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Collective Engagement and Social Identity of the “Taruno Suryo” Reog Community to Improve Spiritual Well-Being

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Abstract

This study examines the concept of collective engagement and social identity in the context of the “Taruno Suryo” Reog Art Community as a strategic approach to improving the community’s spiritual well-being. This descriptive qualitative research, using a case study approach, applies purposive sampling to select key subjects from the community. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Furthermore, the data were analyzed and interpreted using symbolic interactionism theory and social identity theory to explore how symbolic interaction in Reog art practices can strengthen collective bonds and social identity, thereby supporting shared spiritual well-being. The results of the study indicate that the concept of collective engagement, manifested through members’ active involvement in every Reog art activity, can serve as a basis for interaction that, in turn, gives rise to social identity as a pillar for strengthening the solidarity of cultural inheritors. The process of internalizing cultural values and religiosity serves as a forum for fostering spiritual well-being. The integration of these concepts can make the “Taruno Suryo” Reog art community one of the art media capable of fostering the spiritual well-being of community members by internalizing the cultural values of Reog Ponorogo in every art activity.

Keywords: Collective Engagement; Social Identity; Reog Ponorogo; Community Spiritual Well-Being

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Introduction

The art of Reog Ponorogo is a traditional art that is rich in social and spiritual values (Fransiska et al., 2021). For the people of Ponorogo, reog is not just a performance or tourist attraction; it is a symbol of heroism and a manifestation of noble values passed down from generation to generation (Warsini, 2022) perlengkapan dan busana reog, serta peran reog sebagai media dalam penyebaran agama Islam di Ponorogo. Proses penelitian dilakukan dengan teknik studi literatur yang berasal dari buku dan internet. Reog Ponorogo memiliki nilai moral yang tinggi untuk mendorong sikap hidup cinta tanah air, yang di dalamnya terdapat ajaran yakni, tenang, ketekunan, ketangguhan, siaga, mampu mengantisipasi, perhatian, terampil,



trengginas (lincrah as one of the intangible cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO since December 3, 2024 (Cahyani & Yogahastama, 2025). Reog's existence lies not only in its visual beauty but also in the strength of the community solidarity that supports it. Amidst the currents of globalization that often erode local identities, the Reog community must transform into a strong culture that consistently cultivates values of togetherness and a sense of belonging (Syalia, 2024). One of the rego communities in Ponorogo is the "Taruno Suryo" reog art community.

The Reog Arts Community "Taruno Suryo" was born from the enthusiasm of students of Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo High School to preserve culture (Riadi, 2020). The name "Taruno Suryo" has a deep philosophical meaning: "Taruno" means youth, while "Suryo" means sun. The sun symbolizes the Muhammadiyah Association. Taruno Suryo is seen as a shining young figure in Muhammadiyah, bringing enlightenment and positive energy through the arts and culture. To this day, Taruno Suryo has grown into one of the proud icons of Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo High School. The presence of this community breaks the stigma that modernity and religiosity cannot coexist with tradition. Because instead, Taruno Suryo stands as proof of the harmony between Islamic propagation and local wisdom.

The Reog Art Community "Taruno Suryo" has been active since 2012, a result of their consistent efforts in "Cultural Da'wah," which integrates Islamic values into traditional arts without reducing their essence. In the context of Reog art, the most fundamental aspect of cultural da'wah is eliminating the elements of polytheism often inherent in traditional Reog (Iskandar, 2022). Therefore, this community was founded not merely as an extracurricular activity but as an inclusive platform for student creativity in preserving Ponorogo's ancestral culture without conflicting with Islamic law. It was through this platform that the idea of "Reog Santri" was born (Riadi, 2020), as a counter to the stigma that traditional art is always associated with the mystical.

Understanding the sustainability of the "Taruno Suryo" reog community requires not only the preservation of its cultural norms but also attention to its members' psychological and spiritual dimensions. These two dimensions are formed by two primary psychosocial dimensions, namely collective engagement and social identity (Saputra et al., 2024). Firstly, being part of the Reog community involves more than just attending rehearsals and performances; it also requires a commitment of energy, dedication, and professionalism throughout every stage of the process. As Herbert Blumer explained in his theory of symbolic interactionism, social meaning arises through physical presence and active involvement in the exchange and interpretation of symbols (Bijaksana, 2025). Members of the 'Taruno Suryo' reog art community are directly involved in shaping, maintaining, and passing on the community's social and cultural structures.

