harmony, and dynamics, as well as community perspectives on *Terbangan Menara's* presence, adaptability, and sustainability in modern society. It is anticipated that this study will offer a clearer understanding of how traditional arts negotiate continuity, adaptation, and cultural identity despite modernization by tying musical analysis to socio-cultural transition. Analytically, this study adopts an ethnomusicological perspective in which musical style and social function are treated as interrelated dimensions of traditional music (Bohلمان, 1988), so that the rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and vocal characteristics of *Terbangan Menara* can be interpreted alongside community perceptions of its continuity and change. In light of this context, the purpose of this study is to explore *Terbangan Menara Kudus's* musical style and investigate how the community views its presence in modern society. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of traditional music studies, cultural preservation discourse, and strategies for revitalizing local arts in the modern era.

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This study is grounded in ethnomusicological perspectives on music as cultural identity and social practice, particularly the views of Bohlman (1988) and Blacking, which emphasize music as a medium for transmitting cultural values, constructing social cohesion, and expressing collective identity.

## 2. METHODS

To investigate the musical style, community attitudes, and cultural adaptability of *Terbangan Menara* in Kudus Regency amid sociocultural shifts, this study employed a qualitative methodology. Twenty-two purposively selected informants, including performers, cultural leaders, members of the community members, young people, Yayasan Menara Makam Sunan Kudus (YM3SK) management, and regional cultural stakeholders, participated in the study. The selection of informants was based on their engagement in *Terbangan Menara* performance and preservation, as well as their cultural expertise.

Interviews, observations, and documentation were used to gather data. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data on *Terbangan Menara's* cultural adaptation, musical traits, social roles, and historical evolution.

Each interview lasted approximately 45–90 minutes and was conducted directly with participants after obtaining their consent. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The transcribed data were then coded and categorized according to emerging themes related to musical style, community perception, and cultural adaptation. Observations were carried out during rehearsals and performances to examine musical practices, performer interactions, instrumentation, rhythmic patterns, tempo, vocal delivery, dynamics, and audience responses. Documentation included photographs, audio recordings, archival materials, and related cultural documents.

The analysis of musical elements focused on rhythm, tempo, vocal patterns, dynamics, and the interaction between percussion instruments and vocals in *Terbangan Menara* performances. Musical data were interpreted through observational findings, audio documentation, and interview results from performers and cultural figures. Community perceptions were analyzed using thematic coding, which yielded five major themes: cultural identity, religious values, social cohesion, cultural preservation, and adaptation to modernization.

Data analysis was carried out using the qualitative analysis model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1992). Relevant material from observations, interviews, and documentation was chosen and categorized in accordance with the research focus during the data reduction stage. To facilitate comprehension, the data were arranged and presented descriptively. Ultimately, patterns, meanings, and connections between musical practices, community perceptions, and cultural adaption processes were identified in order to draw conclusions. The five perception indicators (cultural identity, religious values, social cohesion, cultural preservation, and modernization adaptation) emerged through thematic analysis following the data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing stages proposed by Miles and Huberman. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation data were coded and categorized based on recurring patterns and meanings expressed by participants before being organized into broader themes. Triangulation techniques were used to compare interview results, observational findings, and documentation sources in order to guarantee the reliability of the data. Ethical considerations were

maintained by ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of participants' identities throughout the research process.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Result**

##### **The Development of *Terbangan Menara* Art in Kudus Regency**

The development of Islam in Kudus and its surroundings has left behind religious, cultural, traditional, and customary values, which have inspired the lives of the people of Kudus. These values of religiosity, culture, tradition, and customs are believed to be embedded in the dynamics of the Kudus community, especially in Kudus Kulon, the area where Islam was spread by Sunan Kudus (F et al., 2017). The development of *Terbangan Menara* art in Kudus Regency is inseparable from its role as cultural heritage with deep historical roots, especially within the context of Islam and the traditions of the Kudus community. Since its inception, this art has been used as a medium for religious preaching and has been preserved in various religious ceremonies and celebrations, such as those at Ta'sis Masjid Al-Aqsha Menara Kudus. The *Terbangan Menara* performance tradition is usually marked by the sound of tambourines (*terbang*) played by four people, along with a *jidur* player, and melodious vocals singing *sholawat* from the Al-Barzanji book, reinforcing the performance's religious and spiritual nuances of the performance.

