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The *Hudoq Kita'*: A Contemporary Reinterpretation of Dayak Kenyah Cosmology in Light of Islamic Legal and Theological Perspectives

Abstract: This study aims to reinterpret the cosmology of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as an embodied theology within the lived experience of the Dayak Kenyah community, while also examining its relevance from the perspectives of Islamic law and theology in the contemporary era. To date, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance has generally been understood as a symbolic-cultural ritual, whereas its theological and normative dimensions—particularly in dialogue with Islamic tradition—have received limited systematic scholarly attention. Employing a qualitative methodology, this research adopts ethnographic and normative-theological approaches. Data were collected through literature review, visual documentation analysis, and symbolic interpretation of movement patterns, masks, and ritual structures in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance. The analysis integrates Dayak Kenyah cosmology with Islamic theological frameworks, particularly concepts regarding the relationships among humans and God, nature, and the social community. The findings indicate that the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance represents a cosmological worldview that emphasizes ecological harmony, collective responsibility, and spiritual consciousness as foundational elements of social life. These values resonate with the principles of *tawhīd rubūbiyyah*, the concept of *khalīfah fī al-ard*, and environmental ethics within Islamic theology. From the perspective of Islamic law, the practice of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance may be understood as an expression of local wisdom that does not contradict the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), provided that it is interpreted symbolically and contextually and does not involve elements of *shirk* or violations of fundamental creedal principles. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to expanding culturally grounded scholarship in Islamic law and theology, strengthening dialogical approaches between Islam and indigenous traditions, and offering a conceptual framework for the development of an inclusive, contextually grounded cultural fiqh in Indonesia.

Keywords: Dayak Kenyah; Embodied Theology; *Hudoq Kita'*; Islamic Theology; Local Wisdom.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity in Indonesia not only represents the richness of ethnic identity but also reflects how society understands the relationship among humans, nature, and the Transcendent. In the context of indigenous peoples, religious expression is often not expressed in written theological doctrine but is embodied in ritual practices, performing arts, and cosmological symbols that live in everyday life. One of these expressions is the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance, which has developed within the Dayak Kenyah community's tradition. This dance is not only staged as cultural heritage but also functions as a spiritual medium that articulates the hopes, prayers, and cosmological awareness of indigenous peoples regarding the balance of life.¹

Historically, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is closely related to the agrarian rites and life cycle of the Dayak Kenyah people. The masks used, the repetitive dance movements, and the timing of their implementation reflect a cosmological view that places nature as a sacred space that must be kept in balance. In practice, this dance is a collective means of affirming the harmonious relationship among humans, the environment, and the transcendent forces believed to give life.² However, in contemporary Indonesia, which is increasingly plural and religious, the meaning of cultural practices such as the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is often ambiguous. On the one hand, it is celebrated as a national cultural treasure; on the other hand, it is often questioned in religious discourse, especially from the perspective of Islamic theology and law, which often harbors suspicion of customary-based ritual practices.

The main problem that arises is the tendency to read dichotomously between customs and religion. Local cultural practices are often understood as entities that stand outside, and even contradict, the normative framework of Islam.³ As a result, traditions such as the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance are judged solely as pre-Islamic rites or remnants of local beliefs to be shunned, without any effort to understand their symbolic meaning and ethical

¹ Jesita Trisnawati, Syakir Muharrar, and Eko Sugiarto, 'The Hudoq Mask Works Potential as a Source of Learning and Moral Based Local Wisdom of Dayak Bahau Busang Tribe', *The International Journal of Politics and Sociology Research* 10, no. 4 (March 2023): 176-193, <https://doi.org/10.35335/ijopsor.v10i4.88>.

² Nur Hikmah Yanti, 'Makna Simbolik Topeng Tarian Hudoq Pada Upacara Panen Masyarakat Suku Dayak', *Imaji: Jurnal Seni Dan Pendidikan Seni* 17, no. 1 (June 2019): 13-26, <https://doi.org/10.21831/imaji.v17i1.25728>.

³ Muhammad Shuhufi and Arip Purkon, 'Harmonization of Islamic Law and Local Culture: A Study of Indonesian Sundanese Ethnic Culture', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 21, no. 1 (June 2023): 138-153, <https://doi.org/10.30984/jis.v21i1.1870>.

value. This kind of reading pattern not only simplifies the cultural complexity of indigenous peoples, but also closes the space for dialogue between Islam and local wisdom that has actually coexisted for a long time in the archipelago.

Several previous studies have indeed made important contributions to understanding the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance and Dayak Kenyah cosmology. First, anthropological studies that treat the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as a symbol of agrarian cosmology emphasize its role in maintaining the balance of nature and in fostering social solidarity among indigenous peoples.⁴ This kind of study has shown that Hudoq is not just a performing art but part of a belief system integrated into society's lifestyle. However, such research generally stops at ethnographic descriptions and has not developed a reflective theological reading, especially in the context of interfaith dialogue. Second, the study focusing on the aesthetic and perperative aspects of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance highlights the visual richness, mask symbols, and gesture dynamics as a cultural language.⁵ This approach enriches the understanding of symbolic meaning in Dayak Kenyah performing arts, but tends to separate the aesthetic dimension from the normative and religious frameworks. As a result, the theological values that may be contained in the expression of the body and the collective rites have not been fully revealed.

