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*Zulfatun Sofiyani and Ajeng Mustika Pratiwi*

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# Males as Identity Preservers of Indigenous Knowledge in Culinary Tradition During the Earth Alms Ceremony

Zulfatun Sofiyani\* and Ajeng Mustika Pratiwi

Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya

\*e-mail: zulfatun.sofiyani@fisip.unair.ac.id

## Abstract

Culinary tradition is widely perceived as an activity predominantly performed by females. This assumption, however, contrasts with the culinary practice observed during the Earth Alms ceremony in the villages of Tlemang and Lukerjo, parts of Lamongan Regency. In this indigenous community, males are required to cook as part of social responsibility; in addition, serve as identities in preserving indigenous knowledge to pass on the culinary traditions at the Earth Alms ceremony across generations. Correlating to this, objective of the study is to explore the significance and pivotal role of males as identities in preserving indigenous knowledge in the Earth Alms culinary tradition. To achieve this, a qualitative with a phenomenological approach was employed by conducting direct interviews with informants, including men involved in the culinary tradition, as well as community members well-versed in the cultural and historical context of the Earth Alms ritual. Subsequently, the data were analysed through the theory of social construction of gender, examining how the role of men in this culinary tradition was formed and influenced by prevailing social norms. Another key aspect is that the social construction theory facilitated an understanding of how society constructs meaning of gender roles in the culinary tradition, while gender theory provided insights into the evolving role of men in preserving indigenous knowledge. Therefore, the study demonstrates that males serve an indispensable role in preserving indigenous knowledge in the culinary tradition of the Earth Alms ceremony, illustrating an attempt to sustain and maintain cultural involvement amidst ongoing social changes.

## Keywords

gender, social construction, preserving indigenous knowledge, culinary tradition, earth alms

## 1 Introduction

Preserving indigenous knowledge is essential to protect traditional knowledge, ensuring the continuity and transmission of cultural heritage across generations. One of the manifestations of indigenous knowledge is in the culinary tradition associated with the Earth Alms ceremony, conducted in the villages of Tlemang and Lukerjo, Lamongan Regency, embedded in the local cultural values and belief systems. Culinary tradition is commonly perceived as the domain of women, typically responsible for managing kitchen and preparing meals. Chung (2022) notes that women tend to devote more time to domestic tasks such as cooking compared to men (p. 1592). However, in Earth Alms ceremony in Lamongan, males undertake the central role in the culinary process. This signifies that males are socially constructed as identities accountable for preserving indigenous knowledge.

To elaborate further, preserving indigenous knowledge is crucial for maintaining the cultural and traditional existence across generations. In addition, this practice serves as a guiding framework to control the relationships among humans, nature, society, and spirituality. In terms of Earth Alms ceremony, indigenous knowledge reflects symbolic practices and the cultural values of local customs (Niman et al., 2023, p. 16; R.P. et al., 2021, p. 6). Moreover, these cultural values are essential to be understood and learned by future generations through preservation techniques. In process, active involvement of groups, generations and social strata is required. Bestowing knowledge from the elders to younger generations, for example, is conducted both directly and through shared experiences (Ali et al., 2022, p. 41; Renganathan & Kral, 2018).

Today, the process of preserving indigenous knowledge is experiencing significant adversities, as modernization and technological advancements have diminished the interest of younger generations to

explore traditional practices and regional cultures. Therefore, integrating traditional lifestyles with modern developments is important as a means of sustaining the relevance of indigenous knowledge among the society (Bonzemo, 2018, p. 137; Nugroho et al., 2023, p. 22). This practice is depicted in the role of males within the community during Earth Alms ceremony, serving as identities in preserving indigenous knowledge in daily basis. In contrast, modern generations tend to preserve knowledge through digital media.

