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Meaning-Making of Sundanese Reak Art: An Alfred Schutz Phenomenological Study of Reak Rajawali SPMS Performers

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ABSTRACK

Sundanese Reak art is a traditional performing-arts heritage that is still preserved by the Reak Rajawali SPMS troupe in Tegalluar Village, Bandung Regency. This study seeks to understand how the performers interpret their involvement in this art form, examined through the because-motive and in-order-to-motive as conceptualized by Alfred Schutz. A phenomenological approach within a constructivist paradigm was employed, as the researcher sought to capture the informants' lived experiences authentically rather than fitting them into pre-determined categories. Data were gathered through field observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving three key informants active in the Reak Rajawali SPMS group, along with two supporting informants for triangulation purposes. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that the performers' underlying motives stem from family tradition passed down across generations, experiences that began in childhood, affection for Sundanese culture, and a personal identity bound up with Reak. Their goal-oriented motives include preserving Reak so it does not vanish with time, cultivating discipline and solidarity among the younger generation, and introducing the art form to a wider public. For the performers, Reak is more than traditional entertainment; it is a cultural identity, a medium of communication, and a tangible effort to keep ancestral heritage alive amid modernization.

Keywords: phenomenology, Sundanese Reak art, performers, traditional culture, Alfred Schutz

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication occupies a fundamental place in human life, since it is through communication that messages are conveyed, meanings are exchanged, and social relationships are formed (Effendy, 2007). In social life, communication takes place not only through verbal language but also through symbols, actions, customs, and art forms passed down across generations as markers of community identity (Andriani, 2025). Art holds an important place in social life because it is a means of expressing feelings, ideas, values, and cultural identity, as well as a medium of cultural communication and of preserving traditional values (Mulyana, 2016).

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One traditional performing art that has developed among the Sundanese, particularly in East Bandung, Sumedang, Cileunyi, Ujung Berung, and Cibiru, is Reak. This art form combines traditional music, dance, acrobatic displays, and elements of magic and local culture in a single lively performance. Sabili (2020) notes that Reak is thought to be related to Reog Ponorogo, which entered West Java during the Cirebon Sultanate, while the Sundanese themselves understand the word “Reak” as deriving from “reang”, meaning crowded or noisy, in keeping with the atmosphere of the processions that accompany it. Maulandari (2023) adds that the art form is believed to have begun developing in the eighteenth century through a figure named Abah Oyot in Kampung Ciborelang, Cinunuk Village, and that from its earliest days it functioned not only as entertainment but also as a cultural expression carrying social and spiritual values, especially in circumcision (*khitanan*) celebrations.

Each Reak group in West Java has its own history, process of transmission, and performance characteristics, so understandings of this art form cannot be generalized. This study focuses on Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS (Sinar Pusaka Mekar Saluyu) in Tegalluar Village, Bojongsoang District, Bandung Regency, which grew out of a family *kuda lumping* (hobby-horse dance) tradition before adopting elements of Reak and being formally established in 2006. The group regularly holds rehearsals and performances; takes part in circumcision ceremonies, thanksgiving events (*syukuran*), street parades (*helaran*), and public entertainment; and has received a direct visit from the Governor of West Java in recognition of its role in preserving traditional Sundanese art.

Previous studies of Reak have generally highlighted its history, performance form, visual elements, or preservation strategies (Rizqia et al., 2023; Hamdani, 2023). The perspective of the performers themselves, that is, how they make sense of their involvement, what experiences shape their motives, and what meanings they ultimately hold, has rarely been explored, particularly through Alfred Schutz’s phenomenological approach in the context of Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS. This gap underlies the present study. Accordingly, the study addresses three questions: (1) how do Reak performers experience their involvement in Sundanese Reak art in Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS; (2) what are the because-motives and in-order-to-motives of the performers in taking part in Sundanese Reak art; and (3) how do the performers construct the meaning of Sundanese Reak art based on their experiences? These questions are expected to provide a more holistic understanding of Reak as lived by its performers, while contributing to studies of cultural communication and interpersonal communication in traditional arts communities.

