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## Echoes of devotion: Okokan in Tabanan as ritual sound, social cohesion, and Balinese spiritual life

M. Agus Sutiarto<sup>1</sup>, Jumbuh Hakim<sup>2</sup>, Chet Narayan Acharya<sup>3</sup>, Nirdosh Agarwal<sup>4</sup>, Md. Alaul Haque<sup>5</sup>, Asma Khan<sup>6</sup>, Tijjani Ahmed Ajayi<sup>7</sup>

Institut Pariwisata dan Bisnis Internasional, INDONESIA<sup>1</sup>  
Universitas Mataram, INDONESIA<sup>2</sup>  
Academy of Innovation for Economic Development NEPAL<sup>3</sup>  
SunRise University, INDIA<sup>4</sup>  
Metropolitan University, Sylhet, BANGLADESH<sup>5</sup>  
Universiti Putra Malaysia, MALAYSIA<sup>6</sup>  
Shehu Shagari University of Education Sokoto, NIGERIA<sup>7</sup>

**Abstract** - The *Tektekan Okokan* tradition of Kediri, Tabanan, is a surviving Balinese ritual using sonic instruments—*Okokan*, *Kulkul*, and *Tengteng*—to repel disease outbreaks (*grubug*) and neutralize negative forces in the village. Historically performed for days or even months following spiritual messages (*pawisik*) and signs of occult disturbance, today it is mainly held on *Pengerupukan*, the eve of *Nyepi*, as a replacement for *ogoh-ogoh* processions while circling the village. This practice inspires the creation of a contemporary fashion collection. Data on the tradition were obtained through literature study, observation, and documentation. The design process follows the eight-stage Frangipani method (design brief; research and sourcing; design development; final collection; prototype, sampling, and construction; promotion, branding, and sales; production; and business). The resulting works comprise three categories—ready to wear, ready to wear deluxe, and haute couture—visualizing *Tektekan Okokan* through selected keywords and plague-like, enveloping motif details that symbolically depict the village under attack and ritually protected.

**Keywords:** *okokan* tradition; *tektekan* ritual; spiritual heritage; fashion design inspiration; Balinese culture

### 1. Introduction

Bali is widely recognized as a cultural landscape where religion, art, and everyday life are deeply intertwined. Ritual performance and sound play a central role in Balinese Hindu practice, serving not merely as aesthetic expression but as a medium for communication with the spiritual realm and for maintaining social harmony. Among the many ritual sound traditions of Bali, *Okokan* represents a distinctive cultural practice rooted in the agricultural and ritual life of the people of *Tabanan Regency*, particularly in Kediri Village.

Originally, the *Okokan* was a wooden bell traditionally hung around the neck of cattle, producing a resonant and rumbling sound when shaken. Over time, this utilitarian object evolved into a ritual instrument used collectively in ceremonial performances intended to repel negative forces and restore cosmic balance (Putri & Pratiwi, 2023). In ritual contexts, the loud and rhythmic sounds generated by groups of performers carrying *Okokan* instruments are believed to create vibrational energy capable of neutralizing harmful influences and protecting the community.



Within Balinese cosmology, ritual sound is often linked to the concept of cosmic harmony between humans, nature, and the divine. The Okokan tradition is closely associated with the *Nangluk Merana* ritual and the pre-Nyepi purification ceremonies, where the sonic performance functions as a protective mechanism against outbreaks of disease or spiritual disturbances. Scholars have noted that the sound of Okokan is perceived not only as musical expression but also as a symbolic act that channels collective devotion toward Sang Hyang Widhi (the Supreme God in Balinese Hinduism) (Sedana et al., 2019).

The performance of Okokan involves coordinated movement, dance gestures, and communal participation. The performers move through village spaces while shaking the wooden bells rhythmically, accompanied by chanting, costumes, and dramatic expressions. These elements transform the sonic practice into a performative ritual that embodies local beliefs about harmony, purification, and protection. Symbolically, the performance represents the human effort to maintain balance within the triadic relationship between humans, nature, and the divine, commonly articulated through the Balinese philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*.

Beyond its ritual function, the Okokan tradition also plays a crucial role in shaping social identity and collective memory. Community members—particularly youth groups—participate actively in the preparation and performance of Okokan ceremonies. Through these activities, knowledge of cultural values, ritual practices, and local history is transmitted across generations. As Wulandari, Upadani, and Alfarisi (2020) observe, the symbolic interactions embedded in the Okokan tradition reflect noble cultural values such as harmony, cooperation, and devotion, reinforcing social cohesion within the village community.

