

# The Existence of Kabasaran Dance in Minahasa

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## ABSTRACT

This research discusses the existence of Kabasaran dance with the Minahasa culture in Tondano. This research was carried out to find out by exploring the meaning of cultural heritage that needs to be revealed. The diversity of Minahasa culture has a cultural meaning from the ancient Tou Minahasa generation until now which is still clear in its existence in the community and it needs to be translated into the meaning of that culture. One of them is the Kabasaran dance, which is a war dance that has three stages consisting of separate dance forms that have meaning. Kabasaran dance has dance equipment including accessories, uniforms, swords, and shields. Dance equipment has cultural symbols that need to be translated. These symbols have a meaningful and beneficial life value for generations of cultural heirs. The Kabasaran dance is one of the local wisdoms that is preserved and is a regional cultural specialty and is a cultural asset of Indonesia. Kabasaran dance implicitly describes the unity of the Minahasa people in providing a sense of security and defending their homeland with all their strength.

**Keywords:** *Culture, Kabasaran Dance, Existence, Minahasa*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Minahasa people or called "Tou" Minahasa in their local language have works in the field of art that can be admired as regional and national assets. The traditional Minahasa 'tou' artworks include the 'kabasaran' dance, the 'maengket' dance, the 'pisok' dance. In these works, it is very evident to express the life of the 'tou' Minahasa. The Minahasa people believe in the greatness of God as creator and protector. They believe that God shows His power through the natural surroundings. Nine times the manguni whistle sound is believed to be a good sign to carry out an activity, including traveling long distances, occupying a newly built house, a good sign for farming. The Tawa'ang plant is used as a benchmark or land boundary for planting crops. This plant also has the meaning of an "oath" if someone violates it, it will be punished by Opo Empung. Belief in the power of Opo Empung can be seen in the Kabasaran war dance, among other things, the expression of the eyes glaring sharply from the dancer which means driving away spirits or evil spirits. The expression of glaring eyes is a symbol of Opo Empung who is angry with evil spirits. Kabasaran dance is a reflection of the war life in the past, in each individual Tou Minahasa. The great works of the past generations of the Minahasa people described above have strokes which have a meaning as the mindset of the Minahasa

people. The Kabasaran dance is one of the local wisdoms of Minahasa culture which is very often found in Tondano, North Sulawesi. Where the Kabasaran dance is an asset that attracts local people and tourists to find out the meaning or translation of the Kabasaran Dance. It is realized that there is still a lack of the richness of Minahasa culture in scientific research. It is true what Renwarin said that there are still many cultural riches in Indonesia that have not been explored and have not been scientifically studied; the same is the case with the Minahasa culture. The linguistic study of the Kabasaran dance has not been written in various books and articles, so this work is a new discovery by the author [8]. Meaningful utterances and strokes in the form of shapes that appear in the Kabasaran dance decoration in society are the existence of the cultural meaning of the Kabasaran dance with the Minahasa culture.

Kabasaran dance is a war dance consisting of independent dance forms that have meaning. The symbolic meaning of the Kabasaran dance reflects a characteristic feature of the community itself. Currently, cultural existence is increasingly alienating. These changes can have an impact on the cultural heritage that the Minahasa people have upheld. This study discusses the existence of the symbolic meaning of the Kabasaran dance with the Minahasa culture in Tondano. With this research was carried out to find out by exploring the

meaning of cultural heritage that needs to be disclosed. The diversity of Minahasa culture has a cultural meaning from the ancient Tou Minahasa generation until now which is still clear in its existence in the community and it needs to be translated into the meaning of that culture. One of them is the Kabasaran dance, which is a war dance which has three stages consisting of separate dance forms that have meaning. Kabasaran dance has dance equipment including accessories, uniforms, swords and shields. Dance equipment has cultural symbols that need to be translated. In these symbols have a meaningful and beneficial life value for generations of cultural heirs. The Kabasaran dance is one of the local wisdoms that is preserved and is a regional cultural wealth, and is a cultural asset of Indonesia.

