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The Dynamics of the Sapuh Leger Ritual in Religious Practices

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Abstract

The Sapuh Leger Ritual is an important Balinese Hindu tradition performed for individuals born during Wuku Wayang, yet its continuity amid social change requires further examination. This study analyzes the ritual's foundations, explains its implementation process, and examines its impacts on the religious practices of the Hindu community in Bungkulan Village, Sawan District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. This study employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review, and analyzed using data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that Sapuh Leger is founded on Hindu teachings, customary law (*dresta*), and local cultural values reflected in *Tri Hita Karana*. Its implementation includes preparation, determination of *dewasa ayu*, ceremonial preparation, *panglukatan*, Wayang Sapuh Leger performance, and closing prayers. The ritual strengthens religious confidence, psychological reassurance, social solidarity, cultural transmission, and the preservation of local heritage. Despite technical adaptations, its essential religious meanings remain preserved. The study concludes that Sapuh Leger remains a relevant religious, social, and cultural institution through adaptive continuity.

Keywords

Balinese Shadow Puppetry, Religious Practice, Ritual Dynamics, Sapuh Leger.

1. Introduction

Religious rituals are important expressions of Balinese Hindu culture that preserve religious, social, and cultural values across generations. Beyond offerings to Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa, rituals foster harmonious relationships among humans, between humans and God, and between humans and nature, reflecting the principles of Tri Hita Karana (Sukarma, 2016; Lestari et al., 2025). This philosophy emphasizes balance among spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions, making rituals important for maintaining social cohesion, transmitting cultural values, and sustaining local traditions (Sadiyani et al., 2025). One ritual that continues to be practiced is the Sapuh Leger Ritual, a purification or *ruwatan* ceremony for individuals born during Wuku Wayang, which is associated with the mythology of Bhataras Kala. The ritual serves as spiritual protection and restoration of balance through *wayang* performance as its primary medium. It integrates religious beliefs, mythology, artistic expression, and philosophical values, while conveying meanings concerning human life and purification (Lovric, 1992; Muada, 2021; Dwipayana et al., 2024).

Bungkulan Village, Sawan District, Buleleng Regency, is one of the communities in northern Bali where the Sapuh Leger Ritual continues to be practiced according to local traditions. In this ritual, *wayang* is not merely an artistic performance but an essential component governed by religious and customary principles. The ceremony requires a *dalang* who possesses knowledge of relevant ritual texts and customary procedures, giving the role a spiritual function beyond that of a performer. Muada et al. (2025) describe Wayang Sapuh Leger *ruwatan* as an ancestral tradition that Balinese communities preserve through specific ritual requirements. Modernization and social change may influence ritual practices, including performance forms, equipment, duration, and the dissemination of traditional knowledge is shared. However, such adaptations do not necessarily diminish the sacred character of the ritual. Communities may modify certain aspects while maintaining their fundamental principles, meanings, and functions, demonstrating the adaptability of cultural traditions while preserving their identity (Lestari et al., 2025; Sadiyani et al., 2025). The continuity of Sapuh Leger also reflects the enduring relationship between ritual, religious belief, and performing arts in Balinese community life (Keeler, 1992).

Previous studies have examined Sapuh Leger from several perspectives. Muada (2021) investigated the function and philosophical meaning of the *ruwatan* tradition through Sudhamala and Sapuh Leger shadow plays, while Apriani (2012) examined the implementation of the Sapuh Leger ceremony in Saren Traditional Village. Ratih et al. (2019) examined Sapuh Leger as an application of the Manusa Yadnya teaching, whereas Dwipayana et al. (2024) analyzed the values underlying Wayang Sapuh Leger performances from the perspective of Max Scheler's axiology. Marajaya and Hendro (2021) and Muada et al. (2025) emphasized Sapuh Leger as an ancestral tradition of Balinese society, while Wikrama et al. (2026) examined Hindu religious educational values embedded in Wayang Sapuh Leger performances. These studies demonstrate the rich religious, philosophical, cultural, and educational dimensions of Sapuh Leger. Nevertheless, they tend to focus on particular aspects of the ritual rather than examining its implementation as a dynamic religious practice within a community.

