



## Fenomena *Ndadi* Sebagai Media Pendidikan Nilai Dalam Masyarakat Tradisional Jawa

### *The Ndadi Phenomenon as a Medium for Values Education in Traditional Javanese Society*

**Mahattama Banteng Sukarno**

Christian Church Theological School of Indonesia

Jalan Hasanudin 134, Mangunsari, Sidomukti, Kota Salatiga, Jawa Tengah 50721

mahattamabantengsukarno@gmail.com

Info Artikel	Abstract
<p><b>Diterima</b> 21 Juni 2024</p> <p><b>Revisi I</b> 15 September 2024</p> <p><b>Revisi II</b> 18 Oktober 2024</p> <p><b>Disetujui</b> 30 Oktober 2024</p>	<p>Fenomena <i>Ndadi</i> dalam pertunjukan kesenian <i>Kuda Lumping</i> memiliki peran signifikan dalam masyarakat tradisional Jawa <i>Abangan</i>, yaitu sebagai media pendidikan berbasis nilai. Para sesepuh dan tokoh Agama Jawa memanfaatkannya untuk menyampaikan ajaran moral, etika, dan spiritual kepada anggota masyarakat, baik di dalam maupun di luar komunitas. Namun, fenomena ini sering kali menghadapi dominasi dan hegemoni ideologis dari individu atau kelompok agama formal yang menginterpretasikan <i>Ndadi</i> sesuai dengan perspektif mereka sendiri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami makna <i>Ndadi</i> dari sudut pandang para pemain, khususnya para sesepuh kesenian <i>Kuda Lumping</i>. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi dan mengacu pada perspektif interaksionisme simbolik George Herbert Mead, peneliti merumuskan pertanyaan penelitian: Bagaimana fenomena <i>Ndadi</i> dalam pertunjukan <i>Kuda Lumping</i> berfungsi sebagai media pendidikan nilai dalam masyarakat tradisional Jawa? Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa <i>Ndadi</i> merupakan media yang sangat bermakna dalam pendidikan berbasis nilai. Dalam memahami makna dan nilai-nilai tersebut, para pelaku sosial perlu memahami konsep kosmologis Agama Jawa, yang memungkinkan mereka untuk mengungkap nilai-nilai seperti keberanian, pengorbanan, kesetiaan, kebersamaan, keselarasan dengan alam dan dunia spiritual, keadilan, serta rasa hormat kepada orang yang lebih tua. Nilai-nilai ini dapat dengan mudah dipahami melalui <i>Ndadi</i>, karena relevan, otentik, menarik, interaktif, menghargai keragaman budaya, membangkitkan emosi dan refleksi, serta kontekstual, dengan memanfaatkan elemen visual dan pendengaran yang menarik. Selain itu, <i>Ndadi</i> juga menunjukkan</p>

	<p>keterkaitan erat antara ekspresi seni dan spiritualitas lokal yang unik, yang memperkuat identitas budaya komunitas.</p> <p><b>Kata Kunci:</b> <i>ndadi</i>; <i>kuda lumping</i>; masyarakat, nilai; kesadaran</p> <p>The <i>Ndadi</i> phenomenon in the <i>Kuda Lumping</i> art performance has a significant role in the traditional Javanese society of <i>Abangan</i>, namely as a value-based educational medium. Javanese elders and religious leaders use it to convey moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings to members of the community, both inside and outside the community. However, this phenomenon often faces the dominance and ideological hegemony of formal religious individuals or groups who interpret <i>Ndadi</i> according to their own perspectives. This research aims to understand the meaning of <i>Ndadi</i> from the perspective of the players, especially the elders of the <i>Kuda Lumping</i> art. Using a phenomenological approach and referring to the perspective of George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism, the researcher formulated a research question: How does the <i>Ndadi</i> phenomenon in the <i>Kuda Lumping</i> performance function as a medium of value education in traditional Javanese society? This study found that <i>Ndadi</i> is a very meaningful medium in value-based education. In understanding these meanings and values, social actors need to understand the cosmological concept of Javanese religion, which allows them to reveal values such as courage, sacrifice, loyalty, togetherness, harmony with nature and the spiritual world, justice, and respect for elders. These values can be easily understood through <i>Ndadi</i>, because they are relevant, authentic, engaging, interactive, appreciate cultural diversity, evoke emotions and reflections, and are contextual, by utilizing interesting visual and auditory elements. In addition, <i>Ndadi</i> also showed a close connection between artistic expression and unique local spirituality, which strengthens the cultural identity of the community.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>ndadi</i>; <i>kuda lumping</i>; society; values; consciousness</p>
--	---

## INTRODUCTION

The research of the *Ndadi* phenomenon as a medium of value education in traditional Javanese society has high significance, especially in facing contemporary challenges in moral education in Indonesia. When social morality is declining and cases of violence and ethical violations are increasing, it is important to revisit local cultural traditions such as *Ndadi*. The review aims to explore how *Ndadi* plays a role as a means of moral values education.

*Ndadi* is a Javanese spirituality practice. *Ndadi* is often understood as the same as trance, but it is very different. Trance can occur without special rituals, but *Ndadi* occurs with certain rituals, especially in the performance of the *Kuda Lumping* art which is part of the local wisdom of the Javanese people. By focusing on *Ndadi*, this research offers valuable insights into how the traditional mechanisms of moral and spiritual education can be revived to address the moral challenges of modern society.

