

The “Selamatan Assîr ” Tradition As Local Wisdom In Career Meaning-Making: A Socio-Cultural Perspective On Gig Work Culture In The Contemporary Economy

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Abstract

In the digital economy landscape characterized by flexibility, uncertainty, and the disruption of work meaning, the *gig economy* has generated a crisis of identity and spirituality among many modern workers. This study examines the *Selamatan Assîr* tradition in Situbondo, East Java, as a form of local wisdom offering an alternative framework for understanding career and life well-being. The purpose of this research is to explore the socio-spiritual meanings embedded in the *Selamatan Assîr* ritual and to analyze its relevance to the construction of career meaning within a contemporary work culture that tends toward individualism. Employing a qualitative approach with an ethnographic paradigm, this study utilizes in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and ritual documentation. A thematic-reflective analysis was applied to interpret the symbols, narratives, and lived experiences of participants concerning work, sustenance (*rezeki*), and blessing (*barakah*). The findings reveal that *Selamatan Assîr* functions as a value system integrating three primary dimensions: spiritual, social, and psychological. The spiritual dimension positions work as an act of worship and self-transcendence; the social dimension strengthens solidarity and communal ethics; while the psychological dimension serves as a collective coping mechanism against economic uncertainty. This tradition cultivates the awareness that career success is not solely measured by material achievement but by the balance between productivity, blessing, and humanity. In conclusion, *Selamatan Assîr* represents a career paradigm rooted in spirituality and collectivism, offering an alternative to Western career theories that are predominantly individualistic. Theoretically, this research enriches *career construction theory* through religio-cultural dimensions; practically, it contributes to the development of a local wisdom-based career counseling model relevant to the digital economy era.

Keywords: *Selamatan Assîr*, local wisdom, gig economy, career meaning, work spirituality.

1. Introduction

In the global economic landscape defined by digitalization, flexibility, and uncertainty, the *gig economy* has emerged as a symbol of radical transformation in the modern world of work. This system allows individuals to work independently, manage their own time, and select projects across diverse sectors. Yet, behind this apparent freedom lies a new paradox: income instability, the absence of social

protection, and the blurring of boundaries between personal life and professional work. Many gig workers now face a profound crisis of meaning and identity, as employment is no longer merely a source of livelihood but a crucial element in self-construction and the search for life's purpose. In this context, work should not be viewed solely as an economic activity, but also as a reflection of social, spiritual, and cultural values (Bajwa, U., Gastaldo, D., Di Ruggiero, E., & Knorr, 2018; Brooks et al., 2020)

In contrast to the global economic paradigm that emphasizes individualism and competition, Indonesian society continues to uphold traditions that situate work within a framework of collectivism and spirituality. One prominent example is *Selamatan Assîr*, a living tradition in Situbondo, East Java. This ritual serves as an expression of gratitude and collective prayer held when someone attains blessings in their career—such as receiving a promotion, starting a new business, or seeking divine grace for prosperity. Within *Selamatan Assîr*, prayer and simple communal meals function as symbolic acts affirming that work is a form of worship, livelihood is a trust (*amanah*), and genuine success is measured not merely by material gain, but by the happiness and well-being it brings to one's family and community (Samsul Arifin & Zaini, 2021; Samsul Arifin, 2020a; Hadi, 2013; Norhasan, 2012).

This ritual offers a distinct perspective on the meaning of career, diverging from the predominantly individualistic worldview of the West. It emphasizes that success does not stand alone but is deeply rooted in one's interconnectedness with God, family, and community (Samsul Arifin & Zaini, 2019; Samsul Arifin, 2025a, 2025c).. In the language of cultural psychology, this tradition embodies an *interdependent self-construal*—a self-concept that highlights reciprocal relationships between the individual and their social environment (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This stands in contrast to the *independent self-construal* typical of Western culture, which regards career as an expression of personal autonomy. Such a perspective enriches the *self-concept theory of career development* (Super, 1963, 1990) by integrating the social and spiritual dimensions inherent in collectivist societies.

Studies exploring the relationship between culture and career development have expanded considerably in recent decades (Alvin & .A. Athanasou, 2008). However, most of these inquiries remain centered on modern, individualistic contexts. In Indonesia, research examining cultural values in the domain of work has largely focused on literary or religious expressions, such as *Serat Wedhatama* (Istiqomah et al., 2017) or the ritual of *Rokat Bumi* (Samsul Arifin, 2019; Khalik, 2007). Few studies, however, have investigated how local cultural practices such as *Selamatan Assîr* construct meanings of work and career through the intertwined dimensions of spirituality and social solidarity, particularly amid the rise of new economic systems like the gig economy.