However, the contemporary transformation of Balinese society has introduced new dynamics that affect the continuity of traditional rituals. Tourism development, modernization, and commercialization have contributed to shifts in the function and meaning of the Okokan tradition. In some cases, ritual performances that were once strictly sacred have been adapted for cultural festivals and tourism events, raising concerns about the desacralization of the tradition. Recent studies indicate that such transformations can alter the symbolic significance of Okokan, shifting its value from ritual meaning toward economic or entertainment purposes (Wulandari et al., 2024).

This evolving context highlights the need for deeper scholarly exploration of the Okokan tradition not merely as a cultural artifact but as a living sound practice embedded within religious life, social relations, and community identity. Understanding how Okokan operates simultaneously as ritual sound, social practice, and cultural heritage is essential for appreciating its significance in Balinese spiritual life.

Despite growing scholarly attention to Balinese ritual performance, studies focusing specifically on sound as a medium of social cohesion and spiritual expression remain relatively limited. Many existing studies on Okokan emphasize tourism commodification, legal protection, or cultural transformation. While these perspectives provide valuable insights, they often overlook the experiential and communal dimensions of the ritual sound itself.

Furthermore, as modernization and tourism reshape cultural practices in Bali, traditional rituals risk losing their original meanings or being recontextualized as staged cultural performances. Investigating the role of Okokan as a sonic ritual practice can therefore contribute to broader discussions about **cultural sustainability**, ritual continuity, and community identity in contemporary Bali.

This research is urgent because it addresses the intersection between ritual sound, communal participation, and spiritual belief, offering a more holistic understanding of how traditional practices function within living religious communities. By documenting and analysing the Okokan tradition in Tabanan, this study aims to contribute to the preservation and scholarly interpretation of Balinese intangible cultural heritage.

Several key concepts are central to this research. Okokan – A traditional wooden bell originally used for livestock that has evolved into a ritual instrument performed collectively in ceremonial contexts in Bali. Ritual Sound – Acoustic expressions used within religious or ceremonial contexts to convey spiritual meaning or influence cosmological balance. Social Cohesion – The bonds and shared values that unite members of a community through collective practices and rituals. Balinese Spiritual Life – The integration of religious belief, ritual practice, and daily social interactions within Balinese Hindu society.

This research draws upon several theoretical perspectives. Symbolic interactionism emphasizes how meaning is created through social interaction and shared symbols. Ritual objects and performances, including Okokan, function as symbolic expressions through which community members interpret spiritual values and collective identity. Studies applying this framework have shown that the symbolic elements within Okokan performances represent harmony between humans, nature, and the divine (Wulandari et al., 2020). Anthropological perspectives on ritual sound emphasize that sound can serve as a powerful medium

for shaping emotional experience and spiritual perception. Ritual sound practices create immersive environments that reinforce collective belief systems and communal participation.

Theories of cultural heritage examine how traditions evolve as they interact with modern social, economic, and tourism dynamics. In the case of Okokan, this framework helps analyse the tension between preserving ritual authenticity and adapting cultural practices for broader audiences. Theoretical frameworks suitable for studying Okokan in Tabanan as ritual sound, social cohesion, and Balinese spiritual life include symbolic interactionism, which helps interpret how ritual sounds convey communal identity and spiritual meanings through shared symbols (Hynson, 2021; Suryawati, 2025; Nofrianti & Alisa, 2024). The Balinese Hindu concept of *tri hita karana*, emphasizing harmony among humans, nature, and the divine, provides a culturally grounded framework to understand the integration of music, ritual, and environmental relationships in social cohesion (Huang & Rockwell, 2023; Subawa, 2024; Sadiyani et al., 2025).

Relational practice theory highlights how artistic and ritual activities foster enduring relationships that connect people with each other and their environment, reflecting Balinese spirituality's holistic nature (Huang & Rockwell, 2023). For social cohesion specifically, frameworks on ritualized belonging explain how communal music engagement promotes trust, cooperation, and a joyful sense of shared identity that transcends religious differences (Van Der Merwe & Morelli, 2022). Additionally, Durkheim's theory of social integration can be applied to analyse how shared rituals generate collective solidarity and moral order within the community (Van Der Merwe & Morelli, 2022).

