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The Acculturation of Islamic Values in the Nyambai Tradition and Its Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): An Islamic Anthropological Study of the Ranau Community

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Abstract

Objective: Analyze the process of cultural and religious acculturation in the Nyambai Tradition of the Ranau community and its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. The focus of the study includes the transformation of performances, rhymes, cultural symbols, and social interactions. **Theoretical framework:** The research uses the theory of cultural acculturation, interpretive anthropology, habitus theory, and the concept of Islamic living. This framework describes the integration of Islamic values into the local culture without losing its original character. **Literature review:** Previous studies have shown adaptations between Islam and local cultures in various community traditions. However, studies linking cultural-religious acculturation to the achievement of the SDGs are still limited. **Method:** The research applied an ethnographic qualitative approach through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, cultural documentation, and analysis of Nyambai rhymes. The data were analyzed interactively to find patterns of cultural transformation and Islamic values. **Results:** The Nyambai tradition undergoes selective acculturation, which is reflected in performance ethics, rhyming language, cultural symbols, and social interaction. Islamic values are integrated without eliminating the local cultural identity of the Ranau people. **Implications:** The Nyambai tradition supports culture-based education (SDG 4), gender ethics (SDG 5), cultural preservation (SDG 11), and social cohesion (SDG 16). These findings suggest that local traditions can be instruments of sustainable development. **Novelty:** This research offers a conceptual model of "cultural acculturation based on Islamic values for sustainable development (SDGs)". This model integrates cultural preservation, Islamic values, and sustainable development goals in a single analytical framework.

Keywords: cultural acculturation, islamic anthropology, local tradition, nyambai tradition, sustainable development goals (sdgs).

INTRODUCTION

The Ranau people of South Ogan Komering Ulu (OKU) Regency possess a unique cultural heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation. One of the most prominent traditions that defines their collective identity is the Nyambai Tradition [1]. This tradition is a form of cultural expression that combines dance, traditional music, pantun poetry, and social interaction involving all segments of society, particularly young men and women. In the view of the Ranau community, Nyambai is not merely entertainment, but a

symbolic space that teaches values of courtesy, respect for elders, communal solidarity, and social ethics that have long been hallmarks of the local culture [2]. From a sustainable development perspective, these values reflect the contribution of local culture to strengthening character education and social cohesion, which aligns with the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly regarding quality education and inclusive community development.

Throughout history, this tradition has undergone significant transformations, particularly after Islam arrived in the Ranau region in the 16th century through the missionary efforts of scholars and merchants from Palembang and Minangkabau [3]. This process of Islamization was not repressive but rather dialogical. Cultural elements deemed incompatible with Islamic teachings were gradually adapted—whether regarding timing, social etiquette, spatial segregation, or the removal of elements potentially conflicting with Sharia law [4]. This demonstrates a dynamic acculturation between religious values and local culture, wherein Islam did not come to replace traditions but rather to guide and reorganize cultural practices so they remain relevant within the framework of religious values [5]. This acculturation process simultaneously demonstrates how Islamic values serve as an ethical foundation in shaping social practices that support value-based sustainable development, including in the formation of social norms, gender ethics, and community harmony aligned with the SDGs agenda.

In the modern context, the Nyambai tradition faces pressures from globalization, changing social norms, technological advancements, and growing demands for new religious ethics [6]. Several elements of the tradition have undergone modifications, including attire, musical accompaniment, patterns of interaction, and even its social function, which originally served as a gathering place for young men and women but has now become more formal and polite [7]. This shift demonstrates that the Nyambai tradition is not a static heritage but a cultural entity that continuously adapts to the changing times. Within the framework of the SDGs, this dynamic reflects the importance of *cultural resilience* as part of efforts to maintain community sustainability amidst the tide of globalization (SDG 11).

Nevertheless, for the people of Ranau, Nyambai continues to play a central role in strengthening their religious and cultural identity. This tradition serves as a means of instilling moral values, character education, and historical awareness through symbols, poetry, and other performing arts that depict the harmonious relationship between local culture and Islamic values [8]. On the other hand, traditional symbols such as clothing, dance movements, and stage design reflect a collective memory that binds the community as a historical and cultural entity [9]-[10]. This function demonstrates that local traditions serve not only as cultural heritage but also as social instruments in supporting values-based education (SDG 4) and strengthening social cohesion and community peace (SDG 16).

Scientific studies on the process of acculturation of Islamic values within the Nyambai tradition remain limited, particularly from the perspective of Islamic anthropology. Most previous studies have focused primarily on elements of performing arts or their social functions, while aspects of religious dialogue, religious symbolism, and identity construction through tradition have not been analyzed in depth. Furthermore, research linking local traditions to their contribution to sustainable development grounded in Islamic values within the framework of the SDGs remains very limited. In fact, understanding Nyambai as a “living cultural text” requires a comprehensive approach capable of explaining how Islamic values are absorbed, negotiated, and reinterpreted by communities within their own cultural frameworks.