Third, research on the relationship between Islam and local culture in Indonesia is generally conducted within a normative-fiqhi framework.⁶ The primary focus of this study is on determining the boundaries between acceptable and rejected customary practices based on the categories of halal, haram, *bid'ah*, and *shirk*. While important, this approach often leaves little room for conceptual dialogue with the cosmology of certain indigenous peoples, including Dayak Kenyah. Local traditions are more often judged from the outside than understood through the religious experience of the supporting community. Thus, there remains a significant gap in the study: the lack of research that integrates the

⁴ Nur Robbaniyah et al., 'Identity and Diversity in the Hudoq Dance: A Review of Religious Moderation Based on Ancestral Heritage Among the Dayak Tribe', *An-Nida'* 47, no. 1 (July 2023): 38-54, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v47i1.25321>.

⁵ Fauzia Latif, 'Tarian Dan Topeng Hudoq Kalimantan Timur: Suatu Kajian Filsafat Seni', *Humaniora* 4, no. 1 (April 2013): 712-22, <https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v4i1.3481>.

⁶ Firda Arina Zulfa et al., 'Mapping Contemporary Islamic Legal Thought In Indonesia: A Dialog Between Fiqh and the Culture of the Archipelago', *AlMawarid Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum (JSYH)* 7, no. 1 (March 2025): 177-202, <https://doi.org/10.20885/mawarid.vol7.iss1.art10>.

cosmology of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance with the perspective of Islamic theology and law in a dialogical, contextual manner.

Departing from the research gap, this research offers a different approach. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to reinterpret the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as a form of embodied theology, which is an understanding of theology that is not only expressed through texts and doctrines, but also through the body, rites, and social practices. With this approach, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is understood as a theological medium that contains awareness of human connection with nature and the Transcendent. Furthermore, this research places this meaning in dialogue with Islamic theology and law, primarily through the concepts of monotheism, *khalīfah fī al-ard*, and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.

Instead of judging the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance in black-and-white, as a matter of allowing or not, this study seeks to read the symbolic meanings and ethical values that underlie the practice. This approach allows Islamic law and theology to function more contextually, not solely as normative instruments, but also as an ethical framework capable of dialogue with the cultural realities of indigenous peoples. Thus, Islam is not seen as a force that negates local traditions, but rather as a perspective that can enrich understanding of cultural wisdom. Based on this framework, the central question of this research is formulated as follows: how can the cosmology of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance be understood as a form of theology incarnated in the Dayak Kenyah society, and to what extent is the practice relevant in the perspective of Islamic law and theology in the contemporary era? This question serves as an entry point for critically examining the relationship among customs, theology, and Islamic law in a pluralistic society.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach to examine the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as a cultural practice rich in theological and cosmological meaning for the Dayak Kenyah people. An ethnographic approach was chosen to read this dance as a living, collectively experienced religious expression rather than simply as a performing art object.⁷ At the same time, a normative-theological approach is used to place such meaning

⁷ Burhan Bungin, *Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2003).

in dialogue with Islamic law and theology.⁸ The research data is sourced from visual documentation of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance, ethnographic and descriptive records on the context of ritual implementation, and relevant library sources, including books, journal articles, and scientific works that discuss Dayak cosmology, cultural theology, and Islamic law.

The data analysis process was carried out in an interpretive and thematic manner by tracing the symbolic meaning contained in the elements of dance movements, masks, rites, and accompanying social relations. The data collected is reduced and categorized based on key cosmological themes, such as man's relationship with nature, spiritual awareness, and collective responsibility. Furthermore, the findings were analyzed through a conceptual dialogue with the framework of Islamic theology and law, especially the concepts of monotheism, *khalīfah fī al-ard*, and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. To maintain data validity, this study employs triangulation of sources and theories, as well as cross-disciplinary reading.⁹ Through this approach, the research is expected to produce a complete and contextual understanding of the position of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance within the legal, theological, and cultural landscape of contemporary Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as an Expression of Cosmology and Incarnate Theology

The results of this study confirm that the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance cannot be reduced to merely an art performance or a traditional rite of folklore. Such a meaning risks placing the cultural practices of the Dayak Kenyah people in a superficial, independent position, divorced from the spiritual context that surrounds them. The *Hudoq Kita'* dance, as lived and practiced in its community, is a cosmology embodied in the collective body, movement, and rites. It presents a worldview that does not separate the sacred from the profane, man from nature, or social practice from spiritual consciousness.¹⁰

⁸ Muhammad Hasan, Dahlia Haliah Ma'u, and Muallimin Mochammad Sahid, 'Inheritance Property Distribution Models Among the Muslim Community of Borneo-Nusantara', *Al'Adalah* 21, no. 1 (June 2024): 175-198, <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v21i1.22310>.

⁹ Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif : Buku Sumber Tentang Metode Metode Baru* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 2014).