Communication theories focusing on symbolic and ritual communication also elucidate how values and cultural identity are transmitted intergenerationally through Okokan performances (Nofrianti & Alisa, 2024).

Previous research on the Okokan tradition can be grouped into several thematic areas.

First, studies focusing on symbolic meaning and cultural values emphasize the moral and philosophical significance embedded in the Okokan performance. Wulandari et al. (2020) highlight how the symbolic interactions among performers reflect values such as devotion, harmony, and communal responsibility.

Second, research examining socio-religious aspects explores the ritual role of Okokan in ceremonial contexts. Sedana et al. (2019) demonstrate that the sound produced during Okokan performances is believed to neutralize negative spiritual forces and maintain cosmic balance within the community.

Third, several studies address the transformation and commodification of the Okokan tradition in response to tourism development. Windutama et al. (2020) discuss how the tradition has been incorporated into tourism attractions, while more recent research notes the potential risk of desacralization when ritual practices are adapted for commercial purposes (Wulandari et al., 2024). Although these studies provide valuable insights, few have examined the Okokan tradition specifically from the perspective of ritual sound as a medium of spiritual experience and social cohesion. This gap highlights the need for a more integrated analysis that combines cultural anthropology, sound studies, and religious studies.

Research on the Okokan tradition in Tabanan highlights its role as a symbolic representation of noble values such as harmony between humans and nature, devotion to Sang Hyang Widhi, and work ethic expressed through dance and ritual offerings, analyzed through symbolic interactionism (Wulandari et al., 2020).

Studies document a significant transformation in Okokan's cultural identity, shifting from a ritual practice linked to disease outbreaks toward commercialization and incorporation of modern musical elements, which alters its original sacred meanings and attributes (Wulandari & Lamopia, 2021). The legitimacy and active role of local institutions like Puri Agung Kerambitan are crucial in addressing cultural degradation by engaging younger generations and promoting socialization strategies based on structural functionalism to sustain the tradition (Wulandari et al., 2022).

Legal perspectives reveal that while Indonesian copyright law recognizes traditional cultural expressions like Okokan, there are challenges in protecting economic rights and preventing exploitation due to ambiguous regulations on communal ownership and benefit sharing (Putri & Pratiwi, 2023). Broader Balinese spiritual frameworks such as *tri hita karana* emphasize relational practices that integrate music, ritual, environmental stewardship, and social cohesion, situating Okokan within a holistic system connecting people, nature, and the divine (Huang & Rockwell, 2023).

Research on sociocultural harmony and interfaith relations in Bali emphasizes the central role of Balinese local wisdom as a foundation for peaceful coexistence among diverse religious communities. The philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, which promotes harmony between humans, nature, and the divine, alongside values like *Tri Kaya Parisudha* and *menyama braya* (mutual respect), underpins social interactions that foster inter-religious harmony in Denpasar City (Kiriana et al., 2025). Studies highlight



how these local philosophies serve as social capital, encouraging respect and appreciation across religious boundaries to maintain community cohesion (Kiriana et al., 2025; Kiriana et al., 2025).

The integration of Hindu-Buddhist syncretism in Bali further exemplifies religious harmony through shared rituals and spiritual practices, reflecting a long history of coexistence and mutual influence (Kiriana, 2016; Kiriana, 2021). Communication strategies in cultural ceremonies, such as the role of the *pemayun* in Balinese weddings, demonstrate how traditional figures mediate social dynamics to preserve cultural values and strengthen collective identity (Kariana & Dasih, 2025). Additionally, embedding local wisdom like *Tri Hita Karana* into education and tourism development supports sustainable community growth while reinforcing cultural identity and social cohesion (Supandi & Sukerni, 2025; Laksana et al., 2025).

The reviewed studies collectively explore the role of local culture, ritual practices, and indigenous philosophies in strengthening social cohesion, religious moderation, and sustainable community development across different Indonesian contexts. Several authors emphasize that cultural traditions function not only as heritage expressions but also as mechanisms for maintaining collective identity and social harmony in increasingly modernized societies (Arshiniwati & Peradantha, 2025; Johnson, 2025).

