

## The Degradation of The Role of *Mamaca* Art as a Medium for Proselytizing Moderate Islam

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh fenomena memudarnya tradisi seni mamaca di kalangan masyarakat Madura, khususnya di Desa Glagahwero, Kecamatan Kalisat, Kabupaten Jember. Seni mamaca yang dahulu berfungsi sebagai sarana dakwah Islam kultural, kini mengalami penurunan signifikan baik dari segi regenerasi pelaku, apresiasi masyarakat, maupun relevansi sosialnya. Hal ini diperparah oleh menguatnya dakwah skripturalis-tekstualis yang kurang akomodatif terhadap ekspresi budaya lokal. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kemunduran seni mamaca, menelaah respon tokoh agama dan pelaku seni terhadap kondisi tersebut, serta mengkaji implikasinya terhadap dakwah Islam moderat di era kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Informan terdiri dari tokoh agama, pelaku seni, dan warga desa setempat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemunduran mamaca dipengaruhi oleh tidak adanya sistem kaderisasi, resistensi terhadap inovasi, serta dominasi model keberagamaan yang literalistik. Seni mamaca berpotensi dihidupkan kembali jika diintegrasikan dalam pendidikan pesantren dan program kebudayaan lokal yang lebih adaptif terhadap konteks zaman.

**Kata Kunci:** *mamaca, dakwah budaya, Islam moderat, skripturalisme, tradisi lokal.*

### **Abstract**

This research is motivated by the phenomenon of the fading of the *mamaca* art tradition among the Madurese community, especially in Glagahwero Village, Kalisat District, Jember Regency. The art of *mamaca*, which used to function as a means of cultural Islamic da'wah, has now experienced a significant decline in terms of regeneration of actors, community appreciation, and social relevance. This is exacerbated by the strengthening of scripturalist-textualist da'wah that is less accommodating to local cultural expressions. The purpose of this study is to understand the factors that contribute to the decline of the art of *mamaca*, examine the responses of religious leaders and artists to these conditions, and explore the implications for moderate Islamic da'wah in the contemporary era. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques that include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Informants consisted of religious leaders, artists, and local villagers. The results showed that the decline of *mamaca* was influenced by the absence of a regeneration system, resistance to innovation, and the dominance of a literalistic religious model. The art of *mamaca* has the potential to be revived if it is integrated into pesantren education and local cultural programs that are more adaptive to the current context.

**Keywords:** *mamaca, cultural da'wah, moderate Islam, scripturalism, local tradition.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Islam in Indonesia has developed through a distinctive, peaceful, and cultural approach, where local arts and traditions play a central role in the process of spreading its teachings. One art form that plays a significant role in the propagation of Islam in the Madura region is *mamaca*, a tradition of reciting classical Islamic poetry in the form of songs and musical narratives. This art not only conveys Islamic messages, but also forms a moderate and humanistic Madurese Islamic identity (Paisun, 2010). Historically, scholars such as Walisongo strategically used local art forms, including wayang,

gamelan, and *mamaca*, as a means of proselytizing that was inclusive and accommodating to local culture (Sumawinata et al., 2022). However, in the last decade, *mamaca* has experienced a drastic decline, pushed out by the strengthening of scripturalist and puritanical religious patterns, which tend to reject tradition-based religious expressions (Al-Hafizh et al., 2024). In addition, the presence of social media as a new da'wah arena actually accelerates the process of marginalization of traditional Islamic arts such as *mamaca*, because the dominant narrative on digital platforms accommodates verbalistic and sensational lectures that are far from cultural values (Setiawan, 2022). In this context, the urgency to revitalize *mamaca* is not only important for cultural preservation, but also strategic in strengthening moderate Islamic identity amidst waves of radicalism and religious homogenization. Revisiting the position of *mamaca* as a da'wah instrument can be an entry point for building a more inclusive alternative narrative in contemporary Indonesian Islamic discourse (Suparjo, n.d.).

This phenomenon is more evident in the case of *mamaca* in Kalisat Village, Jember, where the sustainability of this art form faces serious challenges. The successor cadre of *mamaca* artists in this region is very small, almost nonexistent. The children and descendants of the *mamaca* artists are not interested in inheriting the art, despite various socialization and facilitation efforts by the village government. The youth have no interest in learning *mamaca*, and the senior artists have no systematic learning system. There is no clear curriculum, regeneration stage, or regeneration plan; the recruitment process depends entirely on individual volunteerism. Even more concerning, the art of *mamaca* has little economic value. The artists who act as *tokang ngijung* (performers) and *tokang tegges* (interpreters) in community events never receive financial rewards. The art of *mamaca* never really became a profession, and therefore lost its appeal to the younger generation living under the demands of a modern economy.

