

Waking the Community for *Sahur*: Ramadan Heritage, Social Solidarity, and Cultural Transformation in Indonesia

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Abstract

The tradition of waking the community for *sahur* is a cultural practice in Ramadan that continues to be observed across many regions of Indonesia, taking diverse local forms such as *ronda sahur* in Java, *sahur bagarak* in South Kalimantan, *arakan sahur* in Jambi, and *keliling sahur* in Langkat. This study examines how the *sahur* wake-up tradition has changed in form, function, and meaning under conditions of modernization. It uses a qualitative literature-based method in which data drawn from journal articles, academic books, and other relevant publications were analyzed through an interpretive cultural approach to trace the relationship between religious practice, local culture, and social change. The findings show that the tradition originally served as a communal means of signaling the time of *sahur* using *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, and other traditional instruments. As this practical function has been displaced by modern technology, the tradition has not disappeared but has been reconstituted as a more symbolic cultural practice, expressed through *sahur* festivals, Ramadan cultural processions, community art performances, and digital documentation on social media. This transformation indicates that the tradition now functions less as a practical reminder than as a vehicle for cultural identity and social solidarity among Muslim communities. The article contributes to the study of intangible cultural heritage by showing that the *sahur* wake-up tradition is not merely preserved but actively reconstructed through a heritage-making process, in which community participation, youth transmission, Ramadan soundscapes, festivalization, spatial negotiation, and digital documentation jointly convert a practical religious custom into a dynamic form of Ramadan cultural heritage. The study concludes that this tradition constitutes a form of intangible cultural heritage capable of adapting to social and technological change without losing the values of togetherness, religiosity, and cultural identity that sustain it.

Keywords: *sahur* tradition; Ramadan cultural heritage; Islam Nusantara; social solidarity; digital transformation

Abstrak

Tradisi membangunkan sahur merupakan praktik budaya Ramadan yang tetap dipertahankan di berbagai daerah di Indonesia dan diwujudkan dalam beragam bentuk lokal, seperti ronda sahur di Jawa, sahur bagarak di Kalimantan Selatan, arakan sahur di Jambi, dan keliling sahur di Langkat. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana tradisi membangunkan sahur mengalami perubahan bentuk, fungsi, dan makna dalam konteks modernisasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis kepustakaan, dengan data yang bersumber dari artikel jurnal, buku akademik, dan publikasi relevan lainnya, yang dianalisis melalui pendekatan analisis budaya interpretatif untuk memahami hubungan antara praktik keagamaan, budaya lokal, dan perubahan sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ini pada awalnya berfungsi sebagai mekanisme komunal untuk menandai waktu sahur melalui *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, dan instrumen tradisional lainnya. Ketika fungsi praktis tersebut mulai tergantikan oleh teknologi modern, tradisi ini tidak menghilang, melainkan bertransformasi menjadi praktik budaya yang lebih simbolis melalui festival sahur, arak-arai budaya Ramadan, pertunjukan seni komunitas, dan dokumentasi digital di media sosial. Transformasi ini menunjukkan bahwa tradisi membangunkan sahur kini berperan lebih sebagai sarana identitas budaya dan solidaritas sosial umat Islam daripada sekadar pengingat waktu sahur. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada studi warisan budaya takbenda dengan menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ini tidak sekadar dilestarikan, tetapi juga secara aktif direkonstruksi melalui proses pembentukan warisan (*heritage-making*), yang melibatkan partisipasi masyarakat, transmisi antar generasi, lanskap suara Ramadan, festivalisasi, negosiasi ruang publik, serta dokumentasi digital. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa tradisi membangunkan sahur merupakan warisan budaya takbenda yang mampu beradaptasi terhadap perubahan sosial dan teknologi tanpa kehilangan nilai kebersamaan, religiusitas, dan identitas budaya yang menjadi fondasi keberlangsungannya.

Kata kunci: tradisi *sahur*; warisan budaya Ramadan; Islam Nusantara; solidaritas sosial; transformasi digital

Introduction

The advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how Muslims prepare for *sahur* during Ramadan. Alarm clocks, smartphone applications, and prayer-time notifications now enable individuals to wake independently, without relying on traditional communal practices. Despite this technological shift, the tradition of waking up for *sahur* persists in many Muslim communities, even though its original practical function has largely been replaced. This persistence raises an important question: why does a communal practice that is no longer essential for timekeeping remain actively maintained across Muslim societies? Its continued existence suggests that the tradition's significance extends beyond its practical function and increasingly reflects broader social and cultural meanings. Collective *sahur* wake-up activities remain an integral part of the rhythm of Ramadan life in many Muslim communities, with locally adapted forms found across the Islamic world, from the Middle East to Southeast Asia (Roy, 2004, p. 54). Rather than functioning

merely as a communal reminder for pre-dawn meals, such practices illustrate how religious traditions are continuously sustained, reinterpreted, and embedded within local cultural contexts, becoming enduring expressions of religious culture and collective identity (Ali, 2023).

