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## **The Influence of *Singo Ulung* Dance in the Celebration of Islamic Festivals**

**Hudaifah**

Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (IIS) Program Pascasarjana,  
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta Universitas  
Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
email: leeivach23@gmail.com

**Ita Rodiah**

Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (IIS) Program Pascasarjana,  
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta Universitas  
Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
email: ita.rodiah@uin-suka.ac.id

### **Abstract**

*Singo Ulung* is an art form originating from Bondowoso Regency, East Java Province, bordered to the west by Jember Regency, to the south by Situbondo Regency, and to the south by Banyuwangi Regency. The population of Bondowoso Regency is 776.252 citizens, and 90% of the population is Muslim. This research aims to discover the relationship between *Singo Ulung* Dance Art in celebrating the Islamic Festival and tohor related religious activities with *Singo Ulung*. The

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method used is descriptive qualitative, which uses observation, documentation, and interview techniques. The result of this research is *Singo Ulung* dance art, which is used to attract the community to carry out da'wah; performing *Singo Ulung* dance can attract the community to enliven the celebration of Islamic festivals and other religious activities.

[*Singo Ulung* adalah kesenian yang berasal dari Kabupaten Bondowoso, Provinsi Jawa Timur, yang berbatasan dengan Kabupaten Jember di sebelah barat, Kabupaten Situbondo di sebelah timur, dan Kabupaten Banyuwangi di sebelah selatan. Jumlah penduduk Kabupaten Bondowoso adalah 776.000 jiwa. 252 jiwa dengan mayoritas 90% beragama Islam. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana hubungan Kesenian Tari *Singo Ulung* dalam perayaan Hari Besar Islam dan kegiatan keagamaan lainnya yang saling berkaitan dengan *Singo Ulung*. metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan teknik observasi, dokumentasi dan wawancara. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah kesenian tari *Singo Ulung* yang digunakan untuk menarik masyarakat dalam melaksanakan dakwah, dengan menampilkan tari *Singo Ulung* mampu menarik masyarakat dalam memeriahkan perayaan hari besar Islam dan kegiatan keagamaan lainnya.]

**Keywords:** tarian *Singo Ulung*; pengaruh; perayaan festival Islam

## **Introduction**

*Singo Ulung* art originates from Bondowoso Regency. Currently, *Singo Ulung* art is a performance that is never absent in every event held by the people of Bondowoso Regency, not only general social events but also religious events featuring *Singo Ulung* Dance to attract people to participate in religious activities, which, if religious activities are less in demand by the community because they are considered not interesting and entertaining for them. Then, *Singo Ulung* Dance was originally only for entertainment for the Bondowoso community, and there were no Islamic elements, and da'wah was not brought. Then, religious leaders at that time attracted people to participate in religious activities, one of them by giving the performance of the *Singo Ulung* Dance. Gradually, this activity became a habit, and every time they held a community event, they did not forget to invite *Singo Ulung* Dance. This is what became a new culture for the people of Bondowoso.

Some literature studies that have discussed the art of *Singo Ulung* Dance are first in the journal of Septani. In his research, he

explored the values of the *Singo Ulung* tradition which contained the value of mutual cooperation of the Blimbing Village community in carrying out rituals. every 13th, 14th, 15th Sya'ban. This tradition is a big celebration.<sup>1</sup> Samuel, in his research, found that in preserving the *singo ulung* culture, digital comic design is a medium because it is easily accessible so that it can attract teenagers to be more familiar with local culture.<sup>2</sup> Zulkainain, in his research, focuses more on new music arrangements for the art of Ronteg *Singo Ulung*, finding more dynamic and progressive music arrangements so that music can be integrated into the Ronteg *Singo Ulung* performance.<sup>3</sup> Akbar also examined the matter in his journal, namely the composition of music for the accompaniment of Ronteg *Singo Ulung* performances. He found that the form of composition consists of several forms of Javanese music using Javanese gamelan in slendro harmony.<sup>4</sup>

An extract from some of the literature in this journal, the researcher wants to examine the *Singo Ulung* Dance art in terms of entertainment that can attract people's enthusiasm to participate in religious events. The purpose of analyzing the *Singo Ulung* Art tradition is to find the relationship between *Singo Ulung* art and the celebration of the Islamic Festival in Bondowso Regency and find why the people of Bondowoso in every celebration of Islamic Festival such as *Muharrom*, *Mulid Nabi Muhammad SAW*, welcoming the arrival of the holy month of *Ramadhan*, recitation, *Haflatul Imtihan*, *Walimatul Ursy*, *Walimatul Khitan* and others. Is there any influence contained in the