*Terbangan Menara* has experienced a number of notable developments over its history, such as shifts in the performers, advancements in musical instruments, and an expansion in the variety of performance formats. As a way to uphold spiritual and cultural values, this art form was once immensely popular and became an essential part of people's everyday life, particularly among priests and religious leaders. However, enthusiasm and involvement in *Terbangan Menara* began to wane over time, particularly among the younger generation, which affected the tradition's overall survival.

Nevertheless, various revitalization efforts continue to be carried out by the community and local government, for example, by promoting *Terbangan Menara* as an important part of various annual events such as the Ta'sis Masjid commemoration and cultural arts festivals. Abdul Jalil, a member of the Steering Committee of Ta'sis Masjid Al-Aqsha Menara Kudus, said that the Ta'sis commemoration is an event to mark the establishment of the Al-Aqsha Menara Mosque by Sunan Kudus, a propagator of Islam in Java. This step aims to ensure that this art form not only remains known and appreciated by the people of Kudus, but also continues to thrive and evolve amid changing times and generations.

One of the important strategies carried out by the community of preservers and managers of Menara Kudus is to hold training sessions or "Sunday night practices" specifically for children and teenagers in the surrounding area (Rosyid, 2019a) This activity not only serves as a preventive measure to prevent a decline in the younger generation's interest in the *Terbangan Menara* tradition, but also acts as an effective educational medium in shaping the character of the participants. Through these regular practices, children and teenagers learn to build self-confidence, discipline, and social responsibility, which can improve their overall quality of life. As a result, children who participate in the training have been shown to have greater awareness of the importance of preserving local culture and are more motivated to actively participate in traditional performances, helping ensure that this art form is preserved and passed on to the next generation.

In terms of musicality, the development of *Terbangan Menara* is also marked by the learning of formations and playing techniques, such as *Kemplong*, *Telon*, *Salahan*, and *Lajer*, which are central to the harmony of terbangan musical instruments. The *Terbangan Menara* instrument has a diameter of 40 cm, the largest among rebana instruments, which are 35 cm in diameter. This presentation is now also supported by the art community and the Jami'ah *Terbangan Menara Kudus* group, so that the variety of performances can be more. This change allows for innovation without sacrificing the cultural foundations that define *Terbangan Menara's* identity. There are requirements for achieving the desired timbre when studying the art of *Terbangan Menara*. According to *Terbangan Menara* artists, the sound needs to be deep and thick in order to be more pleasing to listen to. The Syaroful Anam book, the Al-Barjanji book, and a number of pieces created by Kudus Regency clergy serve as the foundation for *Terbangan Menara* art. The songs performed by *Terbangan Menara* are very diverse. One of the songs, Sholawat Asnawiyah, was written by KHR. Asnawi and is commonly performed by *Terbangan Menara*, as follows:

Lyrics of the Sholawat Asnawiyah Song

*Ya Robbi sholli 'alar rosuli muhammadin sirril 'ula  
Wal anbiya' wal mursalinal ghurri khotman awwala  
Ya Robbi nawwir qolbana binuri qur'ani jala  
Waftakh lana bidarsi au qiro'atin turottala  
Warzuq bifahmil anbiya' lana wa ayyi man tala  
Tsabbit bihi iimanana dunya wa ukhro kamilan  
Aman aman aman aman aman aman  
Indonesia raya aman  
Aamiin aamiin aamiin aamiin aamiin aamiin  
Ya Robbi Robbal 'alamin  
Aamiin aamiin aamiin aamiin aamiin aamiin  
Wa ya mujibas sa'iliin*

The value of togetherness is evident not only in the performance of *Terbangan Menara* but also in every stage of preparation and rehearsal, which involve close cooperation among the performers, their families, and the surrounding community. This peaceful exchange highlights the relevance of art in fostering societal cohesiveness and upholding the admirable ideals that have been passed down through the generations. Additionally, systematic documenting and promotion of this art through social media and digital platforms continue to advance attempts to conserve it, giving modern preservation tactics a distinctive touch. Even though technology is a useful tool for increasing community awareness and reach, the younger generation's acceptance and active participation still face many obstacles. This is a crucial area of focus for cultural preservationists to ensure that this tradition continues and remains relevant in the future.

