

The Meaning of Moral Advice for the Bride in the Wotik Ritual of Wawi Waten in the Kloangpopot Indigenous People

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine in depth the meaning of moral warnings conveyed to the bride in the Wotik Wawi Waten rite in the Kloangpopot indigenous people. This rite is an important part of the traditional marriage series that is full of cultural values and life norms that have been passed down from generation to generation. The approach used in this study is qualitative descriptive, with data collection techniques through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders and cultural actors, and documentation of the practice of the rite. The results of the study show that there are six main values contained in the message, namely the recognition of origin and family ties; integration in the husband's family; self-control and social ethics; loyalty and togetherness; expectations of fertility and continuity of generations as well as simplicity and value orientation. These values are conveyed through symbolic and meaningful indigenous languages, so that they not only function as advice, but also as a means of cultural transmission and the formation of identity and the role of women in the Kloangpopot community. Thus, this rite has a strategic role in maintaining the sustainability of cultural values while strengthening the social structure of indigenous peoples

INTRODUCTION

Traditional marriage is a form of cultural expression that is full of values, norms, and symbols that are inherited from generation to generation in a society. In the context of a multicultural Indonesian society, the practice of traditional marriage not only serves as a procession of unification of two individuals, but also as a social mechanism to transmit cultural and moral values to the next generation. Thus, traditional marriage has a dual function, namely as a social event as well as a cultural institution that contains educational and normative dimensions. This view is in line with the concept of culture as a system of meaning inherited through social practices (Koentjaraningrat, 2009; Geertz, 1973), as well as strengthened by empirical findings that show that marriage traditions play a role in the formation of social character and identity (Pratiwi & Nugroho, 2023; Rahmawati, 2024).

Furthermore, various studies show that each stage in the traditional marriage ritual contains a symbolic meaning that serves to regulate social relations and strengthen the collective value of society. Ritual is not only understood as a ceremonial act, but as a system of symbols that internalizes social values (Turner, 1969; Keesing, 1981). In this context, research by Putri and Yuliana (2022) reveals that the Minangkabau traditional marriage procession functions as a means of internalizing social values and strengthening the kinship structure. Similar findings are also shown by Sari (2020) in the Javanese tradition and Lestari (2019) in Bali, which affirm that symbols in marriage rituals have educational and integrative functions. In fact, recent research shows that ritual symbols remain relevant as a medium of cultural communication in modern society (Sembiring, 2022).

In this framework, the existence of moral warnings as part of the traditional marriage ritual is very significant. Moral advice is not just in the form of normative advice, but is a symbolic communication practice that contains values, norms, and social ethics that are inherited orally. Oral traditions have an important role in maintaining the sustainability of cultural values because they are conveyed in a sacred context (Sibarani, 2012; Hidayat, 2020). Kurniawan's research (2021) shows that oral traditions are an effective medium in transmitting cultural values between generations. In addition, Wulandari (2021) found that traditional speech in Bugis marriage rituals functions as a means of moral education that shapes the character of the bride. Thus, moral advice can be understood as a cultural instrument that has an educational as well as normative function.

Furthermore, the gifts addressed to the bride have a strategic position in the cultural value structure. In many traditional societies, women are positioned as guardians of family harmony and heirs of moral values. Therefore, advice to the bride generally emphasizes domestic responsibility, fidelity, and self-control. Dewi's research (2018) shows that women have a central role in maintaining the sustainability of family values in Nusa Tenggara society. This finding is strengthened by Fitriani and Hadi (2020) who show that the construction of women's roles in marriage culture is formed through social and symbolic

processes. Thus, moral advice to the bride not only has an individual impact, but also has far-reaching social implications.

In addition, international studies show that marriage rituals in various cultures contain universal values such as loyalty, responsibility, and social harmony. Ritual is understood as a mechanism for the formation of social cohesion (Turner, 1969) as well as a system of meaning that must be interpreted in a cultural context (Geertz, 1973). In addition, gender theory asserts that women's roles are social constructs formed through cultural practices (Ortner, 1974; Beauvoir, 1949). Therefore, moral messages in marriage rituals can be understood as part of a symbolic system that represents and shapes gender relations in society.

