

## Values Embodiment of the *Nyangahant* Ritual in Salako Community's Culture in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak

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### Abstract

This study depicted the values embodied in the *Nyangahant* ritual ingrained in the Salako community's culture in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak. Cultural examples include human creations, tastes, intentions, and mental or intellectual things. Ritual is a culture that gives rise to traditions in which people continuously perform thoughts and actions. The *Nyangahant* ritual is highly valued in the Salako community because it serves as a guide in community life, creating a harmonious atmosphere and balancing the harmonious relationship between human life, the universe, and their God, *Jubata*. This study aims to analyse the values contained in *the Nyangahant* ritual implementation in the culture of the Salako community in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak. This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. Methods of data collection include observation, interviews, and document analysis. To analyse data, a descriptive qualitative analysis method is used, which involves reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. The research subjects are traditional leaders (*Tuha Adat*), chieftains (*Penghulu*), village heads (*Ketua Kampung*), cultural practitioners, and community figures. The study's findings show that the *Nyangahant* ritual in the Salako community's culture in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak contains social, moral, cultural, and economic values. Material, Vital, and spiritual values are examples of social values. Aside from that, spiritual values include religious and spiritual values. At the same time, the moral values that correspond are deliberation, togetherness, obedience (*Barakump*), collaborative effort, and cooperation (*Baaie'*). The study's findings show that, despite the various cultural assimilation effects of the modern world, the Salako community maintains traditional and cultural practices passed down from previous generations. This is

due to the Salako community's beliefs, customs, and culture, which define their community identity in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak.

**Keywords:** Culture, Ritual, Nyangahant Ritual, Salako, Values

### Introduction

Culture is made up of patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting that are acquired and transmitted primarily through symbols and serve as the distinguishing achievements of human groups, including their manifestation in artifacts: The essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and their associated values (Kluckhohn, 1951). According to Lee et al (2006), a society's culture and way of life are referred to as culture. It is defined as a set of values and beliefs, or a collection of learned behaviors, that we share with others in a specific society, providing us with a sense of belonging and identity. As a result of the need to interact with people from other countries and cultures, cultural understanding is becoming increasingly important.

Humans and culture have a very close relationship, so much so that they are referred to as cultural beings. Culture is human creation, taste, and initiative, or it can be interpreted as matters concerning the mind or reason. A form of culture continuously developing in society is the result of reasoning or thought creativity, and human work, where thoughts and actions carried out by humans on an ongoing basis will eventually give birth to a tradition. Tradition is a custom that is still practiced in a community or customs that are passed down from generation to generation that originates in the past but has not been destroyed or tampered with. It has its own story to say to the people.

Each region has its traditions and characteristics. Practices in each area are also implemented differently and still thought to have positive value by the supportive community will be kept. In contrast, traditions that are believed to be no longer compatible with the development of the times, as it is now known as modern times, will be abandoned by society. However, it is undeniable that even amid globalization, such as today, many traditions in various regions are still being preserved. One is the *Nyangahant* ritual in the Salako culture of Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak.

According to Mohamad Maulana et al (2020) Sarawak's Salako people are an ethnic minority. Kaufman (2007) claims that the Salako people who now live in Sarawak are descended from Mount Gajing. Mount Gajing is a mountainous area in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, near Sungai Salako or Sungai Selakau and not far from the Singkawang district. Many Salako people migrated to Sarawak due to political and geographical factors. Because of Kalimantan, Indonesia's proximity to the State of Sarawak, the migration and settlement construction process by the Salako community in Sarawak became easier.

The Salako community's first settlements in Sarawak, according to Kaufman (2007), were in Sungai Pasir and Sungai Kayan. The first settlement established several new villages in Sarawak's Salako community. Kaufman' (2007) claim is supported by (Maulana et al., 2020). They state that most Salako villages in Sarawak, including Kampung Pueh, Kampung Biawak, Kampung Selabat, and Kampung Sebako, are in Sematan and Lundu districts.

According to Awang Hasmadi (1994), the traditional Salako community is firmly committed to animism. Since time immemorial, the Salako community's belief in animism has been the foundation for forming beliefs and a way of life. Based on this traditional belief, the Salako community believes in the existence of *Jubata* as a God in their community. *Jubata* is the universe realm's owner and manages it for the Salako community. Because of the Salako

community's strong belief in *Jubata*, their lives in Sarawak are still governed by taboos that must be followed and obeyed to avoid *Jubata's* wrath.