The research of *Ndadi* is not the first, but no one has conducted a research by developing interdisciplinary studies, especially anthropological, sociological, and social psychological perspectives. These three perspectives are the researcher's paradigm to research as a media of value education in traditional Javanese society. Researchers understand that *Ndadi* is not only a cultural ritual but also a life tradition that has the potential to transmit moral principles such as responsibility, harmony, and respect. The approach bridges the gap between traditional cultural practices and contemporary educational needs and demonstrates the relevance of indigenous knowledge systems in shaping more ethical and cohesive societies. By examining *Ndadi's* role, this research contributes to a broader discourse on value education and offers practical solutions to address the decline in moral integrity, both in religious and cultural communities.

Alarming cases of moral violations, including tragic killings committed by individuals against their own family members have demonstrated the urgency to address the current state of moral education in Indonesia. These heinous acts, such as the brutal murder of a parent by his son and the attempt of one of the fathers to "send" his child to heaven, reflect a profound distortion of religious and cultural values that previously emphasized affection, respect, and family harmony. The phenomenon of moral degradation shows a significant disconnect between traditional values and modern social behavior, which is

exacerbated by the polarization of religious and political identities. The situation is not only an individual ethical crisis but also a communal one, as more and more individuals fail to internalize the moral teachings that once guided their actions both in the family and in society.

In this context, the research of the traditional mechanism of moral education such as the *Ndadi* phenomenon in Javanese society becomes very relevant. As a cultural practice deeply rooted in spiritual discipline and communal harmony, *Ndadi* offers a perspective to understand how moral values are traditionally instilled in everyday life. Reviving and understanding practices like these can provide a deeper insight into how moral principles can be effectively communicated and internalized in modern contexts, thus aiding in addressing the worsening moral crisis seen in cases of violence and social misconduct.

In the first week of 2023, Indonesia was shocked by the news that a husband and wife had been brutally murdered by their own child. Khairul Anwar (54) and Rohmah (50) were brutally killed by Doni Oktavianus (25). Oktavianus stabbed Anwar and Rohmah in the head and body until they died. (Ferd Almunanda, 2023.) Another heinous murder was committed by a father against his child. He stabbed his child 24 times with a kitchen knife, three of which went through the chest and into the victim's heart. Ironically, the reason for this murder was the father's desire for his child to go to heaven and to prevent him from seeing his mother working as a Lady

Companion (LC). (Adysha Citra Ramadan, 2023.)

"Entering heaven" is a noble aspiration in the values of religious and cultural communities in Indonesia. It is unfortunate, however, that this noble aspiration has been "distorted" by certain social actors who use it as a reason to take the lives of others, especially their own children. Similarly, a year earlier, a mother had taken the lives of her three children in the name of 'goodness'. The goodness she meant was to protect her children from poverty and suffering.

The murder of a child or a parent is generally considered a serious moral offence, especially in Indonesian society, which upholds religious and cultural values. In addition, there are other "serious" moral offenses that are no longer "foreign" to social interactions in society, including gambling, bullying, sexual harassment, LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) issues, unmarried pregnancy, and drug addiction. (Kompasiana, 2021.)

Based on the above cases of moral violations, it can be understood that the moral situation in Indonesian society is currently not in a good state. The actions of social actors in society that violate moral principles can be attributed to the deterioration of value education. One of the main factors contributing to this degradation is the polarisation of social and political identities (religion) within society. This polarisation has divided and eroded the moral values that should exist within both religious and cultural communities.

Polarisation in society has intensified since the 2014 general elections, leading to an increase in violence within religious and cultural

communities. (BNPT, 2023. ) This is a social reality that needs to be addressed with caution and wisdom. Negative actions resulting from low moral values, a decline in the quality and quantity of social interactions that focus on self and social harmony, an increase in inappropriate behaviour, and a decline in responsibility and environmental awareness highlight the importance of creatively emphasising values education to improve the quality and quantity of moral values in society.

Values education can help social actors to understand and internalise moral values such as responsibility and honesty, among others. The lack of quantity and quality of values education can lead to irresponsible and unethical behaviour in the everyday actions of social actors. Such irresponsible and unethical behaviour will affect the quality of interactions and social behaviour of individuals and communities within society, leading to a tendency to disregard differences, a lack of sympathy and empathy, and an inability to understand diversity. If not carefully addressed, this can lead to segregation, conflict and disharmony within religious and cultural communities.

In addition to the declining quality of morally good actions at both personal and community levels in social interactions and behaviour, the lack of values education can lead to inappropriate behaviour. Verbal abuse, bullying and even drug use are not uncommon. This is something that should be alien to a society that emphasises spirituality and religiosity, as stated in the first principle of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. As a result, values education in religious and

cultural communities is currently facing a challenging situation.

Low individual moral quality resulting from suboptimal value education leads to a lack of responsibility and environmental awareness. Individualism becomes more dominant than family values, which is ironic in an agrarian society that emphasises traditional culture. Therefore, it is crucial to continuously research and develop critical perspectives on values education and its implementation in society.