¹⁰ Ester Kezia, Yovi Irvan Vivian, and Saferi Yohana, 'Pertunjukan Udoq (Hudoq Kiba): Strategi Keberlanjutan Budaya Dayak Kenyah Oleh Masyarakat Desa Budaya Sungai Bawang', *Ilmu Budaya: Jurnal*

The main elements in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance, such as the use of masks with shapes that resemble natural creatures, repetitive and rhythmic dance movements, and their attachment to the cycles of seasons and agriculture, are not neutral aesthetic elements. These elements represent the cosmological view of the Dayak Kenyah people, who position humans as an integral part of the cosmic order. In this cosmology, nature is not understood as an inanimate object to be exploited, but rather as a living entity with a spiritual and moral dimension. Human relations with nature are built on the principles of balance, interdependence, and ethical responsibility.¹¹

The collective dance moves reflect the belief that survival is not determined solely by the individual, but by the harmony among humans, nature, and transcendent forces. The repetition of motion is not a void of meaning, but rather a symbol of the continuity of life and cosmic order. In this context, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance serves as a ritual space in which people collectively "present" the ideal cosmic order while affirming their place within it.¹²

When read through the lens of embodied theology, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance shows that theological experience is not always expressed in the form of intellectual reflection or doctrinal formulation. Rather, theology is present and lived through the body, movement, and repetitive social practices. The dancer's body is the primary medium for expressing a relationship with the Transcendent. Through a moving body, the Dayak Kenyah people affirm their existence as beings that are inseparable from nature and the spiritual forces that surround it.¹³

In this perspective, the body is not understood as a purely biological entity, but rather as a symbolic space full of meaning. The gestures of the *Hudoq* dancers became a

Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, Dan Budaya 9, no. 3 (December 2025): 181-192, <https://doi.org/10.30872/jbssb.v9i3.22984>.

¹¹ Elvis Deventus Geroda and Edelweis Puti Prima, 'Komunikasi Simbolik dalam Upacara Ritual Hudoq Suku Dayak Bahau Umaq Luhut Desa Kelian Luar Kabupaten Kutai Barat Kalimantan Timur', *DIGICOM: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Media* 4, no. 1 (September 2024): 23-39, <https://doi.org/10.37826/digicom.v4i1.768>.

¹² Tri Indrahastuti et al., 'Integrating Ki Hajar Dewantara's Philosophical Values and Islamic Legal Principles in the Hudoq Kita Dance Tradition', *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 29, no. 2 (December 2025): 285-292, <https://doi.org/10.29300/madania.v29i2.9221>.

¹³ Agustinus Masterinus Laka Meko and Nani Indah Lestari, 'Religiusitas Tradisi Hudoq - Dayak Bahau dan Krisis Ekologis dalam Perspektif Laudato Si', *Perspektif* 17, no. 2 (December 2022): 183-196, <https://doi.org/10.69621/jpf.v17i2.166>.

theological language that conveyed messages of connectedness, balance, and obedience to the cosmic order. The *Hudoq* mask, which is often misinterpreted as a mere mystical symbol, actually serves as a visual representation of the relationship between humans and the non-human world. It is a reminder that human life is always on a broader network of relationships, beyond the boundaries of individuality. The ritual space where the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is performed is also not neutral. The space becomes a sacred arena where the boundary between the mundane and the transcendent becomes fluid. In this space, people not only watch or participate physically, but also experience a collective spiritual encounter. Thus, ritual spaces can be understood as "living texts" that store and transmit theological values across generations. Theology, in this sense, is not written or codified, but is inherited through shared experiences that are constantly repeated and interpreted.¹⁴

These findings reinforce the view that the religious practices of indigenous peoples have their own theological rationality. Such rationality may not be articulated in conceptual language as the formal theological tradition, but it still has a coherent and profound structure of meaning. The symbolic language used in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is not irrational, but rather another way of expressing religious experiences. Symbols, rites, and gestures become means of connecting human experience directly and contextually with transcendent reality. In this context, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance reflects a form of spirituality that is praxis. Religious values are not taught through lectures or normative texts, but are lived through collective actions involving the body, emotions, and social consciousness. This kind of spirituality emphasizes the importance of active involvement in maintaining the balance of life, both with nature and with fellow humans. In other words, religiosity does not stop at internal beliefs; it manifests in concrete actions that impact social and ecological life.

An incarnate theological approach helps see that practices such as the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance are not a residue of "pre-religious" beliefs to be abandoned, but rather a form of religious expression born of a particular social and ecological context. He points out that man is always looking for ways to make sense of his existence in a complex world, and that

¹⁴ Otovianus Oscar, Muhammad Ibnu Sa'ad, and Jundro Daud Hasiholan, 'Pengenalan Tarian Adat Dayak Hudoq Melalui Media Virtual Reality Untuk Pelestarian Budaya', *Bulletin of Information Technology (BIT)* 6, no. 4 (December 2025): 391-396, <https://doi.org/10.47065/bit.v7i1.2338>.

this search does not always take the same form as established theological traditions. In this case, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is an example of how theology can be firmly rooted in people's life experiences, without losing its spiritual depth.¹⁵

Furthermore, understanding the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as an incarnate theology opens up a broader space for reflection on how to read the cultural practices of indigenous peoples. Rather than judging it by rigid normative criteria, this approach invites us to understand meaning from within, paying attention to the symbolic context and religious experience that surrounds it. In this way, cultural practices are no longer positioned as the "other" of religion, but as one of the legitimate forms of religious articulation in a given social context. The reading of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as an expression of cosmology and incarnate theology confirms that the relationship between culture and spirituality is dynamic and mutually forming. This dance not only sustains the Dayak Kenyah tradition but also serves as a medium for theological reflection, remaining relevant in addressing the challenges of the times. In a modern world marked by ecological crises and social fragmentation, the values of balance, collective responsibility, and cosmic consciousness embodied in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance offer important lessons on a more ethical and sustainable way of living.