In Indonesia, the tradition of waking up for *sahur* has developed into diverse local expressions that reflect the country's cultural diversity. As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia illustrates how Ramadan practices are continuously adapted to local cultural contexts while retaining their religious significance. One well-documented form is Patrol *Sahur* in Malang, East Java, where youth groups walk through neighborhoods before dawn playing *kentongan*, *bedug*, drums, and *rebana*. Originally a communal reminder for *sahur*, the practice has gradually evolved into an annual cultural festival that reinforces local identity and community participation (Afria et al., 2025; Maftuchin & Budiyanto, 2017). A comparable tradition is documented in Kuala Tungkal, Jambi, through *Arakan Sahur*, in which processions accompanied by traditional percussion instruments have become part of local Ramadan celebrations (Widodo et al., 2025). In Central Java, *Ronda Sahur* continues to be organized by village youth using *kentongan* as a communal reminder while strengthening neighborhood solidarity (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026). Similar practices are found in Morowali, Central Sulawesi, and South Kalimantan, where community-based *sahur* patrols remain important expressions of collective participation and local Ramadan culture (Shalihin et al., 2024). These cases demonstrate that waking people for *sahur* in Indonesia no longer functions solely as a practical reminder for the pre-dawn meal, but has evolved into a social and cultural practice that embodies communal solidarity, local identity, and the ongoing transmission of Ramadan cultural heritage (Koentjaraningrat, 2009, p. 146).

The tradition also plays an important role in strengthening social solidarity by creating structured forms of collective participation within local communities. Documentary evidence from Patrol *Sahur* in Malang shows that the activity is organized collaboratively by youth associations (*karang taruna*), mosque youth organizations, neighborhood committees, and local residents, who jointly prepare musical instruments, determine patrol routes, coordinate performance schedules, and contribute financial or material support (Afria et al., 2025). A similar pattern is found in *Ronda Sahur* in Central Java, where village youth cooperate with neighborhood leaders and mosque committees to organize patrol groups that not only wake residents for *sahur* but also strengthen social interaction and community responsibility (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026). In Kuala Tungkal, Jambi, *Arakan Sahur* has expanded beyond a neighborhood activity into a community-supported cultural procession involving local organizations and village authorities, while in several regions Patrol *Sahur* has been incorporated into annual Ramadan festivals supported by local governments as part of cultural promotion and heritage preservation (Widodo et al., 2025). These cases show that social solidarity is expressed through reciprocal cooperation, voluntary participation, shared responsibility,

intergenerational collaboration, and institutional support from mosques, neighborhood organizations, and local governments. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, such collective practices function as social rituals that reinforce community cohesion and collective identity; the Indonesian cases further show that these rituals simultaneously operate as mechanisms for transmitting and sustaining Ramadan cultural heritage through everyday community participation (Hefner, 2011).

The uniqueness of the *sahur* wake-up tradition lies in its ability to endure and continually adapt amid rapid social change. Technological developments, particularly the widespread use of alarm clocks, smartphone applications, and prayer-time notifications, have significantly reduced its original practical function as a communal reminder. At the same time, increasing urbanization and public-noise regulation have altered how the tradition is performed, encouraging communities to organize more structured activities through neighborhood coordination, designated patrol routes, or officially sanctioned cultural events. Rather than disappearing, the tradition has been reinterpreted through festivalization, whereby *Patrol Sahur*, *Arakan Sahur*, and other local performances have evolved into annual Ramadan cultural festivals that emphasize artistic expression, youth participation, and local identity. Social media has further expanded the tradition beyond its original local setting by enabling communities to document, disseminate, and share *sahur* activities with wider audiences, creating new forms of participation and cultural visibility. These interconnected transformations demonstrate that the tradition is no longer maintained primarily for its practical function but because it has acquired new meanings as an expression of communal identity, collective memory, and intangible Ramadan cultural heritage, which continues to be negotiated and transmitted within changing social and technological contexts.

This article examines how the tradition of waking up for *sahur* has developed as part of Ramadan cultural heritage while simultaneously transforming in response to contemporary social change. Specifically, the study addresses three questions: (1) What are the major local forms of the *sahur* wake-up tradition documented in Indonesia? (2) Who are the principal actors involved, what instruments or media are used, and what social functions do these practices perform within local communities? and (3) How has the tradition been transformed from a practical communal timekeeping practice into Ramadan cultural heritage in the context of modernization, urbanization, public-space regulation, and digitalization? By addressing these questions, the study contributes to a better understanding of the dynamic relationship between religion, culture, and social change in Indonesian Muslim society, and explains the heritage-making process through which the tradition is continuously preserved, reinterpreted, and transmitted across generations (Azra, 2002, p. 112).

Previous studies on Ramadan traditions in Indonesia have primarily examined the *sahur* wake-up tradition from three separate perspectives: its role in fostering social piety, community participation, and religious solidarity during Ramadan (Shalihin et al., 2024); its status as an expression of local

wisdom and cultural adaptation within Muslim communities (Afria et al., 2025); and the influence of modernization, urbanization, and changing socio-cultural conditions on the continuity of local religious practice (Pangestu, 2021). While these studies have made important contributions, they generally address these dimensions independently rather than integrating them into a single analytical framework. More importantly, prior research has not sufficiently examined the *sahur* wake-up tradition as a heritage-making process through which a practical communal timekeeping practice is continuously preserved, negotiated, and reinterpreted as part of Ramadan's intangible cultural heritage. Limited attention has likewise been paid to how the tradition's changing functions relate to festivalization, youth participation, public-space negotiation, and digital documentation, all of which have reshaped the way the tradition is practiced and transmitted in contemporary Indonesian society. Addressing these gaps, this study adopts an integrated historical, socio-cultural, and interpretive cultural perspective to explain how the *sahur* wake-up tradition has evolved from a practical religious activity into a dynamic form of Ramadan cultural heritage amid modernization and digitalization.