The gig economy, as elaborated by Oyer and Malik et al., revolutionizes traditional labor relations by using digital platforms to directly connect workers and clients (Malik, R., Visvizi, A., & Skrzek-Lubasińska, 2021; Oyer, 2020) . While this model creates opportunities for financial autonomy and flexibility, it also introduces new forms of precarity—temporary contracts, unstable income, and the blurred distinction between productivity and exploitation (Banik, N., & Padalkar, 2021; Umney, C., Stuart, M., Bessa, I., Joyce, S., Neumann, D., & Trappmann, 2024). Within such a volatile landscape, gig workers often experience a profound loss of meaning and direction, as the absence of social and spiritual structures leaves their inner well-being unsupported.

Scholars have described the gig economy as a symbol of global economic transformation characterized by digitization and labor flexibility. This model produces a generation of workers who are no longer bound to a single institution or fixed working hours but depend instead on projects, client demand, and digital algorithms (S Arifin & Fatah, 2023; Samsul & Risma, 2020). Freedom and autonomy are frequently celebrated as hallmarks of progress. Yet, beneath these ideals lie deeper realities—eroded job security, income instability, and relentless pressure to remain productive without temporal limits (Banik, N., & Padalkar, 2021).

From a psychological perspective, such conditions generate new forms of alienation—an estrangement that arises when work loses its social and spiritual purpose. For many gig workers, a career no longer serves as a space for growth but merely as a survival mechanism. As Bauman's notion of "liquid modernity" suggests, modern individuals drift from one contract to another, severed from stable social roots. Consequently, work becomes detached from moral and communal values such as solidarity, blessing (*barakah*), and moral responsibility (Samsul Arifin, 2024) .

Empirical studies further indicate that workers in gig sectors often experience *existential emptiness* due to the absence of emotional attachment to their jobs. What once represented a means of self-actualization now becomes a source of cognitive and emotional fatigue. This situation underscores the urgent need to restore spiritual and communal values in career construction—to view work not merely as an economic pursuit but as a path toward meaning and self-integration (James, 2022) .

In the realm of career psychology, Donald Super emphasized that career development is a dynamic process closely tied to one's self-concept (Rojas et al., 21 C.E.; Super, 1963, 1990). Individuals select and adapt their careers according to how they perceive themselves and their social roles. This idea was later expanded by Savickas (2005) through the *career construction theory*, which views career as a life narrative—humans write and interpret their life stories through the work they choose (Savickas, 2005).

However, these theories predominantly stem from Western individualistic frameworks. In collectivist societies like Indonesia, career is not merely a personal matter but also a social and spiritual journey (Isfandari et al., 2019). Cultural and religious values play a fundamental role in shaping one's career orientation. In rural or *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) communities, for instance, work is often perceived as an *amanah* (divine trust), rather than a purely economic contract.

Viktor Frankl, in *Man's Search for Meaning*, asserts that meaning in life can be discovered through three avenues: meaningful work, genuine love, and a wise attitude toward suffering (Frankl, 1988, 2006). In the context of labor, individuals attain wholeness when their work contributes to something greater than themselves. This perspective aligns with the notion of *spiritual well-being*—an inner state of peace achieved when one performs work with gratitude, purpose, and a sense of divine connection (Allan, B. A., Rolniak, J. R., & Bouchard, 2020; Samsul Arifin & Zaini, 2021; Samsul Arifin, 2020b; Dolcos, F., Hohl, K., Hu, Y., & Dolcos, 2021; Minhaji & Arifin, 2021; Muslihata, 2014)

Thus, the meaning of a career is shaped not only by economic and psychological factors but also by the surrounding system of cultural and moral values. Spirituality provides direction to one's motivation, while culture offers a framework for embodying those values. Together, they transform

work from a mere productive act into an existential journey toward harmony with oneself and one's environment.

Indonesia possesses a rich cultural heritage that frames work as both an act of worship and a collective duty. In Madurese and East Javanese coastal communities, for instance, work is understood through the lens of *berkah* (blessing) and *selamatan* (communal thanksgiving)—two intertwined concepts uniting the spiritual and social dimensions of daily life. The ritual of *Selamatan Assîr* exemplifies this worldview by integrating human effort (*ikhtiar*) and prayer (*doa bersama*) as an expression of gratitude and a plea for divine protection over one's livelihood.

Selamatan functions as a symbol of solidarity that reinforces the social fabric of Javanese society (Samsul Arifin & Zaini, 2021). Yet in the Situbondo context, *Selamatan Assîr* operates not merely as a social event but as a form of *spiritual coping*—a communal strategy to face uncertainty through collective prayer and surrender to God. The tradition reveals that work is never entirely individual; it is always situated within networks of relationships, supplication, and shared empathy.

