

Interpreting the Molangi Banasi and Managawa Traditions of Muslim Nias in Welcoming Ramadan through Buya Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar*

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ABSTRACT

Molangi Banasi and *Managawa* are cultural traditions practiced by Muslims in Gunungsitoli, Nias, to welcome the month of Ramadan. Although the community continues to preserve these traditions, neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith explicitly prescribes them, leading to diverse patterns of religious interpretation. This study examines the meanings of *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* through the perspective of the Living Qur'an and evaluates their religious position using Buya Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar*. The study employed a qualitative field research design. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with thirteen participants comprising one religious leader, six community members, and six young adults, as well as documentation and a literature review. The researchers analyzed the data using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings show that participants understand *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as inherited cultural traditions rather than normative acts of worship. Religious leaders classify them as local customs that Muslims may observe but are not required to perform. Community members increasingly evaluate the traditions according to the Qur'an and the Hadith, while younger participants value them primarily as expressions of social solidarity, cultural identity, and communal celebration before Ramadan. Analysis of *Tafsir al-Azhar* demonstrates that Hamka rejects religious legitimacy based solely on ancestral custom and requires religious practice to rest upon the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and rational judgment. This finding expands the conceptual scope of Living Qur'an studies by showing that Qur'anic reception also operates through cultural negotiation and normative evaluation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Muslims engage with the Qur'an not only as a normative source of Islamic teachings but also as a lived reality expressed through religious practices, cultural

traditions, rituals, and social symbols. The living Qur'an perspective examines how Muslim communities internalize, negotiate, and embody Qur'anic values in everyday life, demonstrating that the relationship between the Qur'an and society is continuously shaped by historical and cultural contexts (Annas et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2022; Yunus et al., 2022).

Across Indonesia, encounters between Islam and local cultures have produced various traditions that integrate Qur'anic values with indigenous wisdom. Previous studies show that traditions such as Mappasagena, Mappanre Temme, and tahlilan function as media for transmitting Islamic teachings while strengthening communal identity and social solidarity (Halimatus et al., 2023; Miswar et al., 2022; Wiguna & Fuadi, 2022; Yunus et al., 2022). These findings indicate that local traditions do not necessarily contradict Islam; rather, they often provide cultural spaces in which Qur'anic values take social form (Faisal et al., 2022; Islami & Wahyudi, 2024).

Despite this growing scholarship, living Qur'an studies still focus primarily on practices explicitly connected to Qur'anic texts, such as Qur'an recitation, completion ceremonies, ruqyah, and the ritual use of selected verses (Pakuna et al., 2024; Ummah et al., 2022). Traditions lacking explicit textual foundations are frequently treated merely as anthropological phenomena or examined exclusively through Islamic legal perspectives. Consequently, limited attention has been given to how Muslim communities negotiate Qur'anic values in interpreting local customs. This gap calls for an analytical framework that combines studies of Qur'anic reception with normative interpretation.

Buya Hamka's Tafsir al-Azhar offers such a framework. Written within the *adabī ijtīmā'ī* tradition, the commentary relates Qur'anic teachings to social realities and discusses customs, traditions, and religious life in Indonesia (Purwaningrum & Muhammad, 2022; Syafi'i, 2014). Hamka consistently maintains that the Qur'an and the Sunnah constitute the primary sources of religious authority while recognizing the legitimacy of local custom (*'urf*) insofar as it does not contradict Islamic principles (Hamka, 2001e).

This framework is relevant for examining Molangi Banasi and Managawa, Ramadan welcoming traditions practiced by the Muslim community of Gunungsitoli, Nias. Although preserved across generations as part of Muslim Nias cultural identity, these traditions are interpreted differently within the community. Religious leaders generally regard them as customary practices rather than acts of worship, some community members reject them because of their lack of scriptural foundation, while younger generations emphasize their social and cultural functions. These diverse

interpretations reflect the dynamic relationship between local culture and changing religious understandings.

