

Transformative Integration of Interdisciplinary Knowledge and *Ogoh-Ogoh* Symbolism in Cultivating Social Harmony in Mataram

Ni Luh Sinar Ayu Ratnadewi*, Ida Bagus Alit Arta Wiguna

Institut Agama Hindu Negeri Gde Pudja Mataram, Indonesia

*sinarayu@iahn-gdepudja.ac.id

Abstract

Mataram City, as the center of religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity in West Nusa Tenggara Province, presents its challenges in building inclusive and sustainable social harmony. One of the symbols of local culture that plays a role in maintaining this harmony is *Ogoh-Ogoh*, which, although it originated from Hindu religious traditions, has now become a space for cross-identity interaction. This research aims to examine how *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism is understood and interpreted in the context of a multicultural society, as well as its contribution to the formation of harmony between religious communities. The method used is qualitative with an interdisciplinary approach, combining insights from cultural anthropology, social psychology, and religious studies. Data was obtained through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and community discussions, then analyzed using thematic coding techniques. The results of the study show that *Ogoh-Ogoh* has undergone a transformation in meaning, from a religious symbol to a means of social education that is able to build a collective awareness of the importance of tolerance and togetherness. The participation of interfaith communities in the *Ogoh-Ogoh* tradition strengthens social cohesion and shows the potential of local culture as an integrative medium. However, there is still resistance from conservative groups who view *Ogoh-Ogoh* exclusively, so an interdisciplinary, inclusive, and participatory approach is needed in the management of this cultural symbol. This study concludes that *Ogoh-Ogoh* is a dynamic symbol that can make a real contribution to strengthening social harmony if interpreted openly and across identity boundaries.

Keywords: *Ogoh-Ogoh*; Multicultural; Social Harmony; Interdisciplinary; Cultural Symbols

Abstrak

Kota Mataram sebagai pusat keberagaman agama, etnis, dan budaya di Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat menghadirkan tantangan tersendiri dalam membangun harmoni sosial yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan. Salah satu simbol budaya lokal yang berperan dalam merawat kerukunan tersebut adalah Ogoh-Ogoh, yang meskipun berasal dari tradisi keagamaan Hindu, kini telah menjadi ruang interaksi lintas identitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana simbolisme Ogoh-Ogoh dipahami dan dimaknai dalam konteks masyarakat multikultural, serta kontribusinya terhadap pembentukan harmoni antarumat beragama. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan interdisipliner, menggabungkan wawasan antropologi budaya, psikologi sosial, dan studi agama. Data diperoleh melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan diskusi komunitas, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik coding tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Ogoh-Ogoh telah mengalami transformasi makna, dari simbol religius menjadi sarana edukasi sosial yang mampu membangun kesadaran kolektif atas pentingnya toleransi dan kebersamaan. Partisipasi masyarakat lintas agama dalam tradisi Ogoh-Ogoh memperkuat kohesi sosial dan memperlihatkan potensi budaya lokal sebagai media integratif. Namun demikian, masih terdapat

*resistensi dari kelompok konservatif yang memandang *Ogoh-Ogoh* secara eksklusif, sehingga diperlukan pendekatan interdisipliner yang inklusif dan partisipatif dalam pengelolaan simbol budaya ini. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa *Ogoh-Ogoh* merupakan simbol dinamis yang dapat berkontribusi nyata dalam memperkuat harmoni sosial apabila dimaknai secara terbuka dan lintas batas identitas.*

Kata Kunci: *Ogoh-Ogoh; Multikultural; Harmoni Sosial; Interdisipliner; Simbol Budaya*

Introduction

Mataram City, as the capital of West Nusa Tenggara Province, is an area inhabited by people from various religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, including Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism, as well as the Sasak, Balinese, and other ethnic groups (Budiwanti, 2014; Purwanto, 2023; Suciati and Sofyan, 2021). This diversity represents both an asset and a challenge in fostering a peaceful and sustainable social life. In this context, interreligious harmony is the main prerequisite for creating social stability, preventing horizontal conflicts, and strengthening the collective identity as an inclusive society (Naamy, 2022; Natsir, 2014).

