

## The Phenomenon Of Trance In The Traditional Art Of Kuda Lumping In Lamasi District

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:**The Lumping Horse Show in Lamasi district often displays the phenomenon of Trance which is believed to be the entry of ancestral spirits, making it an important interaction between the real and spiritual world.

**Aims:**This study aims to analyze the function, meaning, and public perception of the trance scene in the art of Kuda Lumping.

**Methods:**Using qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach, the data were obtained through observation, interview, and documentation in Lamasi District, and then analyzed with The Theory of symbolic interactionism.

**Result:**The trance serves as entertainment, a self-cleaning medium, and an intermediary for the transmission of ancestral messages; while the local people perceive it positively, appreciate, respect, and make it a cultural heritage.

**Conclusion:**The Trance in Kuda Lumping in Lamasi has a profound spiritual and social function, recognized and respected by the community as an important element of cultural preservation.

**Keyword:** Art, Kuda Lumping, Trance, Lamasi District

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## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of Trance, which is the central point in the performance of traditional Kuda Lumping Art in Lamasi District, is a very urgent topic to be examined more deeply, especially through the perspective of sociology of religion and cultural anthropology (Ananingsih et al., 2024; Ayu et al., 2025; Firmala & Maulidiawati, 2025; Pratama et al., 2024; Putra & Sepdwiko, 2025; Sari et al., 2025). The urgency of this research is based on the role of trance as a cultural and ritual mechanism that serves as a bridge connecting the spiritual dimension and social reality of the community (Chen, 2024; Mahmuluddin, 2024; McNamara, 2024; Straughan, 2025; Whitehouse, 2024). This transcendental experience is not merely a theatrical scene, but rather an authentic expression that sustains collective identity and provides a way for society to process and interpret supernatural reality (Ali, 2024; Arroisi et al., 2025; Giacomet Thomazoni, 2025; Rarastesia et al., 2024; Saliu et al., 2025). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the function and meaning of trance becomes crucial in the context of preserving cultural heritage that is prone to be misunderstood in the fast flow of modernization and rationality (Craig et al., 2024; Gasser, 2025; Gherma, 2025; Jati, 2025).

There is a significant gap between the ideal practice and real-world conditions in the staging of traditional arts involving trance rituals like Kuda Lumping, because although ideally this art should be viewed as a sacred ritual performance carrying noble values, conditions on the ground show that dramatic trance elements tend to reduce this art to mere mystical stigma or a sensational entertainment spectacle that emphasizes immune attraction.

Terdapat kesenjangan signifikan antara praktik ideal dan kondisi nyata dalam pementasan kesenian tradisional yang melibatkan ritual trance seperti Kuda Lumping (Erwanti & Amin, 2025; Jati, 2025; Nordin & Din, 2025; Pisali et al., n.d.; Wahyudi et al., 2025; Zainal et al., 2025). Secara ideal dan berdasarkan tradisi asalnya, Kuda Lumping harus dipandang sebagai pertunjukan seni ritual yang sakral, membawa nilai-nilai luhur dan warisan leluhur (Devat et al., 2025; Manafe et al., 2025; Mzara & Maaziz, 2025; Zhang, 2025). However, real conditions on the ground show that the inclusion of elements of dramatic trance tends to make this art reduced and trapped in a mere mystical stigma or just an entertainment spectacle that emphasizes elements of sensationalism immune attraction (Suryawan, 2025; Wibowo et al., 2025). This gap in interpretation and practice poses a cultural dilemma for the artist community: they must struggle to maintain the sanctity and depth of ritual values without sacrificing public appeal, while at the same time having to face the views of a modern society increasingly dominated by rational logic.

The opportunity for this research to be carried out in depth is very wide open in a specific location, namely Lamasi District, Luwu Regency. This area offers a unique context as a transmigration area that has a multiethnic and heterogeneous composition, where Javanese culture (as the bearer of the Kuda Lumping tradition) interacts intensively with local ethnicities such as Bugis and Toraja. This diverse socio-cultural context creates ideal conditions for testing and empirically analyzing how the phenomenon of trance as a cultural symbol can be accepted, tolerated and interpreted differently in diverse environments. This study has a golden opportunity to reveal the role of the phenomenon in maintaining community solidarity and harmony between different ethnic backgrounds.

