

## **ORAL TRADITION AS CULTURAL PEDAGOGY: PRESERVING KOTAH PEHAPENG WAHA PLEDANG IN THE LIFELONG LEARNING PRACTICES OF LAMAKERA**

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**Abstrak:** *Tradisi lisan Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang yang berkembang di Lamakera, Flores Timur, merupakan bentuk warisan budaya tak benda yang memuat nilai-nilai pendidikan, moralitas, spiritualitas, dan identitas kolektif. Tradisi ini berfungsi sebagai sarana pembelajaran informal berbasis kearifan lokal yang diwariskan secara turun-temurun. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi literatur dan paradigma fenomenologis-hermeneutis untuk mengkaji peran dan tantangan tradisi ini dalam konteks modernisasi dan digitalisasi. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun terjadi pergeseran pola komunikasi dan preferensi generasi muda terhadap media digital, masyarakat Lamakera menunjukkan ketahanan budaya melalui inovasi adaptif. Dokumentasi digital, pengintegrasian dalam kurikulum pendidikan formal, serta peran aktif komunitas dan lembaga kebudayaan menjadi strategi kunci dalam menjaga kesinambungan tradisi ini. Tradisi lisan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat konservasi budaya, tetapi juga sebagai media rekonstruksi identitas sosial dan sarana pendidikan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan di era globalisasi. Oleh karena itu, pelestarian tradisi ini perlu dilakukan secara berkelanjutan melalui sinergi antara pendekatan digital dan konvensional.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Tradisi Lisan, Kearifan Lokal, Pendidikan Budaya, Transformasi Digital, Identitas Kolektif*

**Judul:** *Tradisi Lisan ke Aksi: Melestarikan Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang sebagai Simbol Kesadaran Belajar Seumur Hidup Masyarakat Lamakera.*

**Abstract:** *The Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang oral tradition of Lamakera, East Flores, represents an intangible cultural heritage that embodies educational, moral, spiritual, and collective identity values. Functioning as a form of informal education rooted in local wisdom, this tradition has been passed down through generations. This study adopts a qualitative approach using literature review and a phenomenological-hermeneutic paradigm to examine the relevance and challenges of this tradition in the face of modernization and digital transformation. The findings indicate that despite shifts in communication patterns and generational preferences toward digital media, the Lamakera community continues to demonstrate cultural resilience through adaptive innovation. Digital documentation, curricular integration, and active participation by community and cultural institutions are identified as key strategies for preserving the tradition. Far from being a static relic, the oral tradition acts as a medium for social identity reconstruction and value transmission within a rapidly globalizing context. This research highlights the importance of sustained preservation efforts through synergizing traditional practices with digital platforms to ensure the continued relevance of oral heritage in shaping culturally rooted and ethically grounded communities.*

**Keywords:** Oral Tradition, Local Wisdom, Cultural Education, Digital Transformation, Collective Identity



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## INTRODUCTION

The oral tradition of *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng*, which has flourished in Lamakera, East Flores, East Nusa Tenggara (Indonesia), constitutes an integral part of the region's cultural heritage and plays a pivotal role in fostering lifelong learning.<sup>1</sup> This tradition serves as a medium through which the Lamakera community transmits knowledge, social values, and life wisdom inherited from their ancestors. However, the forces of modernization, technological advancement, globalization, and changing lifestyles pose significant threats to the survival of this tradition.<sup>2</sup> These dynamics raise pressing questions: Is this oral tradition still relevant in the contemporary era? Can it endure the accelerating pace of sociocultural change? How are community members striving to preserve a cultural legacy that symbolizes their commitment to lifelong learning?

The central issue addressed in this study concerns the preservation challenges of the *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng* tradition in Lamakera. Once a primary mode of life instruction, it is increasingly being replaced by formal education and digital media. The younger generation now gravitates toward more structured, practical knowledge sources, while the values embedded in oral storytelling are frequently perceived as outdated. This declining interest has sparked serious concern about the potential loss of valuable cultural knowledge, including insights into the community's history, social ethics, and spiritual beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

Although this tradition remains embedded in Lamakera's social fabric, intergenerational transmission is becoming increasingly difficult. Contributing factors include modern lifestyles, limited time, and the pervasive influence of external cultures. Field observations indicate that more than 60% of Lamakera's youth no longer engage with or feel connected to this oral tradition.<sup>4</sup> Instead, they rely on digital technologies for information and social interaction. In such a context, critical questions arise: How can this tradition be sustained and revitalized? How can its embedded values remain relevant to contemporary life?

Field data reveals mounting challenges in preserving *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng*. A 2023 survey among Lamakera youth revealed that only approximately 25% possessed adequate knowledge of the oral narratives that form part of their cultural heritage. Conversely, over 70% expressed a stronger preference for engaging with technological

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<sup>1</sup> R. H. Barnes, "Lamakera, Solor: Ethnographic Notes on a Muslim Whaling Village of Eastern Indonesia," *Anthropos* 91, no. 1–3 (1996).

<sup>2</sup> Sulaiman Mustafa Wuhdin and Shadli Rosalkhi, "Pola Komunikasi Dalam Proses Interaksi Sosial Masyarakat Dalam Upacara Adat Di Lamakera (Studi Kasus Koda Malen/Sapaan Adat Pernikahan Di Lamakera)," *Jesya* 7, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.36778/jesya.v7i1.1386>.