To answer these questions, the article is organized as follows. The remainder of this introduction reviews Alfred Schutz’s phenomenology, the position of performers and interpersonal communication in cultural communication studies, and the conceptual framework that underpins the analysis. The Materials and Methods section describes the methods used to answer the research questions in the field. The Results and Discussion section presents findings on the phenomenon, experiences, motives, and meanings of Sundanese Reak art in Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS, following the framework shown in Fig. 1. The final sections present the conclusions, implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

1.1 Alfred Schutz’s Phenomenology

The term phenomenology derives from the Greek *phenomenon* (that which appears) and *logos* (study), so it can be understood as the study of a person’s lived experience, or of how a person subjectively experiences and gives meaning to that experience (Nurlatifah, 2023). Edmund Husserl is known as the founder of modern phenomenology through the idea of *epoché*, the suspension of judgment about reality so that phenomena can be understood as they present themselves rather than through preconceived assumptions (Supraja & Akbar, 2021).

Alfred Schutz later extended Husserl’s thought into the social domain, so that phenomenology was no longer confined to abstract philosophical questions but became a tool for understanding everyday human social action (Kuswarno, 2009). For Schutz, meaning arises from a continuous stream of experience connected both to previous experiences and to interactions with others, so that every action always carries meaning, even though that meaning is never fully complete (Nindito, 2013). Schutz divided the motives of social action into two categories (Budiarko, 2021). The first is the *because motive*, the factors from past experience that drive a person to act after assessing the social, economic, cultural, and normative conditions surrounding them (Wirawan in Budiarko, 2021). The second is the *in-order-to motive*, the reason a person acts in order to bring about a desired future situation, an action that is inseparable from intersubjectivity among individuals.

This two-motive framework serves as the analytical lens of the study: the because motive explains why performers first became involved and have remained in Reak, while the in-order-to motive

explains where that involvement is directed. The meeting of the two motives ultimately shapes the subjective meaning that performers attach to the art they practice.

1.2 Performers and Interpersonal Communication

Performers are individuals directly involved in the creation, production, and performance of works of art; Indonesian regulations use the term *pelaku seni budaya* (arts and culture practitioners), as set out in the implementing regulations of Law Number 5 of 2017 on the Advancement of Culture. Suganda (2016) emphasizes that the success of a performing art depends not only on the artistic ability of its performers but also on their ability to manage resources and networks of cooperation and to adapt to changing times.

Within arts groups, interpersonal communication is the main channel that sustains cooperation, the division of roles, and the transmission of values among members. Morissan (2021) explains that through verbal and nonverbal messages, interpersonal communication enables individuals to build social relationships, share experiences, and influence one another's attitudes and behavior. In traditional arts such as Reak, this kind of communication takes place in regular rehearsals, in coordination during performances, and in everyday conversations that gradually turn fellow members into something like family.

Several similar studies have used Schutz's phenomenological framework in different contexts, such as the experiences of matrifocal families of female migrant workers (Hidayati, 2025), the social climber phenomenon on social media (Alfaridzki, 2024), and the interpersonal communication of tambourine dancers (Sitompul, 2024). These studies share the methods of the present study, namely a phenomenological approach and data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. The difference lies in the object and focus: this study specifically examines how performers make meaning of Sundanese Reak art, a perspective rarely addressed by previous studies of Reak, which have mostly focused on its history, performance form, and visual elements (Rizqia et al., 2023).

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study rests on the assumption that the meaning performers attach to Reak does not stand alone but is formed through an interrelated series of phenomena, experiences, and motives. Its starting point is the phenomenon of Reak Rajawali SPMS itself as a living social reality in Tegalluar Village. From this phenomenon, performers undergo experiences and communication in their everyday involvement, which Alfred Schutz's phenomenology explains through two motives: the *because motive*, the past experiences that drive involvement, and the *in-order-to motive*, the future hopes that direct it. The meeting of these two motives ultimately shapes the subjective meaning of Sundanese Reak art for its performers. This line of reasoning is illustrated in the following diagram.