Research on Muslim communities in Nias remains limited compared with studies on Javanese, Bugis, Mandar, and Minangkabau societies (Ansari, 2024; Moeis et al., 2022; Yakub et al., 2023). Existing studies on Nias have focused mainly on cultural preservation and community development (Rambe et al., 2024; Sarumaha et al., 2024), leaving the relationship between local traditions, Qur'anic reception, and interpretation underexplored. Therefore, this study examines *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as forms of Qur'anic reception and analyzes them through Buya Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar*. It argues that Qur'anic reception extends beyond the direct ritual use of scripture and also operates through normative evaluation, whereby Muslim communities distinguish culturally legitimate customs from religious practices that require explicit scriptural authority.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative field research design to examine the relationship between local tradition, Qur'anic reception, and the construction of religious meaning within the Muslim community of Gunungsitoli, North Sumatra. A qualitative approach enabled the researchers to explore participants' interpretations and experiences within their socio-cultural context (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Methodologically, the study adopted the Living Qur'an approach developed by Abdul Mustaqim (Mustaqim, 2017).

The study drew upon both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of the *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* traditions. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in and knowledge of the traditions. The study involved thirteen participants: one religious leader (TA), six community members (MU), and six young adults (GM), enabling the researchers to capture perspectives from different social groups. Secondary data consisted of the Qur'an, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, methodological studies on the Living Qur'an, and relevant literature on Qur'anic reception, local traditions, Islam, and culture.

Data were collected between January and July 2026 through field observations, literature review, and semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Field notes and supporting documents complemented and verified the information obtained from participants.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2020). Observational, interview, and documentary materials

were transcribed, coded, and organized into thematic categories related to forms of tradition, symbolic meanings, community reception, and their relationship to Qur'anic values. The findings were subsequently interpreted through the frameworks of the Living Qur'an and *Tafsir al-Azhar*.

Trustworthiness was ensured through source and methodological triangulation, member checking, and systematic documentation of the research process in accordance with the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability proposed by Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Molangi Banasi and *Managawa* as Ramadan Welcoming Traditions

Molangi Banasi and *Managawa* are long-standing cultural traditions practiced by the Muslim community of Gunungsitoli, Nias Islands, to welcome the arrival of Ramadan. From the perspective of the Living Qur'an, such practices demonstrate that Muslim religious life develops not only through normative texts but also through inherited traditions, cultural symbols, and collective experiences embedded in everyday social life (Annas et al., 2024). Understanding these traditions therefore requires attention to their forms of practice, modes of implementation, and the meanings attributed to them by community members before examining them through the lenses of Qur'anic reception and exegesis.

All participants described *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as inherited customs rather than recent innovations. They explained that earlier generations had practiced the traditions continuously and that the community has maintained them until today. A Religious Leader (TA) emphasized that their continuity rests on cultural inheritance rather than religious obligation:

"...Islamic law does not prescribe this practice. Our ancestors passed it down, so we continue it instead of abandoning it. It has become part of our custom, especially here in Gunungsitoli and throughout Nias Regency." (Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026)

This statement shows that community members consciously distinguish cultural inheritance from normative religious authority. They preserve the tradition because it represents the cultural identity of the Muslim community rather than an obligation established by Islamic law.

Field observations identified two consecutive stages in the Ramadan welcoming tradition: *Molangi Banasi*, a communal sea bath, followed by *Managawa*, a ritual bath using lime-infused water. During *Molangi Banasi*, community members gather at the beach on the final day before Ramadan to swim or bathe together. Children, young

adults, parents, and extended families participate collectively, transforming the shoreline into a social gathering place. Many participants described the occasion as an annual reunion that allows relatives and friends to reconnect before the fasting month begins, creating a shared atmosphere of celebration (GM 01, personal communication, July 11, 2026; MU 04, personal communication, July 10, 2026; MU 06, personal communication, July 12, 2026). Participants differed in interpreting Molangi Banasi: some viewed it as symbolic purification before Ramadan, while others regarded it merely as a cultural tradition.