A research gap remains in the limited integration of Sapuh Leger's ritual foundations, implementation, and implications for community religious practices amid social change. Previous studies have largely focused on its philosophical meanings, ritual values, performing arts, and ancestral significance, while paying less attention to how communities preserve its sacredness and socio-religious functions amid changing social conditions. The novelty of this study lies in examining Sapuh Leger as a socio-religious system that undergoes adaptation while maintaining its

religious, social, and cultural functions in the life of the Bungkulan Village community. The study uses Durkheim and Swain's (1915) functionalist perspective to explain the role of ritual in maintaining social solidarity and order, while Herskovit's (1958) cultural relativism helps explain ritual change within its specific local cultural context.

This study aims to analyze the foundations of the Sapuh Leger Ritual, explain its implementation process, and examine its implications for the religious practices of the Bungkulan Village community, Sawan District, Buleleng Regency. The findings are expected to contribute to the study of Hindu religion and Balinese culture, particularly in clarifying of religious rituals adapt amid social change, while providing a scholarly basis for preserving Sapuh Leger as cultural heritage rooted in local wisdom.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Religious Rituals and Tri Hita Karana

Tri Hita Karana is a fundamental philosophical framework in Balinese Hindu society that emphasizes harmony among humans and God (*parhyangan*), among human beings (*parwongan*), and between humans and nature (*palemahan*). Rather than functioning solely as a religious doctrine, this philosophy is reflected in everyday social and cultural practices. Peters (2013) describes Tri Hita Karana as a principle that shapes the Balinese understanding of a balanced life, in which spiritual, social, and environmental relationships are mutually connected. This interconnectedness allows religious values to be expressed through collective practices and community activities. Widiastini et al. (2023) demonstrate that Tri Hita Karana continues to operate as a local value in community development, including through religious ceremonies, voluntary communal activities (*ngayah*), environmental protection, and cooperation among residents. Their findings indicate that social change does not necessarily weaken traditional values; instead, local communities can incorporate new developments while maintaining established cultural principles.

The relevance of Tri Hita Karana extends beyond individual religious practice because it provides a cultural basis for understanding sustainability, community relations, and the human-nature-divine relationship. Ginaya et al. (2019) and Johnson et al. (2025) emphasize that the philosophy can guide community development by integrating spiritual values, social cohesion, and environmental responsibility. Similarly, Huang and Rockwell (2020) show that Balinese artistic and musical practices are closely connected with spiritual and ecological relationships, demonstrating that cultural expressions may simultaneously carry religious and environmental meanings. Wijaya et al. (2025) further position Tri Hita Karana as a philosophical framework that promotes balance between human, natural, and divine relationships. These perspectives suggest that Balinese rituals should be understood as culturally embedded practices rather than isolated religious ceremonies. In this context, the continuity of rituals such as Sapuh Leger can be examined through their capacity to maintain religious meaning while sustaining social relationships and adapting to changing circumstances.

2.2. Sapuh Leger Ritual as Religious and Cultural Practice

Wayang holds a distinctive position in Balinese religious and cultural life, functioning not only as a performing art but also as a medium for conveying symbolic, philosophical, and religious meanings. Seramasara (2019) explains that wayang communicates ideas about human behavior, religious beliefs, and cultural values through symbolic narratives and performances. This role becomes particularly significant when wayang is incorporated into religious rituals, where its characters, movements, and visual elements carry meanings beyond aesthetic expression. Wicaksandita and Wicaksana (2025) similarly demonstrate that Balinese

wayang embodies Hindu aesthetic concepts and symbolic representations connected to religious and cosmological ideas. Accordingly, Wayang Sapuh Leger represents an integration of artistic and ritual practices, through which religious meanings are communicated and experienced collectively by the community.

