Hybrid Spirituality as Local Wisdom and Community Resilience Strategy of Indigenous Belief Adherents in Banyumas, Central Java

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Abstract

Indigenous belief adherents in Indonesia have sustained ancestral spiritual traditions despite social stigma and structural marginalization. This study describes and analyzes the hybrid spirituality practices of indigenous belief adherents in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, as living local wisdom that fosters micro level community resilience. Drawing on a qualitative phenomenological design, the study involved 20 purposively selected informants. Data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model with source and technique triangulation. Findings reveal that hybrid spirituality manifests across five dimensions: (1) flexible timing of sembahyang and semedi; (2) ethical reinterpretation of ritual symbols; (3) situational linguistic repertoires and silent prayer; (4) participation in majority religious-social gatherings to maintain coexistence; and (5) adaptive motives encompassing official identity reinterpretation, decision postponement for family stability, and the prioritization of inner tranquility over administrative labels. The study concludes that hybrid spirituality operates as an indigenous knowledge system providing adaptive resources at individual, familial, and neighborhood levels. Within this framework, community resilience is conceptualized not as a proven macro-collective outcome, but as a potential adaptive capacity at the micro level that enables vulnerable adherents to sustain cultural identity while maintaining everyday social cohesion.

Keywords: hybrid spirituality; local wisdom; micro-level resilience; indigenous belief adherents.

I. INTRODUCTION

The encounter between local spiritual traditions and the dominant religion rarely results in a simple choice between staying with one's ancestral beliefs and converting to another religion. Studies of "lived religion" show that religious life unfolds in everyday practices that transcend institutional categories: people pray, arrange their spaces, choose their language, and adapt their participation in communal activities according to the context they face (McGuire, 2008). Ammerman et al. (2020) adds that such practices are shaped by a cultural repertoire rooted in local history and law, so that the way people practice their religion cannot be separated from the categories provided by the state and society.

In a pluralistic society, this situation gives rise to various forms of hybridity. Bognár (2024) highlights hybrid and individualized spiritual practices within an ever-changing social landscape. Mujinga (2025) describes migrant communities that renegotiate their identities and religious practices in relation to their surrounding environments, and Perković (2025) notes that spiritual identity is shaped through interaction with the norms of the majority while preserving internal values. These three studies demonstrate that hybridity arises from the need to adapt within social spaces.

In Indonesia, this need takes the form of specific administrative categories. The state distinguishes between religion and belief, which has implications for public services and social acceptance (Butt, 2020; Nalle, 2021). Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 did indeed pave the way for the inclusion of belief identity (Viri & Febriany,

2020), but the privileged status of formal religions has allowed societal stigma to persist (Anandita & Kutanegara, 2023; Deta, 2022; Wasisto, 2024). Administrative policies and social norms often measure the validity of religious belief solely based on formal criteria (God, a prophet, and a holy book), making it easy for adherents of other beliefs to be labeled as deviant (Arifin, 2023; Fata, 2023).

In Banyumas Regency, this discrepancy is particularly evident. Data from Direktorat Jenderal Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil Kementerian Dalam Negeri (2025) lists only 135 adherents with official religious identities on their ID cards, while data from community groups and estimates by local agencies indicate that the actual number ranges from 1,394 to 1,500 adherents. This massive discrepancy confirms field findings that the majority of Penghayat are forced to maintain a formal religious identity on their identity documents to avoid discrimination. These obstacles manifest concretely in the form of student bullying at school (Fadllirrohim, 2022), discrimination in public services and social stigma (Abdillah, 2022), the rejection of traditional burial rites in Patikraja, Baturraden, Rawalo, and Purwokerto, and even the destruction of a community center in 2014.

Previous studies on spiritual practitioners in Banyumas have generally focused on bureaucratic barriers to service delivery (Abdillah, 2022) , issues of organizational renewal (Anisatuszahra, 2024), or discriminatory treatment in educational institutions (Fadllirrohim, 2022). However, further research is needed to explicitly link the micro-practices of hybrid spirituality in daily life—such as the flexibility of ritual rhythms, ethical interpretations of symbols, the use of linguistic repertoires, and social participation—with the functions of local wisdom and community resilience strategies based on the direct experiences of practitioners. This article seeks to map how the adaptation of hybrid spirituality functions not as a form of cultural extinction, but rather as indigenous knowledge and a survival mechanism amid structural marginalization