This demonstrates how *Terbangan Menara* has managed to survive by finding a place of appreciation within society, despite fluctuations in popularity due of the ongoing wave of modernization. The numerous adaptation and innovation initiatives being undertaken by local communities and art activists are essential to *Terbangan Menara's* survival. Strong backing from Kudus's religious and cultural establishments is also essential to maintaining and advancing this

custom. In spite of increasingly complicated and quick social and cultural changes, the cooperative process and synergy between art practitioners, the local community, and the government are crucial elements that allow this traditional art to continue.



**Figure 1.** *Terbang Menara Kudus*  
(Source: YM3SK, 2025)

### **Musical Style in *Terbang Menara***

The musical style in *Terbang Menara* art has unique characteristics and is rich in religious and local cultural values. *Terbang Menara* consists of four terbang musical instruments (rebana) named *Kemplong*, *Telon*, *Salahan*, and *Lajer*, which are played together with a *jidur* beater. During the celebration of Sunan Kudus's opening of the *luwur*, the sound of *Terbang Menara*, often referred to as *terbang menara*, is played for four hours by a community group and entertains the community accompanied by *jidur*. The order of the players follows standard guidelines: the leftmost *layer* player, then *salahan*, *telon*, and *kemplong* on the right. This harmonious, rhythmic pattern of playing creates a sacred, solemn atmosphere in the performance, which is usually accompanied by the chanting of the *Kitab Al-Barzanji* sholawat. This music is not merely entertainment, but also a means of religious expression and a bond of collective solidarity for the people of Kudus.

*Terbang Menara's* tambourine music has a unique local character since it incorporates gamelan and Javanese beats. Additionally, the lyrics depict the language diversity and cultural acculturation of the Muslim community in Kudus by combining Javanese, Arabic, and Indonesian. Within the context of Islamic preaching, this distinctiveness demonstrates openness to external cultural influences while strengthening local identity. This musical style transforms *Terbang Menara* art into a cultural communication tool that shares religious and spiritual values with the community. The way *Terbang Menara* music is performed is a significant component of its musical style, alongside the instruments and patterns.

The audience is captivated by the unique harmony produced when the instruments are played in a way that complements one another. Every instrument has a distinct function that deepens the music's dynamics and tone, giving both the audience and the performers a profoundly beautiful experience. This method is typically learned via practice in local creative communities over many generations.

## A. Rhythm

In the musical elements of *Terbangan Menara* art, there is rhythm or cadence, which is a series of regular movements, which is used as a fundamental element in *Terbangan Menara* art. A rhythm or beat in *Terbangan Menara* music is a change in the length, pitch, and strength of a note or sound that exists in a single musical sequence. The rhythm or beat of *Terbangan Menara* music cannot be understood after just one listen. Therefore, to understand the rhythm or beat in the music, it is necessary to listen to the performance repeatedly in order to understand its rhythmic structure.

The rhythm or beat of the music performed by the *Terbangan Menara* music group in each of their performances, for example in the song *Sholawat Asnawiyah*, uses a *sholawat* rhythm with a repeated pattern (*ostinato*) according to the tempo and uses a 4/4 time signature, because with this tempo, it starts slowly and then gradually speeds up. Indeed, *Terbangan Menara's* performance has its own characteristics or rules. The pattern of *Terbangan Menara's* performance has a distinctive tempo, which is very slow at the beginning with infrequent beats, then there is a term called *naik*, where the tempo gradually increases, and so on until the end, where the tempo becomes faster and climaxes at a fast tempo. Table 1 presents the instruments used in *Terbangan Menara* and their respective musical functions within the ensemble.

**Table 1.** Presents the Basic Rhythmic Functions of Each Instrument Observed During the Performance of *Sholawat Asnawiyah*.

