

## The meaning of communication symbols in the Rudat dance art of the Paleben group in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency

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### Abstract

*The art of rudat dance is one of the arts from Subang Village, Kuningan Regency. Rudat is a type of art in which there is a dance accompanied by tambourine clapping where the dance elements contain elements of martial arts. The aim of this research is to find out the forms of communication symbols in rudat dance art in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency, and to find out the performers of rudat dance art in interpreting rudat dance art. The research method used is qualitative with a symbolic interaction study approach. Data was obtained based on interviews and observations. Data processing and data analysis techniques use the data analysis model of Miles and Huberman. The results obtained from this research are: First, the forms of symbols in rudat art are from the basic rudat dance movements. There are four symbols used, namely the Gojes symbol in a stance with the right hand directed to the left, the left hand positioned behind the body and has the meaning of preparing oneself for what is to come. The Kincar Symbol is in an attacking position, the right hand extended forward with the fingers clenched into a fist, and the left hand bent with the fingers clenched into a fist, which has the meaning of facing existing problems. The Alayya symbol with the body moving sideways to the right and left has the meaning of avoiding something bad. And finally the Ogel symbol in a defensive position. The right hand, which is positioned to protect the chest, and the left hand holding the right arm, has the meaning of surviving all trials. The two rudat dancers want to preserve rudat art so that the people in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency don't forget it by performing rudat dance performances regularly.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The art of rudat dance is one of the arts and is a characteristic of Subang Village, Kuningan Regency. Rudat is a type of art in which there is a form of dance accompanied by music where the dance elements contain elements of martial arts, sound arts and elements of religion. Rudat dance is a combination of movement and vocal arts accompanied by tambourine beats. The poems contained in the songs contain religious elements in the form of praise to Allah SWT, prayers to the Messenger with the aim of strengthening people's faith in the Islamic religion (Kodir et al. 2022).

The rudat dance art is performed or held when commemorating major Islamic religious holidays such as the Prophet's birthday, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Islamic New Year and other major holidays. Apart from that, the art of rudat dance is performed when there are celebrations such as weddings or circumcisions, even when commemorating the

Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia, rudat dance performances are also always performed.

The rudat performance in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency is usually held in the evening after Isha prayers. The people who will take part in carrying out the rudat will form a line when the tambourines start to be tapped, which is a sign that the rudat performance will soon begin. When the rudat performance has started, the people who join in dance according to the verses from the barzanji book and the beats of the musical instruments used in the rudat performance. The movements in rudat dance are in the form of martial arts movements, the movement patterns are different from martial arts in general because the position of the rudat dancer is sitting and only the body and hands move. Rudat performances are usually divided into three sessions with two breaks. This aims to ensure that the rudat players can rest so they don't get tired and can join in dancing until the performance is finished.

According to Prof. Dr. Soedarsono (in Muryanto, 2020) dance is an expression of the human spirit expressed in the form of rhythmic and beautiful movements. Dance can be performed by one or more individuals and can be used for a variety of purposes, such as entertainment, ritual, art, or therapy. Dance can also convey messages and emotions through body movements, expressions and clothing.

Art can be used as a place to convey ideas, beliefs or even to maintain the norms and customs of society (Aprilia, 2021). Traditional arts as performances have always been preserved by the community, so that the arts have developed to this day. People in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency are still very enthusiastic about watching or dancing when there is a Rudat dance performance. It's not just adults who are enthusiastic when there is a Rudat performance, children and even teenage girls often join in dancing when the Rudat dance performance takes place even though they have to be crowded with adults.

The rudat dance art is currently used as a medium of entertainment for the people of Subang Village, Kuningan Regency. To make rudat dance art remain an art interested Usually, when the rudat dance performance is finished, there will be several rudat players who will sing or go into a trance. This is because rudat players enjoy the dance so much that in the end a supernatural creature enters the player's body, but there are also those who say that the trance is only intentional by people who can insert supernatural things into the player's body to make the rudat performance more lively. Everyone who is possessed will usually immediately stand up and continue dancing when they hear the sound of the tambourine instrument, and if the instrument is no longer being played, they will immediately go berserk like other possessed people. To remove the supernatural from the body of a rudat player, this is by making his body unable to move. People who are still conscious will hold parts of their body so that they don't go berserk again and prayers will be recited so that the supernatural will come out of the body of the possessed person. The existence of people who are possessed is only for additional entertainment so that the audience will be more interested in seeing the magic show or even the audience will be interested in taking part. dance rod.