The Salako community believes that violating or disobeying the taboo will cause *Badi* (disturbance from spirits), *Idap* (sickness), and *Tulah* (the plague) to a person or the community in a Salako community village. The Salako community's respect and fear of *Jubata* have been translated through the performance of the *Nyangahant* ritual by preparing offerings in the form of food objects and praying to obtain permission and blessing from *Jubata* every time they want to do something and beg always to be blessed with prosperity in life. As a result, Hasmadi (1990) claims that the Salako community in Sarawak continues to practice this ancestral belief even though the majority has embraced new religions such as Christianity and Islam. This occurred because the Salako community in Sarawak still firmly believes in the concept of *Parukunan Kita*. In the Salako culture, the idea of *Parukunan Kita* serves as a guide to the belief that supernatural powers exist. The Salako community also believes that everything or anything that exists in this world has a guardian, and the guardian in question is *Jubata*.

The Salako community continues to keep the *Nyangahant* ritual as one form of culture because it was created by the local community to strengthen friendship ties, in which case social life is still intertwined with good and harmony. Furthermore, the *Nyangahant* ritual contains values that Salako society regards as the spirit and meaning of communal life. A general tradition holds specific fundamental values, which are as follows: 1) social value, which is love between humans in the context of interpersonal relationships, that is, when one and the other understand and respect each other. 2) Religious values, specifically those with the most significant magnitude. This value stems from the highest truth that God has to offer. 3) Moral Values. What is meant is understanding the significance of ethical, social values and culture and the context in which culture lives and develops. These values will be reflected in symbols, slogans, and other visible items. Attitudes, actions, gestures, and beliefs that are embedded in that regulate and become a frame of reference in activity and behavior (Mustar et al., 2020)

The values studied in this study are related to the *Nyangahant* ritual and include social, religious, moral, cultural, and economic values. 1) Social value is a value that refers to what is good and proper for people in general. 2) Religious values or religion are values that refer to what someone of a religious orientation chooses, such as a belief in God Almighty or something non-material. 3) Moral values are values based on interpersonal and social relationships that refer to the possession of something as a good thing or profitable thing (Supriyadin, 2016). Another school of thought holds that cultural values are living concepts in the human mind about things people regard as noble, such as determining alternatives, means, and ends (Nurhayati & Yunan, 2019). At the same time, economics is the value of human behavior in business to meet their needs.

According to the opinion mentioned earlier, the values contained in the *Nyangahant* ritual are: 1) The social values contained in the *Nyangahant* ritual are clearly illustrated when the community engages in cooperation (*Baaie*), participation, and mutual assistance in the preparation and completion of the *Nyangahant* ritual process. 2) The religious values contained in the *Nyangahant* ritual can be seen in the fact that this tradition is carried out for an offering and prayer ceremony performed by the Salako community to their God, *Jubata*, in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak. The purpose of its performance is to ask for help in overcoming life's crises, protection from all threats and disasters, blessings, *Tolak Bala*,

fertility and good rice yields, and a wish to be blessed with good fortune in life. 3) The moral value in the *Nyangahant* ritual can be seen in the Salako community in Kampung Pueh's habit of cooperation; a sense of mutual participation helps, from preparation to implementation of the *Nyangahant* ritual, put the common interest above the interests of the sake of continuity and smooth implementation of the *Nyangahant* ritual. 4) The cultural values. The *Nyangahant* ritual arose from the Salako people's thoughts, who made it a habit, then passed it down from generation to generation, and it is still practiced today. 5) Economic value, as demonstrated by the *Nyangahant* ritual, in which Salako people sell a portion of their harvest to cover their daily expenses.

The *Nyangahant* ritual is a one-of-a-kind custom. It is said to be a unique tradition because the *Nyangahant* ritual is a ritual known as *Indu' Gawe*, which is "Mother" to all Salako rituals. Therefore, implementing the *Nyangahant* ceremony is an offering and prayer activity that is very important and must be carried out to ensure that every objective of proposing a ritual is achieved. Therefore, the ritual *Nyangahant* will be carried out as an "opening" ritual to implement all crucial traditions in Salako cultures, such as *Gawe' Ka Padi* and *Gawe' Ka Manusia*. The existence of the *Nyangahant* ritual is not only the result of inheritance but also of the Salako people's determination to preserve traditional cultural values. Thus, this article aims to explain the values embodied in the *Nyangahant* ritual in the Salako culture of Pueh village, Lundu, Sarawak.

### Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study that employs an ethnographic approach. Participation-observation and ethnographic interviews were used to collect data in this study. The participatory observation began on July 22, 2020 and ended on January 21, 2021. This research used the ethnographic interview method to interview traditional practitioners who still practice the *Nyangahant* ritual today. The interview is conducted in stages based on the informant's availability. The first interview was conducted in collaboration with the headman of Kampung Pueh, Mr Ramil Mina, and was followed by an interview with the Village Head, Mr Iran@Eran Suut. Besides that, to learn more about the *Nyangahant* ritual, the researcher met with the *Tuha Adat*, Ayahanda Nulos Anak Nimbun (89 years old), the Penghulu, and the Village Head. *Tuha Adat*, Ayahanda Nulos Anak Nimbun, who also comes from the same village, was interviewed in depth. *Tuha Adat* oversees directing the *Nyangahant* ritual. He descended from Salako and is a *Tuha Adat* or Head of Tradition with a thorough understanding and knowledge of the *Nyangahant* rituals. *Tuha Adat* introduced the researcher to other ritual supporters and practitioners, including Mr Sukor Anak Lauik (51 years old), Menghia Anak Mahli (57 years old), and Jala Anak Limbang (78 years old). They still practise the *Nyangahant* ritual to this day.

### Result and Discussion

The *Nyangahant* ritual is an offering and prayer ceremony performed by the Salako community to their God, *Jubata*, in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak. The purpose of its performance is to ask for help in overcoming life's crises, protection from all threats and disasters, blessings, *Tolak Bala*, fertility and good rice yields, and a wish to be blessed with good fortune in life. To appease the *Jubata*, food will be served during the *Nyangahant* ritual ceremony. The performance of the ritual is inextricably linked to the practitioner community's worldview.

Every cultural activity must have a value implicit in its execution. The value of a tradition, whether realized or not, will last forever if culture is preserved. Value is a belief, preference, or assumption about what humans want or consider good. Someone who directs someone's behaviour and judgment but does not judge whether that behaviour is correct or incorrect. Human society requires other people to interact with to function. Organization as a community comprises individuals who participate in various activities in social life, resulting in the formation of social values in the community's life.

Social values are formed because tradition still serves a purpose in society. One of them is the *Nyangahant* ritual, which is part of the Salako culture in Pueh village, Lundu, Sarawak. This is where there are problems in the implementation of this tradition. It contains the following values

### 1) Social Value

Social value is something that the community considers valuable, precisely the community's opinion on something that is expected, beautiful, and factual and has benefits if done. People's attitudes and feelings about what is right and wrong determine social value. The *Nyangahant* ritual is a good tradition in the Salako community because it allows the community to interact and support one another for standard safety and well-being.

This is supported by the viewpoint expressed by the village heads of Kampung Pueh, Iran@Eran Saut, who stated that the Salako community has carried on this tradition from generation to generation. They believe that if the *Nyangahant* ritual is not performed, the people will suffer from *Badi* (creature disruption), *Idap* (disease), and *Tulah* (disaster) (unlucky).

According to *Tuha Adat*, if this tradition is carried out, it is seen as the right step because it is a mandate given by our ancestors, and we must do it so that all the people or we are protected from any calamity that occurs unreasonably. Material, vital, and spiritual values are examples of social values. These values are being implemented.

The *Nyangahant* ritual is explained as follows

#### a) Material values

The material value of the *Nyangahant* ritual can be seen in the offerings or offerings prepared to entertain the gods, specifically *Jubata* and our ancestors. Bamboo stems are used for cooking *Poe'*, while Leaf Oil is used for cooking *Bontonkng*. *Tuha Adat* stated that to provide offerings or offerings to God (*Jubata*) and ancestors, we need machetes to cut bamboo, oil leaves, firewood, and, most importantly, pork, chicken, and rice. Aside from being offered to God (*Jubata*) and the ancestors, the entire community and guests who participate in the ritual's execution also enjoy the dish.

#### b) Vital Value

The vital values of the *Nyangahant* ritual's implementation are clear from the tradition's goals and functions. The purpose of its performance is to ask for help in overcoming life's crises, protection from all threats and disasters, blessings, *Tolak Bala*, fertility and good rice yields, and a wish to be blessed with good fortune in life. Simultaneously, as a repellent to evil spirits and all



other dangers, the Salako community in Pueh village can live in peace. This is supported by Iran@ Eran Saut, the village head of Kampung Pueh, who stated that the implementation of this *Nyangahant* ritual is to protect all society from evil spirits by offering worship to God (*Jubata*) and the ancestors, as well as praying to God that all people are always given sustenance or a good harvest.

### c) Spiritual Value

Religious values and moral values are spiritual values in ritual implementation.