However, in the modern context, the tradition of traditional marriage is not static, but has adapted to social changes. The values in ritual are still maintained, although they have undergone reinterpretation along with the influence of modernity (Giddens, 1991; Rahman, 2021). Research by Pratiwi and Nugroho (2023) and Rahmawati (2024) shows that the tradition of marriage undergoes a transformation of meaning without losing the essence of its cultural value. This shows the existence of a dialectic between tradition and modernity that produces new forms that are more contextual.

In the context of the Kloangpopot indigenous people, the wawi waten wotik rite is one of the cultural practices that still maintains this symbolic and normative function. This rite not only serves as the legitimacy of marriage, but also as a space for the delivery of moral warnings by traditional priests to the bride, especially the bride. The message is believed to be a guideline for life that directs women's attitudes and behaviors in family life.

However, scientific studies that specifically highlight the meaning of moral warnings in this rite are still relatively limited. Most previous research has focused more on the ritual aspect in general, without examining in depth the speech of the wejangan as an autonomous symbolic practice. In fact, as shown by various previous studies, traditional speech is an important medium in the reproduction of social values and cultural construction (Wulandari, 2021; Kurniawan, 2021). Thus, there is a research gap that needs to be filled.

Based on this description, this research is important to be conducted in order to examine in depth the meaning of moral warnings addressed to the bride in the wawi waten ritual in the Kloangpopot indigenous people. This research not only describes the content of the wejangan, but also interprets the symbolic meaning contained in it and reveals how these values shape the construction of women's roles. Thus, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the study of culture, symbolic communication, and gender, as well as a practical contribution to the preservation of local culture in the midst of increasingly complex social change currents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marriage Ritual as a System of Cultural and Moral Meaning

Marriage rituals in indigenous peoples are not just ceremonies, but symbolic systems that contain moral, social, and spiritual values that are inherited from generation to generation. In the context of cultural anthropology, ritual is understood as a medium of value transmission that regulates social relations as well as the legitimacy of individual status in the community. Studies of marriage rituals in various ethnic Indonesians show that each stage of the ritual contains a moral message that serves as a guideline for domestic life for the bride and groom (Hasyim, 2022). Other research confirms that wedding rituals have a profound philosophical dimension, including the values of responsibility, loyalty, and social harmony instilled through traditional symbols and practices (Rizki et al., 2023).

In the perspective of semiotics, ritual is understood as a system of signs that contain denotative and connotative meanings. Each symbol in the ritual has an educational function, especially in conveying moral advice to the bride, both explicitly and implicitly. This strengthens the position of ritual as an effective means of cultural education in traditional societies.

The Wotik Wawi Waten Tradition in the Kloangpopot Community

The Wotik Wawi Waten tradition is one of the cultural practices of the Kloangpopot indigenous people in Sikka Regency which is still maintained today. Recent research shows that this ritual not only serves as part of the wedding procession, but also as a means of symbolic communication that contains moral and social values (Alanti, 2023). In this ritual, the use of figurative language such as metaphors, repetitions, and symbols is the main medium in conveying messages to the bride, especially the bride.

In addition, other rituals within the same community, such as the Lado Ceremony, also demonstrate the use of powerful symbolic language in conveying moral meaning, including protection, hope, and the balance of domestic life (Bala et al., 2024). This shows that the Kloangpopot people have a consistent cultural system in using rituals as a medium for conveying normative values.

Thus, Wotik Wawi Waten can be understood as part of a broader cultural system, which places ritual language as the primary instrument in shaping the moral consciousness of individuals in the context of marriage.

Ritual Language and Moral Advice for Brides

Language in traditional rituals has an important role as a means of delivering moral advice. In Wotik Wawi Waten, moral messages are often packaged in the form of figurative language that is rich in meaning, so it requires contextual interpretation to understand the message conveyed. Research shows that the use of language styles such as symbols, hyperbole, and repetition aims to reinforce moral messages and improve the memory of the recipient of the message (Alanti, 2023).

In particular, advice to the bride usually relates to values such as loyalty, domestic responsibility, respect for the family, and the ability to maintain domestic harmony. These findings are in line with ethnolinguistic studies that

state that ritual language in the context of marriage functions as a mechanism for internalizing cultural values to individuals (Soge & Janggo, 2024).