Table 1. *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as an Expression of Cosmology and Theology Incarnated by the Dayak Kenyah Community

| Analysis Aspect | Key Findings | Cosmological Meaning | Implications of Incarnate Theology |
|-----------------|---|--|---|
| Dance Form | Repetitive, rhythmic, and collective movement | Demonstrate the order and continuity of the cosmic order | Theology is lived through the body and collective action, not verbal doctrine |
| Hudoq Mask | Representations of natural beings and non-human symbols | Affirming man's relationship with nature and the spiritual world | The mask serves as a theological symbol, not an object of worship |
| Dancer's Body | The body becomes the primary medium of ritual | The body is positioned as part of the cosmos | The body becomes the "living text" of the |

¹⁵ Elvis Deventus Geroda and Edelweis Puti Prima, 'Komunikasi Simbolik dalam Upacara Ritual Hudoq Suku Dayak Bahau Umaq Luhut Desa Kelian Luar Kabupaten Kutai Barat Kalimantan Timur', *DIGICOM: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Media* 4, no. 1 (September 2024): 23-39, <https://doi.org/10.37826/digicom.v4i1.768>.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | conveyor of the theological message. |
| Ritual Room | Traditional spaces are sacred and communal | The profan–sacred boundary is fluid | The ritual space becomes the locus of encounter with the Transcendent |
| Relationship with Nature | Dances related to the cycle of nature and agriculture | Nature is understood as a living and moral entity | Contains ecological ethics and spiritual responsibility |
| Social Dimension | Done collectively by the community | Affirming solidarity and shared responsibility | Spirituality is praxis and social |
| Forms of Theology | Not textually or doctrinally based | Theology is present in symbols and rites | Embodied <i>theology concept</i> |
| Value Orientation | Balance, harmony, sustainability | Maintaining the cosmic and social order | Theology serves as an ethical guide to life |

Source: Author's Interpretation

The table summarizes analytically how the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance functions as an expression of cosmology and theology incarnated in the lives of the Dayak Kenyah people. Every aspect—from dance forms, masks, dancers' bodies, to ritual spaces—shows that theological meaning is not articulated through normative doctrines or texts, but instead lived through bodily experience and collective practice. The relationship between humans and nature depicted in this dance affirms the cosmological view of nature as a moral living entity while reflecting ecological ethics and social responsibility. Thus, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance can be understood as a "living text" that brings together the symbolic, social, and spiritual dimensions and shows how theology works in practice within local cultures, rather than as a conceptual system separate from the daily experiences of indigenous peoples.

The *Hudoq Kita'* Cosmological Dialogue with Islamic Theology

When read through the lens of Islamic theology, the cosmology articulated in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance reveals a rich and complex space of dialogue between the local Dayak Kenyah tradition and Islamic values. This dance does not simply function as an aesthetic expression or cultural ritual, but rather as a symbolic medium that represents people's perspectives on the relationships among humans, nature, and transcendent forces. In this context, *Hudoq Kita'* can be understood as a cultural text that contains cosmology, ethics, and spirituality that is alive and inherited collectively. When this cultural text is approached

dialogically with Islamic theology, several conceptual points emerge, showing that the encounter between religion and local culture is not always antagonistic but can enrich both.¹⁶

One of the main points of convergence lies in the principle of cosmic balance and the harmonious relationship between man and nature.¹⁷ In Dayak Kenyah cosmology, nature is not treated as an inanimate object to be freely exploited, but as a sacred, meaningful living space with a close relationship to human life. Nature is understood as an entity that must be respected, maintained, and treated ethically because human survival depends so much on it. This view resonates strongly with the concept of *tauḥīd rubūbiyyah* in Islamic theology, which affirms that all creation is in a single divine order, created, regulated, and maintained by Allah. In this framework, the universe is not a stand-alone reality but rather part of a cosmic system subject to God's will.¹⁸

In Islam, nature is understood as *āyāt kauniyyah*, the signs of God's greatness that stretch throughout the universe.¹⁹ Nature not only has an ecological function but also a theological and moral function, because through nature humans are invited to reflect, know God, and organize their lives responsibly. This meaning aligns with the Dayak Kenyah cosmological view, which sees nature as a sacred space that conveys ethical messages about order, balance, and sustainability. Thus, despite being born out of different symbolic traditions and languages, both Islamic theology and *Hudoq Kita'* cosmology place nature in a spiritually meaningful position.²⁰

¹⁶ Desi Daria Asung, Dahri Dahlan, and Purwanti Purwanti, 'Religiositas Dalam Mitos Upacara Adat Hudoq Dayak Bahau di Ujoh Bilang Kecamatan Long Bagun Kabupaten Mahulu', *Ilmu Budaya: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya* 3, no. 4 (September 2019): 430-441, <https://doi.org/10.30872/jbssb.v3i4.2178>.

