IJBMC
International Journal of Body, Mind and Culture

Volume 13, Issue 4, pp 166-179
DOI: 10.61838/ijbmc.v13i4.1316

Article type:
Original Research

When Ritual Is Experienced as Healing: An Islamic Counseling Oriented Phenomenological Study of Kololi Kie within the Ternate Community, Indonesia

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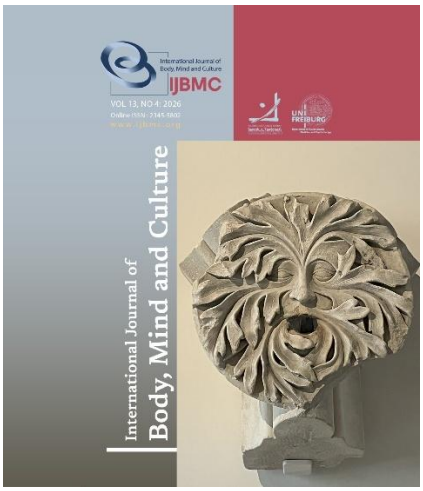

Article history:

Received 23 Jan 2026
Revised 28 Feb 2026
Accepted 12 March 2026
Published online 01 Apr 2026

How to cite this article:
Albaar, R., Amriana, A., Canu, Z., & Yusuf, M. (2026). When Ritual Is Experienced as Healing: An Islamic Counseling Oriented Phenomenological Study of Kololi Kie within the Ternate Community, Indonesia. International Journal of Body, Mind and Culture, 13(4), 166–179.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study explores how the *Kololi Kie ritual* is experienced and interpreted as healing within the Ternate community, with particular attention to how Islamic values inform meaning-making processes in an indigenous counseling-oriented context.

Methods and Materials: The study adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach grounded in Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology. Data were collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with 12 participants, including traditional elders, ritual facilitators, and community members who regularly engage in *Kololi Kie.* Supplementary materials included field notes and local cultural documents related to the *ritual.* The analysis focused on participants' lived experiences and motivational orientations.

Findings: Participants experience *Kololi Kie* as emotionally and spiritually restorative, describing processes of emotional relief, moral reflection, social connectedness, and existential meaning-making. These experiences are articulated through culturally and religiously embedded narratives rather than through formal therapeutic techniques. Within Schutz's framework, the study identifies a spiritually oriented dimension of motivation that complements *in-order-to* and *because* motives, highlighting how ritual participation is shaped by transcendental intentions and moral accountability.

Conclusion: Rather than conceptualizing *Kololi Kie* as a formal counseling model or clinical intervention, this study suggests that the ritual may be understood as an indigenous practice through which healing is subjectively experienced and socially negotiated. The findings contribute to phenomenological discussions of spirituality and counseling by illustrating how Islamic values operate within a lived moral and cultural lifeworld. Given its focus on a single ritual within one community, the study's insights are context-specific and not intended for generalization.

Keywords: Indigenous counseling practice, Islamic values, phenomenology, meaning-making, spiritual motives.

Introduction

The rapid advancement of globalization has intensified academic interest in preserving local cultural practices, particularly in community-based social intervention and mental health approaches. In Indonesia, the Ternate ethnic community in North Maluku possesses a unique cultural heritage, including the *Kololi Kie ritual.* This ceremonial procession involves circumnavigating Mount Gamalama in traditional kora-kora boats and reciting three Islamic prayers: *Asmih, Tayyibi*, and Abdul Qadir Djaelani. Although this ritual is often regarded as a symbol of cultural heritage and collective identity, various ethnographic sources suggest that *Kololi Kie* also encompasses profound social and spiritual dimensions (Indriani & Utami, 2023), functioning as a means of collective unity, inner healing, and connection with transcendent forces.

Recent studies in Indonesia have documented how religious leaders perform healing roles through ritual-based practices, illustrating their significance as therapeutic agents in rural communities (Sulaiman & Ula, 2025). Moreover, psychospiritual and socioreligious frameworks have been proposed as highly effective in integrating traditional ritual with formal mental health efforts (Putri & Arifinsyah, 2025). In addition, research on public health perceptions reveals a persistent duality of trust between modern medical treatment and cultural/traditional healing modalities, highlighting the potential for integrating both in culturally sensitive interventions (Setianti et al., 2025).

In line with this context, the humanistic counseling approach, which emphasizes personal wholeness, self-actualization, and empathetic relationships, has become increasingly relevant in mental health services across Southeast Asia. However, existing humanistic counseling models remain predominantly influenced by Western paradigms that are essentially individualistic and often overlook the deeply rooted spiritual-communal dimensions of local societies, including those in Indonesia. In this regard, indigenous counseling approaches are critically important, as they offer an integrative framework that incorporates local values, traditional belief systems, and community healing practices into contemporary counseling models (Garrett & Herring, 2001; Mazidah et al., 2023).

The sociocultural context of the Ternate community offers a compelling subject for scholarly exploration. On one hand, the Sultanate of Ternate is among the oldest Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago, with Islamic values deeply embedded in the social fabric of the society. This historical integration of Islam with local customs has also been noted in studies of North Maluku's religious landscape (Momole et al., 2024). On the other hand, animistic and dynamistic beliefs continue to coexist and influence the community's worldview, particularly in how the community responds to significant events, including emergencies such as natural disasters. Such coexistence of Islamic and pre-Islamic belief systems is consistent with findings on animistic dynamistic practices in Muslim communities across eastern Indonesia (Kaltsum, 2022).