The religious dimension of wayang is also closely associated with the role of the *dalang*. Umeda (2006) notes that the Balinese *dalang* has traditionally held a dual role as both performer and religious figure, although modernization and changes in religious organization have influenced how strongly this religious role is maintained. Seramasara (2018) likewise emphasizes the close relationship between Hindu religion and traditional performing arts in Bali, particularly in contexts where artistic practices function as part of religious and cultural life. The use of Wayang Sapuh Leger as a ritual medium therefore reflects a broader Balinese tradition in which performance, spirituality, and communal life intersect. The study of Sapuh Leger consequently requires attention not only to its artistic form but also to the religious authority of the *dalang*, the symbolic meanings communicated through the performance, and the cultural context in which the ritual is practiced. These dimensions provide an important foundation for examining how Sapuh Leger continues to function as a religious practice while responding to contemporary social changes.

3. Methods

This research uses a qualitative research design with a case study approach to examine the dynamics of the Sapuh Leger ritual within the religious practices of the Hindu community in Bungkulan Village, Sawan District, Buleleng Regency, Bali. The case study approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of cultural and religious phenomena within their natural social context. This research was conducted in Bungkulan Village, a community that continues to preserve the Sapuh Leger ritual as part of the Manusa Yadnya ceremony. Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in the ritual. They included Jro Dalang and Mpu Dalang as ritual leaders, traditional leaders, temple priests (*pemangku*), ritual participants (*Sang Yajamana*), and community members with a broad understanding of the ritual tradition.

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and a literature review (Sugiyono, 2020). Participant observation was conducted during the preparation, implementation, and post-ritual stages to obtain contextual information regarding ritual practices. Semi-structured interviews explored participants' perspectives on the ritual's foundations, implementation process, and sociocultural impact. Documentation included photographs, field notes, and ritual-related documents. A literature review was conducted using scholarly publications, books, traditional manuscripts/palm-leaf manuscripts, and other relevant references regarding the Sapuh Leger ritual and Balinese Hindu religious practices.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis focused on three main aspects: the religious and sociocultural foundations underlying the Sapuh Leger ritual, the stages and process of ritual implementation, and religious, social, cultural, and psychological impacts on the local community. The interpretation of the findings was guided by Functionalism Theory and Durkheim and Swain's (1915) theory to explain the social function of rituals, and by Herskovits's (1958) Cultural Relativism Theory to understand rituals within the cultural context of the Bungkulan community. To ensure the reliability of the findings, this study employed source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and time triangulation. Credibility was further strengthened through prolonged field involvement, continuous observation,

and member checking with selected informants to verify the accuracy and consistency of the collected data.

4. Results

4.1. Basis for the Implementation Process of the Sapuh Leger Ritual

The Sapuh Leger ritual is a Balinese Hindu religious practice performed of purify individuals born during Wuku Wayang. In Bungkulan Village, Sawan District, Buleleng Regency, the ritual remains a religious tradition passed down through generations. According to a *Jro Dalang* informant, its continuity rests not only on the mythology of Bhatara Kala in the Lontar Sapuh Leger and Kala Purana, but also on social, customary, and cultural values embedded in the community. Thus, Sapuh Leger is understood not merely as an individual religious obligation but as a collective practice with religious and social functions (Muada, 2021; Muada et al., 2025).

The primary foundation of Sapuh Leger is rooted in Hindu teachings, particularly the implementation of Manusa Yadnya as a purification ceremony intended to maintain balance in human life. The Bungkulan community believes that individuals born during Wuku Wayang have a mythological connection with Bhatara Kala and therefore require purification to remove negative influences and attain physical and spiritual well-being. An informant explained that this belief remains the main reason the community continues to perform the ritual despite changing social conditions. This understanding aligns with previous studies that position Sapuh Leger as a form of ruwatan with religious and philosophical meanings within Balinese Hinduism (Ratih et al., 2019; Muada, 2021).