<sup>3</sup> Wuhdin and Rosalkhi.

<sup>4</sup> Wuhdin and Rosalkhi.

platforms for learning and communication.<sup>5</sup> This shift underscores a changing hierarchy of values, with oral tradition increasingly marginalized as a medium of learning.

Nevertheless, some community groups continue to advocate for the preservation of this tradition. Local elders and customary leaders have initiated training programs highlighting the importance of *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng* in the context of lifelong learning. Cultural events such as festivals and customary gatherings are used to reintroduce young people to the moral and cultural values embedded in oral storytelling. Yet, these efforts have not been sufficient to reengage youth at scale.<sup>6</sup>

Clifford Geertz conceptualizes culture as a system of symbols expressed through communication.<sup>7</sup> Within this framework, Lamakera's oral tradition functions as a symbolic system that conveys both practical and spiritual knowledge. Geertz posits that oral traditions play a crucial role in shaping social and cultural identity by enabling communities to interpret their place in the world.<sup>8</sup> For the people of Lamakera, *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng* is more than folklore – it is an educational tool that nurtures moral, ethical, and social understanding.

The concept of lifelong learning, as defined by UNESCO, emphasizes that education is not confined to youth but continues throughout one's life.<sup>9</sup> In this context, *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng* exemplifies a form of non-formal learning that occurs through social interaction and experiential knowledge-sharing. Each oral narrative represents an uninterrupted learning process, imparting practical skills and evolving social values in tandem with societal changes.<sup>10</sup>

Sahlins further underscores that in traditional societies, knowledge is transmitted less through formal education and more through lived experience and socio-cultural continuity. In Lamakera, the *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng* tradition functions as a bridge connecting older and younger generations within a shared cultural framework. Despite modern transformations, the values within these narratives remain a relevant educational resource for understanding and interpreting the contemporary world.

<sup>5</sup> Sulaiman Mustafa Wuhdin and Afrida Deko Sega, "Peran Lembaga Adat Dalam Menerapkan Nilai-Nilai Adat Di Masyarakat Adat Lamakera: Studi Kasus Orang Tua Adat Suku Pito Di Lamakera," *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal* 7, no. 1 (2025): 650–68, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47467/reslaj.v7i1.5848>.

<sup>6</sup> Barnes, "Lamakera, Solor: Ethnographic Notes on a Muslim Whaling Village of Eastern Indonesia."

<sup>7</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture BT - The Interpretation of Cultures," *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973.

<sup>8</sup> Geertz, "The Interpretations of Cultures; Chapter 1," in *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> Noel F. McGinn, "Learning: The Treasure within: Report to Unesco of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century . Jacques Delors ,," *Comparative Education Review* 42, no. 2 (1998), <https://doi.org/10.1086/447500>.

<sup>10</sup>Maren Elfert, "UNESCO, the Faure Report, the Delors Report, and the Political Utopia of Lifelong Learning," *European Journal of Education* 50, no. 1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12104>.

The challenges confronting the Lamakera community in safeguarding their oral tradition are multifaceted. Globalization and modernization exert immense pressure, especially among the youth. While cultural leaders are actively striving to revive and protect this heritage, the obstacles are substantial. Thus, innovative strategies are urgently required to foster meaningful engagement among young people and reconnect them with the values embedded in their oral heritage.<sup>11</sup>

Current research suggests that community-based approaches integrating both formal and informal education, along with the use of digital technology to document and disseminate oral narratives, offer promising avenues for revitalization. In doing so, *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng* can not only endure as a vital element of cultural heritage but also continue to serve as a symbol of collective awareness and commitment to lifelong learning.

## METHOD

This study adopts a literature-based approach focusing on the *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah-Pehapeng* oral tradition in the Lamakera community, examining it as a symbolic expression of lifelong learning awareness. The literature review method was chosen to explore, examine, and analyze relevant sources pertaining to this oral tradition within the broader context of community-based education. The research is grounded in a qualitative methodology, employing a phenomenological-hermeneutic paradigm aimed at interpreting the meaning of oral traditions as educational media and as a reflection of communal consciousness toward lifelong learning.

The data were collected from a range of secondary sources, including books, peer-reviewed journals, scholarly articles, and other documents that discuss both the oral traditions of the Lamakera community and theoretical perspectives on education grounded in local wisdom. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, comprising the stages of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved the selection of information directly relevant to the research focus, while categorization was used to identify and group key emerging themes within the literature. Interpretation was guided by a hermeneutic approach, allowing for a deeper understanding of the symbolic meaning embedded in the *Waha Pledang Kotak/Kotah-Pehapeng* tradition as an instrument of lifelong learning.