### **Literature Review**

In his research, Dodi Ilham emphasises that education is an essential means of advancing various aspects of society. In his research on "Initiating Values Education in the National Education System", he highlights the importance of values that can guide the learning process towards the core essence of education, which is to humanise humanity. This is based on the function of values education as a means of controlling and evaluating undesirable aspects within the world of education. (Dodi Ilham, 2019)

Similarly, Aiman Faiz and Imas Kurniawaty emphasise the importance of values education. In their research on the "Urgency of Values Education in the Era of Globalisation", they point out the threats and challenges that Indonesian society will face. Information technology provides wide access for external influences to penetrate knowledge, ideology and other aspects of the younger generation, which may not always be beneficial. Education in values becomes an important barrier against negative influences that threaten the harmony of Indonesian society. (Faiz & Kurniawaty, 2022)

Values education is complex in terms of dimensions and variables, both in teaching and delivery, to achieve optimal results. Sigit Purwanto explores *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppetry) as a medium for values education. *Wayang Kulit* performances are not only entertainment, but also a means of teaching moral values through stories, characters and other elements in the performance. An interesting aspect of *Wayang Kulit* is its "ability" to become an effective medium for inculcating values and character traits. (Sigit Purwanto, 2018)

Ewita Cahaya Ramadanti's research is interesting because it integrates Islamic values into science education. While values education generally falls within the realm of social-humanitarian studies, Ramadanti integrates it with the exact sciences. For her, an integrated learning approach between science and Islam at the primary level is crucial. This type of education will equip students with both knowledge and religious awareness. (Evita Cahaya Ramadanti, 2020)

Similarly, but with a different approach, Mitahur Rohman and Hairudin emphasise education through social and cultural values. They stress the need for a synthesis to address the roots of intolerance that have long been ingrained in Indonesia's young generation. They believe that the internalisation of these values can create social harmony in society. (Miftahur Rohman, 2018)

Based on the various studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that values education is crucial. The common thread between these studies is the similarities that emerge. However, there are also differences that serve as gaps for further research. Apart from the

empirical gaps in different research contexts, another gap that the author wishes to address is the medium of education.

In this research, the researcher shifted the focus of the research to value education from the perspective of formally recognized religions in Indonesia such as Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. On the contrary, this research explores the view of Javanese Religion, which is a belief system that currently combines the traditions of *Kapitayan*, Hindu Shiva, and Islamic mysticism. In contrast to previous research that used the Natural Sciences (IPA) curriculum or cultural performances such as *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppetry) as value education, this research explores a unique and poorly studied phenomenon from *Ndadi* in the performance of the *Kuda Lumping* art as a medium to transmit moral and spiritual values.

The phenomenon of *Ndadi* in the performance of the *Kuda Lumping* art is a significant ideological contestation field. From the point of view of clerics and religious authorities affiliated with officially recognized religions in Indonesia, *Ndadi* is often interpreted as a practice of polytheism, idolatry, or idolatrical practice because it involves a phenomenon that they understand as trance. However, *Kuda Lumping* practitioners, most of whom are adherents of the Javanese religion, have a different interpretation. For them, *Ndadi* is not an expression of polytheism or idolatry, but rather a profound spiritual experience that connects them to their ancestors and

reinforces communal values such as discipline, humility, and respect for the invisible forces in nature.

The difference in interpretation highlights *Ndadi* as a contestation field between competing religious and cultural ideologies. Therefore, this research will investigate how these cultural and spiritual practices function as a vehicle for values education in the context of Javanese religion, offering an alternative perspective to the dominant religious interpretation.

In exploring the *Ndadi* phenomenon as a medium of value education, this research focuses on the cultural and religious context in Salatiga, a city known for its rich Javanese cultural heritage and diverse religious traditions. The focus on *Ndadi*'s performance in *Kuda Lumping* allows for an in-depth investigation of how cultural expressions often viewed with suspicion by formal religious authorities can serve as an alternative avenue for the teaching of moral values. Through engagement with practitioners and community members, this research aims to uncover the layers of meaning embedded in the *Ndadi*, which for the Javanese people serves as a spiritual experience and education of core values such as solidarity, respect for nature, and harmonious living. These values are not transmitted through formal religious institutions, but through cultural practices that continue to be lived thus providing a unique perspective that challenges the conventional paradigm of value education.

## **METHODS**

The researcher developed the paradigm of symbolic interactionism from George Herbert Mead. The Mead paradigm is very relevant to researching the *Ndadi* phenomenon as a medium of value education in traditional Javanese society. This approach focuses on how the elders build social reality through symbolic interaction and how the process of internalizing moral values occurs through the relationship between the mind, the self (which is differentiated into I and me), and society. Using these three key variables, the research of *Ndadi* was conducted to understand the process of forming the morality of social actors and how to place themselves in Javanese society which is traditional and related to spiritual practices. (Mead, 1934)

The variable about the mind in Symbolic Interactionism refers to the capacity of the resource person to reflect, think, and interpret the world around him through symbols, especially language. The difference is that if Mead understands verbal language as a significant symbol and non-verbal language as insignificant, then in traditional Javanese society, non-verbal language such as gestures is also as significant as verbal language. (Sukarno, 2022)