Existence comes from the Latin word *existere* which means to arise, exist, arise, have actual existence. *Existere* is composed of *ex* which means to come out and *sistere* which means to appear or appear. There are several definitions of existence which are explained into four meanings. First, existence is what is. Second, existence is what has actuality. Third, existence is everything that is experienced and discovered that something exists. Fourth, existence is perfection [7]. Existence has a meaning that is quite broad in scope. However, in this study the existence that will be seen from a cultural point of view in the Tondano community is related to the symbolic meaning of the Kabasaran dance with the Minahasa culture. The meaning or meaning is the relationship between the sound symbol and its reference. Meaning is also a form of response to stimuli obtained by actors in communication in accordance with the association and learning outcomes they have. Meanings fall into two broad groups: speaker-sense and linguistic-sense. The former refers to the speaker's intention or intention when he said something. Meanwhile, the latter refers to the linguistic meaning that is commonly perceived by language speakers. Namely the literal meaning, and this is part of semantics. Here are a number of characteristics and meaning relations commonly discussed by semantics: lexical ambiguity, synonymy, hyponymy, overlap and antonymy. Lexic ambiguity occurs when a word has more than two meanings. Synonymy is a number of words which have the same meaning. Hyponymy is a word which means it covers the whole meaning of another word. Overlap is a semantic phenomenon when two or more words have overlapping semantic features. Antonyms are two words that have opposite meanings. Human speech contains complete meaning. The integrity of meaning is a combination of four aspects, namely sense, feeling, tone, and intension. Understanding that aspect in all contexts is part of the effort to understand meaning in communication (Santosa, 2014).

Symbolic is all objects in the form of objects, people, events, behavior, and utterances that contain certain meanings. According to the culture in question [4]. The

meaning of symbols according to the concept of Ogden and Richards [1] is a linguistic element, in the form of words, sentences, and so on, which arbitrarily represent the objects of the outside world and the world of experience of the people who wear them. Spradley suggests that symbols are any objects or events that point to something. All symbols involve three elements: (a) the symbol itself, encompassing whatever we can feel or experience; (b) one or more references are objects which are used as symbolic references; and (c) the relationship between symbol and reference is the third element in meaning. These three elements are the basis for symbolic meaning [11]. This shows that the symbolic process itself is a process carried out by humans to make certain things represent other things. Example: symbols of wealth such as money, titles, ranks pinned to our clothes are considered by some to be symbols of social privilege. The symbol displays the relationship between the marker and the marker in its arbitrary nature. Interpreters are required to discover the signification relationship creatively and dynamically. Signs that turn into symbols will automatically be affixed with situational and conditional cultural characteristics [9].

Signs have the same meaning for everyone while symbols have many meanings depending on who interprets them. Signs that turn into symbols by themselves will be culturally, situational, and conditional. Halliday and Ruqaiya argue that interpreting text cannot be separated from context [5]. The context referred to is the context of the situation and cultural context. The theories about the meaning of symbols as suggested by these experts are used by researchers to reveal the meaning of verbal symbols and nonverbal symbols in the Kabasaran dance. Taking into account the various opinions obtained by experts and related to research on the implementation of the Kabasaran dance, it can be argued that symbols are everything (words, phrases, clauses, discourses, paralinguistics, devices, clothes, movements, gestures and places) that are used for can represent something that has been agreed collectively by the Minahasa community as users of that culture. Historically, this Kabasaran dance is a war dance performed by Minahasa soldiers before and after the battlefield. In the past, the dancers had to come from the descendants of Kabasaran dancers as well. The reason is that if the dancer is a descendant of Kabasaran, he has a special weapon that is inherited. Moreover, the weapons in this dance are also sacred so that not just anyone can and may carry them [12].

However, due to the absence of warlike in ancient times, the Kabasaran dance is no longer used as a war dance. This North Sulawesi dance then developed into a dance that is used in traditional ceremonies and other cultural events. The Kabasaran Dance performance is now designated as a legacy of the ancestors who died in the battle to defend the homeland (Tangkilian E. Maria et al. 2012). In this case, research on the symbolic

meaning of the Minahasa cultural heritage is still limited. There is still a lack of research to reveal the mystery behind the symbols, but relevant and existing research results are important to refer to. Literature review can be traced through literature studies and supporting media which are very helpful in providing fast and accurate information (via the internet). Literature review related to the application of the theory used by previous researchers. The theory can be the same based on the theory of experts, but the objects, techniques, problems under study are different. To the researcher's knowledge, there are several research results related to this research.