Previous studies on the art of *mamaca* and Islamic cultural da'wah can be categorized into four main trends. First, studies that emphasize the aesthetic, social, and preservation dimensions of the traditional art of *mamaca* as part of Madura's cultural wealth. For example, Dana et

al. (2023) developed a *mamaca* preservation model involving the government and the media, while Hidayatullah (n.d.) and Wilantini & Amien (2024) showed that *mamaca* plays an important role in character education and ethical values of Madurese society. Isyanto et al. (2023) also emphasized that *mamaca*, as oral literature, is now being abandoned by the younger generation due to the penetration of digital culture. Second, studies that look at traditional arts as a medium for Islamic propagation. Nurhidayah (2017) shows the role of mask dance as a vehicle for Islamic propagation, which is now experiencing a decline due to the flow of modernization. Rizali's (2012) study also emphasizes that art in Islam can be a medium for da'wah as long as it does not conflict with sharia values. Meanwhile, Ritonga (2018) sees print media as one of the strategic channels in broadcasting da'wah. Third, studies that highlight the challenges of moderating Islam in the digital age and social media. Akmaliah (2020), Faldiansyah (2022), and Meyer (2024) demonstrate the weak position of moderate Islamic organizations in the digital space, amid the growing strength of radical and exclusive discourse. Fourth, historical and theoretical studies examine the conceptualization of Islamic art and its relationship with power, identity, and resistance to modernity (Lerner & Shalem, 2010; Urofsky, 2022; Delgado, 2012; Ikhwan, 2024). Although diverse and rich, these studies have yet to examine in depth the relationship between the waning of *mamaca*, the absence of regeneration of local da'wah traditions, and the strengthening of scripturalist expressions of Islam.

This research specifically aims to fill this void by examining three main aspects; (1) how *mamaca* art activists respond to the fading existence of *mamaca* in the community; (2) how the attitude of religious leaders, especially kiai and pesantren caregivers, towards the lack of regeneration of *mamaca* actors; and (3) how the weakening of the *mamaca* tradition has an impact on efforts to strengthen moderate Islam, especially for the younger generation. This research links the process of local cultural degradation with the paradigm shift in contemporary Islamic da'wah and examines the possibility of integrating the art of *mamaca* into the agenda of religious moderation in Indonesia.

This research departs from the assumption that the decline of *mamaca* art is not only caused by technological advances or shifting public tastes, but is part of epistemological changes in the understanding and practice of da'wah. This shift indicates a shift from participatory cultural expressions to an increasingly verbalistic, scriptural, and one-way textual lecture-oriented model of da'wah. This transition has an impact on the declining role of oral traditions, such as *mamaca*, alongside the increasingly dominant religious narratives on social media that often overlook the local context and cultural heritage of the community (Hidayatullah, n.d.). The art of *mamaca*, in this case, has the potential as a strategic cultural instrument that embodies the values of moderate Islam: inclusiveness, social attachment, and contextual relevance in local traditions (Isyanto et al., 2023). It can also play a role in counteracting the deculturalization of religion by fostering a sense of belonging and togetherness through collectively inherited cultural practices (Hidayatullah, n.d.).

Preliminary findings indicate that some art activists and religious leaders support the preservation of *mamaca* as part of local Islamic identity, which must be maintained, especially in the face of modernity's challenges and the homogenization of dakwah (Isyanto et al., 2023). They see *mamaca* as an alternative medium for da'wah that can bridge the younger generation with Islamic values that are friendly and reflective (Hidayatullah, n.d.). On the other hand, there is also a view that the dominance of textual sermons and digital media provides clarity and broader access to religious teachings. This view emphasizes that the modernization of da'wah is not entirely negative, and can even expand the reach of da'wah to a broader segment of society. Therefore, this study proposes the repositioning of the art of *mamaca* as part of a moderate Islamic cultural strategy that is contextual, locally rooted, and relevant to the challenges of the times.

## **METHODS**

The units of analysis in this study are cultural actors, religious leaders, and local policy makers in Glagahwero Village, Kalisat Subdistrict, Jember Regency, who have direct or indirect involvement with the practice of *mamaca* art. The research subjects included *mamaca*

artists (both active and retired), religious leaders such as kiai and pesantren caregivers, and village officials who have been involved in local tradition preservation activities. This unit was chosen because it is representative of the socio-cultural context that is transforming in terms of artistic regeneration, changes in proselytization practices, and the relationship between tradition and modernity.