The ritual is also governed by customary law (*dresta*) in Bungkulan Village. According to a traditional leader, *dresta* provides guidelines concerning the determination of *dewasa* (auspicious time), the preparation of *banten* (offerings), and the appointment of the *dalang* authorized to lead the ceremony. The community recognizes a *Jro Dalang* or *Mpu Dalang* who has undergone the *marwinten* process and possesses spiritual legitimacy. These provisions demonstrate that the ritual is shaped by the interaction between religious teachings and customary norms transmitted across generations. The dual religious and customary role of the *dalang* is also consistent with the position of the Balinese puppeteer as both an artistic and religious figure (Umeda, 2006; Seramasara, 2018).

The implementation of Sapuh Leger further reflects the principles of *Tri Hita Karana*, namely harmony between humans and God (*parhyangan*), among humans (*parwongan*), and between humans and nature (*palemahan*). A *Jro Dalang* informant explained that *parhyangan* is expressed through prayer, ritual instruments, and requests for protection from Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. *Parwongan* is reflected in *manyama braya*, cooperation in preparing the ceremony, and the participation of families and community members. Meanwhile, *palemahan* is represented through the use of natural elements in purification and as symbols of cosmic balance. These practices illustrate the application of Tri Hita Karana as a foundation for harmonious religious, social, and environmental relationships in Balinese society (Widiastini et al., 2023; Wijaya et al., 2025).

From a functionalist perspective, Sapuh Leger functions as a social fact with binding power within the community. The ritual maintains social order, strengthens solidarity, and preserves cultural values by encouraging community members to follow religious and customary norms. Its collective character is particularly evident in the involvement of families and community members throughout the ritual process, demonstrating that Sapuh Leger extends beyond individual purification to reinforce shared social responsibilities (Seramasara, 2019). The family also constitutes an important foundation of the ritual. Parents are considered to have a

moral and religious responsibility to perform Sapuh Leger as a form of *Anyangaskara*, or early purification intended to provide spiritual protection for their children. According to an informant, performing the ritual represents parental love and responsibility for the child's future. Therefore, participation in Sapuh Leger reflects not only individual religious belief but also family norms embedded within the cultural life of Bungkulan Village.

Amid contemporary developments, the fundamental basis of Sapuh Leger remains intact despite several technical adjustments. The community has adapted the use of *banten*, employed tents instead of traditional structures, and streamlined the ritual schedule. However, these changes are largely technical, while religious values, core procedures, and sacred meanings remain guided by religious teachings and customary law. This demonstrates the community's ability to adapt to social change without abandoning the cultural identity and spiritual values embedded in Sapuh Leger (Widiastini et al., 2023; Johnson et al., 2025). The findings indicate that the foundation of Sapuh Leger in Bungkulan Village rests on three interconnected pillars: Hindu teachings, customary law (*dresta*), and local cultural values based on Tri Hita Karana. Together, these elements shape a religious practice that functions not only as a means of spiritual purification but also as a mechanism for maintaining social solidarity, preserving cultural identity, and sustaining communal harmony amid changing social conditions.

4.2. The Process of Implementing the Sapuh Leger Ritual

The Sapuh Leger Ritual in Bungkulan Village is a series of purification ceremonies performed for individuals born during Wuku Wayang as part of the Manusa Yadnya ritual. Based on observations and interviews, the ritual is understood not only as spiritual purification but also as a medium for transmitting religious, customary, and cultural values maintained by the community. Although its implementation has shifted in response to changing circumstances, its fundamental structure remains guided by Hindu teachings and the *dresta* prevailing in the village (Muada, 2021; Muada et al., 2025).

The first stage involves ritual preparation, beginning with a family consultation with the *Jro Dalang* to determine ritual requirements, prepare ceremonial materials, and coordinate the participation of family and community members. According to a *Jro Dalang* informant, this process reflects the principle of *manyama braya* through cooperation in preparing *banten*, the ritual venue, and other equipment. The participation of community members demonstrates that Sapuh Leger has a social function in strengthening relationships between families and the customary community. From a functionalist perspective, collective participation in ritual preparation contributes to social solidarity and community integration (Seramasara, 2019).

