

Hadroh music as a means of religious communication

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Islamic art, specifically Hadroh, in conveying religious messages within communities with limited exposure to spiritual practices and religious studies. Given the prevalence of such circumstances, particularly among individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, alternative approaches to religious communication are essential. In response, the *Santri Besek* of Surokarsan village, Yogyakarta, have adopted Hadroh art as a means of religious preaching. Through a comprehensive examination conducted in Surokarsan village, utilizing methodologies including in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, this research explores the effectiveness of using art as a medium for religious communication. The findings reveal significant enhancements in da'wah efficacy, particularly among mothers, teenagers, and children. Participants demonstrated heightened enthusiasm towards fostering mosque prosperity, indicative of the impact of art-based religious communication. Notably, the study identifies a notable shift in the religious practices of mothers, with increased engagement in rhythmic recitations of *Sholawat* accompanied by Hadroh, even among those previously less active in spiritual activities. Furthermore, children exhibit greater receptivity to religious education when delivered through rhythmic or melodic formats, suggesting the potential for innovative approaches to religious instruction. In conclusion, this research underscores the value of incorporating art, particularly Hadroh, in religious communication strategies, particularly within communities facing limited exposure to traditional spiritual practices. By leveraging artistic mediums, such as music and rhythm, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how to effectively convey religious messages and promote religious engagement among diverse populations.



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1. Introduction

Many people say that the Christianization mission in Java was not successful, especially in rural areas. This is partly due to the Javanese's concern that when someone dies, the *tahlilan* tradition is not held. This was conveyed by one of the Muhammadiyah figures, namely KH. Tafsir, who is the chairman of the Central Java PWM. Islamic groups between urban and rural areas do have different styles. One of them is motivated by activities and work. Urban Muslims, most of whom are civil servants and entrepreneurs, are busy working from morning to evening and even until night. So, there is not much free time to chat or linger in the dhikr assembly [1]. In contrast to Muslims in rural areas, most of them are farmers or agricultural laborers. So their work really depends on the season. So in the evening, there is plenty of time to gather. Just look, kinship and kinship in rural areas are more pronounced because they have a lot of time to interact with sincerity [2], including doing *tahlilan*, *istighosah* etc. at night [3]. Even among rural Muslims or traditionalist Muslims, da'wah is often wrapped in art and culture, like the very famous *wayang*. *Wayang* comes from stories and history that are closely related to Hinduism in India [4]. However, in Java, *wayang* is given an Islamic breath as a

means of da'wah or teaching religion. It is said that this was started by one of the Wali Songo figures, namely Sunan Kalijogo, who spread Islam on the coast of Java [5]. Apart from *wayang*, there is also *hadroh* or traditional music with tambourine instruments. Tambourines are made from cow or cow skin. Sometimes also goat skin. Cow or goat skin is dried and then cut into rounds. Each edge is connected to a circular piece of wood. The diameter is usually 20-35 cm [6].

Art and culture are closely linked to religious groups, especially traditionalist Islamic groups. Includes playing musical instruments. There are several types of musical games wrapped in Islamic culture among Islamic boarding schools, which are widely known by the public. Among them are the arts of *marawis*, *hadroh*, *qasidah*, and *nasyid*. The material consists of rhythm and percussion patterns as accompaniment to song melodies and lyrics about faith and moral values. In the musical tradition of Islamic boarding schools, the study of religion and music are closely intertwined. However, each has its meaning in influencing students and improving the educational process in Islamic boarding schools [7]. Linguistically, *hadrah* means "presence", which comes from Arabic, *hadhoro-yahdhuru-hadhrotan*. Meanwhile, in practice among the people, *hadrah* means the rhythm of a musical instrument known as tambourine music. According to some Sufi circles, *hadrah* is a method used to increase people's awareness of the presence of God and the Prophet Muhammad in their hearts [8], [9]. The Oxford Dictionary of Islam states that the word "*hadrah*" itself refers to 'presence' in some literature. The presence in question is the presence of God through the chanting of dhikr or prayers associated with rituals and song performances, both private and public. Usually, it begins with reading poetry and prayer, followed by dhikr and rituals. In *hadrah* music several aspects appear. Among them are aspects of literature, dance and music. The literary element appears in the verses that are sung, the dance aspect appears in the expressive movements, and the musical element appears in the rhythm and strokes. *Hadroh* music in the West Lampung area tries to combine *hadroh* music with religious rituals. Apart from being displayed in rituals, *hadrah* also has a function as a da'wah message conveyed through poetry. Even for some people in Islamic circles, art, including *hadroh*, is used as a way to get closer to God. So it is famous for groups such as Sufi teachings and *tharekat*. There is also a view that the art of *hadrah* is a means of offering prayers and prayers that the Koran commands [6].