This research employs a descriptive, qualitative approach with an interpretive orientation. This approach was chosen because it enables a detailed description of how social actors interpret the shifting functions of *mamaca* within the context of Islamic da'wah and the cultural dynamics of local communities. This design is operationalized through an exploratory field study, combining direct observation of cultural practices, tracing the narrative history of *mamaca*, and interpreting the community's response to the fading of the tradition. This approach allows the disclosure of the symbolic, social, and cultural dimensions of the phenomenon under study holistically and contextually.

Data sources in this study were obtained from purposively selected key informants, including *mamaca* artists from Glagahwero village, local religious leaders (kiai and ustaz), and village officials involved in cultural preservation programs. Data collection techniques included participatory observation of local events that still present *mamaca*, in-depth interviews with key informants to explore their perceptions of changes in proselytization practices and the sustainability of traditions, and documentation studies that included archives of *mamaca* verse texts, local documentary videos, and village policy documents related to traditional arts. This process was conducted over a span of time sufficient to capture social and cultural dynamics in a representative manner.

The collected data were analyzed using interpretative qualitative analysis techniques, which involved data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation of meaning, and triangulation between sources. The analysis was conducted by tracing narrative patterns related to *mamaca*, shifts in da'wah epistemology, and regeneration challenges within the context of rural communities. Data reduction involved sorting out relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents. The main categories included "cultural da'wah

transformation," "symbolic resistance to puritanism," and "perceptions of the economic value and sustainability of local arts." Triangulation was employed to ensure the validity of the findings by comparing data from multiple sources.

## DISCUSSION

### Degeneration of *Mamaca* Art

The phenomenon of *mamaca* art degeneration in East Java, especially in Glagahwero Village, reflects a crisis of local cultural sustainability in the face of modernization and the transformation of Islamic preaching values. The art of *mamaca*, which once served as a space for religious and cultural interaction, is slowly losing its place in the community's social life. This degeneration is not only marked by the reduction in the number of active actors, but also by the absence of a systematic tradition inheritance scheme. The absence of an informal curriculum, the absence of ongoing facilitation, and the lack of institutional support from religious institutions and the village government accelerate the process of generational disconnection. Thus, *mamaca* has experienced not only a quantitative decline in practice but also a decline in quality in the community's collective memory as part of a local expression of Islam. This sustainability crisis is conveyed by *mamaca* actors in Madura, especially in Glagahwero Village:

**Table 1. Statements Related to Regeneration and Challenges of *Mamaca* Art in Glagahwero, Kalisat**

Informant	Age	Interview Statement	Description
Mr. Hoi (Chairman of Kalisat Gotong Royong Paguyuban)	67 years old	"Until now there are no young people who are interested in learning seriously how to read and neggesi. Even my children and son-in-law do not want to work on <i>Mamaca</i> . Of course, we hope that one day there will still be young people who are willing to be our successors."	Lack of successor cadres



<b>Mr. Jalal</b> ( <i>Mamaca</i> artist, Mumbulsari)	70 years old	"I don't have any students. I used to learn from my uncle by practicing singing and shouting in the river. There was also an obligation to fast. Until now, no one wants to learn from me like that."	Unsystematic regeneration
<b>Regards</b> (Mr. Hoi's son-in-law)	40 years old	"So far, I have been in charge of taking Bapak to the regular <i>Mamaca</i> gathering... But I am not interested in becoming your successor, because <i>Mamaca</i> cannot be used as a job that generates money to fulfill the needs of our family."	No profit prospects
<b>H. Halim</b> (Glagahwero Village Head)	50 years old	"The village government has tried to facilitate <i>Mamaca</i> and fully support efforts to preserve it. However, the biggest obstacle is the lack of interest from the village youth to learn and becoming the successor to the elderly <i>Mamaca</i> artists."	Lack of successor cadres
<b>Drs. KH. A. Rosyidi Baihaqi</b> (Caretaker of Miftahul Ulum Islamic Boarding School)	68 years old	"Learning <i>Mamaca</i> has no curriculum... He is very expert. But when I asked him how to learn <i>Mamaca</i> , he just told me to pay attention and imitate how to sing and <i>negesin</i> ... so until now, this pesantren has never taught <i>Mamaca</i> to the students."	Unsystematic regeneration
<b>Hoiriyah</b> (Daughter of Mr. Hoi)	40 years old	"You were never paid when you were <i>tokang ngijung</i> and <i>tokang tegges</i> at the Gotong Royong social gathering... If there is a <i>tangge'en Mamaca</i> or rokat, you usually get paid as much as you can... as far as I remember, maybe only two to three times a year..."	No profit prospects