Based on this, this article will analyze how adherents of local beliefs in Banyumas practice hybrid spirituality in their daily lives, as well as how these practices express local wisdom and support their adaptation. The urgency of this study lies in the importance of understanding how practitioners maintain their spiritual identity and traditions amid social stigma and structural marginalization. Through the practitioners' firsthand experiences, this study seeks to demonstrate that hybrid spirituality does not merely reflect an adaptation to social pressures, but can also serve as a source of local knowledge that helps ensure cultural sustainability, strengthen adaptive capacity, and maintain social bonds within a diverse society.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and meaning that indigenous belief adherents attach to their hybrid spiritual practices. The research was conducted in Banyumas Regency, Central Java, which is home to a diverse array of spiritual traditions and approximately 1,394 indigenous belief adherents organized into 14 communities. A total of 20 informants were selected through purposive sampling, comprising six primary informants who practiced hybrid spirituality and 14 supporting informants from government agencies, organizations of adherents, and religious institutions. Data were collected through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Result

This study maps the hybrid spirituality practices among indigenous belief adherents in Banyumas Regency into five main dimensions: flexible ritual timing, ethical reinterpretation of ritual symbols, situational linguistic repertoires and silence, communal religious-social participation, and negotiation of administrative identity alongside adaptive motives. To provide a comprehensive overview, Table 1 summarizes the synthesis matrix of these five dimensions before they are elaborated in detail in the subsequent subsections.

Table 1. Synthesis Matrix of Five Dimensions of Hybrid Spirituality Among Indigenous Belief Adherents in Banyumas

No	Dimension of Hybrid Spirituality	Empirical Indicators & Field Practices	Principal Informants	Manifestation of Local Wisdom	Potential Micro-Level Resilience
1	Flexible Ritual Rhythms (Sembahyang & Semedi)	Combination of scheduled sembahyang (morning/evening or 3 times daily) with flexible semedi; use of home altar (mukadimah) facing east (ngetan).	SB, SLS, WR, SBR, TR, RR	Philosophy of 'ngetan' honors 'kawitan' (origin of life); semedi as local inner contemplation.	Provides inner tranquility and psychological coping mechanism for individuals facing social pressure.
2	Ethical Reinterpretation of Ritual Symbols	Use of incense (dupa), flowers, water, and ritual appurtenances (ubarampe) interpreted ethically-pedagogically rather than mystically.	RR, SBR, WR	Fragrant incense = driver of noble behavior; Flowers = symbol of life that must bloom and flourish.	Internalization of personal and family moral bulwarks to maintain dignity amid negative stigma.
3	Situational Linguistic Repertoires & Silence	Use of Javanese prayers in private spaces; majority religious greetings/terms in public; and silent prayer (wordless).	SB, SBR, WR, SLS	Javanese language preserves cultural memory & sense (rasa); silence asserts unverbalized immanent knowledge.	Navigates social communication to avoid interpersonal friction while nurturing neighborhood ties.
4	Communal Religious-Social Participation	Active involvement in yasinan, tahlilan, sadranan, rajaban, and neighborhood	TR, SLS, WR	Traditions of 'shared space' and 'mutual aid' (gotong royong) as distinctive	Preserves social capital and micro-social integration among neighbors

		gatherings at RT/RW levels.		Banyumas social ethos.	without sacrificing inner beliefs.
5	Administrative Identity Negotiation & Adaptive Motives	Reinterpretation of KTP label (Islam = isining alam); postponement of KTP changes for family; prioritizing inner peace.	RR, SB, SBR, TRN, TR	Separation of outward wisdom (bureaucratic label) and inward wisdom (relation with God) as survival strategy.	Prevents family conflict and bureaucratic isolation, providing adaptive space at micro level.

Source: Primary Data, 2026

1. Flexible Ritual Practices and Inner Tranquility

Sembahyang and semedi constitute the two main pillars of worship for indigenous belief adherents in Banyumas, but their execution rhythm is not uniform; rather, it adjusts to space and organizational teachings. Informant SB distinguishes the routine obligation of sembahyang from the flexibility of semedi:

> "*Sembahyang itu dua kali, pagi dan sore. Kalau semadi, bebas. Ada sembahyang ada semadi. Semadi bebas kapan pun."* (SB)
> (Sembahyang is twice, morning and evening. As for semadi, it is free. There is sembahyang and there is semadi. Semadi is free, whenever.)