The practical involvement of males in preserving indigenous knowledge is clearly demonstrated in the villages of Tlemang and Lukerjo, Lamongan Regency. The Earth Alms ceremony includes a collecting culinary event, where men actively participate as a means of bestowing cultural values and beliefs to younger generations. The two villages present food offerings during Earth Alms ceremony, presenting symbolic meaning and reflecting the harmony among humans, nature, and reverence for the divine. In Indonesia, in the predominantly agricultural island of Java, in particular, Earth Alms remain to be practiced as a means of expressing gratitude for life and the harvest (Ni'am, Puspitasari, & Hariyadi, 2023, p. 241). The culinary process during the Earth Alms involves the long-preserved traditional methods, such as the use of specific tools, ingredients, and the initial ritualistic procedure to the preparation of dishes to be shared and vied by the locals.

The unique phenomenon in this Lamongan tradition is represented in the role of male cooks during the Earth Alms ceremony. In this traditional event, other than serving as culinary practitioners, the men act as collective preservers of cultural values (Maharani, 2022, p. 28). The men's expertise in culinary practice during the Earth Alms ceremony demonstrates that Lamongan's traditional cuisine attributes as a substantial cultural significance in addition to the rich flavor. Thus, this tradition reflects that Lamongan is well-recognized for the cultural practices that uphold communal values and the custom preservation, in addition to the regional dishes (Munawaroh, 2013, p. 117). Moreover, this highlights Lamongan as a region that has successfully integrated culinary traditions with cultural identity in a well-integrated fashion. In addition, the region is well-known for the distinct culinary offerings, such as Soto Lamongan, Pecel Lele Lamongan, Nasi Boran, Tahu Campur, and Wingko Babat. Moreover, Lamongan is prominent as a historical center for Islamic development through Wali Songo. Therefore, Lamongan unsurprisingly has seamlessly combined culture, cuisines and religious spirituality, owing to the rich and diverse cultural heritage.

The phenomenon of male cooks during the Earth Alms ceremony stands in stark contrast to the general societal construction of gender roles. In mainstream society, culinary practice is commonly perceived as part of women's responsibility (Chung, 2022, p. 1593; Novianti, 2008, p. 258). According to traditional gender norms, women are considered as more suited to managing domestic tasks (Boo, 2021, p. 2355). In fact, data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) in 2024 reveals that the male workforce participation rate (80.36%) significantly exceeds that of women (54.03%). This data reinforces the notion that men are primarily suited for non-domestic tasks. However, the Earth Alms culinary tradition in Lamongan presents a different narrative. In this case, males take on a central role in both culinary practices and serving processes. This unique phenomenon challenges conventional gender roles in culinary practice, as this activity is intensely intertwined with cultural values and customs that lend significant meaning to this practice.

The involvement of males in culinary practices poses direct challenge to gender stereotypes and reinforces collective awareness as a cultural identity in preserving indigenous knowledge. To attain a profound understanding on this phenomenon, an analysis was conducted on the studies by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman (2013), who argue that reality and knowledge are constructed through the social reality experienced by humans. This theory believes that objects are formed by the structure of social order, while subjects are formed through human rationality (p. 55). As a response to this, the objective of the study is to attain a profound understanding on the significance and roles of males, as identities that contribute to preserving indigenous knowledge in Earth Alms culinary tradition.

## 2 Methods

The study employed a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological approach, in which qualitative study emphasizes process and significance without relying on quantitative measurements (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). The methodology describes the constructed realities within societal contexts and explores the relationship between the researcher and the investigated subjects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). Moreover, phenomenology, as an approach, focuses on genuine phenomena. Husserl describes this as human experiences through consciousness, whereby the researcher simultaneously experienced the phenomenon.

In this case, consciousness refers to the essence and manifestations of the world (Adian, 2016). This implies that interpretation emerges from everyday subjective experiences, tangibly practiced and communicated in daily life.