In Muhtadin and Habib's view, *hadroh* is a means of praise, which is a form of acculturation to Islam and Javanese culture. This can be seen from the reading of *shalawat* and dhikr and prayers accompanied by Arabic or Javanese poetry. In Javanese it is called *sholawatan* or praise. This is also usually done by traditionalist groups when they finish the call to prayer and wait for *iqomah*. In some communities in Bangunrejo Kidul village, the tradition of praise is still maintained and practiced as a medium for spreading Islam as well as religious expression. The value of da'wah in praise lies in the perspective and norms relating to *aqidah*, morals, worship and sharia, as well as other moral advice extracted from the Al-Quran and Hadith. This is sometimes considered a form of rural Sufism and a model of the search for rural spirituality. The poetry that is sung while accompanying *hadroh* music becomes religious education for cultural heritage to the next generation and aims to increase the spirituality and religious piety of the community [3]. In other research, da'wah practitioner through the art of *sholawat* accompanied by *hadroh* was presented at several events. Among them are the Masyayikh or Jabin haul, the Prophet's birthday routine, diba' or habsyi, Majlis Ta'lim, or the Al Banjari festival. This is all done as a medium for preaching, literacy and also preserving cultural heritage. The art of *sholawat* is divided into two generations, namely the younger generation (Al Banjari) and the older generation (ishari) [10].

In Lamongan, East Java, especially in Beru Village, the art of *hadrah* is also developing. Here, *hadroh* is an Islamic performing art in the form of music combined with *Raddad* dance. Like the others, the poetry that is sung is prayer and poetry of religious advice [8]. *Hadroh* is also the Islamic cultural identity of the Muaro Jambi people through the diction of the rhymes of the music accompanying the *hadroh* dance. The cultural identity of the people living in Muaro Jambi in the art of *hadroh* music is reflected in the diction of the accompanying musical songs. The diction of the song is a mixture of regional languages and Arabic. Every word that is chanted reflects the cultural identity of the Muaro Jambi people, such as a harmonious life. *Hadroh* dance and music, as one of the traditional dances of the Muaro Jambi village community, is a form of appreciation for the community's cultural values [11]. The land of Papua is synonymous with non-Muslim residents, and it is not uncommon for some people to think that there is no Muslim community in Papua. This assumption was further strengthened by the inauguration of the capital of West Papua, Manokwari, as a Biblical city. However, the fact is that Islam entered Papua in 1512, even before the arrival of other

religions. However, according to Saidah and Fadillah's research, the existence of *hadrah* music in Papua, especially in the city of Manokwari, is currently very popular; this is marked by the many *hadrah* competitions and festivals held, the many prayer assemblies involving *hadrah* music, such as accompaniment to the Prophet's prayer verses, even the existence of *hadroh* as an extracurricular activity in educational institutions [12].

Apart from functioning as a medium for da'wah, literacy and entertainment, Islamic music is also synonymous with magic, like the *Sheikhermania* group as followers of the Ahbab al-Mushtofa Shalawat Council under the leadership of Habib Sheikh. In terms of socio-religious transformation in contemporary Indonesia, prayer meetings accompanied by traditional Arabic musical instruments have a cultural strategy and approach that functions as a solution to society's social and economic problems. People feel more comfortable and calm in living their lives and also more enthusiastic about embracing the future. Apart from that, it also functions as an alternative collective identity for the younger generation of music lovers, an alternative narrative function in liberal and radical Islamic circles, a more meaningful function for free time activities, and serves as a complementary solution to the existential identity dilemma of the young Muslim generation in the midst of an identity crisis due to modernity. Religious rituals and traditions can be mediated through pop culture, whose market is Muslim youth with different social backgrounds, traditionalist Muslims and the urban middle class. The *Syeikhermania* group grows in large and small cities in Indonesia [13]. It illustrates that art, especially *hadroh*, has long been used as a means of religious communication or in other terms, cultural da'wah. Da'wah, with this kind of model, is closer to traditionalist Islamic groups based in villages. However, it is not uncommon for some urban Islamic groups who have a modernist style to do this.