Furthermore, ritual language also acts as a tool of social control that regulates individual behavior in accordance with societal norms. Thus, the moral advice in Wotik Wawi Waten is not only personal, but also collective, as it reflects social expectations of women's roles in the family and community.

Semiotic and Ethnolinguistic Approaches in Ritual Analysis

The study of meaning in traditional rituals generally uses semiotic and ethnolinguistic approaches. Semiotic approaches, particularly those developed by Roland Barthes, allow for the analysis of symbolic meaning in rituals, both at the level of denotation and connotation. Research on rituals in Indonesia shows that symbols in marriage ceremonies contain myths and ideologies that reflect the social structure of society (Adilia & Said, 2020).

Meanwhile, the ethnolinguistic approach emphasizes the relationship between language and culture, specifically how language is used in social contexts to convey cultural values. In the study of marriage rituals, ethnolinguistics helps uncover how terms, expressions, and language structures in rituals reflect people's belief systems and values (Soge & Janggo, 2024).

The combination of these two approaches is very relevant in analyzing the Wotik Wawi Waten, because it allows researchers to understand the moral meanings contained in the ritual language more comprehensively.

Social Function and Ritual Transformation in a Contemporary Context

Although traditional rituals are still maintained, there are dynamics of change in their implementation along with the times. However, research shows that the main function of ritual as a means of transmitting moral values is still relevant. Rituals not only serve as a symbol of cultural identity, but also as a mechanism to maintain social cohesion in society (Hasyim, 2022).

In the modern context, rituals such as Wotik Wawi Waten face challenges in the form of globalization and changes in social values. However, the sustainability of this ritual shows the existence of cultural adaptations that allow traditional values to remain alive in contemporary society. Therefore, the study of the meaning of moral counsel in rituals is important to understand how these values are maintained and transformed in modern life.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive descriptive type to understand and interpret the meaning of moral warnings contained in the wawi waten ritual in the Kloangpopot indigenous people. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on exploring the symbolic meaning that lives in the socio-cultural context of the community, thereby allowing researchers to understand reality in depth and contextually (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2017).

The research was carried out on the indigenous people of Kloangpopot with research subjects including traditional imams as givers of wejangan, brides as recipients of wejangan, and family members and communities involved in the rite. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement and knowledge of the cultural practices studied (Sugiyono, 2019). Data collection

techniques were carried out through participatory observation to directly observe the course of the rituals and symbols used, in-depth interviews in a semi-structured manner to explore the meaning of moral warnings from informants, as well as documentation in the form of recordings, photographs, and relevant customary archives. In addition to interviews and participatory observation, visual documentation was also used as part of the data collection process during the implementation of the Wotik Wawi Waten ritual. The photographs captured important moments of the customary marriage ceremony, including the traditional imam delivering moral advice to the bride and groom in the presence of both extended families, as well as the ritual atmosphere as a sacred moment of marriage legitimization in the Kloangpopot indigenous community. These visual data were used to strengthen the observational findings by providing contextual evidence of the ritual setting, the participants involved, and the cultural atmosphere in which the moral messages were conveyed.



Figure 1. The traditional imam delivers moral advice to the bride and groom, witnessed by both extended families during the Wotik Wawi Waten ritual.



Figure 2. The Wotik Wawi Waten ritual as a sacred moment of marriage legitimization in the culture of the Kloangpopot indigenous community.

The data obtained were then analyzed interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as proposed by Miles

and Huberman (2014), with a symbolic interpretive approach to understand the sign as a system of meaning in a cultural framework (Geertz, 1973). To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checks on informants to ensure the compatibility between the data and the reality being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, this research also pays attention to ethical aspects by seeking approval from traditional leaders and informants, maintaining identity secrecy, and respecting the values and norms that apply in the local community.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the traditional imam's message in the *ritual of wotik wawi waten* to the bride was conveyed in the form of symbolic speech that was arranged in a sequential manner, describing the life journey of women from their origins to their role in the family and society. The meaning of moral wejangan for the bride in the *wawi waten ritual wotik* in the Kloangpopot indigenous people has a distinctive wejangan structure and has several main plots as follows:

First, recognition of origin and family ties. The prayer begins with an affirmation of the origin and kinship bond through the expression "*ami ina ata bua ami ama ata gae-ami dopo horok blapu wutun*" which means "*we are the father and mother who gave birth to you - we call all the spirits of our ancestors*". This speech does not simply state biological connections, but affirms that a woman's identity is rooted in a vast genealogical network, which includes parents, ancestors, and the indigenous community as a whole. The kinship circle is even expanded through the mention of various social relations, such as *ue luur liwun* (all cousins), *wari lodar lelen* (all cousins), *ue lepo gete blapu sina* (older brothers in big tribes), *wari woga mosan blon bale java* (younger siblings in big tribes), *ue puhe uben koet* (siblings), *wari oha wakan dadin* (younger siblings), *ue u'a epan* (older brother), *Wari Sobat Wohon* (younger acquaintance), as well as *A'a Ata Dua* (with Tanta) and *Tap Ata Moa* (with brother-in-law). This layered mention represents the complex scope of social and genealogical relationships within the structure of indigenous peoples, while affirming that individuals are never independent, but are always in a network of interconnected and binding relationships.

Furthermore, the summoning of the spirits of ancestors contains a sacred dimension that affirms that marriage does not only take place in the earthly realm, but also involves a spiritual dimension. Thus, the woman who enters marriage does not exist as a mere autonomous individual, but as a representation of a lineage whose dignity and sustainability must be maintained. In this framework, marriage is not simply interpreted as the union of two individuals, but as the integration of two broader kinship systems, so that every action in domestic life has social, cultural, and spiritual implications that go beyond personal interests.

Second, integration into the husband's family. Furthermore, the message directs women to the process of integration into the husband's family, reflected in the phrase "*dua giit baa deri lepo*" which means "*the wife officially becomes a member of the husband's tribe*". This phrase marks the change in the social status of

women from family members of origin to integral parts of the husband's family, which at the same time brings the consequences of new responsibilities. The status of *two giit baa deri lepo* is not only symbolic, but also manifested in various concrete demands that must be lived in domestic life. This is evident in a series of advice such as "*au huu mora wungu piren*" (you have taken responsibility), "*huu giit reta alan*" (hold your head tightly), "*ma huu beli sai ata wungun*" (be responsible for your husband's family), "*wara mora kuat glaran*" (hold it firmly), and "*wara mangane wali palik*" (hold it firmly over the shoulder). These expressions affirm that women are expected to have firmness, strength, and readiness in facing the dynamics of family life.

These responsibilities are further articulated in the form of concrete domestic activities, such as "*ma moni plepang moni libang*" (go sweep), "*moni beli ata wisung*" (go sweep your husband's yard), and "*wisung wawa ia naha due poa woer*" (to keep the yard clean), which is emphasized by the prohibition of "*lopa pulo watu utur*" (do not overgrow bushes). In this context, home cleanliness is not only interpreted physically, but also as a symbol of order and harmony in family life. In addition, the domestic role of women is also emphasized through cooking activities, as seen in the expressions "*ma du sai unu*" (go cook) and "*ma hening sai api*" (go put on fire), which show that the kitchen is one of the centers of women's responsibility in maintaining the sustainability of family life.

On the other hand, the *wejangan* also indicates the involvement of women in supporting the family economy, which is implied in the expressions "*ma tuut giden wawa lewu detun*" (go weaving under the house) and "*taduk touk wawa namang lorang*" (weaving in your yard). Weaving activities not only have economic value, but are also part of cultural identity that is passed down from generation to generation. In addition, women's social responsibilities in the extended family are also emphasized through advice such as "*ma lair sai mora ue luur liwun*" (go look after your cousin's sister), "*ma tangar mora sai wari lodar lelen*" (watch your cousin's sister), "*ma lair sai ganu mora wakir wain*" (pay attention to one by one), and "*lair mora wae inga*" (look at them with a beaming face). This shows that women play a role not only in the scope of the core household, but also in maintaining broader social relations within the extended family.

