Artistic negotiation, religious and cultural values: an Islamic dance aesthetic in the perspective of Muhammadiyah *tarjih* decision

Heni Siswantari [a,1,], Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra [a,2*], Samsul Maarif [a,3]

[a] Universitas Gadjah Mada Jl. Teknika Utara Sinduadi, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta and 55284, Indonesia
[1] heni.siswantari@mail.ugm.ac.id; [2] heddy.shri@ugm.ac.id *; [3] samsul.maarif75@ugm.ac.id
* corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to show the efforts to build Islamic dance aesthetics through artistic negotiations of dance works with art norms in *tarjih* decisions and cultural values in Muhammadiyah dance performances. The results of this intersection gave rise to a new value in Islamic dance art that speaks not only to divine oneness as an Islamic principle but also to Indonesian cultural factors in its aesthetic performance. Data was collected for 6 months using interview techniques and audio-visual data analysis of 3 dance works and artists in Muhammadiyah. Interviews with the general chairman policymakers in the field of tarjih and art institutions in Muhammadiyah also support analysis related to religious values in artworks. The analysis shows that the dance works performed result from the artist's religious interpretation of the norms in the Muhammadiyah *tarjih* decision. There is a negotiation between artists and Muhammadiyah administrators that takes place continuously in Muhammadiyah dance performances. Artists conduct artistic negotiations in the dance works performed to harmonize with Islamic values without eliminating cultural elements. The adaptation process is more on content (variety of dance movements), performance (costumes and dance supporting elements), and ideas (philosophical values within the cultural framework). The theoretical contribution of this research is to understand the relationship between art, culture, and religion, especially in the context of Islamic performing arts. This research also makes an important contribution to building the theory of Islamic dance aesthetics, which talks about artistic beauty and religious meaning in every element of performing arts and shows it through the perspective of dance diversity in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

Performing arts have become a concern among Muslims in Indonesia. The presence of the body as the main medium in performance art raises a longer discussion related to the limitation of *aurat* for both men and women. In the Islamic context, the human body is considered a creation of God that must be kept pure and honorable. Therefore, the use of the body as the main object in performing arts raises questions about the extent to which this artistic expression is allowed within the framework of Islamic norms. Most thinkers and scholars believe that performing arts involving the body should maintain certain restrictions to prevent behavior that could degrade the dignity or modesty of the human body. On the other hand, there are also more moderate views that accept that performing arts, if performed with due regard to Islamic moral values, can be accepted as a legitimate form of expression. These different views on art and Islam have led Islamic organizations in Indonesia to provide their own rules and views. In the 2015 MUI National Conference in Surabaya, East Java, one program was mandated to make a guidebook on Islamic art. The book was finally released in 2020

with the title Principles and General Guidelines of Islamic Art, which contains several fields of art discussed, such as music, visuals, theater, and film [1]. Attention to art is shown by major Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which has the Indonesian Muslim Cultural Artists Institute (LESBUMI) and Muhammadiyah with the Cultural Arts Institute (LSB). Both institutions focus on the development of art as a culture-based Islamic proselytization in society. In its development, NU campaigns for the concept of Islam Nusantara, which carries the spirit of tolerance and humanism and recognizes the existence of local cultural expressions and local beliefs in the archipelago [2]. This confirms that NU uses culture as the main basis for proselytizing Islam in society. This differs from the case of LSB in Muhammadiyah, which is often unknown by its members, let alone by people outside Muhammadiyah. The paradigm that has developed in the community so far is that Muhammadiyah stays away from arts and culture because it is considered to be close to the area of traditions and rituals that contain *tahayul*, *bid'ah,* and *kurafat* which are at odds with Muhammadiyah's perspective [3]. This kind of view is very contrary to the existence of LSB, which is a reflection of the Muhammadiyah organization, which not only focuses on religious aspects but also embraces culture as a means of communication and expression [4].

The contestation of religion and art in Muhammadiyah in recent decades is very interesting to study further. The journey of Muhammadiyah's *tarjih* verdict on art has been initiated since 1995 and was included in the book set of *Tarjih* Muhammadiyah's decisions in volume 3 in 2018 [5]. This decision was made by the *Tarjih* Council, a special institution within Muhammadiyah that studies Islamic teachings, makes decisions and fatwas, and produces discourse, including making *Tarjih* decisions on art. Although it has been socialized from time to time, differences of opinion about the development of art in Muhammadiyah still often occur in various regions in Indonesia. Most of the Muhammadiyah community still believes that this organization is not artistic or has not developed art in its life. Although the *tarjih* verdict states that art is *mubah* (permissible), many Muhammadiyah people think that art does not need to be developed. This view arises from the lack of understanding of art and the limited appreciation of art among Muhammadiyah in some regions. In an interview with Chamim Ilyas, chairman of the *Tarjih* and *Tajdid* Council of Muhammadiyah 2022-2027, it was explained that some Muhammadiyah people, especially those influenced by conservative and Wahabi religious understanding, put performing arts as something that is not related to Islamic principles. Muhammadiyah itself highlights the existence of two schools of thought in Muhammadiyah, namely progressive Islam and conservative Islam, which often conflict, including in views related to art and culture. Conservative thinking tends to reject art that is considered incompatible with Islamic principles [6], [7]. Muhammadiyah, despite its conservative views, tries to strike a balance between modernization and religious principles in art and culture. This view often limits the space for art, which is considered potentially contradictory to Islamic teachings [8], [9]. Muhammadiyah tends to be moderate in its approach, including in terms of art; however, conservative views in society often hinder the acceptance of these moderate views [10].