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<sup>1</sup> Septania Indri Winarni, "Penggalian Nilai-Nilai Tradisi Singo Ulung Sebagai Relevansi Pembelajaran," *Fon: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia* 15, no. 2 (2019): 12-19, <http://journal.uniku.ac.id/index.php/FON/article/view/2164>.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Putra Anugrah and Baroto Tavip Indrojarwo, "Perancangan Komik Digital Legenda Singo Ulung Sebagai Media Pelestarian Cerita Rakyat Kabupaten Bondowoso," *Jurnal Sains dan Seni ITS* 7, no. 1 (2018): 30-34, [https://ejurnal.its.ac.id/index.php/sains\\_seni/article/viewFile/29513](https://ejurnal.its.ac.id/index.php/sains_seni/article/viewFile/29513)

<sup>3</sup> Zulkarnain Mistortoify, Aris Setiawan, and Mutiara Dewi Fatimah, "Aransemen Musik Baru Kesenian Ronteg Singo Ulung pada Sanggar Gema Buana, Desa Prajejan Kidul, Kabupaten Bondowoso, Jawa Timur," *Abdi Seni* 13, no. 2 (Desember 2022): 143-52, <https://doi.org/10.33153/abdiseni.v13i2.4343>.

<sup>4</sup> Akbar Bhagaskoro, "Bentuk Komposisi Musik Pengiring Seni Pertunjukan Ronteg Singo Ulung di Padepokan Seni Gema Buana Desa Prajejan Kidul Kecamatan Prajejan Kabupaten Bondowoso Provinsi Jawa Timur," *Jurnal Seni Musik* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1-13, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jsm.v3i1.4062>.

implementation of *Singo Ulung* Art so that this art exists in every celebration of the Islamic Festival?

Given the increasing number of people in Bondowoso Regency who are enthusiastic about the art of *Singo Ulung* Dance, if you look at the phenomenon, *Singo Ulung* Dance is very prevalent in every activity, both in general and religiously. So, to attract the attention and enthusiasm of the community to attend religious events in Bondowoso Regency, *Singo Ulung* Dance is used as an accompaniment. Thus, the researcher hypothesized that *Singo Ulung* Dance influences the celebration of the Islamic Festival.

The province of East Java is bordered to the west by Jember Regency, to the south by Situbondo Regency, and to the south by Banyuwangi Regency. The population of Bondowoso district is 776.252, and 90% of the population is Muslim.<sup>5</sup> It is not surprising that the celebration of the Islamic Festival in Bondowoso Regency is celebrated with great fanfare, one of which is by performing the *Singo Ulung* Dance. Besides being famous for the *Singo Ulung* art, Bondowoso Regency is also famous for its specialty food, Tape. *Singo Ulung* art is a dance with four roles, the first is the singo, while the second plays the role of panji or jasminah, the third is the last female dancer warok.<sup>6</sup> In its implementation, the dancer must use a lion-shaped costume, and the movements displayed resemble lion movements. The use of costumes is also different for lion role dancers, who use lion costumes made of white raffia rope. This raffian rope will be unraveled to form like a lion's fur for the lion's head which is used almost the same material as the barong lion head in the Reog Ponorogo dance.<sup>7</sup>

Then for Panji using topen dance costumes and female dancers using kebaya and sampur, finally warok wearing all black clothes with a red and white striped shirt typical of Madura and carrying a rattan in the story warok is described as an animal trainer. This dance also has similarities with Barongsai, but the difference is in the costumes where

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<sup>5</sup>“BPS Kabupaten Bondowoso,” accessed Desember 11, 2023, <https://bondowoso.kab.bps.go.id/publication/2021/02/26/84e659e75ba52cc51705756b/kabupaten-bondowoso-dalam-angka-2021.html>.

<sup>6</sup>Liputan6.com, “Asal Usul Tari Singo Ulung dan Kemunculan Desa Belimbing Jawa Timur,” accessed Februari 2023, <https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/5199475/asal-usul-tari-singo-ulung-dan-kemunculan-desa-belimbing-jawa-timur>.

<sup>7</sup>“Makna dan Sejarah Tari Singo Ulung,” *Sering Jalan* (blog), 24 April 2020, <https://seringjalan.com/makna-dan-sejarah-tari-singo-ulung/>.

Taria *Singo Ulung* is simpler, and the theme presented is also much different.<sup>8</sup> *Singo Ulung* is an attraction show that moves and dances its movements exactly like a lion, plus a costume that strongly resembles a lion, and its behavior is made to look like a lion. The *Singo Ulung* dance is also accompanied by traditional music such as gamelan, but nowadays, it is carried out by a drum band, and sound system music is paraded using a pickup truck. *Singo Ulung* art is an intangible cultural heritage. *Singo Ulung* art is a performing art or performance art, which is an art show by displaying, and there are several other pieces of equipment as musical accompaniment.