Thus, integration into the husband's family is not only interpreted as a change in formal status, but also as a process of comprehensive adaptation to applicable values, norms, and social responsibilities. The symbol of "*huu giit reta alan*" (strong grip on the head) is the main representation of the burden of responsibility, which requires women's strength, resilience, and readiness to live a full domestic life.

Third, self-control and social ethics. As human beings, married couples are not free from mistakes and mistakes in their actions. Against this reality, customary advice has provided clear guidelines on how a wife should behave. This is evident in a series of phrases such as "*masuk hulir ha du gete*" (despite a big mistake), "*ko hala ha du mosang*" (a very big mistake), "*ko hulir ha upu*" (or a small mistake), and "*ko hala eon demen*" (or an unintentional mistake). This series shows that all forms of mistakes, big or small, intentional or not, are part of the dynamics of domestic life that must be faced with a wise attitude. In this context, women

are instructed not to expand conflicts into the public sphere, as affirmed in the expressions "*di lopa geke litin gete*" (do not bring your husband to trial) and "*mawe plaha aran klewang*" (do not drag him to the village court). This advice means that conflict resolution must be maintained in a private space in order to maintain the honor and integrity of the family.

Furthermore, this provision not only prohibits certain actions, but also offers concrete and contextual methods of conflict resolution. Wives are encouraged to advise their husbands at the right time and atmosphere, as illustrated in the expressions "*nian wau lero wawa*" (the night before bed), "*miu plaha oti oha piren*" (lay out the mat first), "*sorong oti loni garan*" (prepare the pillow), "*ene nylon briang lamp*" and "*damar ene nylon pata*" (when the light is dim). This atmosphere describes an intimate, calm, and quiet state that supports effective communication. In such situations, the way of communication is also subtly regulated through the expressions "*miu tutur wii doi-doi*" (speak slowly), "*tutur glepu ganu hepun glepu ongen unen*" (speak slowly like the sound of mosquitoes in a coconut grove), and "*harang wii mae-mae*" (rebuke gently), which emphasize the importance of gentleness, patience, and self-control in conveying corrections.

This method of conflict resolution is strengthened by the recommendation to maintain family privacy, as seen in the expressions "*ata tilun riwun lopa diri rena*" (the ears of many people should not hear) and "*ata mata ngasung lopa ileng ita*" (the eyes of many people should not see). This is based on the realization that the involvement of outside parties can magnify the problem, as affirmed in the expressions "*loning tilun hotong wali ga due gogo legur*" (when many ears hear, the problem gets bigger) and "*loning mata ata lala ga due bruha wehak*" (if many eyes see, the problem will get bigger). Thus, this message not only emphasizes self-control and communication ethics, but also presents a conflict resolution model based on privacy, gentleness, and wisdom, which places women as guardians of emotional stability and harmony in domestic life.

Fourth, loyalty and togetherness. Fidelity is one of the main foundations in married life, which in the *wawi waten ritual* is strongly affirmed through various symbolic expressions that are full of meaning. A wife who has pledged allegiance in the marriage bond is not only required to be faithful in ideal conditions, but also in all the dynamics of life, both in joy and in sorrow. This is reflected in the expressions "*matet naha miu ruam*" (death must be for both of you) and "*lemer watu miu ruam*" (drown stone for both of you), which describe loyalty in situations of suffering, hardship, and even in the face of death. On the other hand, in a situation of happiness, loyalty is affirmed through the expressions "*moret naha miu ruam*" (life must be both of you) and "*bawak papan miu ruam*" (floating board must be both), which indicate that happiness must be lived together as a whole.

This series of expressions shows that fidelity in marriage is not situational, but is total and comprehensive. Loyalty is not only tested when things are difficult, but also when life is going well. In this context, loyalty becomes a principle that transcends external conditions and is rooted in a deep inner commitment. This traditional statement clearly outlines that the relationship

between husband and wife is understood as an inseparable bond, where both parties are called to accompany, support, and survive together in all life situations. Thus, loyalty is not just an emotional attitude, but a form of moral responsibility that is constantly renewed in the praxis of daily life.

Furthermore, this emphasis on fidelity also implicitly affirms the principle of inseparability in marriage. The expressions used do not provide space for separation as a solution to problems, but rather encourage couples to remain united in facing every challenge. In this perspective, marriage is understood as a sacred bond that has a social and spiritual dimension, so it cannot be arbitrarily broken. Loyalty is the main support in maintaining the integrity of the bond, as well as a reflection of moral maturity in dealing with conflicts and differences.