The gap between the *Tarjih* verdict and the views of the Muhammadiyah community indicates an unresolved problem of understanding, which ultimately hinders the development of performing arts in Muhammadiyah. Some critical analysis is also given to *Tarjih*'s decisions that are not fully understood or actualized by the community, including in the aspect of art and culture, which causes a gap in understanding [11]**,** [12]. Muhammadiyah should implement a policy of decentralization of discourse and *fatwa* in the organization's institutional hierarchy in responding to matters of art and culture and not wait for top-down oriented religious thinking - waiting for fatwa and guidance from the *Tarjih* Council. On the other hand, the policymakers in *the Tarjih Council do not know about the science of art and only analyze it through theological len*ses (religious norms) without considering the artistic aspects. Even a study related to music and songs in the view of Sharia highlighted the difference in views between the *Tarjih* Council, which tends to allow art as long as it is in accordance with Sharia, while conservative views in society tend to reject [13]. This perception is very contrary to the results of the Muhammadiyah *Tarjih* Decision Set, which explicitly states that the law of art in Islam is permissible or allowed as long as it does not contain elements of damage (*fasad*), danger (*dlarar*), disobedience (*isyyan*), or disobedience from Allah SWT (*ba'id 'anillah*) [5]**.**

The discussion of the hadith perspective on art in Muhammadiyah emphasizes that art is permitted as long as it does not conflict with the principle of tawhid and does not lead to polytheism [14]. This perspective is also in line with the basic principles of haram and halal things in QS. al-An'am {6}: 119], which means as follows. "... when indeed Allah has explained to you what He has forbidden

you, except what you are compelled to eat". Art, in this case, is interpreted as *mubah* (permissible) and falls under the law of halal until there is something that makes it *haram*. This verse is one of the bases for Muhammadiyah to give *mubah* law in art development. Muhammadiyah's support for art development also manifests itself in several Muhammadiyah music vocational schools and art study programs at several Muhammadiyah universities. The Muhammadiyah Religious Concept in *Islam Berkemajuan* also explains that Muhammadiyah promotes a moderate and inclusive Islam, which includes acceptance of art as long as it does not conflict with the basic teachings of Islam and actually serves to get closer to Allah SWT [15], [16].

Furthermore, art in Muhammadiyah is also interpreted as one of the cultural *da'wah* tools used to convey Islamic messages to the wider community. Thus, the assumption that Muhammadiyah rejects art is contrary to reality, where art is actually used as a medium to strengthen Muhammadiyah's *da'wah*. This research aims to analyze the aesthetic negotiation of Islamic performing arts, especially in Muhammadiyah [17]–[19]. The main focus of this research is to see how the negotiation process takes place, both from the side of the artists and the Muhammadiyah organization. This research will dig deeper into the forms of performing arts developed by the Muhammadiyah community and how they negotiate with existing *tarjih* decisions. In addition, this research will also explain how Muhammadiyah communities can adapt to performing arts without ignoring the Islamic values they hold.

2. Art, Aesthetic Islam, and Muhammadiyah context

A review of existing literature shows that the relationship between art and religion has been a long debate, both in the global context and within Muhammadiyah. The facts on the ground show that art and culture within Muhammadiyah have found their place conceptually and practically [20]–[24]. However, literature examining the relationship between Muhammadiyah and art in detail is still limited. The few existing studies only focus on the formal aspects of Muhammadiyah's decisions without touching on the aesthetic dimensions that developed in Muhammadiyah society. For example, although performing arts in Muhammadiyah are recognized as part of *da'wah*, the literature is still insufficient to explain how Islamic art aesthetics occur between performers and audiences and Muhammadiyah society in general. According to Hadley, Islamic performing arts actors negotiate with aesthetic, social, and economic values to create sustainable art practices [25]. In the context of art aesthetics in Muhammadiyah, art is judged not only on its artistic aspects but also on the moral, ethical, and religious values contained in the work. In the social aspect, Muhammadiyah art is seen in the context of its influence in society's educational and social fields. The third is economic value, which sees Muhammadiyah art developed and packaged to become a source of income for artists by carrying religious themes. This is very relevant to Islamic art aesthetics in the context of Muhammadiyah and performing arts in *da'wah*. The emptiness of this study is the basis for raising this research in order to answer questions that have not been answered in previous studies.