This study is important for investigating how the acculturation of Islamic values takes place within the Nyambai tradition, how the people of Ranau integrate Islamic teachings into their cultural practices, and how this tradition reinforces cultural-religious identity amid ongoing social change. This study also aims to analyze the role of the Nyambai

tradition as a cultural practice that contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the aspects of education, social equality, cultural preservation, and social cohesion. Using an Islamic anthropological approach, this study seeks to present a holistic understanding of the harmonious convergence of religion and local culture, while also making a theoretical contribution to the study of Islam in the archipelago, emphasizing a contextual and inclusive Islam rooted in local wisdom. Conceptually, this study also offers an integrative perspective between Islamic anthropology and sustainable development, positioning local traditions as strategic instruments in supporting the global SDG agenda based on Islamic values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on the interaction between Islam and local cultures in Indonesia has expanded significantly within the fields of anthropology, sociology, and the study of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. Several studies focus on how Islamic values assimilate with local traditions, such as the Sekaten tradition in Java, Tabuik in West Sumatra, and Maulid in various Muslim communities across the archipelago [11]–[13]. This literature emphasizes that Islam does not exist in a monolithic form but transforms through a dialogical process that produces more contextual forms of religiosity [14]–[16]. In the context of South Sumatra, several studies highlight the presence of traditional rituals such as Begambus, Begedung, and other traditional social traditions as part of the local community's identity [17]–[19]. However, studies on the Nyambai Tradition from an Islamic anthropological perspective remain relatively limited and are mostly discussed from the perspectives of performing arts, folklore, or social functions. Research that explicitly links the interaction between Islam and local culture with its contribution to sustainable development within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is also still very limited, particularly in the context of local communities in Indonesia.

Within its theoretical framework, this study draws upon several key concepts frequently used in the study of culture and Islam. Clifford Geertz's symbolic theory is a primary reference for understanding culture as a system of meaning that can be interpreted through symbols, rituals, and social practices [20]. Meanwhile, Richard Jenkins's theory of identity explains how social identity is formed through repeated interactions, social recognition, and cultural symbols agreed upon by the community [21]. The concept of acculturation is also a crucial theory widely employed in research on the interaction between Islam and local cultures. Azyumardi Azra and other scholars of Nusantara Islam emphasize that the acculturation process allows for the acceptance of local culture as long as it does not conflict with the fundamental principles of sharia [22]. In the field of Islamic anthropology, researchers such as Bowen and Woodward highlight the importance of viewing cultural practices as tangible manifestations of "living Islam" that evolves in accordance with the social context of the community [23]–[25]. To strengthen its relevance to the research focus, this theoretical framework is further enriched by a sustainable development perspective, which views local culture as *social capital* and a cultural resource in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in the aspects of values-based education (SDG 4), social equality (SDG 5), community sustainability (SDG 11), and peace and social cohesion (SDG 16).

Although the literature on Islam and local culture is quite extensive, there are several *research* gaps that require further attention. *First*, there have not been many studies that delve into the Nyambai Tradition as a cultural text containing symbols, values, and social structures reconstructed through an Islamic lens. Most studies merely describe its artistic, historical, or social aspects without exploring the transformation of Islamic values occurring within it. *Second*, there is a lack of studies employing an Islamic anthropological approach to interpret how the Ranau

community reinterprets traditional values within the framework of Islamic ethics. *Third*, there remains a scarcity of research that views local traditions as mechanisms for shaping the religious cultural identity of the community, even though this dimension is crucial for understanding cultural dynamics amidst social change. Fourth, studies linking local traditions as strategic instruments in supporting sustainable development based on Islamic values within the SDGs framework remain very limited; consequently, few studies have integrated cultural, religious, and development perspectives simultaneously. A minor controversy has also arisen regarding the views of some groups who believe that certain elements of traditional customs must be abandoned because they are considered incompatible with Islam, even though anthropological research shows that these traditions have long been Islamized through processes of adaptation and reinterpretation of meaning.

Thus, the existing literature provides an important foundation but also reveals significant gaps in research on the acculturation of Islam within the Nyambai tradition. This study aims to address these gaps through a more holistic and in-depth approach to Islamic anthropology. This study also seeks to develop an integrative perspective between Islamic anthropology and sustainable development by positioning the Nyambai tradition as a cultural practice with the potential to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of acculturation of Islamic values within the Nyambai Tradition among the Ranau people. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for examining cultural meanings, symbols, and experiences that are contextual and dynamic. The research location is in the Ranau region, South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, which serves as the center for the preservation of the Nyambai Tradition and a place where traditional values remain alive in the daily lives of the community [26]–[27]. The selection of this location was also considered in terms of its relevance as a socio-cultural space that reflects local practices with the potential to contribute to sustainable development within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly regarding values-based education, social cohesion, and cultural preservation.

The informants in this study were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, focusing on those with in-depth knowledge of the history, values, social functions, and transformations of the Nyambai Tradition. These informants included traditional leaders, religious leaders, cultural elders, artists such as dancers and singers, young people involved in performances, and members of the general public who have inherited an understanding of the tradition from generation to generation. The selection of these informants allowed the researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of traditional practices and the Islamic values internalized within them [28]. The diversity of these informants was also crucial for capturing broader social dimensions, including how the Nyambai tradition plays a role in shaping social relations, gender ethics, and collective values relevant to SDG indicators.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory and non-participatory observations, and documentary analysis. The interviews were semi-structured to explore the informants' perspectives and experiences regarding the symbolic meaning of Nyambai, customary rules, moral values, and the process of adapting traditions to the teachings of Islam. The interviews were also aimed at exploring informants' perceptions regarding the role of tradition in supporting values education, social harmony, and cultural sustainability as part of a contribution to the SDGs. Observations were conducted by participating in various Nyambai performances and preparations, both in formal customary events and in other social contexts. Through these observations, the researchers were able to directly observe patterns of interaction, the use of symbols, the layout of the performance

space, and the process of internalizing Islamic values within the tradition. Observations also focused on social practices that reflect sustainability values, such as community participation, cultural preservation, and the strengthening of social cohesion. Meanwhile, documentation was obtained from traditional archives, local historical records, photographs, videos, and verses used in the performances as supporting data [29].