Therefore, strengthening the values of tolerance, respect for traditions, and intercultural dialogue is indispensable as a foundation for harmonious social development in Mataram (Andari, 2025; Jayadi, 2025; Wiguna and Widyasari, 2025). Interreligious harmony in Mataram City is a crucial issue in facing the increasingly complex challenges of religious and cultural diversity in the modern era. As a city inhabited by various religious and ethnic communities, Mataram needs a strong social foundation to maintain cohesion and stability (Fitriani, 2023; Jayadi, 2025; Suprapto, 2020). The *Ogoh-Ogoh* tradition, originally a religious symbol in the *Nyepi* ceremony of Hindus, has developed into a space for cultural dialogue involving interfaith participation.

This phenomenon shows the potential for the transformation of local values into a medium for strengthening social harmony amid diversity (Jelantik, 2025; Pendid, 2001; Sutarti, 2023; Yusa et al., 2024). Therefore, this research is important for examining how *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism serves as both a unifying tool and a reflection of the dynamics of interfaith interaction in Mataram. By combining interdisciplinary perspectives, such as cultural anthropology, social psychology, and religious studies, this research aims to comprehensively reveal the role of *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism in creating interfaith harmony, as well as its contribution to strengthening local identity and building an inclusive and sustainable society.

The study of *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism can support the creation of interfaith collaborative initiatives involving various groups and make strong cooperation between various elements of society, including religious communities, essential to achieve national development goals (Pamuji, 2024; Umam and Barmawi, 2023; Widana and Wirata, 2023). By understanding and appreciating local cultural symbolism and promoting interfaith harmony, research on *Ogoh-Ogoh* can make a real contribution to creating a solid and inclusive social foundation. At Mataram City lies a narrative woven with threads of history, tradition, and resilience.

From its origins as a seat of ancient kingdoms to its contemporary status as a bustling urban center, the city bears witness to a continuum of cultural exchange, adaptation, and innovation (Chandra, 2020; Damayanti and Indrapati, 2023; Fuadi, 2019). The legacy of the Mataram Sultanate, with its synthesis of Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic traditions, echoes through the streets, temples, and rituals that punctuate the cityscape. Against this backdrop, the quest for harmony emerges as both a timeless aspiration and a pressing imperative, resonating with the aspirations of its diverse inhabitants.

Drawing from the rich cultural fabric of Mataram City, our scholarly endeavor seeks to decode the complicated interaction between interdisciplinary scholarship and the symbolic resonance of *Ogoh-Ogoh* in cultivating harmony. Through a comprehensive methodological approach that encompasses immersive interviews and participatory observation, our study endeavors to unearth the transformative potential inherent in the amalgamation of diverse knowledge systems to foster social cohesion (Firdaus, 2014; Wibowo and Yani, 2016).

By engaging with an array of stakeholders, ranging from esteemed community leaders to grassroots residents, our research endeavors to capture the nuanced essence of multicultural harmony, thus enriching scholarly discourse with a multifaceted tapestry of diverse perspectives, experiences, and insights (Chandra et al., 2019; Saputra and Tayib, 2019). This study holds significance not only for Mataram City but also for broader discussions on social cohesion, diversity management, and peacebuilding in multicultural societies. By offering fresh insights into the synergy between local wisdom and interdisciplinary knowledge, the research contributes to ongoing efforts to promote harmony and resilience in the face of evolving societal challenges.

The subsequent sections of this paper will go over a comprehensive analysis of relevant literature, methodologies, findings, discussions, and conclusions, providing a broad perspective on the dynamics of multicultural harmony in Mataram City and beyond. Harmony within a multicultural society is a critical aspect of social cohesion and development. In regions like Mataram City, where diverse cultural and religious beliefs intersect, understanding the dynamics of harmony becomes paramount. This research analyzes the transformative integration of interdisciplinary knowledge and the symbolism of *Ogoh-Ogoh* to elucidate their influence on harmony within Mataram City.