The next stage is the determination of *dewasa ayu*, or an auspicious time for conducting the ritual, based on Balinese *Wariga* calculations. According to an informant, the timing is determined by the *Jro Dalang* by considering religious references and local traditions. The community considers adherence to the appropriate time essential to achieving the ritual's purpose of purification. This practice demonstrates that religious and customary norms regulate community behavior and are maintained through collective acceptance. In this sense, the determination of *dewasa ayu* represents not merely a technical procedure but also the continuation of religious knowledge and customary authority across generations. The preparation of ceremonial facilities follows the level of the ceremony and the family's circumstances. An informant explained that several types of *banten* have been simplified in response to social and economic changes, although the essential components of the ritual remain preserved. Such adjustments indicate that the community can accommodate contemporary conditions without abandoning the symbolic and religious meanings embedded in the ritual. This adaptive character

aligns with the broader capacity of Balinese cultural traditions to maintain core values while responding to social change (Widiastini et al., 2023; Johnson et al., 2025).

The central stage is the *pengruwatan* or purification procession, which involves *panglukatan* using holy water (*tirta*) and is led by a *Jro Dalang* or *Mpu Dalang*. The purification is believed to remove *mala* or negative influences associated with individuals born during Wuku Wayang. The procession is then accompanied by the Wayang Sapuh Leger performance, which presents the story of Bhatara Kala and symbolically represents purification and the triumph of *dharma* over *adharma* (Dewi, 2014; Muada, 2021). During this process, the *dalang* functions not only as a performer but also as a ritual leader who recites mantras, leads prayers, and mediates between the ritual participants and the divine realm. This dual role reflects the longstanding religious significance of the Balinese *dalang* (Umeda, 2006; Seramasara, 2018).

During the ritual, the atmosphere shifts from an ordinary social setting into a sacred space through the recitation of mantras, the use of *tirta*, ritual symbols, and *gender wayang* accompaniment. An informant described this atmosphere as creating a shared religious experience among participants and community members. From Durkheim and Swain's (1915) perspective, such collective religious experiences generate collective effervescence, strengthening solidarity and reaffirming shared beliefs. In Sapuh Leger, this experience reinforces community commitment to the ritual and supports the preservation of ancestral traditions (Seramasara, 2019).

The final stage consists of communal prayer, the distribution of *tirta* and *bija*, and closing prayers that symbolize the completion of the purification process. Participants perceive this stage as providing spiritual protection and restoring harmony in their lives. It also reflects the principles of Tri Hita Karana of restoring harmonious relationships between humans and God, among humans, and between humans and nature (Widiastini et al., 2023; Wijaya et al., 2025). The implementation of Sapuh Leger demonstrates continuity alongside adaptation. Changes include simplified ceremonial facilities, shorter implementation time, the use of modern tents, and digital documentation. Nevertheless, essential elements including the Wayang Sapuh Leger performance, mantras, *panglukatan*, and the leadership of the *dalang* remain preserved. These findings indicate that the changes are adaptive rather than substantive, enabling the community to maintain the ritual's religious and social functions while responding to contemporary conditions.

4.3. The Impact of the Sapuh Leger Ritual

The Sapuh Leger ritual in Bungkulan Village is not only a purification ceremony for individuals born during Wuku Wayang but also a practice with religious, psychological, social, and cultural implications. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, individuals, families, and the wider community involved in the ritual experience its effects. The community understands the ritual as a religious obligation rooted in Hindu teachings, *Lontar Sapuh Leger*, and local *dresta*. Its successful implementation is therefore associated not only with completing the ceremony but also with achieving inner peace and spiritual protection. This understanding reflects the Tri Hita Karana principle of maintaining harmonious relationships between humans and God, among humans, and with nature (Widiastini et al., 2023; Wijaya et al., 2025).