Such loyalty does not arise suddenly, but grows out of a commitment made consciously before the extended family and the customary priest. The pledge is not only personal, but also collective, because it is witnessed and recognized by indigenous communities. In this context, loyalty acquires a strong social legitimacy, so violations against it have an impact not only on the individual, but also on the honor of the family and the community. Therefore, fidelity in marriage is not only a personal responsibility, but also a form of respect for cultural values and broader social ties.

Thus, the customary *wejangan* in the *Wawi Waten Wotik* Rite places fidelity as a fundamental principle that supports the sustainability of married life. Loyalty lived in joy and sorrow until death separates not only maintains the integrity of the husband-wife relationship, but also ensures the sustainability of values, family harmony, and social stability in indigenous peoples.

Fifth, the hope of fertility and generational continuation. Expectations for the fertility and sustainability of the generation are one of the important dimensions in the traditional *wejangan* in the *wawi waten ritual*. In the cultural framework of indigenous peoples, marriage is not only interpreted as the union of two individuals, but also as a means to continue the lineage and maintain the continuity of the existence of the family and community. This is explicitly reflected in the expressions "*ma bua buri sai ganu wetan*" (go and have children like jewawut seeds) and "*deri leu nete etin*" (stay in every place), which describe the hope that offspring will develop abundantly and widespread. The symbol of the small but abundant jewawut seeds contains the meaning of uninterrupted fertility, growth, and sustainability of life.

Furthermore, this hope is reinforced through the phrases "*ma gae teto ganu atong*" (go and multiply like spinach seeds) and "*gera leu nete oan*" (stand fully in every place), which again emphasize the importance of productivity and abundance in offspring. In this context, women are not only seen as individuals in marital relationships, but also as the main agents in giving birth to and caring for the next generation. Fertility, therefore, is not only a biological aspect, but also has a very strong social and cultural dimension, because it is directly related to the sustainability of the identity and structure of indigenous peoples.

In addition to emphasizing the number and growth of offspring, this message also contains a deep relational meaning related to the function of the new generation in family life. This can be seen in the expressions "*ia na ami ledu*

dena song" (to be our place of hope) and "*ami mapa dena kadang*" (to be our place of refuge), which show that children are seen as a source of hope and a support for the life of their parents in the future. In this perspective, offspring have not only biological value, but also social value as a successor to responsibility and keeper of balance in the family.

This symbolism is further enriched through the metaphors of chicken life in expressions such as "*ami dena duru muhun*" (where we ask for chickens), "*muhun mitat le lunun*" (chickens that always gather together), and "*wau wau ra lau nai nai kajo klereng let*" (afternoon perched on a walnut tree branch). This picture emphasizes the importance of togetherness, attachment, and order in family life. The chickens that gather and return to their places symbolize the children who remain attached to the family, even though they are scattered in various places. This is emphasized by the expressions "*safe pano boer road*" (rooster that is always in groups) and "*luat-luat ra reta mobo blodong lete buwun*" (always at home and walking on the roof of the house), which shows the hope for the presence and closeness of the next generation in family life.

Thus, this traditional message not only emphasizes the importance of giving birth to offspring, but also forms an understanding that the new generation has a strategic role as a source of hope, a support for life, and a guardian of the continuity of cultural values and identity. Fertility in this context becomes a symbol of the sustainability of life that is not only biological, but also social, cultural, and even spiritual.

Sixth, simplicity and value orientation. The aspect of simplicity and value orientation is one of the important empirical aspects of the traditional wejangan in the *wawi waden ritual*. In this context, domestic life is not directed at the attainment of luxury or the excessive fulfillment of material desires, but rather at an attitude of living that is simple, sufficient, and rooted in the values of wisdom. This is reflected in the phrase "*masuk matet oa eo tena wewe lalan*" which means "so that you don't need to chase on the road". This phrase contains a moral message that the needs of life must be met reasonably without having to pursue something excessively to the point of sacrificing more basic life values. Thus, simplicity is understood as a form of self-control as well as a wise attitude in managing desires.