For instance, in the case of a missing child believed to have offended the sea guardian spirit, the community does not immediately rely on official search and rescue teams; instead, they await a "spiritual whisper" conveyed through ritual processes led by traditional elders. This reliance on spiritual guidance in moments of crisis aligns with indigenous disaster-response patterns documented in coastal communities, where metaphysical interpretations often shape collective decision-making (Nurislaminingsih & Rochwulaningsih, 2022). This practice illustrates that traditional belief systems serve as spiritual convictions and guiding principles in decision-making processes concerning communal safety and well-being.

Within this framework, *Kololi Kie* is a collective counseling space that integrates Islamic spirituality, local wisdom, and community healing practices. However, no scholarly research has explicitly analyzed *Kololi Kie* as an indigenous-based counseling framework. Most existing studies have focused primarily on its symbolic, ritualistic, or anthropological dimensions (Fatah et al., 2024; Nurlaili et al., 2017), without addressing its therapeutic potential, humanistic values, or the existential meanings embedded within the practice.

Similarly, humanistic counseling approaches in Indonesia rarely explore local cultural dimensions holistically. Many studies on local rituals tend to emphasize Islamic acculturation or cultural preservation rather than examining the relationship between such

rituals and community psychology, mental resilience, or the structure of spiritual motivation. However, such exploration is crucial for enriching counseling theory and practice rooted in the sociocultural realities of indigenous communities. Nonetheless, no prior research has directly examined *Kololi Kie* as an indigenous counseling framework that integrates Islamic humanism with spiritual healing traditions. This study aims to address this gap by elucidating the humanistic counseling values embedded in the *Kololi Kie ritual*, describing how the ritual serves as a culturally grounded counseling space, and exploring the cultural and spiritual motivations that underlie this collective healing practice.

In recent decades, increasing scholarly attention has been directed toward culturally grounded approaches to mental health and community well-being, particularly in non-Western societies where healing is often embedded within collective ritual, spirituality, and local cosmology, rather than being understood solely as symbolic or ceremonial acts. In many Indigenous communities, these serve as lived spaces where meaning, emotional regulation, and social cohesion are collectively negotiated. Within this broader context, Indonesia provides a rich landscape for examining how local traditions operate as informal yet influential modes of psychosocial support.

One such tradition is *Kololi Kie*, a communal ritual practiced by the Ternate community in North Maluku. The ritual involves circumnavigating Mount Gamalama using traditional *kora-kora* boats while reciting Islamic prayers—*Asmih*, *Tayyibi*, and invocations associated with Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani. Existing ethnographic and cultural studies describe *Kololi Kie* primarily as a marker of collective identity, historical continuity, and cosmological harmony (Indriani & Utami, 2023; Muslim, 2019). However, community narratives and ritual participation suggest that *Kololi Kie* is also experienced as a moment of inner calm, moral reassurance, and communal healing, particularly in times of uncertainty or crisis.

Studies on ritual-based healing in Indonesian Muslim communities indicate that religious leaders and collective rites often perform psychosocial functions similar to counseling, even when not formally labeled as such (Sulaiman & Ula, 2025). Research in psychospiritual and socioreligious health further demonstrates that spiritual meaning-making and communal participation can enhance emotional resilience and perceived well-being (Putri & Arifinsyah, 2025). At the same time, public health research shows that many communities continue to negotiate between biomedical treatment and culturally embedded healing practices, reflecting a pluralistic understanding of health and recovery (Setianti et al., 2025).

From the perspective of Islamic counseling, healing is not limited to symptom reduction. However, it entails restoring harmony among the self (*nafs*), moral intention (*niyyah*), spiritual awareness (*taqwa*), and social responsibility (*ukhuwah*). While contemporary counseling practices in Southeast Asia increasingly adopt humanistic principles such as empathy, self-actualization, and personal growth, these models remain largely shaped by Western individualistic assumptions. As a result, they often fail to fully capture the communal and spiritually embedded modes of meaning-making characteristic of many Muslim societies.

The Ternate community represents a particularly relevant case for examining this intersection. Historically rooted in one of the oldest Islamic sultanates in the Indonesian archipelago, Ternate society reflects a long-standing integration of Islamic teachings with local customs (Momole et al., 2024). Alongside Islamic norms, ancestral beliefs and cosmological interpretations continue to inform communal responses to extraordinary events, including natural disasters and social disruption. Rather than representing a contradiction, this coexistence forms a lived moral landscape in which Islamic spirituality is interpreted through local experience (Kaltsum, 2022).

Despite a growing body of research on indigenous counseling and Islamic psychospiritual practices in Indonesia, *Kololi Kie* has not yet been examined phenomenologically as a lived counseling experience. Existing studies have largely focused on its ritual symbolism, historical origins, or cultural preservation (Fatah et al., 2024; Nurlaili et al., 2017), leaving unexplored the ways in which participants themselves experience the ritual as a source of emotional reassurance, moral orientation, and collective healing. This study does not claim the absence of all prior discussions but argues that there is limited empirical research that explicitly analyzes *Kololi Kie* through the lens of Islamic counseling–oriented phenomenology.