Research on ritual and performance traditions highlights how cultural revitalization can serve broader social purposes beyond preservation. The revival of ritual dance traditions is presented as a strategy to reconnect communities with their spiritual values while simultaneously supporting sustainable cultural tourism and local economic resilience (Arshiniwati & Peradantha, 2025). Similarly, the reinterpretation of Balinese philosophical concepts such as *Tri Hita Karana* demonstrates how indigenous worldviews can be positioned as frameworks for integrated development that balances human relationships with nature, society, and spirituality (Johnson, 2025; Mulyana, 2025).

Other studies examine the sociocultural role of rituals and ceremonial language in strengthening community bonds. Ritual communication practices embedded in traditional ceremonies are shown to reinforce collective norms, transmit moral values, and strengthen interpersonal solidarity within communities (Muthalib et al., 2024). In parallel, ethnographic investigations reveal that ritual practices can also function as adaptive strategies that enhance community resilience when facing urbanization and socio-economic transformation (Djufri, 2026).

Several authors also emphasize the role of cultural expressions in promoting social cohesion and religious moderation. Cultural festivals and religious rituals are described as symbolic spaces where communities negotiate identity, mutual respect, and coexistence across different belief systems (Atasoge et al., 2025). Likewise, studies on interreligious communication within Hindu-Buddhist communities demonstrate how dialogue and culturally rooted conflict management practices contribute to maintaining harmony in plural societies (Prabawa & Adisastra, 2025).

Despite these valuable contributions, the reviewed literature tends to present local cultural traditions in a predominantly celebratory manner, often emphasizing their positive social impacts while paying limited attention to internal tensions, power relations, or the potential commodification of culture in tourism contexts. For instance, while cultural tourism is promoted as a pathway to sustainability, relatively little critical discussion is offered regarding the risks of commercialization that may alter the authenticity or spiritual significance of traditional rituals (Arshiniwati & Peradantha, 2025; Mulyana, 2025).

In addition, many of the studies rely heavily on qualitative cultural interpretations without providing deeper comparative analysis or long-term empirical evidence demonstrating measurable social outcomes. This limitation makes it difficult to evaluate the extent to which cultural practices directly influence broader societal transformations such as economic development, policy formation, or intergroup relations (Johnson, 2025; Djufri, 2026).

Another limitation is the geographical concentration of several studies within Bali or specific Indonesian communities, which may restrict the generalizability of their conclusions to other multicultural or global contexts. Although some authors suggest that local philosophies and cultural strategies could serve as universal models for sustainable development and social harmony, the literature provides limited cross-cultural comparison to substantiate these claims (Johnson, 2025; Yudarta et al., 2025).

Overall, the reviewed works provide important insights into the relationship between culture, social cohesion, and sustainable development by demonstrating how ritual practices, traditional philosophies, and artistic expressions continue to shape community resilience and identity in contemporary society. However, future research would benefit from integrating more critical perspectives, comparative approaches, and interdisciplinary methodologies in order to better understand the complexities and evolving dynamics of cultural traditions in modern social contexts (Arshiniwati & Peradantha, 2025; Johnson, 2025;

Djufri, 2026; Atasoge et al., 2025; Muthalib et al., 2024; Mulyana, 2025; Yudarta et al., 2025; Prabawa & Adisastra, 2025).

Together, these studies underscore tensions between preservation and modernization of Okokan, the need for effective cultural governance, and the importance of understanding its spiritual-social functions within Balinese Hinduism.

Based on the background and literature review, this study seeks to address the following research questions: (1) How does the Okokan tradition function as a form of ritual sound within the spiritual life of the Tabanan community? (2) In what ways does the Okokan performance contribute to social cohesion and communal identity? (3) How are symbolic meanings and spiritual beliefs expressed through the sonic and performative elements of Okokan rituals? (4) How does the transformation of Okokan within contemporary Balinese society influence its ritual and social significance?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the role of Okokan as ritual sound, social expression, and spiritual practice within the community of Tabanan, Bali. Qualitative methods were selected to gain an in-depth understanding of cultural meanings, community participation, and the social values embedded in Okokan performances. Data were collected through a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation to capture both the experiential and symbolic aspects of the tradition.