In the context of the *Ndadi* phenomenon, the social actors involved in this ritual not only follow the formal rules that have been inherited, but also constantly interpret the meaning of each action they perform in the ritual. Through the reflection and internalization of cultural symbols, such as respect for ancestors and spiritual

practices, social actors are involved in the process of educating moral values. It is this mind that allows them to conform to existing social norms and, at the same time, develop a morality guided by traditional communal and spiritual contexts. (Sukarno, 2019)

The concept of self in Symbolic Interactionism consists of two aspects, namely I and me. Me is the self that has been internalized based on the expectations and norms of society, while I is a spontaneous response to unpredictable situations. In the *Ndadi* phenomenon, me can be understood as a representation of norms and values taught through rituals, such as order, spiritual discipline, and connection with community and ancestors. Meanwhile, I refer to the creative and spontaneous responses of social actors to how they express the spiritual consciousness they internalize. In the *Ndadi*, each social actor interacts with these spiritual and social elements, displaying a personal expression of values that have been ingrained in them, which further reshapes the communal perception of morality and values. (Sukarno, 2024)

According to Mead, the social variable is present in social actors through the internalization of social norms, rules, and symbols. Society is the main source of values that guide social actors in action. In the *Ndadi* phenomenon, traditional Javanese society is a structure that provides a symbolic framework for the education of moral values. Every action of social actors involved in *Ndadi* is influenced by the expectations of society about how a community member should act in the context of spiritual rituals. However,

more importantly, the actions seen by the community have been "decided" first through the process of internal interaction between the mind, self, and society in social actors. That is, a person's actions in the *Ndadi* ritual are not a mechanical reaction to external demands, but rather the result of internal negotiations influenced by their understanding of communal norms, personal spirituality, and social meaning. (Sukarno, 2022)

Strictly, the mind, self, and society simultaneously form a framework for social actors to understand and practice moral values in their cultural context. The *Ndadi* ritual is not only a representation of a dead tradition, but a continuous interaction of life that produces and reproduces moral values through the social actors involved in it. Therefore, the researcher developed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological method. (Baldwin, 1986)

As the research is conducted in the town of Salatiga, the descriptive data will be obtained from primary informants, namely the elders of the *Kuda Lumping* Art community in Salatiga. Salatiga City consists of four districts. These four cultural groups are distributed across the three districts. Initially, there was also a '*Kuda Lumping*' cultural group in Sidomukti District, but it is no longer in existence. In terms of existence, all four cultural groups have had elders or shamans since their establishment. Not all '*Kuda Lumping*' cultural groups have their own elders or shamans, so when there is a performance, they may borrow elders from other cultural groups. On the other hand, in most cultural groups, there are four elders, but the subject of this

research is the most senior elder among them. Some of these elders are: First, KS and Na from 'Siswo Kridho Budoyo' (Ngampel, RW 04, Blotongan Village, Sidorejo Lor Sub-district, Salatiga [light green]); second, Wa and Mus from 'Krido Buono' (Sembir, RT 02 / RW 02, Bugel Village, Sidorejo Lor Sub-district, Salatiga [light green]); third, Mu and On of Sari Mudi Budoyo (Karangpete, RT 02 / RW 06, Kutowinangun Kidul Village, Tingkir Subdistrict, Salatiga [light brown]); and fourth, Nga and JP of Lestari Budi Tamtomo (Tegalrejo Village RW 4, Tegalrejo Village, Argomulyo Subdistrict, Salatiga [dark brown]).



**Figure 1:** Map of Salatiga City

The author collected data from the elders based on one research question: How does the *Ndadi* phenomenon in *Kuda Lumping* performances function as a medium for values education in traditional Javanese society? The information obtained from this question was then subjected to a process of validation and reduction through triangulation to achieve data saturation. The triangulation process was carried out by clarifying information with the same informants as



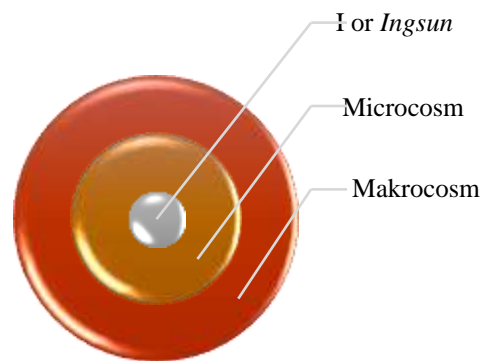
well as others based on keywords. (Zanki, 2020) The keywords used by the author are: mind, self, society, values and consciousness, developed from the perspective of George Herbert Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism. These five keywords are interwoven in the discussion that follows. (Sukarno, 2024)

## DISCUSSION

The phenomenon of *Ndadi* has long been a battleground of ideologies (especially religious ones). As mentioned earlier, religious figures from official government-sanctioned religions such as Islam and Christianity generally perceive *Ndadi* as an act of shirk (polytheism), idolatry and even idol worship. This understanding is understandable as they do not interpret the phenomenon from the perspective of the traditional Javanese art of *Kuda Lumping*.