**Figure 1.** The Singo Ulung Dance

## Methods

This research uses descriptive and supported qualitative methods.<sup>9</sup> In this study, using deep interview technique with five people of Bondowoso Regency with criteria two people named Wilda and Ikka

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<sup>8</sup> Liputan6.com, “Asal Usul Tari Singo Ulung dan Kemunculan Desa Belimbing Jawa Timur.”

<sup>9</sup> Marinu Waruwu, “Pendekatan Penelitian Pendidikan: Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif dan Metode Penelitian Kombinasi (Mixed Method),” *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 7, no. 1 (April 2023): 2896–2910, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v7i1.6187>.

general public, Ais as a lover of *Singo Ulung* Dance, Soni as an ustaz as a respondent who when there is a Haflatul Imtihan event at the madrasa always performs *Singo Ulung* Dance and Khoifulla as a religious figure. All respondents have had direct contact with *Singo Ulung* Dance. Besides that, researchers also use observation and documentation techniques when the data obtained is managed using triangulation.<sup>10</sup> This data is also strengthened by a literature review by collecting previous studies on the art of *Singo Ulung* Dance within the last 10 years to strengthen the data.<sup>11</sup>

## **Results**

### **History of the formation of *Singo Ulung* dance art**

The history of *Singo Ulung* begins with a man named Juk Seng. He was a nobleman from Blambangan Banyuwangi titled *Singo Ulung* when he traveled west and entered a forest filled with blimbing plants. Juk Seng's arrival attracted the attention of a powerful figure in the forest, Ki Jasminah. Seeing this, Ki Jasminah was interested in challenging the magic of Juk Seng, so the two of them fought Ki Jasminah using his flagship weapon, namely a stick, while Juk Seng was armed with a kris. Both of them dragged on in a fierce battle until finally, no one lost because both of them were equally powerful. Then the two stopped attacking each other and, looked at each other and smiled. At the end, they agreed to become friends.

Finally, Juk Seng was accepted in the area. When he arrived under the tree, Juk Seng asked what kind of tree it was. It turned out to be a starfruit tree. Since then, the forest changed its name to Desa Belimbing, and at this time, the former tree became *Singo Ulung*'s studio, where every year, an Istighosah event is held. One day, Juk Seng had the idea to make a *Singo Ulung* dance that was animated by two people in one lion's body, one in front holding the head and moving the lion's head, the other behind as the legs. *Singo Ulung* dance is a combination of mask dance and ojung dance. The *Singo Ulung* dance

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<sup>10</sup> Andarusni Alfansyur and Mariyani Mariyani, "Seni Mengelola Data: Penerapan Triangulasi Teknik, Sumber dan Waktu pada Penelitian Pendidikan Sosial," *Historis: Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Sejarah* 5, no. 2 (2020): 146–50. <https://journal.ummat.ac.id/index.php/historis/article/view/3432>

<sup>11</sup> Miza Nina Adlini et al., "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Studi Pustaka," *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan* 6, no. 1 (Maret 2022): 974–80, <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v6i1.3394>.

consists of *Singo Ulung*, Thanda' Bhini' dancers and kona mask dancers accompanied by gamelan music so that it becomes an appreciative and attractive dance.<sup>12</sup> *Topeng Kona* is symbolized as *Juk Seng* because he was the Demang of Belimbing village at the time. *Juk Seng's* real name is unknown as he was a nobleman. The name *Juk Seng* is a nickname made up of two words, *Jujuk* meaning Embah and *Seng* from the word *Senga'* meaning lion.<sup>13</sup>

*Singo Ulung* dance was created as an illustration of the magic possessed by Juk Seng. It is said that *Singo Ulung* Dance is a picture of the magic possessed by Juk Seng, who has the ability to talk to lions and get help from these animals when experiencing difficulties. Therefore, Juk Seng earned the nickname *Singo Ulung*, meaning a lion without a match.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 2.** The Singo Ulung Dance Attraction

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<sup>12</sup> Bhagaskoro, "Bentuk Komposisi Musik Pengiring Seni Pertunjukan Ronteg Singo Ulung di Padepokan Seni Gema Buana Desa Prajekan Kidul Kecamatan Prajekan Kabupaten Bondowoso Provinsi Jawa Timur."