The urgency of this research is based on the argument that performing arts in Muhammadiyah play an important role in shaping its followers' cultural and religious identity. With the differences in views between art actors and *tarjih* decisions, this research seeks to show that performing arts in Muhammadiyah are not only understood as artistic expressions but also as an arena where negotiations of aesthetic and religious values occur. In his study, Rasmussen sees the negotiation of aesthetic and religious values in Kyai Kanjeng music as Islamic performing arts that play a role in expressing cultural and religious identity in Indonesia [26]. In the context of Muhammadiyah, which tends to combine tradition with a modern approach, Arabic music-based performance art is understood as a novelty concept. Thus, there is a fusion of Indonesian, Arabic, and Western music in the form of orchestras with Indonesian religious songs, religious music festivals and so on. Muhammadiyah also began to open art programs governed by Islamic teachings as a form of negotiation between art as a cultural expression and religious values [14]. Muhammadiyah also shows the negotiation of cultural and religious values in performing arts through its acceptance of local traditions and arts, which were previously considered incompatible with religious teachings [27]. Implementing aesthetic and religious values has also been applied in the daily lives of Muhammadiyah members through arts and culture integrated with religious values [28]. The hypothesis proposed in this study is that the aesthetic negotiation that occurs in Muhammadiyah does not negate religious values but rather strengthens religious identity through art practices. The state of the art of this research lies in exploring the process of negotiating dance aesthetics in Muhammadiyah, which reflects the balance between artistic

expression and Islamic religious values and reveals how these practices contribute to shaping cultural and religious identity. This research, therefore, fills a gap in the literature that has not fully examined the intersection of artistic, moral, and religious dimensions in Islamic cultural expressions in Muhammadiyah.

Aesthetic negotiation refers to the process of compromise and dialogue between different parties or elements in an artwork to achieve a balance between artistic and other values, such as cultural, religious, or moral values. In the context of performing arts, aesthetic negotiation involves artists, communities, and audiences in determining how art is presented. According to Islamic aesthetic theory, aesthetic value in artworks is measured not only based on visual or performative beauty but also on the extent to which the work aligns with religious values. Islamic aesthetics refers to divine wisdom and intellect, where art is considered a reflection of divine beauty. Art in Islam is judged based on visuals and conformity with religious values [29], [30]. Art in Islam should be based on the principle of tawhid, where the beauty of art is measured by its conformity to the teachings of Islamic monotheism, not just visual aesthetics [31]. Aesthetics in Islamic architecture is not only about physical beauty but also about reflecting Islamic religious principles derived from Islamic scholars' philosophical thoughts [30]. In Muhammadiyah, aesthetic negotiation reflects the process of selecting art elements that are in accordance with Islamic teachings without sacrificing the artistic quality of the work. In his writing, Azmi explained that tambourine music combines aesthetic and religious values in the context of *pesantren*, reflecting the negotiation between artistic and religious elements [32]. Similarly, Muslim artists use art to negotiate aesthetic and religious values, especially in shaping Muslim identity amidst religious and secular discourses [33].

Aesthetic negotiation can be categorized based on the elements that are the subject of negotiation. The first element is visual and performative aesthetics, which is how a work of art is displayed visually and dynamically. The second element is the content or message to be conveyed, where negotiations occur to ensure that the message conveyed is in line with religious norms. The third element is community acceptance, where artistic negotiations pay attention to how the community, especially in Muhammadiyah, responds to a work of art. This process creates a dialog between the artist and the community that aims to maintain a balance between artistic expression and religious values [34]. In the context of Muhammadiyah, the developing performing arts often involve elements of local traditions adapted to Islamic principles. This categorization also involves consideration of how performing arts can be an effective means of *da'wah*, where elements of the arts are adapted to remain compatible with religious values. Muhammadiyah has the Muhammadiyah Institute of Arts and Culture, which is tasked with facilitating the development of arts that are in line with Islamic teachings. Muhammadiyah also organizes various performing arts activities in major events such as Muktamar and Tanwir, where art is used as part of cultural *da'wah*. This categorization shows that art in Muhammadiyah is a means of entertainment and part of a broader *da'wah* strategy.

3. Method

The object of this research is performing arts in Muhammadiyah society, which is still a problematic issue. Muhammadiyah has issued the *Tarjih* Decisions on Art, which states that the law of art is permissible and art can be used as cultural *da'wah*. However, many Muhammadiyah citizens believe that this organization does not support the development of art in their daily lives. This is contrary to the fact that performing arts are often used in various official Muhammadiyah events, including da'wah activities. Thus, the object of this research focuses on the practice of performing arts in Muhammadiyah as well as the aesthetic negotiation of the performing arts. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods and describes the performing arts in Muhammadiyah society. The data used consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with informants who play an essential role in Muhammadiyah's art and culture decisions, namely Haidar Nashir as the general chairman of PP Muhammadiyah for the 2022-2027 period, Chamim Ilyas as the chairman of the *tarjih* and *tajdid* assembly of PP Muhammadiyah, Dr. Aisyah, S.Ag as Chairperson of PP 'Aisyiyah, and Widyastuti, M.Hum who served as Chairperson of 'Aisyiyah's Institute for Arts Culture and Sports. In addition, secondary data in the form of relevant literature was used to strengthen the analysis. Participants in this research included artist figures in Muhammadiyah who are active in several fields of dance art, such as Wigati as a performance leader community in East Java and Henny as the head of the Bali Region of 'Aisyiyah Art Institute. Interviews were conducted to explore their views on art and how Islamic art aesthetics are carried out in

Muhammadiyah. The analyzed dance works also include several dance performances performed in Muhammadiyah activities to be analyzed related to the aesthetic negotiations that arise from the dance performance.