As presented by the interviewees, they unanimously agree that the act of performing *Ndadi* in the presentation of *Kuda Lumping* art is not an act of shirk, idolatry or polytheism. Interestingly, this consensus was reached through separate interview processes. The understanding of these respected elders is based on their self-awareness of the cosmological concepts and the three philosophical principles of Javanese religion (The union between man as a servant and God, known as *Manunggaling Kawula-Gusti*; aims to protect, beautify, and save the world, or *Memayu Hayuning Bawana*; The essence of life comes from God and the guidance of *Sangkan Paraning Dhumadi*) that serve as the fundamental basis of *Kuda Lumping* art performance. (Endraswara, 2014)

The elders understand Javanese cosmology in a simple yet profound way, although their explanation may not seem so straightforward. For them, the world (cosmos) is divided into two realms: the macrocosm, known as *jagad gedhe* or the big world, and the microcosm, known as *jagad cilek* or the small world. (Endraswara, 2014)



**Figure 2:** Conceptual diagram of Javanese human cosmology from the perspective of Javanese religion

The microcosm can be understood as the self (individual human), while the macrocosm refers to individuals outside the human self. Within an individual there is the 'I' or '*Ingsun*'. The 'I' refers to the self within the individual, while the '*Ingsun*' refers to the divine self that resides within the individual. At this level, the concept of '*I-Ingsun*' is often misunderstood by the general public. For certain groups, this misunderstanding becomes a justification for their ideological hegemony and domination over the phenomenon of *Ndadi* in Javanese religion.

The concept of '*I-Ingsun*' is often accused of being the basis of polytheism, because it is understood as the union of man and *Ingsun* or God. This is not the case. God is understood

as a powerful entity that is close to humans, dwelling within them but not becoming one with them. This concept then develops as the basis for the philosophy of *Manunggaling kawula Gusti*.

The word '*Ingsun*' literally means 'I', but it refers to the more powerful entity, God or Gusti. Placing *Ingsun* in the microcosm emphasises that caution and wisdom should prevail in the actions of every Javanese individual. Each Javanese individual should include God, who resides within them. Human beings are seen as limited beings; therefore the 'self' should always strive to be close to God. This closeness extends to the point where God's will becomes more important than one's own. This sense of closeness is reflected in everyday behaviour, making it a strong and essential foundation for Javanese moral action and moral values.

In addition to being understood as the self (individual), the microcosm can also be understood as small communities within society. From this, the macrocosm can be understood as larger communities. For example, if the microcosm is seen as the immediate family, then the macrocosm would be other families beyond the immediate one. If the microcosm is seen as a small town, the macrocosm would be a larger town. Nevertheless, in the microcosm there is not only 'I' but also '*Ingsun*'. Therefore, all social actions and behaviours should always emphasise and be based on their relationship with the divine entity, God Almighty.

A good relationship will lead to positive interactions and self-reflection, which will give rise to moral values. The moral values that arise from the relationship between a servant and God, or '*I-Ingsun*', emphasise humanity

without forgetting one's place before God. In essence, these moral values revolve around humanity and devotion to God. (Endraswara, 2015)

In conveying these values to both the microcosm and the macrocosm, the Javanese have their uniqueness, which lies in their use of symbols. Javanese culture attaches great importance to symbols. These symbols represent one of the local wisdoms of the Javanese people in building social harmony according to the philosophy of *Memayu Hayuning Bawana* or creating a better and more beautiful world. The symbols are adapted to the context and society in which the values are born and/or transmitted.

Salatiga is an urban city with different social structures, both modern and traditional. In traditional Javanese society, there are at least three groups: *Priyayi*, *Santri* and *Abangan*. The *Kuda Lumpung* art community belongs to the Javanese *Abangan* community. The *Abangan*, generally outside the *Priyayi* and *Santri* communities, are often on the 'periphery' due to ideological hegemony and domination. This group is also associated with the common people, non-Islamic individuals and those who still maintain mystical Javanese religious traditions. On the other hand, the *Priyayi* are associated with merchants, while the *Santri* are associated with religious figures. Although seemingly primordial, the traditional social structure is still evident today. Interestingly, the definition of *Abangan* now transcends spatial and class shifts to include urban communities in cities. (Amanah Nurish, 2019)

In the context of Salatiga, the Javanese *Abangan* community has assimilated as agriculture has declined.

However, their character and worldview have remained relatively unchanged, including their adherence to mystical Javanese religious beliefs. Mystical Javanese religion emphasises closeness to God Almighty without neglecting human uniqueness. One way of expressing this closeness is through the phenomenon of *Ndadi* in *Kuda Lumping* art performance.

The phenomenon of *Ndadi* is not an obligatory part of the *Kuda Lumping* art performance. It can be omitted at the request of the patron. However, as a symbol of religiosity, *Ndadi* is an integral part of the *Kuda Lumping* performance as a work of art.

Art is an expression of human experience, and the same is true of *Kuda Lumping's* art performance. The elements of the art performance are arranged and constructed based on the philosophy and values lived within the community as a unique dialectic between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Because these human experiences are unique, artistic expressions may differ even within the same concept, such as *Kuda Lumping* Art.

As part of the art performance, the phenomenon of *Ndadi* is also an expression of experiences. These experiences are related to elements of the social environment. The *Abangan* Javanese perceive the social environment differently from the general population. As mentioned earlier, the cosmological concept determines the meaning of life and the actions of social actors within the community.