Moreover, *Selamatan Assîr* can be seen as a form of traditional community counseling. Individuals who celebrate success or seek blessings in their career invite family and neighbors to pray together. This process fulfills three essential functions: a psychological one that alleviates anxiety and cultivates gratitude; a social one that strengthens interpersonal bonds; and a spiritual one that reaffirms the belief that sustenance and career are divine trusts to be managed with sincerity and integrity.

Accordingly, *Selamatan Assîr* represents more than ritual—it is a value system shaping how people perceive and manage their work. Core principles such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *tawakkal* (trust in God), and *syukur* (gratitude) serve as moral anchors that guide career behavior. In the highly individualistic digital economy, these values offer much-needed balance and spiritual depth.

In contemporary psychological discourse, there is growing recognition of the importance of *culturally sensitive counseling*. Effective counseling must be grounded in the client's cultural and social context to foster genuine connection and relevance (Samsul Arifin, 2025d; Flanagan & Lanagan, 2004; Henriksen, 2015). Within this framework, *Selamatan Assîr* can be interpreted as a community-based counseling practice rich in reflective, supportive, and transcendent values.

This aligns with the principles of *community-based counseling*, which position individuals as integral parts of social and spiritual ecosystems (Ivey, A.E, 2010). When facing career-related stress, individuals are not encouraged to cope in isolation but are guided back toward community and collective prayer. This approach reframes work as a path of *self-transcendence*—a movement beyond the ego toward balance among human, divine, and communal dimensions.

Through this perspective, *Selamatan Assîr* may serve as a new paradigm in career counseling, especially amid the crisis of meaning confronting gig workers. It illustrates that true well-being lies not solely in economic stability but also in the blessing of relationships and the spiritual meaning embedded in one's labor. In essence, *Selamatan Assîr* embodies local wisdom that harmonizes the fast-paced digital world with the principle of *at-tawazun*—a balanced integration of material and spiritual life.

Thus, *Selamatan Assîr* should be seen not merely as an expression of gratitude but as a form of social counseling that unites spirituality, work, and communal harmony. It teaches that professional success must be balanced with inner peace and social connectedness. Meaningful work, therefore, is that which nurtures equilibrium between humans, God, and others—echoing Viktor Frankl’s view that life’s meaning emerges through work aligned with higher values.

Furthermore, the values embedded in *Selamatan Assîr* hold potential to enrich Indonesia’s career counseling approaches. While Western models such as *career adaptability* or *life design* tend to emphasize individualism, *Selamatan Assîr* highlights social and spiritual reflection. In this sense, local traditions can function as reflective media that help individuals reinterpret their career orientation—not only for personal fulfillment but also for collective well-being and shared prosperity.

This study thus aims to explore two central questions: first, how the practice of *Selamatan Assîr* reflects spiritual and social meanings within Situbondo’s work culture; and second, how these values can be reinterpreted to address the challenges of meaning in the era of the gig economy. Using an ethnographic approach, the research seeks to uncover the symbolic layers of the ritual, the interplay between culture and career self-concept, and its implications for developing a culturally grounded model of career counseling.

Theoretically, this study contributes to broadening the understanding of self-concept theory in career development, making it more contextual and inclusive of non-Western cultures. Practically, the findings are expected to inform counselors, educators, and policymakers in creating career guidance frameworks rooted in spirituality and communal values. Hence, *Selamatan Assîr* should be regarded not only as a cultural heritage but as a new paradigm for understanding career and meaning-making in the digital economy—an avenue toward existential balance, social harmony, and spiritual fulfillment.

2. Research method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an ethnographic paradigm, aiming to understand the cultural and spiritual meanings embedded within the *Selamatan Assîr* practice in the social context of Situbondo society. The ethnographic approach was chosen because it allows for the exploration of values, symbols, and subjective experiences that cannot be captured through numerical data but can only be understood through direct interaction with cultural actors (Creswell & Hirose, 2019).

The research was conducted in the coastal areas of Situbondo Regency, East Java—an area known as a center for the flourishing *Selamatan Assîr* tradition among *santri* (Islamic boarding school communities) and fishing families. Participants in this study included religious leaders, workers, small business owners, and families directly involved in organizing the ritual. Informants were selected purposively, focusing on individuals considered most knowledgeable about the practice and its meanings (Andi Mappiare, 2009; Barak, 2020; Saadi et al., 2023). A total of fifteen key informants were interviewed in depth, including two local *kiai* (Islamic scholars), four participants in the gig economy (such as online drivers and digital freelancers), and several community members who had previously hosted *Selamatan Assîr* ceremonies. This approach enabled the researcher to capture

diverse perspectives on how people interpret work, sustenance (*rezeki*), and blessing (*barakah*) in their everyday lives.