SB's account distinguishes between two forms of spiritual practice: one that follows a regular schedule and another that remains open to personal timing. *Sembahyang* is performed twice a day, in the morning and evening, whereas *semadi* is described as *bebas* (free) from any fixed schedule. By stating that "there is *sembahyang* and there is *semadi*," SB presents the two as complementary components of spiritual life rather than alternative practices. While *sembahyang* establishes a regular rhythm, *semadi* allows practitioners to determine when to engage in contemplation. This arrangement suggests that flexibility is embedded within the structure of worship itself, rather than indicating an absence of spiritual discipline.

The accounts of other informants reveal variations in how spiritual practices are incorporated into daily life. SLS emphasizes gratitude at the beginning and end of the day, while WR practices inner contemplation before sleeping. SBR prefers midnight or the early hours of the morning, when the surrounding environment is quiet, whereas TR follows a three-times-daily obligation according to Tri Luhur teachings. Compared with TR's prescribed schedule, SLS, WR, and SBR organize their practices around personal preferences and daily routines, while SB combines scheduled sembahyang with unrestricted semadi. These variations show that spiritual discipline is maintained through both organizational prescriptions and individually organized practices.

WR practices inner contemplation before sleep, either sitting or lying down, integrating the practice into an ordinary moment of daily life. Similarly, SBR chooses midnight or the early morning because the surrounding environment is quieter, making it easier to attain inner tranquility. These accounts demonstrate how practitioners adjust the conditions of their spiritual activities to accommodate their individual circumstances.

Spatial arrangements also reflect the philosophical meanings attached to spiritual practice. RR performs *sembahyang* at a designated place in the home called *mukadimah*, facing east (*ngetan*). According to RR, this orientation serves as a reminder of *kawitan*, understood as the origin of life. Thus, the direction of the body during prayer carries a philosophical meaning concerning the source of existence. Together with WR's practice before sleep, RR's account indicates that the domestic sphere provides an important setting for individual spiritual activities. In the context of the burial refusals and the destruction of a community center in 2014, as discussed in the Introduction, the role of the home as a place of spiritual practice is particularly relevant. It demonstrates that individual practices can continue within domestic spaces, even when the availability of shared public ritual spaces is uncertain.

Across these accounts, inner tranquility emerges as an important resource cultivated through individual spiritual practices. Contemplation and personal reflection provide practitioners with an internal source of psychological support amid social pressures. Rather than depending entirely on external recognition or the availability of collective ritual spaces, these practices offer individuals a means of maintaining their spiritual engagement within their everyday circumstances. In this sense, inner tranquility can be understood as an individual psychological resource that contributes to adaptive capacity.

2. Ethical Reinterpretation of Ritual Symbols

The use of ritual appurtenances such as incense, flowers, and ubarampe is not understood as passive mysticism, but as a medium for moral and ethical life instruction. Informant RR provides an explicit ethical interpretation of fragrant incense:

> *"Umpamanya waktu sembahyang, kok pakai dupa wangi, itu berarti maknanya kehidupan saya supaya wangi terus atau harum. Jangan sampai tercela."* (RR)
> "For example, when praying, why use fragrant incense? It means that my life should stay fragrant, or sweet-smelling. It must never become blameworthy."

RR's answer is notable for the way it moves the meaning of the object from the altar to the person. The question, posed in the excerpt as "why use fragrant incense?", could be answered by pointing to spirits, offerings, or inherited custom. Instead, the answer is a statement about conduct: the fragrance of the incense stands for the fragrance of a life, and the closing phrase, *jangan sampai tercela* (it must never become blameworthy), is a self-directed moral injunction.

RR also explains flowers as symbolizing that human life must continue to bloom and develop for the benefit of others. For SBR and WR, incense helps create a solemn and comforting atmosphere, intended so that this sense of comfort radiates to the surrounding environment. Thus, ritual symbols function as ethical reminders (moral reminders) to preserve personal dignity and relational harmony.

Two registers in which informants speak about ritual objects can be distinguished. RR's account is semantic: it says what the objects mean, with incense standing for a fragrant, blameless life and flowers for a life that must bloom and develop for the benefit of others. The accounts of SBR and WR are more atmospheric: they concern what incense does, creating a solemn and comforting atmosphere whose comfort is meant to radiate to the surrounding environment. The informants did not present their explanations as rebuttals, and the authors do not claim that they were formed for that purpose. Rather, these explanations constitute a form of self-understanding in which ritual objects are interpreted through ethical meanings, making them part of local knowledge rather than mere ritual decoration.

3. Contextual Language Adjustment and Silence

Indigenous belief adherents utilize a flexible linguistic repertoire according to interaction contexts. Javanese is used in personal prayers and internal expressions because it is felt to possess emotional closeness and cultural memory. Informant SB asserts:

> *"Jawa semua. Memang ajaran ini juga sepertinya sudah lama banget"* (SB)
> "All in Javanese. This teaching, too, seems to be very old indeed."

