



## Musical Expression of *Sholawat* Art in Multicultural Societies: A Study of Composition Forms

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### Abstract

This study is based on society's reality about the diversity of musical expressions of the *sholawat* art which is still ongoing. Therefore, this study aims to identify, analyze, and describe the musical expressions of *sholawat* art that exist in society in the context of a multicultural society. This study is a qualitative descriptive study with a musicology approach as the main approach. This study used several techniques for data collection, namely interview techniques, document and documentation study techniques, and observation techniques. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using content analysis with the main musicological approach which refers to the concept of composition, harmony, song form, and presentation form. The results show that in a multicultural society, such as Indonesia, there are various kinds of musical expressions of *sholawat* art. If we look at musicology, the diversity of musical expressions includes several kinds of expressions, which include the variety in characterization, the variety in the scale tradition used, the mixture in the use of song lyrics, and the variety in the technique of using language in composing the lyrics.

**Keywords:** musical expression; sholawat art; multiculturalism; composition

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### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's territory consists of about 16,000 large and small islands and is inhabited by more than 400 large and small ethnic groups who embrace various major religions (Melaletoa & Dloyanah, 1995). The major religions are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and belief in the One and Only God with various cultural forms and forms (Soedarsono, 2001). This amount also means that Indonesia has various forms and varieties of art in each of these ethnic groups, including various per-

forming arts. One of them is the variety of performing arts is the performing arts of *sholawat* music.

The art of *sholawat* is one of the developing arts in Indonesia. In the context of the culture of the Muslim community, praying is an order of religious teachings as stated in the Qur'an *surah* al-Ahzab: 56, which means: Verily Allah and His angels pray for the Prophet, O Believers, pray for the Prophet Respect to him (Surah Al Ahzab: 56). Along with the conditions of the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, languages, arts that exist and develop in Indonesia, this situation will influence the

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community in expressing or expressing the art of *sholawat* music so that there may be various kinds of expressions of *sholawat* art that occur and develop in society. This art can be expressed in multiple forms of presentation and in a very diverse context, both related to its function and expression itself, as well as in certain moments.

Many writers have done a number of previous writings on the art of *sholawat* and its expression, for example by; (1) Wahyuni and Pujianti (2019), who review *sholawat* from the semantic side of the Connotative Meaning of the Qasidah Salawat of the Prophet's Syair in the Manuscript of the Council of Dhikr and Salawat Pondok Rumi for the Al-Asyiqin Jambi Council (Semantic Study) and reviewing *sholawat* from the perspective of developing *sholawat* offerings about the media. Tutik, et al. (2020) reviewed the relationship between *puji-pujian* (praise song, *adzan* (after the call to prayer) and the development of intelligence. Fahrurroji & Azhar (2017) also conducted a review of *sholawat* from the Qur'an and hadith. This study provides an overview of this prayer's implications in the interpretation and establishment of laws and semantically analyzing the *sholawat* to the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.

From some writings on *sholawat*, it can be argued that there has not been one single article that specifically examines musical expression in prayer offerings in a multicultural society. Even if there is, the study carried out is deemed incomplete and still simple.

According to Poole (1996), as cited by Suharto (1996), multiculturalism is a political principle which states that the government should act to protect and maintain social diversity that occurs in plural societies. The maintenance is, at least, by preventing discrimination on the basis of cultural identity and non-discrimination in government practices (negative multiculturalism), and perhaps also by acting positively to ensure the sustainable survival of minority cultures (positive multiculturalism) (Poole, 1997). In multiculturalism education, it is an idea, movement, educa-

tional reform, and educational process that aims to change educational institutions' structure so that students who are members of various racial, ethnic and cultural groups will have the same opportunity to achieve academic achievement in school (Suharto, 1996).

A multicultural society consists of different cultural communities with all the benefits and slight differences in the world's concept, systems of meaning, values, organizational forms, history, customs, and existing habits. A multicultural society is a term used to describe a person's view or opinion regarding various life on earth, or a policy that emphasizes the acceptance of cultural diversity, as well as a variety of cultures, multiple values of society, systems, cultures, customs, and also their politics (Parekh, 2001). The different conditions of society in terms of values, social, ethnicity, religion, and culture are very likely to affect expression activities, including music, which he does.