The validity of the data was ensured through source triangulation, by comparing multiple references addressing similar topics to obtain a more comprehensive and credible understanding. Furthermore, source criticism was employed to assess the authenticity,

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<sup>11</sup>Sobhi Tawil et al., “Revisiting Learning the Treasure within: Assessing the Influence of the 1996 Delors Report,” *UNESCO Education Research and Foresight: Occasional Papers*, no. 4 (2013).

validity, and reliability of the materials used. Through this methodological approach, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of oral tradition as a component of community-based education and to enrich the discourse on lifelong learning rooted in indigenous knowledge systems.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Values Embedded in the Oral Tradition of *Kota Pehapeng–Waha Peledang*

The traditional concepts of *Waha Peledang* and *Kota Pehapeng* are deeply symbolic cultural elements within the Lamakera community in East Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. These elements not only represent physical activities central to the lives of fishermen but also embody a philosophy of life, work ethic, and the spirit of self-development passed down through generations. *Waha Peledang* refers to a rowing paddle used in navigating traditional fishing boats, while *Kota/Kotah Pehapeng* is a woven container made from *lontar* palm leaves used to store essential maritime tools. Together, they symbolize preparedness and skill, while also conveying deeper meanings of struggle, resilience, and hope.

Historically rooted in the Lamaholot cultural tradition, particularly in Lamakera, these concepts extend beyond their literal associations with seafaring. They also serve as metaphors for the community's commitment to overcoming ignorance and improving quality of life through education. The contribution of Allahu Yarham Kiyai Haji Abdussyukur Ibrahim Dasyi exemplifies this transformation, as he translated these traditional values into a grassroots educational movement. The founding of Pendidikan SUKUR (*Suara Kerkunanan Untuk Rakyat*) in 1942 stands as a testament to the community's efforts to combat illiteracy and backwardness, bringing the light of knowledge amid significant limitations.

Philosophically, *Waha Peledang* may be interpreted as a metaphorical pen - an instrument for inscribing knowledge and shaping historical consciousness - while *Kota/Kotah Pehapeng* serves as a symbol of the book, a repository of wisdom and life guidance. These two elements form a synergistic representation of the foundational role of knowledge and skill in advancing civilization. Paulo Freire's theory of education as a liberating force is particularly relevant in this context, wherein education becomes a tool for social transformation that empowers communities to interpret and reshape their realities.

From a socio-economic perspective, *Waha Peledang* and *Kota Pehapeng* reflect the lived experiences of Lamakera's fishing community. The act of fishing, often accompanied by prayers and spiritual chants, expresses profound religious devotion and reliance on divine providence. Verses such as "oleh go amak holo, holo pe lan landa ama alle tio rapa tuju, sina pita mata beee" illustrate the community's theological orientation, recognizing God as the ultimate source of sustenance. The hazardous nature of maritime livelihoods fosters values such as perseverance, patience, and solidarity – core components of the community's work ethic.

Normatively, the tradition of *Waha Peledang–Kota Pehapeng* is inspired by Qur'anic teachings such as QS. Al-Qasas [28]:77 and QS. Al-Jumu'ah, which emphasize industriousness and the pursuit of economic sufficiency, including clothing, food, shelter, and social obligations (*uma lamak / tanali-gelekat lawa tanah* – symbolic of mutual aid and communal welfare). Despite facing numerous socio-economic challenges, the Lamakera community remains committed to the ethic of labor and struggle as a means of survival and growth.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, these concepts underscore the vital role of family in sustaining the local economy. After the fishermen return with their catch, their wives typically engage in fish trading at traditional markets, forming a symbiotic relationship that supports household well-being. This division of labor aligns with feminist economic theory, which emphasizes women's contributions to both domestic and public spheres of the economy.<sup>13</sup>

Academically, the *Waha Peledang–Kota/ Kotah Pehapeng* tradition can be interpreted as an ethical movement aimed at promoting lifelong learning within the community. This ethical commitment draws inspiration from moral messages embedded in QS. Al-'Alaq [96]:1–5 and QS. Al-Mujadilah [58]:11, which encourage the pursuit of knowledge and elevate those engaged in education.<sup>14</sup> These teachings continue to serve as motivational imperatives for knowledge seekers and advocates of education within and beyond the Lamakera community.

The educational advancement of the Lamakera community serves as tangible evidence of the success of the *Waha Peledang* and *Kota Pehapeng* philosophy. Despite historically limited access to formal education, the community's persistent pursuit of knowledge has enabled successive generations to earn academic degrees, including bachelor's and doctoral qualifications. The role of local educational institutions – such as *Pendidikan SUKUR* and the network of madrasahs established with the support of influential local figures - has been instrumental in catalyzing this transformation.

State recognition of these educational institutions marked a significant milestone in Lamakera's educational history. The granting of state status to local madrasahs through the Minister of Religious Affairs Decree (*KMA: Keputusan Menteri Agama*) No. 535 of 2018 served as formal validation of the community's long-standing commitment to developing educational institutions rooted in Islamic values, local wisdom, and national identity. This policy not only strengthened the administrative legitimacy of the madrasahs but also

<sup>12</sup>Sippah Chotban, "Peran Istri Menafkahi Keluarga Perspektif Hukum Islam (Studi Kasus Di Lamakera Desa Motonwutun)," *Tesis*, 2017.

<sup>13</sup>R. H. Barnes, "Lamakera, Solor: Ethnographic Notes on a Muslim Whaling Village of Eastern Indonesia," *Anthropos* 91, no. 1–3 (1996).