From this, it can be concluded that the art of *mamaca* faces serious challenges in terms of regeneration due to the absence of a structured regeneration system and the younger generation's lack of interest in continuing the tradition. This disinterest is exacerbated by the fact that *mamaca* does not have a promising economic value, so it is not considered a financially viable professional option. Despite the village government's efforts to facilitate and preserve the art of *mamaca*, the approach has not been able to generate interest among the youth. The art of *mamaca* continues to be practiced traditionally and personally, without any systematic learning mechanism, either within the family or religious institutions such as pesantren. This indicates that the art of *mamaca* is on the verge of cultural extinction unless there is immediate revitalization that addresses its structural, economic, and educational aspects as a whole. This is reinforced by the following observations:

#### Results of Field Observations of *Mamaca* Artists in Jember

Date of Visit	Name of Informant	Location	Daily Activities	<i>Mamaca</i> Activity	Informant's Expectation
June 28, 2025	Mr. Hoi	Glagahwer o village, Kalisat sub-	Trading from Fajr to Asr,	Active as Chairman of Gotong	Wants his children/grand children or

		district, Jember district	<i>Mamaca</i> is done in the afternoon and evening.	Royong Association (13 members, age >60 years)	The younger generation to be the successors of <i>Mamaca</i> , but until now, no one is interested
July 1, 2025	Mr. Jalal	Lampeji village, Mumbulsari sub- district, Jember district	Has no permanent economic activity, depends on children's remittances and neighbors' help.	Still singing regularly even though he is alone; his <i>Mamaca</i> community has disbanded	Very hopeful that there will be young people who want to learn <i>Mamaca</i> , but the hope is not yet realized.

Observations made on June 28, 2025, at the home of Mr. Hoi, a *Mamaca* artist and chairman of the Gotong Royong Association in Glagahwero Village, Kalisat Sub-district, showed a complex socio-cultural reality. Mr. Hoi, who sells ice mix and cendol at the market, only does *Mamaca* in the afternoons and evenings with a small community of 13 elderly people. Although he still regularly organizes arisan activities and *Mamaca* readings, he expressed deep concern about the lack of interest from the younger generation, including his children and grandchildren, in continuing the tradition. The absence of a formal regeneration system and the low economic value of *Mamaca* are two main obstacles that hinder regeneration.

Meanwhile, observations on July 1, 2025, at Mr. Jalal's residence in Lampeji Village, Mumbulsari Sub-district, confirmed a more acute challenge. Living alone in a very simple house, Mr. Jalal lives within economic limitations without a permanent job. Nevertheless, he still maintains his love for *Mamaca*, even though he has to sing alone because his community has disbanded. He hopes that there are young people who are interested in learning *Mamaca* from him, but until now, this hope has not materialized. This condition indicates that the art of

*Mamaca* is in a critical phase, where older artists carry on the tradition individually without adequate structural support, regeneration systems, or public recognition.

The findings of this study reveal the complex dynamics of *Mamaca* art survival in Madura, especially in the Jember region, and demonstrate its close relationship with the changing paradigm of Islamic da'wah in Indonesia. In the historical and cultural context, *Mamaca* was once an effective medium of da'wah that combined art, spirituality, and moral education through poems and songs that resonated with the community. This art reflects a culturally friendly and moderate model of Islamic da'wah, as demonstrated by the role of local scholars in combining Islamic values with local aesthetic expressions (Paisun, 2010; Sumawinata et al., 2022). However, based on the research results, it appears that *Mamaca* is now in a critical condition. The absence of an informal curriculum, the lack of structural regeneration, and low economic prospects have caused this tradition to become generatively disconnected. The lack of interest from the younger generation, stemming from both modern economic pressures and a narrative gap with the digital world, makes preserving this art even more challenging.

Furthermore, the conservative views of some religious leaders and art actors who reject updates to *Mamaca*'s templates and structure also reinforce stagnation. When contemporary Islamic da'wah shifts towards scripturalism and verbliness on social media, traditional-based forms of da'wah, such as *Mamaca*, become increasingly marginalized (Al-Hafizh et al., 2024; Setiawan, 2022). This is in line with the findings of Isyanto et al. (2023), which shows that oral literary arts such as *Mamaca* are starting to be abandoned because they are unable to compete with the penetration of digital culture. This indicates that the marginalization of *Mamaca* is not only an internal issue of tradition, but also a consequence of changes in the field of da'wah and the epistemological orientation of Muslims. By comparing these findings with those of Nurhidayah (2017) and Rizali (2012), it appears that art as a medium for da'wah faces a dilemma between preserving tradition and meeting the demands of modernity. On the other hand, as Hidayatullah (n.d.) notes, the preservation of traditions such as

*Mamaca* is actually an opportunity to instill Islamic values that are contextual, reflective, and down-to-earth.