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted over several months by attending *Selamatan Assîr* ceremonies held in local homes, from the preparation stage through the collective prayer session. Interviews were designed to explore participants' emotional experiences, spiritual reflections, and interpretations of career within the dynamic social and economic context. Documentation included photographs, prayer notes, and symbolic artifacts used during the rituals. All conversations were recorded and transcribed verbatim, while the researcher also noted nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and the atmosphere of togetherness-elements that often serve as crucial indicators of deeper cultural meanings.

Data analysis followed a thematic-reflective approach. The analytical process began with a holistic reading of all transcripts to gain an overall understanding, followed by identifying recurring meaning units, categorizing major themes-such as gratitude, togetherness, prayer, work, and blessing-and interpreting their interrelations through the theoretical lenses of career psychology and spiritual work ethics. The analysis was conducted interactively and continuously throughout the research process, allowing interpretations to evolve alongside the researcher's deepening understanding of the field context. The validity of findings was strengthened through triangulation of data sources and methods, discussions with community leaders, and critical reflection on the researcher's positionality and role during the study.

Ethical considerations were maintained rigorously by safeguarding the confidentiality of informants' identities, ensuring voluntary participation through informed consent, and respecting local religious and cultural norms. The entire research process was carried out with an empathic and dialogical approach, ensuring that the data collected were not only factual but also culturally and spiritually meaningful.

Through this methodological design, the study seeks to uncover the profound meanings of *Selamatan Assîr*—not merely as a local ritual, but as a reflection of Situbondo society's spirituality in navigating the cultural and economic uncertainties of modern work life within the era of the gig economy.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Implementation of the “Selamatan Assîr” Tradition as a Representation of Spiritual and Social Meaning in the Work Culture of Situbondo Society

Field research reveals that the *Selamatan Assîr* tradition in Situbondo embodies a form of local wisdom that reflects the deep interconnection between spirituality, work, and social well-being within contemporary life. The ritual is not merely a religious ceremony of prayer but also a value system that regulates work ethics, shapes perceptions of livelihood, and fosters balance between worldly needs and spiritual responsibilities. In the context of communities increasingly influenced by flexible labor

systems or the *gig economy*, *Selamatan Assîr* serves as a collective practice that reaffirms the meaning of work as an act of worship, devotion, and social solidarity.

Empirically, the *Selamatan Assîr* is held at night after the '*Ishā*' prayer. This timing reflects the belief in the sacredness of the night as a moment of intimate spiritual communion between humans and God. The host family, together with neighbors and relatives, prepares the ritual materials through *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), including two measures of rice (*dua fitrah*), a rooster, *nasi pocong* (sticky rice dish), *salabed* money equivalent to seven *dirhams*, and curry spices. The communal act of cooking, which often continues until midnight, symbolizes the union of spiritual and social values. In this process, cooking transcends its domestic role to become an act of service and togetherness, uniting participants across social strata. The collective labor reinforces the belief that physical work, when performed sincerely and for communal good, constitutes a form of worship that brings divine blessing.

Once preparations are complete, participants gather in a circle, seated in a state of ritual purity. The circular formation symbolizes equality and spiritual interconnectedness among those present. The prayer is led by an *imam* who begins with *tawassul*, reciting *al-Fātiḥah* and dedicating it to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the prophets, saints (*awliyā' Allāh*), and specifically to *Sultan al-Awliyā'*, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī. The structure of this prayer reveals a spiritual network that links the local community with the broader Sufi cosmology. Within this framework, *Selamatan Assîr* functions as a bridge between local religiosity and a universal spiritual worldview, emphasizing *tawassul*, humility, and divine love.

The ritual continues with the recitation of seven selected chapters from the Qur'an in turns: *Yā Sīn*, *al-Wāqī'ah*, *az-Zalzalah*, *ash-Shams*, *ad-Duḥā*, *ash-Sharḥ*, and *al-Ikhlāṣ*. This collective recitation fosters a participatory atmosphere, cultivating a shared sense of spiritual ownership. Each chapter carries profound symbolic meaning: *Yā Sīn* affirms faith and resurrection, *al-Wāqī'ah* reflects the balance between deeds and sustenance, *az-Zalzalah* underscores moral accountability, *ash-Shams* and *ad-Duḥā* evoke purification and perseverance, while *ash-Sharḥ* and *al-Ikhlāṣ* reinforce serenity, monotheism, and sincerity. This spiritual structure illustrates that the economic life of Situbondo's people is inseparable from eschatological awareness and religious morality.