The argument developed here proposes that waking people for *sahur* in Indonesia should be understood not merely as a communal practice for reminding people of the pre-dawn meal, but as an evolving form of Ramadan intangible cultural heritage that represents the cultural identity of Indonesian Muslim communities. Although modernization, urbanization, and digital technology have reduced its original practical function as a communal timekeeping mechanism, the tradition has not disappeared. The documentary evidence analyzed in this study indicates that it has instead undergone cultural transformation and reinterpretation, acquiring new meanings related to local identity, social solidarity, and the public expression of Ramadan culture. From this perspective, the continuity of the tradition depends less on preserving its original utilitarian function than on its capacity to adapt to changing social and technological contexts. Based on this documentary analysis, the article offers an interpretive reading of the *sahur* wake-up tradition as a heritage-making process, in which communal religious practice is continuously preserved, negotiated, and reinterpreted through youth participation, festivalization, public-space negotiation, and digital documentation. Rather than offering a definitive explanation, this interpretation contributes to ongoing discussions in the anthropology of religion and Islamic cultural studies by providing a documentary-based perspective on how religious traditions are maintained and transformed in contemporary Indonesian society.

Literature Review

Ramadan, Social Piety and Communal Religious Practice

Religious practice during Ramadan extends beyond individual acts of worship, creating communal spaces where religious values are collectively experienced, negotiated, and reproduced. From the

perspective of Islamic anthropology, Ramadan is a period in which rituals such as *iftar*, *tarawih*, and *sahur* foster collective religious experience through sustained community participation and shared social interaction (J. R. Bowen, 2012). This perspective provides the first analytical foundation of the present study by treating the *sahur* wake-up tradition as a communal religious practice rather than merely a functional reminder of pre-dawn meals. Studies on religious soundscapes further show that auditory practices, including the use of *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, drums, and collective calls, do more than signal time; they also shape religious space, strengthen communal identity, and mark the cultural presence of Ramadan within local communities (Schielke, 2009). Heritage studies, in turn, argue that cultural heritage should not be understood as a fixed inheritance but as a dynamic process through which communities continuously negotiate, reinterpret, and transmit cultural practice in response to changing social contexts (Smith, 2006). Drawing on these three perspectives, this study develops an analytical framework that interprets the *sahur* wake-up tradition as a communal Ramadan practice whose religious soundscape and collective performance have gradually been transformed into an evolving form of intangible cultural heritage in contemporary Indonesian society (Hefner, 2011).

Durkheim argued that religious ritual is a mechanism that generates shared awareness within a community (Durkheim, 1995). The practice of waking up for *sahur* can be understood as a social ritual that not only reminds people of mealtimes before fasting but also builds a sense of togetherness and strengthens Muslim communal identity. Research on Ramadan practice in Indonesia shows that community participation in various communal activities during Ramadan contributes to the reproduction of mutual cooperation, social solidarity, and piety (Pabbajah, 2021; Shalihin et al., 2024). The tradition of waking up for *sahur* can thus be understood as a religious practice that bridges the religious and social dimensions of Muslim life in Indonesia. However, most research on Ramadan still focuses on religiosity, social piety, or general ritual practices, and studies that specifically explain how this tradition is maintained and passed down as part of Ramadan's cultural heritage remain relatively limited. This study therefore seeks to broaden the discussion by positioning the *sahur* wake-up tradition as a shared religious practice that also serves as a medium of cultural transmission.

Local Wisdom, Soundscapes, and the Tradition of Waking Up for Sahur

The study of the *sahur* wake-up tradition cannot be separated from the concepts of local wisdom and religious soundscape. In Muslim societies, sound plays a crucial role in marking religious space and time, as in the call to prayer (*adzan*), the *bedug*, the *rebana*, and the *kentongan* (Hirschkind, 2006). These sounds serve not only as a means of communication but also as a means of shaping a community's religious experience and identity. The *sahur* wake-up tradition has developed into

diverse local forms across Indonesia, including *Patrol Sahur*, *Ronda Sahur*, *Bagarak Sahur*, and *Arakan Sahur*, reflecting the interaction between Islamic teaching and local cultural tradition. While previous studies have mainly interpreted these practices as expressions of cultural acculturation and local religiosity, this article adopts three complementary analytical perspectives: the tradition as a communal Ramadan practice that strengthens social relationships; the sounds of *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, and other traditional instruments as a Ramadan religious soundscape that marks religious time and reinforces local identity; and the tradition as a heritage-making process, through which communities continuously negotiate, reinterpret, and transmit Ramadan cultural heritage through festivalization, youth participation, public-space adaptation, and digital documentation.

A tradition can be considered heritage when it is passed down from generation to generation, continuously reproduced, and provides a sense of identity and continuity to the community (Smith, 2006). The *sahur* wake-up tradition can be understood as a living cultural heritage of Ramadan, sustained through social practice and shared experience. Previous studies, however, generally emphasize its local-wisdom dimension rather than the process of cultural inheritance and identity formation that occur through tradition. This study therefore situates the *sahur* wake-up tradition within the framework of intangible cultural heritage to explain how it is maintained and interpreted by Muslim communities in Indonesia.

Modernity, Digital Media and the Transformation of Cultural Heritage

Modernity and digital technology have transformed how communities practice the *sahur* wake-up tradition. The widespread use of smartphone alarms and prayer-time applications has reduced their original function as a communal timekeeping practice, while public-noise regulation has encouraged more organized forms such as *Patrol Sahur* festivals and coordinated community performances (Giddens, 1991). Rather than disappearing, the tradition has adapted to digital media: *Patrol Sahur* in Malang and *Arakan Sahur* in Kuala Tungkal are widely documented and shared through YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, extending their visibility beyond local communities. These developments show that digital technology has transformed the tradition into a digitally mediated form of Ramadan cultural heritage rather than replacing it (Campbell, 2013).