Participant observation was conducted during Okokan performances and related ritual activities in several villages in Tabanan. This method allowed the researcher to directly observe how Okokan instruments are played, how the community organizes the performances, and how participants interact during the ritual processions. Observations also focused on the atmosphere of the events, the involvement of youth groups, and the relationship between ritual sound and the surrounding spiritual environment.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with key informants, including community leaders, cultural practitioners, religious figures, and members of youth organizations involved in Okokan performances. These interviews aimed to explore participants' perspectives on the historical background of Okokan, its ritual functions, its role in strengthening social cohesion, and its significance within Balinese spiritual life. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility so that informants could share detailed experiences and interpretations related to the tradition.

In addition, documentation techniques were used to complement observational and interview data. These included the collection of photographs, video recordings, field notes, and relevant community documents related to Okokan activities. Secondary sources such as academic articles, cultural reports, and local archives were also reviewed to support contextual understanding of Okokan traditions in Tabanan.

### 2.2 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using qualitative descriptive analysis. This process involved organizing, interpreting, and synthesizing the information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation in order to identify key themes related to ritual sound, social cohesion, and spiritual meaning in Okokan performances.

The analysis began with data reduction, in which the researcher reviewed field notes and interview transcripts to identify relevant information connected to the research objectives. Important statements, recurring ideas, and cultural explanations provided by participants were categorized into thematic groups such as ritual functions, community participation, cultural identity, and spiritual symbolism.

Next, data display was conducted by arranging the categorized information into structured descriptions that illustrate patterns and relationships between the themes. This step helped clarify how Okokan performances function not only as ritual sound practices but also as social events that strengthen communal bonds and reinforce shared cultural values within the Balinese community. Finally, conclusions were drawn through interpretative analysis by linking the identified themes with broader discussions on ritual practices, cultural resilience, and Balinese spirituality. The analysis emphasized how Okokan serves as a medium through which devotion, communal solidarity, and cultural continuity are expressed and maintained within the social and religious life of Tabanan communities.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Results

#### 3.1.1 Okokan as Ritual Sound in Balinese Spiritual Practice



The findings show that Okokan in Tabanan functions primarily as a ritual sound instrument closely associated with religious ceremonies and spiritual purification practices within Balinese Hindu society. Okokan is traditionally constructed from carved wood and shaped similarly to a large bell that produces a deep resonant sound when shaken or struck. Although the instrument may appear simple in its physical form, its cultural and spiritual significance within the community is profound. For the people of Tabanan, the sound of Okokan is not merely an auditory element of ritual performance but an important symbolic expression of devotion and spiritual communication.

Historically, Okokan performances are closely related to ritual activities aimed at restoring harmony and protecting the community from negative spiritual forces. In many villages in Tabanan, Okokan is traditionally performed during specific religious occasions, particularly during periods when the community seeks spiritual purification or protection from disease, natural disturbances, or metaphysical imbalance. Local belief systems emphasize that sound can function as a sacred medium capable of influencing the spiritual environment. Within this worldview, the rhythmic resonance produced by Okokan is believed to drive away harmful energies and invite positive spiritual forces into the community.

During ritual processions, groups of villagers—often consisting of youth organizations and traditional community members—walk together through village pathways while shaking or striking the Okokan instruments in coordinated rhythms. The movement through different areas of the village symbolically spreads the protective sound throughout the community space. This collective procession creates a powerful sonic environment in which the repeated rhythms echo through residential areas, temples, and communal spaces. The resulting atmosphere is both solemn and energetic, reflecting the community's shared spiritual intention.

The ritual performance of Okokan also carries a strong element of communal devotion. Participants often prepare themselves through ritual practices before joining the procession, demonstrating respect for the sacred nature of the activity. The sound produced by the instruments becomes a collective expression of prayer and reverence directed toward divine forces and ancestral spirits. In this sense, Okokan serves as an auditory offering that complements other ritual elements such as offerings, prayers, and temple ceremonies.

In addition to its ritual function, the practice of playing Okokan also reinforces the relationship between humans, nature, and the spiritual world—an important principle within Balinese Hindu cosmology. The belief that sound can influence spiritual balance reflects broader philosophical ideas about harmony between the physical and metaphysical realms. When the Okokan resonates across the village landscape, it symbolically reconnects the community with sacred space and reinforces the shared responsibility of maintaining spiritual equilibrium.

Another important aspect revealed in the findings is the collective participation involved in Okokan performances. Unlike individual musical expression, Okokan rituals require coordinated participation from many members of the community. This collective action strengthens the sense of spiritual unity among participants, as the synchronized rhythms represent shared devotion and communal cooperation. The ritual sound becomes a unifying element that links individuals to the larger spiritual identity of the village.