Data in this study was collected for 6 months, specifically Muhammadiyah performing arts in Bali, East Java, and Central Java, through three main techniques: (1) interviews, (2) observation, and (3) documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to better understand the perceptions of Muhammadiyah leaders and artists regarding performing arts. Observation was used to directly observe performing arts, while documentation was obtained from records of art activities that Muhammadiyah art groups carried out. These techniques provide comprehensive data regarding the object of research. The steps of qualitative data analysis that will be used in this research include preparing and organizing data, transcribing data, understanding the data corpus, meaning data, coding data, generating categories and themes, and reporting the results of the analysis [35]. The analysis was carried out in stages, starting with processing raw data. Next, triangulation techniques were used, namely observation interviews and documentation. After that, source triangulation was carried out between *tarjih* administrators and Muhammadiyah artists. To produce conclusions based on the results of data triangulation. This triangulation is done by comparing various data sources to ensure the validity and reliability of the information obtained and to assess the consistency of the results obtained from various sources of information. The complete data collection and analysis techniques can be seen in Fig.1.
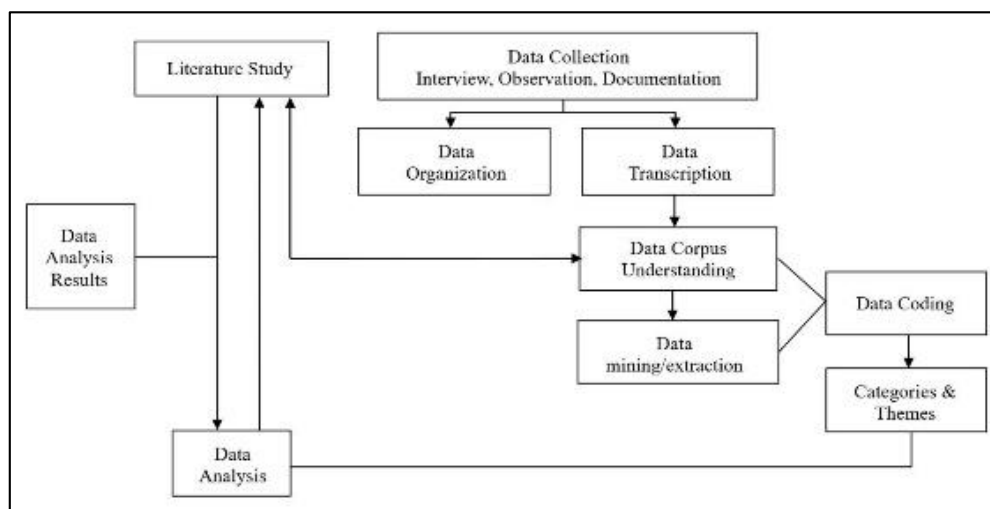

Fig. 1. Complete data collection and analysis techniques

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Artistic Negotiation of Muhammadiyah Dance Arts

The research shows that artistic negotiation in Muhammadiyah's performing arts functions as a tool to balance aesthetic values with Islamic principles embraced by Muhammadiyah. Based on the interview results, Muhammadiyah artists often face a dilemma between maintaining high artistic values and fulfilling the requirements set forth in the *Tarjih* Decisions. For example, adjustments are made in the selection of songs, dance movements, and the use of costumes to ensure that the art remains in line with Islamic principles. Islamic dance aesthetics is seen as a meeting between artistic negotiations, cultural values, and moral values as a form of religious representation in dance works. Muhammadiyah artists demonstrated that they negotiate art by balancing art as a form of expression and *da'wah* with strict Islamic norms. Informants revealed that aesthetic negotiation involves compromise in terms of the use of music, costumes, and dance movements. Muhammadiyah artists, such as Kusen and Romi, explained that they often have to adjust musical compositions and dance movements to remain in line with Islamic values. For example, the music used should not contain elements that are considered distracting, movements that are too sensual, and songs that have the potential to lead to sin are clearly avoided in every performance, and the costumes worn must remain in accordance with the principles of modesty in Islam, where the clothes used in performing arts must

maintain *aurat* and the value of modesty. This negotiation is not only limited to the technical aspects of art but also includes moral messages conveyed through performing arts.