Data analysis was conducted interactively by following the stages outlined by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by grouping relevant data based on themes such as cultural symbols, Islamic values, forms of acculturation, and the socio-religious functions of traditions. The data categorization process also includes identifying themes related to the traditions' contributions to aspects of the SDGs, such as values education, social equality, cultural preservation, and community cohesion. The focused data is then presented in the form of descriptive and thematic narratives to make it easier for researchers to identify patterns and meanings. Through this process, the researchers then conclude the forms of Islamic integration within the Nyambai Tradition, the cultural changes and adaptations that have occurred, and the role of tradition in shaping the religious and cultural identity of the Ranau community [30]–[32].

To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information from traditional leaders, religious leaders, artists, and the general public, as well as by checking for consistency among interview results, observations, and documentation. Additionally, data validity was reinforced through member checks with several key informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations align with the socio-cultural realities they understand. Discussions with cultural experts and Islamic scholars were also conducted to enhance the credibility of the analysis [33]. This validation approach is also crucial to ensure that interpretations regarding cultural contributions to the SDGs are not speculative but grounded in empirical realities acknowledged by the community.

Through this series of procedures, this research method provides a solid foundation for comprehensively understanding how Islamic values have been acculturated within the Nyambai Tradition, as well as how the people of Ranau interpret and negotiate their identities through cultural practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. This approach allows for the identification of the strategic role of local traditions as socio-cultural instruments in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on Islamic values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Structure of the Nyambai Tradition and Its Role in Shaping Sustainable Socio-Cultural Values

The Nyambai tradition is a cultural space born from the long-standing interaction between the customs of the Ranau people and the moral values that have been passed down from generation to generation. Historically, Nyambai is not merely an artistic performance but serves as a vehicle for social education, a medium for uniting the youth, and a cultural platform that instills moral values, courtesy, and etiquette in the daily lives of the Ranau community. Nyambai is a meeting point between cultural aesthetics and social ethics, so that every element in this tradition has symbolic meaning as well as a social function. From a sustainable development perspective, this function demonstrates that Nyambai serves as a mechanism for culture-based education (SDG 4) as well as an instrument for strengthening social cohesion within the community (SDG 16).



Figure 1. Documentation of the Nyambai Performance

The basic structure of Nyambai consists of five main elements: dance movements, traditional poetry, accompanying music, stage layout, and cultural symbols such as scarves and traditional clothing. These five elements are intertwined to form a cohesive cultural system. Within the framework of symbolic anthropology proposed by Clifford Geertz, each cultural element is part of a “web of meaning” created by humans. The Nyambai tradition demonstrates this principle through the social meanings that the community attaches to the body movements, verses, floor patterns, and traditional symbols involved in the performance [34]. The interconnection between these elements also reflects *cultural sustainability* as part of efforts to preserve community identity (SDG 11).

For example, the dance movements of Nyambai are not only aesthetically valuable but also represent collective identity, feminine modesty, and family honor. Similarly, the verses in Nyambai serve as a means of conveying moral messages, traditional advice, and social values based on Islamic ethics. Thus, the elements that make up Nyambai cannot be separated from the social and spiritual context of the Ranau community. The integration of Islamic moral values into these elements reinforces the tradition’s function as a medium for character education and the formation of social ethics relevant to a values-based sustainable development agenda.

Core Elements in the Structure of the Nyambai Tradition

1. Dance Movements: The Body as a Social Symbol

The dance movements in Nyambai are gentle, orderly, and follow the rhythm of traditional music. From Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s perspective, the body serves as a medium for social and cultural experience [35]. The body movements of female dancers in Nyambai are not merely aesthetic expressions but symbols that project moral values: modesty, adherence to custom, and the honor of women.



Figure 2. The Nyambai Dance

The subtle dance movements, which do not emphasize sensuality, indicate that this tradition is shaped by cultural norms that restrict women’s movements in social interactions. The harmony among the dancers’ steps reflects the value of social harmony, while the orderly hand movements symbolize self-control and respect for community

norms. From an SDG perspective, this practice reflects culturally and religiously based gender ethics that contribute to the formation of ethical social relations (SDG 5).

2. Traditional Pantun: A Tool for Moral and Social Education

The pantuns recited in the Nyambai performance convey moral messages and social ethics. This aligns with Dedy Mulyana’s argument that cultural communication is the most effective medium for conveying social values through familiar language [35]–[36].

Table 1. Nyambai pantun verses translated by Mr. Isbit I Made

Nyambai Pantun	Meaning
<i>Robikum, oh Robikum, O Lord of the universe May peace be with you, First of all, I send my greetings</i>	<i>Robikum, O Robikum, Robikum, may peace be with you Peace be upon you all, I begin everything with a greeting</i>
<i>This is a starfruit, served on a plate Welcome to Halu Tibalos, greetings "Walaikumsalam"</i>	<i>This fruit is a guava Placed on a tray The greeting is accepted We also respond with a greeting "Walaikumsalam"</i>
<i>In the name of Allah, the fruit is ripe, All praise be to Allah, What’s going on with that wedding? The slow-moving village chief</i>	<i>In the name of Allah, climb the pine tree; praise and thanks to Allah, climb the guava tree. Let’s get married soon, Come to the village chief’s house</i>
<i>Brother carries a tray, The mother-in-law welcomes the groom Kilu is very happy, Adu receives Ghasan</i>	<i>If my brother carries his tray, I greet him from behind. We give our response, We have received the proposal.</i>

Pantun also serves as a social regulator, as the moral values conveyed subtly serve to remind the younger generation of the boundaries of social interaction accepted by society. In the context of sustainable development, this function highlights the role of pantun as a culturally-based informal educational medium that supports the improvement of quality education in values (SDG 4).