Music plays a vital role in society. Music or singing functions as a means of transferring knowledge, values and culture of society from one generation to another. It is a means of preserving culture, traditions, norms, ethics, and history. Music is communicative because it combines various elements, such as dance and visual arts, to create various communication media. In this case, religion and communication are involved in the task of integrating society through the transmission of knowledge, ideas, ideals, feelings, desires, *etc.* People, with the help of effective communication and religion, can understand themselves, share the challenges they face, and offer solutions to their political, economic, social, ethnic, educational and spiritual problems. A society that does not have religion and communication is a dead society because such a society will lack social and spiritual interaction. Here, religion is seen as an inseparable part of communication. In this sense, both religion and communication complement each other [14]. So some people use *hadroh* music as a means of religious communication to convey religious messages and values. *Hadroh* itself is viewed from the form of the presentation pattern; the *trebang* instrument has four types of drumming patterns, namely "“*Pukulan Lanangan, Pukulan Wedokan, Nggolong Lanangan, Nggolong Wedokan*”” played in unison (*imbal-imbalan*) by four musicians [15]. However, in Lampung, as stated in Iswanto's research, there are *tabuhan cakak* and *tabuhan turunan*. *Tabuhan cakak* consists of eighteen types of blows, while *tabuhan turunan* consists of seven blows [6].

In Surokarsan village, around the early 1990s, there were several students who became mosque marshals. They live in the Nurul Huda mosque. These children mostly come from Ponorogo, East Java. However, in everyday life, they are not called mosque *marbots*, but rather *santri besek*. This name was given to them because local residents often invited them for *tahlilan*, *aqiqohan*, circumcision, or other celebrations. And usually, after taking part in the celebration, they return home with souvenirs (*berkat* in Javanese) wrapped in woven bamboo or *besek*. These *santri besek* see the culture of urban Islamic groups, which is different from the rural areas where they come from. Religious passion tends towards formality and substance. There is no growing religious fanfare or broadcast. They only carry out obligatory rituals such as prayer, fasting, zakat and routine recitation. No splendor accompanies every religious moment in Islam. Apart from that, they also saw that many parents and children had difficulty learning Arabic letters or reciting the Koran. They rarely do *dhikr* because they are busy with daily activities. Then, an initiative emerged to revive *hadroh* music as a means of religious communication.

The hope is that without realizing it, they will learn religion, learn to do *dhikr*, pray with rhythm. The method with an artistic approach is expected to be able to make you happy so you don't get bored easily. On the other hand, the hope is that the religious broadcast will continue and a feeling of joy or happiness will also be obtained. From the problems described above, this research tries to reveal how

hadroh music is communicated in the context of spreading Islamic religion in Surokarsan village, Yogyakarta. On the other hand, this research also wants to look at the phenomena of the implications of cultural da'wah in society regarding the existence of *hadroh* music. So far, religious communication methods that are closely related to tradition and art are often carried out by traditionalist Islamic groups who live in rural areas. However, this research tries to see if it turns out that modern Islamic groups in urban areas also use the same method to communicate these religious values. Facts show that Surokarsan village is in the city of Yogyakarta. Apart from that, the city of Yogyakarta is the birthplace of the modern Islamic group, namely Muhammadiyah. So it is quite interesting to see the meeting point between tradition and art among traditionalist Islamic groups amidst urban modernist Islamic groups.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach [16], [17], because it tries to uncover the question of why and how the phenomenon of using *hadrah* music as a means of communication in preaching [18]. The method used is ethnography. Where researchers dive into and mingle with the community that is the object of their research [19]. This is done to find out not only the cultural intricacies that occur in society. But also to look for the meaning behind existing cultural symbols [20]. The data collection techniques were carried out using in-depth interviews, observation and literature study. This includes documentation [21], [22]. The selected sources are those who are perpetrators, know and also hear directly the process of religious communication carried out by *santri besek* using *hadroh* musical instruments [23]. The number of sources interviewed was 10 people. The observations made were of the author's stay in the village for 7 years. So really understand the scope of the research object. Data taken from various archives left behind such as photos, activity reports and various relevant books. The research flow diagram can be seen in Fig. 1.