Islamic dance in Muhammadiyah is divided into several categories: Islamic dance in content, Islamic in appearance, and Islamic in ideas. This is because of the various perceptions and interpretations of Islamic dance in Muhammadiyah. Researchers saw how both Muhammadiyah administrators and artists interpreted art and Islam in the interviews and observations conducted. An interesting explanation was conveyed by Wigati, a teacher and head of the Muhammadiyah Cultural Arts Institute in the East Java region, about dance and women: "One day, we performed *Remo* dance performed by a woman wearing a hijab and not a solo dancer. In the past, we had performed this dance solo and received criticism from the local Muhammadiyah board because it was considered inappropriate because the audience's attention would be focused on that one dancer".

The criticism was then addressed by Muhammadiyah artists in East Java who performed the *Remo* dance in pairs and groups by female dancers. This is very interesting, considering that *Remo's* dance was originally a male dance along with *ludruk* art [36]. In its development, women also performed this dance, so the *Remo* princess dance emerged. Fig. 2 shows that the *Remo* dance, which was originally a male dance depicting strength and masculinity, is now enjoyed and performed by women with certain modifications in Muhammadiyah. Based on information from informants, according to local Muhammadiyah *tarjih* administrators, the masculine movements of *Remo's* dance will reduce the level of eroticism of female dancers when presenting it. When women dance masculine movements, this is seen as a way to avoid eroticism and sensuality. However, this also leads to gender injustice because when men dance feminine movements, they are seen as violating the norms of their masculinity. There is inequality in the way society judges or evaluates dance movements based on gender. The dance movement itself is more universal and should not be tied to narrow social roles. Judging dance based on feminine and masculine movements is not just about the aesthetics of dance itself but rather how gender is shaped in a social and cultural context. Gender injustice arises when dance is considered based on whether the movements are deemed "appropriate" to traditional male or female roles. This phenomenon reflects the tension between tradition and modernity, where art that should be freely expressed is often constrained by rigid social norms. The following is a display of female *Remo* dancers in groups in Muhammadiyah, which can be seen in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2. Female *Remo* dancers of Muhammadiyah

In Fig. 3, in detail, it is shown that the use of leggings and long-sleeved shirts gives female dancers comfort in moving but still maintains modesty. It aims to cover body parts that are considered to cause sexual attraction or are considered not in accordance with the norms of modesty in the Muhammadiyah tradition. The black hijab worn by female dancers signifies conformity with the demands of Islam regarding the obligation to cover the *aurat*. The hijab can also be interpreted as a symbol to maintain the modesty of female dancers so as not to bring out body displays that are considered sensitive or erotic. *Kace* (a necklace worn on the chest), which is used to cover sensitive parts of women, also adapts to religious values that prioritize covering the *aurat*. This costume modification is also a way to adapt its aesthetics to be more acceptable to the Muhammadiyah community. Although *Remo's* dance is masculine, this effort emphasizes how women can be involved in dance without violating applicable social or religious norms.

This idea is a form of negotiation for female dancers to display the strength and masculine energy that exists in Remo's dance without losing the essence or original meaning of the dance, but still adhering to norms of modesty. Therefore, although this dance is rooted in masculinity, the interpretation of movement is still acceptable as long as it is done within a framework that is in accordance with existing religious and cultural values. Philosophically, *Remo's* dance has a high wisdom value, which describes the struggle of the people from the colonizers [37].

Fig. 3. Detail of Muhammadiyah *Remo* dance hijab costume

This idea continues to be promoted when Remo's dance is presented as a form of Muhammadiyah support for the development of local cultural arts. This artistic negotiation is carried out while still paying attention to the original *Remo* dance aesthetics, one of which is energetic and full of stomping movements. The next development of dance in Muhammadiyah was in Bali, which was developed due to regular meetings between Muhammadiyah and 'Aisyiyah art institutions. In an interview with, Dhuha said that As a Muslim minority group in Bali, the close relationship between Muhammadiyah members is increasingly solid. An activity called "jagongan" is held regularly every month as a space for discussion of the art of Muslim artists in Bali. Muhammadiyah Muslim artists and Islamic organizations in Bali gathered and showed their best ideas and performances. The development of dance in Muhammadiyah Bali was initially quite limited, and only a type of Islamic dance was developed, namely, the *Rodhat* dance. In some performances, the *Rodhat* dance of Muhammadiyah is now also performed by women, as shown in Fig. 4 in the 4th Muhammadiyah Grand Camp in Bali.

Fig. 4. *Rodhat* dance of Muhammadiyah Bali

Rodhat dance is considered safe for women to dance in because the movements do not explore the body, and the movements are like marching. In this case, there is discrimination against movement in dance that gets the *shari'i* label and does not. In the hadith of Sahih Bukhari, Muslim number 2128, it is explained that "women who are dressed but naked, swaying and their heads are like camel humps

will not be found in heaven." Siti Aisyah interprets this as the chairperson of 'Aisyiyah's central leadership for the 2022-2027 period as follows:

> "*In dancing, there are so many movements; whether these movements fall into the category mentioned in the hadith, I am not sure. However, I think what needs to be done is to choose dances that are not too energetic and have soft movements. (Aisyah)*". (Interview Rika, 2024).