3. Accompanying Music: Strengthening Collective Emotions

The traditional music accompanying Nyambai is a key element in creating a specific emotional atmosphere. From Victor Turner’s perspective, music serves as an “emotional bond” that strengthens social ties between participants and spectators. The gentle rhythm of Nyambai music guides the dancers’ movements and helps create a shared emotional space, which ultimately reinforces a sense of *togetherness* [37]. This contributes to the formation of social solidarity and community cohesion, which are essential components of building a peaceful and inclusive society (SDG 16).

4. Performance Layout: Representation of Social Hierarchy

The spatial arrangement in a Nyambai performance is not random but follows strict traditional rules. The positions of the dancers, singers, musicians, traditional leaders, and religious leaders are arranged according to the social hierarchy. The audience area is also segregated by gender to maintain propriety and avoid unwanted physical interaction.



Figure 3. Layout of a Nyambai Performance

From Michel Foucault’s perspective, social space is a mechanism of control. Similarly, in the Nyambai tradition, spatial arrangements govern the behavior of participants and reflect the moral values of the Ranau community [38]. These spatial arrangements also reflect an organized social system and contribute to social stability and ethical community governance, which align with the goals of sustainable development (SDG 16).

5. Cultural Symbols: Scarves and Traditional Attire

Cultural symbols such as scarves and traditional clothing serve both aesthetic and moral functions. The scarves worn by female dancers symbolize modesty and represent the honor of Ranau women. Modest traditional attire emphasizes the value of simplicity and avoids an impression of excess.



Figure 4. The Symbolism of the Scarf in Nyambai

According to Geertz’s theory of symbols, cultural symbols not only represent objects but also carry deep meanings related to the social experiences of a community. The symbols in Nyambai serve as visual representations of the community’s moral values [39]. These symbols play a role in preserving cultural identity as part of the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage (SDG 11).

Table 2. Elements of Nyambai Traditions, Social Functions, and Their Contributions to the SDGs

Traditional Element	Aesthetic Function	Social Function	Symbolic Meaning	Contribution to the SDGs
Dance Movements	Beauty of Movement	Self-control	Politeness	Development of body ethics and gender relations based on values (SDG 5)
Traditional Pantun	Rhythm of language	Moral education	Traditional advice	Culturally-based character education media (SDG 4)

Accompaniment Music	Setting the rhythm	Emotional bonds	Social harmony	Strengthening social cohesion and community solidarity (SDG 16)
Spatial planning	Structural beauty	Social regulation	Traditional hierarchy	Strengthening social governance and community order (SDG 16)
Scarf/Clothing	Dance accessories	Symbols of honor	Women's identity	Preservation of cultural identity and the sustainable development of traditions (SDG 11)

The findings of this study reinforce Geertz's (1973) theory of culture as a symbolic system. All elements of Nyambai carry symbolic meanings centered on politeness, morality, and honor. Furthermore, Jenkins's (2008) theory of social identity proves relevant, as the Nyambai tradition helps shape the collective identity of the Ranau community through the participation of the younger generation in traditional activities. Turner's theory of *communitas* reinforces the finding that Nyambai fosters a strong sense of community, while Foucault's concept of space explains how spatial arrangements are used to uphold moral values [40]–[42]. These findings indicate that Nyambai traditions function not only as a symbolic system but also as a social mechanism contributing to sustainable development through values education, the strengthening of cultural identity, and social cohesion within the community.

This expanded discussion demonstrates that the structure of the Nyambai tradition constitutes a complex and meaningful cultural system. Each element is not merely aesthetic in nature but also forms part of a social and moral educational mechanism that shapes the identity of the Ranau community. These cultural elements operate through interrelated symbolic and social processes, creating a cultural space that preserves customs while conveying ethical values aligned with the community's spirituality. Conceptually, these findings affirm that local traditions such as Nyambai hold strategic potential as instruments of sustainable development grounded in Islamic values, supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Acculturation of Islamic Values into the Nyambai Tradition and Its Implications for Sustainable Social Life

The acculturation of Islamic values within the Nyambai tradition is a cultural process that has unfolded through prolonged interaction between the customary norms of the Ranau community and Islamic teachings that have become deeply embedded in daily life. Research findings indicate that acculturation does not occur in a tense or confrontational manner, but rather through a process of *cultural harmonization*—a fusion that preserves cultural identity while integrating Islamic values as a moral guide. From a sustainable development perspective, this harmonization process exemplifies a model of cultural-religious integration that supports social stability and community sustainability (SDG 11 and SDG 16).

Behavioral Adjustments in the Nyambai Performance

The adjustment of behavior in the Nyambai performance is one of the most evident forms of Islamic acculturation in the cultural life of the Ranau community. On a practical level, this change is evident in the reorganization of interaction patterns between performers and the audience, which now places greater emphasis on Islamic principles of modesty. While in the past, the space for interaction between men and women was more flexible, in today's Nyambai performances, the community has begun to implement a more structured separation of spaces. Men and women sit apart to avoid *ikhtilat*, while the performance area

for women is demarcated to protect them from potential direct physical interaction with male spectators. Additionally, religious leaders are given positions of honor, typically at the front or sides, as a symbol of moral legitimacy and as guardians of social ethics during the performance.