Accordingly, this study seeks to explore how

participants experience and interpret Kololi Kie as a form of communal healing, how Islamic values shape the process of meaning-making within the ritual, and how spiritual motives are articulated in participants' lived narratives. By adopting a phenomenological approach, this research positions *Kololi Kie* not as a therapeutic intervention in the clinical sense, but as a culturally grounded counseling space embedded in everyday religious life.

Literatur Review

Indigenous counseling has emerged as a culturally responsive therapeutic approach that recognizes the limitations of Western models when applied to non-Western societies. This approach integrates local wisdom, traditional belief systems, and community healing practices into counseling. In the Indonesian context, several studies have attempted to formulate counseling models grounded in local culture, drawing from philosophical, spiritual, and ritual sources. (Marhamah et al.) developed a counseling model based on Javanese tradition through the philosophy of *Kawruh Jiwa* by Ki Ageng Suryomentaram, emphasizing inner balance, empathy, and humility as core components of personal development. Fitriyah et al. (2022) analyzed counseling values within the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) environment, drawing on the classical text Ta'limul Muta'allim, and highlighted how spiritual authority, moral nurturing, and affective teacher–student relationships serve therapeutic functions. Meanwhile, Mazidah et al. (2023) interpreted the *Gusjigang* ethos, popularized by Sunan Kudus, as a counseling framework integrating religiosity, commerce, and moral education. However, these three studies remain largely theoretical or literature-based and are not directly connected to field-based community practices.

Nevertheless, a broader literature review indicates that culturally grounded counseling practices have developed significantly across various Indigenous communities worldwide. Garrett & Herring (2001) proposed the Honoring the Power of Relation model within Native American communities, emphasizing the importance of spiritual relationships, kinship, and connection to nature in the healing process. Laliberté et al. (2012) found that cultural empowerment is key to building sustainable mental health among Indigenous populations. Similarly, the Whare Tapa Whā model among the Māori of New Zealand, as described by Durie (2004), places spirituality as an inseparable dimension of mental, physical, and social well-being.

These studies suggest that culture-based healing practices are not unique to Indonesia but are also gaining global scholarly attention. Breuer (1955), in Studies on Hysteria, demonstrated how repressed emotions could be released through symbolic and verbal experiences within therapeutic settings, a principle also observed in collective rituals such as *Kololi Kie.* Etzioni (1994) highlighted the importance of social solidarity and community cohesion within the framework of communitarianism, which is highly relevant for understanding the collective role of the Ternate community in sustaining mental health through communal rites. Ivey & Johnston (2013) introduced the concept of cultural intentionality in multicultural counseling, emphasizing the need to adapt therapeutic approaches to clients' cultural and spiritual values. In this context, the practice of *Kololi Kie* reflects the core values of empathy, spiritual reflection, and interpersonal connectedness characteristic of community-based counseling.

In the context of the *Kololi Kie ritual* practiced by the Ternate community, existing studies remain limited to symbolic and cultural analyses. For example, research by Syukur (2019) highlights communal and religious values embedded in the ritual but does not explicitly explore its therapeutic or psychosocial dimensions. This gap presents an opportunity to reinterpret *Kololi Kie* not merely as a cultural expression but as a form of indigenous counseling that integrates Islamic spirituality, community solidarity, and psychological well-being.

The *Kololi Kie ritual* itself consists of a structured sequence of spiritual activities: circumnavigating Mount Gamalama in *kora-kora* boats, chanting Islamic prayers such as *Asmih*, *Tayyibi*, and *Abdul Qadir Jaelani*, and invoking protection from natural disasters and spiritual disturbances. This practice goes beyond mere symbolism; it creates a space for collective healing, reinforcement of ancestral memory, and reaffirmation of communal spirituality. Participants in the ritual do not simply "perform" it but profoundly "experience" a process of meaning-making concerning the relationship between humans, nature, and the Divine. Furthermore, this ritual operates within a belief system that integrates

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Islamic teachings and ancestral spirituality. In times of crisis, the Ternate community does not immediately rely on formal state procedures; instead, they seek guidance from traditional elders. This indicates that *Kololi Kie* is part of a local counseling ecology that unites cultural symbols, prayers, and collective action to maintain the community's emotional stability.

Beyond the Indonesian context, counseling approaches rooted in local cultures have also gained international recognition. Rodaughan et al. (2024) emphasized the integration of Indigenous Australian epistemologies and spiritual relationships into trauma counseling practices. Boyer et al. (2024) highlighted the role of cultural auditing in enhancing reflexivity and cultural sensitivity, particularly in work with First Nations families. Wexler & Gone (2012) further asserted that suicide prevention efforts within North American Indigenous communities require therapeutic alliances that respect traditional spiritual values and practices.

From a methodological standpoint, this study adopts Alfred Schutz's phenomenological approach as its primary framework. Schutz distinguishes between in-order-to motives (future-oriented action goals) and because-of motives (historical reasons), allowing for an in-depth exploration of the meaning of actions within the actor's stream of consciousness. Costelloe (1998) extends this framework by introducing the concept of intersubjective space, in which meaning is collectively constructed through shared experiences. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of spiritual practices such as *Kololi Kiea's* personal, social, and historically situated forms of counseling.