This opinion is a form of 'Aisyiyah's caution in developing dance. Not a few ''Aisyiyah cadres in various regions feel the need for guidelines that can be used so that mistakes do not occur in developing art. Based on this opinion, the *Rodhat* dance was chosen because it is considered Islamic and includes lyrics of *shalawatan* or praises of the prophet in the accompaniment. *Rodhat* dance costumes also follow Islamic principles, namely covering the *aurat* and not emphasizing the female body shape. At first, the Muhammadiyah cadres were resistant to the performance of Balinese dance. Muhammadiyah administrators only see dance in terms of the form of movement without regard to the value of the dance. In an interview with Chamim Ilyas (2024), this event is a form of a specialistic and not universal view of art. In its development, Muhammadiyah administrators in Bali began to be open to the cultural values of Bali. There was a negotiation in terms of artisticity regarding the concept of hijab through the costumes worn by Pendet dancers. Here is one of the displays of the *Pendet* dance performed at Muhammadiyah events in Bali. Can be seen in Fig. 5.

Fig. 5. *Pendet* dance with hijab by Muhammadiyah in Bali

Artistic negotiations in Balinese *Pendet* dance can be seen in the use of costumes and makeup that retain the characteristics of Balinese culture. Adaptation on some sides is still done to maintain Islamic values in Balinese dance artistic negotiations. One is the use of cuffs and black *hijab* before using the original *Pendet* dance costume that covers the upper part of the chest to the arms of the dancer. The use of this additional clothing considers aspects of comfort, as well as maintaining modesty for dancers with consideration of religious values in Islam. Nevertheless, the use of cuffs and hijab does not reduce the meaning of the original costume because it still reflects the impression of splendor and elegance of *Pendet* dance.

Furthermore, the long hair that is tied neatly is one of the characteristics of the appearance of Balinese dancers. It can be seen in the picture that dancers still use wigs outside the hijab to adapt to Balinese culture and not change the essence of the dance. Third is the artistic negotiation on the use of Balinese dance make-up, which has thick and corrective characteristics, with an emphasis on large and expressive eyes. This type of make-up reflects the strength and splendor of Balinese culture, so Muhammadiyah artists still apply it to maintain the characteristics of Balinese dance. These are examples of artistic negotiation where traditional elements are maintained but adapted to the artistic and practical needs of the performance. Artistic negotiations in Muhammadiyah dance are carried out by considering moral aspects and cultural values. The position of moral values is more dominant than the artistic needs of dance in Muhammadiyah. An example is in the *Gambyong* dance in Fig. 6, which shows costume changes that are different from the original. This change certainly does not meet the cultural values and artistic needs of *Gambyong* dance.

Fig. 6. Muhammadiyah *gambyong* hijab costume

Philosophically, the costume of *Gambyong* dance utilizes the *angkin, jarik, selendang*, and *sanggul tekuk,* which depicts the popular dance, namely *tledhek*. In its development, *Gambyong* dance costumes developed and became more diverse with various motifs and colors. However, there are still standard rules for *Gambyong* dance costumes, namely in terms of the use of cloth wrapped around the chest, the color of the cloth wrapped around, *angkin*, the use of cloth /*jarik*, accessories *mentul* dan *sanggul* [38]. More complete differences between *Gambyong* hijab and bun dancers can be seen in the following Fig. 7.
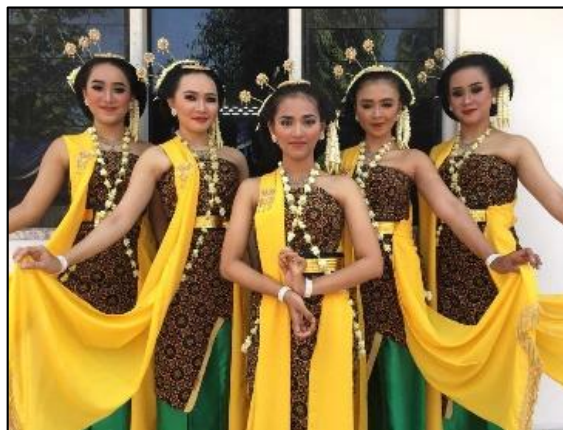
Fig. 7. Original *gambyong* dance costume

Fig. 7 is a *Gambyong* dancer who performed at the regional work meeting of the Muhammadiyah Art Institute in Central Java. The dancers wear green velvet tops with long sleeves. *Bludru* itself is a fabric that has a smooth and slightly shiny texture, which gives a luxurious but not too flashy impression. By choosing a *bludru kebaya*, the dancers can maintain a graceful appearance in accordance with the character of *Gambyong* dance. On the head, besides using the hijab, there are also modifications to the accessories that can still be used as an effort to keep connecting *Gambyong* dance with Javanese cultural roots. These accessories give the impression that traditional elements are not completely eliminated but adjusted to better suit the current social and religious context. All forms of artistic negotiations carried out certainly raise many perceptions from the wider community. There are groups that see this change as eliminating the true essence of the *Gambyong* dance. Fig. 7 shows one example of the original Gambyong dance costume, which does not wear a *hijab*. There are quite significant changes, one of which is from the wrapped *kemben,* which is changed to a velvet *kebaya*. On the other hand, through this negotiation, the dance can continue to develop in Islam in Indonesia while maintaining the cultural value of the dance.