Two features of this brief statement stand out. The first is its totalizing form: *Jawa semua*, all of it is Javanese, leaves no room for a mixed liturgical language in the informant's own prayer. Whatever flexibility the practitioner shows in public speech, the language of prayer is described as undivided. The second is the way the statement immediately connects language to age. The remark that the teaching "seems to be very old" treats Javanese as the carrier of a line of transmission that stretches back beyond the informant's own lifetime, so that praying in Javanese is also a way of standing within that line. This accords with the informants' description of Javanese as a language of emotional closeness and cultural memory, and with the notion of *rasa*, the inner sense that prayer in Javanese is able to hold.

Furthermore, silent prayer (without verbal words) is employed when language is deemed no longer capable of containing the majesty of spiritual sense (rasa). In the public sphere, indigenous belief adherents adjust to environmental norms; expressions such as assalamu'alaikum or majority religious greetings are used in daily social intercourse. SBR shares that the Javanese greeting "kula nuwun" is sometimes less understood in general settings compared to conventional greetings. This adjustment proves the presence of a situational linguistic repertoire that maintains harmony without eroding inner beliefs:

Silence occupies a particular place in this repertoire. Silent prayer is used when language is judged no longer able to contain the majesty of *rasa*; it is neither a withdrawal from speech nor an absence of practice, but a mode of prayer that begins where words end. The repertoire described by informants thus has three registers: Javanese for private and intimate expression, the greetings of the majority for public encounters, and silence for what exceeds both.

> *"…Contone assalamu'alaikum ya tek enggo. Karena apa ya. Aku pernah ngalami nang daerah Sirau. Mlebu warung, kula nuwun. Wis ora mangsane. Lah sing mangsan apa? Assalamu'alaikum. Oh iya assalamu'alaikum. Domeih aku pernah. Nyong kula nuwun ora mangsan uwis jere."* (SBR)
>
> "…For example, *assalamu'alaikum*, yes, I use it. Why? I once experienced this in the Sirau area. I went into a food stall and said *kula nuwun*. That was no longer the fashion. So what is the fashion? *Assalamu'alaikum*. Oh yes, *assalamu'alaikum*. I did experience that. *Kula nuwun* is no longer in use, they said."

The passage is a small narrative rather than a rule, and its structure repays attention. SBR does not begin by announcing a policy of adopting the majority greeting; the explanation arrives through an episode: entering a food stall in the Sirau area, greeting in the Javanese way, and discovering that this greeting was no longer current. The exchange reported in the excerpt, in which *kula nuwun* is said to be out of use and *assalamu'alaikum* is named as what is current, is presented as new knowledge about what is expected, and the "oh yes" can be read as the moment of learning. The adaptation described is thus experiential: it grows out of an encounter in which a familiar Javanese form of courtesy was not recognized as such.

SBR speaks in the Banyumasan register of Javanese, with its characteristic first-person form *nyong*, and incorporates the Arabic-derived greeting into that speech without apparent strain. The informant's fluency in the local idiom while explaining why the local greeting has given way in public settings illustrates the layering described above: Javanese remains the

language of the informant's own speech, but the greeting used at the threshold of a stranger's shop is chosen with the listener in mind. Language choice becomes part of adapting so that communication is well-received by society. This reflects that language is used contextually according to the situations faced in daily life.

Taken together, the three registers show that language choice for these adherents is a matter of audience. The adjustment is accomplished without any declaration about belief having to be made. SBR's account also indicates the direction in which the adjustment runs: it is the Javanese greeting that gives way in the public sphere, and the adherent who appears to learn this by being corrected, not the reverse.

4. Social-Religious Activities as a Path to Coexistence

Informants report active involvement in majority social-religious activities, such as yasinan, tahlilan, sadranan, rajaban, religious gatherings, and RT/RW mutual assistance (gotong royong). Informant TR states that he attends when invited by neighbors while maintaining the boundary between social participation and personal prayer style. Informant SLS interprets tahlilan as a social tradition of respect for grieving neighbors:

> *"Ya paling tahlil. Kita hargailah karena itu pun sebenarnya tradisi juga. Nang apa di Arab sebagai agama Islam ngga ada tahlil yang sampe tujuh hari."* (SLS)
>
> "Well, mostly *tahlil*. We respect it, because that too is actually a tradition. In, what is it called, Arabia, as the religion of Islam, there is no *tahlil* that goes on for up to seven days."