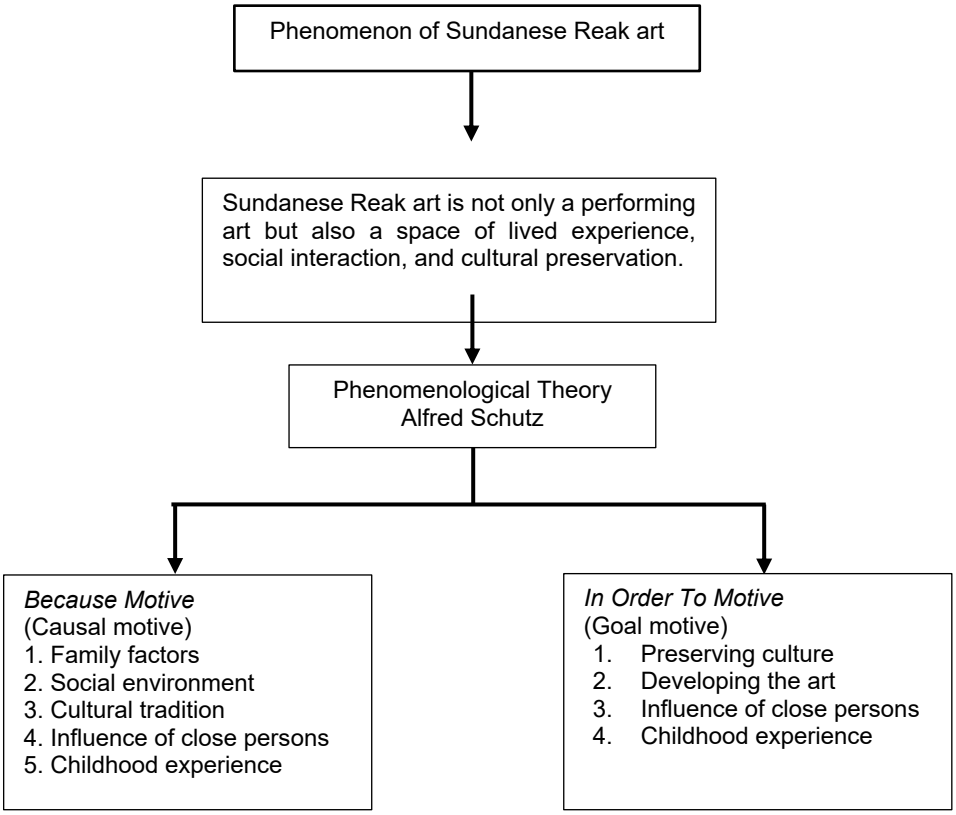


Fig. 1. Research framework (Source: Researcher's analysis, 2026)

The framework emphasizes that the study does not stop at describing the phenomenon but goes further to uncover the motives behind it, arriving at conclusions about the meanings constructed by the performers. This sequence forms the basis for organizing the Results and Discussion section.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study sought to understand the experiences, behavior, and meanings that performers attach to Reak in depth and holistically, rather than in the form of numbers or hypothesis testing (Bogdan & Taylor in Zakiyuddin, 2017). The study adopted a constructivist paradigm, assuming that humans continuously construct meaning to understand the world around them based on their respective social and historical backgrounds (Creswell, 2019); the researcher therefore sought to explore the diversity of meanings held by the informants rather than fitting them into predetermined categories.

Research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, that is, the selection of informants based on specific considerations aligned with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2020), because the required data could only be obtained from those directly involved in, or with a thorough understanding of, the issue under study. On this basis, the informants were divided into two groups. The three key informants were Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana (64 years old; chair, elder, *pawang* or ritual handler, and co-founder), Abah Rusmana (60 years old; vice chair, elder, *pawang*, and co-founder), and Kang Bayu Nopa (25 years old; treasurer and representative of the younger generation). They were selected because they represent two generations: the founders, who have understood the origins and values of the art since the group was formed, and the successor generation, who experience the meaning of Reak without having lived through the group's early years. The two supporting informants were Kang Asep Hanafi (30 years old; Head of the Community Welfare Section of Tegalluar Village) and Pak Emen (60 years old; community member and village security officer), whose accounts were used to complement and cross-check the data from the key informants.