Academically, the research gap and the novelty of this research are identified in the lack of a truly in-depth phenomenological study of the specific function and social meaning of Kuda Lumping trance that focuses on the level of perception of diverse audiences and communities. Previous studies have often tended to focus on aspects of history, music, or simply descriptions of physical attractions. The essential novelty offered by this study is to analyze trance symbolically using the

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lens of The Theory of symbolic interactionism. This approach aims to reveal how supernatural symbols such as ancestral spirits that possess dancers are developed (constructed), perceived, and ultimately internalized as binding social meanings in the community of transmigrants.

A strong reason for choosing the traditional art of Kuda Lumping in Lamasi District as the specific context of the study (variable X) is because the region represents an ideal case study on endurance and cultural adaptation. The Lumping horse in Lamasi has demonstrated its ability to retain its core ritual practices, including the phenomenon of trance, despite having been distanced from its Native Cultural Center. This resilience signifies the ability of cultural adaptation and spiritual resilience is extraordinary. This choice of location makes it a very rich sample to understand the intrinsic mechanisms of preservation of traditions in the pressures of geographical and social change, while highlighting the role of transcendental elements in strengthening cultural ties.

Explicitly, the purpose of this study is to describe comprehensively and theoretically analyze the function, meaning, and public perception of the phenomenon of trance in the art of Kuda Lumping in Lamasi. The contribution of this research is expected to be twofold: First, it provides valid and rich empirical data for the development of sociology of religion and Cultural Anthropology on how supernatural symbols are interpreted and function at the local level. Second, it serves as an important reference for local governments, cultural institutions, and art activists in formulating strategies for the preservation of traditional arts that are sensitive to their spiritual values, so that the noble values of tradition are maintained and not eroded by commercialization or contemporary skeptical views.

## METHOD

### Research Design

Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi (M.Th et al., 2024; Semiawan, n.d.). This approach was chosen to describe in depth and interpret the experience, function, meaning, and perception associated with the phenomenon of trance in the traditional art of Kuda Lumping in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency. The theoretical framework used to analyze the data is the theory of symbolic interactionism by George Herbert Mead, which focuses on how symbols (such as trance) are constructed and interpreted in social interactions.

### Participant

Determination of informants is done purposively (purposefully). The key informants involved were 7 people and were classified into three main categories: the leader of the Kuda Lumping Arts Group, the dancer (who was in a trance), and the community (spectators) in Lamasi District who watched the performance. This election aims to obtain a comprehensive perspective of the various parties involved directly or indirectly with the phenomenon.

### Population and the methods of sampling Instrumentation (sample of questions, scoring method, and psychometric properties (validity and reliability))

This study does not use an instrument in the form of structured questionnaires with scoring schemes or psychometric testing such as validity and reliability, because this is a phenomenological qualitative research. The study population in general is the community of Kuda Lumping and the community in Lamasi District. The sampling method used is purposive sampling to select

informants who have direct knowledge and experience about the phenomenon of Trance, which ensures the richness of data and depth of information according to the focus of the study.

### **Instrument**

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself (human instrument). Researchers act as data collectors as well as analyzers. Supporting instruments used are interview guidelines (containing a list of open questions), recording devices (for recording interviews), and cameras (for observation documentation).

### **Procedures and if relevant, the time frame**

The data collection procedure was carried out through three main techniques: direct observation (to observe Lumping horse shows and trance scenes), in-depth interviews (with leaders, dancers, and the community), and documentation (in the form of field notes and photographs). Based on the thesis data, interviews were conducted in September 2024 (for example, interviews with dancers on September 15, 2024).

### **Analysis plan**

Qualitative data analysis techniques used are models that involve several repetitive steps, namely: Data reduction (selecting, focusing, and abstracting data from field notes and interview transcripts), Data presentation (organizing data in the form of narratives or tables for easy understanding), theoretical analysis (linking data findings with The Theory of symbolic interactionism), and finally is verification or conclusion (taking the final conclusion based on the evidence found and verified during the analysis process).