Modernity also presents challenges, including changing urban lifestyles and reduced community participation in communal activities, giving rise to an ongoing negotiation between preserving tradition and meeting the demands of modern life. Studies of cultural heritage show that the sustainability of a tradition depends not on its ability to retain its original form intact, but on its capacity to adapt to social change while maintaining the meanings its supporting community considers important (Hefner, 2011). Building on this perspective, this study argues that the *sahur* wake-up tradition has not declined with modernization but has instead been transformed from a

practical mechanism into a symbolic, identity-based, and representational form of Ramadan cultural heritage.

This study contributes by integrating three strands of scholarship that are often discussed separately: Ramadan as a space of communal religious practice that strengthens collective participation and social solidarity; local wisdom and religious soundscapes, which highlight how *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, and communal performance shape local Muslim identity and cultural expression; and modernization, urbanization, and digital religion, which explain how technological change, public-space regulation, and digital media reshape the practice and transmission of religious tradition. By bringing these perspectives together, this study interprets the *sahur* wake-up tradition as an intangible aspect of Ramadan cultural heritage, shaped by religious practice, sustained by local cultural expression, and continuously renegotiated amid contemporary social and technological change. From this perspective, the transformation of the tradition is understood not as cultural decline but as a process of adaptation that enables the cultural identity of Ramadan to endure amid changing social conditions.

Method

This study employed a qualitative literature review combined with interpretive cultural analysis to examine the transformation of the *sahur* wake-up tradition as a form of Ramadan cultural heritage. This approach was chosen because the study seeks to interpret cultural practices and their historical and social transformation through library sources (Bowen, 2009; Denzin et al., 2024). Sources were collected from indexed national and international journals, academic books, and digital materials accessible online, including websites and publicly available YouTube and social media content related to *Patrol Sahur*, *Bagarak Sahur*, and *Arakan Sahur*. The literature search combined keywords such as “*sahur* tradition,” “*Patrol Sahur*,” “Ramadan cultural heritage,” “religious soundscape,” “digital religion,” and “Indonesia,” covering publications from 2000 to 2025, while several earlier foundational works were retained for their theoretical and historical significance. References were selected for their direct relevance to the *sahur* wake-up tradition, Ramadan cultural practice, local Islamic culture, intangible cultural heritage, and digital transformation, thereby strengthening the credibility of the documentary corpus for subsequent interpretive cultural analysis.

Indonesia was chosen as the research context because of its diverse Islamic cultures and the differences in *sahur*-waking practices across the archipelago, such as the *sahur* processions of Sumatra and the *sahur*-waking traditions of Java (Azra, 2002). These conditions make Indonesia a relevant setting for examining how religious practices evolve into cultural identities that are transmitted across generations. This study therefore treats the *sahur*-waking tradition not only as a ritual activity but also as a socio-cultural phenomenon that expresses the relationship between

religion, culture, and society (Geertz, 1973, pp. 89-90). Data were collected through documentation techniques applied to relevant written sources, including prominent national and international journal articles discussing Ramadan traditions, Islamic culture, community rituals, cultural identity, and the transformation of religious culture, supplemented by academic books that provided a conceptual and theoretical basis. All collected data were selected according to source credibility, relevance to the research focus, and contribution to the study (Creswell, 2010; Moleong, 2018).

Data were grouped into three analytical categories. Historical data comprise documentary evidence concerning the emergence, development, and local expression of the *sahur* wake-up tradition in Indonesia, including *Patrol Sahur*, *Ronda Sahur*, *Keliling Sahur*, and *Arakan Sahur*. Socio-cultural data comprise information on the actors involved (youth groups, mosque committees, and local communities), the instruments used (*kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, and other percussion instruments), patterns of community participation, and values such as *gotong royong*, social solidarity, intergenerational transmission, and local identity. Cultural transformation data describe changes in the function, meaning, and performance of the tradition, including festivalization, public performance, digital documentation, social media dissemination, technological adaptation, and public-space regulation. Following categorization, all documents were analyzed through thematic coding using an interpretive cultural approach. Coding was conducted manually by identifying recurring themes across the documentary corpus and organizing them into five analytical codes: (1) local forms of the tradition, (2) actors and community participation, (3) instruments and religious soundscapes, (4) social functions and cultural values, and (5) cultural transformation and public-space negotiation. For example, descriptions of *Patrol Sahur* organized by youth groups were coded under “actors and community participation,” while documentation of Ramadan festivals and social media dissemination was coded under “cultural transformation and public-space negotiation.” These coded themes were then interpreted through the perspectives of cultural anthropology, the sociology of religion, and heritage studies to explain how the *sahur* wake-up tradition has evolved from a practical communal reminder into an intangible form of Ramadan cultural heritage.