SLS's statement carries an argument as well as a description. By calling *tahlilan* "a tradition too", SLS places the event in the category of culture, which is shared by neighbors of different religious positions, rather than in that of worship specific to one religion. The reference to practice in Arabia, where, in the informant's account, there is no *tahlil* lasting up to seven days, extends the argument: if the multi-day commemoration is a local custom, then taking part in it is a matter of respect for neighbors and for tradition, not of religious affiliation. This study reports the claim as the informant's own interpretation and does not adjudicate its theological or historical accuracy; its analytic significance lies in the way it allows participation and belief to be kept apart.

The events named by informants are not all of one kind. *Yasinan* (the communal recitation of Surah Yasin), *tahlilan* (communal recitations of remembrance, commonly held for the deceased), *sadranan* (customary village rites associated with ancestors and graves), and *rajaban* (gatherings tied to the month of Rajab) are religious or religio-cultural events, whereas RT/RW mutual assistance (*gotong royong*) belongs to the civic life of the neighborhood. In TR's account, attendance follows an invitation from neighbors, which indicates that participation is triggered relationally and follows the logic of reciprocity between households, while TR keeps a distinction between joining the gathering and maintaining a personal prayer style. Indigenous belief adherents do not isolate themselves from community life; rather, they cultivate social capital. Nevertheless, this participation also takes place within asymmetrical relationships where adherents often must exercise restraint to maintain neighborhood harmony.

The coexistence described here should not be read in isolation from the exclusions recorded elsewhere in the regency. *Tahlilan*, as SLS frames it, is an act of respect toward grieving neighbors, an occasion in which adherents stand alongside others in the face of death. Yet the Introduction notes that traditional burial rites of adherents have been rejected in several localities, including Patikraja, Baturraden, Rawalo, and Purwokerto. The authors do not suggest that these refusals occurred in the same neighborhoods as the *tahlilan* attended by informants. The juxtaposition nonetheless clarifies what is at stake in everyday participation: adherents take part in their neighbors' mourning at the same time as, in other

localities, their own death rites have not been accepted. This is the sense in which the participation reported by informants is asymmetrical. For this reason, the social capital that adherents accumulate through attendance, in the sense used in this article, is better described as relationships kept open at a cost than as a resource obtained freely.

5. Administrative Identity Negotiation and Adaptive Motives

When facing population document categorization (KTP), findings reveal three main adaptive motives among indigenous belief adherents:

a. Reinterpretation Motive: Reinterpretation of formal religious labels. Informant RR interprets the word 'Islam' on his ID card as *isining alam* (contents of the universe), a universal spiritual consciousness transcending organizational boundaries. Supporting informant TRN distinguishes written identity on KTP as an outward/administrative matter, whereas relationship with God is an inward matter.

The reinterpretation RR offers has the form of a wordplay. *Islam*, the word printed on the identity card, is heard as *isining alam*, "the contents of the universe", and so becomes a name for a universal spiritual awareness that is not confined by organizational boundaries. This kind of etymological reading, in which a borrowed term is given a meaning by analogy to the sound of Javanese words, is reminiscent of the Javanese practice of folk etymology often called *kerata basa*. It allows the label to remain on the card while its content is re-specified by the person who carries it.

The same separation is articulated from another position. TRN, a supporting informant, distinguishes what is written on the KTP as an outward, administrative matter from the relationship with God as an inward matter. Within this vocabulary, the administrative category governs how a person is read by institutions, and the inward relation governs what the person actually practices; each can be maintained without being collapsed into the other.

b. Postponement Motive: Postponing ID card changes. Informants SB and SBR choose not to change the religion column on their KTPs yet. SB considers the concerns and objections of his children, while SBR considers procedural uncertainty at lower administrative levels.

The two reasons given for not yet changing the card are of different kinds. SB's reason is relational and internal to the family: the concerns and objections of his children weigh on the decision. SBR's reason is institutional: uncertainty about procedures at lower administrative levels makes the outcome of a change unpredictable. Both are described as a decision not to change the entry yet, which signals deferral rather than rejection. The informants thus keep the possibility of change open while declining to bear its immediate costs, which would fall, in the first case, on family relationships and, in the second, on an uncertain encounter with the administration.

Seen against the figures given in the Introduction, such decisions also have an aggregate dimension. The data of this study cannot establish the scale at which such decisions occur, and six principal informants do not permit generalization. This is so even though Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 opened the way for the inclusion of belief identity on identity documents.

c. Inner Priority Motive: Prioritizing inner tranquility over official labels. Informants WR and SLS emphasize that safety and inner peace are far more primary than mere administrative recognition on paper.