Second, social identity is built from members' attachment to the regional community. This dimension serves as a foundation that strengthens self-recognition and relationships among members, thereby supporting the community's spiritual well-being. A sense of belonging and pride in one's cultural heritage can foster a positive self-definition. According to Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory, individuals who strongly identify with their group tend to have better mental health and life satisfaction (Syarif, 2025). In the context of the 'Taruno Suryo' reog art community, collective bonds strengthen member solidarity and enable community members to become part of the cultural heritage artist identity amidst the wave of modernization.

The art of Reog Ponorogo is traditionally understood as a manifestation of heroic values and community solidarity. However, in the era of globalization, the challenge of preserving this art form is no longer merely a technical issue of performance, but rather a matter of identity resilience and the psychosocial well-being of its performers. While

previous studies have explored the formation of cultural identity within arts communities and the role of art as a social glue, the current literature lacks a critical connection between the mechanisms of collective engagement and dimensions of spiritual well-being.

Research on traditional arts communities has previously been conducted by Andini & Alimi, who examined the identity formation of traditional arts activists from the Gambang Semarang Art Company (GSAC) (Andini & Alimi, 2025). The results showed that the arts community plays three important roles in shaping traditional cultural identity: as a forum for negotiation, an agent of cultural adaptation, and a space for social interaction. Tunnikmah (2025), also supports this research, which found that interaction patterns within the fine arts community can develop through ongoing symbolic relationships and collectively managed spatial facilities. Meanwhile, Saputra et al (2024) notes that the arts community serves as a social glue, maintaining local traditions and values amid the changes and influences of globalization.

Previous research on traditional arts communities has focused solely on analyzing social identity without integrating it with other aspects. Meanwhile, this research focuses on the implementation of collective engagement and social identity within the Reog “Taruno Suryo” arts community and their relationship to the concept of spiritual well-being. Spiritual well-being is defined as a state that reflects positive feelings and an individual’s ability to express their relationships harmoniously (Sapriyanti et al., 2021). This state of well-being involves three dimensions of integrated relationships: relationships with oneself, with others, and with God. (Putri & Prihwanto, 2024) In his research, he also found that art has spiritual potential, making it a means of increasing the spiritual dimension.

Most previous research tends to separate the analysis of social identity from its practical impact on community members’ spiritual well-being. For example, Andini & Alimi’s research focuses solely on the community’s role as a forum for identity negotiation. Saputra’s research, however, views communities as guardians of local values. This study aims to fill this gap by arguing that collective engagement is not merely a physical presence but a process of symbolic interactionism that mechanically builds a strong social identity, which is essentially the foundation for spiritual well-being.

Theoretically, collective involvement in Taruno Suryo’s Reog art community offers a unique case in which Islamic values are integrated into local traditions through the concept of Reog Santri. This gap distinguishes the focus of this research from studies of general art communities. Here, social identity is formed not only through in-group and out-group distinctions but also through religious syncretism aimed at eliminating polytheistic elements. Spiritual well-being is specifically defined here as a harmonious relationship with oneself, others, and God, triggered by collective activities such as ritual prayer before practice.

Based on the research focus above, this study has three main problems to be investigated: (1) How are the interaction patterns and involvement of members in the “Taruno Suryo” reog art community? (2) How is social identity formed through the role of “cultural heirs”? (3) How do collective involvement and social identity contribute to improving the spiritual well-being of the community as a whole? Based on the formulation of the problem, this study aims to develop the concepts of collective engagement and social identity in the context of the Reog Ponorogo community as a strategic approach to improving the community’s spiritual well-being. This approach is important in a traditional art community because the power of active participation and a deep sense of identity can foster psychological resilience amid the currents of modernization.

By understanding and analyzing the three concepts above, it is hoped that this strategy can strengthen the solidarity of the Reog arts community “Taruno Suryo” in maintaining spiritual and cultural values in the digital era. This strategy can also improve its members’

quality of life and create a balance between the existence of art and inner well-being. The meaning of collective spiritual well-being is not only felt personally but also by all members of the Reog arts community, “Taruno Suryo,” thereby fostering a sense of belonging and spiritual harmony that ultimately makes Reog Ponorogo a bridge between sacred traditions that support sustainable spiritual well-being.

Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive case study approach (Poltak & Widjaja, 2024) to explore in depth the phenomena of collective engagement and social identity within the Reog art community “Taruno Suryo”. The main focus of the research is to understand how these concepts develop and contribute to improving spiritual well-being within the community. The subjects of this research were community members selected using a purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: senior mentors and assistants (minimum 5 years of membership) and coordinators of each role, consisting of warok, jathil, and pembarong.

This study used purposive sampling to select research participants, ensuring that data were obtained from key figures who understood the community’s internal dynamics. The participants included one senior mentor, one community supervisor, and seven active members. Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth semi-structured interviews to elicit narratives about experiences, journeys, and understandings related to the implementation of collective engagement and social identity. Furthermore, participant observation was used, in which the researcher directly observed members’ interactions during their practice routines on Tuesday and Friday afternoons, as well as during preparations for the Ponorogo National Reog Festival. Documentation was conducted by collecting photos of practice activities, field diaries, and community social media posts that represent the identity of the Reog Santri (Islamic Reog students).

Furthermore, data analysis in this study draws on Herbert Blumer’s symbolic interactionism and the Social Identity Theory of Henry Tajfel and John Turner. The collected data were then interpreted using a qualitative thematic analysis approach that encompassed several stages, including transcribing interviews and field notes, identifying key themes related to collective engagement, social identity, and spiritual well-being, constructing thematic narratives by connecting the above concepts with the practices and experiences of Reog community members, and verifying data findings through source triangulation. This data triangulation technique aims to ensure the validity and reliability of the research data and to ensure that the interpretation aligns with the meaning they convey (Husnullail et al., 2024).

The analysis process further encompasses transcription, converting the interview results into text and rereading them to understand the overall context. Coding is then carried out by grouping them into initial codes such as “prayer rituals,” “intergenerational interactions,” “visual attributes,” and “conflict resolution.” Afterward, theme development is carried out, where these codes are synthesized into three main themes. First, collective involvement, focusing on routine interaction patterns and the symbolic meaning of musical instruments or props. Second, social identity construction encompasses the stages of categorization, identification, and social comparison as reog santri. Third, spiritual well-being, which is the transcendental relationship through prayer and inner peace fostered by group solidarity.

Meanwhile, in terms of data validity, this study applies data certainty standards through several techniques: first, source triangulation, researchers compare data obtained from various levels of informants, from supervisors and mentors to younger members, to gain a complete perspective. Second, in triangulation of techniques, researchers cross-check interview results with field observation notes and visual documentation to ensure

consistency of information. Third, observational diligence. Researchers conducted consistent observations during the intensive training period leading up to the festival to gain a deeper understanding of group dynamics. Fourth, member checking. Data interpretation results were reconfirmed with key informants to ensure that the thematic narrative developed by the researchers aligned with community members' experiences.

Result and Discussion

Collective Engagement in the Reog “Taruno Suryo” Art Community

Reog Ponorogo is an art form that emerged from local history and later became an important part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Historically, Reog Ponorogo emerged from the political and symbolic struggles during the late Majapahit kingdom around the 15th century. At that time, the barongan became a symbol of social criticism against a perceived unjust power. Subsequently, Reog transformed local Islamization, particularly under the influence of three important figures: Bathoro Katong, Kyai Ageng Mirah, and Patih Selo Aji. These three figures attempted to reinterpret all elements of the Reog performance as a medium for preaching, moral education, and strengthening social governance. Thus, the Reog Ponorogo performance art is understood not only as an expression of group identity but as a cultural practice rich in ritual, historical, symbolic, and spiritual meaning.

Ideologically, Reog conveys messages about power, ethics, self-control, and togetherness. Locally, Reog, as a cultural heritage, operates on two levels: as a medium of entertainment and as a cultural symbol embedded in everyday life. Throughout its development, Reog has undergone cultural transformations, including its initial development as a symbol of social and political criticism. The subsequent Islamization phase saw Reog become a means of preaching and moral education. In the contemporary phase, Reog has once again become a regional identity and a symbol of global pride as part of intangible cultural heritage. These transformations demonstrate Reog's continued shift from a ritual tradition to a broader cultural representation.