The documents were systematically organized by source type to ensure analytical consistency. The selected corpus included scientific publications, local news reports, and publicly accessible digital materials meeting predetermined inclusion criteria. The composition of the documentary corpus is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Composition of the Documentary Corpus

Resource	No. of sources	Information	Purpose of analysis
Journal articles	12	Intangible cultural heritage, Ramadan rituals, digital religion, soundscapes; the tradition of waking up for <i>sahur</i> in	Developing a theoretical framework and comparative

Resource	No. of sources	Information	Purpose of analysis
Books	20	Indonesia, local culture, community participation Cultural anthropology, sociology of religion, Islam Nusantara	analysis; identifying local forms and social functions of the tradition Explaining the historical and conceptual context
Website news	5	Online media and newspapers	Identifying contemporary practices
Social media	2	Visual documentation of the <i>sahur</i> tradition	Analyzing the transformation toward digital heritage

The documents were carefully reviewed and reduced to retain information relevant to the research objectives. The extracted data were coded and grouped into the three analytical categories described above. Findings were then interpreted through interpretive cultural analysis, integrating perspectives from cultural anthropology, the sociology of religion, and cultural heritage studies to explain how the *sahur* wake-up tradition has been maintained, reinterpreted, and transformed in contemporary Indonesian Muslim society. The interpreted findings were synthesized to identify broader patterns of cultural continuity and change within Ramadan tradition (Bowen, 2009; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Results

Local Traditions of Waking Up for *Sahur* in Indonesia

Figure 1.
Community-Based Patrol *Sahur* activity.



Source: Ikp (2022).

The tradition of waking up for *sahur* in Indonesia does not develop in a uniform form but varies according to the local cultural context of each region. This variation is evident in the naming of the tradition, the actors involved, the instruments used, and the methods of implementation. In East Java, Patrol *Sahur* developed as a folk musical art using gongs and *kentongan* and has become a medium for youth participation in Ramadan activity (Maftuchin & Budiyanto, 2017). In Central Java, *Ronda Sahur* still maintains its primary function as a village patrol that wakes residents for *sahur*, using gongs as a traditional communication tool (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026). In Kuala Tungkal, Jambi, *Arakan Sahur* has evolved into a cultural parade that combines traditional music, Malay symbols, and community participation, embodying values of mutual cooperation and togetherness and the cultural identity of the Malay community, and has since been formalized as a regional cultural festival (Afria et al., 2025; Widodo et al., 2025). In Central Sulawesi, communities maintain the *Dengo-Dengo* or *Ndengu-ndengu* tradition (Suprianto, 2024), in which *kentongan*, *bedug*, and *rebana* are played by young men from bamboo structures built specifically for Ramadan. South Kalimantan has the *Bagarakan Sahur* tradition (Heldawati, 2025), a village-wide procession using simple tools that produce loud sounds to signal the time of *sahur*.

As summarized in Table 2, these local variations reflect Indonesia’s cultural diversity while maintaining a common religious purpose. Differences in actors, instruments, and performance style indicate local adaptation, while the shared emphasis on community participation, social solidarity, and Ramadan celebration demonstrates the tradition’s continued vitality as a growing form of intangible cultural heritage.

Table 2
Mapping of Local Sahur Traditions

Location	Tradition	Actor	Instrumen t	Social function	Transformatio n	Source
Malang, East Java	Patrol <i>Sahur</i>	Youth organizations , mosque	<i>Kentongan</i> , <i>bedug</i> , and others	Waking the community for <i>sahur</i> ; strengthening	Developed into the Patrol <i>Sahur</i> festival, patrol music	Maftuchi n & Budiyant o (2017)

Location	Tradition	Actor	Instrumen t	Social function	Transformatio n	Source
		youth, local youth		intergenerational relationships	competitions, and a Ramadan cultural attraction	
Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta	<i>Ronda Sahur, Sahur Tek-Tok</i>	Mosque youth, local youth	<i>Kentongan</i>	Reminding residents of <i>sahur</i> time; strengthening social solidarity	Documented through social media	Manggala (2025)
South Kalimantan	<i>Bagarakan Sahur</i>	Local youth	<i>Bedug, kentongan</i>	Waking the community for <i>sahur</i>	Accompanied by religious or popular songs using modern sound systems	Heldawati (2025)
Jambi	<i>Arakan Sahur</i>	Mosque youth, local youth	<i>Bedug, rebana, traditional instruments</i>	Islamic outreach; strengthening community togetherness	Developed into a Ramadan cultural parade and public performance	Widodo et al. (2025)
Langkat	<i>Sahur Keliling</i>	Mosque youth, local youth	<i>Kentongan, bedug</i>	Reminding residents of <i>sahur</i> time; strengthening social solidarity	Documented through social media	Sembiring (2020)

Although each region uses different terms, instruments, and implementation methods, all these practices share one characteristic: they are carried out collectively by the community as a means of waking people for *sahur* during Ramadan. This similarity demonstrates that the *sahur* wake-up tradition is a communal cultural practice that adapts to local contexts, producing diverse cultural expressions while retaining its social and religious functions.

Actors, Instruments and Social Functions of the Tradition

The *sahur* wake-up tradition in Indonesia follows a relatively consistent pattern despite developing in different local forms. This consistency is evident in three respects: the actors involved, the instruments used, and the social function the tradition serves. It is generally carried out collectively by the community in the early morning hours before *sahur*, functioning not only as a time reminder but also as a space for social interaction that strengthens community cohesion.

In several documented cases, youth groups affiliated with mosques, community organizations, arts communities, and local residents play a central role in organizing the tradition. In Kademangan Village, Malang Regency, Patrol *Sahur* is coordinated by village youth with support from community leaders and the village government, illustrating collaborative efforts to preserve the tradition across

generations (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026). Similarly, *Arakan Sahur* in Kuala Tungkal, Jambi, involves youth groups, local communities, and Malay cultural organizations working together to prepare the procession, traditional musical performance, and other Ramadan cultural attributes (Afria et al., 2025). These cases suggest that youth participation, supported by community institutions, contributes significantly to the continuity and adaptation of the tradition in contemporary Indonesia.