In a broader context, the declining role of *mamaca* indicates a crisis of local Islamic culture in the face of waves of religious homogenization. The declining role of *mamaca* in East Java highlights a significant cultural crisis amidst the homogenization of Islamic expressions. As a traditional art form that combines poetry and music, *mamaca* serves as a vital medium in fostering a moderate Islamic identity rooted in local wisdom. This cultural heritage not only strengthens community identity but also maintains social harmony through the delivery of inclusive and humanistic Islamic values (Hidayatullah, n.d.; Supadma & Dana, 2022). In the context of artistic expression, *mamaca* offers an expressive and meaningful alternative to rigid verbal teachings, enriching religious practices within the frame of local culture (Isyanto et al., 2023). To revitalize *mamaca*, effective strategies need to involve cross-sectoral integration through collaboration between schools, pesantren, and local communities, including the development of culture-based education and performance programs (Damanik et al., 2024). In addition, adapting to digital media is crucial for reaching the younger generation and maintaining the relevance of this tradition amid changing times (Supadma & Dana, 2022). Nonetheless, the challenges of globalization, which tend to prioritize modern cultural expressions over traditional arts, cannot be ignored. Therefore, *mamaca* preservation efforts must be able to balance the needs of modernity with local cultural values to maintain the diversity of Indonesia's cultural landscape.

### **Declining Public Interest in *Mamaca* Art**

One of the leading indicators of the weakening of *the mamaca* tradition is the decreasing interest of the community, especially the younger generation, in this art. This declining interest cannot be separated from the contemporary socio-economic and cultural context, in which traditional arts are considered less relevant, financially unprofitable, and incompatible with the image of modernity that now dominates people's preferences. Despite the village government's efforts at socialization and preservation, incidental and ceremonial approaches

have not been enough to turn the tide. Additionally, *mamaca* lacks appeal in the commercial performing arts market, and therefore has not emerged as a promising alternative profession. This decline in interest indicates that the preservation of cultural arts cannot be separated from an intergenerational approach, the integration of cultural education, and the transformation of the presentation model to keep it contextual and engaging. This phenomenon is as follows:

**Table 3. Statement of Declining Public Interest in *Mamaca* Art  
*Mamaca* Art in Glagahwero, Kalisat**

Informant	Age	Interview Statement	Description
Greetings Mr. Hoi's son-in-law	40 Year	I personally enjoy coming with you to <i>Mamaca</i> or Rokat events. Because I can chat with the other members. However, I can honestly say that I do not understand the content. Nor can I enjoy	No entertainment element
		The songs. In fact, I often get goosebumps listening to them sing."	
H. Halim village head of Glagahwero	50 years old	"I once proposed to hold a <i>Mamaca</i> performance at the Glagahwero village office. But the response from some village officials and the <i>mamaca</i> artists themselves was less than enthusiastic. They said that <i>mamaca</i> is different from hadrah performances and contemporary religious music. It lacks the excitement to attract the audience."	No entertainment element
Drs. KH. A. Rosyidi Baihaqi, Caretaker of Miftahul Ulum	68 years	"The songs or the way of singing in <i>Mamaca</i> have always been the same. <i>Artate</i> , <i>Durma</i> , <i>Asmaradana</i> , and others. The content of the story is also the same. There is no change. There are no new works. That's why <i>Mamaca</i> can never develop because it doesn't keep up with the times. This is different from modern literature, which continues to produce new	The <i>mamaca</i> tradition should




Kalisat Islamic Boarding School	old	writers and new poems, short stories, and novels. It is also different from modern music which continues to produce musicians and new works. Modern literary works continue to be published and read in the form of books, magazines, newspapers and online media, even through social media. Modern music also continues to be broadcast through various platforms, such as radio, TV, and the internet. This is not the case with <i>mamaca</i> ."	not be changed
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This statement shows that the art of *mamaca* is facing a crisis of public interest, especially from the younger generation and the general public, due to several cultural and structural factors. First, the absence of entertainment is the main cause. *Mamaca* is considered monotonous, difficult to understand in terms of content and narrative flow, and does not present a visually and musically interesting performance form. This causes listeners even from the closest environment of *mamaca* performers to feel unfamiliar or even not enjoy the performance.

Secondly, the conservative view of some performers and religious leaders that the *mamaca* template or structure should not be changed reinforces resistance to innovation. As a result, *mamaca* does not develop creatively and is unable to compete with other art forms such as hadrah or contemporary religious music that are more adaptive to modern public tastes.