The cultural representation of Reog has also become increasingly prominent with the emergence of various Reog Festivals and the growth of the Reog community in Ponorogo. Reog festivals serve not only as performance spaces but also as a medium for representing living symbols of cultural identity. Furthermore, the presence of Reog communities demonstrates that this tradition is not merely a legacy of the past but is reproduced by future generations through organizations, training, and broader networks. The existence of these festivals and communities indicates that Reog serves as a means of collective engagement, strengthening a sense of belonging and solidarity within the community. Thus, Reog is understood not merely as a performing art but as a symbol of collective consciousness and a medium for cultural inheritance.

In the Reog arts community, there is no such thing as a “single performer.” Reog is a performing art form that integrates various elements, including the warok. Warok is a tough male figure who symbolizes courage, honor, and spiritual strength in Reog performances. Visually, warok appear striking in all-black costumes that envelop their muscular bodies. Warok also wears a large sickle at his waist and a tightly gripped leather whip, creating a brave silhouette that dominates the stage. The strength of their firm facial expressions and their blazing gaze semiotically represent the protector of society and a spiritual role model, enriching the visual dimension of Reog performances.

Second, jathil is the term for the kuda lumping (horse dance) dancers performed by young women. Jathil symbolizes agility and courage, actualized in energetic dance movements. Visually, Jathil appear in woven rattan costumes shaped like kuda lumping

(horse dance) wrapped around the hips and back. Furthermore, the dancers' slender bodies, clad in bright batik and metal accessories, accentuate their lively, energetic expressions. These facial expressions semiotically represent the strong feminine energy within the visual composition of the Reog performance as a collective cultural identity.



Figure 1. Visualization of Warok and Jathil in the Reog performance

Source: Author Fieldwork, 2025

Third, a *pembarong*, or *singo barong*, is a performer wearing a giant reog mask and a *barongan* costume. Those masks or costumes symbolize strength and the spirit of resistance against all forms of evil. Visually, the *barong* figure dominates the stage, towering over the stage with a carved wooden mask, a jet-black costume of thick wool, and iron claws that scratch the ground. The primal expression behind the mask can represent primal energy as an unrivaled protector. Fourth, King Klana Sewandono is an antagonist in the reog story. The figure of Klono Sewandono is known as a gallant king, with a red face and glaring eyes, and he carries the *Samandiman* whip. Visually, he appears to be wearing a wooden mask with a fiery red face, which can symbolize anger and power.



Figure 2. Visualization of *Pembarong* and King Klono Sewandono in Reog art

Source: Author Fieldwork, 2025

Fifth, Bujang Ganong is the witty and energetic prime minister of the poet Anom. He is skilled in martial arts and acrobatics, enabling him to lighten the mood. This characteristic imbues him with extraordinary skills in both martial arts and acrobatics. The combination of his physical agility and humorous demeanor creates a humorous atmosphere in the Reog Ponorogo performance. Additionally, other performers, such as pengrawit (gamelan musicians) and biraswara (backing singers), contribute to the overall performance. All these elements complement each other, forming a unified cultural value and profound spirituality within the Reog Ponorogo performance.

For reog artists, identities such as warok, jathil, pembarong, klono sewandono, and bujang ganong are not merely stage roles but are part of their social status, embedded in their daily lives. The success of a reog performance, such as that presented by the “Taruno Suryo” Reog Arts Community, depends heavily on unity and strong trust among the performers, making reog art not merely a spectacle but a tangible symbol of togetherness and cooperation. It is the members’ lively involvement in every local arts event that encourages this unity and solidarity.

Interview data from Safri Chandra (29), a mentor for the “Taruno Suryo” reog arts community, shows that the concept of collective engagement grows through consistent, routine practice. Regularly scheduled practices on Tuesdays and Fridays afternoons foster this collective engagement.

“Through routine training activities like this, community members can maximize their interactions, build solidarity and cohesiveness between teams, share, and joke around together.”

The training activities intensified when the “Taruno Suryo” reog arts community actively performed at the 2025 Ponorogo National Reog Festival.



Figure 3. Documentation of practice before appearing at the Ponorogo National Reog Festival 2025

Source: Author Fieldwork, 2025

Student involvement in routine training activities such as those described above demonstrates active participation across generations in preserving tradition. Based on observational data, members of the “Taruno Suryo” reog community fall into two generations: the second and third generations. Despite their differences, their involvement does not significantly impact relationships or teamwork. The age difference strengthens solidarity and a sense of community in preserving the Reog tradition. Intergenerational collaboration is key to maintaining cultural continuity in a harmonious and mutually supportive manner.