¹⁷ Muchimah et al., 'Legal Culture and the Dynamics of Religious Interaction in Ritual Practices among Interfaith Marriage', *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, 7 November 2024, 333-348, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v18i2.11659>.

¹⁸ Nur Hikmah Yanti, 'Makna Simbolik Topeng Tarian Hudoq Pada Upacara Panen Masyarakat Suku Dayak', *Imaji: Jurnal Seni Dan Pendidikan Seni* 17, no. 1 (June 2019): 13-26, <https://doi.org/10.21831/imaji.v17i1.25728>.

¹⁹ Ily Yanti et al., 'Negotiating Sharī'ah and Customary Law: Legal Pluralism in Familial Relationships among the Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi', *Journal of Islamic Law* 6, no. 2 (June 2025): 177-205, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v6i2.3311>.

²⁰ Nuryasmi Nuryasmi, 'Di Balik Topeng Hudoq, Tersibak Cerita Asal Usul Lahirnya Tari Hudoq', *Cendekia: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan* 1, no. 1 (July 2021): 108-122, <https://doi.org/10.51878/cendekia.v1i1.97>.

Furthermore, the collective consciousness embodied in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is highly relevant to the concept of *khalīfah fī al-ard* in Islamic theology. In Islamic teachings, humans are positioned as caliphs, namely God's representatives on earth who are entrusted with maintaining, managing, and maintaining the balance of creation. This position is not interpreted as legitimacy to arbitrarily control nature, but rather as a moral and spiritual responsibility to ensure that nature remains sustainable and functional for life. This concept finds its equivalent in the practice of *Hudoq Kita'*, where dance movements are performed communally and repeatedly as a symbol of mutual involvement in maintaining cosmic harmony.²¹

Rhythmic dance movements performed collectively reflect the view that the sustainability of life is not a sole responsibility of individuals, but the result of collective awareness and action. In this context, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance serves as both a social and a spiritual reminder that human relations with nature must be maintained collectively. This value aligns with environmental ethics in Islam, which emphasize social responsibility, ecological justice, and the prohibition of destruction (*fasād fī al-ard*).²² Thus, the dialogue between *Hudoq Kita'* cosmology and Islamic theology shows a common ethical orientation, especially in the effort to maintain sustainability and balance of life.²³

However, the study also found that theological tensions often arise in encounters between local cultural practices and Islamic theology.²⁴ Interestingly, the tension does not primarily lie in fundamental values, but rather in symbols and rites.²⁵ Concerns about shirk, deviations from the faith, or practices considered contrary to the purity of monotheism

²¹ Jesita Trisnawati, Syakir Muharrar, and Eko Sugiarto, 'The Hudoq Mask Works Potential as a Source of Learning and Moral Based Local Wisdom of Dayak Bahau Busang Tribe', *The International Journal of Politics and Sociology Research* 10, no. 4 (March 2023): 176–193, <https://doi.org/10.35335/ijopsor.v10i4.88>.

²² Danil Sutiawan, Roby Saputra, and Ifansyah Putra, 'Siyasah Syar'iyah and Local Fiqh Construction: A Study of Islamic Legal Practice in Indonesia', *Tanfizi : Journal of Islamic Constitutional and Political Law* 1, no. 1 (June 2025): 25–38.

²³ Thesa Nur Sastia, Samsyu Kamaruddin, and Octamaya Tenri Awaru Awaru, 'Melestarikan Kesenian Tari Hudoq di Desa Budaya Pampang Kalimantan Timur', *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 8, no. 6 (June 2024), <https://sejurnal.com/pub/index.php/jpim/article/view/2178>.

²⁴ Lukis Alam et al., 'Negotiating Ethnic and Religious Identities: Indonesian Chinese Muslims in Shari'ah Compliant Business', *Ijtihad : Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 25, no. 1 (June 2025): 92–104, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v25i1.92-54>.

²⁵ Maria Pricilia Silviana, Hartiwiningsih, and Lego Karjoko, 'Fiqh Al-Bī'ah and Restorative-Ecological Justice in Corporate Environmental Crimes', *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 24, no. 2 (December 2025): 397–419, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v24i2.16415>.

often arise when traditional symbols are read literally and ahistorically.²⁶ In this context, the symbols in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance are perceived as objects of worship or representations of forces other than God, thus triggering theological resistance.