This behavioral regulation reflects a mechanism of cultural filtering through the principle of *'urf* in Islamic jurisprudence, namely local traditions that are acceptable as long as they do not conflict with Sharia values. The people of Ranau do not simply discard traditional elements that have been passed down from generation to generation, but rather adapt them to Islamic norms. Within the framework of Islamic anthropology, this process is known as *selective integration*—a form of selective integration that allows religious values to enter local culture through a conscious filtering process carried out by the community. Thus, the behavioral rules in the Nyambai performance not only reflect the cultural identity of the Ranau community but also demonstrate how Islamic values can thrive within tradition without causing conflict between custom and religion. This adaptation also contributes to the formation of a more ethical and inclusive social order, which aligns with building a peaceful and just society (SDG 16) and strengthening value-based social relations (SDG 5).

The Refinement of the Pantun as a Form of Cultural Da'wah

Pantun holds a very important place in Nyambai tradition, not only as an aesthetic element but also as a means of social communication that conveys moral values. The acculturation of Islamic values into this tradition is clearly evident in the refinement of the pantun's language, which is now more polite, ethical, and rich with Islamic messages. In practice, the pantuns used in Nyambai no longer consist solely of traditional expressions or romantic metaphors characteristic of the local culture, but also convey moral messages such as the importance of maintaining self-respect, the duty to honor and obey one's parents, calls to improve one's character, and warnings to avoid sin and self-destructive behavior. Furthermore, these pantuns often contain teachings about guarding one's speech and calls to worship—such as praying and giving thanks for Allah's blessings—which are subtly woven into the Ranau metaphors and traditional expressions.

The use of Islamic-themed pantuns demonstrates how communities utilize cultural language as a medium for cultural da'wah—one that does not preach but rather touches the heart through literary aesthetics. This approach aligns with *the concept of tabligh bil hikmah*, which involves conveying Islamic teachings with wisdom and contextual appropriateness. Through pantun, moral values and Islamic teachings enter the cultural sphere without erasing the local character that has been passed down from generation to generation. Thus, Nyambai not only serves as an artistic performance but also becomes an effective means of spreading Islamic values to the younger generation.

The use of Islamic-themed pantuns demonstrates how communities utilize cultural language as a medium for cultural da'wah that is not patronizing, but rather touches the heart through literary aesthetics. This approach aligns with *the concept of tabligh bil hikmah*, which involves conveying Islamic teachings with wisdom and contextual appropriateness. In the context of the SDGs, the function of these pantuns highlights the role of local culture as an effective medium of informal education in enhancing the quality of values- and character-based education (SDG 4). Syamsul Arifin's perspective reinforces this finding, noting that cultural da'wah is a model of da'wah that uses local culture as an entry point to convey Islamic messages without undermining the cultural structure itself. The Nyambai pantun is a concrete example of how religious messages can be harmonized with aesthetic cultural symbols so that they remain accepted by the community as part of their identity. Thus, the pantun in Nyambai serves as a gentle yet effective medium for moral education, preserving the continuity of traditional values while strengthening the Islamic character of the Ranau community [43]. Consequently, the pantun functions not only as a cultural expression but also as a social educational instrument that contributes to the development of character-based human development.

Harmonizing Dance Movements with Islamic Ethics

The acculturation of Islamic values into the Nyambai tradition is also evident in the adaptation of dance movements by the people of Ranau. While in the past, certain dance movements were considered freer and more expressive, these movements are now carefully selected to align with the values of modesty taught by Islam. Hand and hip movements that were previously more dynamic have been replaced with movements that are softer, more graceful, and more controlled. The primary focus of this dance is no longer on physical expressions that emphasize sensuality, but rather on the beauty of movements that radiate the dignity and gentleness of Ranau women. Additionally, body movements considered excessive or potentially indecent have been reduced, making the overall choreography more refined and orderly. This adjustment is also evident in how the female dancers maintain physical distance from the male dancers, as a form of respect for Islamic social ethics.

The process of refining dance movements is not a rejection of customs or a diminishment of the aesthetic value of tradition, but rather the community’s effort to maintain harmony between cultural heritage and the moral demands of religion. In the Islamic concept of *adab*, the body is not merely an aesthetic medium, but also a moral trust that must be safeguarded with dignity. Therefore, the reworking of the Nyambai dance movements reflects the collective consciousness of the Ranau community to preserve its cultural identity without neglecting religious guidance. This transformation demonstrates that Nyambai remains alive as a symbol of Ranau culture, yet simultaneously serves as a representation of the values of modesty and spirituality within the Muslim community in the region.

The Selection of Cultural Symbols in Clothing and Accessories

The traditional clothing and shawls used in Nyambai performances have undergone a reinterpretation of meaning. Traditionally, the shawl served as an aesthetic element; however, in the context of Islamic acculturation, it is now understood as a symbol of modesty and honor. Women’s attire has been made more modest, in accordance with Islamic dress norms, without compromising the authenticity of Ranau customs.

These reinterpreted cultural symbols align with Geertz’s theory that cultural symbols always have a dual dimension: aesthetic and ideological. The process of reinterpreting symbols is part of cultural adaptation that allows communities to maintain their identity while remaining faithful to religious values [44].