From the community side, the initiative to make *mamaca* part of the public performance also did not bear fruit due to the lack of enthusiasm, both from the performers and the village community. This situation shows that the art of *mamaca* not only faces external challenges in the form of changing tastes and media developments, but also internal challenges in the form of resistance to innovation and a lack of systematic efforts in renewing the form of presentation. This is evidenced by the poorly maintained manuscripts as shown below:

**Figure 1. Mamaca text that is less attractive**

Image	Description
	Front cover without writing
	Manuscript copy by Sami'an written on lined paper
	The name of the Prophet Muhammad is repeated. So is the name of the angel Jibril (Jibra'il), but the writing is not good and artistic.

Concrete evidence of resistance to innovation in the art of *mamaca* can be observed through the physical condition of the



manuscripts used by traditional practitioners. The picture above shows the condition of a *mamaca* script rewritten by a traditional practitioner named Sami'an. It appears that the manuscript lacks an attractive visual appearance, both in terms of aesthetics and design. The lack of efforts to modernize the appearance and packaging of the text reinforces the impression that *mamaca* is trapped in cultural conservatism, making it challenging to attract the attention of the younger generation. This further confirms that the art of *mamaca* needs to be revitalized, not only in performance practice but also in the presentation of the text and its aesthetic medium.

One of the main indicators of the weakening of the *mamaca* tradition in the Glagahwero area of Kalisat District, Jember Regency, is the declining interest of the community, especially the younger generation, in this art form. This decline in interest is inseparable from the contemporary social, cultural, and economic context, in which traditional arts are considered less relevant to the values of modernity, have unappealing economic prospects, and are unable to offer visually and musically engaging entertainment. The study found that although the village government has made efforts towards socialization and preservation, the approach taken is ceremonial and does not address the root causes of regeneration and modernization issues. When associated with Rogers' *diffusion of innovations* approach, *mamaca* can be categorized as a laggard because its adoption of reforms is minimal due to internal resistance and the lack of strategic intervention from external actors.

Field findings show that many informants, including the families of *mamaca* performers, village heads, and religious leaders, stated that the art is difficult to understand due to its monotonous form and binding to classic song styles such as *Artate*, *Durma*, or *Asmaradana* that have not been updated. The absence of a regeneration system exacerbates this disinterest, the absence of a learning curriculum, and the absence of economic incentives that make *mamaca* lose its appeal as a form of profession or even just a choice of cultural expression for the younger generation. Even the manuscripts used by *Mamaca* artists, as shown in the observation picture, appear unkempt and are handwritten on lined paper, without visual packaging or a readable printed narrative.

This shows that resistance to innovation does not only occur in performance practices, but also in the management and presentation of cultural documents.

When compared with the results of previous studies, such as those conducted by Dana et al. (2023), Hidayatullah (n.d.), and Isyanto et al. (2023), there are similarities in the pattern of challenges faced by Islamic traditional arts. These studies emphasize that media transformation, penetration of digital culture, and changes in the aesthetic tastes of urban communities have led to the marginalization of local culture-based forms of da'wah. However, what distinguishes the results of this study is the emphasis on the interaction between internal resistance (conservatism of actors and religious leaders) and the lack of structural innovation (curriculum, presentation format, distribution media), which simultaneously accelerates the process of "cultural death" of *mamaca* art. In this case, this research fills the void in the previous literature, which focuses more on aesthetic aspects and preservation, but has not addressed the strategic aspects of cultural transformation and the repositioning of local art in the discourse of contemporary Islamic da'wah.

Furthermore, if it is associated with the great context of peaceful and cultural Indonesian Islam, as stated by Paisun (2010) and Sumawinata et al. (2022), the art of *mamaca* actually has great potential as an alternative da'wah instrument that represents the face of moderate and humanistic Islam. However, this potential is eroded by digital da'wah narratives that are more scripturalist, verbalistic, and tend to be homogeneous, as criticized by Al-Hafizh et al. (2024) and Setiawan (2022). In this context, the revitalization of *mamaca* cannot be separated from the agenda of religious moderation in Indonesia, especially in responding to the wave of religious purification and deculturalization of da'wah. This research suggests the need for integrating *Mamaca* into the local cultural education ecosystem, utilizing digital media as a means of dissemination, and forming cross-generational communities that can bridge local values with modern Islamic expressions.

An important lesson (*wisdom*) that can be drawn from the results of this study is that the preservation of traditional Islamic-based arts,

such as *mamaca*, is not enough to rely solely on good intentions and cultural romanticism. A strategic approach is needed that involves reconstructing the form, developing a structured inheritance system, and providing economic incentives and digitalization as a means of distribution. Otherwise, the art of *mamaca* will suffer the same fate as other forms of cultural expression that are slowly disappearing from the collective memory of society because they fail to adapt to the times. Therefore, *mamaca* must be repositioned not only as a cultural heritage but also as a moderate da'wah strategy that is locally rooted and socially relevant.

