

TRANSFORMATION OF THE MEANING OF THE TRADITION OF NGUBUR ARI-ARI IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF GEN Y & GEN Z CASE STUDY IN BAGOREJO VILLAGE, SRONO SUB-DISTRICT BANYUWANGI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The role of today's generation is needed to continue to preserve and implement traditions so that they are not eroded in the era of modern technology. These generations include Generation Y and Generation Z. This research aims to analyze the perspective of the tradition of burying ari-ari from the point of view of millennial generation Y and generation Z. The method used in this research is a qualitative approach and type of case study research. By using data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observation and documentation. The sampling technique in this study used purposive sampling technique. In this study using the triangulation technique, namely the source triangulation technique. Researcher triangulation technique, and method triangulation technique. The results of the analysis are then presented in narrative form to provide an overview of the topic under study. The results of this study show that modernity and globalization affect the two generations' perspectives on the tradition of burying ari-ari. But although cultural values are still respected, there has been a change in a more logical and flexible perspective. Generation Y tends to value and maintain traditions as part of their cultural identity. Generation Z tends to look for ways to adapt these traditions to make them more relevant to modern life. Despite the differences in perspective, both generations show interest in understanding and exploring these traditions.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Banyuwangi is one of the districts in East Java Province which is located at the eastern end of Java Island. Banyuwangi Regency consists of 25 sub-districts 28 villages and 189 villages. Geographically, the boundaries of

Banyuwangi Regency from the north are bordered by Situbondo Regency, the east is bordered by the Bali Strait, the south is bordered by the Indian Ocean, and the west is bordered by Jember Regency and Bondowoso Regency. In addition, Banyuwangi also has a wealth of culture and traditions that are very diverse. This shows that Banyuwangi is a district that has various cultures.

Over time and with the impact of globalization, traditions began to erode little by little due to globalization which became one of the factors that contributed significantly to the transformation and shift of culture in Indonesia. Globalization has an impact or effect on cultural homogenization, local traditions and values begin to fade due to a stronger and more varied global culture (Putri et al., 2025). In addition, globalization has also caused several problems in the field of culture, such as the fading of cultural elements preserved by the ancestors, and the weakening of love for the country (Jadidah et al., 2023). Therefore, to maintain the existence and value of culture, the role of the current generation is needed to continue to maintain the spirit of culture and tradition. The passage of time creates different obstacles or challenges to preserving culture. In the era of globalization, with the development of technology and modernization, the challenges of preserving traditions are increasingly significant (Dewiyulianti et al., 2025)

Culture or culture comes from the Sanskrit language, namely buddhayah, which is the plural form of buddhi, which is defined as matters relating to the human mind and mind (Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022). Culture is a whole way of life that develops and is shared by a group of people, which includes values, norms, traditions, language, art, religion, and social systems. Culture and tradition have a close relationship, where tradition is one of the important components in culture or culture. Koentjaraningrat argues that culture is the whole of human behavior and the results of human behavior that are regulated by the behavioral system that must be obtained by learning, and everything is arranged in the life of the community (Rodin, 2013).

Tradition is something that has been made, arranged, and then practiced from the past to the present either regarding the works produced or beliefs that are passed on through oral or written, such as religious beliefs, secular, beliefs resulting from logic, and revealed beliefs (Rahma, 2017). Traditions are customs or habits inherited by ancestors that are passed on from generation to generation which continue to be applied and implemented in society (Lilis, 2022). One of the traditions that is still preserved and applied by the Banyuwangi community is the tradition of burying ari-ari in Bagorejo Village, Srono District, Banyuwangi Regency.

In the village of Bagorejo, Srono Subdistrict, Banyuwangi Regency, the tradition of burying the placenta is still carried out from generation to generation as part of the local community's culture and beliefs, signifying the strong preservation of ancestral cultural values. This tradition is not merely an act of burying the placenta but carries spiritual and symbolic significance related to the safety and good fortune of the newborn baby. Additionally, the tradition of burying the placenta serves as a means to strengthen social bonds among families and community members, as its implementation typically involves community participation.