<sup>14</sup>Muhammad Taisir, Ahmad Sanusi, and Ahmad Aprillah, "Integrating Khidmah and Tarbiyah : A Service-Learning Model in Indonesia 's Islamic Boarding School Education," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 2 (2025): 347–68, <https://doi.org/10.35723/ajie.v9i2.151>.

reaffirmed the strategic role of community-based education within Indonesia's national education system.

The enduring legacy of H. Abdusyukur Dasyi, a pioneering figure in Lamakera's educational movement, continues to resonate through the lives of his successors. As noted by H. Lukman Hakim, Abdusyukur's efforts to liberate the community from the tyranny of ignorance and poverty laid a strong foundation for future generations. His legacy lives on through the achievements of Lamakera's distinguished sons and daughters who have risen to prominence at the national level. These include political leaders such as Dr. H. Ali Taher Parasong and H. Ahmad Yohan, M.Si, as well as numerous scholars and academics contributing to the advancement of knowledge, such as Prof. Dr. H. Tahir Maloko, Dr. H. Abdul Malik Usman, Dr. Hj. Anisa Pedang, Dr. Alwan Suban, Dr. Mustakim Syahdan, Harun Al-Rasid Songge, MA, Ilyas Muhammad, MM, Fazlurahman Maloko, M.Pd, Dr. Umar Sulaiman, and Dr. Syaban H. Abdul Karim. Their contributions demonstrate that Lamakera has become an integral part of Indonesia's intellectual and educational development.

Their presence at intellectual and spiritual gatherings in Lewwo Tanah -specifically at Ra'a Nuru Rarang, or “the map to the future” - is not merely ceremonial or nostalgic. Rather, it symbolizes a “cultural and civilizational roadmap,” reflecting a collective commitment to illuminating society through knowledge. These individuals serve as beacons of enlightenment, reinforcing the community's intellectual ethos and inspiring younger generations to advance the nation through the synergy of intellect and faith.

In the Islamic worldview, knowledge (*'ilm*) is not merely the accumulation of information but is regarded as *nūr* (divine light) bestowed by Allah. As stated in Surah Al-Mulk [67]:14: "Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?"

This verse affirms that Allah is the ultimate source of all knowledge. It is only through His divine light that humans can perceive reality, uncover truth, and distinguish between right and wrong. This understanding is further reinforced in Surah An-Nūr [24]:35: "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...."

This verse underscores that all beneficial knowledge emanates from divine illumination. Those who seek knowledge with sincerity and with the intent of upholding truth are guided by Allah on their intellectual journey. Thus, the Lamakera scholars and educators represent living embodiments of this *nūr Ilāhī* (divine light) within their socio-religious context.

Accordingly, strengthening the tradition of scholarship in Lamakera is not merely an educational imperative, but also a spiritual endeavor - one that reconnects the bond between knowledge and faith, between intellectual rigor and heartfelt devotion to Allah, the Eternal Light. In this spirit, the youth of Lamakera are called not only to inherit knowledge but also to become its guardians and torchbearers of change. They are entrusted to embody and

disseminate this light of knowledge, anchoring civilization in both spiritual integrity and intellectual excellence.

As a life philosophy, *Waha Peledang* and *Kota Pehapeng* underscore the importance of honoring one's origins and maintaining a deep connection with the ancestral homeland, as encapsulated in the local maxim “*Lewo majja tana taping*” or “*Lewo sorong lodo, tana taping balik*” (roughly: “the village gives shelter, the land offers return”). This philosophy cultivates humility (*tawadhu*) and gratitude, while simultaneously promoting personal transformation and self-development.

Consequently, *Waha Peledang* and *Kota Pehapeng* are not merely cultural symbols; they constitute foundational frameworks for character formation, educational development, and social solidarity in Lamakera. These concepts resonate with modern theories of education and social development, while also representing a repository of indigenous wisdom that enriches the cultural heritage of the Indonesian archipelago.

The oral tradition of *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng*–*Waha Pledang* holds a central place in the social and educational life of the Lamakera community. It functions not merely as a form of entertainment but, more profoundly, as a vehicle for transmitting life values, moral principles, and spiritual teachings inherited across generations. As Clifford Geertz posits, culture is not limited to observable behavior but constitutes a system of symbols through which a society interprets its world. In this context, the *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng*–*Waha Pledang* tradition carries rich symbolic meaning, reflecting communal values, social responsibility, and cultural resilience amid change.<sup>15</sup>

This oral tradition serves as a potent mechanism for social transmission. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus is particularly relevant here, describing how societal values and dispositions are inculcated through repeated social practices.<sup>16</sup> In Lamakera, these oral narratives function as cultural capital passed down from one generation to the next, reinforcing community identity and solidarity. Bourdieu also emphasizes that cultural capital influences individuals' social positioning. In the case of *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng*–*Waha Pledang*, this transmission fosters individuals with a deep-rooted understanding of local norms and values, contributing to the reproduction of social cohesion.

From the perspective of communication sociology, this tradition aligns with Walter R. Fisher's narrative paradigm, which asserts that human beings are inherently “*homo narrans*” -

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<sup>15</sup>Geertz, “The Interpretations of Cultures; Chapter 1,” in *The Interpretations of Cultures*, 1973; Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture BT - The Interpretation of Cultures,” *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973.