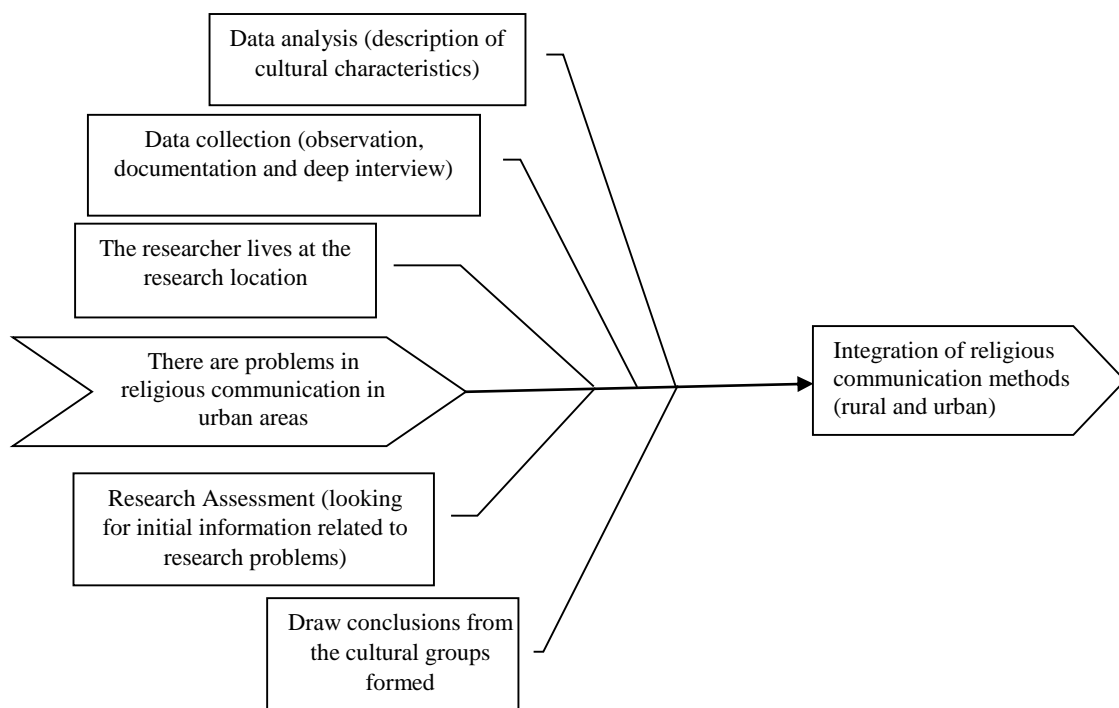


Fig. 1. The research flow diagram

3. Results and Discussion

Humans have a natural ability to communicate. In the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rahman verse 4 is called "*al-bayan*". Communication is the way humans interact socially, convey messages and grow as individuals in society. As a comprehensive religion, Islam hopes that every human interaction, including communication, can be beneficial for both parties, which results in the concept of Islamic communication. Islamic communication is the process of conveying messages containing Islamic values to other people using the principles of the Koran and Sunnah. This means that communication

must be good overall, and apart from that, the method of communication must be in accordance with the Islamic motto, namely, *rahmatan lil' alamin*. It is hoped that the information conveyed is purely from the form of manipulation and individual or group interests. Many things cause impurity in giving or receiving a message because of ego and personal interests [24]. Communication in religion, especially Islam, teaches communication with mutual respect and respect for other people, including communication in conveying religious teachings. Even the prophet Muhammad came to the world to perfect morals. So, in the prophet's preaching, there is no word of coercion but *tabligh*, which simply conveys the truth. There are several principles in communicating religion, as stated in the holy books. First, the principle of *qawlan karima* or noble words. Second, the principle of *qawlan sadida* or correct and straight speech. Third, the principle of *qawlan ma'rufa* or good words. Fourth, the principle of *qawlan baligha* is words that are effective and full of openness. Fifth, *qawlan laying* or gentle words. Sixth, *qawlan maisura* or correct sayings [25]. There are various ways of communicating religious values, or in other terms called, *da'wah*. The most common way is with *tabligh akbar*, recitation or lecture. However, various community groups have their own ways and traditions. Islamic groups in Indonesia often create cultural acculturation to convey religious messages, including the art of *hadroh* music to accompany *thoyibah* prayer and *dhikr* sentences.