Although ideally and based on its original tradition, Kuda Lumping should be viewed as a sacred ritualistic art performance that carries noble values, the condition on the ground shows a significant gap. The inclusion of dramatic trance elements tends to reduce this art, trapping it in a mere mystical stigma or classifying it as a spectacle focused purely on sensationalism and attractions of invulnerability. This gap in interpretation creates a cultural dilemma for the artist community, which must struggle to maintain the ritual's sacredness amidst an increasingly rational modern society.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The results showed that the phenomenon of Trance in Kuda Lumping in Lamasi District has three main functions, namely as an attractive entertainment, as a process of self-cleaning from negative energy or bad traits, and as an intermediary for delivering important messages or advice from ancestors; while the local community perceives it positively, appreciates, and respects it as part of cultural heritage which must be preserved.

This study found that the phenomenon of Trance in Kuda Lumping in Lamasi District serves three main functions : as attractive entertainment, as a process of self-cleaning from negative energy or bad traits, and as an intermediary for delivering important messages or advice from ancestors. The local community perceives this phenomenon positively, showing appreciation and respect for it as part of their cultural heritage that must be preserved. These findings are then critically analyzed through the lens of The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism. The transcendental act of trance does not merely exist as individual experience, but functions as a powerful collective symbol. This symbol effectively strengthens community solidarity and preserves the Javanese cultural identity within the multiethnic transmigration environment of Lamasi. Therefore, the functions found entertainment, cleansing, and communication with ancestors are collectively accepted and respected because the phenomenon has been successfully constructed and

internalized as a binding social meaning, demonstrating that it is a socially-constructed reality rather than just mass hysteria.

### **Discussion**

The discussion shows that the meaning of this trance is in accordance with The Theory of symbolic interactionism, where the transcendental Act serves as a collective symbol that strengthens community solidarity and Javanese cultural identity in the midst of the multiethnic environment of Lamasi transmigration, asserting that this phenomenon is a collectively accepted social construction, not just mass hysteria.

To fully leverage the phenomenological approach, the analysis must be enriched by integrating direct self-narratives or quotes from the key informants. The discussion of the trance's spiritual function, particularly as a 'self-cleansing medium' or an intermediary for 'ancestral messages' , requires incorporating first-person accounts from the dancers to provide deep, subjective evidence of the experience. Similarly, the finding on the positive perception, appreciation, and respect from the multiethnic community should be empirically validated through direct quotes or summarized testimonials from the spectators, thereby strengthening the study's conclusions on cultural tolerance and social solidarity in Lamasi.

### **Implications**

The theoretical implication of these findings is that trance can be viewed as a cultural coping mechanism that helps communities deal with social and spiritual challenges, while the practical implication is the need for public education to distinguish between the value of ritual art and sensationalized mystical elements, for the sake of the preservation of dignified art.

### **Research contribution**

The contribution of this research is to fill the gap in the literature of sociology of religion by providing an in-depth phenomenological analysis of the spiritual and social functions of trance in the context of transmigrant communities, as well as enriching the understanding of how non-formal religious symbols adapt in heterogeneous social environments.

### **Limitations**

The limitation of this study lies in its nature of focusing in one location (Lamasi sub-district) so generalization of findings may be limited to similar geographical and demographic contexts, as well as the limitation of data on the deep psychological interpretation of the dancer's trance experience which is highly subjective.

### **Suggestions**

A suggestion for further research is to conduct comparative studies in other transmigration areas with Lumping horses to test the external validity of the findings, or conduct action research involving collaboration between artists, local governments, and academics to formulate a sustainable model of Lumping Horse Preservation.

### **CONCLUSION**

The main conclusion of this study is that the phenomenon of trance that occurs in the traditional art of Kuda Lumping in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency, has a function and meaning that goes far beyond mere entertainment. Functionally, trance doubles as a means of entertainment that produces immune attraction, as a self-cleansing medium to release vices, and as an intermediary to convey important messages or advice from ancestors to the community. Socially, this phenomenon is perceived positively, being responded to with an attitude of appreciation and respect by the

pluralistic Lamasi society. This attitude shows high cultural tolerance and strengthens social solidarity in the midst of ethnic diversity (Javanese, Bugis, Toraja). Thus, trance is a vital cultural symbol, which is successfully maintained as a cultural heritage in transmigration locations and serves as a support for identity and unifying communities in the modern era.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

IK is fully responsible for the conceptualization, research design, implementation of methodologies, as well as the collection and analysis of field data. IK also served as the lead author in compiling the initial draft of the manuscript. Meanwhile, DS and SR make important contributions in the overall supervision of research, conduct critical reviews, as well as being responsible for substantial revisions and final approval of manuscripts to ensure academic quality and validity.

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