Instrument	Rhythmic Function	Musical Role
Kemplong	Main repeated beat	Tempo marker
Telon	Rhythmic variation	Rhythmic ornament
Salahan	Syncopated response pattern	Interlocking rhythm
Lajer	Basic repetitive cycle	Rhythmic foundation
Jidur	Provides bass effect & strengthens tempo	Tempo base

As shown in Table 1, the rhythmic interaction among the instruments creates a pattern in which each instrument responds to the others, similar to the percussion patterns commonly found in Javanese traditional music. This shows that *Terbangan Menara* is not only used as Islamic devotional music, but also reflects the influence of local musical traditions in Kudus society.

## B. Melody and Vocal

The melodic element in *Terbangan Menara* is primarily carried by the lead vocalist through the performance of *Sholawat Asnawiyah*. The melody presented in this song follows the vocal line sung by the vocalist and serves as the main melodic framework of the performance. While the rhythmic accompaniment is produced by the *terbang* ensemble, the melodic contour is shaped entirely through the vocal rendition. The song employs a pentatonic scale consisting of five principal pitches, organized according to the tradition's melodic characteristics of the tradition. As shown in Figure 2, the melodic contour of *Sholawat Asnawiyah* is based on a pentatonic scale and follows the vocal line performed by the lead vocalist. Figure 2 presents the transcription of the melody used in *Terbangan Menara* performances.

## Sholawat Asnawiyah

Vokal

Cipt. KHR. Asnawi

♩ = 43

ya rob bi sho lli 'a la ro sul li mu ham ma di in si ir ril 'u

5  
la ya rob bi sho lli 'a la ro sul li mu ham ma di in si ir ril 'u

9  
la wal an biy ya' wa l mur sa lin a l ghu rri

12  
kho t ma n aw wa la wal an bi ya a' wa l mur sa li n al ghu rri

16 ♩ = 47  
khot ma n aw wa la ya rob bi shol li 'al la ro su li mu ham mad

20

**Figure 2.** Melodic notation of Sholawat Asnawiyah  
(Source: Transcription by the researcher, 2025)

### C. Harmony

Harmonization in *Terbangan Menara* in the song Sholawat Asnawiyah uses a technique similar to *paradiddle* in percussion, with a reciprocal rhythmic pattern that creates sound harmony. Unlike harmony in pitched musical instruments, which is based on chords and notes, harmony in rhythmic musical instruments is formed from rhythmic patterns between instruments played alternately. Instruments such as the *telon*, *lajer*, *salahan*, *kemplong*, and *jidur* are initially played together, then alternately, forming a call-and-response pattern. The harmony in *Terbangan Menara* is not only the vocal melody, which is sung in unison, but also the rhythmic patterns of all the rhythmic instruments, producing a musical harmony that is distinct yet harmonious at the same time. Figure 3 illustrates the harmonization pattern between the vocal line and the *Terbangan Menara* instruments. The interlocking rhythmic interaction among *kemplong*, *telon*, *salahan*, *lajer*, and *jidur* creates a distinctive call-and-response texture.

The image shows a musical score for the Sholawat Asnawiyah. It consists of six staves. The top staff is for the vocal line (VOKAL), written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "di in si ir ril 'u la ya rob bi sho lli 'a la ro". The accompaniment includes LAJER, SALAHAN, TELON, KEMPLONG, and JEDUR, all written in a simplified notation on five-line staves. The JEDUR staff shows a simple bass line with a few notes.

Figure 3. Harmonization Notation of Vocals and *Terbangan Menara* (Sholawat Asnawiyah)  
(Source: Transcription by the researcher, 2025)

#### D. Tempo

The playing pattern of *Terbangan Menara* art has its own rules, with tempo signs in the form of ascending and descending forms. Initially, the tempo is very slow (*adagio*), then increases to a faster tempo (*allegro*), and ends at a fast tempo. This tempo pattern is also applied to the Sholawat Asnawiyah song, which starts slowly, rises to a slightly faster tempo, and becomes a characteristic accompaniment to *Terbangan Menara*. The pattern of the *terbangan* musical instrument strikes plays an important role in regulating the tempo of the song, ensuring harmony with the vocals. The tempo of the song starts at around 68 beats, rises to 90 beats, then returns to the original pattern at a faster tempo, and ends at a fast tempo. Thus, the playing pattern follows the same rules for all songs, differing only in tempo variations. Figure 4 presents the notation of Sholawat Asnawiyah at a slow tempo (*adagio*), which characterizes the opening section of the performance. As shown in Figure 5, the tempo gradually increases to a faster pace (*allegro*), creating the climactic section of the performance.