Research in other areas, such as the tradition of burying the placenta in the Jujuluk Village community in Banten, also shows that the tradition of burying the placenta is considered very important in society, as each stage has philosophical and symbolic meanings. The burial process is carried out with special procedures involving symbolic objects (Rizkyawati, 2023). This aligns with the values upheld by the community of Bagorejo Village, reflecting the significance of rituals within the cultural framework. Cultural anthropology research reveals that the ritual of burying the placenta is closely tied to local myths and beliefs passed down orally, thereby serving as a source of identity and unity for the community (Nugroho, 2023).

Despite modernization and social changes affecting many aspects of community life, the tradition of burying the placenta in Bagorejo Village remains intact and continues to exist, signifying the strength of local cultural values. This demonstrates that the community of Bagorejo Village still has a strong commitment to preserving and maintaining the cultural identity inherited from previous generations, a collective awareness of the importance of culture. Therefore, the role of the current generation is crucial in continuing to preserve and maintain cultural diversity. These generations include Generation Y and Generation Z.

Millennials, often referred to as Gen Y, are the generation born between 1981 and 1996 (Winarno, 2024). Millennials generally view culture differently than previous generations. With the development and advancement of technology, many aspects of culture have been adapted and presented in digital formats, such as music, films, and art. Gen Y often consumes this content online, which can influence how this generation understands and values culture and traditions. Gen Y serves as a bridge between local and global cultures. Gen Y faces the challenge of preserving cultural identity and traditions amid technological advancements and globalization, yet Gen Y also holds potential in cultural preservation and development through creativity and social engagement.

Generation Z or Gen Z is the generation born between 1997 and 2012, with a current age range of 13 to 28 years old (Arum et al., 2023). Gen Gen Z is known to have been born in an era when technology was already present and rapidly developing, and they have broader access to information through technology. This raises questions about how they understand and respond to the Ngubur Ari-ari tradition, which has existed since ancient times. With technological advancements and ease of access, digital technology has the potential to be misused (Dedi, 2022). Generation Z is often exposed to foreign cultures that can shift their attention away from local culture due to globalization. Although Generation Z has broad access to information, not all members of this generation have a deep understanding of local culture and traditions. This calls for Generation Z to be more proactive in preserving and valuing their own culture. Generation Z has a significant influence in contributing to the preservation and development of culture, particularly through the use of technology and social media.

This study aims to examine the tradition of burying the placenta, which is still practiced by the community of Bagorejo Village, Srono District. Despite the modern era and advanced technology, there is still a group of people who continue to preserve the tradition of burying the placenta. This study focuses on the transformation of the meaning of the tradition of burying the placenta from the perspective of Generation Y and Generation Z in Bagorejo Village. The research questions in this study are: (1) What is the symbolic meaning contained in the tradition of burying the placenta in Bagorejo Village, Srono Sub-district, Banyuwangi Regency?; (2) What are the processes and stages of implementing the tradition of burying the placenta in Bagorejo Village, Srono Sub-district, Banyuwangi Regency?; (3) What are the perspectives of Generation Y and Generation Z on the Ngubur Ari-ari tradition in Bagorejo Village, Srono Sub-district, Banyuwangi Regency? This study will delve deeply into how these two generations understand and interpret the Ngubur Ari-ari tradition in their daily routines.

Based on the above explanation, this study not only investigates the tradition of burying the placenta but also delves deeper into the perceptions of the two generations, namely Generation Y and Generation Z. Perception is the result of the brain's work in understanding, interpreting, and evaluating something that has occurred in its surroundings (Mariana et al., 2025). Therefore, this study will delve deeper into the phenomenon occurring in Bagorejo Village, Srono Subdistrict, Banyuwangi Regency, using direct interviews with the participants/community members.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study research type. Data collection techniques were carried out by means of direct observation or observation at the research location, as well as in-depth interviews with informants, and documentation in the form of photographs or audio recordings. This research took place in Bagorejo Village, Srono District, Banyuwangi Regency. The research time started from May to July. The informants in this study consisted of traditional leaders (baby shamans) of Bagorejo Village who directly handled the process of burying the placenta in the research location, 8 Generation Y informants, and 8 Generation Z informants. The sampling technique in this study uses purposive sampling technique, because the selected informants have criteria for in-depth knowledge of the issues to be studied. After the data is obtained through observation, interview, and documentation techniques, then checking the data and presenting the data based on the data obtained in the field. To ensure the validity of the data, the research used a triangulation technique, namely the source triangulation technique. Researcher triangulation techniques, and method triangulation techniques, Triangulation is also defined as data checking activities (Mekarisce, 2020). In this study, data