Table 3. Forms of Acculturation of Islamic Values in the Nyambai Tradition and Their Contribution to the SDGs

Cultural Aspect	Traditional Practices	Islamic Adaptation	Acculturation Model	Contribution to the SDGs
Behavior	Gender-neutral spaces	Separation of men and women	Integration of etiquette and manners	Establishment of an ethical and inclusive social order (SDG 16), as well as value-based gender relations (SDG 5)
Pantun	Free, spontaneous	More polite, containing Islamic moral messages	Cultural enlightenment	Culturally-based media for values and character education (SDG 4)
Dance	Expressive	Selective, more polite & controlled	Aesthetic adjustment	Development of body ethics and social etiquette (SDG 5)

Clothing	Traditional jewelry	Simpler, symbol honor	a of	Reinterpretation of symbols	Sustainable preservation of cultural identity (SDG 11)
Social interaction	Freedom within traditional boundaries	Restricted according to Islamic law	to	Custom as Islamic 'urf	Strengthening social cohesion and community harmony (SDG 16)

Theoretically, the dynamics of the assimilation of Islamic culture into the Nyambai tradition among the Ranau community align with the cultural anthropological framework outlined by Koentjaraningrat, particularly regarding the process of adopting new cultural elements without eliminating traditional ones [45]. In the Ranau context, Nyambai customs function as indigenous elements that have taken deep root as the community's cultural identity, while Islamic moral and ethical values serve as new elements that introduce a religious dimension. However, the process at play is not one of substitution; Islam does not replace customs but rather acts in an additive and corrective manner. Traditions are preserved but harmonized with Islamic teachings, resulting in a cultural form that is more in line with the worldview of the Muslim community in Ranau.

This approach aligns with Haviland's view that successful acculturation is acculturation that is able to selectively filter new cultural elements so as not to cause identity conflicts or cultural crises [46]. Cultural selection is a crucial step in ensuring that the introduced values do not undermine established traditional structures. The Ranau community appears to have successfully carried out this filtering process. They have embraced Islamic teachings as their primary moral guide, yet continue to preserve Nyambai as a means of artistic expression, social solidarity, and collective identity. This filtering is achieved through gradual changes across various aspects—from behavior, dance aesthetics, and pantun language to performance symbols—all harmonized with Islamic values such as modesty and spirituality.

This gradual process of acculturation reflects adaptive cultural dynamics. Islam did not come to eliminate Nyambai traditions, but rather to provide a moral framework that influences how the community understands, practices, and reinterprets those traditions. The aesthetics of the dance movements were adapted to be more graceful and controlled, the language of pantun was enriched with Islamic moral messages, and cultural symbols such as clothing, headscarves, and the layout of the performance space were rearranged to reflect the ethics of modesty. This reinterpretation emphasizes that acculturation does not always mean radical change, but can instead serve to strengthen local values through a religious moral touch that aligns with the social context of the community.

Thus, the acculturation of Islamic values within the Nyambai tradition serves not only as a cultural process but also as an effective mechanism for cultural da'wah. Conceptually, this finding confirms that local traditions can function as strategic instruments in supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) grounded in Islamic values. This approach reflects the moderate and inclusive nature of Islam in Ranau society, which is capable of adapting to the times without abandoning its ancestral heritage. Therefore, Nyambai is not only preserved as a cultural tradition but also revitalized as a space that harmoniously and sustainably integrates traditional values and Islamic teachings.

The Transformation of Practices and Reinterpretation of Symbols from the Perspective of Cultural Sustainability and Islamic Values

The transformation of practices and reinterpretation of symbols within the Nyambai Tradition demonstrate that the Ranau community is not merely undergoing passive adaptation but is actively engaged in a creative process to integrate Islamic values into its cultural identity. When cultural elements undergo reinterpretation, shifts in meaning occur that are not merely structural but also symbolic, moral, and spiritual. From a sustainable

development perspective, this process reflects the community's ability to achieve *cultural sustainability* without losing its local identity (SDG 11).

The headscarf, which was originally understood merely as a dance prop to enhance movement, now holds expanded significance within an Islamic context. From a cultural semiotics perspective, as explained by Clifford Geertz, a symbol is not a lifeless object, but rather a “model of” and a “model for” action [47]. In Nyambai, the scarf serves as a model of Ranau cultural identity, yet simultaneously functions as a model of polite and appropriate behavior in accordance with Islamic ethics. This new meaning aligns with the concept of *cultural “reformation,”* namely, the reform of traditional symbols to make them relevant to the community's religious values. This reinterpretation also contributes to adaptive cultural preservation, which is part of a socio-cultural sustainability strategy within the framework of the SDGs (SDG 11).

This symbolic change can also be analyzed through Koentjaraningrat's theory of acculturation, which views acculturation as a process of adopting new cultural elements without negating the old ones. In this case, the Nyambai customs are preserved as the original cultural structure, yet Islamic values such as modesty, self-respect, and self-control are introduced as corrective values that refine and strengthen the morality of these traditions. In other words, what Koentjaraningrat refers to as *cultural modification* occurs, where new elements enrich the old ones without causing structural conflict [48]. This process demonstrates that the integration of religious values into local culture can serve as an ethical foundation for sustainable social development.

Meanwhile, when compared to Haviland's theory of acculturation, the transformation of Nyambai demonstrates that the Ranau community practices a form of selective and non-conflictual acculturation, which is an indicator of successful acculturation. Haviland emphasizes that effective acculturation does not lead to cultural disorientation or “disruption,” but rather results in a harmonious integration of old and new elements. This is clearly evident in Nyambai: the community does not reject Islam, and Islam does not erase traditions. Instead, the two meet at a point of balance [49]. This balance contributes to the creation of an inclusive, peaceful, and resilient society, which aligns with the goals of sustainable development (SDG 16).