<sup>13</sup> Kayan Swastika, Sumarno, and Agung Wahyu R., "Dinamika Kesenian Topèng Kona di Desa Blimbing Kecamatan Klabang Kabupaten Bondowoso Tahun 1942-2014," *LSP-Jurnal Ilmiah Dosen*, August 31, 2016, 104–17, <http://repository.unej.ac.id/handle/123456789/76825>.

<sup>14</sup> "Cerita Singo Ulung dalam Tradisi Lisan Masyarakat Bondowoso – Balai Bahasa Provinsi Jawa Timur," 9 Januari 2023, <https://balaibahasajatim.kemdikbud.go.id/2023/01/09/cerita-singo-ulung-dalam-tradisi-lisan-masyarakat-bondowoso/>.

### **Celebration of Islamic Festival in Bondowoso Regency**

The commemoration of Islamic holidays is an activity that aims to spread Islam and explore the history and meaning that occurred why that day was made a historical day by Muslims. The purpose of this activity is to teach Islamic values to the community so that they do not forget these values. The material presented is also lectured and accompanied by jokes so that people who listen do not feel patronized, people who do not know are made aware, and those who already know are reminded to practice these values consistently.<sup>15</sup>

Every Islamic festival in Bondowoso Regency is celebrated, and the *Singo Ulung* dance is also featured in this celebration. The first is the celebration of the *Maulid* of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The Prophet's *Maulid* is a commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in Indonesia, which falls on 12 Robiul Awal in the Hijri calendar. The celebration of the Prophet's *Maulid* developed long after the Prophet's death. It is a symbol of our respect for the Prophet. The celebration of the Prophet's *Maulid* was first held by King Ibril named Muzhaffaruddin al-kukbiri in the early 7th century in the celebration the king invited all his people and several scholars. Thousands of goats and camels were slaughtered to provide food for the celebrants.<sup>16</sup>

this celebration is carried out during the month of *Robi'ul Awal* usually a recitation and carnival are held. First, the carnival is held with the *Singo Ulung* dance and the recitation of salawat after traveling around then the actors in the carnival will stop at a place that has become *sohibul bait*. They call it the person who held *Maulud* by inviting a Kiai from the next city to give a lecture because this commemorates the *Maulid* of the Prophet, so the lecture's theme is the privileges of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

In Javanese beliefs, the celebration of the Islamic New Year is called 1 Muharrom, and Javanese people call 1 Syuro in its implementation. Javanese people believe it has a spiritual meaning as a manifestation of time change. Javanese people believe that this time

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<sup>15</sup> Eddy Saputra and Ahmad Muhajir, "Penanaman dan Penguatan Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Melalui Perayaan Hari Besar Islam," *Al Ashriyyah* 5, no. 2 (Oktober 2019): 293–309, <https://doi.org/10.53038/alashriyyah.v5i2.96>.

<sup>16</sup> Ahmad Suriadi, "Akulturasi Budaya dalam Tradisi Maulid Nabi Muhammad di Nusantara," *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora* 17, no. 1 (Desember 2019): 167–90, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v17i1.2946>.



change has an impact on human life. 1 Muharram is also an important day for Muslims, so it is used as a national holiday. The celebration of the Islamic New Year is different in different parts of Indonesia, and the Bondowoso community celebrates it with a carnival accompanied by the Singo Ulung dance.<sup>17</sup> The celebration of the Islamic New Year (*1 Muharram*) is the same as the mawlid celebration. The only difference is that there is no lecture event; the celebration of the Islamic New Year (*1 Muharram*) is carried out by a traveling carnival accompanied by *Singo Ulung* Dance to enliven it,

The third *Singo Ulung* dance is held in order to welcome the holy month of Ramadan and the village clean-up event precisely in Blimbing Village as the birthplace of *Singo Ulung*. Clean village is a tradition carried out by the Javanese community. The purpose of this clean village event is to show gratitude for the grace of sustenance obtained by the village community. In addition, this clean village event is also known as a form of bad luck.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of the village cleanup is to ask for the safety and welfare of Blimbing villagers.

Not only in the celebration of the Islamic Festival, there are also Islamic celebrations such as the *Haflatul Imtihan* event (religious school class promotion celebration day). The *Haflatul Imtihan* event is held at the end of every school year in a *pesantren* or *surau*. It is also necessary to improve the quality of religious education so that the next generation of the nation can become a successor that is not weakened by religious education and that this religious learning activity is able to form the character of the nation's children who are religious, honest, tolerant, caring for the community and responsible.<sup>19</sup> This event is enlivened with competitions for students, and the top night invites *Kiai* to give a lecture, but before the lecture is held, the *Singo Ulung* Dance and drum band as musical accompaniment are performed first and as a form of welcome to the *Kiai* who lectures.