Muhammadiyah has a limitation in the development of art that does not have damage (*fasad*), danger (*dlarar*), disobedience (*isyyan*), or disobedience from Allah SWT (*ba'id 'anillah*). The *Remo Putri, Pendhet,* and *Gambyong* dances performed by Muhammadiyah have been adjusted and do not lead to these four elements. In terms of the purpose of presenting the work is to preserve culture and hone taste so that it does not have elements of *fasad* or *dharar*. It also does not have ritual elements /

sinful acts that lead to worshiping other than Allah and functions as entertainment (not *isyyan*). The exercise of taste in dancing also hones the sensitivity of the dancer's taste in getting closer to Allah, not the other way around (not *ba'id 'anillah*).

Philosophically, all dances have meaning about humans and life through gestures as symbolization. Through changes in costumes, movements, and ideas of philosophical values, this dance also functions as a cultural da'wah tool while maintaining cultural values and Islamic identity without leaving the artistic aspects of dance performances. Islamic dance aesthetics found in this research show a strong effort from Muhammadiyah artists to maintain their Islamic integrity in every artwork. The reality found in the field shows that although Muhammadiyah has institutionally given freedom to the development of art, its application still encounters obstacles, especially in more conservative groups of society. Many Muhammadiyah people still doubt the role of art in Islamic life, which in turn affects the practice of performing arts in Muhammadiyah. This effort to keep art in the Islamic corridor is a form of negotiation that Muhammadiyah artists continue to do. This shows that art in Muhammadiyah is not just entertainment but also an effective *da'wah* tool if done properly. The reality on the ground shows that performing arts in Muhammadiyah face great challenges from a society that still views art as taboo. However, the support from official Muhammadiyah institutions has helped strengthen the position of art as a part of *da'wah* that can be well received, especially when this art manages to maintain Islamic values and does not violate norms. Through performing arts, Muhammadiyah can adapt its *da'wah* to the times and play an important role in the formation of Islamic cultural identity in Indonesia without losing the core Islamic values. Performing arts in Muhammadiyah is about cultural expression and how art can be a medium to strengthen faith.

Based on the interview results, Muhammadiyah, as a modernist Islamic organization actually has an open view towards art, as long as the art is in accordance with Islamic principles. Observation results show that Muhammadiyah supports art activities through various institutions such as LSB, which plays a role in developing performing arts that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. This institution is active in developing performing arts that are in accordance with Muhammadiyah values, where art does not only function as entertainment but also as a medium for education and *da'wah*. Haidar Nashir and Chamim Ilyas, two important Muhammadiyah figures, stated that performing arts are part of cultural da'wah that needs to be continuously developed. From interviews with Muhammadiyah figures, it appears that Muhammadiyah strives to integrate art and *da'wah* in a mutually supportive framework. They emphasize the importance of looking at art from the aspect of form, function, and purpose. Art that can educate and inspire is an art that is in line with Muhammadiyah's values. Therefore, performing arts in Muhammadiyah must fulfill this function in addition to acting as a medium of entertainment. In this case, Muhammadiyah places art as a medium to strengthen Islam's spread in the community. This view of Muhammadiyah has been strengthened through various *tarjih* decisions, which state that art can be used as long as it does not conflict with Sharia. Reality shows that although Muhammadiyah has institutionally accommodated art in its activities, there is still a community acceptance gap. Some conservative groups in Muhammadiyah still view art as unnecessary. However, the support of Muhammadiyah figures and official Muhammadiyah institutions has helped open up space for performing arts with Islamic preaching value so that this art can continue to develop in the Muhammadiyah community. The performing arts developed by Muhammadiyah are clear evidence that this organization is able to adapt to social change without losing its religious identity.

4.2. Discussion of the aesthetics of Islamic art

Islamic art aesthetics in dance arts within Muhammadiyah society occur through a complex process. Dance arts are treated as a medium for *dakwah* (Islamic proselytizing), continuously adapting to strict religious norms. Through interviews, observations, and documentation, it is revealed that the Muhammadiyah community strives to integrate traditional arts with Islamic values, maintaining a balance between cultural expression and religious teachings. Dance arts, particularly those involving women, are strictly monitored to avoid elements considered contrary to sharia while preserving traditional aesthetic Muhammadiyah elements. Table 1 is a description of Muhammadiyah's performing arts. Interaction between artists and audiences is crucial in creating a unique artistic experience. Performing arts are evaluated based on technical movement and how the work conveys messages and meaning to its audience. In the Islamic context, performing arts serve as an effective medium for *dakwah*, delivering moral and religious messages through forms of expression that are

acceptable to society. The effectiveness of *dakwah* through performing arts is supported by research on Islamic-themed animations like Upin & Ipin and short films like Nussa [39], [40].