The second stage, *Managawa*, involves bathing with water mixed with lime or citrus after the communal sea bath. According to the Religious Leader (TA), the practice prepares Muslims physically by refreshing and perfuming the body before the first evening of Ramadan.

“...after bathing in the sea, we continue with a lime bath. It gives Muslims a pleasant fragrance as they enter the beginning of Ramadan.” (Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026)

Participation in *Managawa* remains voluntary. Several participants explained that individuals who do not join the communal sea bath often perform the lime bath at home, particularly because of concerns about beach cleanliness or personal safety (MU 06, personal communication, July 12, 2026). Families then prepare to attend the first *Tarawih* prayer at the mosque.

These findings show that *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* form a single sequence rather than two independent rituals. *Molangi Banasi* emphasizes communal participation through collective activity in a public space, whereas *Managawa* highlights personal preparation before the beginning of Ramadan. Together, they constitute a unified cultural tradition that has become deeply rooted in the religious life of the Muslim community in Gunungsitoli.

The study also demonstrates that the traditions create a distinctive social atmosphere beyond their ritual practices. Young participants consistently described the occasion as an opportunity to reunite with relatives and family members returning from different regions.

“Of course, it brings happiness because we can meet our relatives and extended family again. During Ramadan the whole family gathers together. Not everyone takes part in the tradition, but it still strengthens our sense of togetherness.” (GM 03, personal communication, July 13, 2026)

These accounts indicate that the traditions derive much of their significance from their social function. They strengthen solidarity, encourage interaction across

generations, and reinforce the collective identity of Muslim communities in Nias. This finding aligns with Living Qur'an scholarship showing that religious-cultural traditions frequently serve as social mechanisms for transmitting values of togetherness, solidarity, and communal cohesion (Miswar et al., 2022; Rambe et al., 2024; Yakub et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings indicate that the forms of *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* have remained largely unchanged across generations. Their meanings, however, continue to evolve. Some participants regard the traditions as cultural heritage worthy of preservation. Others understand them as symbolic expressions of welcoming Ramadan without assigning them normative religious status. Another group questions their relevance because neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith explicitly prescribes them. These competing interpretations provide the foundation for the next section, which examines the changing patterns of Qur'anic reception surrounding *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa*.

Changing Patterns of Community Reception toward *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa*

The findings indicate that community reception of *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* has shifted over time rather than remaining uniform. Changes in religious understanding, educational attainment, and broader social developments within the Muslim community of Gunungsitoli have reshaped how people interpret the traditions. Although the rituals themselves have remained largely unchanged across generations, the meanings attached to them have become increasingly differentiated. Some community members continue to value them as cultural heritage, whereas others draw a clear distinction between inherited customs and religious practices grounded in normative Islamic sources. The transformation therefore concerns the basis on which the traditions are interpreted and legitimized rather than the continuity of the rituals themselves.

Religious Leader (TA)s represent what may be described as a cultural-normative mode of reception. They openly acknowledge that neither *Molangi Banasi* nor *Managawa* derives from explicit Qur'anic or Prophetic texts. Nevertheless, they regard the traditions as legitimate expressions of Muslim Nias cultural identity, provided that community members do not treat them as religious obligations. One Religious Leader (TA) explained:

“...there is no Qur'anic verse or Hadith that specifically supports these practices. Even so, our ancestors passed them down, and as Muslims we continue to preserve them because they have become part of our custom.” (Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026)

This perspective distinguishes religious authority from cultural authority. The tradition does not derive legitimacy from revelation. Instead, it survives because the community recognizes it as a social inheritance that reinforces the collective identity of Muslims in Gunungsitoli. From the perspective of the Living Qur'an, this finding illustrates that Muslim engagement with Islamic values does not always depend on direct textual application. Communities also express those values through cultural symbols they perceive as compatible with Islamic life (Annas et al., 2024; Islami & Wahyudi, 2024).