Furthermore, community members often describe the sound of Okokan as carrying emotional and spiritual meaning beyond its acoustic quality. For many participants, hearing the resonant tones of the instrument evokes feelings of reverence, cultural pride, and spiritual connection. The sound is therefore interpreted not only as a musical vibration but also as a symbolic reminder of ancestral traditions and long-standing cultural values that continue to shape the spiritual life of the community.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Okokan functions as an important ritual sound practice within Balinese spiritual life in Tabanan. Its role extends beyond musical performance to encompass spiritual communication, communal devotion, and cultural continuity. Through its resonant rhythms and collective performance, Okokan embodies the deep connection between sound, spirituality, and social life in Balinese ritual traditions.

### 3.1.2 Okokan as a Medium of Social Cohesion

Another important finding is the role of Okokan in strengthening social cohesion within the community. In many villages in Tabanan, the preparation and performance of Okokan are not individual activities but collective efforts that involve various elements of the community. The process of organizing the performance typically includes collaboration among youth organizations, traditional village leaders, religious figures, and other community members. Through these interactions, Okokan becomes more than a ritual activity; it serves as a social platform that encourages cooperation and reinforces communal bonds among villagers.

The preparation stage itself already reflects strong communal values. Before a ritual performance takes place, members of the community gather to plan the procession, prepare the instruments, and coordinate participants. Youth groups often take responsibility for practicing the rhythmic patterns and organizing the movement during the procession, while elders and cultural leaders provide guidance regarding the ritual procedures and traditional meanings associated with Okokan. This intergenerational interaction allows cultural knowledge to be shared directly from older generations to younger participants.

Young people, in particular, play an important role in sustaining the tradition. In many villages, local youth organizations actively practice Okokan as part of their cultural activities. Through regular rehearsals and participation in ritual events, young members learn not only how to play the instrument but also the values and responsibilities connected with the tradition. This involvement helps ensure the continuity of cultural practices while also strengthening the sense of belonging among younger generations. Participation in Okokan activities allows youth to develop pride in their cultural heritage and reinforces their connection to the community.

The communal nature of Okokan performances also encourages cooperation and collective responsibility. During processions, participants must coordinate their movements and rhythms in order to create a unified sound. This requirement for synchronization fosters teamwork and mutual awareness among the players. Each participant contributes to the overall performance, and the success of the ritual depends on collective coordination rather than individual skill. Such collaborative dynamics reflect broader social principles within Balinese village life, where cooperation and shared responsibility are highly valued.

Furthermore, Okokan activities often bring together villagers from different social backgrounds and age groups. Community members gather not only to participate in the performance but also to observe, support, and celebrate the event. This shared experience creates opportunities for social interaction and strengthens relationships among residents. The atmosphere surrounding Okokan performances often reflects a sense of togetherness, where people collectively engage in cultural and spiritual expression.

Another significant aspect is the role of Okokan in reinforcing local identity and communal solidarity. When villagers participate in the ritual sound procession, they collectively affirm their cultural heritage and their membership within the community. The shared experience of producing and hearing the resonant Okokan sound becomes a symbolic representation of unity and collective identity.

Overall, the findings indicate that Okokan functions as an important social institution that contributes to the maintenance of social cohesion in Tabanan communities. Through collaborative preparation, intergenerational participation, and shared ritual performance, Okokan strengthens relationships among villagers and fosters a sense of collective responsibility in preserving cultural traditions. The practice therefore plays a significant role not only in spiritual life but also in maintaining the social harmony and unity of the community.

### 3.1.3 Cultural Identity and Local Pride

The research also reveals that Okokan has become an important marker of cultural identity for communities in Tabanan. For many residents, the tradition is not simply a ritual practice but also a symbol of local heritage that reflects the historical and cultural continuity of the community. The presence of Okokan within village ceremonies and cultural activities reinforces the community's sense of belonging and strengthens their connection to ancestral traditions that have been passed down through generations.