This is where the importance of a symbolic and contextual approach to reading local cultural practices becomes evident.²⁷ In the study of contemporary Islamic theology, symbols are not always understood as objects of worship but rather as a medium for expressing human values, identities, and spiritual experiences. When the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is understood as a cultural symbol that represents ecological ethics, social solidarity, and cosmic awareness, it cannot necessarily be categorized as a practice contrary to the Islamic faith. Instead, it can be read as an ethical-spiritual expression that strengthens man's awareness of his responsibilities before God and nature.²⁸

This approach aligns with the principle of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, which emphasizes that the primary purpose of sharia is to safeguard the welfare of humans and the universe. As long as a cultural practice does not contradict the basic principles of monotheism and does not lead to worship of anything other than Allah, it can be placed in the customary and cultural realm, which is *mubāḥ*, or even ethically positive. Thus, the dialogue between *Hudoq Kita'* cosmology and Islamic theology demands an attitude of epistemological openness, in which religion does not exist as a force that negates culture, but as a normative framework that guides and purifies meaning.²⁹

In the end, a dialogical reading of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance shows that Islamic theology can engage constructively with local cosmology without losing its theological

²⁶ Muchimah et al., 'Cultural Pluralism and Islamic Legal Ethics: Reimagining Family Law for Interreligious Marriages in Banyumas', *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 11, no. 1 (March 2026): 67-85, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v11i1.14442>.

²⁷ Sophia Anne Milleer, 'Integrating Local Wisdom and Global Knowledge to Develop Culturally Responsive Education Models', *Nusantara Education* 5, no. 1 (March 2026): 45-61, <https://doi.org/10.66325/nusantaraeducation.v5i1.257>.

²⁸ Bagus Satria, Imron, and Annafi Franz, 'Membangun Aplikasi Pengenalan Topeng Hudoq Berbasis Augmented Reality Dengan Metode Marker Based Tracking', *Jurnal Ilmu Komputer Dan Sistem Informasi (JIKOMSI)* 6, no. 2 (September 2023): 103-110.

²⁹ Halefi Syifa Ramadhani and Dewi Isma Aryani, 'Tinjauan Komparasi Visual Topeng Dayak: Hudoq Dan Sababuka', *Visual Heritage: Jurnal Kreasi Seni dan Budaya* 6, no. 2 (February 2024): 341-348, <https://doi.org/10.30998/vh.v6i2.8188>.

identity.³⁰ This dialogue not only enriches the understanding of the diversity of spiritual expressions of the people of the archipelago but also opens up space for the development of Islamic theology that is more contextual, inclusive, and responsive to ecological and cultural issues.³¹ By placing the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance as a cultural expression rich in values, Islamic theology can serve as a bridge connecting faith, culture, and ecological responsibility into a whole, ethical-spiritual unity.

Table 2. *Hudoq Kita'* Cosmological Dialogue with Islamic Theology

| Study Aspects | The Cosmology of <i>Hudoq Kita'</i> (Dayak Kenyah) | Theology of Islam | Meeting Point / Dialogue |
|------------------------|---|---|--|
| Views on Nature | Nature is understood as a living sacred space, which must be respected and maintained in balance. | Nature is <i>āyāt kauniyyah</i> , a sign of God's greatness that contains theological and moral messages. | Both view nature as spiritually meaningful, not just a material object. |
| Cosmic Principles | Emphasizing cosmic balance and harmony between humans, nature, and transcendent forces | <i>Tauhīd rubūbiyyah</i> affirms that all creation is in one divine order | The harmony of the cosmos is understood as God's will that man must maintain |
| Human Position | Humans are part of the cosmos and are responsible for maintaining the harmony of nature. | Man as <i>khalīfah fī al-ard</i> with the mandate of preserving the earth | Man is not an absolute ruler, but a guardian and custodian of creation |
| Collective Dimension | Dance is performed communally as a symbol of shared responsibility | Islam emphasizes social and collective responsibility in safeguarding the welfare of the people | Ecological and ethical awareness is built through joint action |
| Ritual/Dance Functions | Symbolic media to strengthen human-nature relations and | Worship and pious deeds function to build moral and spiritual awareness | Both function as a means of internalizing ethical-spiritual values |

³⁰ Nur Robbaniyah et al., 'Identity and Diversity in the Hudoq Dance: A Review of Religious Moderation Based on Ancestral Heritage Among the Dayak Tribe', *An-Nida'* 47, no. 1 (July 2023): 38-54, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v47i1.25321>.

³¹ Elvis Deventus Geroda and Edelweis Puti Prima, 'Komunikasi Simbolik dalam Upacara Ritual Hudoq Suku Dayak Bahau Umaq Luhut Desa Kelian Luar Kabupaten Kutai Barat Kalimantan Timur', *DIGICOM: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Media* 4, no. 1 (September 2024): 23-39, <https://doi.org/10.37826/digicom.v4i1.768>.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| | the sustainability of life | | |
| Environmental Ethics | The prohibition of destroying nature because it disturbs the cosmic balance | The prohibition of <i>fasād fī al-ard</i> and the order to preserve nature | Convergence of values in environmental ethics and sustainability |
| Potential Theological Tensions | Symbols and rites are often read as part of traditional traditions | Concern about <i>shirk</i> if the symbol is read literally | Tension arises at the level of symbols, not at substantial values |
| Solution Approach | Symbolic and contextual meanings of cultural practices | Contextual, symbolic, and <i>maqāṣid al-syarī'ah</i> approach | Theological dialogue allows for cultural acceptance without sacrificing faith |
| Theological Implications | Affirming ecological ethics and culture-based social solidarity | Opening up a contextual and responsive space for Islamic theology | Strengthening Islamic theology that is inclusive, ecological, and based on local wisdom |