The statements of WR and SLS rank values. Safety and inner peace are placed above recognition on paper, which is described as less fundamental. This ordering should not be read as indifference to recognition: nothing in the material summarized here shows that these informants regard recognition as unimportant, only that it comes second to the conditions in which a person can practice without fear and with a settled mind.

Across the five dimensions, a gradient of exposure can be discerned. The practices closest to the practitioner, the timing of worship and the meaning of ritual objects, are adjusted according to personal rhythm and interpretation and are less exposed to the view of others. Language and communal participation are adjusted in the presence of neighbors and require attention to what will be understood and accepted. Identity documents, the outermost layer, are subject to the state's categories and to family decisions about how much of the belief should be declared. As exposure increases, the practices described become more cautious: ritual time is simply flexible, language is chosen with a listener in mind, participation is accompanied by restraint, and the administrative label is kept, reinterpreted, or deferred.

A second pattern concerns what remains constant. Across informants, *sembahyang* and *semedi* continue to be practiced even as their timing varies; ritual objects continue to carry the ethical meanings informants give them; Javanese remains the language of private prayer even as public greetings change; and the inward relationship with God is held separate from the outward label. The flexibility documented in this section is thus flexibility in the means of expression and in the terms of public presentation, not in the core of the practice as the informants describe it.

B. Discussion

This discussion integrates the empirical findings above with the designed theoretical framework, specifically lived religion, the concept of local wisdom, and micro-level adaptation and resilience perspectives.

1. Hybrid Spirituality as Everyday Identity Negotiation (Lived Religion)

Research findings confirm that hybrid spirituality among indigenous belief adherents in Banyumas is not a form of doctrinal syncretism that randomly mixes teachings, but a form of lived religion, religion as lived and negotiated in daily practice (McGuire, 2008). As asserted by Ammerman et al. (2020), real religiosity in society often transcends formal institutional boundaries.

Through this lens, indigenous belief adherents cannot be judged merely by the label printed on their ID cards. RR's action of reinterpreting the term 'Islam' as *isining alam*, alongside TR's attendance at community tahlilan traditions, demonstrates how domestic space (the mukadimah altar) and public space (community activities) are flexibly managed. Hybridity here operates as a boundary negotiation enabling adherents to nurture ancestral spiritual continuity without engaging in frontal conflict with majority religious norms.

These findings are consistent with previous studies indigenous belief adherents in Banyumas. Novianti et al. (2023) found that adherents manage stigma through several communication strategies, including acceptance, denial through providing information, avoidance, reducing offensiveness, and disregard. The use of the majority's greeting in public spaces and participation in tahlilan in this study can be interpreted as a way to reduce offensiveness and avoid friction. However, hybrid spirituality does not stop at communication strategies. These practices also extend to the rhythm of worship, the meaning of symbols, and the interpretation of administrative labels, making their scope broader than simply managing one's image in the presence of others.

A practice-based approach also helps explain why the label on the ID card is reinterpreted. Najamuddin et al. (2026) assert that living religious practices are shaped by local cosmology and customary law, so understanding them must go beyond the institutional framework that has long dominated the study of religion. In Indonesia, this framework includes the state's distinction between religion and belief. Therefore, RR's interpretation that the word "Islam" on his ID card signifies "isining alam" is not merely a personal choice but a way of utilizing available categories to ensure that ancestral beliefs can still be practiced. Legal recognition has not yet eliminated the need for such negotiations. Sholakodin (2021)

demonstrates that the formal recognition of the identities of indigenous belief adherents following the Constitutional Court's ruling remains hindered by discrimination and exclusion from the majority group, while Hasanah et al. (2021) note that adherents of the Sapta Darma belief system in Jember face marginalization regarding civil registration, burial practices, and places of worship. Thus, the negotiations undertaken by indigenous belief adherents in Banyumas are part of a broader pattern.

The stigma faced by adherents helps explain why identity negotiations take place in a low-key manner. Syafiq & Putri (2022) studied the leaders and core members of a Javanese indigenous belief adherent group in Mojokerto and found that most participants felt their identities were threatened because they were perceived as performing mythical rituals and believing in superstitions; they were even labeled as outdated, old-fashioned, and engaged in idol worship. To cope with this, the participants employed both intrapsychic and interpersonal strategies, thereby preserving their positive identity amidst the stigma from the surrounding Muslim community. The flexibility of indigenous belief adherent practices in Banyumas, ranging from reinterpreting the labels on their ID cards to participating in community activities can be interpreted as a similar effort to preserve a valued identity in the face of negative judgments. This interpretation is speculative because the research data were not designed to test a framework of identity threat; however, it helps explain why hybridity emerges precisely in the spaces most exposed to the judgments of others.