Traditional art is influenced by various aspects, such as geographical location, beliefs, lifestyle and also education. Life is still steeped in cultural values inherited from their ancestors, so people believe that the habits carried out by their ancestors constitute a culture which, among other things, gave birth to a diversity of traditional arts and their existence is often believed to have power and contain values that must be adhered to. According to Sedyawati in (Irmawati, 2021).

The definition of traditional is anything that is in accordance with tradition or custom and in accordance with the framework of patterns of form and application that are always repeated. Traditional arts, or regional arts, are inherited and passed down from generation

to generation, and will experience development from generation to generation (Fauzan and Nashar, 2017).

Traditional art is one element of a work of art that has appeal or beauty as a result of creativity, taste and intention in a particular community environment. Traditional art is a means used to express a sense of beauty from within the human soul (Andri, 2016).

People in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency are still very enthusiastic about watching or dancing when there is a rudat dance performance. It's not just adults who are enthusiastic when there is a rudat performance, children and often even teenage girls will join in dancing when the rudat dance performance is taking place, and usually the women will dance in the back row so as not to be crowded with the men.

The rudat dance art is currently used as a medium of entertainment for the people of Subang Village, Kuningan Regency. To make the art of rudat dance remain an art that is sought after, usually when the rudat dance performance is finished, there will be several rudat performers who will sing or go into a trance. This is because rudat players enjoy the dance so much that in the end a supernatural creature enters the player's body, but there are also those who say that the trance is only intentional by people who can insert supernatural things into the player's body to make the rudat performance more lively. Everyone who is possessed will usually immediately stand up and continue dancing when they hear the sound of the tambourine instrument, and if the instrument is no longer being played, they will immediately go berserk like other possessed people. To remove the supernatural from the body of a rudat player, this is by making his body unable to move. People who are still conscious will hold parts of their body so that they don't go berserk again and prayers will be recited so that the supernatural will come out of the body of the possessed person. The presence of people in a trance is only for additional entertainment so that the audience will be more interested in seeing the rudat performance or even the audience will be interested in taking part in the rudat dance.

Art certainly has its own meaning that can be understood by the public so that art is not only a means of entertainment but can also be a means of conveying information or learning.

In a cultural context, communication can take place through various media such as oral, written, gestures, music, art, and others. Communication in a culture can be determined by the norms, values and traditions that apply within that culture. In different cultures, ways of speaking, communication styles, and behavior that is considered polite or impolite will also be different. Communication in culture can also be determined by different social contexts, different forms of communication are applied in formal situations and informal situations. Most communication in culture, as a result of experience, learning, and social context, will contain nonverbal elements that contribute to conveying the message, such as facial expressions, body movements, voice, and others.

Communication is a process of exchanging information or creating meaning, which can be simply understood that communication is explained as the process of conveying messages from one person or several people to other people for a specific purpose. Communication will always involve two people, namely the sender and recipient, communication will always involve two people interacting with different goals, motivations and abilities. (Yasir, 2020).

Communication in culture is the most important thing considering that this country consists of hundreds of ethnic groups with different cultural backgrounds. Culture and communication cannot be separated from each other, because culture not only determines who speaks to whom, where and how people encode messages, what those messages mean, and the conditions for sending, listening to, and interpreting messages. Culture is the basis

of communication, so if culture is diverse, diverse communication practices will also develop (Muchtar, 2016).

Apart from verbal communication, humans can also communicate non-verbally, such as through body movements, gestures, facial expressions and other supporting media. Nonverbal communication can also be defined as the creation and exchange of messages without using words. Another important thing in communication is how the message conveyed can be understood by the communicants.

Language or communication through symbols is a signal that has a special meaning that appears to other individuals who have the same idea as the symbol used. The symbols used when interacting and communicating with other people do not have the same meaning or meaning for all regions, the meaning of each symbol depends on the agreement of the region (Amie, 2014).