Local residents often express pride in maintaining the Okokan tradition as part of their cultural identity. This pride is reflected in the enthusiasm of community members when participating in or organizing Okokan performances. Villagers frequently view the practice as a representation of their unique cultural character, distinguishing their community from others. The sound of Okokan, therefore, becomes more than a ritual element; it symbolizes the cultural memory and identity of the people of Tabanan. Through this tradition, community members reaffirm their connection to local customs and demonstrate their commitment to preserving cultural heritage.

In recent years, Okokan performances have expanded beyond strictly ritual contexts and have been presented in various cultural festivals and community events. These performances are often organized as part of regional celebrations, cultural exhibitions, or tourism-related programs that highlight local traditions. While the ritual significance of Okokan remains central, its appearance in public cultural events has increased its visibility both within and outside the community. This broader exposure allows the tradition to be recognized as an important cultural asset that reflects the richness of Balinese heritage.

The inclusion of Okokan in cultural festivals also contributes to the strengthening of local identity. When the tradition is showcased in public events, it becomes a source of collective pride for the community. Residents often feel a sense of accomplishment when their cultural practices are appreciated by visitors,



researchers, and other communities. This recognition encourages villagers to continue preserving the tradition and motivates younger generations to learn and participate in Okokan activities.

At the same time, the growing visibility of Okokan encourages community awareness about the importance of safeguarding traditional cultural practices in the face of modernization and globalization. Rapid social and technological changes have influenced many aspects of contemporary life, including cultural expression. However, traditions such as Okokan serve as reminders of the cultural values that shape local identity and social life. By continuing to perform and promote the tradition, communities actively resist the loss of cultural knowledge and maintain a connection to their historical roots.

Another important aspect is the role of Okokan in strengthening intergenerational cultural continuity. Older members of the community often emphasize the importance of teaching younger generations about the meaning and significance of the tradition. Through participation in performances and cultural events, young people learn about their cultural heritage and develop a sense of pride in being part of the community. This process of cultural transmission ensures that Okokan remains a living tradition rather than merely a historical artifact.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Okokan plays a significant role in shaping cultural identity and fostering local pride within Tabanan communities. Through ritual performances, public cultural events, and intergenerational participation, the tradition continues to function as a powerful symbol of heritage and collective identity. In this way, Okokan not only preserves historical cultural values but also strengthens the community's commitment to maintaining and celebrating their cultural legacy in contemporary society.

#### **3.1.4 Continuity and Adaptation in Contemporary Context**

Another significant finding concerns the adaptive nature of Okokan traditions in contemporary society. Although Okokan remains deeply rooted in ritual practices and spiritual beliefs, the way the tradition is practiced and presented has evolved in response to changing social, cultural, and economic conditions. Communities in Tabanan have demonstrated a strong capacity to maintain the core spiritual meanings of Okokan while also adapting certain aspects of its performance to remain relevant within modern cultural contexts.

One of the most visible forms of adaptation is the inclusion of Okokan performances in cultural festivals and public celebrations. In addition to being performed during religious ceremonies and ritual processions, Okokan is now often presented as part of local cultural events that aim to showcase traditional Balinese heritage. These performances allow the tradition to reach wider audiences, including visitors, researchers, and younger members of the community who may not always participate directly in ritual ceremonies. Through such events, Okokan becomes both a cultural performance and a medium for promoting awareness of local traditions.

Despite these adaptations, community members continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining the spiritual values associated with the tradition. Many cultural leaders and elders stress that the ritual origin and sacred meaning of Okokan should remain respected even when the performance is presented in broader cultural contexts. As a result, efforts are often made to ensure that the essential symbolic elements of the tradition—such as the collective playing of instruments, the rhythmic patterns, and the connection to communal harmony—are preserved. This balance between tradition and innovation illustrates the community's commitment to protecting cultural authenticity while allowing the tradition to evolve.

Another important aspect of adaptation involves the increasing participation of youth groups in the practice and promotion of Okokan. In many villages, local youth organizations have taken an active role in learning and performing the tradition. Structured training programs, rehearsals, and cultural workshops are often organized to teach younger generations how to play the instruments and understand their cultural significance. These activities not only strengthen cultural knowledge among youth but also ensure that the tradition continues to thrive in the future.

In some communities, Okokan performances have also been included in friendly competitions or cultural showcases organized by local institutions or cultural organizations. Such initiatives encourage creativity and enthusiasm among young participants while maintaining respect for traditional forms. Competitions often motivate youth groups to practice more regularly and develop a deeper appreciation for their cultural heritage. At the same time, these activities contribute to strengthening community pride and engagement with local traditions.