Source: Author's Interpretation

This table briefly and systematically illustrates the conceptual dialogue between the cosmology of *Hudoq Kita'* in the Dayak Kenyah tradition and Islamic theology, emphasizing the common points of ethical and spiritual values that both share. By comparing aspects of views on nature, human position, cosmic principles, and environmental ethics, this table shows that the encounter between local culture and Islamic theology does not occur at the level of a conflict of values, but instead at the level of differences in symbols and ritual expressions. *Hudoq Kita'* cosmology and Islamic theology both regard nature as a spiritually meaningful entity and affirm the collective responsibility of humans to maintain the balance of creation. With a symbolic and contextual approach, the theological tensions that arise can be bridged, so that local cultural practices are not understood as a threat to the faith, but as an ethical-spiritual medium that enriches the development of Islamic theology that is contextual, inclusive, and responsive to ecological issues and local wisdom.

The Relevance of *Hudoq Kita'* Dance in the Perspective of Islamic Law

From the perspective of Islamic law, the relevance of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance needs to be read through a methodological framework that captures the complexity of the relationship between sharia norms and local cultural practices. The findings of this study show that the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance cannot be categorized into the realm of *'ibādah maḥḍah*, which is a purely ritual worship practice that the nash has strictly determined. On the

contrary, this dance is more appropriately placed in the area of *mu'āmalah* and *'urf* (custom), which is a socio-cultural space that in Islamic law is dynamic and open to change as long as it does not conflict with the basic principles of sharia. This placement is an important starting point for understanding the position of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance within the development of Islamic law.

In the tradition of *fiqh* proposals, *'urf* is recognized as one of the valid legal considerations, mainly when no explicit provisions are found in the Qur'an and Sunnah.³² The rules of *al'ādah muḥakkamah* emphasize that the customs of the community can be used as the basis for determining the law as long as it is generally applicable, does not contradict the *nash*, and brings benefits.³³ In this context, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance, as a living cultural practice that is passed down from generation to generation by the Dayak Kenyah community, can be understood as a form of *'urf ṣaḥīḥ*, which is a legal and legally acceptable custom. This practice does not include specific orders of worship, does not require beliefs contrary to monotheism, and does not cause social or moral harm.

The approach of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* serves as a crucial analytical framework for assessing the relevance of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance in Islamic law. Instead of formalizing cultural practices based on their ritual outward form, the *maqāṣid* approach directs attention to their purpose, meaning, and social impact. In this perspective, a practice is judged not solely by its outward symbols or expressions, but by the extent to which it contributes to the realization of benefits (*maṣlahah*) and the prevention of harm (*mafsadah*).³⁴ This approach aligns with the spirit of Islamic law, which prioritizes human welfare in law enforcement.

³² Ramadan Subhi, Rozian Karnedi, and Abubakar Muhammad Jibril, 'Tashwir Between Tradition and Modernity: Contemporary Debates in Hadith and Scholarly Thought', *NUSANTARA: Journal Of Law Studies* 3, no. 02 (December 2024): 116-136, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17382483>.

³³ Farida Nurun Nazah et al., 'Gender Justice in Child Custody Disputes: The Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah Approach in Contemporary Judicial Practice', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 2 (November 2025): 1328-1358, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i2.10790>.

³⁴ Imam Mahdi, Etry Mike, and Arini Azka Mutia, 'Contextualizing Islamic Law in Resolving Customary Land Conflicts: A Siyasaḥ Syar'iyah Approach to the Semende Tribe's Dispute in Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park', *Jurnal Ilmiah Mizani: Wacana Hukum, Ekonomi Dan Keagamaan* 12, no. 2 (November 2025): 696-710, <https://doi.org/10.29300/mzn.v12i2.8619>.

The values expressed in the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance align closely with the goals of sharia.³⁵ One of the central values that stands out is the maintenance of the environment, which in the framework of contemporary *maqāṣid* is often formulated as *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*. The *Hudoq Kita'* dance embodies the Dayak Kenyah people's ecological awareness through the symbolization of the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. The moral message contained in this dance emphasizes the importance of maintaining cosmic balance, avoiding excessive exploitation of nature, and caring for the environment as a source of shared life. This value is in line with the principles of Islamic law that prohibit destruction (*fasād fī al-arḍ*) and encourage the maintenance of the earth as a mandate from Allah.

In addition to its ecological aspect, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance also embodies values of social solidarity and communal order. Collective dance practices reflect the spirit of togetherness, cooperation, and social responsibility. In Islamic law, these values have an important position because they relate to the protection of social welfare (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs* and *ḥifẓ al-māl* in the collective dimension). Community involvement in a single cultural practice strengthens social bonds. It prevents the fragmentation of society, which in the long run contributes to social stability and harmony. Thus, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance can be seen as a social medium that supports the goals of sharia in maintaining social order.³⁶

The *maqāṣid* approach also helps avoid Islamic law from being reduced to a narrow halal-haram classification. In some cases, local cultural practices are often judged a priori as "un-Islamic" simply because they use symbols or forms of expression that differ from the Arab-Islamic tradition. This perspective may overlook the social, historical, and symbolic context inherent in the practice. In the case of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance, the literal reading of symbols and rites can raise theological suspicions, especially if they are directly associated with non-Islamic beliefs. However, if symbols are understood as a cultural language that is representative and ethical, rather than as objects of worship, then the basis for their rejection becomes legally weak.