16 ♩ = 47

Vokal  
khot ma n aw wa la ya rob bi shol li 'al la ro

Lajer

Salahan

Kemplong

Telon

Figure 4. *Sholawat Asnawiyah* notation with slow tempo  
(Source: Transcription by the researcher, 2025)

101 ♩ = 115

Vo.  
a ja zid di aq la la jam bi yu

Lajer

Salahan

Kemplong

Telon

Jedur

Figure 5. *Sholawat Asnawiyah* Notation With Fast Tempo  
(Source: Transcription by the researcher, 2025)

## E. Dynamics

In *Terbangan Menara* art, the dynamics of the terbangan musical instruments must be in harmony with each other, starting with slow, infrequent strokes at the beginning, then increasing to faster, louder strokes until the climax at the end of the song, which ends at a fast tempo. The way the instruments are played complements each other, with dynamic variations that match the rhythm of the song. This dynamic is expressed with terms such as Piano (soft), Pianissimo (very soft), Mezzo Piano (half soft), Mezzo Forte (half loud), Forte (loud), and Fortissimo (very loud). Figure 6 shows the dynamic progression in *Sholawat Asnawiyah*, beginning with soft dynamics and gradually increasing toward a strong climax.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Sholawat Asnawiyah'. It consists of five staves: Vokal (Vocal), Lajer, Salahan, Kemplong, and Telon. The vocal line begins at measure 76 with the lyrics 'ukh ro n ka mi la ya rob bi'. A red circle highlights a 'ff' dynamic marking with a hairpin crescendo symbol above the final notes of the vocal line.

Figure 6. Increasingly fast dynamic markings in the song *Sholawat Asnawiyah*  
(Source: Transcription by the researcher, 2025)

### Community Perceptions toward *Terbangan Menara Kudus*

Cultural identity, social cohesion, religious values, cultural preservation, and adaptation to modernization are all strongly linked to how the community views traditional music. These five themes emerged from the thematic analysis and were used to present the findings regarding community perceptions of *Terbangan Menara Kudus*.

#### 1. Community Perceptions of *Terbangan Menara* as a Cultural Identity

The results demonstrate that *Terbangan Menara* is viewed favorably by the community as a symbol of Kudus cultural identity. Most informants stated that *Terbangan Menara* is a long-standing cultural legacy that represents the Kudus community's unique character. It is also seen as closely connected to the historical evolution of Kudus's religion and culture, making it a representation of the region's pride and uniqueness. Furthermore, *Terbangan Menara* is seen as a significant cultural manifestation that sets Kudus apart from other areas. One community representative emphasized the role of *Terbangan Menara* as a symbol of local identity:

*“Terbangan Menara is not only a traditional performing art but also a symbol of the cultural identity of the Kudus community, transmitted across generations and deeply embedded in the history of Islamic dissemination at Menara Kudus”* (GA1, Gus Ari, YM3SK Administrator).

These findings indicate that *Terbangan Menara* functions as an important cultural symbol that distinguishes Kudus from other regions while preserving the historical legacy of Sunan Kudus. According to observational data, this traditional act is still regularly performed at different religious and cultural events in the Menara Kudus area, demonstrating its ongoing significance in local life.

#### 2. Community Perceptions of the Religious Values of *Terbangan Menara*

According to the interview, *Terbangan Menara* is highly regarded by the community as

having important religious values. Most informants stated that this traditional music is frequently played during Islamic events, including Maulid Nabi celebrations, religious gatherings, and commemorations of Islamic holy days.

Islamic religious teachings and moral lessons are thought to be present in the sholawat songs performed at *Terbangan Menara*. One coordinator of the *Terbangan Menara* group explained:

*“The sholawat performed in Terbangan Menara serves not only as a musical expression but also as a medium for Islamic da’wah, fostering devotion to Prophet Muhammad SAW and transmitting Islamic values to the wider community”* (E1, Edy, *Terbangan Menara* Coordinator).