### The strengthening of the Scriptualist-textualist group

In the last two decades, Islamic da'wah in Indonesia has shown a tendency to strengthen the scripturalist-textualist model, which is a religious model that focuses on the literalness of the *text*, formal legalism, and verbal approaches in delivering religious messages. In many religious spaces, including in rural areas such as Glagahwero, groups that embrace this orientation often take a cynical view of culture-based proselytizing arts such as *mamaca*. The arts are considered heresy or a distraction from the substance of true Islam. Narratives that develop in social media spaces, online lectures, and religious forums also strengthen this paradigm, so that the space for expression for cultural da'wah is increasingly marginalized. The strengthening of this scripturalism not only affects people's preferences for forms of da'wah but also forms a religious climate that is less accommodating to the heritage of local Islamic traditions. This condition is as follows:

**Table 3 Statement of the Strengthening of the Scriptualist-textualist group of *Mamaca* Art in Glagahwero, Kalisat**

Informant	Age	Interview Statement	Description
Drs. KH. A. Rosyidi Baihaqi	68 years old	"There is no curriculum for learning <i>mamaca</i> . I used to just follow when my father attended <i>Mamaca</i> events. He was very good at it. But when I asked him how to learn <i>Mamaca</i> , he just told me to pay attention and imitate how to <i>sing</i> and <i>negesin</i> . If you have the talent, you will be	Unsystematic regeneration

		able to do it because you are used to it. And he never taught <i>Mamaca</i> to the students, so until now this pesantren has never taught <i>Mamaca</i> to the students."	
Wayudi, Pak Hoi's neighbor, a failed <i>Mamaca</i> artist.	50 years old	"I was once trained and trained by my late grandfather to become a tokang ngijung. It started when I stopped going to school and got married. I was told to familiarize myself with the vocal cadence of the <i>Mamaca</i> song every time I went to bed. But over time, my wife and I felt that there was a mystical aura in our house. There seemed to be supernatural beings present every time I practiced vocal exercises. My infant son cried every time I sang the <i>Mamaca</i> chant. Finally, I decided to stop learning <i>mamaca</i> . I was not mentally strong. I was afraid of being possessed by jinn or spirits."	Fatalistic mindset and attitude


Based on the statements of the two informants, the results show that the regeneration process of *mamaca* art in Glagahwero Village is very unsystematic and overshadowed by a fatalistic mindset that contributes to weakening the community's interest in the preservation of this art. The absence of a structured curriculum or learning method means that the art of *mamaca* is only passed down informally and is limited to kinship relations. The learning process tends to be imitative and not widely open to students or village youth.

In addition, the emergence of mystical beliefs among prospective performers also exacerbates the situation. One informant revealed a personal experience of being overwhelmed by fear of the "supernatural aura" while practising *mamaca*, which led to a decision to stop learning. This reflects the socio-cultural construction that sees *mamaca* as something mystical or overly spiritual, posing a psychological and cultural barrier to the regeneration of artists.

Overall, the combination of the absence of a formal regeneration system and the emergence of mystical narratives plays a major role in dampening the enthusiasm of new generations to learn *mamaca*. This phenomenon poses a serious challenge to the preservation of *mamaca*

as part of Islamic cultural propaganda in Madurese society, especially in the midst of modernization and rationalization. The strengthening of this scripturalist-textualist group is also reinforced by the following document:

### **Merokat Document**

NEWSPAPER PHOTO	LINK	DESCRIPTION
	<a href="https://www.sketsanusanantara.id/news/103906296/merokat-kenangan-sebuah-upaya-untuk-mengingat-dan-belajar-tentang-tradisi-rokat-di-kawasan-jember">https://www.sketsanusanantara.id/news/103906296/merokat-kenangan-sebuah-upaya-untuk-mengingat-dan-belajar-tentang-tradisi-rokat-di-kawasan-jember</a>	<i>The Merokat Kenangan</i> event, organized by Yayasan Studi Arsip Sudut Kalisat, is an effort to preserve the tradition of rokat in Jember as a form of gratitude and social bonding. Through a workshop forum, participants were invited to understand the meaning of rokat from cultural, manuscript, archaeological, and Islamic perspectives, as well as its various forms such as rokat pandhaba, tasek, and isra' mi'raj. This event is a space for reflection and learning to maintain the continuity of tradition amid changing times.

This research reveals that the art of *mamaca*, as a form of Islamic cultural da'wah of Madurese society, is experiencing a significant decline, especially in areas such as Kalisat, Jember. The remaining practitioners of the tradition have no clear successors, while the younger generation's interest in *mamaca* continues to decline. This is influenced by several factors, including the absence of a formal

regeneration system, the absence of economic incentives, and the image that *mamaca* is irrelevant to modern life. The informal nature of the inheritance process, which relies on family relationships, means that regeneration is not possible. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of economic recognition of the role of *mamaca* artists, which contributes to the lack of motivation for new generations to learn and continue this tradition.