The phenomenon of *Ndadi* serves as both evidence and symbol of the interaction between the microcosm and the macrocosm. In the mystical

understanding of Javanese religion, the human world can be seen as the microcosm, while the world beyond humans (the supernatural) is the macrocosm. It is in this macrocosm that the elders believe the deceased who have not reached nirvana or heaven reside. They are the ancestors who are also creations of God. At this level, *Ndadi* in *Kuda Lumping* art performance can become a medium of interaction with these deceased ancestors. (Angela et al., 2009)

The ancestors do not come spontaneously. They are invited to participate in the activities of the present generation. The invitation is made with respect through rituals before the day of the performance. The ancestors who come during the *Kuda Lumping* performance express their existence through the performers by controlling their bodies, which lay people interpret as a possession trance. In reality, however, *Ndadi* has a fundamentally different meaning.

Possession trance can occur anywhere, but *Ndadi* is not the same. The elders of the *Kuda Lumping* art community may reject ancestors who wish to 'possess' the bodies of the art performers. Conversely, they may also forcefully command ancestors who refuse to leave the actors' bodies. Therefore, the social stigma that *Kuda Lumping* art actors engage in acts of polytheism, idolatry or idol worship is inaccurate. They do not worship the ancestors as they are also creations of God. Moreover, the elders include prayers from their respective faiths and religions, such as Islam or Christianity, in their ritual processes.

Returning to the original research question as to why the phenomenon of *Ndadi* in the *Kuda Lumping* art

performance can be used as a medium for imparting moral values, the simple answer based on the above exposition is that the phenomenon of *Ndadi* in the *Kuda Lumping* art performance is a form of spirituality and religiosity of social actors based on their life experiences.

The life experiences of these social actors vary, but social interactions in their daily behaviour have enabled them to construct moral values of humanity and divinity from these experiences. However, due to the dynamic nature of religious and cultural dynamics, the transmission of these values faces its challenges.

These challenges are also faced by the elders of the *Kuda Lumping* art community when they try to convey the moral values of humanity and divinity in the phenomenon of *Ndadi*. These challenges arise because *Ndadi* has become a battleground of ideological warfare. This reality has led the artists and supporters of the *Ndadi* phenomenon in the *Kuda Lumping* art performance to often face social stigma, stereotypes and even discrimination. However, despite these actions, people in society continue to enthusiastically seek out the phenomenon of *Ndadi* in the *Kuda Lumping* art performance. (Sukarno, 2019)

The public's enthusiasm for the phenomenon of *Ndadi* becomes an effective bridge for conveying moral values of humanity and divinity. As a result, the *Kuda Lumping* art performance is not presented haphazardly or without preparation. The elders carefully prepare the elements of the performance, not only for entertainment but also to teach moral values.

Key elements of the *Kuda Lumping* art performance that support the phenomenon of *Ndadi* as a medium for transmitting moral values include songs or *tembangs*, the gestures of the elders, offerings (*sesaji*), storytelling and the event announcer or *pambiyawara*. For the elders of the Javanese *Abangan* community, *tembangs* are not just a series of words but also mystical symbols. The verses of the *tembangs* are expressions in literary form, arising from the poet's reflections as a human being with a divine essence. Therefore, the *tembangs* played are not chosen arbitrarily, but are adapted to the stories performed during the event. The *tembang* singers must also prepare several *tembangs*, as the ancestors, who are believed to enter the body of the performer, often request such variety. (Usman, 2023)

The gestures of the elders, combined with offerings, are fascinating and often misunderstood. The elders often perform gestures of '*manembah*', which are often mistaken for acts of worship. *Manembah* is a gesture of reverence, adoration and devotion to something considered sacred, honourable, noble or of high value. It also reflects obedience, respect and recognition of the greatness of something. Because of these misconceptions, the event announcer helps to explain the values and meanings of these symbols, including the act of *manembah*.



**Figure 3:** The 'manembah' gesture performed by the elders

Emcees, or *pambiyawara*, also serve as a bridge to pass on knowledge to the current generation. Their role as an educational bridge is crucial because the current generation often doesn't understand the Javanese language, symbols and gestures used in performances, especially those related to the phenomenon of *Ndadi*. The success of the emcees or *pambiyawara* in bridging the verbal transmission of moral and divine values becomes one of the determinants of the success and continuity of the *Kuda Lumping* art community. (Sukarno, 2022)

Based on the findings from informant interviews, it is concluded that the phenomenon of *Ndadi* in *Kuda Lumping* performances can serve as a medium for teaching values in traditional Javanese society and is not limited to communities outside the Javanese ethnic group. Several factors underlie the use of *Ndadi* as an educational medium, including:

- a. Relevant and authentic: The cycle of life and death is one of the most authentic aspects of society, experienced by every individual. The phenomenon of *Ndadi* serves as a medium to teach about this reality and how to deal with it in real life.