Few studies have explored the symbolism of *Ogoh-Ogoh* within the framework of contemporary multiculturalism, employing a cross-disciplinary methodology. Harmony within multicultural societies has been a subject of scholarly inquiry across various disciplines. Cultural anthropologists have explored how diverse cultural practices contribute to social cohesion, emphasizing the importance of understanding local contexts and indigenous knowledge systems. Religious studies scholars have examined the role of religious beliefs and rituals in fostering interfaith harmony, pointing out the potential for shared values and mutual respect.

Interdisciplinary approaches have gained prominence recently, recognizing the need to transcend disciplinary boundaries to address complex societal challenges. Integrating insights from anthropology, sociology, psychology, and other disciplines can provide a more holistic understanding of social dynamics and facilitate effective interventions for promoting harmony. A thorough understanding of the *Ogoh-Ogoh* can provide a positive contribution in maintaining and strengthening harmony between religious communities in Mataram City. Effective interfaith understanding can be a bridge for dialogue and understanding between religious communities, which is very important in creating peace and social harmony (Anam et al., 2024; Bakhri and Subhi, 2024).

Ogoh-Ogoh plays an important role in strengthening the cultural identity of the Balinese Hindu community in Mataram City. At the same time, with respect and tolerance between religious communities, this tradition can also support religious diversity, making *Ogoh-Ogoh* a symbol of unity that strengthens social ties in a society of diverse religions (Al-Gazali, 2022; Husen and Khoirudin, 2022; Zainuri, 2020). Interreligious harmony in Mataram City is a crucial issue in facing the increasingly complex challenges of religious and cultural diversity in the modern era. As a city inhabited by various religious and ethnic communities, Mataram needs a strong social foundation to maintain cohesion and stability.

The *Ogoh-Ogoh* tradition, originally a religious symbol in the *Nyepi* ceremony of Hindus, has developed into a space for cultural dialogue involving interfaith participation (Budiwanti, 2018). This phenomenon shows the potential for the transformation of local values into a medium for strengthening social harmony amid diversity. However, previous studies are generally still limited to the study of *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism in the context of Hindu traditions internally, while studies that explore how *Ogoh-Ogoh* contributes to interfaith social harmony in the modern multicultural era are still very rare (Anggreni, 2023; Muhtar and Jihad, 2019).

Furthermore, a few studies have employed an interdisciplinary approach to examine *Ogoh-Ogoh* as a cultural symbol, integrating aspects of cultural anthropology, social psychology, and religious studies. Therefore, this research is important and urgent to comprehensively examine the role of *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism in creating interfaith harmony in Mataram, as well as to enrich theoretical understanding of the dynamics of social interaction in contemporary multicultural society. Clifford Geertz's (1992) theory of cultural symbolism forms the basis of this research, viewing culture as a pattern of meanings expressed through various symbols.

Geertz emphasizes the importance of thick description to reveal the meanings and values contained in cultural symbols. Culture is understood as a set of symbolic tools that regulate human behavior and interaction, as well as being the basis for innovation, interpretation of experience, and guidance in behavior. In this context, *Ogoh-Ogoh* is considered a cultural symbol full of religious and social meanings, which can be interpreted by the people of Mataram City as a means of interfaith dialogue (Geertz, 2000). In addition, Benedict Anderson's (1985) theory of local identity and harmony is also an important foundation.

This theory explains how *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism can strengthen local identity, which in turn becomes the foundation for the creation of social harmony between religious communities (Maxwell, 2005). In Mataram, the strengthening of local identity through *Ogoh-Ogoh* is expected to build a collective bond that unites diverse religious groups, thus supporting the creation of inclusive and harmonious social cohesion. As a complement, Stuart Hall's (2024) symbolic reception theory is also used to explain how Mataram people impart meaning to *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism. Hall emphasizes that the meaning of cultural symbols depends on the interpretation of the recipient community.