A symbol is an arbitrary label or reference for a phenomenon. Symbols are usually agreed upon within a group, but may not be understood outside the group. Symbols are used by humans to share reality with other people or interact with other people. Apart from that, symbols are also used by humans to pass down culture from generation to generation. (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

A communication symbol is a sign or symbol that is used to represent or convey a meaning. Symbols can be words, images, symbols, gestures, or signs that are accepted and understood by the individual or group that uses them. Communication symbols are used in various types of communication, including verbal and nonverbal communication. In communication, symbols are used to simplify the communication process and make messages easier to receive and understand by the recipient.

Dance movement symbols are found in the elements displayed in the dance, such as the movements, clothing and make-up used by the dancers. Every element in the dance has a meaning so that the story can be realized in the dance. The symbols that will be studied in the rudat dance art in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency are only the movement symbols, because in this rudat art, special clothing and make-up are not used to perform the rudat dance performance. The presence of dance movement symbols is used to convey a message in dance through movement.

Communication cannot be separated from culture as a result of the formation of meaning in symbols. By using symbols in life, humans can create something in culture which contains or contains language, myth, religion, art and science. Symbols and meaning are two elements that form a unity that complements each other. Dance is a cultural product which contains meaning and value. Thus dance can be called a symbol system (Mataram, 2018).

Symbolic interaction is the way humans interact and communicate through symbols, signs and meanings that are understood collectively in society. Symbolic interaction involves the exchange of meaning through symbols such as language, gestures, cultural symbols that shape social reality and influence individual behavior. Symbolic interactions are very important in building and maintaining social relationships and understanding different social realities.

Understanding symbolic interactionism (symbolic interactionism) is a way of thinking about thoughts (mind), self and society which have contributed to the sociocultural tradition in building communication theory. When using sociology as a foundation, it teaches that when interacting with each other, they will share meaning for a certain period of time and for certain actions (Morissan 2018).

Symbolic interaction emphasizes human actions and interactions in social life. Symbolic interactions are interactions that give rise to special meanings and give rise to interpretations. A deeper study of the main idea of symbolic interaction theory is that an

action has a different meaning from other people who also interpret the meaning in the interaction action. Because individuals continue to change, society also changes through interaction. So it is interaction that is considered the important variable that determines human behavior, not the structure of society. The structure itself is created and changed due to human interaction (Roshima, 2017).

In this rudat dance art, the interaction that occurs is between groups and groups or more specifically between the rudat paleben group and the people who watch the rudat dance performance in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency. The rudat dancers perform dances to convey messages or interact through movement symbols to the people watching, hoping that the message can also be understood by the audience.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this research is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research does not use numbers but uses analysis using theory as a basis for conducting research.

Denzin & Lincol (in Anggito and Setiawan, 2018: 7) state that qualitative research is research that uses a natural setting with the aim of interpreting a phenomenon that occurs and is carried out using various existing methods.

The research approach used is the study of symbolic interaction. This approach originates from the thoughts of George Herbert Mead. From the word interactionism it is clear that the target of this approach is social interaction, the word symbolic refers to the use of symbols in interaction. This theory also invites individuals to deepen their study of the meaning of interaction used in indigenous communities

Symbolic interactions are based on ideas about the individual and his interactions with society. The essence of symbolic interaction is an activity that is characteristic of humans, namely communication or exchange of symbols that are given meaning. This perspective suggests that human behavior should be seen as a process that allows shaping and regulating their behavior by taking into account the expectations of other people with whom they interact.

Symbolic interaction refers to the characteristics of human interaction. This means that people understand each other and give meaning to their actions, both when interacting with others and in their own reflection. This interaction process involves the use of language symbols, social norms, religion, and views (Sugiarta and Lestari, 2023).

The data collection technique uses primary data such as observation interviews, interviews and documentation. This secondary data includes book references, previous research and *internet searching*.

A research informant is someone who has information and understands the research object. The technique for determining informants uses purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a data source sampling technique that is based on certain considerations and certain objectives, which really controls an object to be studied.

The researcher took the main informants who were people from the Rudat Paleben Arts Group. The Paleben group was chosen because this group is a group that often performs rudat dances in other areas in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency. The informants chosen were also administrators and dancers of the group, such as the chairman of the Paleben Group.