Following the recitations, participants perform *dhikr* together, chanting verses such as *al-Ikhlāṣ*, *al-'Alaq*, and *an-Nās*, along with selected passages from *al-Baqarah*, including *Āyat al-Kursī*. This is followed by one hundred repetitions of *ṣalawāt* upon the Prophet, and invocations of the Divine Names (*asmā' Allāh*), including *Yā Hādī*, *Yā 'Alīm*, *Yā Khabīr*, *Yā Mubīn*. The rhythmic repetition of these phrases induces a meditative state that enhances spiritual awareness and collective serenity. In the midst of a modern work culture marked by pressure and competition, such practice serves as a form of inner healing, nurturing peace and sincerity in one's daily labor.

The ritual reaches its climax with the recitation of the *Du'ā Sîr Jailani* (As'ad, 1990; Sukaryo, 1996)—a lengthy supplication filled with expressions of surrender to God and acknowledgment of His greatness. Within this prayer lies a plea that all work performed may lead to divine approval and

blessing. This moment becomes the pinnacle of spiritual and social integration, where participants collectively experience the awareness that life and labor are integral parts of worship.

After the prayer, participants share the prepared meal. This communal dining is more than a feast—it embodies gratitude and solidarity. Leftovers taken home, known as *berkah* (blessing), symbolize the continuity of goodness that accompanies everyday life. The informal conversations that follow, often over coffee, serve as a vital social space for strengthening emotional bonds and community solidarity. In an increasingly individualistic society, such moments of conviviality play a crucial role in sustaining social cohesion and empathy.

Qualitative analysis of interviews and observations reveals that *Selamatan Assîr* functions as a ritual of meaning-making within Situbondo's work life. The values embedded in the practice—sincerity, cooperation, and gratitude—serve as moral guidelines that shape the community's work ethic and concept of success. Practitioners view labor not merely as a source of income but as an act of worship and a means of spreading benefit to others. In this framework, *Selamatan Assîr* presents a model of spiritual work ethics that stands in contrast to the individualistic and competitive tendencies of the modern gig economy. For the people of Situbondo, career success is measured not by material accumulation but by the degree to which work brings tranquility, blessing, and collective happiness.

From a sociocultural perspective, *Selamatan Assîr* also acts as a social-binding mechanism amid shifting economic structures. The ritual reinforces a sense of communal belonging and diminishes social distance among participants. Shared involvement in the ceremony provides a space for the formation of collective identity rooted in religious and humanistic values. Amid the uncertainties of the digital economy, the solidarity and mutual aid fostered through this practice serve as vital sources of social resilience.

Moreover, *Selamatan Assîr* carries educational and transformative functions. Through its repetitive enactment, moral and spiritual values are transmitted across generations. Young participants learn lessons of diligence, sincerity, and respect for their ancestors. In this way, *Selamatan Assîr* operates as a medium of cultural character education. Within the demanding and often stressful conditions of the gig economy, the values embodied in this tradition become a spiritual resource for maintaining inner balance and work motivation.

Thus, this study demonstrates that *Selamatan Assîr* is not merely a religious ritual but a comprehensive cultural system integrating spirituality, work ethics, and social solidarity. It stands as tangible evidence of how the people of Situbondo construct the meaning of life and career amid rapid socio-economic transformation. The tradition affirms that every form of labor embodies elements of worship, service, and moral responsibility toward others. In today's fast-paced digital work environment, the message of *Selamatan Assîr* remains profoundly relevant: true success does not belong to those who are merely the fastest or the strongest, but to those who work with sincerity, mutual compassion, and a harmonious balance between worldly and spiritual life.

3.2. Socio-Cultural Interpretation of the “Selamatan Assîr” Tradition and Its Meaning of Career in the Gig Economy Era

Field research reveals that the *Selamatan Assîr* tradition in Situbondo serves a dual cultural function: it operates both as a spiritual practice aimed at deepening one’s closeness to God and as a social system that structures the community’s work ethics. Within the context of pesantren and coastal societies—many of whose members are now involved in flexible or gig-based employment—this tradition provides a moral and spiritual framework that redefines the meaning of career, not merely as an economic pursuit but as an act of worship and a means to achieve life balance. In essence, *Selamatan Assîr* functions as a cultural mechanism that embeds spiritual and social orientation within a modern economic structure increasingly driven by individualism.

Empirically, the implementation of *Selamatan Assîr* begins with collective preparations involving family members, neighbors, and relatives. This process reflects the values of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and shared responsibility, where everyone contributes actively to preparing meals and ritual necessities. Such togetherness is not only practical but deeply symbolic: it reinforces the belief that economic success is rooted in social and moral support from one’s community. Amid the isolating tendencies of the gig economy, which demands mobility and self-reliance, *Selamatan Assîr* presents an alternative—reaffirming solidarity networks grounded in spirituality and communal belonging.