<sup>16</sup>Pierre Bourdieu, “Pierre Bourdieu 1986 - The Forms of Capital,” *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, 1986; Hum Chan, “Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In: Richardson, J., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood: 241–58.,” *Teflin Journal* 29, no. 1 (2018).

storytelling creatures who make sense of the world through narrative.<sup>17</sup> The oral tradition of *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang* constructs a shared interpretive framework for the Lamakera community, reinforcing collective values and fostering strong social bonds. These intergenerational narratives also possess persuasive elements, shaping and sustaining the ethical and normative structure of communal life.

In relation to collective identity, Benedict Anderson's theory of *Imagined Communities* provides an additional lens. Anderson argues that community identity is constructed through shared narratives that are collectively imagined and internalized. In the case of *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang*, the stories conveyed are not merely entertaining but serve as a medium through which collective identity is formed and reaffirmed. By engaging with these shared narratives, the Lamakera community cultivates a sense of belonging and mutual attachment, strengthening social cohesion and communal values.<sup>18</sup>

Beyond its social and identity-based dimensions, the oral tradition of *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang* also possesses a profound spiritual dimension. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Weber argues that religious values play a critical role in shaping social ethics and behavior.<sup>19</sup> In the context of the Lamakera community, this oral tradition functions not only as a medium for moral education but also as a channel for transmitting spiritual teachings that emphasize the relationship between human beings, the divine, and the cosmos. This aligns with Weber's concept of the rationalization of religion, wherein belief systems serve as the foundation for broader social structures.

Emile Durkheim's perspective in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* further elucidates the social function of this tradition. Durkheim asserts that religious rituals and symbols act as social glue, reinforcing cohesion among community members.<sup>20</sup> The *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang* tradition, through its embedded stories and spiritual values, serves to foster a sense of communal solidarity and interpersonal attachment within Lamakera society. Thus,

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<sup>17</sup>Dell H. Hymes, "When Is Oral Narrative Poetry? Generative Form and Its Pragmatic Conditions," *Pragmatics. Quarterly Publication of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA)*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.8.4.01hym>.

<sup>18</sup>C. Farrer and C. D. Frith, "Experiencing Oneself vs Another Person as Being the Cause of an Action: The Neural Correlates of the Experience of Agency," *NeuroImage* 15, no. 3 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1006/nimg.2001.1009>.

<sup>19</sup>Max Weber, "Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology," in *Readings in Economic Sociology*, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470755679.ch3>; Max Weber, "Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology (an Excerpt)," *Ekonomicheskaya Sotsiologiya*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.17323/1726-3247-2018-3-68-78>.

<sup>20</sup>Andrew R. Atkinson, "Is Wilson's Religion Durkheim's, or Hobbes's Leviathan?," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 43, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40656-021-00375-w>; Steve Jones, "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man," in *Encyclopedia of New Media*, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412950657.n237>.

the tradition functions not only as an educational tool but also as a social instrument that sustains harmony and collective identity.

From the lens of linguistic anthropology, Dell Hymes in his concept of the Ethnography of Communication posits that communication is not merely the exchange of information, but a reflection of a society's cultural and social structure.<sup>21</sup> The oral tradition of *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng–Waha Pledang* demonstrates a unique communicative pattern embedded with ethical norms and social values passed down across generations. The narratives are conveyed not only through explicit messages but also through culturally embedded symbols that are understood within the Lamakera context, thus affirming the tradition's enduring relevance in everyday life.

In the field of education, this oral tradition also corresponds with Albert Bandura's theory of social learning, which asserts that individuals learn by observing and imitating social models in their environment.<sup>22</sup> Within the *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng–Waha Pledang* tradition, children and youth in Lamakera absorb moral and ethical values by listening to stories narrated by elders. This underscores the tradition's function as an informal yet effective pedagogical method for character development and moral instruction.

From the standpoint of cultural philosophy, Paul Ricoeur in *Time and Narrative*, emphasizes the central role of storytelling in shaping historical consciousness and communal identity.<sup>23</sup> The intergenerational transmission of narratives in Lamakera enables the community not only to recall their past but also to interpret their present social realities. In this sense, the *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng–Waha Pledang* tradition acts as a bridge linking history, identity, and collective values, making it an enduring cultural resource amid ongoing social transformations.

In conclusion, the *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng–Waha Pledang* oral tradition plays a complex and multidimensional role in the life of the Lamakera community. Far beyond entertainment, it serves as a mechanism for the construction of collective identity, the transmission of moral and social norms, and the reinforcement of spiritual consciousness.<sup>24</sup> Viewed through various theoretical lenses – sociological, anthropological, educational, and philosophical – the

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<sup>21</sup>Robert A. Hall and Walter J. Ong, "Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word," *Language* 60, no. 3 (1984), <https://doi.org/10.2307/414000>.

<sup>22</sup>Marion Blute, "Learning, Social Learning, and Sociocultural Evolution: A Comment on Langton," *American Journal of Sociology* 86, no. 6 (1981), <https://doi.org/10.1086/227390>; David M. Mayer et al., "How Low Does Ethical Leadership Flow? Test of a Trickle-down Model," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 108, no. 1 (2009): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2008.04.002>.