Data were collected through three techniques: non-participant observation at rehearsal and performance sites, unstructured in-depth interviews, and documentation in the form of photographs, recordings, and records of group activities. These three techniques were used as a single integrated strategy of qualitative data collection (Sugiyono, 2017). The data were analyzed using the interactive

model of Miles and Huberman (1984), comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with conclusions treated as provisional at the early stage and regarded as credible once supported by consistent evidence from the field. Data validity was examined through source, technique, and time triangulation (Sugiyono, 2018).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings on how the performers of Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS in Tegalluar Village, Bandung Regency, make meaning of Sundanese Reak art, following the framework in Fig. 1. The discussion begins with the phenomenon and existence of Reak Rajawali SPMS and the challenges it faces, continues with the experiences and communication of the performers as the phenomenological point of departure, then examines the because-motives and in-order-to-motives as formulated by Alfred Schutz, and culminates in the subjective meaning of Sundanese Reak art and the verification of data validity through triangulation. This sequence also provides a layered answer to the three research questions posed in the introduction.

3.1 The Phenomenon and Existence of Reak Rajawali SPMS

Before turning to individual experiences and meanings, it is necessary to see how Reak positions itself within the community of Tegalluar Village. Reak Rajawali SPMS emerged from the development of *kuda lumping*, an art form handed down from the ancestors. Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana, the chair and one of the group's founders, recounted its origins in an interview on 29 March 2026:

> *"Kuda lumping awalnya dari kakek kan ini mah seolah turunan yah turun temurun alhamdulilah, awal nah mah pun aki ngabinah mah dina bidang organisasi kuda lumping ngan di taroskan ku abi mah nyeta sebutan namah reak raja wali kituh, alhamdulilah." (Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana, interview, 29 March 2026)*

Abah Rusmana, the vice chair and also a co-founder, affirmed this while stressing that the art must not stop developing:

> *"Wayahna ku para nonoman koreh masalah seni ulah di tepikeun ka monoton, nya etanya ka hayangan bapa justru ulah di tepikeun ka katingaleun lah, lewih jauh nyaaa." (Abah Rusmana, interview, 29 March 2026)*

From the younger generation, Kang Bayu Nopa described the founding of Reak Rajawali as a family innovation:

> *"Pada tahun 2005 mulai menciptakan sebuah inovasi baru yaitu membuat kesenian reak rajawali." (Kang Bayu Nopa, interview, 16 June 2026)*
>
> Translation: "In 2005 [we] began creating a new innovation, namely the Reak Rajawali art."

The group's existence is also recognized beyond its founding family. Kang Asep Hanafi, Head of the Community Welfare Section of Tegalluar Village and a supporting informant, explained the position of Reak Rajawali among the traditional arts of the village:

> *"Menurut pandangan saya, Reak adalah sebuah kesenian tradisional daerah atau seni buhun Sunda. Di Desa Tegalluar sendiri terdapat kelompok Reak Rajawali. Sebelumnya di Tegalluar terdapat berbagai jenis kesenian, namun untuk Reak salah satunya adalah Reak Rajawali." (Kang Asep Hanafi, interview, 25 June 2026)*
>
> Translation: "In my view, Reak is a traditional regional art, or old Sundanese art (*seni buhun*). In Tegalluar Village itself there is the Reak Rajawali group. Tegalluar previously had various kinds of art, but as for Reak, one of them is Reak Rajawali."

Residents' testimony reinforces this picture. Pak Emen, a resident and member of the village security team who served as a supporting informant, witnessed the transition from *kuda lumping* to Reak first-hand:

> *"Bapak mah ti leutik geus apal. Da bapak lahir di dieu, jadi ti baheula geus sering ningali Reak. Harita mah can disebut Reak, leuwih kasohor kuda lumping." (Pak Emen, interview, 24 June 2026)*

These five accounts, from three generations of performers and two people outside the group, present a consistent picture: Reak Rajawali SPMS is a continuation of the family's *kuda lumping* that has kept developing without losing its traditional roots. The study found differences in perspective between generations that are in fact complementary: the elders view Reak as a cultural trust (*amanat*) that must be safeguarded and passed on, while the younger generation also see it as a space for creativity and a medium for introducing Sundanese culture through technology and social media. Rather than becoming a source of conflict, this difference in perspective appears to be the strength that enables Reak Rajawali SPMS to endure: the elders safeguard traditional values, while the younger generation drives adaptation to the times.