In terms of instruments, the documentary evidence shows a combination of traditional communication devices and folk musical instruments. *Kentongan* and *bedug* remain the most frequently documented instruments because they have long functioned as markers of religious activity within Indonesian Muslim communities. In several local traditions, these instruments are complemented by *rebana* and improvised percussion made from jerrycans, used water gallons, cans, and iron pipes, creating distinctive rhythmic patterns during Patrol *Sahur* and related activities. Beyond their practical function of producing sound, these instruments collectively create a Ramadan religious soundscape through which communities mark the time for *sahur*, express collective participation, preserve shared cultural memory, and reinforce social solidarity. The continuity of the tradition, therefore, depends not only on the instruments themselves but also on the shared meanings and communal participation that these sounds generate during Ramadan.

Socially, the tradition serves as a means of mutual cooperation that strengthens relationships among residents, encourages younger generations to participate in religious activities, and transmits Ramadan's cultural values. It embodies togetherness, solidarity, social responsibility, and respect for local cultural heritage passed down through generations (Afria et al., 2025). Related findings indicate that the tradition not only maintains its religious function but also serves as a medium for preserving local wisdom and strengthening community cultural identity (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026). Community involvement, the use of readily accessible instruments, and continued social function together sustain the tradition, which serves not merely as a mechanism for waking people for *sahur* but also as a space for reproducing social solidarity, community participation, and the transmission of Ramadan culture across Muslim communities in Indonesia (Shalihin et al., 2024).

From Practical Reminder to Cultural Heritage Display

In many documented contemporary cases, the *sahur* wake-up tradition in Indonesia has experienced a marked shift in function. While it originally served as a practical communal reminder, it is now increasingly expressed as part of Ramadan's cultural heritage through Patrol *Sahur* festivals, cultural parades, musical competitions, digital documentation, and cultural preservation initiatives supported by local governments. At the same time, the widespread use of smartphone alarms and prayer-time applications has reduced community reliance on collective wake-up practice, diminishing the tradition's original utilitarian function. The documentary evidence nonetheless indicates that the

tradition continues to be maintained because of its enduring social, cultural, and symbolic significance within local communities (Pangestu, 2021).

Figure 2.
Modern Transformation of the *Sahur* Wake-Up Tradition Through Festivalization and Digital Documentation.



Source: Pariwisata (2025).

In West Tanjung Jabung Regency, for example, the *sahur* parade is no longer held solely as a wake-up call for residents but has also developed into a Ramadan cultural event involving the arts community, local government, and the wider public, demonstrating the expansion of its function from a communal activity to a space for representing local culture (Afria et al., 2025). Similarly, in Malang Regency, Patrol *Sahur* has evolved into an art performance that maintains the use of *kentongan* and bamboo instruments while showcasing musical creativity as part of local cultural identity (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026).

Digital media has played an increasingly important role in expanding the tradition's visibility beyond local communities. As illustrated in Figure 1, community-based activities such as Patrol *Sahur* continue to involve youth groups performing with *kentongan*, *bedug*, and *rebana*, demonstrating that the tradition remains a collective Ramadan practice. Figure 2 shows how contemporary forms of the tradition are increasingly represented through Ramadan festivals, cultural performance, and digital documentation shared via YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and online news portals. These developments indicate that digital media functions not only as a means of documentation but also as a platform for cultural promotion, the reproduction of collective memory, and the intergenerational transmission of Ramadan cultural heritage (Campbell, 2013; Miller, 2016).

New challenges have also emerged, particularly in urban areas where concerns over noise, population density, and public order have become increasingly significant. The widespread use of high-powered loudspeakers (*sound horeg*) and late-night musical performance has prompted several local governments and community authorities to regulate Patrol *Sahur* activity to minimize disturbance while preserving local tradition. The implementation of Circular Letter No. 5 of 2022 of the Ministry

of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on the use of loudspeakers in mosques and *musala* (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022) has encouraged many communities to adjust the volume, duration, and timing of Ramadan activities. In several documented cases, communities have responded by organizing shorter patrol routes, limiting sound levels, coordinating activity with village authorities, or transforming the tradition into officially supported Ramadan festivals and cultural performances. These findings suggest that the continuity of the *sahur* wake-up tradition depends not only on cultural preservation but also on continuous negotiation between religious expression, public-space governance, and the diverse needs of contemporary society. Rather than indicating cultural decline, this process demonstrates how the tradition is continually adapted through changes in performance, organization, and cultural meaning while remaining an important element of Ramadan cultural heritage.

Discussion

From Practical Reminder to Ramadan Cultural Heritage

The documentary evidence suggests that the continued existence of the *sahur* wake-up tradition cannot be explained solely by its original practical function. Although smartphone alarms, prayer-time applications, and other digital technologies now provide more efficient ways to wake for *sahur*, communities across Indonesia continue to organize Patrol *Sahur*, *Ronda Sahur*, *Bagarak Sahur*, and related traditions. This indicates that the significance of the tradition has shifted from its utilitarian purpose toward its symbolic and cultural value (Campbell, 2013; Pangestu, 2021).

From a cultural heritage perspective, traditions endure not because they remain functionally indispensable but because communities continuously attribute new meanings to them through collective practice (Smith, 2006). The *sahur* wake-up tradition has gradually become a symbol of Ramadan identity through which collective memory, social participation, and local cultural values are reproduced across generations. The active involvement of youth groups, mosque committees, and local communities demonstrates that heritage is created through ongoing social participation rather than simply inherited from the past (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006). In this sense, the tradition functions less as a mechanism for marking time than as a cultural practice that reinforces social cohesion and shared religious identity (Hefner, 2011).