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<sup>17</sup> Rudi Triyo Bowo, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Tradisi Peringatan Tahun Baru Hijriyah," *Mudarrisa: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2009): 99–116, <https://doi.org/10.18326/mdr.v1i1.99-116>

<sup>18</sup> Dadang Sundawa and Ludovikus Bomans Wadu, "Implementasi Nilai Karakter Religius dalam Tradisi Bersih Desa," *Jurnal Moral Kemasyarakatan* 6, no. 2 (2021): 77–82, <https://doi.org/10.21067/jmk.v6i2.6488>

<sup>19</sup> Dani Hamdani et al., "Pengaruh Peringatan Hari Besar Islam Terhadap Santri dan Santriah di Pesantren Al-Munawwir," *Proceedings UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung* 1, no. 5 (2021): 54–60.

*Singo Ulung* Dance is also used for other Islamic events such as *Walimatul Ursy* and *Walimatul Khitan*. *Walimatul Ursy* is a wedding celebration. The owner of the event holds a wedding feast, inviting relatives, neighbors, and friends to witness the wedding by serving food and drink as a form of gratitude to God for allowing his son and daughter to marry.<sup>20</sup> Marriage is a sacred moment for a person's life, so it is recommended to announce the marriage in public, one of which is with *Walimatul Ursy*. The Prophet Muhammad SAW recommends that the *Walimatul Ursy* be accompanied by entertainment to enliven the event because everyone wants a sacred event to be held with great fanfare.<sup>21</sup> One of the forms of enlivening the wedding of the Bondowoso Regency community by performing *Singo Ulung* dance is performed at night to entertain the guests present.

*Walimatul Khitan* is a thanksgiving event for a boy who has just completed circumcision. This event is held as a form of gratitude from the parents for the completion of the circumcision procession by inviting their relatives and the community to join in the happiness. *Walimah Khitan* is usually held when the child has recovered from the pain of the circumcision wound.<sup>22</sup> *Singo Ulung* dance is performed to accompany the child who has dared to be circumcised, and the child is paraded from the road to his house using a decorated rickshaw and accompanied by the *Singo Ulung* attraction enlivened by drumband music in its implementation. Not only in the celebration of Islamic Festival *Singo Ulung* dance is also used to attract charity house to house the results of this charity money will later be used to build mosques, *Madrasah*, and *Surau* and for the smooth running of religious activities.

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<sup>20</sup> Triyani Oktofiyah, Jaedi, and Kurnaengsih, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam dalam Acara Walimatul 'Ursy dalam Sebuah Perkawinan di Desa Kasmaran Kec. Widasari Kabupaten Indramayu," *Journal Islamic Pedagogia* 2, no. 2 (September 2022): 72–78, <https://doi.org/10.31943/pedagogia.v2i2.80>.

<sup>21</sup> Agus Mahfudin and Muhammad Ali Mafthuchin, "Tradisi Hiburan Dangdut dalam Walimatul 'Ursy," *Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 5, no. 1 (September 2020): 62–78.

<sup>22</sup> Randy Maulana Yusuf, "Aspek–Aspek Transaksional dalam Penggunaan Rokok Sebagai Sarana Undangan Khitan dalam Perspektif Urf: Studi di Desa Batang-Batang Laok, Kabupaten Sumenep" (undergraduate, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2020), <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/24926/>.



**Figure 3.** The *Singo Ulung* Dance in wedding ceremony

Based on the results of the interviews, why every event in Bondowoso Regency and, especially Islamic activities such as Maulid Nabi, Islamic New Year (1 Muharram), cleaning the village, and welcoming the holy month of *Ramadan*, *Haflatul Imtihan*, *Walimatul Ursy*, *Walimatul Khitan*, and charity events. And even other social events, but this analysis is more focused on events related to Islam. Here the author interviewed several Bondowoso people, the first being Aisiyah, who is a lover of the art of Singo Ulung, with the question of why every celebration of Islamic Festival is always presented with Singo Ulung Dance. The answer is that Singo Ulung Dance is an original art owned by Bondowoso Regency, besides us as the younger generation to continue to preserve the culture that we have, therefore Singo Ulung Dance is always performed, especially at religious events. For religious events.