Similar patterns of adaptation have been reported among Kejawen adherents in other contexts. Setianingsih et al. (2022), studying three primary subjects who are followers of Kejawen Islam, concluded that these adherents do not shut themselves off from new cultural influences, demonstrate adaptive patterns of adjustment, and interact relatively easily with their social environment. These findings support the interpretation that flexibility is not a sign of weakening faith, but rather a way to maintain social relationships while preserving spiritual continuity. Nevertheless, the ease of interaction reported in that study cannot be directly applied to practitioners in Banyumas, who carry the additional burden of an identity that falls outside the categories of official religions. SBR's account that the greeting "kula nuwun" is poorly understood in general settings suggests that adaptation tends to be one-sided, with adherents moving toward the majority's repertoire. The flexibility that appears harmonious on the surface must therefore be interpreted alongside the burden of adaptation borne by one party.

These negotiations must also be situated within the history of the formation of state categories. Nalle (2021) demonstrates that legal discrimination against indigenous belief adherents arose from political struggles during the New Order era, and that the government only later put an end to it, at least in the realm of civil registration. An analysis by Batubara et al. (2025) of six belief systems, including Kejawen, adds that the state's engagement with local beliefs is often more a matter of political calculation than good faith, and that increased legal recognition following the Constitutional Court's ruling has not yet been followed by social acceptance. They also assess that Kejawen's ability to coexist with major religions serves as a survival mechanism amid state formalization. Within this framework, the discrepancy between the 135 adherents officially registered on their ID cards and the estimated 1,394 to 1,500 adherents in Banyumas can be interpreted not merely as a matter of individual choice, but also as a reflection of legal categories that determine what is safe to declare in public spaces. The hybrid nature of these adherents is thus both a religious practice and a response to the history of categorization.

The social context in which this negotiation takes place is also not static. Hudayana (2022), through long-term observations and in-depth interviews within trah, kinship organizations based on lineage, demonstrates that the religious identity of some Javanese has shifted from Kejawen Islam toward a form of piety centered on sharia since the Reformation era, and that trah serves as a framework for members across generations to adopt this form

of piety. That study did not address the indigenous belief adherents and was not conducted in Banyumas; therefore, its findings are used here only as a general guide. If the local religious climate becomes more restrictive, the presence of practitioners at yasinan, tahlilan, and sadranan gatherings may shift from customary participation to expected participation, and the space for maintaining a boundary between social participation and personal prayer, as TR does, may narrow. This study does not measure such changes, but analyses of "lived religion" at the local level must remain mindful that the repertoire available to practitioners may change over time.

2. Hybrid Spirituality as Indigenous Knowledge and Local Wisdom

Hybrid spirituality practices do not erode traditional knowledge; rather, they serve as a vehicle for the continuity of local wisdom (indigenous knowledge). Ethical interpretations of fragrant incense (living undisgraced), flowers (blooming life), and the ngetan orientation (remembering kawitan) prove that ritual objects and orientations contain a living moral pedagogy (Gde et al., 2026; Minarni & Muhajir, 2025; Megawati, Vedanti, et al., 2026). The use of the Javanese language and silent prayer also reinforces Maarif (2023) view on the importance of relational dignity in ancestral religions in Indonesia. Local wisdom in Banyumas is not static like a museum artifact, but is adaptively reinterpreted by practitioners to answer contemporary challenges and maintain social harmony.

The interpretation of local wisdom as a living system is also supported by studies on the hybridization of local knowledge. Yanou et al. (2024) , who studied the local knowledge of the Tonga people in Zambia, found that local knowledge is often hybridized with external knowledge when local knowledge alone is deemed insufficient, and in some cases, those external elements merely reorganize old practices. Their context was natural resource management, not spirituality; thus, their findings are used here as a conceptual lesson: hybridization does not automatically mean the loss of indigenous knowledge. Among the practitioners in Banyumas, the use of mainstream religious terminology and activities coexists with the ethical meanings of Javanese symbols and language that continue to be preserved, allowing local wisdom to endure in an adapted form.