#### I. Religious Values

Religious values are visible in the implementation of the *Nyangahant* ritual, as evidenced by the Salako people's attitude of worship, respect, and thanks to God (*Jubata*) for the resulting assistance in overcoming life's crises; protection from all threats and disasters; blessings; *Tolak Bala*; fertility and good rice yields; and a wish to be blessed with good fortune in life.

The implementation of the *Nyangahant* ritual is an expression of gratitude. This is supported by Ramil Mina, the Chieftan of Kampung Pueh, whose statement that the *Nyangahant* ritual was performed for reasons other than avoiding evil spirits, *Tolak Bala*, *Idap*, *Badi*, and *Tulah*. This tradition is also carried out as a form of gratitude to the highest record for the previous bountiful harvests while also asking for protection so the plant can be planted later to avoid pests that will harm the plant.

### 2) Moral values

The value of cooperation (*Baaie*) is one of the moral values embodied in the *Nyangahant* ceremony's implementation. The Salako community's collaboration and spirit of association throughout the planning and implementation process contributed to the ritual's flawless execution. Furthermore, the Salako community's *Barakump* concept has promoted the values of unity and obedience. This is evident in the way the *Nyangahant* ritual is performed. The implementation involves all Salako community members, regardless of their religious beliefs, position, or role in the community. They all have different parts in each process and have exchanged ideas to ensure that the ritual is carried out flawlessly.

A genuine sense of participation in helping one another, as well as harmony between citizens who value common interests over personal interests, to ensure the continuity and smooth implementation of the *Nyangahant* ritual and achieve a common goal. This is consistent with the Village Head's statement that to incorporate the materials into the ritual's performance, and we collaborated between the community and the traditional leader (*Tuha Adat*). According to Iran@Eran Saut, we worked together to prepare all the food and equipment needed for the ritual and the ritual site from the beginning to the end of the process.

### 3) Cultural Values

Cultural values have been clearly illustrated in the tradition of performing the *Nyangahant* ritual since the beginning, where practice becomes culture. Culture is the result of human labor that becomes unknowingly customary. This *Nyangahant* ritual, which has its implementation procedures and has become a habit of the Salako community in general, is also the result of the Salako community's work or thoughts. According to *Tuha Adat*, the *Nyangahant* ritual has become a community habit from the past to the present, as evidenced by local villagers who still carry out every procession or stage of the ritual's implementation, which is carried out every time the Salako community wants to ask *Jubata* for the truth. These practices are passed down from ancestors or ancestors to the generations below them and are still alive and well today, preserved and maintained.

### 4) Economic Value

The Salako community's efforts, which have previously yielded good harvests, and then harvests traded by the village community to meet other living needs, demonstrate the economic value of the *Nyangahant* ritual. The traditional leader (*Tuha Adat*) claims that by performing the *Nyangahant* ritual, they will receive an abundant harvest that will be very useful in meeting our daily needs.

Salako people who value high noble values believe that man cannot live alone and must rely on others. As a result, implementing rituals involving the entire community's activities is aimed at the common good. This is because the tradition is essentially for the benefit of the Salako community in Pueh Village, Lundu, Sarawak, providing welfare, peace, and safety.

## Conclusions

The study's findings show that the *Nyangahant* ritual in the Salako community's culture in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak contains social, moral, cultural, and economic values. Material, Vital, and spiritual values are examples of social values. Aside from that, spiritual values include religious values. Religious values are visible in the implementation of the *Nyangahant* ritual, as evidenced by the Salako people's attitude of worship, respect, and thanks to God (*Jubata*) for the resulting assistance in overcoming life's crises; protection from all threats and disasters; blessings; *Tolak Bala*; fertility and good rice yields; and a wish to be blessed with good fortune in life. At the same time, the moral values that correspond are deliberation, togetherness, obedience (*Barakump*), collaborative effort, and cooperation (*Baaie'*). The study's findings show that, despite the various cultural assimilation effects of the modern world, the Salako community maintains traditional and cultural practices passed down from previous generations. This is due to the Salako community's beliefs, customs, and culture, which define their community identity in Kampung Pueh, Lundu, Sarawak. Even though the *Nyangahant* ceremony may appear out of date, it represents a high level of politeness in translating the Salako community's culture and identity. As a result, even though they have experienced various cultural assimilations of impressions from the modern world, the Salako people still perpetuate the traditional grip and culture inherited from previous generations. Beliefs, customs, and culture define a person's identity for the people of Salako. Beliefs, customs, and culture should not be questioned in the Salako community because they may cause illness, bad luck, plague, or disaster. Beliefs, customs, and culture have been

preserved, and the Salako people have been educated to ensure that the culture continues to be eternal to balance the harmonious relationship between human life, the universe, and their god, namely *Jubata*.

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