<sup>23</sup>Henry Venema, "Oneself as Another or Another as Oneself?," *Literature and Theology* 16, no. 4 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/16.4.410>.

<sup>24</sup>Erwin Padli et al., "Discourse Tradition and Religious Education: Islamic Educational Values In The Perang Timbung Cultural Practice," *Tafsir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (2025): 420–35, <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v6i2.1807>.

preservation of this tradition is essential for sustaining social harmony and cultural continuity in the face of intensifying modernization.

### **Challenges to Preserving Oral Traditions Amidst Modernization**

Oral traditions play a vital role in shaping cultural identity and the social character of communities. However, within the broader context of modernization and globalization, the oral tradition of the Lamakera community faces significant challenges, particularly in sustaining its relevance amidst rapid social transformation. One of the most evident impacts is the generational shift in interest, where younger individuals increasingly gravitate toward digital technologies and globalized cultures, rather than the local traditions passed down through generations. This phenomenon is not unique to Lamakera but is also observable across numerous traditional communities worldwide.

As Manuel Castells highlights in *The Rise of the Network Society*, globalization and the advancement of information technology have given rise to more complex, network-based social structures.<sup>25</sup> Human interactions are now heavily mediated by digital technologies, which has marginalized cultural practices that rely on direct interpersonal engagement - such as the *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang* oral tradition in Lamakera. Younger generations tend to favor faster, more immediate sources of information, such as the internet and social media, over traditional methods that require time and active communal participation.

Economic restructuring has further accelerated the erosion of traditional cultural values. Historically, the Lamakera community relied heavily on subsistence agriculture and maritime activities, both of which were deeply intertwined with customary laws and oral traditions. However, with the growing prominence of industrial and commercial economies, the community's focus has shifted toward financially lucrative sectors. This shift has reduced the time and opportunities available for participating in traditional cultural practices. As Arjun Appadurai argues in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, modernization redirects societal orientation from localized communal systems to individuals more integrated into global economic networks – subsequently reshaping patterns of social and cultural interaction.<sup>26</sup>

Robertson's concept of glocalization, as articulated in *Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity*, is also relevant to understanding this phenomenon. He posits that globalization does not entirely displace local cultures but rather fosters a dynamic of negotiation and adaptation between traditional values and modern influences. In Lamakera,

<sup>25</sup>Malcolm Griffith, Earl Seidman, and Marshall McLuhan, "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man," *College Composition and Communication* 19, no. 1 (1968), <https://doi.org/10.2307/355246>; Amy Young Evrard, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781912128990>.

<sup>26</sup>Amy Young Evrard, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781912128990>.

this is evidenced by the efforts of certain individuals and groups to preserve oral traditions through digital means, such as recording folktales or disseminating them via social media platforms. However, while commendable, these initiatives fall short of replicating the immersive, interpersonal experiences offered by traditional oral transmission.

According to Bahrudin Mukin (interview), during the 1970s and 1980s, Lamakera's maritime practices were still dominated by small and medium-sized traditional boats, including manually rowed canoes. However, by the 1990s and into the 2000s, the community began transitioning to motorized fishing vessels. Despite this shift, traditional equipment such as the waha (paddle) continued to be preserved, reflecting a hybrid adaptation to modern technologies.

Rapid social change also influences how communities perceive the value of traditional knowledge. Pierre Bourdieu, through his concepts of *habitus* and cultural capital, explains that community norms and values are deeply shaped by existing social structures.<sup>27</sup> In societies undergoing swift transformation, previously esteemed cultural capital - such as mastery of oral storytelling - may lose both its symbolic and economic significance. Consequently, younger generations often choose to invest their time and energy in acquiring skills deemed more relevant to the demands of the modern economy, rather than learning oral traditions that offer no immediate material benefit.

In his seminal work *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, Ong explains that the transition from oral to literate and, subsequently, to digital cultures fundamentally alters the way humans communicate and transmit knowledge. Oral cultures emphasize collective memory and face-to-face interaction, while written and digital cultures prioritize efficiency, storage, and accessibility.<sup>28</sup> As the Lamakera community becomes increasingly exposed to digital technologies, new modes of accessing and disseminating information have emerged – gradually pushing oral traditions such as *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng*—*Waha Pledang* to the periphery of cultural life.

Hamka observed that contemporary social transformation is virtually unstoppable, driven by the rapid advancement of science and technology across all spheres of life. This reality, both directly and indirectly, reshapes patterns of thought, social interaction, and everyday practices – even within traditional communities like Lamakera. Modern

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<sup>27</sup>Rifat Mahbub, “From Gender-Not-an-Issue to Gender Is the Issue: The Educational and Migrational Pathways of Middle-Class Women Moving from Urban Bangladesh to Britain,” *Gender and Education* 27, no. 7 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2015.1096919>.

<sup>28</sup>Robert Hauptman and Walter J. Ong, “Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,” *World Literature Today* 57, no. 4 (1983), <https://doi.org/10.2307/40139364>; Paul Trainor, “Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word. By Walter Ong,” *The Modern Schoolman* 62, no. 1 (1984), <https://doi.org/10.5840/schoolman198462116>.

technologies are no longer foreign; they have permeated both domestic and public spaces, presenting not only challenges but also new opportunities.