Thus, this research integrates three main theories Geertz's cultural symbolism, Anderson's local identity, and Hall's symbolic reception to examine how *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism affects interfaith harmony in Mataram City, as well as a reflection of dynamic social and cultural interactions. Although *Ogoh-Ogoh* has long been known as a cultural symbol in Balinese Hindu tradition, scientific studies of its role in building social harmony in multicultural areas such as Mataram City are still limited. Most previous research has placed more emphasis on ritual aspects and symbolic meanings of *Ogoh-Ogoh* in the internal context of the Hindu community, without exploring the interaction and reception of the symbol by interfaith communities.

In fact, in the plural social reality of Mataram, *Ogoh-Ogoh* has undergone a transformation in meaning and role involving the participation of people from various backgrounds. To date, there has been no in-depth study of *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism in modern multicultural contexts using a cross-disciplinary approach that combines cultural anthropology, sociology of religion, and social psychology. Therefore, this research is important to fill this gap and make a new contribution to understanding the dynamics of harmony across religions through local cultural symbols.

Method

This research is a type of qualitative research that aims to examine the views of the people of Mataram City, the forms of harmony that exist in the people of Mataram City, and the impact of religion on the lives of people in Mataram City. The research was carried out for six months, from April to September 2024, in Mataram City, West Nusa Tenggara. The observation location is focused on four main points that are known to be active in the implementation of the *Ogoh-Ogoh* tradition and reflect the diversity of the population, namely Cakranegara, Mataram, Ampenan, and Sekarbelia Districts. The informants were purposively determined to ensure diverse representation, including 25 people with details: 5 religious leaders (Hindu, Islamic, Christian, Catholic, and Buddhist), 5 local traditional and cultural leaders, 5 *Ogoh-Ogoh* committees or organizers, and 10 interfaith and ethnic citizens. The age range of informants is 20 to 60 years old, with Balinese, Sasak, Javanese, and Chinese ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of religions in the informant group includes Hinduism (40%), Islam (30%), Christianity/Catholicism (20%), and Buddhism (10%). Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and community group discussions. The interviews focused on questions about the meaning of *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism, involvement in cultural activities, and perceptions of *Ogoh-Ogoh*'s contribution to social harmony. The participatory approach is carried out through community discussion forums to capture the collective perception of interfaith communities. The data were analyzed manually using thematic coding techniques according to Miles and Huberman, which included the categories of symbolism, interreligious tolerance, and local identity strengthening. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking with several key informants to confirm data interpretation. Although software such as NVivo is available, in this study, the researcher chose a narrative-based manual approach to maintain interpretive proximity to the local context studied.

Results and Discussion

This research reveals that the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge plays an important role in understanding *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism as a medium for forming social harmony in Mataram City. Through an approach that combines the study of culture, religion, social psychology, and sociology, *Ogoh-Ogoh* is not only considered a Hindu religious ritual but also an expression of a collective culture that contains universal values such as self-purification, the triumph of good over evil, and the creation of a balance in life.

Interview data showed that figures from various religious backgrounds in Mataram, including Hinduism and Islam, agreed that understanding *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism can strengthen interfaith awareness of the importance of tolerance and harmony. According to Ni Wayan Sriningsih and H. Nazir, *Ogoh-Ogoh* is a means for the people of Mataram to respect each other's differences and build a collective awareness that diversity is a strength, not a barrier to unity. The symbolism of *Ogoh-Ogoh*, which carries the value of cleansing and moral renewal, is considered relevant by all levels of society.

Furthermore, traditional leaders such as Ida Mangku Alit and cultural committees such as I Gusti Bagus Panji emphasized that the participation of interfaith communities in the *Ogoh-Ogoh* parade not only shows cultural openness but also shows the potential of *Ogoh-Ogoh* as a tool of social education. Through shared experiences in these cultural activities, people learn to build equal social relationships, support each other, and maintain harmony in a sustainable manner. The symbolism of *Ogoh-Ogoh*, in this context,

serves as a meeting point between religious expression and local cultural identity. An interdisciplinary approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of how such symbolic values are understood interfaith and translated into social practices that strengthen community cohesion. Thus, the *Ogoh-Ogoh* tradition in Mataram becomes an integrative practice space that involves religion, culture, and social education at the same time. This study observes that *Ogoh-Ogoh* inclusivity is inseparable from challenges. Some conservative groups still view *Ogoh-Ogoh* narrowly as a ritual irrelevant to their beliefs.

