

## The Analysis of Public Perception of The *Buka Luwur* Tradition in Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus Cemetery

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### Abstract / Abstrak

This study aims to provide a comprehensive account of the local community's perspective on the *Buka Luwur* tradition in two distinct cultural contexts, specifically in Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria. The research methodology employs a qualitative phenomenological approach. The informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on two criteria: (1) caretakers of the graves of Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus, and (2) native residents of Kudus who participate in the ritual of breaking *luwur* at their graves. This investigation involved a total of four informants. Data collection employs in-depth interviews. The research employs a direct interview technique, using an interview guide based on the theory of perception characteristics. Coding is used for data analysis, and triangulation establishes credibility. According to the research findings, the Kudus community generally has a favorable perception of the *Buka Luwur* tradition in Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus. The people believe that participating in the tradition will result in receiving blessings from the mullah.

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan penjelasan komprehensif mengenai perspektif masyarakat lokal terhadap tradisi Buka Luwur dalam dua konteks budaya yang berbeda, khususnya di Sunan Kudus dan Sunan Muria. Metodologi penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi kualitatif. Informan dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling berdasarkan dua kriteria: (1) juru kunci makam Sunan Muria dan Sunan Kudus, dan (2) penduduk asli Kudus yang berpartisipasi dalam ritual pecah luwur di makam mereka. Penelitian ini melibatkan total empat orang informan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara mendalam. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik wawancara langsung, dengan menggunakan panduan wawancara berdasarkan teori karakteristik persepsi. Pengkodean digunakan untuk analisis data, dan triangulasi untuk membangun kredibilitas. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, masyarakat Kudus secara umum memiliki persepsi yang baik terhadap tradisi Buka Luwur Sunan Muria dan Sunan Kudus. Masyarakat percaya bahwa dengan mengikuti tradisi tersebut akan mendapatkan berkah dari para mullah.*

### Keywords / Kata kunci

*Buka luwur;*  
*Perception;*  
*Sunan Kudus;*  
*Sunan Muria;*  
*Tradition*

*Buka luwur;*  
*Persepsi;*  
*Sunan Kudus;*  
*Sunan Muria;*  
*Tradisi*

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### Introduction

The tradition of *buka luwur* has been practiced by ancient civilizations and continues to be upheld by the community, particularly in Kudus City (Rosyid, 2020). *Buka luwur* is a ritual that involves replacing the shroud covering the grave of a mullah. The term *buka* in the phrase *buka luwur* signifies the action of opening, whereas *luwur* refers to a thin shroud cloth covering one's grave (Nuha, 2016). Furthermore, tradition is defined as a religious practice that has become

routine due to its deep connection with socio-cultural circumstances (Nuha, 2016). The *buka luwur* ceremony takes place annually to honor the passing of a local mullah/religious leader (Yuwono, 2017).

The act of *buka luwur* has evolved into a cultural custom widely conducted among groups in different places and is considered a form of local wisdom. Local wisdom refers to the collective knowledge and understanding of positive values, which are embraced, practiced, and preserved over an extended time by a specific

group of individuals residing in a certain area or region (Njatrijani, 2018).

A belief held by certain individuals suggests that adhering to the tradition of *buka luwur* will get them to receive blessings from the mullahs. As described by Soraya (2018), perception is a cognitive process by which individuals use their five senses to comprehend information about their surroundings. It is important to note that each person may interpret this information differently, resulting in various meanings or responses. Nevertheless, variations in perception might lead to conflict, while one of the contributing elements to variations in perception is culture (Sari et al., 2021).

Perception is shaped by three key elements: cognitive, emotional, and conative. These three components collectively contribute to forming a comprehensive perception of a specific object (Agapito et al., 2013). The cognitive or perceptual component refers to the aspects of information, views, and beliefs that influence how an individual perceives an attitude or object. The affective component, the emotional component, is the aspect of an attitude associated with experiencing either pleasure or displeasure towards the object of the attitude. Experiencing happiness is a favorable state, and so is the opposite. The conative component, commonly the behavioral or action component, means an individual's inclination to act or behave relating to an attitude object. This component represents the magnitude of an individual's inclination or disposition to act or behave towards the object of their attitude.

Kudus City, located in Central Java, is a compact urban area where the predominant religious belief among its inhabitants was Hinduism long ago (Khotimah, 2018). Given the widespread acceptance of Hindu beliefs among the public, Islamic broadcasters must have designed a strategic plan to promote the propagation of Islam in Kudus City. The propagation of Islam in Java was initiated in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, but not until the Walisongo era, specifically in the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD, did the Javanese populace wholeheartedly embrace the Islamic faith (Kharis, 2020). Some mullahs imparted their teachings by incorporating Islamic principles into the local community's culture, one of which was by conducting *buka luwur* (Pratiwi, 2020). Now, some spots in Kudus City still preserve the tradition of *buka luwur*, among which are placed in the Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus cemetery.

This study uncovers the perception and appraisal toward the *buka luwur* tradition, an intangible heritage of the wali songo, by the local communities residing near the burial ground of Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus. This research can potentially enhance the conservation and advancement of the *buka luwur* tradition as a local wisdom comprising several noble ideals that should be conserved in this incessant global transformation era. This research examines the public perception of *buka luwur* in two different settings to identify the variations and similarities of the people's practice in understanding and undergoing the *buka luwur* tradition from both areas. This can offer a comprehensive description of the impact of these two individuals' traditions on religious, social, cultural, and environmental issues. The analysis of the *buka luwur* tradition in those two areas is undertaken to investigate the dynamics and adaptability of the Luwur fasting tradition in these two locations in response to evolving societal situations and changing times. This demonstrates the degree to which the practice of *buka luwur* is still being upheld despite the challenges encountered and the available chances.