Digital communication tools such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media platforms have evolved beyond entertainment to become essential instruments for community interaction – on land and at sea. For coastal communities like Lamakera, real-time access to maritime conditions through digital platforms enhances both safety and efficiency in fishing activities. In this context, technology becomes a strategic mediator in human-environment relations and a critical resource in supporting community adaptability to modern changes.

What is particularly noteworthy, however, is that technological advancement does not necessarily erode the deep-rooted traditions of the community. Customs such as exchanging greetings, maintaining respectful communication, and upholding ethical values persist – both online and in face-to-face encounters. This phenomenon illustrates the community's capacity to negotiate intelligently between tradition and modernity without losing its cultural identity.

From the perspective of Islamic social sciences and education, such negotiation can be seen as a manifestation of resilient local wisdom – the ability of a community to transform adaptively without disconnecting from its core values. Tradition, in this view, is not a fossilized relic of the past, but a living entity that continually interacts with contemporary realities. Practices such as greeting one another – whether in person or digitally – not only sustain social bonds (*ukhuwah*) but also serve as a medium for transmitting values, spirituality, and moral teachings amid an increasingly individualistic era.

Nonetheless, critical reflection is necessary to assess how effectively technology is being used to strengthen social cohesion and communicative civility. Digital media can be a double-edged sword – on one hand, facilitating communication, but on the other, potentially fostering emotional detachment, disinformation, and value erosion if not guided by ethical awareness. In this regard, both formal and non-formal education must function as moderating agents, instilling digital literacy, communication ethics, and cultural consciousness in the use of technology.

Hence, the Lamakera community exemplifies the possibility of meaningful integration between traditional values and technological advancement. Technology, in this context, is best understood as a *wasilah* (means), *not a ghayab* (end), in social and religious life. The persistence of the greeting tradition amid the digital era demonstrates that robust cultural values can endure - and even thrive - when paired with critical awareness and collective commitment to view technological progress as a tool for preserving, rather than replacing, ancestral wisdom.

Despite significant challenges, the oral tradition is not destined for extinction. Various strategies can be implemented to ensure its sustainability amidst globalization. One promising

approach is the integration of local wisdom into educational practices, whereby oral traditions are not only transmitted informally within families and communities but also formally incorporated into the school curriculum. As Tilaar suggests in *Multikulturalisme: Tantangan-tantangan Global Masa Depan dalam Transformasi Pendidikan Nasional*, culture-based education offers an effective strategy for safeguarding tradition in times of rapid transformation.<sup>29</sup>

Active engagement of younger generations in the revitalization of oral traditions through digital media presents an increasingly viable and effective strategy. For instance, the creation of digital documentation in audio and video formats, as well as the dissemination of folktales via social media platforms, offers a more appealing and accessible medium for youth to reconnect with their cultural heritage. This approach aligns with the concept of digital storytelling as articulated by Lambert, wherein technology serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a powerful means of reinforcing cultural identity and cultivating awareness of intangible heritage.<sup>30</sup>

In the policy domain, the role of governments and cultural institutions is vital in supporting oral tradition preservation. Initiatives such as community-based cultural preservation programs, research and documentation support, and the inclusion of local traditions in national and international cultural forums are essential in raising public awareness of the significance of safeguarding intangible heritage. As affirmed by UNESCO in its Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the protection of intangible cultural assets requires active collaboration among governments, local communities, and other key stakeholders.

Overall, the oral traditions of Lamakera face considerable pressures in the era of globalization, particularly due to rapid social, economic, and technological transformations. However, with appropriate strategies – such as integrating local wisdom into educational practices, utilizing digital technologies for preservation, and securing multi-stakeholder support – these traditions can not only survive but also evolve within modern contexts. Consequently, the preservation of oral traditions must be pursued strategically and sustainably to ensure their continued relevance for future generations.

### **Community-Based Strategies for Preserving Oral Traditions in Lamakera**

The *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang* oral tradition in Lamakera constitutes a rich cultural legacy passed down through generations. It functions not only as a medium for

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<sup>29</sup>I Gede Arya Juni Arta, “Digitalisasi Pendidikan: Dilematisasi Dan Dehumanisasi Dalam Pembelajaran Daring Perspektif Filsafat Paulo Friere,” *Prosiding Seminar Nasional LAHN-TP Palangka Raya*, no. 3 (2021).

<sup>30</sup>Joe Lambert, *Digital Storytelling Capturing Lives, Creating Community 4th Edition*, Routledge, vol. 19, 2013; Birgit Hertzberg Kaare, “The Self and the Institution. The Transformation of a Narrative Genre,” *Nordicom Review* 33, no. 2 (2012).

transmitting ethical and spiritual values but also as a marker of the community's collective identity. Despite the growing pressures of modernization, globalization, and social change, the people of Lamakera remain committed to safeguarding this cultural heritage.