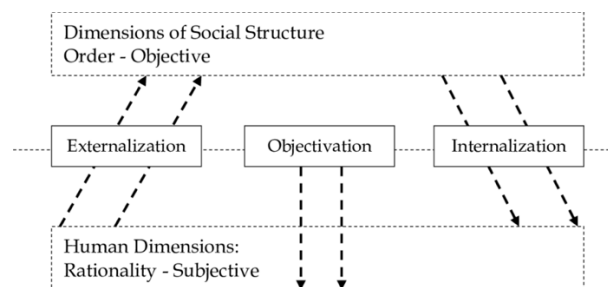
Given the definition, the objective of the study is to examine the significance attributed to males as identities in preserving indigenous knowledge by participating in culinary activities in Earth Alms ceremony. In this case, men serve as subjects, imbuing the roles as cooks, consciously acting as both custodians of tradition and preservers of indigenous knowledge. This awareness contributes to reshaping the currently developing societal constructions of gender stereotypes by positioning males as subjects in culinary activities. Furthermore, the study adheres to a number of stages of phenomenological research: first, understanding the philosophical perspective underlying the research approach; second, formulating research questions to explore the subjects' experiences; third, conducting direct data collection and exploration; fourth, analyzing collected data from interviews; and fifth, reporting the findings (Creswell, 2015).

In line with the stages, the study integrated a nuanced understanding of phenomenology as a guiding framework in collecting data. The framework was conducted through interview questions in the villages of Tlemang and Lukerjo, located in Lamongan Regency, involving 10 (ten) informants. The informants were selected through a purposive sampling method to adhere the objective of the study. The participants specifically encompassed directly involved individuals in the Earth Alms culinary process, such as members of the cooking team, the head cook, traditional leaders, and local officials serving as supplementary data sources. Likewise, Nyimbili & Nyimbili (2024), emphasizes that purposive sampling requires particular conditions to assure the selected sample is robust, unbiased, and reliable, thereby reinforcing the reliability of the findings.

In-depth interviews were conducted in accordance to the interview guide, despite being unstructured, to collect relevant and accurate information. The approach allowed the informants to be flexible in conveying experiences, perspectives, and narratives in a more natural and profound way. The approach was selected to attain rich, authentic, and contextually nuanced qualitative data, adhering the objective of the study in understanding local sociocultural dynamics. In practice, the interviews were conducted multiple times with similar informant apart from the culinary activities. The final round interviews were conducted during the Earth Alms cooking process. This method is to validate previous data and substantiate findings through real time observation during the cooking process of the Earth Alms ceremony.

The interviews were conducted through a mixed-language approach, integrating Indonesian and Javanese, to represent a culture gesture of respect toward elder participants while fostering a more relaxed, comfortable, and conducive environment. By adapting to the informants' natural communication style, the approach facilitated a profound understanding of the informants' perspectives on the research topic. Afterward, the collected data were transcribed, coded, and categorized thematically as findings, to be subsequently analyzed according the research questions and the implemented theory.

Data analysis was conducted through social construction theory by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, which posits that individuals sharing cultural commonalities continuously construct significance from reality and knowledge through human construction in everyday life. To illustrate, the framework is depicted in fig. 1.



**Fig. 1** Process of Peter L. Berger's Theory from (Riyanto, 2009)

In objective reality, human beings are structurally influenced by living environments. This signifies that the trajectory of human development is socially determined from birth to adulthood. In subjective manner, however, individuals are viewed as beings with particular tendencies within social lives. Human subjectivity is shaped by the capabilities of each individual within social context (Dharma, 2018). In this case, the theory highlights paradigms, including externalization (adaptation/adjustment), objectivation (self-interaction), and internalization (identification) (Hendrawan & Drajat, 2023; Humaida & Hidayat, 2023).

Externalization refers to the process by which individuals create meaning, and subsequently transform the meaning into a reality that validates the individual's existence within the societal context. On the other hand, objectivation, is the process by which individuals clarify everyday knowledge of life. Furthermore, internalization represents the understanding of events in an objective manner in order to express the meanings derived from subjective processes. In other words, internalization is understood as the distinctive characteristics of an individual when forming external relational relationships during the process of meaning-making, following stages of self-representation (Berger & Luckmann, 2021).

In terms of gender, the role of males as an identity in preserving traditional knowledge at the Earth Alms ritual demonstrates how identities are constructed through social structures that position men at the center of the cooking process. This aligns with Ullah's (2024) study regarding indigenous knowledge, which refers to the wisdom and practices developed by local communities within specific regions. In many cases, indigenous knowledge is bestowed orally across generations, encompassing traditional technological knowledge and sacred knowledge, such as rituals, songs, dances, stories, place names, clothing, forms of art, hereditary, and names (Oyelude, 2023).