Multiple prior studies across numerous search engines have investigated the tradition of *buka luwur*. Fathurohman and Setiawan (2017) demonstrated that the Sunan Kudus tradition of *buka luwur* holds significant meaning and educational worth, encompassing tolerance, mutual assistance, and religious principles. This study specifically examined the significance and principles of cultural customs without delving extensively into individuals' interpretations or creating cross-cultural comparisons. Fuadi (2013) found that the *buka luwur* tradition in Kudus is relied upon and revered by the community to seek favors. This study examined individuals' perceptions but did not provide a comparative analysis or comparison with equal traditions in different geographical areas or diverse societies.

Moreover, Nuha (2016) emphasized the significance of *buka luwur* as a medium for promoting Islamic and social principles and its role in fostering communal unity. This research did not address variations in how people in the Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus areas perceive things. Argarini (2015) examined the Kudus public perception of visual symbols in the *buka luwur* tradition, revealing various interpretations that depend on demographic characteristics. This research solely sought visual symbols and did not involve a comparison of perceptions between different locales or cultures.

Based on the review of previous studies, a research gap is found. There are several unrevealed points, such as the comparison of public perception of *buka luwur* tradition in two different areas (the areas around Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus cemetery) and how the interaction among cultures can impact the tradition and perception by applying three aspects of perception by Agapito; cognitive, affective, and conative. None of the preceding studies has specifically examined the difference in individuals' perceptions of the traditional *buka luwur* ceremony from a cross-cultural psychological standpoint, particularly in the Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus regions. It was also found that no related studies particularly analyzed the perception of the *buka luwur* tradition in detail, dealing with three components of perception: cognitive, affective, and conative. In addition, there is a lack of research on public perceptions of *buka luwur* at Sunan Muria and *sego pincuk* as its iconic dish. Hence, it is crucial to conduct this study to ascertain the public's perspective on the practice of *buka luwur* in Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus.

This recent study belongs to the social sciences and focuses on examining public perception. Its objective is to ascertain differences among individuals' perceptions of the *buka luwur* tradition within two distinct cultural contexts. It is highly expected that this research will guide future research.

### Method

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, particularly a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is a branch of philosophy that focuses on studying humans as phenomena. The phenomenological method directs its focus toward the realm of experience. It explores the subjective nature of understanding events or occurrences as experienced by individuals (Nuryana & Pawito, 2019). Exploring how individuals interpret an experience is a key aspect of phenomenological study. The researcher chose the informants by applying a purposive sampling method, a technique for selecting and collecting samples based on specific criteria determined by the researcher (Sugiyono, 2015). The criteria for selection were as follows: (1) individuals responsible for the maintenance of the graves of Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus; and (2) Kudus residents who are native to the area and actively participate in the tradition of *buka luwur*

at the graves of Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus. The data was obtained from primary sources using a combination of direct observation and in-depth interviews with the subjects. Observation means directly witnessing and recording events or phenomena using tests, questionnaires, visual aids/images, and audio recordings (Jamaluddin, 2015).

Further, Sari (2020) defines an interview as a research technique to obtain data by personally questioning/interviewing the allied parties. This study applied an interview guide to uncovering individuals' perceptions of the *buka luwur* tradition, focusing on many aspects of perception as defined by Agapito (2013). The interview guide is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*The list of interview questions*

Aspects	Questions
Cognitive Aspect	1) What is the definition of <i>buka luwur</i> tradition?
	2) Can you provide a chronological account of the events involved in the tradition of <i>buka luwur</i> that you are familiar with?
	3) Where is this tradition conducted?
	4) What is your subjective perspective on this traditional practice?
	5) What is your opinion about the <i>luwur</i> fabric, believed to possess divine blessings?
	6) What do you think about <i>sego pincuk</i> and <i>sego jangkrik</i> , which are believed to possess divine blessings, too?
Affective Aspect	1) What emotions/feelings do you experience as you engage in the practice of <i>buka luwur</i> ?
	2) Do you have a sense of enthusiasm and happiness when participating in the tradition of <i>buka luwur</i> ? If so, what factors contribute to your feelings of happiness or enthusiasm?
	3) What is your level of interest in adhering to this tradition?
Conative Aspect	1) How long have you been adhering to the practice of <i>buka luwur</i> ?
	2) What highly motivates you to follow the tradition of <i>buka luwur</i> ?
	3) Do you follow this tradition because it is something passed down from your family?