Culture is the result of human work in which it contains elements of the order of life which contains knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customary laws and all community habits.<sup>23</sup> especially Islam, Singo Ulung Dance is used to enliven the event so that this monotonous religious event becomes more lively. For example, suppose you see the

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<sup>23</sup> Abdul Wahab Syakhrani and Muhammad Luthfi Kamil, "Budaya dan Kebudayaan: Tinjauan dari Berbagai Pakar, Wujud-Wujud Kebudayaan, 7 Unsur Kebudayaan Yang Bersifat Universal," *Cross-Border* 5, no. 1 (April 2022): 782–91. <https://journal.iaisambas.ac.id/index.php/Cross-Border/article/view/1161>

recitation of *salawat* to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In that case, people tend to be sleepy and easily bored because of the monotony, so with the traveling *Salawat* accompanied by the Singo Ulung Dance performance, the community becomes enthusiastic about participating in *Salawat* activities around the village; this event is usually done when commemorating the Maulid of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

Carnival is a grand celebration held by several regions, and this carnival is considered a cultural heritage and tradition that enlivens an event. In Indonesia itself, a carnival is held to welcome a sacred day. Carnival is also known as an audience attraction because several arts are displayed.<sup>24</sup> Like an example of a carnival in the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Mulid. Not only for small village areas, this traveling *salawat* activity is usually carried out between sub-districts and even between districts with the holding of a Carnival event in order to welcome the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, there are also many arts that are displayed in addition to Singo Ulung Dance accompanied by Rebana music, lined up neatly along the road with the first order of Singo Ulung Dance as an icon to enliven the next event in the second row of *salawat* readers accompanied by Rebana music so that the event becomes more enjoyable for both young people and old people.

Parade is also included in the meaning of carnival, a celebration usually of various interesting patterns to be displayed in the parade event. Parades are referred to as marches because in the arrangement of the people who appear in the parade march in order from front to back in a series of events.<sup>25</sup> For example, the Bondowoso community holds a parade every Islamic New Year commemoration. Furthermore, the results of the second interview with Wilda, an ordinary citizen with almost the same question why every religious event in Bondowoso Regency is identical to the performance of Singo Ulung Dance. The answer is that the purpose of the Singo Ulung Dance is to entertain the

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<sup>24</sup> Dwi Ariyani Reza and Winarto, "Karnaval Satanic Brazil dalam Pemikiran Aqidah Ibnu Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah," *El-Adabi: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 2 (Desember 2023): 26–43, <https://doi.org/10.59166/el-adabi.v2i2.54>.

<sup>25</sup> Robingun Suyud El Syam, "Strategi Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Moderasi Beragama Melalui Ekspresi Karnaval Budaya pada Acara Haflah Khatmil Qur'an Pesantren Al-Asya'ariyyah Wonosobo," *Jurnal Sadewa : Publikasi Ilmu Pendidikan, Pembelajaran dan Ilmu Sosial* 1, no. 3 (Agustus 2023): 174–93, <https://doi.org/10.61132/sadewa.v1i3.56>.

audience and attract the audience's interest in taking part in the activity. For example, the commemoration of the Islamic New Year (1 Muharram) is actually just an ordinary carnival of Singo Ulung Dance with Drumband music that enlivens it and goes around along the road to entertain the community and contains a religious value in the form of a warning that today is the Islamic New Year. So as to warn the public that in the Islamic calendar, the year has changed, the value of da'wah contained is that when it is commemorated with the turn of the year, it will remind us that we live in this world is getting less and less old so don't forget to keep repenting.

The arts will not run smoothly without the support of the community itself. In performing arts, the appreciation of the community is most important because it will always be watched and appreciated by people who have an interest in the arts. The arts will continue to exist if the local community preserves and develops the arts.<sup>26</sup> For example, by participating in every event related to the arts as a form of our appreciation for the arts that belong to us. The third interview with Soni, a Ustad, still asks the same question about why every Islamic event in Bondowoso Regency always features the Singo Ulung Dance. He replied that the Singo Ulung Dance is an entertaining art, especially with the musical accompaniment and the dance of the lion that sways like a walking lion and a lion that will pounce on its prey. An example of an activity that we can see is the Haflatul Imtihan event; this event is most favored by children because it is the culmination of their learning outcomes, namely the end of this year's lessons, and will advance to the next level of education.

*Haflatul Imtihan* is only held by religious schools such as Pesantren and Surau or better known as afternoon diniyah schools. And the peak night of this diniyah school is the *Haflatul Imtihan* event. Singo Ulung Dance performances are used to enliven the event on the peak night and the distribution of prizes to students with achievements, the point of this Haflatul Imtihan event is to give appreciation to students so that they continue to be enthusiastic in studying and carving achievements throughout the ages.

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<sup>26</sup> Putri Dwianggini, Ismunandar Ismunandar, and Imma Fretisari, "Eksistensi Tari Jepin Langkah Penghibur Pengantin di Kota Pontianak Kalimantan Barat," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Khatulistiwa (JPPK)* 10, no. 6 (2021): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.26418/jppk.v10i6.47851>.