Accordingly, this study positions itself at the intersection of local cultural practices and modern psychological theory. It aims to enrich the theoretical discourse on culture-based counseling and to offer an empirical model demonstrating how Islamic values and local traditions can produce meaningful psychological effects within contemporary Indigenous communities. This research contributes to the literature by presenting a counseling model grounded in transcendental spirituality, emerging from the lived practices of the Ternate community. This discourse remains underexplored in the Southeast Asian context.

Indigenous and Culture-Based Counseling

Indigenous counseling has emerged as a critical response to the limitations of Western counseling models when applied in non-Western and collectivist societies. Rather than emphasizing individual pathology, indigenous counseling frameworks foreground relationality, spirituality, and communal responsibility as core elements of psychological well-being (Garrett & Herring, 2001). In Indonesia, several scholars have attempted to articulate counseling models rooted in local philosophical and religious traditions. Marhamah et al. developed a Javanese-based counseling framework grounded in *Kawruh Jiwa*, emphasizing inner balance and moral awareness. Fitriyah et al. (2022) examined pesantren-based counseling values derived from *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*, highlighting affective relationships and spiritual authority. Mazidah et al. (2023) interpreted the *Gusjigang* ethos as a moral counseling model integrating religiosity and social ethics.

While these studies demonstrate the richness of local counseling epistemologies, they remain largely conceptual or text-based. Few have examined ritual as a lived counseling process, particularly through participants' experiential narratives. This gap suggests the need for phenomenological inquiry that foregrounds meaning-making rather than prescriptive models.

Ritual, Community, and Collective Healing

International scholarship further supports the view that ritual operates as a culturally embedded healing practice. Among Native American communities, the *Honoring the Power of Relation* model emphasizes spiritual connectedness, kinship, and the natural world as integral to healing (Garrett & Herring, 2001). Similarly, the Māori *Whare Tapa Whā* framework positions spirituality as inseparable from mental, physical, and social well-being (Durie, 2004). Studies in Indigenous Australian contexts also highlight how ritual and ancestral narratives function as trauma-regulation mechanisms (Rodaughan et al., 2024).

Rather than borrowing these models directly, this study treats them as comparative insights, demonstrating that culture-based healing is a global phenomenon while remaining attentive to the specificity of Islamic-Ternate cosmology.

Islamic Values and Meaning-Making in Counseling

In Islamic counseling literature, healing is understood as a process of restoring ethical intention, spiritual awareness, and relational balance rather than merely reducing psychological symptoms. Core values such as *rahmah* (compassion), *sabr* (endurance), *tawakkul* (trust

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in God), and communal solidarity (*ukhuwah*) are consistently identified as central moral spiritual resources shaping how distress, resilience, and recovery are interpreted within Muslim communities (Maspul, 2025; Mazandarani & Bahramabadi, 2026; Rizal & Irman, 2025). Empirical and systematic studies further demonstrate that these values function as internal regulators of emotional stability and meaning-making, particularly *tawakkul* and *taqwa*, which contribute to coping mechanisms for anxiety and uncertainty by fostering spiritual surrender and moral orientation (Rasheed, 2025). However, despite this growing body of literature, many studies continue to refer to "Islamic values" in broad normative terms, without sufficiently explicating how these values operate in concrete social or ritual practices.

In the context of *Kololi Kie*, Islamic prayers and invocations are not merely symbolic expressions of faith; rather, they function as narrative anchors through which participants interpret uncertainty, danger, and hope. Studies on Islamic psychospiritual counseling indicate that ritualized prayer and collective remembrance (*dhikr*) serve as mechanisms of emotional reassurance, moral recalibration, and communal bonding (Sufya, 2025). Accordingly, this study conceptualizes Islamic values not as abstract doctrinal propositions, but as lived moral orientations that emerge through embodied ritual participation and shared spiritual experience.

Phenomenology and the Analysis of Ritual Experience

Methodologically, this study draws on Alfred Schutz's phenomenological sociology, particularly his distinction between *because-of motives*, actions shaped by past experiences, and *in-order-to motives*, which reflect future-oriented intentions. This framework enables an in-depth exploration of how participants situate *Kololi Kie* within their biographical histories, moral memories, and future expectations (Gros, 2020). By foregrounding subjective meaning and lived experience, Schutz's phenomenology provides a robust lens for understanding ritual not as a static cultural form but as an ongoing process of meaning construction.

Costelloe's (1998) concept of *intersubjective space* further supports the analysis of ritual as a shared meaning-making process rather than an individual psychological event. Within this space, meaning emerges through collective participation, shared symbols, and mutual recognition, allowing ritual practices to function as communal sites of emotional regulation and moral affirmation. While the concept of *bricolage* is acknowledged as a descriptive way in which communities draw on multiple symbolic and religious resources, this study employs it only heuristically. The primary analytic focus remains on lived experience, spiritual motive, and collective meaning-making as articulated by participants themselves.