Expression in music is the expression of thoughts and feelings that include all the nuances of tempo, dynamics, and tone colors of the main elements of music in the grouping of phrases (phrases) manifested by a musical artist or singer conveyed to the listener. Expressions must emerge from the heart. Talking expressions in music are about the expression (facial expression) how sad, happy, disappointed, and anxious the face is, but there are other elements in the expression. The aspects of expression in the art of music consist of 1) tempo (song speed and song speed changes), 2) dynamic (volume level or loudness and changes in loudness), 3) tone color is a characteristic of sounds that sound various -sorts, which are produced by different sound source materials and those produced by how to produce different tones (Kusuma, 2011).

Furthermore, Jamalus (1988), expression in music is an expression of thoughts and feelings that include the tempo, dynamics, and tone colors of the main elements of music manifested by a musical artist or singer conveyed to the listener. In this way,

the expression element is an element of feeling contained in a language sentence or a musical sentence. The songwriter or singer expresses the feelings contained in a song. The expression can also be interpreted as inspiration, where through the attitude of the whole person, an artist, singers, or musicians make a song "visible." Posture, hand gestures, and facial expressions of a person or several performers in a musical presentation visually complement what they convey with sound. Musical expressions are artistic, emotional expressions using tones, which are arranged according to certain rules, which are in the tradition of Western art music; these rules have a scientific character Tyasrinestu (2014). In other words, expression, including chanting prayers, will bring out various musical expression forms, considering that musical expression is an artistic, emotional expression using tone as a medium of expression.

*Sholawat* in the Arabic dictionary is the plural form of the word as found in the Munjid dictionary, صَادِحَاتُ الصَّالِحِينَ which means prayer (Ma'luf, 1986). The meaning of *sholawat* in terms of *sholawat* is perfect grace, the perfection of grace for his lover. It is called perfect grace because *sholawat* is not created, except for the Prophet Muhammad. *Sholawat* also means prayer, blessing, glory, prosperity, and worship (Abdillah, 1987).

For Muslims, the command to pray has actually been written in al-Qur'an, namely in the Al-Ahzab verse: 56, which means "Verily Allah and His angels pray for the Prophet. O you who believe, pray to the Prophet and say greetings of respect to him." Regarding the command to pray, in the context of Indonesian society, which consists of various cultures, the expression of *sholawat* will certainly be very diverse. In Indonesian society, there are various kinds of *sholawat* known, which vary in terms of presentation, composition, lyrics, and calendar when viewed in musical terms, *Sholawat Badar*, *Sholawat Alfiyah*, *Sholawat Tibbil Qulub*, and *Sholawat Nariyah*.

Several kinds of expressions of *sholawat* when viewed from the time of expres-

sion that can be found around the community, for example: before *adzan*, in prayer readings, the time between the *adzan* and *iqomah*, before prayer, etc., or also in other moments such as in songs, videos, either solo or group performance. In these types of expressions, when viewed musically, it can be said that there are those that are presented acapella by several music groups, accompanied by musical accompaniment, or just present alone with or without musical accompaniment.

## METHOD

This study is a descriptive qualitative study, with the primary approach being musicological. The target of the study is the musical expression of *sholawat* art in a multicultural society. Data were collected using observation, document study and documentation, and interviews. Data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis steps from Miles and Huberman.

The technique of checking the validity of the data was carried out in two ways: data triangulation and sources review. Furthermore, to analyze the *sholawat* art expression, it was carried out using several written sources related to composition theory, the science of harmony, and the form of music presentation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the tradition of some Muslim communities, the activities of praying to the Prophet can be translated into various activities, for example, in reading *barjanji*, *sholawat* before congregational prayers, *mauludan*, and even during other religious events. The community's initial purpose in conducting *sholawat* event was solely to get the abundance of grace from Allah SWT. Apart from expecting blessings and mercy from Allah, the prayer program also reflects Muslims' love for the prophet Muhammad SAW.