Table 1. Muhammadiyah Dance Arts

Aspects	Description
Dance Art Form	Dance that has cultural and moral values that are in accordance with Islamic principles
Role of Muhammadiyah	dance arts in Muhammadiyah are used as a means of *da'wah* with Sharia restrictions, namely not falling into four categories (*fasad, dharar, isyan*, and *bait 'anillah*).
Proses Negosiasi artistik	Negotiation in terms of content (movement), appearance (costumes and other dance supporting elements), and ideas (philosophical dance values).
The Role of Art as *Da'wah*	Dance art is seen as a tool to spread religious values and strengthen morals.

Islamic music, *gambus*, and *sintir* performances are also used as media for *dakwah*, effectively combining art and religious messages through musical elements that resonate well with the community [41]–[44]. A study highlights the evolution of Muhammadiyah's *Tarjih* approach, which is modernist, although societal views often remain trapped in conservatism, hindering the application of progressive decisions in arts and culture [19]. This research reinforces earlier studies emphasizing the importance of art as a tool for *dakwah* among Muslim communities. For instance, research conducted by Shay Van Nieuwkerk reveals that performing arts in the Muslim world are often utilized to support religious teachings [45], [46]. However, this study adds a distinct dimension by demonstrating how Muhammadiyah implements stricter artistic negotiations compared to other Muslim communities. The strength of this research lies in its emphasis on cultural aspects integrated with the purification of Islamic teachings, involving not only sharia regulations but also adaptations to local culture. This research offers a deeper understanding of how the Muhammadiyah community navigates the challenges between culture and religion. These Islamic art aesthetics show that performing arts are not merely seen as entertainment but also as a medium to strengthen faith and religious identity. The benefit of this research lies in providing a new framework for other religious communities to develop arts that consider aesthetic elements while preserving moral and spiritual values. This is relevant for developing more universal performing arts, especially in societies with strong religious values.

This research implies that performing arts can continue to thrive within Muhammadiyah society as long as Islamic art aesthetics are rooted in religious values. Arts can serve as tools for *dakwah* and moral education. This also provides opportunities for artists to be more creative in expressing religious messages through art. Another implication is the need for Muhammadiyah educational institutions to integrate arts as part of their *dakwah* curriculum, focusing on religious instruction and cultural aspects. A notable finding is that Muhammadiyah, as an organization emphasizing the purification of Islamic teachings, does not neglect local culture. Restrictions applied to performing arts, such as in dance movements, reflect Muhammadiyah's commitment to preserving its religious identity while accommodating local cultural elements deemed consistent with sharia [47]. Muhammadiyah has developed into a space for collaboration between artists, clerics, and the Muhammadiyah community. One form of collaboration is what happened during the National Muhammadiyah Artists Cultural Camp in Malang in July 2024, which accommodated the aspirations of Muhammadiyah artists in working and preaching through art.

Several things were agreed upon and submitted to the Muhammadiyah central leadership to be ratified, namely: (1) in the field of education; each region must create at least one Muhammadiyah art studio and open an art study program at Muhammadiyah University; (2) the field of business and art events is the making of Art Mu; (3) the field of cultural studies: organizing cultural *fiqh* studies [48]. Artists get the freedom to create within the boundaries set by religious values, while *ulama* and organizational leaders ensure that every innovation still reflects Islamic values. This process produces beautiful and meaningful works of art and strengthens Islamic identity in performing arts. Efforts made by Muhammadiyah in social art in the organisation are to increase socialisation about the importance of art in *da'wah*. Muhammadiyah can strengthen existing arts programmes by providing clearer guidance on the boundaries of sharia in performing arts. In addition, it is important for Muhammadiyah to open a space for dialogue between artists and clerics so that art can develop without causing controversy regarding religious values. Developing an art curriculum that is in accordance with religious principles in Muhammadiyah educational institutions is also a strategic step to maintain the balance between culture and religion.

5. Conclusion

Artistic negotiation in dance includes a compromise between culture and religion and a more profound attempt to adapt the art form to the prevailing norms of sharia. One of the important contributions of this research is the emphasis on aesthetic negotiation as a balancing mechanism between cultural traditions and religious demands. In this case, dance, which was initially considered mere entertainment, was transformed into a means of reinforcing moral and spiritual values through efforts to adjust to Islamic principles, such as in the adjustment of costumes, dance movements, and themes. This research also makes an important contribution to building the theory of Islamic dance aesthetics, which talks about artistic beauty and religious meaning in every element of performing arts, both in costumes, movements, music, and messages to be conveyed. This research shows that Islamic dance aesthetics in the context of Muhammadiyah is not simply the result of a compromise between culture and religion but a process of deep artistic negotiation that allows art to develop into an effective tool of *da'wah* and remain in accordance with the principles of sharia. This research provides a foundation for further development of performing arts within the framework of Islam and opens space for further dialogue between art, religion, and culture. Further research is expected to explore more variations and dynamics that occur in the development of *da'wah* art in various religious communities in Indonesia.

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