Community members outside the Religious Leader (TA)ship display a different pattern of reception. Most participants in this group adopted a textual-normative perspective. They explained that they had stopped participating in *Molangi Banasi* after learning more about Islamic teachings because they found no scriptural basis connecting the tradition with preparation for Ramadan. One participant stated:

"...after finishing senior high school, I came to understand the meaning and purpose of Managawa. From that point, I chose to leave the practice because it has no connection with welcoming the holy month of Ramadan." (MU 01, personal communication, July 10, 2026)

The same participant rejected the assumption that the ritual contributes to spiritual concentration during worship:

"...the lime bath has nothing to do with achieving greater devotion in worship." (MU 01, personal communication, July 10, 2026)

Another participant challenged the belief that bathing in the sea could remove sins:

"...some people say that bathing in the sea washes away our sins. That makes no sense from an Islamic legal perspective. It actually creates another problem because it mixes religion with tradition." (MU 04, personal communication, July 10, 2026)

These responses indicate a shift in religious authority from inherited custom toward scriptural evidence. Participants who no longer practice the tradition do not reject local culture itself. They argue instead that religious practices require explicit support from the Qur'an and the Hadith. Their responses reflect a process of religious rationalization in which scriptural sources increasingly define the boundaries of legitimate religious practice.

Young participants expressed a third pattern of reception. Most no longer interpret *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as religious rituals. Instead, they value the traditions as opportunities for social interaction, cultural continuity, and collective celebration before Ramadan. One participant explained:

“...there really isn’t a religious essence to it. More important things prepare us for Ramadan. What this tradition offers is an opportunity to strengthen relationships. For me, it is simply about happiness.” (GM 02, personal communication, July 11, 2026)

Another participant emphasized its role as a marker of Muslim Nias identity:

“...this custom gives us a distinctive identity. People recognize that Muslims in Nias have this tradition, and that makes it part of who we are.” (GM 04, personal communication, July 13, 2026)

These responses illustrate a process of cultural reinterpretation. Participants no longer associate the traditions with spiritual purification or normative religious obligations. They understand them instead as expressions of local identity and as occasions for strengthening relationships among families and across generations. Similar patterns appear in Living Qur’an scholarship, which shows that religious-cultural practices often evolve into mechanisms for sustaining social solidarity and collective identity (Miswar et al., 2022; Moeis et al., 2022; Yakub et al., 2023). Table 1 summarizes these three patterns of community reception.

Table 1. Patterns of Community Reception toward *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa*

Informant Group	Pattern of Reception	Basis of Interpretation	Meaning of the Tradition
Religious Leader (TA)s (TA)	Cultural-normative	Acknowledge the absence of explicit Qur’anic and Hadith support while preserving the tradition as Muslim Nias cultural heritage consistent with Islamic principles.	Cultural identity, communal solidarity, and a tradition that may be maintained as long as it is not regarded as an obligatory act of worship.
Community Members (MU)	Textual-normative	Emphasize the necessity of Qur’anic and Hadith foundations for religious practice, leading many to discontinue participation.	A cultural practice without normative religious legitimacy and therefore unrelated to spiritual preparation for Ramadan.
Young Adults (GM)	Cultural-social	Disconnect the tradition from religious prescription while valuing it as local identity and a setting for social interaction.	A symbol of togetherness, kinship, celebration before Ramadan, and Muslim Nias identity.

Source: Compiled from interview data (GM 01, personal communication, July 11, 2026; GM 04, personal communication, July 13, 2026; MU 01, personal communication, July 10, 2026; MU 06, personal communication, July 12, 2026; Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026).

Table 1 demonstrates that these differences do not represent a simple division between supporters and opponents of the traditions. Instead, each group relies on a different source of legitimacy. Religious Leader (TA)s preserve the traditions through cultural legitimacy while distinguishing custom from Islamic law. Community members increasingly evaluate them through scriptural legitimacy rooted in the Qur'an and the Hadith. Younger participants reconstruct them as expressions of cultural identity and social cohesion. The central shift therefore lies not in the disappearance of the traditions but in the changing framework through which people understand them.