Apart from being an expression of the love of the Islamic ummah to the Prophet Muhammad SAW which is con-

tained in sharing forms of good activities in connection with a series of worship or memorials, the art of *sholawat* is also manifested in several ways, including 1) As part of *Tasyahud* in prayer, 2) *Sholawat* As a Prayer After *Azan*, 3) Prayers as part of a series of readings in the *Jenazah* Prayer (Mufidah & Farida, 2020).

### Variety of *Sholawat* Expressions

Based on the observations made, in the tradition of *sholawat* expression that develops especially in Indonesian Muslim communities, it can be found that the tradition of saying *sholawat* when viewed from the presence or absence of elemental content in a musical composition can be explained as follows.

Performed without songs: The expression of *sholawat* in this tradition is presented without the nuances of a musical composition (it does not contain elements of melody, bar, scale, form, harmony), presented gently. This expression of *sholawat* generally occurs in one part of the reading during the *tasyahud* in prayer, the part of the prayer reading during the funeral prayers.

Performed with a note (song): Praying *sholawat* with the nuances of this song can generally be found at several moments of time, for example, a) before the call to prayer (*adzan*) is pronounced, b) after *adzan*, c) humming *sholawat* (sung at the time between the *adzan* and *iqomah*, usually while waiting for the arrival of the imams and congregation), d) part of an agenda at the commemoration of the Islamic religious holidays, for example, the observance of the Prophet's birthday, reading the *Barzanji* book in the month of the Prophet Muhammad's birth, and e) music presentation, both in life and through recordings, both for business purposes and *da'wah*, as well as others.

Furthermore, based on the results of observations on a number of expressions of the art of *sholawat* both found in the recording media in the form of audio, video, or those found directly in the field, the various types of the *sholawat* can be categori-

zed into several things as Figure 1-4.

### Based on a variety of scales

*Sholawat* performance based on the category of scales used in the expression is divided into three types: *sholawat* using the major scale, *sholawat* using a minor scale, and *sholawat* using the *pelog* pentatonic scale. An illustration of the art of *sholawat* using major, minor, and pentatonic scales can be illustrated in the following notation.

### Based on lyric expression

Based on field observations, various expressions of prayer have been found. *Salawat* is expressed in various forms from various sources such as audio recordings, videos, and those that occur directly in the field, for example, during the praising activities between the times of call to prayer and *iqomah*, the commemoration of religious holidays. The following are a form of expression.

The expression of *sholawat* taking the same verse but manifested in different melodic forms. For example, the song of *Sholawat Badar* strung together with the song *Lir Ilir* and popularized by Emha Ainun Najib (Najeeb, 2016), and an anonymous artist (in Album *Sholawat Terbaru* Channel, 2018) and the song popularized by the *Wali Band* group (Vidiolirik, 2009) are using different melody.

The Expression of *sholawat* manifested by taking melodies from songs which popular in society. The song is popular in society, for example: (1) *Sholawat Badar*, taking the melody from the song *Ya Thoibah* (Tekno Q, 2018), *Sulis - Ya Thoybah* (Malaysia, 2014), and *Lir -ilir*, popularized by the *Kyai Kanjeng* group led by Emha Ainun Najib (Najeeb, 2016); (2) The song *Ya Rasulullah* popularized by Ustad Jefri (Musikindo, 2013b) takes the melody of the *Jablai* song popularized by Titi Kamal (ASMR, 2019); and (3) *Sholawat As-Sa'adah*, (Nuralamsah, 2020) took part of the melody from the song *Tombo Ati* which was popularized by Opick (Musikindo, 2013a).

In summary, the expressions of *sho-*



Figure 1. The Melody of Sholawat Badar in the major diatonic scale



Figure 2. The Melody of Sholawat Badar in the Original Minor Diatonic Scale



Figure 3. The Melody of Sholawat Badar in Harmonious Minor Scales



Figure 4. The melody of Sholawat Badar with Pentatonic scales (Javanese Pelog)

*lawat* manifested by taking melodies from songs that are popular in society can be arranged in the following Table 1.