Based on interview data with Community Supervisor Mr. Gayuh (40 years old), I added:

“We always implement a communal prayer ritual with the children at the beginning of their training routine. Not just before training but also after, we make it a habit to pray together. The goal is to make every activity easier and smoother for the children.”

In addition to the communal prayer tradition, informants consistently emphasize the values of togetherness, solidarity, and the responsibility to uphold the school and the Ponorogo Regency. These sessions serve not only as preparation before rehearsals and performances but also as a mandatory agenda that can strengthen emotional and spiritual bonds within the community. According to Mr. Gayuh, through this communal prayer ritual and guidance, community members become aware of their roles and responsibilities as cultural inheritors, thereby strengthening the spirit of togetherness and sense of belonging to the Reog Ponorogo culture.

Examining the “Taruno Suryo” reog art community more deeply through Herbert Blumer’s symbolic interactionism reveals that its symbolic meaning emerges dynamically from social interactions among members. The ritual of praying together before practicing and performing the Samandiman Whip interprets the Samandiman Whip as a symbol of controlling lust and leadership, aligning with Blumer’s first premise that humans act towards objects based on collectively constructed subjective meanings. This process is also strengthened by the second premise, which holds that meaning is formed and modified through routine interactions. For example, values such as cooperation are instilled, thereby strengthening a sense of togetherness and belonging to the regional culture. These interactions also serve to shape the character and social identity of student community members as heirs to Ponorogo’s reog culture.

Furthermore, the third premise of Blumer’s symbolic interactionism theory also emphasizes the interpretation of meaning that is realized through dynamic social realities between members (Syahputra et al., 2025). The “Taruno Suryo” reog arts community interprets the performance as a symbol for strengthening relationships between members. Interview data with Ayunda (16 years old) states:

“The feeling of joining the community is like a big family because we often meet and practice together, and often share food and encourage each other throughout training.”

This involvement is not only physical but also emotional and cognitive, as community members feel a sense of ownership and commitment to preserving Reog culture as part of their identity. This process supports Herbert Blumer’s symbolic interactionism, which holds that the meaning of Reog symbols is strengthened through everyday interactions.

From an implementation perspective, the involvement of members of the “Taruno Suryo” reog art community in various art activities fosters solidarity and a strong sense of connection. Based on informant data, Pendi (16 years old), a warok actor, emphasized that collaboration between teams is evident in every community activity, from encouraging one another when someone is tired to preparing equipment together and exchanging costumes to support on-stage performances. Activities like this can support cohesiveness among community members. This process also creates a dynamic social reality in which reog symbols continue to be formed and interpreted, strengthening relationships among members of the “Taruno Suryo” reog art community.

Overall, Herbert Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism illustrates how the meanings of Reog symbols are shaped through everyday social interactions within the Taruno Suryo community. Community members do not merely act on existing meanings; they also actively reinterpret them during rehearsals, performances, and everyday social interactions. The creation of a social reality relevant to young people in schools is a possibility. Moreover, this powerful sense of community can encourage a feeling of connection, with Reog's visual representations serving as a means of communication that brings Ponorogo's cultural identity together in the face of modern challenges. This cultural exchange is the glue that holds the Taruno Suryo community together, ensuring the survival of Reog art as a shared heritage that spans generations.

Social Identity as a Pillar of Community Strengthening

The social identity theory developed by Henry Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s served as the foundation for understanding social identity within the "Taruno Suryo" reog arts community. Simply put, social identity is part of an individual's concept that stems from membership in a particular social group (Setiawan et al., 2022) which is a voluntary and intentional behavior that has positive consequences for the welfare of another person or group. Social identity factors can influence prosocial behavior in individuals in a community. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between social identity and prosocial behavior in the Info Cegatan Jogja (ICJ. Robinson & Setyawan (2025) defines social identity as an understanding of one's position in a group and the attitudes and feelings held by its members. Whereas Saputra & Sinaga (2025) found that social identity is closely related to the level of involvement, understanding, and pride individuals have towards the group or organization they are part of.

Humans naturally seek positive status within their group by distinguishing themselves from other groups, according to social identity. This dynamic social reality supports solidarity among members. This process involves recognizing the superiority of one's own group (the in-group) over other groups (the out-groups). This process of social differentiation not only aims to strengthen the group's existence but also to shape a dynamic social reality and support strong solidarity among members. This shared sense of destiny and pride establishes group identity as a vital foundation for fostering internal harmony and shaping the way individuals interact within a pluralistic society.