A wedding is a sacred celebration for someone, so the owner of the event will usually animate their wedding event. The hobbies that are held can vary. Entertainment at a wedding has been practiced since the time of Rasulullah Muhammad SAW, and it is recommended by Rasulullah SAW to have entertainment at a wedding, such as singing and music, as long as it does not lead to sin. It is permissible to hold entertainment at a wedding because it is a form of excitement and good feelings for the bride and groom and the people who enjoy the entertainment.<sup>27</sup> As the people of Bondowoso Regency in enlivening their wedding by performing Singo Ulung Dance.

The fourth interview was with an ordinary citizen, Ikka, with the same question of why every event is always juxtaposed with the Singo Ulung Dance. The answer is that Singo Ulung Dance is a way to enliven events such as the Walimatul Ursy event, better known as a wedding thanksgiving event; the purpose of the Walimatul Ursy event is an expression of gratitude from the host for being able to marry off his son and daughter. Singo Ulung Dance was invited to the Walimatul Ursy event as a form of gratitude and happiness to the owner of the house for being able to marry off his son and daughter he invited Singo Ulung Dance and performed at the Walimatul Ursy event to share happiness with the surrounding community with the performance of Singo Ulung Dance. Not only gratitude for marriage, there is another called Walimatul Khitan, which is a form of gratitude for parents who have male children who have been circumcised. This event is carried out with great fanfare for some people to make their sons happy by inviting Singo Ulung Dance; the purpose is not only to thank the parents but also to make their sons feel entertained so that they do not feel too much pain after circumcision.

Art is an entertainment for the community. However, when faced with the preaching of Islam in the hands of Sunan Kalijaga, the arts could become a field of preaching to spread Islam. The art that became the media for the da'wah of Sunan Kalijaga in the form of puppet propagation using the media of puppet art Sunan Kalijaga

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<sup>27</sup> Heradani Heradani and Lomba Sultan, "Tinjauan Hukum Islam Terhadap Tradisi Hiburan dalam Pesta Perkawinan (Walimah Al-'Urs) di Kecamatan Bontomarannu Kabupaten Gowa," *Qadauna: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Hukum Keluarga Islam* 1, no. 1 (2019): 17–33, <https://doi.org/10.24252/qadauna.v1i1.11425>.

included teaching Islamic functions in daily life.<sup>28</sup> This unique da'wah of Sunan Kalijaga became an example for his successors, namely delivering da'wah through the arts, which will be continued with the results of the interview below on how religious leaders in Bondowoso Regency attracted public interest in Islamic da'wah using the arts.

The last interview with Haip, a religious figure, asked the same question about why, in every event, Singo Ulung dance becomes iconic in enlivening an event. The answer is that before the start of an event, especially a religious event, it does not attract public interest because the event is monotonous and does not contain entertainment. Before the event starts, the Singo Ulung Dance will be shown as an example of recitation; if only recitation, the community will be less interested in following it because there is nothing interesting before the event, the organizing committee will hold a performance of Singo Ulung Dance. This method is the same as the da'wah method carried out by the spreader of Islam in Java, namely Sunan Kali Jaga, who uses art to deliver his da'wah so that the community easily accepts it. But it is not only Singo Ulung Dance that attracts the community; the lecturer in the recitation must make the community interested; for example, the lecture from the Kiai is famous for its humor because that way, the community is more interesting to listen to. Singo Ulung Dance is also used for charity events, and the money generated from charity events is used for mosque construction and religious activities, as mentioned above.

Man naturally loves beauty, so it cannot be separated from art in human life. Art is the beauty in which human instincts and feelings are contained. Art is capable of bringing a sense of pleasure to the self. Seeing the value of beauty in art, it's used as a da'wah approach. The purpose of Da'wah is to use art to attract people to enjoy the Da'wah being imparted.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Abd Rohim and Muchlis, "Strategi Dakwah Sunan Kalijaga dalam Buku Atlas Wali Songo Karya Agus Sunyoto," *DA'WA: Jurnal Bimbingan Penyuluhan & Konseling Islam* 1, no. 2 (Februari 2022), <https://doi.org/10.36420/dawa.v1i2.93>.

<sup>29</sup> Ahmad Sahlan Abdul Hatim and Mohd Nizam Sahad, "Pendekatan Dakwah Kontemporer Melalui Kesenian," *Jurnal Islam dan Masyarakat Kontemporer* 21, no. 1 (Juli 2020): 134–48, <https://doi.org/10.37231/jimk.2020.21.1.392>.