#### Based on the similarity of melody and lyrics but different formats and genres

Based on the existing documents, various expressions of *sholawat* (Sholawat Badar) are also found with the same verse and melody but are presented in various different genres. Some illustrations of

this form can be seen from the following examples.

Sholawat Badar with major scales in the Tradition Orchestra format (Gamelan): *Indonesian Embassy in Abu Dhabi*. The video on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LePxs6LfVM> shows the form and genre (Wisnu, 2015).

Sholawat Badar dish with harmonious minor scales in the pop genre by Habib Syeh. The video link on <https://www>.

**Table 1.** Title of *Sholawat*, The song title that its melody takes and the artist who performed it

Title of <i>Sholawat</i>	The song title that its melody takes and the artist who performed it
Sholawat Badar	Lir-ilir (Emha Ainun Najib), Ya Thoibah (Nisa Sabyan, Sulis)
Ya Rasulullah Salamun 'Alaika	Jablay (Titi Kamal)
Sholawat As-Sa'adah	Tombo Ati (Opick)

**Table 2.** Variety of *Sholawat Badr* in Different Genres

Type of <i>Sholawat</i>	Artist	Genre
Sholawat Badar	Zuhra	Pop
Sholawat Badar	Lisna dkk	Dangdut
Sholawat Badar	FDJ Enily Family	Reggae
Sholawat Badar	Hadad Alwi	Keroncong
Sholawat Badar	Chrisyealah	Pop-Keroncong
Sholawat Badar	Nasida Ria	Nasyid

youtube.com/watch?v=wXeKP6fIWYI shows this format and genre (Berdakwah, 2019); and video *Zuhra-feat 41 Project* on the major scale on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FO4Soolp6BI> do (Official, 2018)

*Sholawat Badar* presentati-on in the dangdut genre by Lisna et al on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRQ29t8cPbk> (Pajampangan, 2020); and on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5Bm1PCa9Cg> show the format and the genre.

*Sholawat Badar* in the genre of reggae: *FDJ Emily Song* on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHScu2pGskc> shows the format and genre (ARD Management, 2019).

*Sholawat Badar* in the kroncong genre: *Hadad Alwi* on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nk7-PoHD6XU> (Baysem, 2015); and *Chrisye* (Lu'Q, 2012) on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgrd3kjHg1Y> (Lu'Q, 2012)

*Sholawat Badar* in the genre of Nasyid: *Nasida Ria* on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUx8HD1WTIc> shows this format and the genre of Nasyid (Najeeb, 2015).

The description above can be summarized as in Table 2.

### Based on the same melody but different lyrics

The expression of *sholawat* in the form of presenting the same melody but using different lyrics is actually an expression of *sholawat* where a composition of the song is sung repeatedly. Still, in the first repetition, it is presented with different lyrics. Serving like this can be in the form of a vocal group or individual presentation. One of the expressions of prayer in this form is the *Sholawat as-Sa'adah* performance by the Neo *Sholawat-Snada* music group, which can be seen on the following youtube page (Indonesia, 2020). In simple terms, the expressions of prayer in this category can be written as Figure 5.

From the lyric expression which uses Arabic, then it is presented in the form of an expression with lyrics taken from various different languages, namely: a. Indonesian Language, b. English, c. Mandarin, d. Javanese language, e. Minangkabau language, with pauses in the presentation as follows

*Ya Allah curahkanlah rakmat dan keselamatan / Bagi Nabi junjungan kami, Muhammad / Selamanya di dalam keabadian / Kekekalan Kerajaan-Mu, ya Allah //* (in Indonesian Language)

*Ya Allah, please shower your blessing and your salvation / To the Prophet Muhammad who we all adore / May he*

always is under your sovereignty / May he forever Is under your loving care // (in English)

*Ya Allah kei wo men tien an heu keu lien / Ken lau se Muhammad yeh se aitha / Hau hen chiu chai tien an the / Allah teu keu lien wou men hau hen chiu // (in Mandarin language)*

*Sunda Version: Ya Allah lungsur keun rahmat sinareng salamet / Kanggo Nabi junjungan kuring Muhammad / Salawasna aya dina kawilujengan / Salawasna ditang tayungan ku Allah // (in Sundanese)*