The adaptability of Okokan also reflects the broader resilience of Balinese cultural practices. Rather than remaining static, traditions such as Okokan evolve through interaction with contemporary social realities. Communities reinterpret traditional practices in ways that allow them to respond to modern challenges while preserving essential cultural values. This dynamic process demonstrates that cultural

continuity does not necessarily require rigid preservation but can involve thoughtful adaptation guided by community consensus.

Overall, the findings indicate that the continuity of Okokan traditions in Tabanan is closely connected to the community's ability to balance preservation with innovation. By integrating traditional ritual meanings with contemporary cultural expressions, the community ensures that Okokan remains meaningful and relevant within modern society. Through festival performances, youth participation, and cultural education initiatives, the tradition continues to function as a living cultural practice that connects past heritage with present social life.

### 3.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that Okokan in Tabanan represents a multidimensional cultural practice that integrates spiritual devotion, communal participation, and cultural identity within the broader framework of Balinese cultural life. Rather than functioning solely as a musical instrument or ritual object, Okokan embodies a complex cultural system that reflects the interconnected relationship between religion, society, and tradition. Within the context of Balinese Hindu spirituality, sound plays a meaningful role in ritual communication, and the resonant tones of Okokan are interpreted as symbolic expressions of devotion directed toward divine forces and ancestral spirits. Through its rhythmic vibrations, the instrument becomes a medium that helps create a sacred atmosphere during ritual activities and reinforces the spiritual intentions of the community.

As a ritual sound tradition, Okokan illustrates how sonic expressions function as symbolic tools within Balinese religious life. In many ritual contexts, sound is believed to possess spiritual power capable of influencing both the physical and metaphysical environment. The rhythmic resonance produced during Okokan performances is therefore understood as more than an aesthetic or musical element. Instead, it serves as a symbolic act that contributes to restoring harmony between humans, nature, and the spiritual world. This belief reflects the broader cosmological principles embedded within Balinese Hindu philosophy, where maintaining balance among different dimensions of existence is considered essential for the well-being of the community.

The performance of Okokan often occurs within ritual processions that move through village spaces, symbolically spreading the sacred sound across the community landscape. As participants walk together while playing the instruments, the echoes of Okokan resonate through residential areas, temples, and communal spaces. This movement transforms ordinary village pathways into ritual environments where spiritual and social meanings intersect. In this context, sound becomes a powerful form of ritual expression that connects individuals to a shared spiritual experience while reinforcing the collective identity of the community.

From a social perspective, the collaborative nature of Okokan performances reinforces the role of cultural rituals as mechanisms of social cohesion. The organization of Okokan events typically requires coordination among multiple community groups, including youth organizations, village leaders, cultural practitioners, and religious authorities. The process of planning, rehearsing, and performing together creates opportunities for communication and cooperation among participants. These interactions contribute to strengthening interpersonal relationships and fostering a sense of shared responsibility for preserving cultural traditions.

The collective preparation of Okokan performances often involves various stages, such as instrument preparation, rehearsal of rhythmic patterns, coordination of procession routes, and ritual arrangements. Each stage requires collaboration among community members, encouraging them to work together toward a common cultural goal. Through this process, villagers reinforce values of mutual cooperation, respect, and solidarity that are deeply embedded within Balinese social structures. The ritual activity therefore functions not only as a spiritual expression but also as a social practice that strengthens the bonds among members of the community.

Participation in Okokan performances also creates meaningful opportunities for intergenerational interaction. Older community members often play a role in guiding younger participants, explaining the historical background and ritual significance of the tradition. This process allows cultural knowledge to be transmitted directly from one generation to the next, ensuring that the meaning and values associated with the tradition remain preserved. For younger participants, involvement in Okokan activities provides a sense of belonging and cultural pride while also reinforcing their connection to local heritage.

The findings also highlight the importance of cultural pride and identity in sustaining traditional practices. In the context of increasing globalization and tourism development in Bali, many communities face challenges related to cultural transformation and modernization. Rapid social change can sometimes lead to the decline of traditional practices, particularly when younger generations become more influenced



by modern lifestyles and global cultural trends. However, traditions such as Okokan demonstrate how local communities actively preserve their cultural identity by maintaining practices that reflect their historical and spiritual heritage.

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