analysis techniques were in the form of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the analysis are then presented in narrative form to provide an overview of the topic under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The meaning of symbolism contained in the tradition of burying ari ari

The tradition of burying the placenta is one of the cultural practices found in various regions of Indonesia. The tradition of burying the placenta has been passed down through generations with various rituals ((Cahyani & Syamsi, 2023). This tradition of burying the placenta is a tradition that continues to be practiced and applied, especially among the Javanese community in Bagorejo Village, Srono District, Banyuwangi Regency. In medical terms, the placenta is known as the placenta, an organ that forms during pregnancy. The function of the placenta is to facilitate the exchange of metabolic products and gases between the mother's blood circulation and the fetus. The placenta also aids in the development of the fetus while it is in the womb (Zaini, 2017). The people of Bagorejo Village consider the placenta to be the “kakang kawah, adhi ari-ari” which means that the placenta is the biological sibling of the baby born into the world. Additionally, the placenta is also regarded as the guardian of the baby while it is in the womb.



Figure 1. Symbolic objects of the tradition of burying ari-ari
(Source: personal documentation, May 23 2025)

In collecting data, a traditional figure (baby shaman) named Mbah Wijiati (interview, June 22 2025) stated that the placenta is not simply discarded, but buried in order to honor its role while in the womb. In the tradition of burying the placenta, this organ is buried in a specific manner along with symbolic objects. The tradition of burying the placenta holds several symbolic meanings inherent in the practice. This tradition symbolizes respect for the life of the newborn baby who has just entered this world. The placenta is considered part of the baby, and the act of burying it is a way of showing respect. The parents of the baby express gratitude for the birth of their child. The tradition of burying the placenta also creates a spiritual connection between the baby and nature. By burying the placenta, the people of Bagorejo Village believe that it can connect their child to the earth and nature. This creates a strong bond between the individual and their environment, and also serves as a reminder that humans are part of a larger cycle of life.

The Javanese people, especially in Bagorejo Village, consider the placenta to be a symbol of fertility. By burying the placenta, the parents of the baby hope that their child will grow up to be a healthy individual. In the tradition of burying the placenta, the burial site is carefully chosen. For the people of Bagorejo, the placenta is buried beside or in front of the house, which has a special meaning: to ensure that the child will receive blessings from nature and guidance for their life. Additionally, burying the placenta beside or in front of the house signifies that the family has welcomed a new baby into their home.

Mbah Wijiati also added that burying the placenta is a form of hope and prayer for the future of the newborn baby (interview, June 22 2025). Parents recite prayers or express their hopes for the baby during the placenta burial,

hoping that their child will grow up to be a good, successful, and happy person. This reflects the parents' desire to provide the best for their child. Typically, the father of the baby performs the burial of the placenta. This practice is part of the cultural identity of the Bagorejo Village community. Burying the placenta is a tradition passed down from generation to generation, and performing it helps preserve and maintain the culture and values within the Bagorejo Village community. This tradition fosters a sense of community, as it is usually carried out by the family, and even neighbors often join in to help and gather together. Therefore, the tradition of burying the placenta holds symbolic meaning within the tradition itself.