Positioning the Present Study

Building on these strands, this research positions *Kololi Kie* as an indigenous Islamic counseling practice understood through phenomenological inquiry. It contributes empirically by documenting how ritual is experienced as a form of communal healing, theoretically by bridging Islamic counseling values with phenomenological sociology, and contextually by foregrounding a Southeast Asian Muslim community that remains underrepresented in global counseling discourse. By doing so, this study extends current discussions on culture-based counseling. It demonstrates how Islamic spirituality, when embedded in local ritual practice, produces meaningful psychosocial effects within contemporary indigenous communities.

Methods and Materials

Study Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with an interpretative phenomenological design grounded in Alfred Schutz's sociological phenomenology. Within Schutz's framework, the analysis focuses on two motivational dimensions of social action: because-of motives, shaped by biographical experiences and socio-cultural histories, and in-order-to motives, which reflect future-oriented intentions that guide present actions. This phenomenological approach is particularly relevant for examining *Kololi Kie* as a *ritual* practice in which symbolic, spiritual, and social meanings are constructed and interpreted by participants within their everyday lifeworld.

In this study, counseling is not conceptualized as a clinical or therapeutic intervention but as a lived, meaning-oriented process through which individuals and communities interpret emotional distress, seek spiritual reassurance, and find moral orientation within religious and cultural practices. Accordingly, a counseling-oriented analytical perspective is adopted to attend to experiential meanings rather than diagnostic

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categories or outcome-based evaluation. Schutz's phenomenological concepts are employed as sensitizing lenses to explore how participants experience *Kololi Kie* as emotionally stabilizing, spiritually reassuring, and socially integrative. This adaptation does not seek to transform sociological phenomenology into a formal counseling model; rather, it enables an empirically grounded interpretation of how counseling-relevant dimensions such as empathy, reassurance, spiritual motivation, and collective meaning-making emerge organically within an intersubjective ritual space shaped by Islamic prayers and local cultural symbols.

Research Site and Participants

This study was conducted in Salero Village, Ternate City, North Maluku, Indonesia, which is the central location of the *Kololi Kie ritual*. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in the ritual, spiritual knowledge, and cultural authority. Snowball sampling was subsequently employed to identify additional informants recommended by initial participants.

A total of twelve participants were involved in the study through observation, informal interaction, and participation in ritual activities. Of these, nine participants were selected for in-depth interviews based on the richness of their experiential narratives and their sustained involvement in the *Kololi Kie ritual*. These nine participants constitute the primary analytic informants whose verbatim accounts are cited in the Findings section, while the remaining participants contributed contextual perspectives that informed observational and interpretive analysis.

Data collection continued until thematic saturation was reached, indicated by the recurrence of similar experiential narratives and the absence of substantively new themes in subsequent interviews. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and confidentiality was maintained throughout all stages of the research process by anonymizing names and roles. Profile of Research Informants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Profile of Research Informants

Informant Category	Number	Roles and Descriptions
Traditional leaders (key informants)	3	Ritual leaders and authoritative interpreters of *Kololi Kie with* long-term cultural and spiritual roles
Ritual practitioners	4	Active participants regularly take part in the performance of *Kololi Kie.*
General community members	5	Community members who participate in or observe the *ritual*
Total	**12**	

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three primary techniques. First, participant observation was conducted during the implementation of the *Kololi Kie ritual.* The observation focused on the ritual's structure, the use of *kora-kora* boats, social interactions among participants, and the recitation of Islamic prayers. Observational data were documented through detailed field notes, supported by photographs and video recordings.

Second, in-depth interviews were conducted both individually and in small groups using an open-ended interview guide. The interviews explored participants' narratives of experience, interpretations of ritual meaning, emotional responses, and spiritual reflections related to *Kololi Kie.* Interviews were conducted in the local language and Indonesian, lasted approximately 45–90 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Third, document analysis was undertaken to provide a historical and cultural context. Materials reviewed included customary documents, *ritual* manuscripts, archival photographs, video recordings, and local literature related to the *Kololi Kie* tradition.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using an interpretative descriptive qualitative approach and carried out iteratively alongside data collection. The analysis began with manual transcription and open coding of interview transcripts and field notes. This initial inductive coding process identified recurring expressions, experiences, and meanings articulated by participants, particularly those related to *ritual* participation, emotional states, spiritual reflection, and communal interaction.

In the second stage, theoretical coding was applied using Alfred Schutz's phenomenological concepts

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because-of motives and in-order-to motives—as sensitizing analytical lenses rather than rigid a priori categories. These concepts were used to interpret how inductively generated themes reflected participants' biographical backgrounds, cultural memories, and future-oriented intentions. Through this process, experiential themes were systematically linked to Schutz's motivational structures, enabling an interpretive understanding of *Kololi Kie* as lived meaning.

Themes were refined through constant comparison across interviews, observations, and documentary materials to ensure analytical coherence. Analytical credibility was enhanced through member checking, in which preliminary interpretations were discussed with key informants to confirm their resonance with participants' lived experiences. Although qualitative analysis software was not used, rigor was maintained through transparent coding procedures, reflexive memo-writing, and sustained engagement with the data throughout the research process.

Research Validity and Researcher Reflexivity

This study employed multiple strategies to enhance analytical credibility and trustworthiness. Source triangulation was applied by engaging traditional elders, ritual practitioners, and general community members, while method triangulation involved in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Time triangulation was achieved through observations conducted across multiple ritual cycles, allowing the researcher to compare recurring patterns and variations in participants' narratives and ritual practices over time.