Furthermore, the orientation to sufficiency is affirmed through the phrase "*kamang wuut telo tena ogor liman*" (the important thing is to have enough chicken eggs), which illustrates that the fulfillment of needs does not always have to be in the form of large or luxurious, but rather in simple things that are able to sustain life. This simplicity is not interpreted as a limitation, but rather as a choice of values that allows a person to live calmly and meaningfully. This is emphasized by the phrase "*ia na weit liar ga due weti weit*" (so that I can be proud), which shows that pride does not come from material abundance, but from the ability to live life with full awareness and self-respect.

Other expressions such as "*masuk moret eo apu tena and liman*" (so that life does not need to carry a chicken so that the hands have a filling) and "*kamang wedar ladon tena paing alan*" (let it be enough to pull out the feathers of the chicken) further emphasize that the orientation of life is not directed at appearance or

symbols of luxury alone. This metaphor criticizes the tendency to show status through material possession, and instead invites to live as it is. In this context, simplicity becomes an ethical principle that frees individuals from social pressure to appear excessive.

Moreover, the ultimate goal of this simple attitude of life is expressed in the phrase "*ia na porang rang ga due ejo ajar*" (so that we feel satisfied and valuable). Satisfaction and worthiness are not measured by the amount of material possessions we have, but by the ability to live in harmony with the values we believe in. Thus, moderation is related not only to the economic aspect, but also to the psychological and social dimensions, in which the individual feels sufficient, peaceful, and meaningful in his life.

Overall, this message shows that simplicity is a fundamental value orientation in domestic life, which serves as a counterweight to materialistic tendencies. This attitude not only maintains family economic stability, but also strengthens the harmony of relationships and inner peace. In the context of indigenous peoples, moderation is a reflection of moral maturity as well as a form of respect for cultural values that place balance and sufficiency as the main principles of life.

Overall, this series of messages forms a whole unity of meaning, where women are positioned as individuals who have strong cultural roots, are able to adapt to new environments, are responsible for household life, maintain social relations, and play a role in generational sustainability. The language used is metaphorical and symbolic, so that it not only conveys a message directly, but also contains a deep meaning that shapes the awareness and social identity of women in the Kloangpopot indigenous people.

The findings of this study confirm that the advice of traditional imams in the *wawi waten ritual* cannot be reduced as ordinary moral advice, but must be understood as a discursive and symbolic practice that functions to construct social reality, especially related to the identity and role of women in the Kloangpopot indigenous people. In an interpretive perspective, as emphasized by Clifford Geertz (1973), culture is a web of meaning that is spun by humans themselves, and the task of the researcher is to interpret that meaning. The metaphorical language in the speech—for example, "hold firmly over the head" or "do not bring it to the village court" suggests that cultural messages are not conveyed directly, but through symbols that require hermeneutic reading. Thus, traditional wejangan serves as a cultural text that not only reflects values, but also produces and reproduces social meaning.

Furthermore, when viewed through the framework of ritual theory, this message is an integral part of the rite of passage process that transforms women's social status. Victor Turner (1969) emphasized that rituals have a liminal phase in which individuals experience identity ambiguity before entering a new status. In this context, the bride is in a liminal position which is then "rearranged" through customary arrangement to become a full member of the husband's family. Warnings not only direct behavior, but also affirm social legitimacy for the change in status. In other words, this rite serves as an institutional mechanism

that ensures the sustainability of the social structure through the internalization of values.

However, the findings of this study also open up a space for critical reading in a gender perspective. Statements that emphasize domestic roles, patience, and loyalty show that there is a normative construction of women that is in line with Ortner's (1974) view that women are often associated with the domestic realm in the symbolic cultural system. This is also reinforced by Simone de Beauvoir's (1949) idea that women are not born, but are "made" through social processes. In this context, customary *bejangan* can be understood as one of the cultural instruments that plays a role in the process. However, in contrast to reductionist readings that see this as mere subordination, this study found that women's position in the *wojangan* also contains a dimension of symbolic agency, where women are placed as the guardians of family harmony, stability, and sustainability. Thus, there is an ambivalence between social control and symbolic empowerment that needs to be read contextually.