The contrasting responses reveal an ongoing transformation in the religious orientation of the Muslim community in Gunungsitoli. Religious Leader (TA)s continue to preserve the traditions as cultural inheritance compatible with Islam. Community members increasingly assess them through textual religious authority. Younger participants place greater emphasis on cultural identity than religious obligation. These different perspectives show that community reception remains dynamic because it develops through the interaction of cultural transmission, religious education, and social change.

Overall, the findings point to a significant transformation in community reception. Earlier generations primarily viewed *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as symbolic preparations for Ramadan. Contemporary participants assign less religious legitimacy to the traditions while emphasizing their social and cultural functions. The rituals continue, but the meanings that sustain them have changed. Rather than deriving authority from religious obligation, the traditions now persist because they strengthen social cohesion, preserve local identity, and reinforce solidarity among Muslim communities in Nias. This transformation provides the basis for examining *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* through the interpretive framework of Buya Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* in the following section.

Molangi Banasi and Managawa through the Lens of Tafsir al-Azhar

The findings indicate that Muslims in Gunungsitoli understand *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as inherited cultural traditions rather than acts of worship grounded in explicit Qur'anic or Prophetic authority. Religious Leader (TA)s, community members, and younger participants consistently identified the practices as part of the cultural heritage that shapes the collective identity of Muslim Nias (GM 01, personal communication, July 11, 2026; MU 01, personal communication, July 10, 2026;

Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026). Accordingly, the present analysis does not seek scriptural justification for the traditions. Instead, it examines how Buya Hamka's *Tafsir al-Azhar* conceptualizes the relationship among custom, culture, reason, and the normative authority of Islam.

This interpretive framework draws on the *adabī ijtīmā'ī* orientation that characterizes *Tafsir al-Azhar*. Hamka consistently moves beyond textual exposition by relating Qur'anic teachings to the social realities of Indonesian Muslim society. Throughout his commentary, he recognizes the significance of local culture while maintaining that the Qur'an and the Sunnah remain the ultimate sources of religious authority (Purwaningrum & Muhammad, 2022; Syafi'i, 2014). This balance makes *Tafsir al-Azhar* particularly suitable for examining *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as living cultural practices within a Muslim community.

Hamka's interpretation of Qur'an 5:104 offers a useful framework for understanding this position. He criticizes the tendency to accept inherited practices solely because previous generations observed them. For Hamka, such unquestioning acceptance reflects *taqlīd*: following custom without examining its validity through revelation and reason (Hamka, 2001c). His criticism does not target custom itself. Rather, he rejects the practice of assigning religious authority to traditions that lack a foundation in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Hamka develops the same argument in his commentary on Qur'an 17:36. He explains that God grants human beings hearing, sight, and intellect so they can evaluate the benefit and harm of every action. Muslims therefore should not rely exclusively on inherited practice. They must distinguish between teachings rooted in the Sunnah and practices that arise from local tradition through knowledge and critical reflection (Hamka, 2001d). *Tafsir al-Azhar* thus encourages critical engagement with the foundations of religious practice while leaving room for the continued existence of local culture.

Hamka's critique of *taqlīd* does not require Muslims to reject every inherited tradition. In his interpretation of Qur'an 2:208, he emphasizes that believers must embrace Islam comprehensively (*kaffah*), accepting its teachings as the normative standard of religious life (Hamka, 2001a). Consequently, acts of worship cannot rest solely on inherited custom but require clear support from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The field findings closely reflect this principle. Religious Leader (TA)s consistently stated that *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* do not belong to the Islamic legal tradition and that neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith prescribes them (Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026). They further stressed that Muslims who choose not to participate commit no religious offense. Their responses demonstrate a

clear distinction between worship and culture. Community members no longer regard the traditions as religious obligations. Instead, they understand them as cultural expressions associated with the arrival of Ramadan.