Therefore, *Terbangan Menara* is perceived not only as a musical performance but also as a medium for transmitting religious teachings and strengthening spiritual awareness within the community.

As a result, the concerts serve as a platform for Islamic teaching and spiritual awareness in addition to providing amusement. *Terbangan Menara* is still regularly performed at numerous religious festivals in Kudus, according to documentation of community activities.

### 3. Community Perceptions of the Role of *Terbangan Menara* in Social Cohesion

The results showed that *Terbangan Menara* is crucial to fostering social cohesion in the neighborhood. Interview findings indicate that *Terbangan* performances and activities improve social interaction and foster stronger links between community members.

According to observations, *Terbangan Menara* events foster positive social bonds within the community by including people of all ages, from young children to senior citizens.

One community member explained:

*“When there are Terbangan rehearsals or performances, people usually gather together. Besides practicing music, it also becomes a place for social interaction”* (C2, Community Leader).

These findings demonstrate that *Terbangan Menara* serves not only as a traditional art performance but also as a medium to strengthen social solidarity and togetherness.

### 4. Community Perceptions of the Preservation of *Terbangan Menara*

The community demonstrated a high degree of understanding about the significance of protecting *Terbangan Menara*. Interview findings indicate that most informants believed that, to prevent this traditional art from vanishing due of modernization, it should be preserved and passed on to future generations. The results also showed a number of preservation initiatives, such as frequent training sessions and the participation of younger generations in performances. These initiatives are considered crucial to promoting community involvement in preserving *Terbangan Menara*'s sustainability.

One *Terbangan Menara* performer emphasized the importance of preserving this tradition:

*“Terbangan Menara should be continuously preserved because it is a cultural heritage that embodies historical, religious, and communal values for the people of Kudus. Therefore, younger generations need to be actively involved in rehearsals and performances to ensure the continuity of this tradition.”* (A1, Ahla, *Terbangan Menara* Performer).

These findings suggest that preservation efforts are not limited to maintaining musical practices but also involve intergenerational transmission and active community participation to ensure the continuity of *Terbangan Menara*.

### 5. Community Perceptions of Modernization Adaptation

Different opinions about modernization in *Terbangan Menara* practice were shared by the community. As long as modernization preserves the historic and religious values that define the art form, most informants supported modernization. It is believed that modern adaptation is a tactic to keep *Terbangan Menara* alive in today's world.

One *Terbangan* player stated:

*“We sometimes add rhythm variations or use sound systems so the performance can be heard clearly during large events. However, we still preserve the traditional drumming patterns and sholawat songs taught by our predecessors.”* (P1, Performer)

However, several locals expressed concerns that excessive alterations would diminish *Terbangan Menara's* distinctiveness and originality. As a result, the community stressed that modernity should maintain the tradition's religious and cultural core.

The findings also reveal generational differences in the perception of *Terbangan Menara*. Elder informants (above 40 years old) predominantly emphasized cultural preservation and adherence to inherited traditions. As stated by Syukron, one of the elder community members, *“Terbangan Menara harus tetap dipertahankan sesuai ajaran dan tradisi yang diwariskan para sesepuh karena menjadi bagian dari identitas masyarakat Kudus”* (S1, Elder Informant). In contrast, younger participants (20–40 years old) showed greater openness toward innovation and modernization as strategies for sustaining the art form. Nanang, a younger performer, explained that *“innovation and adaptation are important to attract younger audiences, as long as the religious values and traditional characteristics of *Terbangan Menara* are maintained”* (N1, Young Performer). Meanwhile, children involved in *Terbangan* activities generally perceived the tradition as both a cultural learning process and a form of religious participation. These findings indicate that although all age groups value *Terbangan Menara* positively, they differ in their perspectives regarding the balance between preservation and adaptation to contemporary cultural developments.