### 3 Result and Discussion

Indigenous knowledge constitutes a knowledge prevalent within the local communities, commonly rooted in traditional practices and customs of ethnic or indigenous societies. The knowledge is reflected in Earth Alms tradition, a sacred communal celebration performed by rural agrarian communities to express gratitude to nature and the divine for the blessings over the harvests. The ritual persistently practiced in a number of regions of Lamongan Regency, East Java, Indonesia – an area renowned as the largest agricultural producer in the province. Adding to this, Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) of Lamongan Regency reported that agricultural land constitutes the largest portion of land use or 130.89% hectares, where the rice yield as of November 2024 successfully reached an impressive amount of 448.63 tons. Therefore, the community continues to uphold and preserve the tradition of Earth Alms.

In addition to the expansive agricultural domain, Lamongan presents historical significance as a center of Islamic expansion. The tomb of Sunan Drajat, for instance, is regarded as a prominent Islamic figure whose burial site is located within the regency. Historically, Islamic teachings was spread by incorporating cultural and traditional practices. One clear example is expressing gratitude and acknowledgement of success through ritualistic framework of Earth Alms, as performed annually by the local community of Tlemang and Lukerjo. As the informant recounts:

According to the stories from our ancestors, there was a figure here named Raden Nurlali, a descendant of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom. He was a scholar of Raden Sunan Giri IV, or Sunan Prapen. Upon completing his studies and ceremonially graduating, a feast was held to express gratitude to God, from which this annual ritual was established (Informant SL).

This account signifies the profound connection between Islamic teachings and local customs of Tlemang and Lukerjo, in which the Earth Alms ritual was derived from Islamic teachings and local customs, to express gratitude of certain successes. In addition, the tradition typically involves collective participation from the whole community and encompasses a series of ceremonial activities, including communal prayers, processions showcasing agricultural yields, and communal feasts featuring collaboratively prepared traditional dishes. According to Ni'am et al. (2023, p. 239), these rituals commonly present traditional art performances, such as *wayang*, *reog*, or other regional artistic expressions, enriching the cultural dimensions of this indigenous knowledge system.

The fusion of cultural heritage, culinary traditions, and Islamic historical narratives introduce Lamongan as a region of diverse heritage. However, challenges persist in preserving this traditional knowledge. One primary issue is the forfeiture of information and the inherent cultural significance (Renganathan & Kral, 2018, p. 6). In most cases, this phenomenon is accelerated by the passing of community elders and the lack of interest among younger generations in the urgency of preserving the traditions. Traditionally, indigenous knowledge is bestowed across generations through observation on particular phenomena or practices. A unique feature of the Earth Alms ritual in Lamongan is the males' active involvement in preparing the communal feast, symbolizing communal roles and collective responsibility in preserving cultural heritage. The served dishes, such as broth-based delicacies, present symbolic meanings reflecting gratitude, hope, and prayers for sustenance and prosperity. Thus, the ritual transcends as a mere



cultural practice, underscoring the interconnectedness of harmony between humanity, nature, and spiritual values within the local community.

### 3.1 Constructing Male Significance in the Culinary Tradition of Earth Alms Ceremony

In the culinary tradition of Earth Alms ceremony, the construction of male significance is discussed through Peter L. Berger's gender construction theory, encompassing subjectivity, objectivity, internalization, and externalization. In terms of subjective perspective, the male figures in the communities of Tlemang and Lukerjo in Lamongan shape the significance of the roles based on personal experiences and an understanding of the traditions bestowed across generations. Berger and Luckmann (2013) argue that phenomena constructed from the outset within society are perceived as lived realities, ordered and structured through everyday life. Correlating to this, the community interprets men participating in culinary process not merely as a technical endeavor, but rather as an expression of devotion to customs and ancestral beliefs. This subjectivity directs the community to view the role of men in the culinary process as an integral aspect of cultural identity, which is inherent in their position within the social fabric. In fact, from a subjective standpoint, individuals are perceived as beings with certain tendencies in social life, shaped by abilities to engage within the social environment (Dharma, 2018).