3.2 Challenges Facing Reak

Behind its continuity, Reak Rajawali SPMS faces a number of challenges from both within and outside the group. The first is regeneration. Abah Rusmana stressed the importance of regeneration in an interview on 29 March 2026:

> *"Ai ker dari bapak maha amanat ker sadayanna khusunya para nanoman nu bakal datang jiwa penerus wajib ngamumulai tradisi na wajib ngamumulai seolah budaya na, anu wajib ku urang dilestarikeun justru tong ditepikuen parem. Malah malah lewih mekar gitunya lewih jauhh, budaya urang khususnya dina bidang sunda ulah ditepikuen ku eleh ku seni anu luar kitu nya." (Abah Rusmana, interview, 29 March 2026)*

This statement shows that the continuity of Reak depends heavily on successfully passing values on to the younger generation, and that this trust is understood not merely as maintaining old forms but also as developing them. Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana added that the younger generation must be given ample room to learn so that regeneration genuinely takes place rather than remaining a formality of membership.

The second challenge is economic support. Kang Bayu Nopa, the group's treasurer and a member of the younger generation, described this situation in an interview on 16 June 2026:

> *"Kalau sekarang perhatian pemerintah agak berkurang, jadi lebih ke mandiri saja. Anak-anak lebih inisiatif seperti patungan." (Kang Bayu Nopa, interview, 16 June 2026)*
>
> Translation: "Nowadays the government's attention has decreased somewhat, so we are more self-reliant. The members take more initiative, for example by pooling money."

This statement shows that reduced external support has in fact fostered solidarity and financial independence among members, a form of adaptation born of limitation rather than abundant resources. The third challenge concerns differing religious views on the element of trance (*kesurupan*) in the performance. Kang Asep Hanafi explained this in an interview on 25 June 2026:

> *"Bagi sebagian masyarakat yang religius, khususnya umat Islam, terdapat perbedaan pandangan mengenai unsur kesurupan dalam pertunjukan Reak." (Kang Asep Hanafi, interview, 25 June 2026)*
>
> Translation: "For some religious members of the community, especially Muslims, there are differing views about the element of trance in Reak performances."

These differing views indicate an ongoing negotiation of meaning between cultural tradition and religious understanding in the community, which continues to this day without a single resolution. The group does not attempt to remove this element but allows it to coexist with the diversity of views in the community. The fourth challenge is social order. Pak Emen noted disturbances caused by drunken spectators but emphasized, in an interview on 24 June 2026, that such behavior came from outside the group rather than from the Reak performers themselves:

> *"Dari orang luar atau penonton, bukan dari pemain Reak, pemain reak mah pemain Reak sendiri disiplin atuh kan dijaga, orang luar eta mah." (Pak Emen, interview, 24 June 2026)*
>
> Translation: "It comes from outsiders or spectators, not from the Reak players. The Reak players themselves are disciplined and keep themselves in check; it is the outsiders."

This account is consistent with Abah Rusmana's statement that Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS enforces an internal rule prohibiting members from consuming alcohol during activities, so that the group's disciplined image is maintained despite disturbances from outside. The fifth challenge is environmental cleanliness along the procession route, owing to litter discarded by spectators, as also noted by Kang Asep Hanafi. Together, these five challenges show that the continuity of a traditional art is always bound up with issues of regeneration, economics, the negotiation of religious values, social order, and environmental responsibility. Rather than becoming reasons to retreat, these challenges have encouraged Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS to keep improving from within while maintaining good relations with the community and the village government.

3.3 Performers' Experiences and Communication

The three key informants know Reak not as something new but as the continuation of something that existed before they were born. Everyday experience in the group is shaped by intensive interpersonal communication. Kang Bayu Nopa described the pattern of cooperation among members in an interview on 16 June 2026:

> *"Hubungan antar anggota terjalin baik, bahkan kami saling membantu mengisi jobdesk yang kekurangan orang. Antara tim nayaga, pemeran Hanoman, penggotong rajawali semuanya saling mengisi membantu satu sama lain." (Kang Bayu Nopa, interview, 16 June 2026)*
>
> Translation: "Relations among members are good; we even help one another fill roles that are short of people. The *nayaga* (musicians), the Hanoman performers, and the eagle bearers all fill in and help one another."