Nevertheless, Yanou et al. (2024) also note that local communities often view holders of external knowledge as more knowledgeable, and that local knowledge can be eroded while simultaneously persisting. This observation warrants careful consideration. SBR's account of the "*kula nuwun*" greeting, which is poorly understood in the general public, shows that linguistic adaptation is not always free from pressure. Therefore, hybridity among practitioners should be interpreted as a process that involves both creativity and compulsion, and further research needs to distinguish between the two, including in the transmission of this knowledge to younger generations.

This dimension of intergenerational transmission aligns with the findings of Parida et al. (2026) among adolescents practicing local beliefs in West Java, which indicate that families reinforce children's spiritual values through habit formation, modeling, open communication, and the preservation of values, and that spiritual values are transmitted not only through oral narration but also through daily practices directly experienced by the adolescents. This parallel is relevant for adherents in Banyumas, as the ethical meanings of symbols and ritual orientations described by informants in this study are not derived from written doctrines but through repeated engagement in daily family practices. Thus, the continuity of local wisdom among the adherents does not depend solely on documentation or legal recognition, but also on the family's capacity to pass it down informally from one generation to the next, a process whose future sustainability still requires further investigation.

3. Hybrid Spirituality and Community Resilience at the Micro Level

Findings from the six principal informants provide strong evidence of adaptive capacity at the micro level, that is, the level of individuals, families, and immediate neighborhood relations:

A. Individual Level: Flexible rituals and inner quietude provide independent psychological coping to achieve inner tranquility (tentrem batin).
B. Family Level: The decision to postpone ID card changes (such as SB's choice) is an adaptive strategy to manage intergenerational conflict and maintain household harmony.
C. Neighborhood Level: Participation in yasinan and sadranan keeps communication channels and social ties open with surrounding neighbors.

However, adaptive capacity at the micro level is not automatically claimed as proof of macro-collective resilience across all organizations or a causal success that eliminates structural marginalization. As cautioned by Haryono & Susana (2024), self-adjustment strategies often require social costs where adherents must conceal their official identities. Therefore, community resilience is understood as a micro-level potential and adaptive resource continuously in process amid an imperfectly equal social structure.

This caution in interpreting resilience aligns with critiques of the concept of resilience. Suslovic & Lett (2024) argue that resilience is often a burden of expectation placed primarily on groups marginalized by structural discrimination, thereby offering individual-level solutions to structural problems. If this framework is applied to adherents, the flexibility of rituals, the postponement of ID card changes, and self-restraint in interactions with neighbors should not be interpreted as signs that the problem has been resolved. These practices are better understood as costly coping mechanisms, and those costs must still be reduced through changes in public services and social attitudes.

At the family level, the pattern described by Haryono & Susana (2024) is evident, negotiation allows adherents of ancestral beliefs to remain resilient without altering the power imbalances around them. SB and SBR's delay in updating their ID cards maintains domestic harmony, but simultaneously perpetuates the discrepancy between their administrative identity and the beliefs they practice. Thus, community resilience at the micro level in this study is an adaptive capacity that holds value for its practitioners, not a substitute for equal recognition and protection.

Theoretically, these findings extend the "lived religion" approach to the context of ancestral religions in Indonesia. Najamuddin et al. (2026) advocate for expanding the study of "lived religion" beyond institutional settings alone, and this research demonstrates that the practices of adherents in Banyumas are carried out together with family and neighbors and are shaped by the categories provided by the state. In practical terms, civil registration services and educational institutions need to be designed so that indigenous belief adherents can exercise their rights without suffering adverse social consequences, given that obstacles following the Constitutional Court's ruling are still being reported (Hasanah et al., 2021; Sholakodin, 2021).

IV. CONCLUSION

Indigenous belief adherents in Banyumas perform hybrid spirituality through variations of sembahyang and semedi, ethical interpretation of ritual symbols, situational use of language and silence, participation in majority social-religious activities, and negotiation between personal beliefs and administrative identity. These practices are not a uniform combination of religious elements, but a way of managing spiritual continuity within a pluralistic environment. Moral values embedded in symbols and language support the

interpretation of hybrid spirituality as living local wisdom. Furthermore, ritual flexibility, postponement of family administrative decisions, and social participation form micro-level community resilience, a mode of adaptation within individual, familial, and immediate neighborhood domains that holds the potential to sustain cultural traditions. However, this phenomenological study involving six principal informants treats resilience not as a proven macro-collective outcome, but as a potential adaptive capacity within this micro-social space. Future research can trace ritual transmission processes and cross-generational social relation changes at the micro level, while distinguishing voluntary adaptation from pressure-driven adjustment.

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