According to Zainal, the history of the development of *hadroh* in Surokarsan village began with the arrival of Zainal Arifin in 1993. At that time, Zainal, after graduating from the Al Islam Joresan Islamic boarding school, Ponorogo, then continued studying at IAIN, which is now UIN Sunan Kalijaga. The major taken is *tarbiyah*. While studying, Zainal became a *marbot* or *santri besek* at the Nurul Huda Mosque, Surokarsan village. Armed with the experience he had, together with Arifin, his younger brother Anas Yusuf and his neighbor Syaiful, Arifin Kompang tried to revive *hadroh* music. His *hadroh* group was named El-Kahfi, see Fig. 2. This is based on the history of young men who took refuge and slept in caves for hundreds of years, which is immortalized in one of the surahs in the Qur'an, namely al Kahf. Based on Arifin's explanation, the four of them initially invited the village residents. Among them are Lodong, Broto Purwanto, Juned, Didik and Ngadino. Finally, the El Kahfi *hadroh* formation was formed. Anas and Syaiful are the vocalists, Zainal and Arifin hold the Kompang, Juned contains the bass, Broto Lanangan, Didik Kecerkan, Ngadino Wadonan and Lodong have the drums. They agreed that every Friday night after Isha would be for practice. After appearing at internal events, such as fasting together, *nuzulul qur'an*, *isra'mi'raj*, this *hadroh* took part in various events. It is not uncommon, according to Broto, to win several championships.



Fig. 2. El Kahfi *hadroh* group personnel in Surokarsan village in 2000 (doc photo Rismanda)

As stated by Anas, the types of songs sung by *Hadroh El Kahfi* mostly come from the texts of *Maulid al-Barzanzi*, *Syaraf al-anam*, *Diwan al-hadrah*, *Maulid al-burdah*, and *Maulid Diba'i*. The most commonly used are the first two texts. Al-Barzanzi's birthday consists of poetry and prose. Like *sholawat badar*, *tola'al badru*, *ya rosullallah salamun alaika*. This text was written by Ja'far ibn Hasan ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Barzanzi [6]. Art in Islam itself is anything that arouses a sense of beauty and is created to enliven the senses. In this case, *hadrah* includes the musical art of performing the prayer reading accompanied by tambourine musical instruments to encourage the public to appreciate this art. In Javanese society, *hadrah* is better known as tambourine music or flying music. The *Hadroh El Kahfi* group also often appears in competition events, see Fig. 3.



Fig. 3. Hadroh El Kahfi group appearing for the competition

The art of *sholawat* or *sholawatan* is a work of art that explains the wisdom of expressing love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW. *Sholawatan* means praise and friendship of Muslims to the Prophet Muhammad SAW. *Sholawat* also has meaning as a social concern. Its functions in social culture include as a medium for Islamic da'wah and education, which mainly teaches worship and prayer [10]. As Junet said, Surokarsan village has many elderly mothers and children who memorize the prayer readings because they listen to El Kahfi's hadroh when he performs. Thus, it is hoped that Islamic broadcasting can be carried out using art media. *Hadrah* games are more communicative between players and spectators. In the *hadrah*, the player is asked to be able to fill and cover the empty parts of the *hadrah* instrument with a particular stroke pattern; apart from that, the need to emphasize the poetry with an appropriate tempo rhythm is also an essential requirement, so that the message can be conveyed. In art itself, there is an element of beauty in the form of feeling, which is then arranged in such a way and expressed by the mind so that it can be distributed to those who enjoy it [12]. Fig. 4 is the children's version of Hadroh El Kahfi which appeared at the Al-Qur'an Education Park during the Nuzulul Al-Qur'an commemoration event. *Hadroh* music is a form of religious communication that seeks to spread religious values. Apart from art, it is sometimes also used as a ritual. This is an effort to communicate between people with different religious perspectives. People use religion for two-way communication. For example, the art of *hadroh* as an accompaniment in conveying praise and prayers is something that can bind people to each other. They gather to offer prayers, carry out religious rituals, and preserve cultural arts.