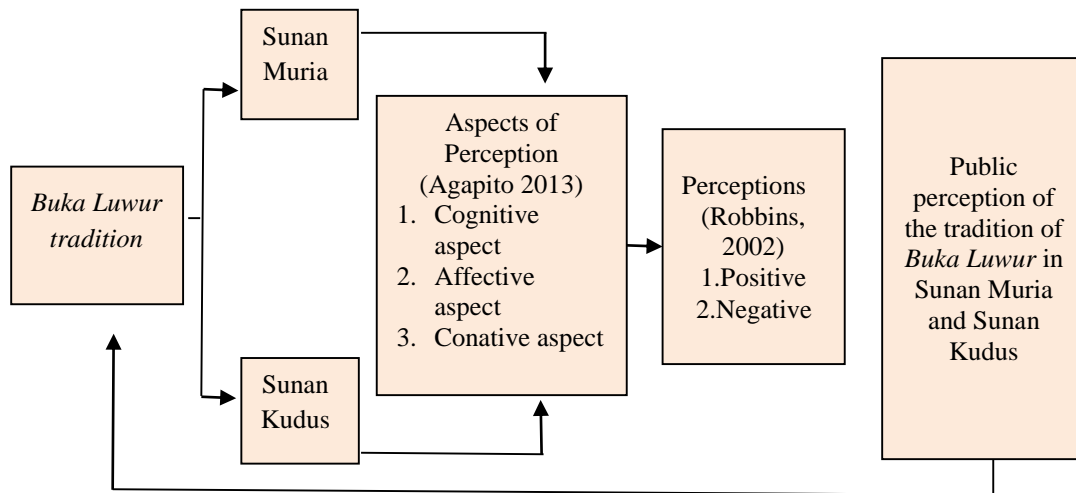


Figure 1. Research Framework of Thinking

The data analysis was done through coding. Coding refers to creating code, which is necessary to demonstrate the relationship between the acquired data and the subsequent analysis (Prihapsari & Indah, 2021). To gain credibility, this research established the data triangulation from many sources and the crosschecking process conducted by enumerators and cultural psychologists. The study took place in two areas: (1) Colo Village, Dawe sub-district, Kudus Regency, where Sunan Muria’s cemetery is located, and (2) Kauman Village, Kota sub-district, Kudus Regency, as the location of Sunan Kudus’ graveyard. The research was conducted in December 2022. The framework of thinking for this recent study is illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 2  
The profile of informants’ demography

Infor- mant	Name Initial	Age	Address	Role
I	MT	67	Colo Village, Kudus	The person in charge of Sunan Muria’s grave
II	MD	65	Colo village, Kudus	Kudus local following the tradition of <i>buka luwur</i> in Sunan Muria
III	PD	52	Kauman village, Kudus	The person in charge of Sunan Kudus’ grave
IV	MA	67	Kaiwungu village, Kudus	Kudus local following the tradition of <i>buka luwur</i> in Sunan Kudus

## Results

Before elaborating on the research findings, below is the demographic profile of the participants, including their initials, age, address, and role. The demographic characteristics of the informants are presented in Table 2.

### Informant I

#### Cognitive aspects

According to the interview with MT, a person in charge of Sunan Muria’s cemetery, interpreting *buka luwur* as a historical practice performed by previous caretakers lacks proof regarding its origin. MT also stated that in Sunan Muria, the term “*buka luwur*” is equivalent to “*salin luwur*.” “*salin*” denotes substitution or replacement, while “*luwur*” refers to a tin shroud cloth commonly used to cover one’s grave.

*Untuk sejarah buka luwur sendiri, mohon maaf niku kita belum menemukan kapan dimulai karena kita melakukan kegiatan yang sudah dilakukan oleh pendahulu-pendahulu kita, jadi tidak, tidak, apa namanya, tidak, tidak ditemukan bukti, bukti terutama naskah maupun tulisan dsb, terkait kapan dimulai buka luwur, dan bahasanya, bahasa sendiri, bahasa asli sini adalah "salin luwur", bukan "buka luwur", bahasa aslinya, untuk perkembangan ada yang mengatakan "ganti luwur" tapi bahasa aslinya salin luwur.*

Pardon me, but we have not been able to determine the exact origins of *Buka Luwur* in its history. We are continuing the practices of our predecessors, and unfortunately, we have not found any evidence, such as manuscripts or writings, that could shed light on their beginnings. It is essential to note that the

original language generally used for *buka luwur* is “salin luwur,” not “buka luwur.” Some may refer to it as “ganti luwur” for development purposes, but the authentic language is “salin luwur.

MT believes that *mori* cloth is perceived to contain blessings, supported by stories of the ancient Imam/mullah and prophets. These stories suggest that even if one dies covered in a shroud, which is not new, it does not matter since it still carries the Prophet’s blessings. Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that individuals have experienced the effects of Sunan Muria’s blessings.

*Ada beberapa mungkin, kisah-kisah para wali zaman dahulu, zaman sahabat atau apa gitu, saya kurang paham, ada sahabat yang minta "aku kalau mati annti kafani, kalau tidak baru tidak apa-apa meskipun sudah di pakai kanjeng nabi", jadi kalau saya percaya ada berkahnya, ini kan, mori, cara bahasa sini kan "lungsuran" ibarate bekas yang sudah dipakai dari seorang wali, bahkan wali songo, kalau saya yakin ada berkahnya, dan terbukti juga di lapangan, banyak, ada bebrapa yang merasakan efek dari keberkahannya, dari sunan muria yang memang kekasih allah yang dekat, coba anda bayangkan saja (mohon maaf nggih) pakaian dalame artis siapa itu, artis saja paling kalau dijual 1 juta sampai ratusan juta, itu di dunia kan, pakaian para artis kan.*

There might be some stories from ancient Imam or The Companions of the *Prophet* that I do not fully comprehend. One of the companions of the Prophet once said, ‘If I die, please cover me with a cloth. It does not matter if the cloth is not new or has already been used by Our Prophet. Therefore, I believe this cloth brings blessing, even if it is ‘lungsuran,’ which is like a second-hand item passed down from a mullah, even from a Wali Songo. In my opinion, it contains blessings as there is some proof that some people feel the effect of blessings from Sunan Muria, the one having a close connection to Allah. Imagine that the preloved underwear from celebrities can cost up to 1 million, whereas it is only a simple thing preowned by an artist.

MT understands *nasi pincuk* as a way to honor and preserve the humble ancestral culture by eating certain food using a leaf container. This tradition reflects the simplicity of Sunan Muria.

The use of teak leaves as food container/plate in the practice of *nasi pincuk* does not consider social strata since it is practiced by people from all levels or classes, including authorities, *kyai* / Imam (Islamic scholars), common people, the wealthy, and the poor, who all dine together using the leaf plate.