- b. Engaging and interactive: The inclusion of *Ndadi* in artistic performances makes it fascinating rather than frightening for many people. It becomes an attractive spectacle for the audience to come, observe and learn about the values embedded in it. The public display of this phenomenon also encourages interaction within the community.
- c. Embracing cultural diversity: The phenomenon of *Ndadi* is not exclusive to *Kuda Lumping*, but is also found in other art forms such as *jaranan* and *reog*. Despite the different art forms, *Ndadi* acts as a unifying symbol, emphasising that it can be a medium of value education across different cultures.
- d. Evoking emotions and reflection: Death remains a great mystery to the living. The existence of ancestors believed to possess the performers stimulates the curiosity of the living to understand them. Although the possessed performers often communicate non-verbally through gestures, these gestures can convey much more, evoking emotions and reflections in the audience and the performers themselves.
- e. Contextual: The occurrence of *Ndadi* is not spontaneous. It involves certain processes, including rituals. Through these rituals, the elders understand the context of the artistic performance and the moral values present in the local community. The inclusion of local figures, believed to be deceased ancestors, in the *Kuda Lumping* performance offers a new perspective on contextualisation in the Javanese mystical context.

- f. Visually and aurally engaging: *Kuda Lumping* performances always include captivating props and sound elements. The costumes, sets, music, offerings, presenters and stories are all designed to be engaging. This effort is crucial as they strive to maintain a place in people's hearts amidst the abundance of entertainment available in society.

The above factors show that the phenomenon of *Ndadi* in *Kuda Lumping* performances can be an educational medium for Javanese society. Moreover, it is not impossible for this phenomenon to serve as an educational medium for individuals or communities beyond Javanese society.

As a valued cultural heritage, *Kuda Lumping* is a popular traditional art form in Javanese society. Beyond mere entertainment, *Kuda Lumping* performances have strong educational values. A fascinating aspect of these performances is the appearance of *Ndadi*, which is seen as a medium of value education in traditional Javanese society.

*Kuda Lumping* is a performance art form in which the dancers move as if they were riding horses or other animals. It involves various elements including music, costumes and accessories. *Kuda Lumping* is often associated with spiritual traditions and animistic beliefs in Javanese society.

*Ndadi* is a phenomenon where a dancer or participant in a *Kuda Lumping* performance is said to be 'possessed' by spirits or spiritual entities. During possession, the dancer undergoes behavioural changes and takes on different characteristics. The person experiencing the possession is believed

to be in a trance or in contact with the spiritual realm.

*Kuda Lumping* performances involving *Ndadi* are considered a medium of values education in traditional Javanese society. Through *Ndadi*, important moral and ethical messages can be conveyed to the audience. Values such as bravery, loyalty, justice, sacrifice and respect for elders are often emphasised in these performances.

*Ndadi* in *Kuda Lumping* performances contains strong symbolism. The audience is encouraged to interpret the behaviour of the possessed dancer as an embedded moral message. Some of these moral values are:

- a. Bravery: During *Ndadi*, the performer demonstrates bravery by confronting spiritual entities or spirits that possess his or her body. This teaches the important lesson of facing fears and gathering courage to overcome obstacles.
- b. Sacrifice: The possessed artist often demonstrates acts of sacrifice by facing dangerous or challenging situations without feeling pain or harm. This illustrates the importance of sacrifice in achieving greater goals or ensuring the safety of the community.
- c. Loyalty: In *Ndadi*, the possessed artist may show loyalty to the spiritual entities they consider part of themselves. They follow instructions and show deep devotion. This reflects the importance of loyalty to values and beliefs that are integral to one's identity and existence.
- d. Togetherness: *Kuda Lumping* performances with *Ndadi* involve collaboration and cooperation between dancers and musicians. This

emphasises the importance of togetherness in achieving common goals. The audience also experiences a sense of togetherness by witnessing the performance and sharing the same emotional impact.

- e. Living in harmony with nature and spirituality: *Kuda Lumping* performances are closely linked to the animistic beliefs and spirituality of traditional Javanese society. Through *Ndadi*, messages can be conveyed about the importance of living in harmony with nature and the spiritual realm. Audiences are encouraged to acknowledge the presence of spiritual beings and to maintain a balance with the universe.
- f. Justice: In some cases, *Ndadi* can represent situations where the possessed dancer serves as a link to the spiritual world to seek justice or offer guidance. This teaches the importance of justice in solving problems and making wise decisions.
- g. Respect for elders: The elders of the *Kuda Lumping* community believe that the entities that possess the performers during *Ndadi* are deceased ancestors. As fellow creations of God, it is their duty to respect the elders, even in different realms.

Despite the strong educational value of *Ndadi* in *Kuda Lumping* performances, the challenges of preserving and developing this cultural heritage cannot be ignored. Social changes, modernisation and foreign cultural influences may threaten the existence of this traditional art form. Therefore, the joint efforts of the government, artist communities, educators and society at large are needed to preserve the tradition of *Kuda*

*Lumping* performances and the values they embody.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the different viewpoints prevalent in society, both in terms of open and closed ideologies (religious dogma), the phenomenon of *Ndadi* serves as an effective medium for teaching and instilling values in the traditional Javanese *Abangan* community. The ideological dominance and hegemony of such understandings, emanating from individuals or communities with formal religious perspectives, can further reinforce segregation within society. Conversely, the conscious acceptance of the meanings and values derived from the *Ndadi* phenomenon, as manifested in the traditional '*Kuda Lumping*' art performance, can serve as a mirror and bridge for constructive dialogue on ideological and theological values among social actors in the community, whether individual or communal.