Accordingly, social identity is defined as a multidimensional construct encompassing the internalization of an individual's role as a unique member of a group. Social identity can encompass ethnic, religious, regional, and cultural identities. Social identity often involves social behavior and past and present social experiences (Hu et al., 2024). Social identity is multidimensional and multilevel because, first, it has strength, namely a strong level of identification with the group. Second, there are specific meanings of membership, such as a focus on competitive performance and on social relationships. Third, social identity provides a process of self-formation through shared experiences, intense interactions, group norms, and environmental adaptation (Evans et al., 2024).

The social environment and social identity are intertwined. The social environment moderates adaptation to life changes in social identity, where membership in multiple groups provides protection and cohesiveness, ensuring identity continuity. For example, support within a group maintains family ties because individuals feel they belong to the same family. Therefore, from a psychological perspective, these positive relationships are compatible (Haslam et al., 2021). Furthermore, this compatibility arises because the social environment provides shared coping mechanisms. Consequently, when individuals encounter life changes, their social group acts as a stabilizing force, facilitating swift adaptation.

The social identity process that occurs in a social community can be formed through three important stages (Kusumasondjaja, 2016), including the group categorization stage, which is a process in which individuals map their social environment into certain groups based on similar characteristics such as age, role, or culture, to simplify social perception and differentiate in-groups from out-groups (Johan et al., 2024). The next stage is the identification process, in which an individual begins to adopt norms and behaviors within the social community, forming a sense of pride and loyalty both personally and communally (Arifin & Rijal, 2025).

In the final stage of social identity formation, namely social comparison, individuals tend to assess their social group more positively than other social groups (Habsy et al., 2025). This subjective assessment, prioritizing one's own group, aims to foster strong solidarity within it (Mazroah & Hanif, 2025). Furthermore, the perception of superiority can directly boost each member's self-esteem, with group success being perceived as personal success. Therefore, the more positive the group image, the greater the individuals' loyalty and willingness to defend shared interests in various situations.

In the "Taruno Suryo" reog art community from Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo High School, the social categorization stage is formed through the presence of a basic identity as "Original Reog Ponorogo Citizens" who distinguish themselves from groups outside the region through unique attributes such as large peacock dadak masks, horse dance costumes, and all-black clothing worn by warok. This process categorizes part of the "Reog City" which has unique and distinctive characteristics. On the other hand, this strong categorization is supported by a sense of togetherness, fostered through routine practice activities and active participation in every Reog Ponorogo National Festival event, which can strengthen a sense of membership. This categorization process is the beginning before entering the identification stage.

During the identification stage, members of the "Taruno Suryo" reog arts community begin to internalize group values as part of their self-concept. This process can be realized through the adoption of the norm of cooperation, reflected in activities such as preparing art materials, sharing food, and practicing routines that can foster an emotional connection to the Bathoro Kathong heritage. Interview data with Vidha (16 years old), a jathil dancer, revealed that,

"Being a jathil dancer has been a hobby since childhood, and this community is like a second home to me. Especially with the 2025 Festival approaching. The training process has been intense for the past four months, almost every day."

The data indicate a strong sense of pride and an emotional connection to the heritage of cultural arts, which can motivate the preservation of reog amid modern influences.

The third stage is social comparison. This stage culminates the social identity process, in which community members actively compare their in-group with out-groups. This process is clearly evident in the lead-up to the 2025 Ponorogo National Reog Festival. The 'Taruno Suryo' reog arts community emphasizes the authenticity of the dadak peacock mask and the distinctive reog santri touch, such as the jathil dancers who wear hijab costumes to uphold Islamic values. The "Taruno Suryo" community has a distinctive feature that sets it apart from commercial versions. This positive comparison enhances the community's image as a center of cultural heritage and delivers a distinctive performance of "Reog Santri".



Figure 4. Appearance of the reog art “Taruno Suryo” at the 2025 Ponorogo National Reog Festival

Source: Author Fieldwork, 2025

In addition, Resta, a 16-year-old Jathil dancer, stated in an interview that documentation of Reog art practices and performances is often uploaded to personal and school social media accounts. The idea is to help students and the community view Reog art in a positive light and attract new members. This strategy can expand the space for all members’ involvement beyond just practice and performances on stage into a digital space, thereby strengthening external validation of the identity of the “Taruno Suryo” community as a Reog Santri community. The support and recognition of the “Taruno Suryo” community come not only from its members but also from the community itself, strengthening a sense of pride and spiritual togetherness.