Table 1. Symbolic meaning

Symbolic Object	Symbolic Meaning
Small jug	Small jugs are used to store placentas and symbolic objects, and are often made of clay. Small jugs symbolise a place of protection for placentas and symbolic objects placed inside them. Here, small jugs reflect the hope that newborn babies will always receive protection and attention from their parents and the surrounding environment.
Red onions	Red onions are believed to have protective properties against negative influences. Therefore, including red onions in the placenta burial tradition can be interpreted as a hope that the baby will be protected from all dangers and negative influences.
Salt	Salt symbolises balance in life. Salt is considered an important element for maintaining health and well-being. It reflects the hope that the baby will live a balanced life, face various challenges and enjoy happiness.
Coins	Coins symbolise wealth, prosperity, and abundance. In the ngubur ari-ari tradition, coins are often used as a representation of the hope for good fortune and abundance. Coins symbolise the hope that the baby will one day receive abundant prosperity and a prosperous life. In this tradition, coins can be interpreted as the hope that the baby will always receive good fortune in every step of their life
Chili	Chili symbolises spirit, courage, and a life full of flavour. Chili is associated with courage and spirit. Chili is interpreted as a hope that the baby will grow up to be a brave, spirited individual who can face life's challenges with confidence.
Tamarind	Tamarind symbolises balance and diversity of taste in life. Tamarind symbolises the balance between sweet and sour flavours. Tamarind symbolises the hope that the baby will live a balanced life, able to face various challenges and enjoy happiness and sadness wisely.
Rice	Rice is a staple food that is very important in the ngubur ari-ari tradition. Rice symbolises fertility, prosperity, and abundance. Rice symbolises the hope that the baby will always have enough food and abundant blessings throughout their life. This reflects the parents' desire for their child to grow up in prosperity.
placenta	The placenta is an organ formed during pregnancy that provides nutrients and oxygen to the foetus. The placenta is cleaned and wrapped in white cloth or mori

	before being placed in a small jar. In this tradition, the placenta symbolises the bond between mother and baby. This process reflects the hope that the bond between mother and child remains strong and filled with love throughout their lives.
White cloth/mori	White cloth symbolises purity, cleanliness, and hope. In many cultures, the colour white symbolises something new and pure. The white cloth or mori used in the ngubur ari-ari process symbolises the hope that the newborn baby will have a pure and clean life, free from negative influences.

The process and stages of implementing the tradition of burying ari ari-ari

The tradition of burying the placenta is a tradition that has specific procedures and rules, as it involves several stages and processes in its implementation. The tradition of burying the placenta involves several interrelated steps that reflect a respect for the placenta in relation to life and a spiritual connection with nature. In performing the tradition of burying the placenta, there are several stages and procedures that must be followed. According to Mbah Wijiati, in performing this tradition, Mbah Wijiati follows several steps that need to be done (interview, June 22 2025).



Figure 2. The grave of ari-ari is given a cover and lighting
(Source: personal documentation, May 24 2025)

First, before the birth, the parents usually select a location for burying the placenta. The people of Bagorejo typically choose locations such as the front yard of the house, beside the house, or a place considered sacred. The selection of this location is considered important because it is believed to bring blessings and protection to the baby. The determination of the burial site for the placenta varies depending on the baby's gender. For a male baby, the placenta is buried on the right side of the house, while for a female baby, the placenta is buried on the left side of the house. In the tradition of burying the placenta, parents also prepare symbolic items to be placed with the placenta, such as cloth, small clay pots, kitchen spices, coins, and other items. These objects are used because the Bagorejo community believes they will bring good luck and fertility to the baby.

Second, after the baby is born, the placenta is separated from the baby. This process is usually performed by experienced medical personnel, who then hand it over to the baby's family. After separation, the placenta is carefully cleaned with clean water to remove any remaining blood from the birth process. For this cleaning process, the community typically uses flowing water. In this tradition, the placenta is wrapped in white cloth or mori cloth as a sign of respect for the placenta. Cleaning the placenta also symbolizes the separation between the baby's life and the organ that functioned during pregnancy.

Third, the cleaned placenta is placed in a small container or pot containing white cloth or mori cloth, kitchen spices such as chili, red onion, salt, rice, and tamarind, and metal coins. When this tradition is performed, family members

and neighbors usually gather to perform rituals or prayers. This involves reciting mantras or prayers to seek blessings and protection for the baby. These prayers often include hopes for the baby to grow up healthy, intelligent, and happy. The family also expresses gratitude for the baby's birth and hopes for the child to grow up well. This is an important moment marking the transition from pregnancy to a new life.