This finding indicates that an interdisciplinary approach must continue to be encouraged so that cultural symbols can be effectively communicated across disciplines and identities, as well as accompanied by spaces for dialogue that bridge different perceptions. Overall, this study concludes that *Ogoh-Ogoh* in Mataram City is a living symbol of the integration of knowledge and practice across disciplines, which can facilitate dialogue between religious communities, form social solidarity, and foster harmony in a pluralistic society. This process shows that cultural symbols, when interpreted openly and participologically, can be the foundation for an inclusive and resilient social order.

1. Perception of *Ogoh-Ogoh*

The public's perception of *Ogoh-Ogoh* in Mataram City shows a dynamic and inclusive tendency. In general, the Hindu community in Mataram still views *Ogoh-Ogoh* as a religious symbol in the series of *Nyepi ceremonies*, which is a representation of *Bhuta Kala* that must be neutralized to maintain the harmony of the universe. However, in a multicultural social space such as Mataram, the *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbol has experienced a broadening of meaning. Non-Hindu communities, such as Muslims, Christians, and people of Chinese descent, also interpret *Ogoh-Ogoh* as a cultural expression and artistic medium that represents togetherness.

This perception is formed through direct involvement in social activities, not simply religious understanding, which shows the process of remanaging cultural symbols in a multicultural urban context. The process of widening the meaning can be explained through Van Peursen's theory of cultural evolution Siswadi (2022) which states that symbols in human culture move from the mythical and ontological to functional stages. *Ogoh-Ogoh* in Mataram has entered a functional stage, where symbolic values are no longer only seen from the spiritual or mythological side but also from their function as a social tool to build harmony.

The involvement of interfaith youth in the creative process of *Ogoh-Ogoh*, such as design, parades, and performances, shows that *Ogoh-Ogoh* has become a social bridge in a pluralistic society. It also reflects the ability of local cultures to adapt to new social contexts without losing their traditional roots. These findings are in line with the study of Setyaningrum and Cahyono (2019) in Linggoasri Village, Pekalongan, where Muslims can accept *Ogoh-Ogoh* as part of folk art, rather than a threat to their religious identity. This attitude is formed because of the existence of a participatory space that allows people across religions to understand and experience *Ogoh-Ogoh* directly in a cultural context, not just as a ritual symbol.

A similar thing was found in Mataram, where *Ogoh-Ogoh* was considered the common property of the city's community, not exclusively of Hindus. This acceptance proves that cultural identity can be inclusive when articulated in an open and egalitarian social space. However, not all groups respond positively to *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbols. The study of Primasuta et al., (2024) shows a degradation of religious meaning when *Ogoh-Ogoh* is interpreted more as an entertainment spectacle than as a means of spiritual education. In Mataram, some conservative Muslim communities are hesitant to

participate in *Ogoh-Ogoh*, which they see as a ritual that doesn't align with their beliefs. This resistance shows that cultural symbols are not completely neutral and still face ideological boundaries. This shows that *Ogoh-Ogoh* inclusivity remains contextual and needs to be managed carefully.

In the perspective of Habermas's theory of public space, symbols such as *Ogoh-Ogoh* can function as a medium of communication across groups if the process of their meaning is carried out in a dialogical and equal manner. When *Ogoh-Ogoh* is controlled by only one cultural or religious group, the potential for symbolic conflict becomes high. Therefore, in Mataram, it is important to maintain a discursive space that allows *Ogoh-Ogoh* to be discussed, accessed, and interpreted by all citizens without symbolic domination. The role of the government, traditional leaders, and interfaith leaders is important in facilitating these cultural practices to remain in an integrative, not exclusive, corridor.