The Relationship between Collective Engagement and Social Identity with Community Spiritual Well-Being

The findings show that collective involvement in the Reog community is characterized by members’ active participation in routine practices, performance preparation, role assignments, interpersonal collaboration, and emotional and social support across all artistic activities. The involvement goes beyond the technical aspects of the performance, encompassing contributions to the community’s ongoing sustainability as a shared space. In the context of Taruno Suryo, this collective involvement is further strengthened by the term ‘Reog Santri’, which is steeped in religious values, thereby making shared activities a meaningful experience. This pattern aligns with the finding that Reog performances can introduce cultural identity and strengthen community solidarity.

The concept of Reog Santri, promoted by the Taruno Suryo community, is understood as a form of cultural negotiation that seeks to bridge the Reog tradition with Islamic values. Taruno Suryo explicitly presents performances with religious nuances, such as the use of hijab costumes for jathil dancers and musical arrangements featuring religious elements, namely the sun march. This element of religiosity is positioned as the main framework for the performance, in accordance with the community’s vision: to become a medium for preaching amar ma’ruf nahi mungkar across all fields through the art of Reog. At this point, the Taruno Suryo community strives to uphold two interests simultaneously: preserving Reog as cultural heritage and ensuring that the practice of this art remains within the bounds of Islamic values.

In practice, the concept of Reog Santri, as part of this cultural negotiation, is certainly not without tension. Community supervisor Mr. Gayuh (40 years old) added that the concept of Reog Santri in the Taruno Suryo community is indeed inseparable from the adaptation of Islamic values. When elements in Reog are not in line with Islamic norms, the Taruno Suryo community does not always reject them outright; instead, it reinterprets them by selecting symbols, affirming in prayers before and after activities, and strengthening moral messages

in each performance. Furthermore, the concept of Reog Santri is supported by its members' collective involvement. Mr. Gayuh emphasized that when all members are actively involved, negotiations between the Reog tradition and Islamic values can proceed more smoothly, as everyone feels part of an artistic tradition within a framework that better aligns with the community's religious values.

Conceptually, collective involvement in the Reog Taruno Suryo community serves as the foundation for building quality social relationships. When members regularly interact in practice and performances, trust, discipline, and a sense of belonging are built within the community. This process is crucial for fostering spiritual well-being, which stems not only from individual experiences but also from social relationships. Repeated interactions foster emotional bonds that can strengthen a sense of togetherness and foster inner peace.

Further findings indicate that a sense of pride shapes community members' social identity in belonging to the Taruno Suryo community and in being cultural inheritors. Members view themselves not only as artists but also as bearers of the community, school, traditions, and cultural values of Ponorogo. Interview data with Angga (16 years old), a pembarong, added:

“Being a reog artist feels like limitless creativity for me. Yes, there is a sense of pride in being the successors and inheritors of the reog art form. Furthermore, my friends and I are still students, but through this community, we want to continue actively contributing to the culture and bringing honor to the school.”

Social identity strengthens the influence of collective engagement because members who feel “part of us” are more likely to internalize the community's norms and goals. In Reog Taruno Suryo, identity emerges from pride in the group's name, solidarity in maintaining the performance's quality, and commitment to upholding the community's image in public spaces. When social identity is firmly established, community members no longer view training as a burden, but rather as a moral and cultural responsibility. Strong community ties have fostered a positive social identity, in which members feel proud to be part of the Reog Santri group, which not only preserves culture but also conveys Islamic da'wah messages. Thus, Reog artistic activities become a form of devotion to tradition and community.

Furthermore, the study's results on the spiritual well-being variable indicate that spiritual well-being in the Taruno Suryo community does not entirely arise from conditions similar to those in other Reog communities. This concept is born of the community's ability to manage differences, negotiate symbols, and formulate elements of Reog art that remain rooted in culture while aligning with Islamic values. The religious aspect of the Reog Santri performance adds depth, showing that art is not only entertainment but also a means of conveying religious values, prayers, and cultural expression. In this context, community spirituality emerges not only from individual rituals or beliefs but also from collective involvement and awareness that maintains harmony between cultural preservation and shared religious meaning.