**Figure 4.** The *Singo Ulung* Dance Moves

## Discussion

Art is a human activity that is done unconsciously to form aesthetics. Therefore, art is often related to beauty and aesthetics. As a beauty, art has a great influence on civilization and changes humans themselves.<sup>30</sup> Folk art or local art that develops in the community is often referred to as traditional art. The elements of traditional art are very complex, consisting of religious systems and religious ceremonies, religious organization systems, community organization systems, knowledge systems, arts, etc.<sup>31</sup>

Based on the explanation of several interviewees, it was found that Singo Ulung Dance Art in Bondowoso Regency is a culture that is very attached to the Bondowoso community so that in any event, Singo Ulung Dance Art becomes iconic in an event not only in social events, this has entered into religious events where in this study the focus is on

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<sup>30</sup> Ahmad Ghazali Syafi'i and Masbukin Masbukin, "Kaligrafi Dan Peradaban Islam: Sejarah dan Pengaruhnya bagi Kebudayaan Islam di Nusantara," *Nusantara; Journal for Southeast Asian Islamic Studies* 17, no. 2 (Januari 2022): 68–75, <https://doi.org/10.24014/nusantara.v17i2.16300>.

<sup>31</sup> Bagus Wahyu Setyawan, "Akulturasi Budaya Islam-Jawa dalam Pementasan Kesenian Ketoprak," *Dance and Theatre Review* 2, no. 1 (2019): 25–34, <https://doi.org/10.24821/dtr.v2i1.3297>.



Islamic religious events such as celebrations of Islamic festivals and events with Islamic nuances, for example Maulid Nabi, Islamic New Year (1 Muharrom), Walimatul Khitan, Walimatul Ursy. This is a combination of arts used as a medium in enlivening da'wah. As the figure who spread Islam on the island of Java, Sunan Kali Jaga, made art as a medium for da'wah. The difference is that if Sunan Kali Jaga, in performing the arts, contains preaching material, *Singo Ulung* is used to attract people to follow the event after the *Singo Ulung* Dance is performed.

The breadth of Sunan Kali Jaga's knowledge, both in terms of religion and cultural knowledge (Java), is what made Sunan Kali Jaga able to integrate the two into a method of da'wah. In acculturating culture, Sunan Kali Jaga was not careless because acculturation of Islamic culture cannot be done carelessly; it cannot be done if it crosses the line or violates God's rules such as halal and haram; this acculturation brings goodness and does not cause damage. The method used by Sunan Kali Jaga slowly began to be accepted by the Javanese people, and Islamic values began to be embedded until, over time, the teachings of Islam mixed with local culture were well received without violence and bloodshed in the community.<sup>32</sup> As Sunan Kali Jaga made Wayang Kulit art as a method of preaching not only as mental entertainment but also ukhrawi entertainment. The method used by Sunan Kali Jaga became a guideline at that time by religious leaders in Bondowoso Regency in acculturating the *Singo Ulung* Dance art to attract public interest in enlivening religious events.

Redfield, an acculturation anthropologist, is a social phenomenon between the two groups that produce culture, and indirectly, these two groups are in intensive contact with each other for a long period, then these habits change and become a new culture.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, *Singo Ulung* Dance Art was originally only as entertainment for the Bondowoso community in which no Islamic elements and da'wah were brought. Then, religious leaders at that time attracted people to participate in religious activities by giving the *Singo Ulung* Dance performance. Gradually, this activity became a habit, and every

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<sup>32</sup> Naufaldi Alif, Laily Mafthukhatul, and Majidatun Ahmala, "Akulturasi Budaya Jawa dan Islam Melalui Dakwah Sunan Kalijaga," *Al'adalah* 23, no. 2 (Oktober 2020): 143–62, <https://doi.org/10.35719/aladalah.v23i2.32>.

<sup>33</sup> Setyawan, "Akulturasi Budaya Islam-Jawa Dalam Pementasan Kesenian Ketoprak," 12.

time they held a community event, they did not forget to invite Singo Ulung Dance. This is what became a new culture for the people of Bondowoso.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that *Singo Ulung* Dance has become an iconic style of the Bondowoso Regency community; apart from being a culture, *Singo Ulung* Dance is also a method of spreading Islamic propaganda indirectly, as was done by Sunan Kali Jaga in the shadow puppet play, which does not only contain entertainment but there is an Islamic value contained in the story. This method is the foundation for religious leaders in Bondowoso Regency to combine art in every religious activity because the *Singo Ulung* Dance performance makes the community enthusiastic to enliven the event, especially Islamic events, which are boring. Such a combination of two different cultures is able to form a new culture, namely art as an attraction in conveying Islamic propagation.

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