In the application of the semiotic model in cultural studies, in this latest development there has been an attempt to bring the two approaches together in one unified analytical framework, namely between interpretative symbolic anthropology and cognitive anthropology (Peirce and de Saussure). First, semiotic theory which outlines the significance of communication code theory, as well as sign production theory [3]. A general semiotic theory that explains each case of sign functions based on a system of basic elements connected to each other by one or more codes. *besar* (country) in Minahasa, which appears at festive occasions in original clothing, wearing a sword, shield, spear, as the national dance of the Minahasa people. Second, Masinambow discusses semiotics in cultural studies. He argues that if culture is considered a sign system, that system functions as a means of structuring people's lives [6]. Understanding this sign system provides an understanding of why community members behave in this way. For residents of a society, the prevailing sign system allows them to behave in accordance with what is expected of them. With an understanding of the signs used, an overview of an order will be obtained because there is a suitability in the interpretation of the signs used. Third, research related to the culture of Gorontalo Tuloli, in a study entitled "Cultural Values of the Folklore of Lahilote (semiotic structural review). The method used in this research is descriptive and semiotic structural analysis studies. Descriptive methods and analysis studies. semiotic structure in this study is used to see the relationship between signs and meanings. Fourth, the writings of Dr. A. B Meyer and the book *Albeon Von Celebes typen*, the Stengel & Markert print, Kabasaran are folk arts found in large villages in Indonesia. The Minahasa, appearing at festive occasions in their original attire, wear a sword, shield, spear, as the national dance of the Minahasa people.

## 2. METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods, qualitative methodology is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral data in the community [2] is also supported by the ethnographic interview method from Spradley [10]. Informants taken consist of

cultural figures and Kabasaran dance actors. Data collection through observation, interviews and documentation. The analysis carried out for qualitative data refers to the model proposed by Miles and Huberman which suggests that activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continue to completion, so that the data is saturated. Activities in data analysis are: data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Sugiyono, 2016). Conclusion was also verified and validated by data triangulation with the informants and expert.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the Minahasa custom, this Kabasaran dance is a war dance performed by Minahasa soldiers before and after the battlefield. In the past, the dancers had to come from the descendants of Kabasaran dancers as well. The reason is that if the dancer is a descendant of Kabasaran, he has a special weapon that is inherited. This legacy weapon is used when dancing. The dancer's costume, which is dominated by red, is a Minahasa woven cloth. The dancer's face looks fierce, the eyes are bulging, and the slightest smile will not be seen while they are dancing. Armed with swords and spears, the dancers look like soldiers ready to fight to destroy the enemy. Occasionally seen jumping movements, moving back and forth with enthusiasm, and also swinging weapons. But at the end of the performance, the dancers make movements that look more cheerful, as a symbol of relieving anger after the battle is over.

The movements are indeed energetic, symbolizing the spirit of a warrior, but also dynamically following the rhythm of a musical instrument. Kabasaran dance movements are led by a performance leader called a *buttonu*, who is chosen according to the agreement of the traditional elders [13]. In general, the basic structure of the kabasaran dance consists of nine sword styles (*santi*) or nine spear styles (*wengkouw*) with a stance consisting of two steps to the left and two to the right. This dance is accompanied by a drum instrument such as a gong, *tambur*, or *kolintang* called "Pa Wasalen", while the dancers are called *kawasalan*, which means "dancing by imitating the movements of two fighting roosters". Along with the development of the Malay language in Manado, the word "kawasalan" then changed to kabasaran, but it has absolutely no connection with the word "besar" in Indonesian, although in the end this dance was used to welcome the dignitaries. Apart from being a welcoming dance, Kabasaran are also used as entertainment in traditional parties. The Minahasa Kabasaran dance is highly recognized in North Sulawesi society. The dance is an attraction for tourism or tourists from outside the North Sulawesi region.

Kabasaran dance consists of three stages, namely *cakalele*, *kumoyak* and *lalaya'an*. *Cakalele*, which comes from the word "saka" which means to compete, and "lele"

which means chasing jump. This stage used to be danced when the soldiers would go to war or return from war. Or, this round shows the ferocity of fighting on the great guests, to give a sense of security to the great guests who come to visit that even demons are afraid to disturb the great guests from the escort of the Kabasaran dancers. Kumoyak, which comes from the word "koyak" which means, swinging a sharp weapon with a sword or spear up and down, back and forth to calm oneself from feeling angry when fighting. The word "koyak" itself, can mean to persuade the spirit of the enemy or opponent who has been killed in battle. Lalaya'an. In this part, the dancers will dance freely and cheerfully, releasing themselves from feelings of anger such as dancing "Lionda" with their waists and other joyful dances. Often, this dance is present as an entertainment for residents when North Sulawesi province holds traditional festivals. kawasan / kabasaran are the identities of the Minahasa tou, not just used as a dance for welcoming guests and entertaining the residents, but also deeper into the ritual process of the way of life of a waraney. The Kabasaran dance is one of the local wisdoms that is preserved and is a regional cultural specialty and is a cultural asset of Indonesia. Kabasaran dance implicitly describes the unity of the Minahasa people in providing a sense of security and defending their homeland with all their strength.

## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

The first author in the study acted as the director and initiator of the research. The second author played a role in the field research assistant and data collection. The third author plays a role in data processing and analysis.

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