Activities such as those mentioned above can directly build trust among community members while creating a sacred space for interaction. The combination of feelings and spirit, as internalized through performing Reog, serves as an important foundation for strengthening community members' spirituality and as a bridge between their artistic experiences and religious values. This process can shape community members not only in artistic competence but also in a strong integration of the artistic and religious dimensions. Furthermore, this condition can foster members' transcendental values, leading to a sense of

inner calm, peace, gratitude, and connection with God.

When analyzed from a cultural perspective, spirituality cannot be understood as a purely individual inner experience. It is also a lived experience, shaped by ritual and symbolic meaning. In the Reog Taruno Suryo community, spirituality is expressed through shared customs such as praying before practice or performance, adherence to group procedures, and respect for and appreciation of sacred elements in the performance. These practices form a unity that does not exist separately from culture, but is integrated into how the community interprets and implements it in its daily lives.

Symbolic meaning is also an important aspect of cultural spirituality. The props, dance movements, costumes, musical accompaniment, and even the flow of the Reog performance are not only aesthetic elements but also convey messages about sacrifice, courage, strength, harmony, and human relationships, with noble cultural values. In this context, symbols serve as a bridge between meaning and real life, so that community members not only present Reog art as a performance before an audience but also seek to bring its values to life. Therefore, the involvement of community members in Reog art performances is a form of cultural participation, not just a performing arts activity.

In the “Taruno Suryo” reog arts community, spiritual well-being is also fostered through a supportive, harmonious, and meaningful community climate. Elisia (17), a jathil dancer, explained that simple conflicts can be resolved through internal community deliberations without involving teachers or coaches. The strong sense of brotherhood fostered by this social identity provides emotional support to community members, allowing problems to be resolved easily without prolonged arguments. Laila (16), also a jathil dancer, shared this sentiment.

“There was a small quantity of conflict, as the members were not focused during practice, often making mistakes. Eventually, we tried to remind each other gently. We even changed the formation, but practice returned to normal.”

The concept of spiritual well-being, as reflected in the informant’s confession above, forms an integrated circle in which solidarity from Reog art can enrich students’ spiritual peace at Senior High School Muhammadiyah 1, Ponorogo, thereby making this community more resilient. This meaningful interaction can fulfill the need for connectedness and transcendence, creating a sense of inner and spiritual calm by internalizing the values of warok as role models. When community members feel emotionally close, this solidarity strengthens, reducing daily stress and building collective resilience as they face modern challenges in the digital age.

A positive cycle of mutual support has made the Taruno Suryo Reog art community the 10th leading Reog art community at the 2025 Ponorogo National Reog Festival. This success is evident in their performances that have attracted the attention of thousands of spectators. In addition, the harmonious collaboration among roles such as warok, jathil, pembarong, and raja klana sewandono, by energetically displaying iconic visual symbols in the style of reog santri, can serve as a bond of solidarity across generations. This achievement is not only a source of pride for Senior High School 1 Muhammadiyah Ponorogo but also strengthens intergenerational solidarity through shared success. Thus, the Taruno Suryo Reog art community not only pursues excellence but also serves as a guardian of cultural identity.

The implementation of this concept demonstrates a mutually reinforcing pattern of interaction. Collective engagement, manifested through members' active participation in all artistic activities, can serve as a basis for interaction that, in turn, gives rise to social identity as a pillar for strengthening solidarity among community members. Furthermore, in the final stage, the process of internalizing cultural values and religious meanings serves as a forum for fostering spiritual well-being. The integration of these three concepts can make the Reog "Taruno Suryo" arts community a spiritual forum that fosters community members' inner well-being by internalizing the cultural values of Reog Ponorogo in every artistic activity.

Conclusion

The development of the concept of collective engagement and social identity within the Reog arts community, "Trauno Suryo," is an innovative strategy to enhance the community's spiritual well-being. The research findings show that the concept of collective engagement, manifested through members' active involvement in every Reog arts activity, can serve as a foundation for interaction that, in turn, gives rise to social identity as a pillar for strengthening the solidarity of cultural inheritors. The process of internalizing cultural values and religiosity serves as a forum for fostering spiritual well-being. This concept not only aims to preserve the cultural heritage of Reog Ponorogo, but also provides theoretical contributions to the study of social and cultural communication. The integration of this concept can make the Reog arts community "Taruno Suryo" one of the art media that promotes the spiritual well-being of community members by internalizing the cultural values of Reog Ponorogo in every aspect of life.

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