The effectiveness of this value-based educational medium depends on the context of the learners. The *Ndadi* phenomenon may not be as effective in communities outside the *Abangan* society, as each community has its own distinct ideologies. Nevertheless, in the context of value-based education, the willingness to be open and learn from other cultures can greatly contribute to improving the quality of education, both in terms of process and outcome. Ultimately, this research aims to stimulate discussion and broaden horizons about Indonesia's cultural richness, which can serve as an effective medium for value-based education to foster greater harmony among the diverse religious and cultural communities in Nusantara.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the research and writing of the article entitled "The *Ndadi* Phenomenon as a Medium for Values Education in Traditional Javanese Society". Thank you to the resource persons who willingly shared their knowledge and experience on the *Ndadi* phenomenon in Javanese society. Without their active participation and valuable information, this research would not have been possible.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the institutions and funding agencies that provided the necessary financial support and facilities. Without their support, this research would not have been possible. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their moral support and encouragement throughout the writing process. This success is the result of the combined hard work and dedication of all those involved. I hope that this article can make a positive contribution to the education of values in traditional Javanese society and provide a deeper understanding of the *Ndadi* phenomenon.

## REFERENCES

- Almunanda, F. (2023). No Title. *Detiknews*.  
<https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6499387/anak-di-jambi-tega-bunuh-ayah-dan-ibu-kandung-ini-tampangnya>
- Amanah Nurish. (2019). *Agama Jawa: Setengah Abad Pasca-Clifford Geertz* (1 (ed.)). LKiS.
- Angela, L., Springate, C., In-country, A. C. F. O. R., Ilmu, F., Dan, S., Politik, I., & Malang, U. M. (2009). *Kuda Lumpung Dan Fenomena Kesurupan Massal: Dua Studi Kasus Tentang Kesurupan*.
- Baldwin, J. D. (1986). *George Herbert Mead: a unifying theory for sociology*. Sage Publications.
- BNPT. (2023). No Title. *BNPT*.  
<https://bnpt.go.id/mitigasi-ancaman-polarisasi-sosial-dan-indentitas-bnpt-ri-ajak-partai-politik-perkuat-wawasan-kebangsaan-kepada-konstituenya>
- Endraswara, S. (2014). *Mistik Kejawaen* (v). Narasi.
- Endraswara, S. (2015). *AGAMA JAWA: Ajaran, Amalan, dan Asal-usul Kejawaen* (1st ed.). Narasi.
- Faiz, A., & Kurniawaty, I. (2022). Urgensi Pendidikan Nilai di Era Globalisasi. *BASICEDU*, 6(3), 3222–3229.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i3.2581>
- Ilham, D. (2019). No Title. *Didaktika*, 8(3).  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.73>
- Kompasiana. (2021). No Title. *Kompasiana*.  
[https://www.kompasiana.com/klyrivena/5cf4c94b0d82303b765cbd45/beberapa-contoh-penyimpangan-moral-yang-ada-di-lingkungan-sekitar?page=2&page\\_images=1](https://www.kompasiana.com/klyrivena/5cf4c94b0d82303b765cbd45/beberapa-contoh-penyimpangan-moral-yang-ada-di-lingkungan-sekitar?page=2&page_images=1)
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *MIND, SELF, and SOCIETY*.
- Purwanto, S. (2018). No Title. *TA'ALLUM*, 6(1).  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21274/taalum.2018.6.1.1-30>
- Ramadan, A. C. (2023). No Title. *Republika.Co.Id*.  
<https://ameera.republika.co.id/berita/ru10f7425/kasus-ayah-bunuh-anak-kandung-di-gresik-mengapa->



- orang-tua-tega-menyakiti-anak  
 Ramadanti, E. C. (2020). No Title. *Tawadhu*, 4(1).  
<https://ejournal.iaiiig.ac.id/index.php/TWD/article/view/224>
- Rohman, M. (2018). No Title. *Al-Tadzkiyyah*, 9(1).  
<http://www.ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/tadzkiyyah/article/viewFile/2603/1901>
- Sukarno, M. B. (2019). *Fenomena Simbolik Kesurupan Dalam Pementasan Tari Kuda Lumping Sebagai Simbol Counter Hegemoni Ideologi Agama*. 1(1), 1–18.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17605/sagacity.v1i1>
- Sukarno, M. B. (2022). *Kajian Teori Interaksionisme Simbolik George Herbert Mead Terhadap Makna Fenomena Kesurupan Pada Pagelaran Kesenian Kuda Lumping di Kota Salatiga* [Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana].  
<https://repository.uksw.edu/handle/123456789/23359>
- Sukarno, M. B. (2024). *Memahami Simbol (Sebuah Pengantar dalam Paradigma Intraksionisme Simbolik George Herbert Mead)* (1st ed.). Deepublish.
- Usman, A. H. J. (2023). Representasi Mimikri Pada Novel Dari Dalam Kubur Karya Soe Tjen Marching. *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, Dan Sastra*, 9(2), 886–900.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v9i2.2761>
- Zanki, H. A. (2020). Teori Psikologi Dan Sosial Pendidikan (Teori Interaksi Simbolik). *Scolae: Journal of Pedagogy*, 3(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.56488/scolae.v3i2.82>