Fig. 4. Hadroh El Kahfi version of the children at the Qur'an Education Park when appearing at the Nuzulul Qur'an commemoration event

Here, then, religion is a binding factor that allows humans to understand themselves and disseminate any information in the society in which they live [14]. Ngadino explained that Surokarsan village, even though it is in the Yogyakarta area, which is the base of the Muhammadiyah mass organization, has a diverse community. For example, NU circles are represented by the children of the mosque robbers. Among them are Ruslan Abdul Ghani or Gagan, Zainal Arifin, Asyhar Widodo,

Anas Yusuf, Bang Fadil, Ngadino. The traditions of their hometown carry them away. Zainal, Syaiful, Arifin Kompang, and Anas Yusuf came from Ponorogo and were educated at the Al Islam Joresan Islamic boarding school. Suppose Azhar Widodo is very strong in the Lamongan tradition. Apart from that, Madurese culture also has strong NU, such as Hisyam, *etc.* Gagan comes from West Java, which also has a strong traditionalist feel. Muhammadiyah is a mass organization that is followed by the majority of mosque administrators. Like Mr. Muslimin, Mr. Edy, Mr. Sumedi, Mrs. Medi, Mrs. Muslimin, Mrs. Endang, Mr. Jeni, *etc.* Meanwhile, the *kejawen* or *abangan* group is adhered to by some older figures. Coincidentally, in Surokarsan village, there are followers of Darmo Gandul. In Javanese, there are also *abangan* or nationalist elements. This was driven by Mr. Kelik, Bang Putut, Mr. Yanto, Mr. Didik, Mr. Agus, Mas Muhyidin. The presence of the Hadroh El Kahfi arts group was able to unite them. Apart from that, he is also able to apply the values of *da'wah* in everyday life. They can become mentors, advisors, counsellors, motivators and enlighteners for the people of Surokarsan village. In the midst of religious society, they still firmly believe that art can be a means of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* [26]. Fig. 5 the El Kahfi Hadroh group performed around the village during the carnival commemorating independence on August 17 1999.



Fig. 5. El Kahfi hadroh group performing by walking around the village during the carnival to commemorate independence on August 17 1999

Religious rituals are not only communicative but also transformative in bringing about social change in society. Religion shapes standards of behavior in most societies. Consequently, the main role of religion lies in its ability to teach, provide knowledge, and build society individually and collectively [14]. With the presence of *hadroh* music in Surokarsan village, a transformation also occurred. Previously, Junet and Lodong, who never knew about mosques at all, often went to mosques. Initially it was for *hadroh* practice. However, if it's prayer time, then join the congregational prayer. Apart from that, he also participates in other mosque youth activities, such as recitation, fasting together, *etc.* Apart from that, with the presence of *hadroh*, the number of children who recite the Koran in the afternoon is also becoming more active and increasing. At that time, there was no drum band art like there is now. So *hadroh* becomes an attraction for children. Especially if the children are going to perform, parents are enthusiastic about accompanying their children to practice and even accompany them during competitions. Here, religion is communicated in such a way that social transformation occurs. In the end, the Surokarsan village mosque was felt to be increasingly prosperous by the congregation.

4. Conclusion

In situations like the above, religion functions as a communication tool and functions as a social tool in society to carry out communication functions. Religious communication allows people to communicate ideas, knowledge, feelings, thoughts, desires and other information. This is an effective means of interaction for peaceful coexistence in realising sustainable development and societal progress. The level of development of communication and religious understanding of each person in society can be used as an indicator of the overall level of development of a culture or nation. The

research results show that religious communication carried out using hadroh music media in Surokarsan village, Yogyakarta, makes da'wah more effective, especially among mothers, teenagers and children. Most of them are more enthusiastic about making the mosque prosperous, exploring religion and making the religious nuances of the village feel alive. Apart from that, mothers who have rarely recited thoyibah sentences have become more likely to repeat sholawat in rhythm accompanied by hadroh. On the other hand, children find it easier to learn religion if they do it by singing or using rhythm. They are more active in studying theology and the Qur'an because they participate in the Qur'an education park or TPA. One of the reasons is because there is hadroh training, there will be competitions and there is a positive place to play, namely in the mosque environment. The interesting thing is, so far there has been a dichotomy that the tradition of religious communication between traditionalist and modernist Islamic groups is difficult for acculturation and synthesis to occur. but in fact it could happen in Surokarsan village, Yogyakarta. Here, the traditions of religious and cultural communication that are closely associated with traditionalist Islamic groups can grow and be accepted by society whose majority adheres to modernist Islam.

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