*Mengacu, kita menghargai budaya luhur-luhur kita, kan sederhana, makna ne aja godong, ini watak kesederhanaan sunan muria juga, tidak peduli yang kesini pejabat, rakyat jelata, orang kaya, orang miskin, sama-sama ajange godong jati, dan kalau pak bupati-bupati, para kyai kita kasih piring emas, yang lain nggak, ya tidak begitu, semua yang kesini kami berikan setara.*

As regards our esteemed culture, we greatly regard its simplicity, epitomized by the godong (leaves) concept. This simplicity is also reflected in the character of Sunan Muria. In its practice, everyone from various social classes, such as officials, commoners, wealthy or poor people, is treated equally, with teak leaves as their food container. If the regents and Imam are distinctively treated with golden plates to serve their foods/meals in events other than the *nasi pincuk* tradition, they will not find the same treatment in this tradition. All people are treated equally and fairly.

#### **Affective Aspect**

MT believes that the *buka luwur* tradition is highly sacred, showing Sunan Muria’s greatness. It can be observed by the arrival of devout followers from many places, including Tuban, Semarang, East Java, and West Java.

*Oo iya iya memang sakral, ini memang sangat sangat sakral, ini memang sangat-sangat sakral, saya memandang ini kelihatan sekali kemuliaan sunan muria dengan kedatangan orang-orang para zahir-zahirat kesini untuk untuk mengikuti salin luwur, bahkan datang dari mana-mana kan itu, dari Tuban, Semarang, Kudus, dari Jawa Barat, Jawa Timur.*

Indeed, the sanctity of this place is undeniable, as evidenced by the prominent presence of the individuals who visit and come from various locations, including Tuban, Semarang, Kudus, and even West Java and East Java, to participate in the *salin luwur* ceremony at Sunan Muria.

According to MT’s perspective, the participants greatly admired and complimented Mbah Sunan’s profile. The mullahs who

participated in this activity demonstrated their enthusiasm in preparing a wide range of elements, including mental, physical, and non-physical aspects. However, despite the overall enthusiasm around this tradition, occasionally, individuals fail to see its significance.

*Dari sisi peserta bahkan saya sendiri kelihatan bahwa sangat memuliakan beliau, para pemangku wali kan hadir disini, dengan antusias dengan menyiapkan kesiapan mental, fisik dan non fisik untuk menghadirinya, acara salin luwur, ini bukti, saya lihat ya karena kemuliaan beliau kemudian saya melihat dari para peserta mereka begituy antusias untuk memuliakan beliau, saya angan-angan ko begitu, kan ada beberapa yang menyepelkan, tapi ada segelintir yang menyepelkan "halah apa", nah ini yang perlu anda ketahui.*

As an observer, I can see that the participants greatly admire him. The mullahs enthusiastically prepare themselves mentally, physically, and emotionally to attend the salin luwur ceremony. This is evident proof of his glory. I personally witnessed the participants' enthusiastic efforts to revere him. While some may underrate the practice of salin luwur, we must truly investigate the great value within this tradition.

### **Conative aspect**

The motivation held by MT to consistently adhere to the ritual of *buka luwur* is to revere and honor Sunan Muria.

*Kelihatan sekali kemuliaan sunan muria dengan kedatangan orang-orang para zahir-zahirat ksini untuk mengikuti salin luwur dan dari sisi beliau ini kemudian dari sisi peserta bahkan saya sendiri kelihatan bahwa sangat memuliakan beliau.*

The magnificence of Sunan Muria becomes evident when many people arrive to participate in the salin luwur. From the participants' perspective, it is crystal clear that Sunan Muria is truly honored and revered.

### **Information II**

#### **Cognitive aspect**

According to MD, *buka luwur* is considered a traditional way of showing respect in the past time. MD further explains that *buka luwur* refers to the act of replacing the cloth that covers a grave.

*Buka luwur niku ngormati jaman, ngekholi jaman rumiyen, dadi nk coro mriki nggih ganti selambu.*

It is crucial to honor and value the past times. However, the term refers to an act of replacing the cloth covering the grave.

Aside from the provided foods, which are believed to contain blessings, the shroud cloth as the grave cover is also perceived to possess significant blessings. MD recalls an experience when someone coming from outside Java Island asked him for the shroud cloth. MD firmly believes that the shroud is imbued with blessings due to the multitude of prayers it absorbs daily. MD shares a remarkable miracle relating to this cloth, wherein he gave a piece of the shroud to a driver. A few days later, the driver experienced a severe accident but miraculously remained unharmed.

*Saya sering dimintain orang luar jawa og, mori iku kan anu mba, didungani bendino, ngresep duno tiap hari tiap malam, saya itu pernah ya, memberi mori ng sopir, sopir cangaan, lha trs, berapa hari kemudian tabrakan, motore memet, tapi tiange ndak apa-apa.*

I frequently receive many requests from people other than Javanese who ask for the shroud. This cloth is wide in size and absorbs abundant prayers from many days and nights. Once, I gave a piece of the shroud cloth to a driver. After several days, the driver got into a motorcycle accident. The vehicle was badly damaged while the driver remained unharmed and fine.

Both locals and visitors believe that *nasi pincuk* possesses its divine favor. MD explained that dried rice from *nasi pincuk*, also known as *nasi aking*, is highly sought after by many people. MD stated that people typically use this kind of rice for scattering in rice fields, medicinal purposes, and even for *mitoni* or a tradition to commemorate the seventh month of pregnancy. MD also maintains the belief that rice carries the blessings of Sunan Muria. He asserts that consuming this rice bestows intelligence upon those seeking knowledge, healing upon the sick, and finding a soul mate for those who have not yet found one.