This interpretation aligns with the argument advanced by Madkan and Mumtahana, who maintain that local traditions remain acceptable as long as they do not contradict the principles of Islamic law (Madkan & Mumtahana, 2022). Within this framework, *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* cannot claim the status of devotional rituals, yet they continue to occupy a legitimate place in the community's social life.

Hamka also acknowledges the constructive role of culture in society. In his interpretation of Qur'an 65:2, he explains that *'urf* (custom) may guide social life provided that it does not conflict with explicit (*ṣarīḥ*) principles of Islamic law (Hamka, 2001e). This position does not call for the elimination of local culture. Instead, it evaluates cultural practices according to their compatibility with Islamic values.

The present study demonstrates that the primary function of *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* has shifted over time. Younger participants no longer associate sea bathing and lime bathing with spiritual purification. They describe the traditions as occasions for strengthening kinship, celebrating together, and expressing Muslim Nias identity. Religious Leader (TA)s likewise emphasize that the traditions should unite rather than divide the community (Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026).

Hamka's commentary on Qur'an 3:104 reinforces this perspective. He argues that preachers must understand local culture before evaluating community traditions so that positive social values are not discarded merely because certain religious assumptions require correction (Hamka, 2001b). This approach distinguishes appreciation of culture from religious endorsement. It recognizes the social value of local traditions without granting them normative religious authority.

These findings also correspond with previous studies by Miswar et al., Yakub et al., and Faisal et al., which show that local traditions often evolve into mechanisms for strengthening social cohesion, solidarity, and collective identity without becoming part of formal religious ritual (Faisal et al., 2022; Miswar et al., 2022; Yakub et al., 2023).

Taken together, the analysis demonstrates that *Tafsir al-Azhar* frames the relationship between Islam and culture as selective rather than oppositional. Hamka rejects attempts to confer religious legitimacy on practices supported only by ancestral custom and lacking Qur'anic or Prophetic foundations. At the same time, he recognizes custom as an integral part of social life when it remains consistent with the principles of Islamic law. The central issue, therefore, does not concern the existence

of tradition itself but the authority and religious meaning that communities assign to it.

Table 2. Synthesis of *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* through the Perspective of *Tafsir al-Azhar*

Analytical Aspect	Empirical Findings	<i>Tafsir al-Azhar</i> Perspective	Synthesis
Authority of tradition	The traditions have been transmitted across generations and preserved as cultural heritage (GM 03, personal communication, July 13, 2026; MU 04, personal communication, July 10, 2026; Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026).	Tradition should not gain authority solely through inheritance; revelation and reason must evaluate it (Hamka, 2001c, 2001d).	Cultural continuity does not automatically confer religious legitimacy.
Religious status	Neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith explicitly prescribes <i>Molangi Banasi</i> or <i>Managawa</i> (Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026).	Islam requires comprehensive adherence (<i>kaffah</i>); acts of worship must derive from the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Hamka, 2001a).	The traditions cannot be classified as normative acts of worship.
Social function	The traditions strengthen kinship, communal identity, and social solidarity (GM 03, personal communication, July 13, 2026; Religious Leader (TA), personal communication, July 10, 2026).	Religious Leader (TA)s should understand local culture in order to distinguish social values from matters of creed (Hamka, 2001b).	Their social value can be preserved as a source of community cohesion.
Status of custom	Community members regard the traditions as	<i>Urf</i> remains acceptable when it does not conflict	<i>Molangi Banasi</i> and <i>Managawa</i> function more

	part of Muslim Nias identity.	with Islamic law (Hamka, 2001e).	appropriately as cultural customs (<i>'urf</i>) than as religious rituals.
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Source: Authors' analysis based on interview findings and *Tafsir al-Azhar*.