³⁵ Jesita Trisnawati, Syakir Muharrar, and Eko Sugiarto, 'The Hudoq Mask Works Potential as a Source of Learning and Moral Based Local Wisdom of Dayak Bahau Busang Tribe', *The International Journal of Politics and Sociology Research* 10, no. 4 (March 2023): 176–193, <https://doi.org/10.35335/ijopsor.v10i4.88>.

³⁶ Nur Robbaniyah et al., 'Identity and Diversity in the Hudoq Dance: A Review of Religious Moderation Based on Ancestral Heritage Among the Dayak Tribe', *An-Nida'* 47, no. 1 (July 2023): 38–54, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v47i1.25321>.

Furthermore, the flexibility of Islamic law in dialogue with local cultures reflects the sharia's universal and contextual character. The history of Islamic law shows that classical jurists often considered local customs in establishing law, especially in the area of *mu'āmalah*. This flexibility allows Islamic law to be rooted in social reality without losing its normative principles. In the context of a multicultural society like Indonesia, this approach is becoming increasingly relevant to ensure that Islamic law is not trapped in an exclusive, distant stance from local social and cultural realities.

Thus, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance need not be positioned as a cultural practice rejected or marginalized within the framework of Islamic law. Rather, it can be understood as an expression of local wisdom that embodies universal ethical values aligned with the goals of sharia. This approach opens up space for a construction of Islamic law that is more inclusive, dialogical, and responsive to cultural diversity. Instead of being an instrument of cultural homogenization, Islamic law can serve as a normative framework that assesses, guides, and affirms cultural practices so long as they bring benefits.³⁷

In the end, the relevance of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance from an Islamic law perspective lies in its ability to present ecological, social, and ethical values aligned with the *maqāṣid al-syaṁ'ah*. A contextual and substantive reading of this practice not only enriches the treasures of contemporary Islamic law but also strengthens its position as a living legal system and enables it to dialogue with the cultural realities of society. With this kind of approach, Islamic law can continue to evolve as a grounded, just, and relevant law in the face of social and cultural challenges in the modern era.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance is a cosmological expression of the Dayak Kenyah community, full of theological and ethical meanings that are embodied through the body, movement, and collective rites. This dance does not simply function as a traditional performance or cultural symbol, but becomes a spiritual medium that reflects indigenous peoples' understanding of the relationship among humans, nature, and the Transcendent. Through the embodied theology approach, this study emphasizes that

³⁷ Fauzia Latif, 'Tarian Dan Topeng Hudoq Kalimantan Timur: Suatu Kajian Filsafat Seni', *Humaniora* 4, no. 1 (April 2013): 712-722, <https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v4i1.3481>.

religious experiences are not always expressed in doctrines and normative texts, but are also manifested in vibrant, meaningful cultural practices in the daily life of the community. From the perspective of Islamic theology and law, the study's findings reveal a significant intersection between the cosmology of the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance and Islam's fundamental values. The principles of cosmic balance, collective responsibility, and the ethics of preserving nature contained in this dance are in line with the concept of monotheism, *khalīfah fī al-ard*, as well as the purpose of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.

The tension that has arisen between traditional practices and Islamic norms is more a result of a textual and ahistorical approach to cultural symbols. When interpreted contextually and symbolically, the *Hudoq Kita'* Dance can be understood as a form of local wisdom that does not contradict the basic principles of Islamic faith. More broadly, this study emphasizes the importance of a dialogical approach in reading the relationship between Islamic law, Islamic theology, and local culture in Indonesia. This approach opens space for the development of cultural fiqh that is inclusive, contextual, and responsive to the realities of a pluralistic society. As for further research, it is suggested that similar studies be carried out through more intensive field research, including in-depth interviews with traditional actors and religious leaders, and expanded to the cultural practices of other indigenous peoples. In addition, comparative studies of Islamic theology and other local religious traditions are important for enriching the discourse on religious and cultural interaction in contemporary Indonesia.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Tri Indrahastuti contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, data collection, and primary drafting of the manuscript. Trisakti contributed to data analysis, interpretation of findings, and critical revision of the manuscript. Setyo Yanuartuti contributed to the development of the theoretical framework and provided scholarly input on cultural and performative analysis. Arif Hidajad contributed to the legal and normative analysis, particularly in relation to Islamic law and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* perspectives. Rina Martiara contributed to methodological refinement, academic editing, and final review of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. This research was conducted independently, without any financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. All interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this article are solely those of the authors and were carried out in accordance with academic and ethical research standards.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

AI tools were used solely for language editing and formatting. All ideas, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions are entirely the authors' own, and all AI-assisted outputs were reviewed to ensure academic integrity.

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