*Wong nasi itu, nasi yang dipeme iku lah, iku yo disuwuni tiang, kagem campuran ng sawah, damel toombo, damel mitoni, kulo nk gadah berkat keng mriko, kulo peme, kulo*

*simpen, tamu dari jauh kan mboten retos, kirane dijual, kulo kan pancen ngedumno teng mriko, nasi niki berkah barokah sangking sunan murio mriki, niku nggih ta ceritakno ngoten, sg sekolah ben pinter, sg loro nggih ben li waras, sg dereng gadah jodoh nggih ben ntuk jodoh.*

Many people seek the dried rice from nasi pincuk for rice field fertilization, medication, and mitoni. If I have the remaining rice from nasi pincuk, I will dry and store it. Sometimes, I share it with guests from far away who think I am selling the 'blessing' rice. However, I always inform them that this rice is from Sunan Muria, containing some miracles to make students more brilliant, to cure sick people, and to make it easy for those who have not found their soulmate.

#### ***Affective Aspect***

MD confessed that he is very pleasant following the *Salin Luwur* ceremony.

*Nggih jelas a, pancen tradisi mba, tradisi jaman riyen, terus menerus, pancen ngeniku.* It is obvious that this tradition is a longstanding tradition that has persisted over time.

#### ***Conative aspect***

MD confessed his contentment and consistent involvement in the *salin luwur* ceremony. This constant tradition has motivated MD to always participate in *salin luwur*.

*Rutin niku angger tanggal 15 suro, ws ra keno ditinggal.*

I set it out as my routine practice every 15<sup>th</sup> Suro. It is a must and cannot be abandoned.

#### **Informant III**

##### ***Cognitive aspect***

PD, the caretaker of Sunan Muria's grave, understands the *buka luwur* activity as replacing the shroud cloth covering the Sunan Kudus tomb and its surrounding tombs. This activity has been carried out for hundreds of years, but its origins remain unknown. According to sources, *buka luwur* is not a *Haul* or commemorating someone's passing.

*Sejarah Buka Luwur, sejarah Buka Luwur itu intinyakan gini ya yang namanya kegiatan Buka Luwur itu sebenarnya adalah proses pergantian kain klambu yang di cungkup Sunan Kudus dan di cungkup sekitarnya. Nah kegiatan Buka Luwur ini jujur ya sampai*

*detik ini saya sendiri masih belum tau kapan itu dimulai, tapi yang jelas kegiatan Buka Luwur ini dilaksanakan setelah Sunan Kudus wafat cuman secara pastinya tahun berapa kita tidak mengetahui. Nah kalau menurut cerita dari berbagai macam masyarakat dan sesepuh yang ada di sekitar menara ini, kegiatan Buka Luwur itu sudah dilaksanakan ratusan tahun yang lalu secara pasti tidak ada yang mengetahui. Kalau berbicara tentang ratusan tahun yang lalu itu kan berarti diatas angka seratus, seratus tepatnya berapa kita tidak tau..seperti itu. Dan kegiatan Buka Luwur itu bukan acara Haul, ngerti haul kan? Ya memperingati hari orang yang wafat, nah itu jadi bukan acara Haul.*

The history of *buka luwur* involves replacing the covering cloth in the Sunan Kudus tomb as well as its surrounding tombs. Frankly speaking, the actual commencement date of the *buka luwur* activity remains unknown to me. Obviously, this activity was conducted after Sunan Kudus passed away, but the precise year is uncertain. Based on some stories from multiple individuals and respected elders around Menara Kudus, this tradition was done several centuries ago, and its exact origins remain unknown. Centuries mean hundreds of years ago, which indicates a time beyond one hundred years, with uncertainty concerning the actual duration. Further, *buka luwur* is not a *Haul*. Do you get the concept of *Haul*? It refers to an event of remembrance for someone who has passed away.

#### ***Affective Aspect***

The locals are enthusiastic about engaging in this activity, such as actively participating in "rewang" or offering assistance. This keenness is observable as the public starts questioning when/what date *buka luwur* is held far away before its D-day. Not only do the surrounding people participate in this tradition, but people from nine neighboring sub-districts also join this endeavor.

*Antusiasme untuk ikut rewang atau membantu dalam kegiatan ini sangat tinggi bahkan sebelum hari raya qurban saja sudah ada yang tanya bisa ngga saya ikut rewang buka luwur, yang berpartisipasi bukan hanya masyarakat sekitar namun dari kesembilan kecamatan, bahkan dari kecamatan Dawe pun ada, cranggan pun ada, terban juga, dari rahtawu juga ada.*

There is great enthusiasm for participating in *rewang* or assisting in this activity.” Before the Idul Adha session, some had already inquired whether they could assist in serving the *buka luwur* ceremony. Additionally, the participants included residents and individuals from all nine sub-districts, including from the sub-districts of Dawe, Cranggan, Terban, and Rahtawu.

#### **Conative Aspect**

The interview with informant III revealed PD’s true motivation to join this tradition. The tradition has historical significance since it has been practiced for centuries with an uncertain origin.

*Menurut cerita dari berbagai macam masyarakat dan sesepuh yang ada di sekitar menara ini, kegiatan Buka Luwur itu sudah dilaksanakan ratusan tahun yang lalu secara pasti tidak ada yang mengetahui.*

Based on several stories from various individuals and respected elders around Menara Kudus, this ritual was conducted several centuries ago, but no one knows when it exactly started.

#### **Informant IV**

##### **Cognitive Aspect**

MA, a Kudus resident who always joins *buka luwur*, stated that the primary focus of the ceremony is the shroud, a thin cloth that covers the tomb.

*Buka luwur niki kan sg diutamakaken setunggal niku kan mori.*

The ultimate thing from *buka luwur* is the shroud. None other than that.

He also mentioned that some people use *nasi jangkrik* as an amulet.”

*Wonten ingkang dipun dahar, wonten ingkang kangge dipun diagem kagem jimat.*

Generally, people eat *nasi jangkrik*, while some use it as an amulet.

##### **Affective Aspect**

*Buka luwur* belongs to a sacred occasion due to its status as a longstanding tradition practiced by prior generations.