Fourth, the Ari-ari that has been cleaned and put in a container or small jug will be taken to the burial site. The hole will be dug by the father or the baby's family at the chosen location. In the tradition of burying the Ari-ari the depth and size of this hole has a certain meaning, for the depth is usually around 60 cm, after which the Ari-ari will be placed in the hole, before the hole is closed, at this time the father or family of the baby will read prayers and hopes for the baby to be given smoothly in living his life.

Fifth, after reading prayers or hopes for the baby, then the hole is covered with soil. Then above it will be sprinkled with several kinds of flowers and covered with objects such as baskets, and the last will be given a lamp that aims to hope that the baby's life path is given light or good hope.

After burial, a thanksgiving is often held to celebrate the birth of the baby and remember the process of burying the placenta. This can involve food, drink and a gathering of family and neighbors. In some cultures, there is a tradition to visit the burial site of the placenta at certain times, such as during the child's birthday and weton time, to pay respects. This creates an ongoing bond between the child and the tradition.

Perspectives of Generation Y and Generation Z

Generation Y or Gen Y is the generation born between 1981 and 1996, while Generation Z or Gen Z was born between 1997 and 2012 (Saputra et al., 2025). The perspectives of Generation Y and Generation Z on the tradition of burying the placenta tend to differ, as this tradition is influenced by various social and cultural changes. Gen Y tends to value traditions and culture more, viewing a tradition as an important part of cultural identity and spirituality. They tend to maintain this practice but with modern adaptations.

Meanwhile, Gen Z, who are more open to change and innovation, question the relevance of this tradition in the context of modern life and their own lives. Gen Z may focus more on practical and scientific aspects, seeking ways to integrate traditional values with more progressive perspectives. This creates a dialogue between generations about the importance of preserving cultural heritage while adapting to the times. Gen Z's participation in cultural activities is an important indicator of their involvement in preserving local culture (Swarna et al., 2024).

a. Perspectives of Generation Y

The ngubur ari-ari tradition generally reflects an appreciation for cultural and spiritual values. The tradition of burying ari-ari cannot be separated from the life of Javanese society which continues to be preserved from the past (Afifah and Supsiliani, 2025). Gen Y sees this traditional practice as an important part of their cultural identity and heritage, although it is often adapted in more modern ways. Generation Y tends to maintain this ritual while considering its relevance and meaning in the context of modern life. Generation Y often feels it is important to preserve their cultural roots, including the tradition of burying the placenta. According to Mrs. Siti, Mrs. Siti views this practice as a way to connect with family identity and as part of a heritage that must be preserved for future generations. Mrs. Siti also added that she does not want this tradition to disappear (interview, 4 June 2025). She has taught her children about the values contained in this tradition, so that it is not merely a ritual but also a means to understand and appreciate their culture (interview, 4 June 2025).

According to Mr. Ghofur, in the digital age, Generation Y often uses social media, which allows this generation to engage in open dialogue with people from different cultural backgrounds, thereby expanding their understanding of similar traditions and practices elsewhere (Interview, 16 June 2025). Mr. Ghofur's perspective aligns with that of Mr. Hasan, who stated (Interview, 16 June 2025) that technology in today's world should be utilised wisely and responsibly, as few people now seek to understand these traditions through advanced technology. Gen Y is more conscious of environmental and social issues. In the context of ngubur ari-ari, they choose more environmentally friendly burial methods, such as using natural materials and avoiding the use of plastic or other hazardous materials. Gen Y associates this tradition with broader social issues, such as maternal and child health, and the importance of community support in the birth process.