Artistic experience also serves as a means of nurturing the younger generation. Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana explained that Reak has functioned as a vehicle for social and moral education:

"Jadi namanya reak itu sebagai satu wadah ya satu wadah untuk membenahi anak-anak muda. Jadi jangan sampai anak muda terarus masa-masa jaman sekarang kan cek bahasa kolot mah hariwang kitunya nah jadi seolah-olah hiji wadah ngebentuk ker posisi barudak sebagai, bisa seolah-olah barudak ku urang, dipelajari diberi didikan secara moral, seperti kolot didik ka anaknya kitu." (Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana, interview, 29 March 2026)

A similar view was expressed by Abah Rusmana, who described the various arts within the Reak group as a medium for communicating values to young members:

"Jadi, nah ayakan wadah. Jadi di jero seni reak iye hente hiji reak Cuma seperti tadi disini teh, jadi ada wadah semacam suling, di jero eta teh aya semacam reog, aya semacam calung, oge aya semacam pencasilat. Jad ngabina ngabina posisi barudak tong ditepikeun ku ulah tergiur karena pergaulan pergaulan yang bebas kitu pergaulan ayena intina mah nya eta." (Abah Rusmana, interview, 29 March 2026)

From outside the group, Kang Asep Hanafi observed how communication and interaction between the performers and the community take place regularly through the high frequency of performances:

"Hampir setiap minggu selalu ada pertunjukan sehingga antusiasme masyarakat sangat tinggi." (Kang Asep Hanafi, interview, 25 June 2026)

Translation: "There is a performance almost every week, so public enthusiasm is very high."

Pak Emen added his experience as a resident who has repeatedly witnessed how Reak performances become a space for social gathering in the village:

"Menghibur masyarakat. Apalagi kalau Agustusan, pasti ramai. Macet pisan jalan desa." (Pak Emen, interview, 24 June 2026)

Translation: "It entertains the community. Especially during the August [Independence Day] celebrations, it is always crowded. The village roads are completely jammed."

These five experiences show that communication in Reak Rajawali SPMS operates on two levels at once: internally, as technical coordination and the transmission of values among members; and externally, as regular interaction with spectators and villagers, which ultimately affirms Reak's position as part of social life in Tegalluar rather than a merely periodic spectacle.

3.4 Because Motives

The because-motives for the performers' involvement in Reak are mostly rooted in family. Kang Bayu Nopa explained that his involvement is not merely a personal interest but a moral responsibility to continue the family legacy:

"Saya mengenal Reak sejak kecil karena pendirinya adalah ayah saya sendiri bersama kakek saya dan keluarga besar dari pihak ayah maupun ibu yang ikut terlibat dalam pendirian seni Reak tersebut. Oleh karena itu, sudah menjadi keharusan bagi saya untuk melanjutkan, meneruskan, dan melestarikan kesenian yang telah dibangun oleh keluarga saya sendiri." (Kang Bayu Nopa, interview, 16 June 2026)

Translation: "I have known Reak since childhood because its founders were my own father together with my grandfather and my extended family on both my father's and my mother's sides, who were involved in establishing this Reak art. Therefore, it is a must for me to continue, carry on, and preserve the art that my own family has built."

Abah Rusmana confirmed the same pattern, namely that Reak existed long before he was born and has been passed down from generation to generation:

"Iya pasti turun temurun keanak cucu, iye ditepen aki ditipen ku bapa terus, alhamdulilah gitu jadi sanes seni ala kadarna, as ana titurut muning iye mah aya tadi na sa ti acan aya bapa, seni mah tos aya." (Abah Rusmana, interview, 29 March 2026)

Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana said much the same, even describing his attachment to Reak as something that has become part of him:

"Lamun masalah eta bapa hente bisa, geus jadi daging lah nya. Kan tadi teh turunan, ngaran seni turunan hese dipiceun. Moal bisa dijauhkeun." (Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana, interview, 29 March 2026)

Among the supporting informants, Kang Asep Hanafi confirmed the cross-generational pattern of regeneration that village officials have also observed:

"Saat ini sebagian besar pemain Reak dan kuda lumping di Tegalluar merupakan anak muda berusia belasan hingga sekitar tiga puluh tahun. Para sesepuh biasanya berperan sebagai pawang, pengurus, atau pihak yang mempersiapkan perlengkapan ritual dan sesajen." (Kang Asep Hanafi, interview, 25 June 2026)

Translation: "At present, most Reak and kuda lumping performers in Tegalluar are young people aged from their teens to around thirty. The elders usually serve as *pawang*, organizers, or those who prepare the ritual equipment and offerings."