*Buka luwur niku kan acara ingkang rutin, didamel sakral nggih saget disakralake, mboten nggih mboten, soale niki nglampahi adat ingkang mbah2 buyut2 ingkang sampun rumiyen.*

*Buka luwur* is a routine event. Its sanctity is up to the people who want to believe or not.

The main point is that this tradition carries on the inherited custom of our ancestors.

MA acknowledged his contentment in dedicating his energies and thoughts to *Mbah Sunan Kudus*. He emphasized the importance of having genuine intentions rather than seeking blessings or rewards when offering assistance.

*Sing jelas niku seneng, soale saget rewang tenaga lan pikiran niku saget dimanfaatake mriki kangge mriku kanggo mbah sunan.*

I am beyond happy, as I can deploy my physical and mental abilities to support this event for *Mbah Sunan*.

##### **Conative aspect**

MA, a 67-year-old, frequently participates in *buka luwur* in Sunan Kudus. He has been involved in the kitchen since he was a child.

*Soale nk buka luwur bagian dapur niku mpun dangu, kulo niku, joko nganti mbah.*

It has been so long that I take part in the kitchen, from my young age up to now.

### **Discussions**

The interviews yielded information about the cognitive aspects of the four informants that interpret *buka luwur* as a traditional ceremony practiced by the ancestors and involving the change of the grave cover cloth. **Fathurohman and Setiawan (2017)** stated that *buka luwur* is a tradition commemorating *Haul* or Sunan Kudus’s passing. In line with this research, MT, the caretaker of Sunan Muria’s grave, and MD, a resident who participates in breaking the *luwur*, believe that breaking the *luwur* is a *Haul* event to commemorate the passing of Sunan Muria. In contrast, PD, the caretaker of the Sunan Kudus cemetery, revealed that *buka luwur* is not a *Haul* event because the exact time when Sunan Kudus passed away is still unknown.

In this recent study, cognitive perception refers to the informants’ knowledge and understanding of the attractive force of the *buka luwur* tradition. The interviews revealed that all four informants were well-informed about various aspects of the tradition. In Sunan Kudus, the tradition of *buka luwur* occurs from the 1st to the 10th of *Muharram*. However, in Sunan Muria, the tradition is known as *salin luwur*, which starts on the 1st of *Muharram* and continues until its peak event on the 15th of *Muharram*, as stated by the caretaker of the Sunan Muria cemetery during the



Table 3  
Analysis of the four informants

Aspect	Informant I	Informant II	Informant III	Informant IV
Cognitive Aspect	MT said there is no evidence to determine when the tradition of <i>buka luwur</i> started. In Sunan Muria, the term “ <i>buka luwur</i> ” is equivalent to “ <i>salin luwur</i> ,” where “ <i>salin</i> ” means replacing and “ <i>luwur</i> ” refers to a thin cloth covering someone’s tomb.	<i>Buka luwur</i> is a traditional practice that demonstrates reverence for the past times. MD further explains that <i>buka luwur</i> is understood as “replacing the <i>selambu</i> ,” which refers to replacing the cloth covering a grave.	The <i>buka luwur</i> tradition can be understood as the process of replacing the shroud covering Sunan Kudus’s grave and its surrounding graves. It has been practiced for centuries, although its exact origins remain unknown. It is important to note that <i>buka luwur</i> is not a <i>Haul</i> event or commemorating someone’s passing.	The primary focus of <i>buka luwur</i> is the shroud covering the grave.
Affective Aspect	The tradition of <i>buka luwur</i> is a highly sacred practice. The magnificence of Sunan Muria is evident through the arrival of many people from different regions.	I am delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the <i>Salin Luwur</i> event.	The locals demonstrated great enthusiasm for this activity, such as by participating in “ <i>rewang</i> ” or offering assistance. Moreover, not only did the locals partake, but people from nine neighboring sub-districts also joined in this endeavor.	The <i>buka luwur</i> event can be considered a sacred ritual, as it is a longstanding practice passed down through generations.
Conative Aspect	MT’s motivation to follow the ritual of <i>buka luwur</i> is to revere or honor Sunan Muria.	MD confessed his contentment and consistent involvement in the <i>salin-luwur</i> ceremony. This enduring custom is the motivating factor behind his participation in the <i>Salin Luwur</i> event.	PD was highly motivated to participate in this activity, which has been practiced for centuries despite no precise historical record.	MA, a 67-year-old man, regularly joins <i>buka luwur</i> events at Sunan Kudus. He has taken part in the kitchen since his youth.

interviews. The extensive duration of the *buka luwur* ceremony reflects the number of processions involved in this tradition (Argarini, 2015).

One of the steps that people look forward to is the distribution of *sego pincuk* (*pincuk* rice) in Sunan Muria and *sego jangkrik* (cricket rice) in Sunan Kudus. These two types of rice include a bowl of rice added with cooked meat as the side dish and wrapped with teak leaves. MD roots the term *sego pincuk* from *sakpincukan*, one whole packet. People believe that the rice distributed contains blessings and can provide salvation (Fuadi, 2013). MT elucidates *sego pincuk* as a form of respect for simple ancestral culture, with

the symbol of food wrapped in leaf containers. It also refers to the noble character of Sunan Muria. No matter who attends the ceremony, officials, Imam, common people, rich people, or poor people all eat from the same teak leaf containers.

Further, MD believed that *sego pincuk* contains its own blessings: for soil/plant fertilization in rice fields, for medication purposes, and for *mitoni* (a particular event to pray for the seventh pregnancy). MD also believes that rice brings the blessings of Sunan Muria. By consuming this rice, the students will be given sharper intelligence, the ailing people can be cured, and the single ones will soon find their soul mate. Meanwhile, MA also explained that several

people use *sego jangrik* as an amulet. This research is the first to review *sego pincuk*, or the distributed rice in a series of Sunan Muria *buka luwur* events.