Member checking was conducted with key informants, particularly traditional elders and long-term ritual participants. Preliminary interpretations, such as identifying ritual participation as emotionally stabilizing or spiritually reassuring, were presented to informants for feedback. In several instances, informants nuanced the researcher's interpretations by emphasizing communal responsibility and obedience to ancestral mandates over individual emotional experience. These clarifications were incorporated into the final analysis to avoid over-psychologizing the ritual experience. In addition, disconfirming cases were actively considered, including participants who described *Kololi Kie* primarily as an obligation or cultural duty rather than a personally meaningful or emotionally healing experience. These accounts were retained in the analysis to reflect the diversity of lived meanings and to prevent a homogenized or overly affirmative portrayal of the ritual.

Researcher reflexivity was treated as an ongoing analytical practice rather than merely a positional statement. The researcher was aware of potential power asymmetries, particularly when interacting with traditional elders and religious authorities whose interpretations carry normative weight within the community. To mitigate this, interviews were conducted in dialogical rather than confirmatory modes, and divergent interpretations were explicitly invited. The researcher also critically reflected on the possibility that an insider position as a Muslim and cultural researcher could generate implicit expectations to portray the ritual positively. Reflexive memo-writing was therefore used to interrogate moments in which admiration, cultural proximity, or normative alignment might influence the selection of quotations or the analytical emphasis. This reflexive stance aimed to balance cultural sensitivity with analytical rigor.

Ethical Considerations

Although formal Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required for qualitative social research at the institutional level, this study was approved by the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM), UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia (SK No. 190 Tahun 2024). All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process by anonymizing identities and roles.

Findings and Results

Humanistic Meanings within the Ritual Structure

The structure of the *Kololi Kie* ritual reflects an organized socio-religious system through which participants experience emotional reassurance, spiritual orientation, and communal order. Roles such as *Jogugu, Kimalaha, Kapita Lau,* and *Imam Ngofa* do not function as therapeutic agents in a clinical sense, but as culturally embedded figures who help regulate collective emotions, sustain symbolic order, and guide shared meaning-making processes during the ritual. Ritual Roles and Meaning-Oriented Functions is presentred in Table 2.

Table 2

Ritual Roles and Meaning-Oriented Functions

Ritual Role	Primary Function	Meaning-Oriented Contribution
Jogugu	Regulates ritual flow and order	Establishes predictability and collective calm
Kimalaha	Interprets symbols and prayers	Facilitates shared understanding of ritual meanings
Kapita Lau	Ensures the physical safety of the procession	Reinforces communal sense of security
Imam Ngofa	Leads prayers and collective remembrance	Provides spiritual guidance and moral reassurance

For instance, *Jogugu* does not merely provide technical instructions but also sets the rhythm and structure of the ritual, helping participants feel oriented and secure. One participant explained, *"When the Jogugu begins to speak, everything becomes calm. We know what to do and do not feel confused"* (Informant #1). Phenomenologically, this reflects how structured leadership contributes to a shared sense of emotional stability within the ritual space.

Similarly, *Kimalaha* plays an important role in mediating symbolic meaning. Beyond reciting prayers, he explains their significance, particularly to younger participants. As one participant noted, *"The first prayer opens the heart, the second purifies intention, and the third brings inner calm. Without explanation, many would not understand this"* (Informant #3). This illustrates how ritual leadership supports participants in articulating existential meaning rather than merely performing symbolic acts.

Cultural Values as Meaning-Making Resources

The cultural values enacted during *Kololi Kie* operate as shared moral and emotional resources that shape how participants interpret their experiences. Rather than functioning as therapeutic techniques, these values structure collective meaning-making in ways that participants describe as reassuring and unifying. Cultural Values and Phenomenological Meanings is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Cultural Values and Phenomenological Meanings

Cultural Value	Ritual Expression	Experiential Meaning
Social solidarity	Equal positioning within the boat	Shared dignity and mutual recognition
Ecological harmony	Circular movement around Mount Gamalama	Relational connection with nature
Ancestral reflection	Visits to sacred burial sites (jere)	Existential continuity and rootedness
Honesty and authenticity	Prohibition against lying	Moral coherence and emotional clarity
Intergenerational transmission	Youth participation	Identity continuity and communal belonging

Social solidarity is particularly visible in the absence of status distinctions during the ritual. Participants sit side by side regardless of social position. As one community member stated, *"On the boat, everyone is equal. What matters is having a sincere intention"* (Informant #4). Phenomenologically, this equality is experienced as mutual acceptance and belonging rather than as a formal counseling principle. Honesty is also emphasized as a moral requirement. Participants described honesty not merely as a social rule but as a spiritual condition of participation. *"If our hearts are not clean, the boat can lose balance,"* explained a traditional elder (Informant #2). This belief reflects how emotional authenticity is embedded in collective moral expectations rather than individualized self-disclosure.

Experienced Psychosocial Effects of Ritual Participation

Participants consistently described *Kololi Kie* as producing emotionally calming and socially integrative experiences. These accounts do not constitute clinical outcomes but reflect how participants interpret changes in their emotional states, perceptions, and communal relations through ritual participation. Experiential Dimensions of Psychosocial Well-Being is presented in Table 4.