This phenomenon does not stand alone, but is closely related to the strengthening of the scripturalist-textualist religious style in the contemporary Indonesian Islamic landscape. This group tends to reject culture-based da'wah on theological grounds and prefers a literal approach to religious teachings. As a result, traditional arts such as *mamaca* are increasingly marginalized in public Islamic discourse. Interviews with religious leaders and aspiring *mamaca* performers show that views that associate *mamaca* with mysticism and irrationality contribute to reinforcing the distance between tradition and modern society. In fact, there is a narrative that *mamaca* contains supernatural elements, leading to fear and reluctance to continue its practice.

This discourse is in line with previous studies. Akmaliah (2020), Faldiansyah (2022), and Meyer (2024) noted that moderate Islam often loses in the digital arena because social media platforms favor radical and black-and-white narratives. In this context, *mamaca*, as a symbol of inclusive, reflective, and contextual Islam, loses its space of expression and stage of representation. On the other hand, research by Isyanto et al. (2023) and Hidayatullah (n.d.) emphasizes the importance of traditional arts as guardians of collective values and social, religious ethics. They see *mamaca* as a strategic instrument in maintaining a friendly, tolerant, and down-to-earth religion. However, the modernization of da'wah through digital media presents a significant opportunity to expand its reach, especially among the younger generation. By integrating traditional practices into contemporary digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and podcasts, da'wah can bridge the generation gap while promoting a moderate and contextualized interpretation of Islam (Qudratullah & Syam, 2024; Aziz et al., 2022; Efendi et al., 2024). Modern media formats enable interactive and engaging learning and increase the

participation of young audiences who are more familiar with the digital ecosystem (Efendi et al., 2023; Chanifah & Rohmah, 2022). In this process, traditional values can be revitalized through more relevant contextual presentations, accompanied by digital da'wah training in the pesantren environment to enable the younger generation to become adaptive and tech-savvy da'wah agents. However, while this integration offers many benefits, an important challenge remains, namely, maintaining the authenticity of traditional values from the risk of message dilution and the spread of misinformation. Thus, the balance between innovation and authenticity is key in designing a sustainable da'wah strategy in the digital age.

Overall, this study suggests that the position of *mamaca* should be restored as part of the cultural strategy in strengthening moderate Islam. *Mamaca* not only functions as a cultural heritage, but also as a space for moral and spiritual education that combines aesthetics, ethics, and creed in one form of local expression. For this reason, the involvement of the state, pesantren, cultural communities, and digital media is key in building a sustainable and inclusive cultural da'wah ecosystem amid changing times.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research reveals that the art of *mamaca*, as an expression of Madurese Islamic cultural da'wah, has suffered significant setbacks due to the absence of a regeneration system, its low economic value, and the strengthening of a scripturalist-textualist religious model that tends to reject culture-based da'wah. Field findings indicate that the younger generation is not interested in inheriting this art, while religious leaders and pesantren have not incorporated *mamaca* into their curriculum or da'wah strategy. This situation reinforces the assumption that the decline of *mamaca* is not merely caused by external factors (such as modernization), but by a paradigm shift in da'wah that overrides local traditions. Thus, *mamaca* is not only a cultural heritage, but also a crucial indicator of the dynamics of local religiosity and challenges in maintaining moderate Islam that is inclusive and contextual.

Theoretically, this research enriches the literature on Islamic



da'wah art and emphasizes the importance of cultural approaches in maintaining the sustainability of moderate and adaptive Islam. In a practical context, the results of this study recommend integrating *Mamaca* into religious moderation programs through education, Islamic boarding schools, and cultural communities. Local governments and the Ministry of Religious Affairs should support traditional arts preservation policies by providing incentives and platforms for local artists to express themselves, and include *mamaca* in the cultural da'wah agenda and national cultural policy. Cross-sector collaboration between religious leaders, cultural figures, educators and state institutions is key in saving the art of *mamaca* from extinction and making it an integral part of the Islamic preaching of the archipelago.

This study has limitations in terms of regional coverage and the number of informants, who are still limited to one village in Jember. In addition, this study has not explored the potential of digitizing *mamaca* as an adaptive medium in the era of social media. Therefore, further research is recommended to explore technology and education-based regeneration models, as well as cross-regional comparative studies to see successful patterns of preserving local da'wah traditions. Research can also be developed in an interdisciplinary direction, such as examining the relationship between traditional arts, digital literacy, and Islamic cultural policy in the context of contemporary Indonesian socio-religious transformation.

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