According to Sugiyono (in Umrati & Wijaya, 2020: 82) Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes and other materials so that it is easier to understand and the findings can be informed to others. This research uses data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Technique Validity can be achieved with an appropriate data collection process. One way is through the triangulation process. Triangulation in credibility testing is defined as checking data from various sources in various ways and at various times. Source triangulation to test the credibility of the data is carried out by checking data that has been obtained through several sources.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (12 Pt)

The results of this research are divided into two subsections. First, to find out the form of communication symbols in rudat dance art in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency. Second, to find out what the rudat dance performers interpret the rudat dance art.

#### 3.1. Research result

##### Forms of Communication Symbols in Rudat Dance

There are four communication symbols in rudat art, namely gejos movement, kincar movement, alayya movement and ogel movement. These movements are taken or derived from pencak silat martial arts movements.

##### 1. Gejos Motion Symbol

The gejos movement is characterized by the right hand being directed to the left, and the left hand being positioned behind the body. The body is in a kneeling position with the body resting on both knees.



**Figure 1.1 Gejos Movement**

Gejos demonstrated the stance movements in silat, because the stance is also very important so that the dancer or fighter can be strong when performing. The kneeling posture found in this movement and also other movements in the Rudat dance means humility possessed by humans.

This was also stated by the informant Mamat. He said that the gejos movement came from pencak silat. However, because the Rudat dance is performed while kneeling, only the hands are in a stance that shows the body's strength. Sturdy here can be interpreted as alert. Another informant named Hadi said that apart from being alert, gejos movements can be interpreted as the ability to focus that humans should have.

Based on the explanation above, the gejos movement can thus be interpreted as a form of human readiness in facing life. Gejos is a description of vigilance which is an attitude that humans should have.

## 2. Kincar Motion Symbol

Kincar movements are characterized by the right hand being extended forward with the fingers clenched into a fist and the left hand being bent with the fingers clenched into a fist. The kneeling body position is the same as in the *gejos*



movement.

**Figure 1.2 Kincar Motion**

The form of smooth movement is the basic technique of attacking. In martial arts, attacking techniques are used to provide resistance when receiving threats or danger from an opponent. Lukman, Chair of the Rudat Paleben Arts Group, said that kincar movements are an illustration of the opposing power possessed by humans. Informants Mamat and Hadi also expressed similar things regarding the meaning of the smooth movement.

Based on the explanations from the informants, it can be understood that smooth movement has a meaning about the human ability to provide resistance when it is necessary. In other words, humans must have the ability to face every problem they have in life.

## 3. Simbol Gerak Alayya

Alayya's movements are characterized by the body being moved sideways to the right and left. The body position remains the same as the vigorous and agile movements, namely kneeling. The sideways movement to the right and left is a form of avoidance, as is the case in *pencak silat* martial arts.



**1.3 Gerak Alayya**

Dodging is an important part of martial arts. This is done when humans receive an attack that is considered dangerous or deadly, avoiding becomes an option that can be done. Dodging is also a technique in martial arts to avoid being hit by attacks from other people.



Based on this explanation, the alayya movement can be interpreted as an illustration of humans' ability to behave when facing problems in their lives. Humans have the choice to avoid getting too deep into the vortex of problems that approach their lives. Apart from that, what is meant by avoidance is the human ability not to look for problems in their lives.

#### 4. Ogel Motion Symbol

Ogel's movement is characterized by the right hand being positioned to protect the chest and the left hand holding the right arm. In pencak silat martial arts, this movement is a form of parrying or defending. The body position is kneeling, the same as the body position in the other movements in this dance.



#### 1.4 Ogel Motion

Defensive techniques in pencak silat martial arts are needed when you cannot avoid an attack and by defending you can minimize the impact of the attack. This technique functions to minimize the impact of attacks that can harm oneself.

From this explanation, an important conclusion can be drawn regarding the ogel movement which is a symbol of the human ability to be able to survive problems in life that are difficult or unavoidable.

No	Motion	Symbol Meaning
1	Get excited	Be alert, humans must be able to be alert and alert to every problem that occurs in their lives.
2	Kinkar	Against, humans must have the ability to face all the problems they have in life
3	Alayya	Avoidance, the human ability to be able to avoid problems and the human ability not to look for problems that can harm their lives.
4	Ogel	Surviving, the human ability to survive in facing all the problems that exist in his life.
5	Kneel	Being humble and not arrogant is an attitude that humans must have in order not to have problems in their lives.