This interpretation supports the concept of heritage-making, which understands cultural heritage as a dynamic process of negotiation rather than a fixed cultural legacy (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006). A cultural practice is maintained not solely for its practical benefit but because it is recognized as knowledge, cultural expression, and identity transmitted from one generation to the next ("Convention for the Safeguarding," 2005). Within this framework, the tradition of waking up for

sahur can be understood through the process of heritagization: the process by which an everyday cultural practice is assigned heritage value through community narrative, festivalization, documentation, and support from community organizations and local governments (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006). Through this process, the tradition is no longer viewed merely as a practical means of marking time but as a cultural heritage that represents collective memory and Ramadan identity. The value of this heritage lies not in the *kentongan*, *bedug*, or patrol music as material objects, but in the knowledge, social practice, and shared meaning through which communities celebrate Ramadan, strengthen social solidarity, and sustain local identity across generations.

This inheritance process does not occur statically but through ongoing negotiation with contemporary social conditions. The Patrol *Sahur* festival, Ramadan cultural parades, documentation through social media, and support from local governments show that communities are not simply maintaining old forms but adapting tradition to changes in technology, public space, and modern lifestyle. The transformation of the tradition is therefore more accurately understood as a process of heritagization, that is, the transformation of a socio-religious practice into a cultural heritage with symbolic, educational, and identity value for its supporting community (Hefner, 2011; Smith, 2006). The sustainability of the tradition thus depends not on its practical function as a time reminder, but on its capacity to adapt as part of Ramadan cultural heritage, continuing to be reinterpreted by Indonesian society.

Ramadan Soundscapes as Markers of Cultural Identity

The findings indicate that the sounds produced during the *sahur* wake-up tradition function not merely as practical timekeeping signals but also as elements of a distinctive Ramadan religious soundscape. Soundscape studies argue that sound shapes how communities experience, interpret, and assign meaning to particular places and cultural events (Schafer, 1994). Within religious contexts, recurring sounds also create shared sensory experiences that reinforce collective memory, identity, and belonging (Hirschkind, 2006). Accordingly, the sounds of *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, *talempong*, and improvised percussion should be understood as cultural symbols through which Muslim communities collectively experience Ramadan.

This interpretation is consistent with the documentary findings presented in the Results section. In Malang, Patrol *Sahur* employs *kentongan*, *bedug*, and *rebana* to create rhythmic processions involving youth groups and local residents (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026). Likewise, *Arakan Sahur* in Kuala Tungkal combines traditional music (Afria et al., 2025), procession, and collective participation to produce a distinctive Ramadan atmosphere, while *Bagarak Sahur* and *Ronda Sahur* similarly use locally adapted instruments to announce the arrival of *sahur*. Although the instruments vary across regions, they collectively construct a shared acoustic environment through which

communities recognize the arrival of Ramadan, strengthen social solidarity, and reaffirm local Muslim identity.

From this perspective, the Ramadan soundscape represents more than an auditory phenomenon; it forms part of the process of cultural transmission and heritage-making. The repeated performance of these sounds during Ramadan preserves collective memory, strengthens intergenerational participation, and enables local communities to maintain cultural continuity despite technological change and urban transformation (Bull & Back, 2015). The persistence of these sound practices thus demonstrates that the cultural significance of the *sahur* wake-up tradition lies not only in its practical function but also in its capacity to express religious identity through shared auditory experience.

Youth as Agents of Intergenerational Transmission

The documentary evidence indicates that young people play a central role in sustaining the *sahur* wake-up tradition by organizing, performing, and transmitting it across generations. In Kademangan Village, Malang Regency, Patrol *Sahur* is coordinated by village youth, who organize rehearsal schedules, prepare *kentongan*, *bedug*, and *rebana*, determine patrol routes, and coordinate activity with community leaders and the village administration (Az-Zahra & Iswatiningsih, 2026). In Kuala Tungkal, Jambi, young participants collaborate with Malay cultural communities to prepare the *Arakan Sahur* procession, traditional musical performance, and Ramadan cultural attributes, demonstrating that the continuity of the tradition depends on intergenerational cooperation rather than individual participation alone (Afria et al., 2025).

Youth participation extends beyond organizing neighborhood activities. In several regions, Patrol *Sahur* has been incorporated into Ramadan festivals and music competitions, encouraging creativity while reinforcing local cultural identity. Many young participants also document these activities through YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and other digital platforms, enabling local traditions to reach wider audiences and become part of Indonesia's digital cultural heritage. These findings suggest that young people function not merely as participants but as cultural mediators who simultaneously preserve, reinterpret, and disseminate the tradition within contemporary society (Smith, 2006).

Cultural Heritage and Contestation in Public Space

The transformation of the *sahur* wake-up tradition is not only a matter of changing cultural function but also reflects an ongoing negotiation between heritage preservation and the dynamics of contemporary public space (Campbell, 2013). Documentary evidence indicates that traditions such as Patrol *Sahur* and *Arakan Sahur* are still maintained, although their implementation is increasingly shaped by public-space regulation, urban lifestyles, and the growing diversity of residential environments. The implementation of Circular Letter No. 5 of 2022 by the Ministry of Religious

Affairs concerning the use of loudspeakers in mosques and *musala* (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022) has prompted many communities to reconsider the volume, timing, and duration of pre-dawn activities. In several documented cases, local organizers have responded by reducing the use of high-powered loudspeakers (*sound horeg*), prioritizing traditional instruments such as *kentongan* and *bedug*, shortening procession routes, coordinating schedules with neighborhood authorities, and avoiding routes near hospitals or densely populated residential areas. These adjustments illustrate that maintaining the tradition requires continuous negotiation between cultural expression, public comfort, and local regulation (Giddens, 1991).