In terms of objectivity, the local community creates collective norms, establishing men as the central figures in the culinary activities during the Earth Alms ceremony. Moreover, the social structure views men as symbolic representatives of tradition and preservers of harmony between humanity, nature, and the divine. Culinary activity, typically considered a female-dominated task in a large different culture, is transformed into a ritual that involves males with significant symbolic meaning within this tradition. This social structure illustrates that the significance of gender roles is shaped and altered according to the specific context of tradition and local cultural values. In terms of gender, male's contribution in preserving traditional knowledge within the Earth Alms ritual demonstrates how identity is constructed through social structures, establishing males at the center of cultural heritage preservation. This identity, however, is not an inherent feature but rather a product of social construction, continually reinforced through the process of internalizing cultural values bestowed across generations (Dharma, 2018).

The internalization process is demonstrated by men in the villages of Tlemang and Lukerjo by adopting pre-determined roles by the community as part of identity. Through active participation in the culinary tradition, the customary values associating masculinity with cultural preservation are transmitted across generations. This internalization is reinforced through informal education established by family and community, involving the teaching of the importance of honoring customs and maintaining the values embedded in the Earth Alms tradition. Therefore, men perceive the roles not as a mere social responsibility, but rather moral and spiritual responsibilities, as illustrated in Figure 2. Berger and Luckmann (2013) further assert that the internalization stages involve the objective understanding of events in order to express the meaning derived from subjective processes. Internalization, in particular, is perceived as a characteristic of an individual when establishing external relational connections during the process of meaning-making following self-representation stages (Berger & Luckmann, 2013).



**Fig. 2** Cooking preparation for Earth Alms Ceremony in Tlemang Village (left) and Lukerjo Village (right) (source: personal documentation)

Figure 2 illustrates that men consciously participate in the cooking process during the Earth Alms ceremony. The subjectivity constructed within this practice has internalized and conceptualized from childhood to adulthood. Furthermore, the established objectivity regarding how community practices are influenced by the customs and beliefs of the local societal group, redefines the gender construction of men as primary participants in preparing the ceremonial dishes - a role traditionally associated with women who are typically considered more adept in culinary matters. Within the framework of the social construction of reality, gender serves as a cultural attribute that delineates distinct societal roles, in addition to shaping individual identities. Moreover, identity – a part of subjective reality - emerges from social processes. As articulated by Berger and Luckmann (2013), identity is determined through social structures, and conceivably reshaped and reconstructed through organismic interactions. This suggests that identity is not fixed but evolves through different interactions throughout daily activities. According to Berger and Luckmann (2021), identity is formed through the interplay between individuals and social organisms, emphasizing the fluidity and subjectivity to change and reshaping in accordance with the social interaction dynamic. The internalization process further involves integrating objectified external values into individual consciousness.

In externalization stage, this process serves as a critical component in the construction of male's significance in Earth Alms tradition. According to Berger and Luckmann (2013), externalization constitutes a process in which individuals transform meaning into a tangible reality, thereby signifying the validity of human existence within a social environment. Moreover, externalization is perceived as an adaptive process wherein individuals align themselves with existing knowledge systems. Consequently, male participation in culinary activities during the Earth Alms ceremony explicitly manifests customary symbols that reinforce the collective identity of the community. Through the culinary process ritual, men publicly articulate their roles, thereby solidifying communal recognition of the contributions in preserving cultural traditions. Furthermore, externalization facilitates a dialogical space between tradition and modernity, wherein indigenous knowledge is preserved while simultaneously affirming the relevance of tradition amidst ongoing social transformations. This signifies the role of males in this tradition extends beyond localized significance, serving as a symbolic representation of enduring cultural resilience.