According to a *Jro Dalang* informant, families generally perform Sapuh Leger because they perceive it as a spiritual responsibility toward children born during Wuku Wayang rather than as an obligation imposed by the community. This belief provides families with a sense of security and confidence that their children have received spiritual protection. Several parents also reported feeling anxious about their children's future before the ritual because of beliefs concerning the influence of Bhuta Kala. Following the ceremony, they experienced greater relief, peace, and

confidence. Thus, Sapuh Leger has a psychological dimension in which religious symbols and ritual experiences contribute to emotional reassurance and perceived spiritual healing. The ritual also has significant social implications. Its preparation and implementation involve extended families, neighbors, traditional leaders, *pemangku*, and the *Jro Dalang* through cooperation. Community participation extends from preparing *banten* and the ritual venue to conducting and completing the ceremony. This process strengthens *manyama braya*, mutual assistance, kinship, and collective responsibility. From a functionalist perspective, collective religious practices strengthen solidarity through shared experiences and reaffirm common values. Sapuh Leger therefore functions not merely as an individual ceremony but as a collective mechanism that reinforces social cohesion and maintains community integration (Seramasara, 2019).

Sapuh Leger provides a means of transmitting traditional knowledge to younger generations. Through participation in the ritual, children and adolescents become familiar with *banten*, ritual procedures, ethical conduct, symbolic meanings, and the philosophical values embedded in Wayang Sapuh Leger. This process represents cultural enculturation through which inherited values are reproduced across generations. The ritual also helps preserve North Balinese performing arts, particularly Wayang Sapuh Leger. The *Jro Dalang* serves as both ritual leader and guardian of the wayang tradition, helping the community maintain the connection between religious practice, artistic expression, and cultural heritage (Umeda, 2006; Seramasara, 2018).

The study also identifies changes in ritual implementation as forms of adaptation to contemporary conditions. These include simplified ceremonial equipment, the use of *banten* preparation services, shorter implementation time, and digital documentation. According to an informant, these changes are understood through the principle of *Desa Kala Patra*, which allows cultural practices to adapt to space, time, and circumstances without abandoning their sacred values. From Herskovits's cultural relativist perspective, such adaptations should be understood within the cultural context of the Bungkulan community's cultural context rather than evaluated against external standards of modernity or rationality (Herskovits, 1958). The continued performance of Sapuh Leger demonstrates that cultural values can remain meaningful even as their practical forms change. The impacts of Sapuh Leger has multidimensional impacts. Religiously, the ritual strengthens spiritual confidence and a sense of protection; psychologically, it provides relief and reduces anxiety; socially, it strengthens solidarity, cooperation, and kinship; and culturally, it preserves local identity and Wayang Sapuh Leger. These findings demonstrate that Sapuh Leger remains relevant not only as a religious purification ritual but also as a social and cultural mechanism for sustaining inherited values amid changing social conditions.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the Sapuh Leger Ritual in Bungkulan Village is a dynamic religious practice in which religious teachings, customary norms, ritual procedures, and community participation are interconnected. Rather than functioning solely as an individual purification ceremony, the ritual serves as a mechanism for maintaining and reproducing religious meanings and cultural values. This finding extends previous studies that have primarily emphasized the philosophical meaning, ancestral character, or symbolic dimensions of Sapuh Leger (Muada, 2021; Muada et al., 2025). This study offers a more integrated perspective by examining how its foundation, implementation, and consequences operate within the everyday religious life of the Bungkulan community.

Regarding its foundation, the ritual is sustained through the interaction of Hindu teachings, *dresta*, family responsibility, and Tri Hita Karana. The community's

understanding of Wuku Wayang and Bhatara Kala provides the religious rationale for purification, while *dresta* shapes how the ritual is performed within the local cultural context. This finding is consistent with Ratih et al. (2019), who associate Sapuh Leger with the implementation of Manusa Yadnya, and Muada (2021), who emphasizes its philosophical and ritual significance. However, the present findings indicate that these religious foundations are not isolated from customary practices. The authority of the *Jro Dalang* or *Mpu Dalang*, the determination of *dewasa ayu*, and the preparation of ritual facilities demonstrate that religious doctrine is operationalized through local customary knowledge. This supports Umeda's (2006) argument regarding the religious authority of the Balinese *dalang* between *adat* and *agama*.