Thus, the perception of *Ogoh-Ogoh* in Mataram City cannot be separated from the dynamics of identity, symbolic power, and social negotiation. This symbol has succeeded in becoming an instrument of social cohesion amid diversity, but it still contains the challenge of maintaining a balance between sacred values and social functions. This research confirms that cultural meanings are contextual, open to reinterpretation, and highly dependent on how local communities articulate them in social practices. When cultural values are managed in an inclusive and critical manner, symbols such as *Ogoh-Ogoh* can contribute significantly to building a harmonious multicultural society.

2. Interdisciplinary Knowledge in the Community

The integration of knowledge in a multicultural community requires an interdisciplinary approach that can bridge differences in perspectives, values, and living practices between members of the community. In Mataram City, cultural practices such as *Ogoh-Ogoh* become a social space where various dimensions of knowledge social, religious, aesthetic, and historical meet and are negotiated. The community not only interprets *Ogoh-Ogoh* as a Hindu cultural heritage but also as a platform for cross-identity expression.

This interdisciplinary approach to understanding community is seen when cultural symbols are not only studied from the perspective of religion but also through the lens of anthropology, education, and communication. The pasraman education model studied in the study by Wiguna and Andari (2025) shows how Hindu philosophy, such as *Tat Twam Asi* and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, is used as the basis for the formation of students' social character through learning strategies that combine ritual practices, exemplary behavior, and internalization of social values. These values are an important foundation in building harmonious relations in pluralistic communities.

But the study's interview results show that an explicit, interdisciplinary academic narrative has not fully supported the integration of these values. The value of religious moderation is more implicitly present in daily practice than as part of the formal curriculum. The same is reflected in the practice of *Ogoh-Ogoh* in Mataram City, where the values of togetherness are formed not through doctrine, but through collective experience. As shown in a previous study by Setyaningrum and Cahyono (2019) non-Hindu communities accept *Ogoh-Ogoh* as an open and collaborative social space.

However, this openness does not necessarily guarantee epistemic equality, there is still the dominance of interpretation from the majority cultural or religious group that controls the meaning of symbols. This shows the importance of an interdisciplinary approach that is not only thematic but also methodological so that the whole group has a role in constructing meaning. Furthermore, the results of Saumantri and Hajam (2023)

study on the urgency of interdisciplinary Islamic study methodologies also show that a cross-disciplinary approach can strengthen the position of communities in responding to diversity challenges. They emphasize that moderation cannot be achieved through a normative approach alone but must involve sociological, psychological, and historical dimensions. In the context of *Ogoh-Ogoh*, this approach can be applied to understand the resistance of conservative groups who reject the symbol because it is considered an exclusive form of ritual. This resistance is not only a theological issue but also related to the lack of space for dialogue across epistemologies within the community.

Interdisciplinary approaches also present their challenges, especially when each discipline brings different paradigms, methods, and logic. In community contexts such as pasraman or *Ogoh-Ogoh* parades, this tension is seen in the way religious and cultural institutions position the roles of participants from non-Hindu backgrounds. Instead of being approached with epistemic empathy, they are sometimes positioned as observers or supporters, rather than as equal subjects in the creation of meaning. This shows the limitations of interdisciplinary when it is not accompanied by critical awareness and cultural equality.

Thus, the integration of knowledge in a multicultural community such as in Mataram requires an interdisciplinary approach that is not only conceptual but also practical. Cultural symbols such as *Ogoh-Ogoh* can only serve as a bridge of harmony when all citizens feel part of the process of interpretation and practice. This research reinforces the idea that the success of inclusive symbols is not sufficiently sustained by the openness of meaning but also by social and educational structures that encourage cross-disciplinary interaction and equality of identity. In this case, *Ogoh-Ogoh* and pasraman are not only cultural or religious spaces but also interdisciplinary social laboratories that test the future of pluralistic coexistence.