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Table 4

Experiential Dimensions of Psychosocial Well-Being

Dimension	Lived Experience	Phenomenological Interpretation
Affective	Reduced fear and anxiety	Emotional release through prayer and collective movement
Cognitive	Reframing of danger and uncertainty	Interpretation of events within spiritual narratives
Social	Increased cooperation after the ritual	Reinforcement of communal responsibility
Identity	Strengthened sense of belonging	Enhanced meaning and collective resilience

Table 5

Profile of Interviewed Informants

Informant Code	Gender	Age Range	Social Role / Category	Descriptive Notes
Informant #1	Male	60–70	Traditional leader (Jogugu)	Senior customary figure responsible for coordinating ritual order and symbolic structure
Informant #2	Male	55–65	Traditional leader (Kimalaha)	Religious–customary figure interpreting prayers and ritual meanings
Informant #3	Male	50–60	Traditional leader (Kapita Lau)	Community-appointed figure overseeing safety and ritual procession
Informant #4	Female	40–50	Community member	Regular ritual participant motivated by spiritual reflection
Informant #5	Male	50–60	Community elder	Long-term observer and narrator of cultural experience
Informant #6	Male	35–45	Ritual facilitator (Imam Ngofa)	Leads collective prayer and remembrance during the ritual
Informant #7	Male	20–30	Local youth	Represents the younger generation of ritual participants
Informant #8	Female	40–50	Community member	Represents family-based participation in the ritual
Informant #9	Male	45–55	Senior ritual practitioner	Actively involved in ritual performance for many years
Informant #10	Female	30–40	Ritual practitioner	Regular participant engaged in communal preparation
Informant #11	Male	35–45	Community member	Participates as a ritual observer and supporter
Informant #12	Female	25–35	Community member	Younger adult participant with intermittent involvement

Table 6

Selected Verbatim Quotes from Interviews

Informant Code	Main Topic	Verbatim Quote (Translated)	Quote Context
Informant #1 *(Jogugu)*	Ritual structure and order	"When the Jogugu begins to speak, everyone calms down. We know exactly what to do, and there is no need to ask much."	Describes the role of structural leadership in providing emotional security during the ritual.
Informant #2 *(Kimalaha)*	Symbolic interpretation	"The first prayer is to open the heart, the second to purify intention, and the third for peace. Not everyone understands this without explanation."	Emphasizes the prayer's symbolic meaning and psychological significance.
Informant #4 *(Female)*	Spiritual motive	"I joined not because I was invited, but because my heart called me… like something was unfinished if I did not join."	Highlights the spiritual dimension, beyond social obligation, as a motive for participation.
Informant #5 *(Community Elder)*	Social solidarity	"After going around the mountain and visiting graves, it feels like we are one big family. Even cleaning the village together becomes lighter."	Shows the effect of ritual in building communal ties and a sense of collective responsibility.
Informant #6 *(Imam Ngofa)*	Prayer structure	"The *Asmih* prayer is for the heart. The *Tayyibi* is for purification. *Abdul Qadir Jaelani* is for protection."	Explains the structure and function of prayer as a tool for spiritual and emotional healing.
Informant #7 *(Youth)*	Anxiety reduction	"I used to panic when I heard the volcano rumble. However, I now feel calmer because I have already said my prayer. I surrender the rest."	Describes affective transformation and the post-ritual psychological effect.
Informant #3 *(Kapita Lau)*	Safety and protection	"Once the boat goes out, I stay alert. I check the waves, the wind... everything must be safe physically and spiritually."	Describes his role in providing both physical and spiritual protection during the ritual.

**All quotations were translated by the researcher with attention to preserving cultural meaning."*

Profile of Interviewed Informants is presented in Table 5. One participant explained, *"I used to panic whenever the mountain made sounds. Now I feel calmer because I have already offered my prayers. The rest I leave to God"* (Informant #7). This illustrates a shift in emotional orientation from fear to a spiritually grounded acceptance, which participants interpreted as inner calm rather than therapeutic recovery. Participants also emphasized changes in social interaction following the ritual. *"After circling the mountain and visiting the sacred*

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places, it feels like we are one big family. Even cleaning the village together feels lighter," noted another participant (Informant #5). These narratives suggest that ritual participation strengthens communal bonds and collective responsibility. Selected Verbatim Quotes from Interviews is presented in Table 6.

Participation Motives and Spiritual Orientation

Beyond practical or social obligations, participants described motives rooted in an inner calling and a spiritual orientation. While Alfred Schutz distinguishes between because-of motives and in-order-to motives, participants' narratives suggest a spiritually oriented dimension of motivation that complements these categories. As one participant expressed, *"I joined not because I was invited, but because there was a calling from within. It feels incomplete if I do not participate"* (Informant #4). Phenomenologically, this reflects an experiential orientation toward transcendence and moral completeness rather than compliance with social expectations. Figures such as *Bobato Akhirat* play an important role in guiding these motives, helping participants interpret their experiences within a sacred moral framework. Their role is not directive in a counseling sense but interpretive, offering validation and orientation that sustain the ritual's shared meaning.