When combined with ten relevant studies, these findings reinforce and expand an existing understanding. The research of Putri and Yuliana (2022) and Sari (2020) emphasized the function of ritual as a medium for internalizing values, but this study shows that the internalization is not general, but is narratively structured through the *wejangan* stage. Meanwhile, the research of Lestari (2019) and Sembiring (2022) highlights the function of symbols in rituals, but has not explored in depth the linguistic and metaphorical dimensions as done in this study. Research by Wulandari (2021) and Kurniawan (2021) emphasizes the role of oral traditions in the transmission of values, and these findings reinforce this by showing that traditional speech not only transmits values, but also systematically shapes the framework of thinking and social identity.

On the other hand, the research of Dewi (2018) and Fitriani and Hadi (2020) underlined the role of women in maintaining family values, which is in line with the findings that *wejangan* is more focused on the bride. However, this research goes further by showing how these roles are constructed through symbolic language that is layered with meaning. The research of Pratiwi and Nugroho (2023) and Rahmawati (2024) highlights the dynamics of changing traditions, and in this context, the *Wotik Wawi Waten* rite shows its adaptive ability while maintaining the essence of value despite the pressure of modernity. Thus, this study not only confirms the previous findings, but also enriches it with a more in-depth textual and symbolic analysis approach.

The main novelty of this research lies in its ability to read traditional advice as a complete and systematic narrative structure, not just a collection of separate advice. This research shows that there is a logical flow in the delivery of the message, starting from the recognition of origins, social integration, the formation of responsibilities, to the orientation to generational sustainability. In addition, the use of data in the form of original excerpts of indigenous languages that are analyzed interpretively provides a methodological contribution that strengthens the cultural validity of the research. More than that, this research also offers the perspective that customary *wejangan* is a form of "cultural curriculum" that implicitly educates individuals on how to live an ideal social life.

Theoretically, these findings expand the study of symbolic communication by showing that indigenous languages function not only as a means of communication, but also as a medium for the formation of social reality. Practically, this study implies that the preservation of oral traditions such as customary wisdom needs to be seen as a strategic effort in maintaining the sustainability of cultural values in the midst of globalization. In this context, the challenge ahead is how to maintain the essence of value without losing relevance in modern life

CONCLUSSION AND RECOMENDATION

This research shows that the traditional priest's message in the Wotik Wawi Waten rite is a form of symbolic communication that functions to shape the identity, values, and social role of women in the Kloangpopot indigenous people. Wejangan is arranged systematically, as follows: recognition of family origin and ties; integration into the husband's family; self-control and social ethics; loyalty and togetherness; the expectation of fertility and generational sustainability; simplicity and value orientation. The language used is metaphorical, so it is able to internalize values in depth. Substantially, the message contains key values such as respect for origin, responsibility, hard work, self-control, loyalty, maintaining family honor, fertility, and simplicity, which are integrated in a single meaning as a "cultural curriculum" for women.

These findings reinforce the view that culture is a system of symbols that shape social reality while affirming the function of ritual as a means of identity transformation and internalization of values. In addition, customary bejangan also plays a role in the construction of gender roles by placing women as guardians of family harmony, but still provides space for symbolic agency in carrying out these roles. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of cultural studies and symbolic communication by placing the wejangan text as a whole object of analysis, while methodologically confirming the effectiveness of the original quotation-based approach, translation, and contextual interpretation in exploring cultural meaning.

Practically, this study emphasizes the importance of preserving customary heritage as a cultural heritage that has educational value and is relevant in shaping the character of the younger generation. Therefore, systematic documentation efforts are needed, the integration of cultural values in education based on local wisdom, and the development of advanced research that examines the dynamics of meaning change in the context of modernity. Further studies are also important to critically explore power and gender relations and make cross-cultural comparisons, thereby enriching scientific understanding and contributions in the field of cultural studies.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research is recommended to explore the dynamics of meaning transformation in the Wotik Wawi Waten ritual within the context of modernity and globalization. In addition, further studies can critically examine power relations and gender construction embedded in customary wejangan, as well as

conduct cross-cultural comparisons to enrich broader perspectives in cultural and symbolic communication studies.

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