**Table 1** The significance of male

The Significance of Earth Alms	The Significance of Males
<p>The Earth Alms tradition presents a profound significance for the communities of Tlemang and Lukrejo, serving as a collective expression of gratitude for the agricultural harvests and well-being bestowed upon them. This practice embodies a harmonious philosophy, emphasizing the interconnection between humans, nature, and spiritual beliefs. Additionally, Earth Alms symbolizes reverence for ancestral heritage, which stands as a symbol for preserving cultural continuity within the community. In Lamongan region, Earth Alms serves as a tangible manifestation of the philosophy of "from nature, for nature." This notion is actualized through acts of sharing agricultural produce and honoring ancestors, from whom essential teachings have been learned and who paved the way for the sustenance of current generations.</p>	<p>The male contributing in the Earth Alms tradition symbolizes a social and spiritual responsibility as preservers of cultural continuity. Male participation reflects customary norms that establish men as bearers of primary responsibilities in sacred rituals, for the purpose of honoring ancestors, maintaining social harmony, and preserving cultural heritage. Additionally, the male's role is embodied in the presentation of traditional dishes, conceptualized as the guardians of women. This interpretation refers to a broader symbolism of solidarity and collaboration, wherein men maintain strong social bonds within the community. Furthermore, male involvement in ritual decision-making signifies a leadership role, wherein men bear responsibility for ensuring the perpetuation of tradition while simultaneously balancing the spiritual and social dimensions of communal life.</p>

Table 1 illustrates the male's significance through the experiences and interpretations of the informants. Men serve as the lead actors in the culinary process during the Earth Alms ceremony, where the involvement is central to the ritual. In this tradition, men embody a cultural, social, and spiritual responsibility, which is systematically structured through customary norms. Men perform strategic functions, including manually preparing the ritual ingredients, cooking, and performing sacred activities. The role signifies a gender construct that establishes men as the preservers of ancestral values and tradition. Furthermore, men are responsible for making critical decisions, such as determining the date of performing the ritual, selecting ingredients, and setting the procedures for the ceremony, through communal consensus. In this case, cadre development serves as an essential aspect of role inheritance, wherein males bestow technical knowledge and cultural philosophy to subsequent generations. Men fulfill technical roles in addition to serving as symbols of collective responsibility, preserving the tradition and fostering community solidarity. The males' active participations contribute to the ongoing relevance of the Earth Alms tradition, both as a cultural identity and as a spiritually meaningful practice.

### 3.2 The Male's Role as Preservers of Indigenous Knowledge Identity

Men in culinary tradition of the Earth Alms ceremony in Lamongan Regency serves a pivotal role in preserving indigenous knowledge, in which the men involve as primary agents in preparing traditional dishes imbued with symbolic significance. The dishes transcend mere sustenance, serving as a medium through which cultural values, spirituality, and harmonious relationships with nature are conveyed. The male's active participation in the culinary process is perceived as a culinary task in addition to an integral aspect of cultural heritage in preserving community identity. The involvement reflects men as representative figures, preserving the continuity of ancestral legacies for future generations (Renganathan & Kral, 2018).

As preservers of tradition, men serve critical role in teaching and bestowing indigenous knowledge to younger generations. This involvement extends beyond the technical aspects, such as performing traditional cooking methods and utilizing local ingredients. The male figures contribute in instilling cultural and spiritual values embedded within each process. During the Earth Alms culinary activities, men demonstrate how indigenous knowledge is not solely transmitted through verbal instruction, but also through direct practices that require communal collaboration (Mehra, 2024). This enhances the understanding that indigenous knowledge is a dynamic element, preserved through active participation in local traditions.



**Fig. 3** The Culinary Process of Earth Alms in Tlemang Village (left) and Lukerjo Village (right) (Source: Personal Documentation)

The role of men as preservers of indigenous knowledge demonstrates how tradition adapts in response to challenges of modernity. Amidst the forces of globalization, which frequently alarm the preservation of local traditions, male participation in the culinary process serves as a symbol of cultural resilience (Renganathan & Kral, 2018). Men embody a collective representation of the community, demonstrating the capacity to preserve local values despite external pressures. By performing this role, men exemplify how traditional values remain pertinent and are woven into modern life, while preserving the core essence of cultural identity.

In addition, the males' role in the culinary tradition extends beyond preserving customary values, fortifying the communal identity of the society. The males' participation serves as a reaffirmation of principles such as unity, collaboration, and shared responsibility in preserving the cultural practices. This establishes men not only to participants in the culinary process but also to symbols of a pivotal role in



preserving culture. Performing these roles, men ensure that indigenous knowledge persists as an integral and meaningful element in shaping the locals' identity in Tlemang and Lukerjo, Lamongan Regency.