3. Dynamics of Multicultural Interaction

Multicultural interaction in Mataram City takes place in a complex and dynamic social context, influenced by the diversity of religions, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds of the community. Cultural symbols such as *Ogoh-Ogoh* have not only become traditional expressions of Hindu society but have also evolved into a social medium that allows for cross-identity encounters. Based on interviews with interfaith community leaders, it was found that the participation of non-Hindus in the *Ogoh-Ogoh* celebration shows a spirit of social cohesion that grows from below, where culture becomes a unifying bridge, not just an exclusive identity.

This phenomenon is in line with the concept of inclusive multiculturalism as studied by Wandini et al., (2024) which shows that harmony in a multicultural society is formed not only through formal policies, but especially through active involvement in daily cultural practices. In Mataram, interreligious interaction is facilitated through involvement in art and cultural activities, which indirectly creates a space for dialogue and empathy. This conclusion is in accordance with Banks et al., (2019) view that education and culture are important tools in strengthening plurality and cross-group awareness.

However, as noted in the study of Balunjuk Agung et al., (2024) multicultural harmony often only manifests itself in the ceremonial realm without being followed by deep social relations. This finding provides a critical note for Mataram City, where involvement in the *Ogoh-Ogoh* parade can be symbolic and has not fully touched the structural aspects of social relations, such as access inequality, stereotypes, and cultural domination. Despite the space for dialogue, equality in the construction of cultural meaning is still a challenge that requires a reflective and participatory interdisciplinary

approach. The involvement of the Muslim community in supporting *Ogoh-Ogoh* activities in Mataram is a positive reflection of the model of cultural inclusion based on universal values. Religious leaders such as H. Nazir emphasized that *Ogoh-Ogoh* teaches the importance of respecting differences and celebrating togetherness in diversity. This statement reinforces the findings of Andari et al., (2025) that value education in the Pasraman environment that internalizes Hindu philosophy, such as *Tat Twam Asi*, is effective in building awareness of religious moderation.

These values transcend religious boundaries and become the basis for ethical and harmonious social interaction. However, resistance to *Ogoh-Ogoh* still arose from certain groups who saw it solely as a Hindu religious rite. In this context, cultural symbols are still overshadowed by theological exclusivity that is difficult to overcome if it is not accompanied by an open epistemological approach. Sumantri and Hajam (2023) emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary methodologies in religious studies to bridge the perception gap. Symbols like *Ogoh-Ogoh*, without a cross-disciplinary understanding, will persistently struggle between spiritual interpretation and broader social meaning.

Thus, the dynamics of multicultural interaction in Mataram reflect the process of negotiating identity and meaning, which takes place in symbolic and social spaces. *Ogoh-Ogoh*, in this framework, is not only a cultural heritage but also a social educational tool that opens space for reflection and strengthening cohesion. But this success requires an approach that is not only ceremonial but also structural and conceptual. Integration between knowledge fields religion, culture, education, and social psychology is key to strengthening sustainable and meaningful multicultural interactions.

Conclusion

This research shows that *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbolism has enormous potential as a medium of social integration amid religious and cultural diversity in Mataram City. With an interdisciplinary approach that combines the perspectives of cultural anthropology, sociology of religion, and social psychology, it was found that *Ogoh-Ogoh* has undergone a transformation of meaning from a symbol of Hindu religious ritual to an inclusive collective cultural expression. The active participation of interfaith communities in the *Ogoh-Ogoh* celebration strengthens local identity and opens a space for constructive and deep interfaith dialogue. Thus, *Ogoh-Ogoh* serves as a cultural instrument that reinforces the values of tolerance, coexistence, and social harmony in multicultural communities. However, this study also confirms that the success of *Ogoh-Ogoh* symbols as a tool of social cohesion is not automatic and universal. There is still resistance from some groups who view *Ogoh-Ogoh* narrowly and exclusively. Therefore, interdisciplinary approaches play a crucial role in formulating inclusive and reflective strategies for managing cultural symbols. Cross-disciplinary knowledge can help unravel tensions between identities and broaden a shared understanding of the meaning of symbols in a broader social context. In conclusion, *Ogoh-Ogoh* is not only a tradition but also an important means in the development of an inclusive, sustainable society and is rooted in local wisdom that is open to differences.

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