The implementation of the ritual's implementation further shows that Sapuh Leger is a structured process rather than a single ceremonial act. Preparation, determination of *dewasa ayu*, provision of banten, *panglukatan*, Wayang Sapuh Leger performance, and closing prayers constitute interconnected stages through which purification is ritually constructed. This finding complements Seramasara's (2019) view of wayang as symbolic communication and Wicaksandita and Wicaksana's (2025) discussion of Hindu aesthetics in Balinese wayang. In Bungkulan, however, the Wayang Sapuh Leger performance has a particularly integrated function because the *dalang* simultaneously performs artistic, ritual, and religious roles. This also reinforces Umeda's (2006) finding that the *dalang* cannot be understood exclusively as a performing artist. The implementation therefore demonstrates the inseparability of artistic expression and religious practice.

The impacts of the ritual reveal its broader significance for community religious life. The ritual's religious experience strengthens participants' confidence in spiritual protection and reinforces commitment to inherited religious practices. Psychologically, the ritual provides a sense of relief and reduced anxiety, while socially it strengthens cooperation, kinship, and *manyama braya*. These findings support a functionalist perspective that collective rituals generate solidarity through shared religious experiences. They also extend Seramasara's (2019) discussion by demonstrating that concrete social consequences within the community accompany the symbolic function of wayang. Culturally, participation enables younger generations to acquire knowledge of ritual procedures, symbols, and Wayang Sapuh Leger, thereby supporting cultural continuity.

An important finding is that continuity does not require the ritual to remain technically unchanged. Adjustments to offerings, facilities, duration, and documentation indicate selective adaptation while preserving its essential religious meaning. This finding aligns with Widiastini et al. (2023) and Johnson et al. (2025), who emphasize the capacity of Balinese cultural values' capacity to accommodate social change. From Herskovits's (1958) cultural relativist perspective, these adaptations should be interpreted according to the cultural logic of the Bungkulan community rather than external standards. The study shows that Sapuh Leger remains relevant because its religious foundation, ritual structure, and community functions are continuously reproduced while its practical forms adapt to changing circumstances.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that the Sapuh Leger Ritual in Bungkulan Village is a dynamic religious practice founded on three interconnected elements: Hindu teachings, customary law (*dresta*), and local cultural values expressed through Tri Hita Karana. Its implementation consists of interconnected stages, including ritual preparation, determination of *dewasa ayu*, preparation of ceremonial facilities, *panglukatan* or *pengruwatan*, the Wayang Sapuh Leger performance, and closing prayers. The ritual is not limited to individual purification but also contributes to

religious, psychological, social, and cultural life. It strengthens spiritual confidence, provides psychological reassurance, reinforces family and community solidarity, and facilitates the transmission of religious and cultural knowledge across generations. The findings also demonstrate that the community adapts technical aspects of the ritual, including ceremonial facilities, implementation time, and documentation, while maintaining its essential religious meanings and sacred procedures.

These findings suggest that cultural preservation does not require maintaining every ritual element in an unchanged; instead, sustainability can be achieved through adaptive practices that preserve fundamental religious and cultural values. This study has several limitations. As a qualitative case study focused on Bungkulan Village, its findings are context-dependent and cannot be generalized to all communities practicing the Sapuh Leger Ritual. The study also relies primarily on observations, interviews, documentation, and literature, so interpretations are closely tied to selected informants' perspectives.

Future research could compare different Balinese communities to examine variations in ritual foundations, implementation, and adaptation. Further studies should explore younger generations, women, families, and ritual participants to understand intergenerational transmission and changing perceptions. Quantitative or mixed-method approaches could also investigate relationships among ritual participation, religiosity, psychological well-being, and social cohesion.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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