The central ritual takes place after the evening (‘*Isyā*’) prayer, when the quietness of night fosters an atmosphere of calm and devotion. Participants, seated in a circle, take turns reciting prayers and verses from the Qur’an. The circular formation symbolizes equality and unity without social hierarchy, embodying the egalitarian ethos that lies at the heart of pesantren culture. The recitations—commonly including *Yā Sîn*, *al-Wāqī‘ah*, *az-Zalzalah*, *asy-Syams*, *ad-Dhuhā*, *al-Insyirāh*, and *al-Ikhlāṣ*—carry moral messages about responsibility, sincerity, and harmony between the worldly and the spiritual. Through repeated prayers and remembrance (*dhikr*), participants undergo a meditative experience that nurtures both spiritual awareness and psychological serenity.

From a socio-psychological perspective, the collective experience of *Selamatan Assîr* functions as a medium for emotional healing and the reinforcement of spiritual identity amid economic instability. Participants often express that the ritual provides emotional strength to face uncertain income and competition within the digital labor market. In this sense, *Selamatan Assîr* can be understood as a form of culturally embedded spiritual coping—where prayer, remembrance, and fellowship generate social energy that enhances individuals’ resilience in navigating work-related stress.

Conceptually, the findings indicate that the values embodied in *Selamatan Assîr* actively shape the spiritual self-concept of the Situbondo community. For them, a career is not solely a matter of professional achievement but a sacred duty carried out with pure intention, responsibility, and sincerity. This perspective aligns with the teachings of Kiai As’ad Syamsul Arifin, a spiritual leader who emphasized that work is both an act of devotion to God and a service to humanity (Samsul Arifin, 2014a, 2014b, 2025b; Ibrahimy & Arifin, 2018, 2019). Consequently, work is evaluated not merely

by its productivity but by the extent to which it brings *barakah*—divine blessing—and contributes to social welfare.

The concept of *barakah* serves as a key element in how the community interprets career success. Within the Islamic worldview, *barakah* represents the abundance of goodness—livelihood that is sufficient, peaceful, and spiritually fulfilling. Practitioners of *Selamatan Assîr* believe that sincere intention and communal prayer invite *barakah*. This belief fosters a work ethic that rejects exploitation and upholds the integrity of one's labor. In the context of the gig economy, where efficiency and flexibility often override job security and moral values, this perspective serves as a moral corrective to the dehumanization of work. *Selamatan Assîr* restores the meaning of career to one grounded in balance—between economic achievement and spiritual tranquility.

Beyond its spiritual dimensions, the research also highlights *Selamatan Assîr* as a medium for strengthening social relations. The ritual acts as a communal gathering that reinforces social bonds and collective identity. The shared meal that concludes the event symbolizes not only the distribution of sustenance but also the reinforcement of social cohesion and emotional support networks. For self-employed workers who are often vulnerable to isolation and competition, values such as solidarity, respect, and social empathy cultivated through *Selamatan Assîr* become vital social capital for community resilience.

This social interpretation suggests that *Selamatan Assîr* functions as a cultural script that structures how people conceptualize work and career. It articulates a dialectical relationship among spiritual values, personal identity, and social structure. In the Situbondo worldview, an individual's self-concept is not defined merely by economic success but by their contribution to social harmony and collective well-being. Thus, a meaningful career is not one that brings personal profit alone but one that extends goodness to family, neighbors, and the wider community.

In relation to modern career theories, these findings expand the notion of career self-concept, which is often rooted in individualistic assumptions. The *Selamatan Assîr* tradition demonstrates that in traditional societies, career consciousness can be both communal and spiritual—where the meaning of work derives from one's relationship with God, others, and the environment. The values embodied in this tradition foster a balanced work ethic that harmonizes professional responsibility, social care, and spiritual awareness. In this way, *Selamatan Assîr* offers an alternative paradigm to the dominant culture of the gig economy, which tends to prioritize speed, efficiency, and limitless competition.

Furthermore, this study reveals that *Selamatan Assîr* holds symbolic significance in preserving the continuity of pesantren culture in the digital era. It serves as an intergenerational space through which moral values such as *tawassul* (seeking intercession), sincerity, and collective cooperation are transmitted. Young people engaged in digital sectors—such as freelancers or online drivers—continue to draw spiritual motivation from this tradition to maintain honesty and sincerity in their work. Therefore, *Selamatan Assîr* does not merely represent a relic of the past but evolves into a source of contemporary work ethics relevant to modern realities.