The synthesis demonstrates that *Tafsir al-Azhar* does not recognize *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as acts of worship because they lack explicit support in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Their continued existence, however, does not conflict with Hamka's interpretive framework when the community understands them as cultural expressions rather than religious obligations. Hamka distinguishes clearly between revelation as the source of religious authority and custom as a sphere of social expression. Within this framework, *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* should be understood as religiously informed cultural traditions that preserve the identity and social cohesion of Muslim communities in Nias without displacing the normative authority of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

***Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* as a Dynamic Expression of the Living Qur'an**

Living Qur'an scholarship understands the Qur'an not only as a text to be recited and interpreted but also as a lived reality that shapes social life. This perspective examines how Muslim communities internalize and embody Qur'anic values in everyday practices (Annas et al., 2024). Previous studies show that traditions such as *Mappasagena*, *Mappanre Temme*, and *Sibaliparriq* express Qur'anic values through rituals and social practices, while the recitation of Qur'an 9:128–129 in Islamic boarding schools represents a form of functional reception in which specific verses are directly incorporated into ritual activities (Miswar et al., 2022; Ummah et al., 2022; Yakub et al., 2023; Yunus et al., 2022).

The present study reveals a different pattern. *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* do not involve the recitation of Qur'anic verses; instead, they persist as cultural traditions rooted in Muslim Nias identity. In this context, the Qur'an functions as a normative framework through which communities distinguish between custom and religious worship.

Table 3. Position of *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* within Living Qur'an Studies

Aspect	Findings from Previous Living Qur'an Studies	Findings of the Present Study
Relationship with the Qur'an	Rituals directly employ Qur'anic verses or derive symbolic meaning from them (Miswar et	The traditions neither recite specific Qur'anic verses nor

	al., 2022; Ummah et al., 2022; Yunus et al., 2022).	incorporate Qur'anic texts into ritual practice.
Form of reception	Textual and functional reception of the Qur'an.	Normative reception of Islamic values.
Primary function	Internalization of Qur'anic values through cultural rituals.	Evaluation of local traditions according to Islamic principles.
Basis of continuity	Religious legitimacy derived from Qur'anic practice.	Cultural identity, kinship, and social cohesion among Muslim Nias communities.
Conceptual contribution	Demonstrates how the Qur'an lives through communal ritual practice.	Demonstrates how the Qur'an functions as a normative standard guiding cultural evaluation and transformation.

Source: Authors' analysis based on empirical findings and the relevant literature.

These findings broaden the conceptual scope of Living Qur'an studies. Existing scholarship has largely examined how Muslim communities recite, practice, or employ Qur'anic verses in ritual and social life (Annas et al., 2024). The present study demonstrates that the relationship between the Qur'an and local culture does not always require the explicit use of Qur'anic texts. The Qur'an may also operate as a system of values that guides communities as they preserve, reinterpret, or abandon inherited traditions.

Within this framework, *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* represent a form of normative reception of the Qur'an. The community does not express this reception through the recitation of specific verses. Instead, it emerges through a social process in which Muslims use fundamental Islamic principles to distinguish between customs that remain culturally acceptable and practices that require explicit scriptural authority. This finding extends the theoretical boundaries of Living Qur'an scholarship. It shows that the Living Qur'an unfolds not only through the ritualization of Qur'anic texts but also through cultural negotiation, where the Qur'an functions as a normative authority that reshapes the meaning of inherited traditions while preserving their social role and cultural identity.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* remain important traditions among the Muslim community of Gunungsitoli, Nias, as part of welcoming Ramadan. Although they lack explicit foundations in the Qur'an and the Hadith, community

members preserve them as expressions of joy, kinship, and Muslim Nias cultural identity rather than as acts of worship. The findings also reveal an intergenerational shift from symbolic interpretations of purification toward greater emphasis on social and cultural functions.

Analysis through *Tafsir al-Azhar* demonstrates that Buya Hamka recognizes local customs (*'urf*) as legitimate as long as they do not contradict Islamic principles. Accordingly, *Molangi Banasi* and *Managawa* should be understood as culturally informed traditions rather than normative religious obligations. This study further contributes to Living Qur'an scholarship by proposing the concept of normative reception, in which the Qur'an functions as a framework for evaluating, preserving, and reconstructing inherited traditions.

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