Interpretive Synthesis

Taken together, *Kololi Kie* can be understood as a culturally grounded ritual space in which communal structure, cultural values, and spiritual orientation converge to produce experiences of emotional reassurance, moral clarity, and social integration. Rather than functioning as a formal counseling model or clinical intervention, the ritual serves as a collective meaning-making practice through which participants negotiate uncertainty, reaffirm communal bonds, and experience healing as a lived, socially embedded process. These findings contribute to phenomenological discussions of ritual, spirituality, and community well-being by illustrating how healing may be experienced and articulated within indigenous Islamic lifeworlds without being reduced to therapeutic technique or clinical outcome.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Kololi Kie ritual practiced by the Ternate community serves not only as a cultural and religious tradition but also as a meaningful communal space where spiritual, emotional, and social experiences are collectively articulated. While it does not constitute formal counseling in a clinical sense, the ritual provides a culturally embedded setting through which participants experience relational safety, empathy, authenticity, and shared meaning. These qualities emerge organically from symbolic structures, ritual roles, and the community's cosmological worldview rather than from externally imposed therapeutic frameworks.

The findings further indicate that participants experience emotional calming, reassurance, and strengthened social connectedness through ritual processes such as symbolic movement, collective prayer, and ancestral remembrance. These experiences resonate with humanistic ideas of acceptance, authenticity, and reflective self-understanding, though they are enacted through cultural and spiritual idioms rather than through explicit counseling techniques. Phenomenologically, participants' motivations for participation can largely be understood within Alfred Schutz's in-order-to and because-of motives, particularly in relation to religious obligation, collective memory, and cultural continuity. At the same time, the prominence of a spiritually oriented inner calling suggests a dimension of motivation that enriches Schutzian interpretations of religious action without displacing them.

Overall, Kololi Kie can be understood as a culturally grounded ritual practice that may support communal well-being through shared meaning, symbolic action, and spiritual orientation. Although this qualitative study does not assess mental health outcomes and therefore does not claim therapeutic efficacy, it contributes to broader discussions on how indigenous rituals can function as culturally resonant resources for emotional regulation, resilience, and social cohesion. These insights underscore the importance of local wisdom traditions in informing culturally sensitive and contextually grounded approaches to psychosocial support, particularly in communities where spirituality and collective identity remain central to everyday life.

Implications

This study offers theoretical insight into how humanistic counseling concepts, such as meaning-making, relational orientation, and experiential reflection, can be understood within an indigenous ritual

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context through a Schutzian phenomenological lens, particularly in Muslim communal settings where spirituality, social order, and cultural continuity are deeply intertwined. Rather than proposing a fixed therapeutic model or a definitive new motivational category, the findings suggest that spiritually oriented meanings constitute an analytically significant dimension of action motivation, enriching existing phenomenological discussions of religion and social action. In practical terms, *Kololi Kie* may be viewed as a culturally embedded communal practice that provides symbolic and relational resources relevant to community-level psychosocial reflection; however, this study does not assess its effectiveness as a mental health intervention, nor does it examine its application in post-disaster or conflict contexts. Any future engagement with such rituals for psychosocial purposes should therefore remain exploratory, critically attentive to issues of inclusivity, gendered authority, ritual hierarchy, and the risk of instrumentalizing sacred practices, and supported by further interdisciplinary and outcome-oriented research.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study is constrained by its small, purposively selected sample and its focus on a single ritual within a specific cultural setting, which limits the range of perspectives and precludes claims of generalizability. The findings rely on participants' phenomenological narratives rather than standardized psychological measures, so reported experiences of calmness, meaning, or social cohesion should be interpreted as subjective meanings rather than verified mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the presence of strong customary and religious authorities may have influenced participants to articulate predominantly affirmative accounts of the ritual, potentially marginalizing ambivalent, critical, or non-participatory voices, particularly along lines of age and gender. Future research would benefit from comparative multi-site studies, mixed-method designs that integrate qualitative phenomenological analysis with validated psychosocial indicators, and explicit attention to power relations and social dynamics within ritual contexts, in order to more critically and empirically examine the role of indigenous spiritual practices in relation to, rather than as substitutes for, formal counseling and mental health services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several reflective recommendations may be proposed with caution. First, *Kololi Kie* may offer conceptual insight for scholars interested in community-based meaning-making practices within culturally and spiritually grounded contexts, rather than serving as a directly transferable counseling approach. Its values of shared reflection, spiritual orientation, and ecological connectedness may inform comparative discussions on how communities experience collective reassurance and cohesion.

Second, educational institutions involved in counseling, social work, and community development may benefit from incorporating case-based discussions of indigenous rituals, such as *Kololi Kie,* into culturally responsive training curricula. Such discussions can enhance students' sensitivity to local worldviews without presuming the direct application of ritual practices as interventions.

Third, for cultural stakeholders and local authorities, the documentation and preservation of Kololi Kie remain important primarily as efforts to ensure cultural continuity and protect heritage. Any engagement with the ritual for psychosocial reflection should remain community-led, non-instrumental, and respectful of its sacred dimensions.

Finally, future research is encouraged to explore indigenous rituals comparatively and critically, with particular attention to ethical boundaries, inclusivity, gendered authority, and the potential risks of re-framing sacred practices within instrumental mental health agendas.

Acknowledgments

The authors express their gratitude and appreciation to all participants.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently, with personal funding, and without financial support from any governmental or private institution or organization.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contribute to this study.

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