Overall, this research confirms that *Selamatan Assîr* embodies *local wisdom* that underpins ethical and spiritual foundations of work within an increasingly competitive global economy. The tradition

illustrates how indigenous values can respond meaningfully to crises of meaning and life balance caused by flexible work cultures. In a society driven by material orientation, *Selamatan Assîr* reminds us that true success lies not in what one possesses but in how one works—with sincerity, moral integrity, and a sense of shared humanity.

In conclusion, the values inherent in the *Selamatan Assîr* tradition—spirituality, togetherness, and divine blessing—offer a conceptual framework for reinterpreting the meaning of career within the gig economy. The tradition affirms that work is not merely an economic endeavor but part of a spiritual journey toward equilibrium between worldly life and the hereafter. These values provide a vital cultural resource for developing an ethical, sustainable, and human-centered approach to work in the rapidly shifting landscape of the modern economy.

3.3. Discussion

The *Selamatan Assîr* tradition in Situbondo represents a synthesis of Islamic spirituality, work ethics, and social solidarity within the coastal-*pesantren* community. The findings of this study reveal that the ritual serves not merely as a medium of prayer or a request for blessings but as a meaning-making system that structures human relationships with God, fellow beings, and nature. In the context of coastal life—characterized by economic uncertainty and the unpredictability of weather—*Selamatan Assîr* functions as a social mechanism that fosters a sense of security, hope, and togetherness. Through prayer, almsgiving, and communal feasting, the community finds a spiritual space to reflect upon their labor, sustenance, and the balance of life.

This phenomenon illustrates that, within the work culture of coastal societies, spirituality is inseparable from economic activity. Daily work—such as fishing, trading, or farming—is always accompanied by a religious awareness that sustenance (*rizq*) comes from Allah and must be pursued with good intentions and a noble social ethic. This aligns with the views of several scholars who argue that workplace spirituality in traditional societies serves both as a source of motivation and as a moral compass that guides economic behavior within the bounds of collective ethics (Agus Riyadi et al., 2022; Samsul Arifin & Munfaridah, 2018; Malik, R., Visvizi, A., & Skrzek-Lubasińska, 2021). In *Selamatan Assîr*, prayer represents the acknowledgment of human limitation and submission to divine will, while *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) symbolizes social awareness and reinforces the bonds of communal solidarity.

This ritual also illustrates how the community negotiates its identity amid the pressures of modern transformation. As the flexible work culture of the *gig economy* brings uncertainty and fragmentation to life's meaning, *Selamatan Assîr* serves as a spiritual anchor that maintains balance between productivity and blessing. In an increasingly individualistic work environment, the ritual restores the values of collectivism and solidarity that underpin the *pesantren* work ethic. As Banik and Padalkar explain, traditional societies possess symbolic mechanisms to preserve social cohesion through rituals that intertwine religious and economic meanings (Banik, N., & Padalkar, 2021).

The spiritual dimension of *Selamatan Assîr* does not merely cultivate theological awareness but also nurtures empathy and a sense of social responsibility. Every member of the community who participates becomes part of a shared narrative—one that acknowledges that a person's sustenance is

inseparable from the prayers and support of others. This reflects the concept of *barakah*, a form of spiritual abundance that transcends material wealth and manifests in the continuity of goodness within social life. *Barakah* signifies that economic success lacks authenticity when detached from moral and social blessing (Samsul Arifin, 2024; Chaer, 2014).

Furthermore, *Selamatan Assîr* can be interpreted as a form of *eco-spirituality* deeply rooted in the ecological consciousness of coastal communities. The prayers and alms offered during the ritual are not solely intended for human well-being but also serve as expressions of gratitude for the sea, the wind, and the land—the vital sources of livelihood. In this sense, the ritual sustains harmony between humans and nature, embodying an ecological awareness that is increasingly neglected in modern economic systems. Such consciousness aligns with the notion of *ecological tawhid*, which situates all creation within a unified divine order—where caring for nature becomes an act of worship and an expression of compassion toward all of God’s creatures.

From a social perspective, *Selamatan Assîr* also functions as a form of collective counseling that channels communal anxiety through prayer and togetherness. Every participant—be it a fisherman, trader, or *santri* (Islamic student)—comes with their own hopes and worries, which are released through solemn prayer and shared meals. This process creates a form of social catharsis, where the emotional tensions caused by economic pressure and life’s uncertainties are eased through comforting religious symbols. In this context, *Selamatan Assîr* plays a role similar to that of counseling in social psychology—providing a communal and spiritual space where individuals can rediscover meaning, hope, and emotional balance through shared reflective experience.