**Table 1.1 Meaning of Rudat Dance Symbols**

The four movements in the Rudat dance and added to the kneeling attitude are the core of the symbols found in the dance. The symbols are basically a picture of human ability in living his life. All of these symbols are the embodiment of the ideal attitude that humans should have.



### Self-interpretation of Rudat Dance Performers

Based on the five movements and symbolic meanings found in the Rudat dance, Rudat artists interpret themselves as human beings who must be competent in living their lives. The five movements and symbolic meanings contained in the Rudat dance are an ideal lifestyle that humans should have.

Based on the informant's explanation above, it can be understood that basically humans with all the strangeness they face in life need to have the right steps in solving the problem. The ideal human in the perspective of Rudat dance artists is a human who knows when to avoid problems and when to face problems. In addition, self-strength in facing problems in life is very important for every human being. Therefore, vigilance, the ability to face and avoid problems, and the strength to survive in the face of problems are the essence of humans in experiencing various problems in their lives. In addition, the important thing that must also be possessed in the soul of every human being is the need for humility so that humans do not encounter many opponents who can present problems in their lives.

Furthermore, for Rudat dance practitioners, the preservation and preservation of this traditional art has two important meanings for them. First, as a custodian of traditional arts or the front guard in maintaining traditional arts. Second, as a conveyer of messages regarding the values of human life as well as providing a way to achieve a harmonious balance of life based on the meaning of the symbols in the Rudat dance.

As an art, Rudat is ultimately understood by dance practitioners as a life goal in sharing the wisdom contained in a traditional art. Through Rudat, these artists realize that they are a symbol of the survival of local wisdom which must remain sustainable.

### 3.2. Discussion

There are four forms of symbols in rudat art. The first is the Gejos symbol which means horse. The two Kincar symbols mean attack. The three Alayya symbols mean avoid. And the last one is the Ogel symbol which means survive.

In this research, researchers found aspects of thinking (*mind*) namely the dancers in the paleben group consider this rudat art as a performance. The art of rudat dance is an art that contains religious and martial elements. The dancers in the paleben group consider rudat dance to be a performance because there are movements that resemble silat martial arts movements which are accompanied by the chanting of poems from the book Al-Barjanzi and also the beats of the tambourine musical instrument. The combination of elements of religion and martial arts makes the dancers interested in performing rudat which is still performed today by the dancers of the rudat paleben group. The rudat dance performance is held in the evening from 8 pm to 12 pm, however the dancers are still enthusiastic about taking part in the rudat performance.

Regarding oneself (*self*), in the rudat dance art in Subang Village, Kuningan Regency, dancers position themselves as dancers when the rudat performance is in progress. The dancers perform the dance in their own way which is still in accordance with the movements and rhythm of the music so that they can perform the dance with symbols and meanings that are conveyed to the audience and can help the audience understand the meaning of the rudat dance itself. It is also common for the dancers to come from the audience and join in dancing in certain parts because the rudat dancers can be anyone, whether they are members of the rudat group or the audience, they can join in dancing the rudat dance.

As a society (*society*), Currently the paleben group rudat dancers want to preserve the rudat dance art so that it is not forgotten by the people of Subang Village, Kuningan

Regency. This is because technology has developed greatly and culture from outside can make the younger generation forget this rudat dance art. Even though currently the enthusiasm of the people in Subang Village is still very high for rudat dance performances, this does not guarantee that in the future the community will still have high enthusiasm for rudat dance arts. Therefore, the Paleben group tries to ensure that rudat performances are held regularly so that people do not forget the art of rudat dance with additional variations of movements so that the audience and young dancers do not feel bored with this art of rudat dance.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation that has been presented in this research, an important conclusion can be drawn that the Rudat dance art has symbols that are interpreted as a guide for humans in living their lives. This symbol speaks about five important points, namely vigilance, the ability to face problems, the ability to survive, the ability to avoid problems, and the importance of low self-esteem. Apart from that, Rudat dance performers realize that it is very important to preserve the Rudat dance because its message is very important for all mankind.

Therefore, it is very important to maintain the Rudat dance so that it does not perish. This is because the meaning of the symbols can be a guide to life for humans. Apart from that, the meaning of the symbols it displays are still very relevant to human life now and in the future. Based on this, performers of this art must remain consistent in performing the Rudat dance for the sustainability of this art as well as to act as a mouthpiece for the meaning of the message contained in it.

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