From a heritage perspective, these negotiations demonstrate that cultural heritage is not a static legacy but a social process shaped by multiple actors, interests, and power relations (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006). Rather than weakening the tradition, adaptation enables communities to preserve its cultural significance while responding to changing social conditions. In several regions, Patrol *Sahur* has also been reorganized as an officially supported Ramadan festival or cultural competition, allowing the tradition to continue within more structured and publicly acceptable formats. The sustainability of the tradition thus depends not only on its historical or religious significance but also on the community's capacity to balance cultural identity, social diversity, and public-space governance, achieved through adaptation and dialogue rather than the uncritical maintenance of earlier forms. This negotiation allows the tradition of waking people for *sahur* to remain alive and relevant within Indonesia's increasingly urban, diverse, and dynamic society.

Digital Heritage: From Local Tradition to Online Cultural Content

Digital media has expanded the ways in which the *sahur* wake-up tradition is preserved, transmitted, and reinterpreted. Documentary evidence indicates that activities such as Patrol *Sahur* in Malang Regency and *Arakan Sahur* in Kuala Tungkal are commonly recorded by youth participants, local cultural communities, local governments, news media, and community members, who use smartphones and digital cameras. The resulting videos and photographs are subsequently shared through platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and online news portals, enabling traditions once experienced primarily within local communities to reach regional, national, and international audiences.

This digital circulation transforms not only the audience but also the tradition's meaning. Rather than functioning solely as a communal pre-dawn practice, the *sahur* wake-up tradition is increasingly becoming a publicly accessible representation of Ramadan's cultural heritage. Through repeated online circulation, audiovisual recordings serve as digital archives that preserve collective memory, promote local cultural identity, and encourage wider public recognition of regional Ramadan tradition (Giaccardi et al., 2012; Campbell, 2013). At the same time, young people act not only as

organizers of these activities but also as digital curators who document, edit, and disseminate cultural content, extending the process of intergenerational transmission into digital space.

In this study, publicly accessible digital materials, including official YouTube channels, Instagram posts, TikTok videos, and online news reports, were used solely as documentary evidence of cultural practice. Only publicly available content was analyzed, and no personal user data or private interactions were collected. This approach follows the principles of documentary research and ensures that digital sources were used ethically to support the interpretation of the *sahur* wake-up tradition as a contemporary form of Ramadan cultural heritage.

Taken together, the findings indicate that the transformation of the *sahur* wake-up tradition should be understood as a process of heritage-making rather than simple cultural continuity. This process begins with the declining practical function of the tradition as a communal timekeeper, driven by technological change. Instead of disappearing, the tradition is reinterpreted through five interconnected mechanisms: youth participation, which ensures the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and practice; the preservation of Ramadan soundscapes through *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, and patrol music, which maintains distinctive local cultural identity; the festivalization of Patrol *Sahur*, *Ronda Sahur*, and *Arakan Sahur*, which transforms everyday religious practice into publicly celebrated cultural events; continuous negotiation with urban regulation and public space, which keeps the tradition socially acceptable and relevant in contemporary society; and digital documentation and social media dissemination, which extend the transmission of the tradition beyond local communities and create new forms of digital cultural heritage. These interconnected processes demonstrate that the continuity of the *sahur* wake-up tradition is sustained not by preserving its original practical function, but by continuously reinterpreting its cultural meaning across generations, social spaces, and digital environments.

Conclusion

The tradition of waking up for *sahur* in Indonesia has undergone significant functional change alongside technological advancement, shifting lifestyle patterns, and the dynamics of public space. While initially serving to wake people for *sahur* using *kentongan*, *bedug*, *rebana*, or other traditional instruments, this practical function has diminished as it has been replaced by technology. This study shows, however, that the tradition has not declined; rather, this transformation reflects a heritage-making process through which a practical communal activity is continuously reinterpreted, transmitted, and institutionalized as Ramadan cultural heritage through community participation, youth engagement, cultural performance, negotiation in public space, and digital documentation. Local forms such as Patrol *Sahur*, *Ronda Sahur*, and *Arakan Sahur* demonstrate that the tradition is

sustained through community participation, the involvement of younger generations, and diverse cultural expressions that continue to adapt to contemporary society.

This study offers a documentary-based interpretation of the *sahur* wake-up tradition as more than a practical religious practice meant to remind people to eat before fasting. The findings suggest that, in many documented contemporary cases, the tradition has increasingly come to be understood as a form of Ramadan cultural heritage sustained through community participation, cultural performance, and digital circulation. By bringing together historical, socio-cultural, and cultural-transformation perspectives, this study contributes to the study of Indonesian Islamic heritage by showing how a communal Ramadan practice becomes cultural heritage through processes of adaptation, performance, and digital documentation, while continuing to express local identity and social solidarity.

This study has limitations, since the analysis is based entirely on sources such as scientific articles, news reports, and other publications, and therefore does not directly capture the experiences, perceptions, and practices of local communities. Nor does it provide an in-depth comparison of regional variations in the *sahur* wake-up tradition or of community responses to these changes. Future research could therefore develop ethnographic studies, field observation, or comparative studies across regions in Indonesia to gain a deeper understanding of how communities interpret, maintain, and transform the tradition of waking up for *sahur* as part of Ramadan cultural heritage amid ongoing social change.

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