Apart from the rice/food considered to have blessings, the four informants also believe that the cloth covering the graves has its blessings. Based on the interview result, the Sunan Muria *buka luwur* tradition cuts the cloth into small pieces and distributes it to residents who live in Colo Village. However, some people use it as an amulet. Meanwhile, at the Sunan Kudus *buka luwur* ceremony, only a few people can get the *luwur* cloth from Sunan Kudus's grave. This is based on research conducted by [Indrahti \(2022\)](#), who said that some people use the shroud cloth covering the cemetery as an amulet. MD said that one of his friends used a piece of the *luwur* cloth as a safety amulet. Once, his friend survived an accident and believed this could happen because of the piece of *luwur* cloth he got from MD.

In contrast to this story, [Fuadi \(2013\)](#) explained that some locals used pieces of *luwur* cloth to tuck into their *peci*, believing it would increase their self-confidence and make it easier to absorb and understand school lessons. Even though it seems impossible, some locals still believe in it, with different levels or kinds of beliefs according to their personal needs. The previous explanation describes how people believe that something can occur by directly seeing, hearing, or sensing it so they can form a perception of a particular object.

The affective aspect obtained from the data shows that MT and MA feel that the *buka luwur* ceremony is a sacred activity. In contrast to the two informants, MA admitted that he was very happy to be able to take part in the *buka luwur* ceremony. According to [Sarwono \(2010\)](#), affective perception relates to feelings of pleasure and displeasure. It can be concluded that the informants' affective perceptions or feelings towards the *buka luwur* tradition are very good. This can be seen from the interview results, showing that the four informants feel the sacredness and pleasure of being involved in the *buka luwur* tradition. PD, as the person in charge of Sunan Muria cemetery, feels the enthusiasm for welcoming the tradition of *buka luwur*. The presence of visitors from various regions, such as Semarang, East Java, and West Java, revealed enthusiasm. Additionally, several people from nine sub-districts around the Sunan Kudus grave also helped and supported the event as volunteers to make the existing tradition of *buka luwur*

successful. The people believe everything related to Sunan Kudus has its blessings, and it fosters a sense of sincerity and joy to participate in this tradition to get blessings from Sunan Kudus.

[Walgito \(2002\)](#) defined the affective aspect as a feeling concerning an individual's impression or feeling to interpret a stimulus. It connects with the subjective emotional aspect towards the object of perception, containing partial or unbiased feelings, supporting or contradicting the perceived object. Based on the interview results, the four informants sided with or supported the tradition of *buka luwur*. This can be seen from each informant's enthusiastic feelings about joining this tradition. Previous research showed that the Kudus residents' perception regarding *buka luwur* is excellent and highly enthusiastic ([Fathurohman & Setiawan, 2017](#)). [Adiyati et al. \(2019\)](#) stated that the locals are extremely keen on *buka luwur* in Sunan Kudus, which is depicted in more than 100 volunteers and the residents helping with the preparation and a series of *buka luwur* ceremonies. They also found that *buka luwur* attracts more and more attention from the public year by year. It has also become an annual event managed by the Kudus city government.

In the conative aspect, MT and MA stated that their motivation for participating in *buka luwur* was to honor and show respect for Sunan. On the other hand, MD and PD were motivated by the fact that this tradition had been carried out by previous generations and had become an established practice. [Walgito \(2002\)](#) stated that the conative aspect, also known as the action aspect, encompasses the observable behaviors and verbal expressions that indicate a tendency to act or react to an object. The conative perception is reflected in someone's behavior. According to the interview results, four informants are prompted to participate in the *buka luwur* ceremony for various reasons.

The community preserves religious activities passed down for generations ([Adiyati et al., 2019](#)). An individual's experience participating in *buka luwur* can influence their perception of this tradition. Positive experiences can strengthen positive perceptions, while negative experiences can weaken them. The fact that this longstanding tradition of *buka luwur* has been continuously practiced from generation to generation becomes a primary reason for individuals to participate in this event at the Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria cemetery. This participation turns into a way of showing respect for the cultural heritage of their ancestors. The *haul* tradition, passed down

through generations, holds a noble meaning as it serves as a bond between residents and a way of honoring ancestors who contributed to the Islamization in Kudus (Rosyid, 2019).

Human perception possesses different points of view in its senses. Some people perceive something as a good (positive) perception and negative perceptions that will influence visible or real human actions (Subagia et al., 2016). Robbins and Coulter (2002) divides perception into two parts: positive and negative perception. Positive perception is an individual's assessment of an object or information with a positive view or by what is expected from the perceived object or existing rules. Robbins and Coulter (2002) defined positive perception as an individual's assessment of an object or piece of information with a positive view; usually, the object is perceived by what is expected. Positive perception is caused by individual satisfaction, knowledge, and experience that the individual has with the object.

Meanwhile, negative perception is defined as an individual's assessment of an object with a negative view, contrary to what is expected from the ideal perceived object or the existing rules. Individual perceptions of *buka luwur* can alter along with social and cultural changes. Modernization, globalization, and secularization can influence how individuals view these traditions.

Positive perceptions in this tradition can be linked to social cognition theory. Social cognition theory is a development of Albert Bandura's behavioristic theory. According to Tullah and Amiruddin (2020), social cognition theory has four phases: 1) attention phase, 2) recall phase, 3) production phase, and 4) reinforcement phase. A tradition passed down from generation to generation and carried out by those closest to them, whether family, parents, or grandparents, who become role models in providing knowledge to their children about the tradition of *buka luwur*, belongs to the attention phase. Next, the memory phase is a person's ability to remember after observing a model; in this stage, they store what the model they see does.