### 3.2 Discussion

The *Terbangan Menara* art form in Kudus Regency has evolved into a traditional art form with significant social, cultural, and religious roles in communal life. Through the recitation of sholawat drawn from the Al-Barzanji and Syaroful Anam scriptures, this art form has served as a vehicle for Islamic teaching since its inception. This illustrates how traditional religious music spreads moral and spiritual ideals throughout society in addition to providing entertainment. This result supports the idea that traditional music serves as a vehicle for passing down cultural values from one generation to the next, in addition to being an artistic medium Bohlman,(1988). Furthermore, in many communities, traditional music plays a role in strengthening social cohesion and expressing a shared cultural identity Hartanti,(2025). Traditional music is also frequently performed in various cultural rituals and community activities, demonstrating its vital role in the social and cultural life of a community Lam (2023). In the context of Kudus, *Terbangan Menara* illustrates the close connection between local cultural development and the history of Islam's spread by Sunan Kudus.

The evolution of *Terbangan Menara* reflects the dynamic interaction between cultural preservation and adaptation in response to modernization and generational change. Although younger generations continue to participate in *Terbangan Menara* activities, several informants

expressed concerns regarding the declining interest of youth in traditional arts amid the growing influence of modern popular culture, despite the fact that this art form was formerly quite popular among the general population. The survival of regional musical traditions may be threatened by cultural globalization and changes in the tastes of the younger generation, according to a number of studies on the sustainability of traditional music (Kurnaiwan, 2025). Therefore, various revitalization efforts such as cultural festivals, activities at the Ta'sis Masjid Menara Kudus, and regular practice sessions for children and teenagers have become crucial strategies for maintaining the sustainability of this art form. Community-based approaches to preserving traditional arts have proven effective in increasing youth engagement and ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage (Chan & Saidon, 2021).

From a musical perspective, *Terbangan Menara* possesses a distinctive musical style through the combination of rebana instruments such as *kemplong*, *telon*, *salahan*, *lajer*, and *jidur*, which produce complementary rhythmic patterns. The rhythmic structure, which employs repetitive patterns (*ostinato*) and gradual tempo changes from slow to fast, indicates the presence of a structured musical system within this tradition. In ethnomusicological studies, rhythmic repetition patterns in traditional music often serve to build a collective musical experience that strengthens emotional and spiritual engagement in community music performances. Thus, musical practices in traditional arts not only serve an aesthetic function but also strengthen social interactions and cultural values within society (Phoasavadi, 2024).

*Terbangan Menara* is viewed favorably by the community, especially regarding local cultural identity. This art form is seen by the community as both a depiction of the religious identity of the Kudus people, who have strong traditions, and a statement of cultural pride. This is consistent with studies showing that traditional music is an essential tool for maintaining cultural heritage in the face of social change and for expressing a community's collective identity (Liu, 2024; Wadiyo et al., 2022).

Additionally, the *Terbangan Menara* art form plays a crucial role in strengthening social cohesion within the community. Rehearsals and performances involving people of various age groups create spaces for social interaction that deepen bonds among residents. Research on community engagement in musical activities indicates that shared musical activities can enhance a sense of togetherness, social trust, and solidarity among community members (Merwe & Morelli, 2022).

The community has a high level of understanding of the importance of preserving the sustainability of *Terbangan Menara* art within the context of cultural preservation. One important tactic in the process of rejuvenating artistic practitioners is to incorporate the younger generation through practice sessions. But the process of modernization has also given rise to a variety of viewpoints within society. While some community members welcome innovation as a means of adapting to keep the art form current, others worry about modifications that deviate too far from its conventional form. This circumstance suggests that the longevity of traditional art necessitates striking a balance between innovation and the maintenance of cultural values that comprise the fundamental identity of the art form.

## CONCLUSION

*Terbangan Menara* Kudus uses ostinato rhythmic patterns, slow-to-fast tempo changes, interlocking rebana harmonization, and religious vocal melodies that blend Islamic and Javanese musical elements, creating unique musical qualities. These musical traits suggest that *Terbangan Menara* serves as both a vehicle for Islamic teaching and a symbol of the Kudus community's cultural identity, shaped by the blending of native and Islamic customs. Furthermore, *Terbangan Menara* is viewed favorably by the community as a cultural legacy, a means of upholding religious principles, and a way to strengthen social cohesion. However, Modernization and sociocultural shifts have created challenges for maintaining younger generations' engagement in traditional arts, underscoring the necessity of adaptation initiatives through performance innovation, youth involvement, cultural education, and the utilization of digital media.

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