Gen Y often associates the tradition of burying the placenta with personal spiritual journeys. Gen Y sees it as an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of life, birth, and the relationship between humans and nature. In carrying out the tradition of burying the placenta, they may focus more on the prayers and hopes they wish to convey to the child, creating a meaningful and reflective moment for the family. Gen Y's perspective on the tradition of burying the placenta is a combination of respect for cultural heritage and adaptation to modern values and realities. According to Mrs. Istifadah, she believes that Generation Y strives to keep this tradition alive while adapting it to remain relevant in today's social and environmental context. In this way, Gen Y not only preserves the tradition but also creates space for innovation and broader dialogue about cultural identity and the values embedded within it (interview, 22 June 2025).

b. Perspectives of Generation Z

Gen Z perspective on the tradition of burying the placenta tends to be more progressive and critical compared to previous generations. As a generation that grew up in the digital and globalised era, Gen Z has a unique perspective on this tradition. Gen Z often questions the relevance of the ngubur ari-ari tradition in the context of modern life. According to Bela, she believes that some aspects of this tradition need to be reviewed or adjusted to better align with current values and realities. Bela also added that Gen Z tends to be more open to innovation in traditional practices (interview, 4 July 2025). For example, Gen Z seeks ways to integrate technology or new methods into the practice of this tradition, such as using digital platforms to share experiences or information.

Gen Z is highly concerned with environmental and sustainability issues. In the context of ngubur ari-ari, they prefer environmentally friendly burial methods, such as using natural materials and avoiding practices that could harm the environment. According to Labib, Gen Z is more engaged in broader social issues, such as maternal and child health. This can influence Gen Z's perspective on the tradition of burying the placenta, as this generation seeks ways to connect this practice with efforts to raise awareness and support for these issues (interview, 3 June 2025).

Gen Z tends to focus more on finding personal meaning in traditions. Generation Z associates the practice of burying the placenta with their own spiritual journey, seeking ways to connect this tradition with their personal values and beliefs. According to Hamidah and Bima, they are more interested in the emotional aspects of this tradition, such as the hopes and prayers they wish to convey to the child, as well as how this practice can create moments of reflection for the family (interview, 9 June 2025). Meanwhile, according to Silpi, she is not particularly interested in the meanings contained within the tradition of burying the placenta; in her view, Generation Z simply follows what their parents tell them to do (interview, 9 June 2025).

According to Shofia, she engaged in dialogue with older family members about this tradition, seeking a deeper understanding of the values contained in the practice of burying the placenta, while also conveying their more modern views (interview, 9 June 2025). This generation is more inclined to involve the community in the implementation of this tradition, creating more inclusive events and celebrating diversity in cultural practices.

Gen Z perspective on the ngubur ari-ari tradition reflects openness to change, social and environmental awareness, and a search for personal meaning. According to Ana, Gen Z strive to understand and appreciate this tradition while questioning its relevance in the context of modern life (Interview June 4 2025). In this way, Gen Z not only preserves the tradition but also creates space for innovation and broader dialogue about cultural identity and the values embedded within it.

CONCLUSION

The tradition of burying the placenta holds deep symbolic meaning within the cultural context of the Bagorejo village community. Generally, this tradition is seen as a form of respect for life and as a symbol of hope for the health and safety of the newborn baby. Beyond its symbolic meaning and procedural aspects, it is important to note that the tradition of burying the placenta also serves as a means of strengthening social bonds within the community. This activity often involves the participation of family members and neighbours, fostering a sense of togetherness and solidarity. In this context, the tradition is not merely a private ritual but also a collective moment that strengthens relationships among

community members. The procedure for performing this tradition involves a series of steps, beginning with the collection of the placenta after childbirth, followed by its burial in a place considered sacred and safe.

From the perspective of Generation Y and Generation Z, there are differing views on this tradition. Generation Y tends to value and preserve the tradition as part of their cultural identity. They appreciate traditional values and strive to pass on this practice to the next generation. Meanwhile, Generation Z, who are more exposed to global information and modernisation, view this tradition with scepticism. They are more likely to question the relevance and meaning of this tradition in the context of modern life. Generation Z tends to seek ways to adapt this tradition to make it more relevant to modern life. Despite the differences in perspective, both generations show an interest in understanding and exploring this tradition. Overall, the tradition of burying the placenta in Bagorejo Village reflects the dynamics between cultural preservation and the influence of changing times. The community needs to find a balance between respecting traditions and opening up to new ideas, so that cultural values remain relevant for future generations. The tradition of burying the placenta in Bagorejo Village is not merely a ritual but also reflects cultural identity.

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