*Ya Allah paringono rakmat lan keslametan / kagem Nabi junjungan kulo Muhammad / Salamanipun wonten ing keselamatan / Salamanipun diwelasi Gusti Allah // (in Javanese)*

*Ya Allah curahkan jo kasalamatan / Taruntuak nabi piturui kami Muhammad / Sapanjang idui di dalam kabakaan / Salamonyo dalam kasih sayng Allah // (in Minangkabau language)*

Based on the research results, it can be explained that there are various musical expressions that are found and developed in Indonesian society. This means that in the context of a multicultural society such as Indonesia, which is rich in various cultures, including a wide variety of artistic expressions, many musical expressions have developed in society.

The variety of expressions that have developed in this society can be in the form of pitched prayers (can be categorized as musical expressions) and not pitched. There are also scales that use major and minor diatonic scales and pentatonic scales (pelog), as well as the use of various lyrics

and different languages but with the same melody or in one type of musical composition, or different melodies and lyrics.

The expression of *sholawat* that does not use songs is possible if the expression of the prayer is still related to a religious ritual so that the expression in this context is not sung. This means that the chanting of *sholawat* means that the expression of prayer at that time is an integral part of worship that is being carried out, so that there is a concern that chanting *sholawat* with songs will affect his specialty in prayer/worship. This is in line with Qur-rata A'yuni's opinion that praying *sholawat* to the Prophet contains two main prayers, namely prayers and blessings to the Prophet (A'yuni, 2016). As a prayer, of course, in expressing it also according to the existing guidance, namely in a soft and hopeful voice, as recommended in the Al Quran surah al A'rof verse 55, which means praying to your Lord with a humble self and a soft voice. Allah does not like people who transcend boundaries (Surah al A'raf: 55). Furthermore, it is also emphasized that the ethics in performing prayer directly related to a prayer or worship activity is that praying to Allah SWT cannot be done carelessly. One of the good manners in praying to be granted by Allah SWT is to read *sholawat* (Zaki, 2020).

The use of different lyrics in the *sholawat* art using melodies in various scales, both diatonic major, minor, and *pelog* pentatonic scale is possible. This possibility is because of the touch and association

Al lah hu ma sho li wa sa jim 'a la Sa yi di na wa mau la na Mu ham  
5  
mad 'a da da ma fi 'il mil lah hi sho la  
7  
tan da i ma tan bi da wa mi mul kil la hi

Figure 5. Sholawat Sa'adah (popularized by Neo Sholawat)

with the developing arts and often consumed by community members who use the prayer (*sholawat*) to associate with a music tradition; the music tradition they often associate with will form a musical tradition a person.

In short, if someone often associates with music traditions with diatonic levels, either major or minor, then this tradition will appear when he expresses his music. In other words, the appearance of a person's musical expression is influenced by his association with a musical tradition that he often encounters. This is in line with the opinion that each person/group has their way of expressing music to differentiate between one group and another (Shaleha, 2019). Likewise, the diversity of music cultures that exist and develop in Indonesia is also very likely to even color and influence someone in expressing their music. In other words, the emergence of the diversity of musical expressions in the *sholawatan* art is thought to be due to the influence of the conditions of musical cultural diversity that develop in the multicultural society.

Music should also be understood in terms of meaning and value by playing music and listening in a cultural context (Elliot, 1995). Music is multicultural because, in the societies such as Indonesia, all music types exist from various original cultural backgrounds, such as Chinese, Indian, and Jazz, to Baroque music (Elliot, 1995). Because music is everywhere and consists of various musical, cultural differences, music's nature is multicultural or diverse. The art that is generally played by the Muslim community cannot be separated from the influence of the multicultural society. Musical compositions and musical expression that emerged was a lot of that comes from cross-genre and cross-culture where the music was coming.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the musical expression of the *sholawat* art in a multicul-

tural society gives rise to various musical expressions of *sholawat* art. Some of the musical expressions of *sholawat* art appear the diversity of presentation in relation to the timing of the melody/scale, and language and musical genres. The variety of expressions of this *sholawat* art is possible.

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