Further, the production phase is the extent to which the things learned will be carried out. The final phase is the reinforcement phase, where someone is motivated to do what they have observed from the model. Those four phases are reflected by the people around Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus cemetery, who perpetuated the traditions that their predecessors had carried out. This is also supported by beliefs passed down

from generation to generation regarding the blessings contained in the used *luwur* cloth or the distributed rice, which are believed to bring goodness.

Based on the informant's knowledge acquired from the previous generations and close relatives, it is factual that the people possess the understanding and contentment to uphold the tradition of *buka luwur*. The four informants firmly believe that the *luwur* cloth and the distributed rice carry blessings. This belief is derived from the wisdom passed down by their predecessors and personal experiences witnessed in the field. For instance, MD, a resident near the Sunan Muria cemetery, highly believes in the blessings of the *luwur* cloth after he saw his friend safe from a severe accident by storing the cloth. MA, a resident living near Sunan Kudus grave, also demonstrates the affective or satisfactory aspect by always feeling very glad to assist in the success of the *buka luwur* ceremony. It is based on the understanding he obtained from his predecessors that everyone who deploys assistance in the tradition will receive a blessing from the mullah.

The research found that the four informants positively perceived the *buka luwur* tradition. The high religious value in viewing the *buka luwur* tradition owned by the surrounding residents makes this tradition a form of respect for the mullah, who has an important role in spreading Islam in Kudus City. In addition, this tradition is considered to have a positive impact. It becomes a momentum to strengthen brotherhood ties and solidarity among communities. For the people around the graves of Sunan Muria and Sunan Kudus, *buka luwur* is a part of the cultural heritage that must be protected and preserved. Community leaders and religious leaders also play an important role in preserving and promoting *buka luwur*. Their support and explanation can help people strengthen positive perceptions of this tradition. The strong belief in great blessings is also one factor that shapes people's positive perception of this noble tradition. People believe that this tradition brings blessings to those involved in it. According to Argarini (2015), people believe in blessings in the *buka luwur* tradition. The *ngalap* (seek for) blessing phenomenon is due to the belief that everything related to Sunan Kudus can bring blessings. This belief spreads from one word to another and is supported by the experiences the people have by themselves. With high positive values such as religion, solidarity, togetherness, blessings, and

pride in the cultural heritage, the community willingly and enthusiastically accepts and maintains the tradition of *buka luwur* or *salin luwur* as an important part of their identity and life. There was still a lack of studies that discuss perceptions of the *buka luwur* tradition using three aspects (cognitive, affective, and conative). This aligns with Chasanah and Falaq (2023), which examined students' perceptions of the *buka luwur* tradition through teachers. However, their research did not analyze every aspect; it only examined general perceptions and directed more toward the purpose of learning.

Similar traditions also become the main point of Tubagus et al. (2021), who discussed the tradition of *ngumbah pusaka*. The term in Sundanese means washing heirlooms, which are seven pieces. It is routinely held every month during *Maulud*, or the day of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The aim of washing heirloom objects is to preserve customs by cleaning and sanctifying cultural heritage objects in museum collections (Tubagus et al., 2021). This is similar to the cultural concept of the tradition of *buka luwur* in the activity of replacing *luwur* or cloth. The ritual of *ngumbah pusaka* has several stages. They are the structure of the *ngumbah pusaka* ritual, preparation for the completeness of the ritual, pre-implementation of the ritual, and implementation of the ritual (Tubagus et al., 2021). This is similar to the tradition of *buka luwur*, where both have several series of events in one tradition. The ultimate point of the *ngumbah pusaka* ritual is *sesaji* or offerings. Offerings are intended to keep people away from such disasters so that performances can run smoothly and always ensure safety. Several *ubarampe* (components) are prepared in the offerings as symbols relating to ancestral spirits (Tubagus et al., 2021). This also has similarities to the cultural concept of the tradition of *buka luwur* in sharing *sego jangkrik* or *sego pincuk*.

The tradition of *buka luwur* is not only found in Sunan Kudus or Sunan Muria. Several graves of Imam/mullahs or prominent figures had similar traditions. One of them is the *Rogomoyo* tradition. Chusni (2022) stated that this tradition occurs in Prokowinong Kaliwungu Village, Kudus Regency. The *Rogomoyo* tradition is carried out to commemorate the passing of Mbah Rogomoyo. He was a wood expert and an Imam. During his lifetime, Mbah Rogomoyo produced a work in the form of the Kudus Traditional House, now known as *Joglo Pencu Tumpang Songo*. Mbah Rogomoyo's grave was named *makam gebyog*.

The *rogomoyo* tradition has several stages, such as the grave sweeping, carnival (carnival participants perform dances depicting certain processes, such as rice planting and carpentry), the exchange of *luwur* cloth, and the joint prayers. Like *buka luwur* in Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria, the *Rogomoyo* tradition also contains noble values such as tolerance, religion, and generosity.

## Conclusion

The *buka luwur* tradition encompasses noble values such as religiosity, simplicity, harmony, tolerance, mutual assistance, solidarity, and togetherness. The ultimate aspects shown in this recent study are cognitive and affective aspects of the tradition. The knowledge/understanding from their predecessors and the phenomena from their surroundings have successfully shaped the informants' positive perceptions of *buka luwur*. The findings indicate that Kudus people participating in the *buka luwur* tradition hold predominantly positive perceptions. They believe that by engaging in this tradition, they will receive blessings from the mullahs.

Furthermore, they believe the food distributed during the tradition, such as *sego pincuk* (in Sunan Muria) and *sego jangkrik* (in Sunan Kudus), carries abundant blessings. Some individuals use this food for various purposes, such as for soil or plant fertilization in rice fields, for medication, for *mitoni* (an event to pray for a 7<sup>th</sup> month pregnancy), and even for an amulet. Similarly, people believe that the used *luwur* cloth possesses its blessings, while some individuals employ it as an amulet.

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