**Table 2** Male as identity in preservation

Preserving Indigenous Knowledge	Male as Preservation Identity
Preserving indigenous knowledge through documentation mediums such as books and digital archives essentially contributes to preserving the Earth Alms tradition. In addition to systematically records key elements of the tradition, the approach broadens the scope of knowledge expansion, thereby preserving the authenticity of information. By leveraging modern media, the tradition remains vibrant and relevant amidst the dynamics of social change. As equally important, this process requires an active involvement and collaboration of various policy makers. Additionally, preservation is manifested in the ongoing use of traditional cooking tools, which serve as symbols of cultural authenticity and a tribute to ancestral reverence.	The implementation of cadre system involves the younger generation in traditions such as cook training or ritual participation, signifying a methodical approach to the transmission of indigenous knowledge. In addition to transferring technical skills, the system serves as an internalization of cultural values and the philosophical foundations underpinning the tradition. Indigenous knowledge is preserved through customary norms, which encompass the procedures for ritual performance, the use of local ingredients, and traditional methods in activities such as cooking and sharing the harvest. Each element of the Earth Alms tradition, including the materials utilized in the ritual process, presents symbolism that reinforces cultural identity. This knowledge is imparted orally and through direct experience, thereby fostering a profound understanding among participants in the tradition. The symbolism does not merely represent local wisdom but also ensures the continued relevance of ancestral values in the present day.

The table above demonstrates that men within the Earth Alms tradition serve as pivotal identity preservers, preserving the values and authenticity of cultural customs through ritualistic practices and social roles. This role is particularly represented in the process of cadre development, in which the indigenous knowledge is transferred to younger generations, in preserving cultural knowledge and practices across time. The cadre system sustains the perpetuation of tradition, thereby ensuring the vitality of ancestral values amidst societal transformations. Participation in manual processes, such as grinding spices and preparing locally sourced ingredients, reflects the embodiment of daily responsibilities. By employing traditional culinary tools and manual techniques in the ritual, men maintain the authenticity of cultural practices and sustainable lifestyles, reflecting the close relationship between humans, nature, and tradition. Furthermore, the use of traditional instruments reinforces the significance of preserving ecological balance and respecting natural resources. In addition, the solidarity cultivated through collective labor serves as a symbol of communal identity, thereby strengthening social relationship. Moreover, the role of men in documenting traditions, both through written records or other archival forms, signifies the males' responsibility in preserving the authenticity of indigenous knowledge and ensuring the transmission to future generations. Thus, in addition to serving as the ritual's practitioners, men represent the preservation of cultural and spiritual values within the community. The position of male elders, involved in the documentation of indigenous knowledge through written or alternative methods, ensures that the knowledge remains accessible to subsequent generations. Notably, this documentation serves as an authoritative reference, preserving indigenous knowledge from potential alterations or distortions.

## 4 Conclusions

Data analysis signifies that the indigenous community views the position and role of men in traditional rituals as a philosophical representation of duties and responsibilities in everyday life. This is reflected in the significance of male figures as an identity within the culinary process of the Earth Alms ceremony in Lamongan, illustrating a shift in gender roles that are typically associated with domestic activities. In this tradition, men involved as technical practitioners in the cooking process, in addition to serving as symbols of guardianship over the cultural values embedded within the process. The significance of this ritual adheres the philosophical view of men as leaders and guides within the family. Men are regarded as heads of households, in addition to bearing responsibility to care for and protect the families.

In line with the objectives of the study, the males' role extends beyond the execution of rituals, encompassing a crucial function in preserving indigenous knowledge. Men serve as custodians of tradition, bestowing cultural knowledge and skills through oral transmission, performed in traditional ways across generations. In fact, the male active participation in the ritual process is essential to ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage. Likewise, the role represents a reverence towards ancestors and cultural sustainability, through active engagement in sacred rituals and the use of traditional tools, thereby reinforcing the strong connection between humanity, nature, and tradition.

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