This theoretical comparison illustrates that the transformation of the Nyambai dance is not merely aesthetic but also ideological. The dance movements, which were once free-flowing, have now become softer and more controlled. From the perspective of Thomas Csordas's embodied culture theory, the body serves as the primary medium through which cultural values are expressed. The bodies of Ranau women in the Nyambai dance serve as a space to express traditional values and Islamic ethics: the gentle movements symbolize traditional grace, while bodily restraint reflects modesty as an Islamic moral value. This is a concrete manifestation of what Csordas refers to as *bodily practices shaped by cultural meaning* [50]. This transformation also reflects the construction of bodily ethics and gender relations grounded in moral and cultural values (SDG 5).

Modernization has also played a significant role in the transformation of Nyambai practices. The integration of activity schedules with prayer times indicates that the tradition now occupies a more religiously structured space in daily life. Viewed through the lens of Anthony Giddens' theory of social change, the Ranau community engages in “traditional reflexivity”—that is, a community's ability to consciously evaluate, adapt, and reorganize its cultural practices to align with contemporary socio-religious conditions. The presence of religious leaders as moral guides in the performances constitutes *a form of symbolic legitimization* that signifies the fusion of customary and religious authority [51]. This simultaneously strengthens value-based social governance and enhances the quality of community life sustainably.

Despite undergoing changes, the people of Ranau have not abandoned their cultural identity. The Nyambai tradition remains preserved as a vehicle for social solidarity, an

aesthetic space, and a symbol of togetherness. From the perspective of *cultural resilience* theory, this demonstrates that the people of Ranau are capable of preserving the core of their traditions while remaining open to the internalization of new values. The reinterpretation of symbols, the filtering of traditional elements, and the modernization of practices prove that Nyambai has not only survived but is also evolving adaptively.

Thus, the transformation of practices and the reinterpretation of symbols within the Nyambai tradition reflect a mature process of acculturation. This unites tradition and Islam as two complementary sources of values, rather than conflicting ones. This tradition demonstrates that the cultural identity of the Ranau community is moderate, inclusive, and responsive to change, while also showing that cultural da'wah can be effective through aesthetic symbols and everyday cultural practices. Conceptually, these findings affirm that the reinterpretation of cultural symbols can serve as an effective strategy in supporting sustainable development grounded in Islamic values, particularly in strengthening values education (SDG 4), social equality (SDG 5), cultural preservation (SDG 11), and social cohesion (SDG 16).

The Formation of Cultural-Religious Identity as the Foundation for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Development

The process of forming the cultural-religious identity of the Ranau community through the Nyambai Tradition demonstrates a complex interaction between traditional values and Islamic values that occurs repeatedly, continuously, and is internalized in daily life. This identity is not formed instantly, but rather through cultural experiences that take place symbolically and practically, resulting in a unique blend of traditional and religious values. From a sustainable development perspective, this process reflects the formation of an adaptive social identity rooted in values, which is essential for creating an inclusive and sustainable society (SDG 16).

From a cultural anthropological perspective, this process can be understood through the concept of *enculturation*—the mechanism by which values are instilled through customs, symbols, rituals, and repeated patterns of social interaction. The young people of Ranau involved in Nyambai undergo a simultaneous process of value internalization: they learn traditional aesthetics through dance movements, pantun (traditional poetry), and other cultural elements, while also absorbing Islamic values through ethical behavior, moral messages in the pantun, and the presence of religious figures within the event's structure. Thus, Nyambai serves as a space for character formation that integrates the cultural and religious dimensions of “.” This demonstrates that local traditions function as a culturally-based educational medium that contributes to enhancing the quality of character education (SDG 4).

When analyzed using Clifford Geertz's theory of religion as a symbolic system, the Nyambai tradition can be understood as a symbol containing two dimensions of meaning: traditional symbols as *cultural models* and Islamic values as *moral models*. Traditional symbols such as the shawl, pantun, and dance movements not only represent the cultural identity of Ranau but also serve as a medium for conveying Islamic ethical values. This symbolic integration allows the Ranau community to articulate their religious identity without losing touch with their local culture. This means that Nyambai functions as a “symbolic bridge” that unites two distinct value systems [52]. This integration also reinforces the sustainability of cultural identity as part of the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (SDG 11).

This can be compared to Stuart Hall's theory of identity, which emphasizes that cultural identity is not something permanent, but is always in the process of formation (*identity as a process of becoming*). The identity of the Ranau community is shaped by an ever-changing historical process and social interactions. The Nyambai tradition, which was once purely customary, has now undergone a transformation through Islamic values. This change

does not erase the old identity but rather enriches and strengthens a new dual identity: custom and religion. In other words, the religious-cultural identity of the Ranau community is the result of a dynamic process of value articulation, not a static structure [53]. This dynamic demonstrates that religious-cultural identity can develop adaptively in the face of social change without losing its cultural roots, which is a hallmark of a sustainable society.

Further analysis using Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* can explain how traditional and Islamic values exist not only in the symbolic realm but also permeate the patterns of action and customs of society. Through regular participation in Nyambai, the younger generation develops a habitus that reflects a fusion of traditional values (such as politeness, graceful movements, and cultural aesthetics) with Islamic values (such as simplicity, self-respect, and moral self-control). It is this habitus that subsequently shapes a deep-rooted religious-cultural identity, which is socially reproduced as the tradition continues [54]. This internalization contributes to the formation of stable and ethical social behavior, which is essential for creating a harmonious and resilient society (SDG 16).