The presence of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) values within *Selamatan Assîr* further enriches the understanding of Islamic work ethics at the grassroots level. In Situbondo, *pesantren* not only serve as centers for faith and religious education but also cultivate values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), trust in divine providence (*tawakkul*), and brotherhood (*ukhuwah*) in daily life. These values are naturally integrated into the *Selamatan Assîr* ritual, making it not merely a symbolic religious act but also a functional practice that shapes a resilient and ethical working community. Within this framework, *Selamatan Assîr* can be understood as a form of “everyday theology” that bridges the spiritual and occupational realms—showing that spirituality and labor are not opposing forces but mutually sustaining dimensions of human existence.

The findings illustrate that amid the accelerating forces of modernization and economic digitalization, the people of Situbondo have successfully preserved a value structure that balances hard work with inner tranquility. *Selamatan Assîr* is not a relic of the past but a living social practice that continues to evolve and find relevance in new contexts. It serves as a symbolic arena in which communities negotiate between the values of tradition and the demands of modernity. Thus, this tradition teaches that spirituality—when lived within a tangible social context—can serve as a vital psychosocial resource that strengthens communal resilience in facing the challenges of a changing era.

Ultimately, *Selamatan Assîr* affirms that true well-being is not measured solely by economic stability, but by the depth of life’s meaning and the quality of human relationships. Within the harmony of prayer, labor, and communal solidarity, the coastal community of Situbondo discovers a tranquil

balance of life. This tradition stands as a timeless reminder that within every act of economic endeavor lies space for spirituality to nurture meaning, and within every prayer ritual resides a social message about the importance of sharing, caring, and living together in collective blessing.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study affirms that the *Selamatan Assîr* tradition in Situbondo is not merely a spiritual heritage or a prayer ritual, but a living and dynamic value system that intertwines spirituality, work ethics, and social solidarity. The tradition embodies a form of local wisdom that responds to existential challenges in contemporary work culture, particularly within the *gig economy*-a realm marked by flexibility, individualism, and uncertainty. Through *Selamatan Assîr*, coastal-pesantren communities construct a conception of career grounded in the balance between economic achievement and spiritual blessing. For them, work is not solely an economic activity but an act of worship and social devotion that strengthens one's relationship with both God and fellow human beings.

The findings reveal that *Selamatan Assîr* performs three primary functions: spiritual, social, and psychological. Spiritually, the ritual serves as a medium of *self-transcendence* through which individuals reaffirm the meaning of life and work in submission to divine will. The social dimension is manifested in the practices of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), collective prayer, and shared meals that reinforce togetherness, egalitarianism, and social empathy. Psychologically, *Selamatan Assîr* functions as a *collective coping mechanism*, channeling anxiety and life pressures into a reflective and tranquil communal space. Thus, the tradition harmonizes spirituality and sociality as the foundation of holistic inner and social well-being.

These findings broaden the theoretical understanding of *career meaning-making* within non-Western contexts. In collectivist cultures such as that of Situbondo, the notion of career extends beyond self-identity to include social and spiritual interconnectedness. The *Selamatan Assîr* tradition presents an alternative paradigm to modern career theories that often prioritize individual autonomy. It enriches the framework of *career construction theory* by incorporating transcendental and communal dimensions, where career meaning is constructed through spiritual narratives that prioritize balance, blessing, and togetherness as central orientations (Savickas, 2005).

Nevertheless, this research has several limitations. First, its scope is confined to the coastal community of Situbondo, which possesses distinctive Islamic and pesantren-based cultural characteristics, making generalization to other cultural contexts necessary with caution. Second, the ethnographic approach provides deep cultural insight but does not quantitatively measure the effects of the tradition on work well-being or career satisfaction. Additionally, gender and generational factors were not specifically examined, even though both may contribute significant variations in how individuals interpret work meaning in the digital era.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies among various Indonesian local traditions with similar functions-such as *kenduri*, *rokat bumi*, or *slametan rezeki*-to identify universal patterns of work spirituality within the archipelagic context. Further studies could also adopt

quantitative or mixed-method approaches to measure the influence of spiritual values on job satisfaction, career resilience, and work–life balance among gig workers. Moreover, developing and empirically testing a *local wisdom–based career counseling model* inspired by *Selamatan Assîr* could be valuable for educational institutions and work communities seeking to promote ethical, sustainable, and meaningful work practices.

Conceptually, this research underscores the importance of integrating spirituality and career development in addressing the crisis of meaning in the digital era. *Selamatan Assîr* demonstrates that local values can serve as vital psychosocial resources that sustain equilibrium between productivity and blessing, ambition and serenity, individuality and community. In a global context increasingly fragmented by market logic and digital algorithms, local wisdom such as *Selamatan Assîr* offers a universal insight: that meaningful work is work that dignifies humanity-uniting prayer, effort, and love into a single harmony of spiritual and social values.

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