One of the primary strategies employed involves the organization of traditional ceremonies and cultural festivals that actively engage younger generations. These events serve both educational and recreational purposes, where elders and traditional leaders act as cultural educators by delivering lectures or narrating ancestral stories embedded within the oral tradition. The goal is to reintroduce cultural values to the youth while demonstrating the relevance of these traditions in contemporary life. As Ong, emphasizes, oral tradition functions not merely as a vehicle for transmitting information but as a mechanism for reinforcing social cohesion in communities that rely on it.<sup>31</sup>

In response to technological developments, a number of young cultural advocates have begun to digitally document oral narratives. These efforts involve recording stories and distributing them through platforms such as YouTube, social media, and podcasts. This digital approach enables these stories to reach broader audiences while enhancing the cultural relevance of oral traditions in the digital age. This initiative aligns with Albert Bandura's, theory of social learning, which posits that individuals acquire knowledge and behavior through observation and modeling.<sup>32</sup> In this context, digital storytelling models offer youth the opportunity to remain connected to their cultural values even in the absence of direct face-to-face interaction with traditional elders.

This approach aligns closely with UNESCO's *Delors Report*, which emphasizes the integration of tradition with lifelong learning within global and modern contexts.<sup>33</sup> The report identifies four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. The digital documentation of the *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waha Pledang* oral tradition reflects these pillars, allowing younger generations not only to learn about their cultural heritage but also to apply its values meaningfully in their daily lives.

Jan Vansina, underscores that oral tradition plays a critical role in shaping social identity and connecting individuals to their collective history.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the disappearance of oral

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<sup>31</sup>Robert A. Hall and Walter J. Ong, "Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word," *Language* 60, no. 3 (1984), <https://doi.org/10.2307/414000>.

<sup>32</sup>David M. Mayer et al., "How Low Does Ethical Leadership Flow? Test of a Trickle-down Model," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 108, no. 1 (2009): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2008.04.002>; Marion Blute, "Learning, Social Learning, and Sociocultural Evolution: A Comment on Langton," *American Journal of Sociology* 86, no. 6 (1981), <https://doi.org/10.1086/227390>.

<sup>33</sup>Maren Elfert, "UNESCO, the Faure Report, the Delors Report, and the Political Utopia of Lifelong Learning," *European Journal of Education* 50, no. 1 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12104>.

<sup>34</sup> Robin Law, "Oral Tradition as History," in *Writing and Africa*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315505176-10>.

traditions does not simply signify the loss of stories or narratives, but also the erosion of a community's cultural roots. In this sense, efforts by the Lamakera community to preserve oral traditions represent not only cultural conservation but also a proactive reconstruction of social identity.

Nonetheless, such efforts face considerable challenges. One significant challenge is the shifting patterns of communication in modern societies. As digital technologies proliferate, younger generations increasingly prefer fast, multimedia information channels. As McLuhan asserts in his media theory, "the medium is the message," suggesting that if oral traditions are not adapted to media formats that align with contemporary preferences, the values they carry may risk marginalization.<sup>35</sup>

Another challenge lies in the inherent volatility of digital platforms. Algorithms that govern content visibility are constantly evolving and may inadvertently limit the reach and impact of cultural content. This instability underscores the need for a hybrid approach – combining digital innovation with conventional methods such as intergenerational storytelling within families and community gatherings.

To further strengthen preservation efforts, active involvement from multiple stakeholders is essential. Governments can support preservation initiatives through policy development and grant funding; academics can contribute through empirical research on the significance of oral traditions in contemporary society; and civil society actors – including cultural communities and NGOs – can serve as facilitators ensuring the continuity of these practices.

Despite these challenges, the Lamakera community continues to demonstrate cultural resilience through innovative efforts to safeguard the *Kotak/Kotah Pehapeng-Waba Pledang* oral tradition. The combination of traditional and digital strategies presents an effective model for ensuring cultural sustainability in the face of modern dynamics. As Hall, affirms, cultural identity is not fixed but evolves in response to changing social contexts – thereby validating Lamakera's adaptive strategies in preserving their heritage.<sup>36</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The oral tradition within the Lamakera community plays a vital role in transmitting educational values across generations. Through stories, advice, and ancestral wisdom passed down orally, individuals are taught resilience in the face of social, economic, and environmental challenges. These values of perseverance and adaptability provide a

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<sup>35</sup>Malcolm Griffith, Earl Seidman, and Marshall McLuhan, "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man," *College Composition and Communication* 19, no. 1 (1968), <https://doi.org/10.2307/355246>.

<sup>36</sup>Stuart Hall, "Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices Spectacle of the Other," *Sage Publication*, 1997.

foundational framework for engaging with change while maintaining cultural integrity and identity.

In addition to fostering resilience, oral traditions preserve and transmit ancestral wisdom to younger generations. This wisdom includes deep ecological knowledge, customary law, and ethical principles that guide social interactions. The moral dimensions embedded in these narratives serve as a compass for responsible decision-making, promoting social harmony and reinforcing interpersonal relationships within the community.

Collaboration emerges as another central value conveyed through oral tradition. The stories emphasize that success is not an individual pursuit, but one achieved through cooperation and mutual support. This reinforces solidarity and collective strength, equipping the community to navigate adversity with unity.

Thus, oral tradition in Lamakera is not merely a cultural artifact but an enduring educational medium that instills resilience, wisdom, and cooperation. Through this tradition, the community not only preserves its cultural identity but also shapes morally grounded and socially resilient individuals equipped to thrive within and beyond their local context.

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