From the perspective of Islamic anthropology, the integration of tradition and Islam evident in Nyambai reflects *the dynamic nature of Islam*—a form of religion that evolves through social practice, not merely at the doctrinal level. In this context, Islam does not emerge as a force that suppresses customs, but rather as a value that softens, improves, and perfects cultural practices. This is in line with Abdullah Saeed’s view of *everyday Islam*, in which the religious practices of Muslim communities are influenced by local contexts, social needs, and cultural dynamics [55]–[58].

Furthermore, the concept of *cultural resilience* demonstrates that despite transformation, the Nyambai tradition remains an integral part of local identity. In fact, the tradition’s ability to embrace new values and adapt is a sign of its strength. The Nyambai tradition did not collapse with the arrival of Islam; rather, it evolved into a tradition that holds legitimacy both culturally and religiously. This resilience reflects the community’s capacity to maintain cultural sustainability amidst the tide of globalization (SDG 11) [59]–[61]. The formation of the cultural-religious identity of the Ranau community is the result of a harmonious integration between traditional symbols and Islamic values. The Nyambai tradition serves as a vessel uniting these two value systems through processes of symbolization, internalization, and intergenerational social reproduction. Conceptually, these findings affirm that a cultural-religious identity rooted in local traditions can serve as social capital in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in education (SDG 4), social equality (SDG 5), cultural preservation (SDG 11), and social cohesion (SDG 16).

Table 4. The Nyambai Tradition Acculturation Model and Its Contribution to the SDGs

Component	Description	Examples in Nyambai	Supporting Theory	Contribution to the SDGs
Elements of Traditional Culture (Customs)	Indigenous Culture of Ranau	Dance, pantun, shawl	Koentjaraningrat	Preservation of local cultural heritage (SDG 11)
New Cultural Elements (Islam)	Islamic values and norms	Ethics, spatial segregation	Islamic Anthropology	Strengthening moral and social values (SDG 16)
Selection & Integration Process	Cultural screening	Refinement of dance & pantun	Haviland, ‘urf	Sustainable cultural adaptation (SDG 11)

Reinterpretation of symbols	Reinterpretation of meaning	The scarf as a symbol of modesty	Geertz	Strengthening value-based cultural identity (SDG 11)
Internalization (Habitus)	Instilling values	Education of the younger generation	Bourdieu	Culture-based character education (SDG 4)
Transformation of Practices	Sociocultural Change	Time and Ethical Adjustments	Giddens	Adaptive social governance (SDG 16)
Outcome: Cultural-Religious Identity	Ranau Muslim Identity	Traditions remain alive	Stuart Hall	Social cohesion & inclusive society (SDG 16)

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the Nyambai tradition is a dynamic cultural space, where the process of acculturation between Ranau customs and Islamic values takes place harmoniously. The findings indicate that traditional elements—including dance movements, pantun (traditional poetry), the headscarf symbol, performance layout, and the social structure of the “tradition—have not disappeared despite the growing influence of Islamic values in community life. Instead, Islamic values function as a filter and purifier through processes of cultural selection, aesthetic refinement, and the reinterpretation of traditional symbols. This process occurs gradually and without confrontation, reflecting selective and adaptive acculturation oriented toward a balance between tradition and religion. From a sustainable development perspective, these findings indicate that the integration of culture and religion can serve as a foundation for social sustainability and the preservation of local identity (SDG 11 and SDG 16). The transformation of Nyambai practices is evident in more polite behavior, adjustments to dance movements, changes in the content of pantuns, and the strengthened role of religious figures in performances. Modernization also encourages the adoption of traditions that are more structured and aligned with the religious rhythms of the community. Through these practices, the younger generation simultaneously internalizes Islamic cultural and moral values, ultimately shaping a moderate and inclusive religious-cultural identity with strong cultural resilience. This internalization process simultaneously reflects the role of tradition as a medium for culture-based character education that contributes to improving the quality of education (SDG 4) and fostering ethical social relations (SDG 5 and SDG 16). Theoretically, these findings reinforce Koentjaraningrat’s concept of acculturation, Haviland’s theory of cultural selection, Clifford Geertz’s symbolic approach, and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, while also contributing to the enrichment of Islamic anthropological studies regarding the concept of *a living Islam*. This study demonstrates that Islam can thrive and evolve through local cultural media without causing identity conflicts, but rather fostering harmony and the continuity of traditions. Conceptually, this research offers an innovative model of culture-religion acculturation rooted in local traditions and integrated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, thereby expanding the scope of Islamic anthropology toward sustainable development. Practically, the findings of this study have implications for the preservation of Ranau culture, the development of the younger generation, and a more humanistic and contextual approach to cultural da’wah. Reinterpreting traditions is one effective strategy to ensure that Islamic moral values can be transmitted through cultural symbols and practices that are close to people’s daily lives. These implications suggest that local traditions such as Nyambai hold strategic potential as value-based social development instruments in supporting the achievement of the SDGs, particularly in the areas of education (SDG 4), social equality (SDG 5), cultural preservation

(SDG 11), and the building of peaceful societies (SDG 16). Further research is recommended to explore the dynamics of acculturation in other traditions in Ranau or similar indigenous territories, analyze the impact of modern social changes on cultural practices, and develop a theoretical model of acculturation that can be applied to other Muslim communities. In addition, future research also needs to empirically test the contribution of local traditions to SDG indicators, thereby strengthening the relationship between Islamic cultural studies and the global development agenda.

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Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to conceptualization, data collection, analysis, manuscript writing, revision, and approval of the final version.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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