Pak Emen also confirmed this from the perspective of a resident who has long witnessed the changing generations of performers:

"Dulu mah bukan reak, tapi kesenian kudalumping weh huuh kesenian kuda lumping rombongan kudalumping sekarang mah jadi reak tapi kuda lumping ada reak ada." (Pak Emen, interview, 24 June 2026)

Translation: “In the past it was not Reak, just kuda lumping, a kuda lumping troupe. Now it has become Reak, but kuda lumping is still there, and Reak is there too.”

Besides family, the social environment has also nurtured the performers’ interest in Reak. Kang Bayu Nopa cited lineage, relatives, and friendships as the main drivers, along with personal fondness for the art and the sociocultural demand to preserve regional art. Family and social environment reinforce each other: growing up in a family and community actively engaged in the arts makes Reak not an activity learned from scratch but something that, in the words of one informant, has “become part of one’s flesh” since childhood.

3.5 In-Order-To Motives

If because-motives explain the origins of involvement, in-order-to-motives explain where that involvement is directed. The first goal is to preserve Reak as a Sundanese cultural heritage, though not by rigidly maintaining old forms. Kang Bayu Nopa explained his goals in an interview on 16 June 2026:

“Saya ingin kesenian Reak semakin dikenal oleh banyak orang. Semoga kesenian ini tidak hanya ada di Tegalluar, tetapi juga dikenal oleh masyarakat di luar daerah. Tujuan saya tetap aktif di Reak agar budaya Sunda tetap hidup dan ada yang meneruskannya.” (Kang Bayu Nopa, interview, 16 June 2026)

Translation: “I want Reak to become better known by many people. I hope this art will not exist only in Tegalluar but will also be known by people outside the area. My goal in staying active in Reak is to keep Sundanese culture alive and to ensure that there are people to carry it on.”

Abah Rusmana expressed a similar hope, namely that preserving Reak is a shared trust for the sake of future generations:

“Abah mah miharep budaya Reak ulah nepi ka leungit. Tujuan abah ngiring terus di ieu kasenian supaya barudak ayeuna jeung nu bakal datang tetep apal kana budaya sorangan jeung daék ngamumulé éta budaya.” (Abah Rusmana, interview, 29 March 2026)

Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana added that his goal is not merely to maintain Reak while he is still active but to ensure its continuity in the future:

“Lamun bapa mah hayang ieu kasenian tetep aya sanajan engke bapa teu neraskeun ieu seni kitunya. Mugia aya nu neruskeun, ngajaga, jeung ngamumulé Reak sangkan budaya Sunda teu leungit ku jaman.” (Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana, interview, 29 March 2026)

From the village government’s perspective, Kang Asep Hanafi considered this goal of preservation to be in line with the village’s interest in safeguarding local cultural identity:

“Kesenian Reak berfungsi untuk melestarikan budaya dan seni buhun yang sudah ada sejak lama.” (Kang Asep Hanafi, interview, 25 June 2026)

Translation: “Reak serves to preserve the culture and old arts (*seni buhun*) that have existed for a long time.”

Pak Emen also hoped that the art would continue to serve as entertainment and as social glue for the village, as he has experienced it:

“Menghibur masyarakat. Apalagi kalau Agustusan, pasti ramai.” (Pak Emen, interview, 24 June 2026)

Translation: “It entertains the community. Especially during the August celebrations, it is always crowded.”

Besides preservation, the second goal is to nurture the younger generation through regular rehearsals and studio (*sanggar*) activities that function as non-formal education, where young members learn discipline, responsibility, and togetherness while being kept away from harmful associations. The third goal is to build social relationships and introduce Reak to a wider public, as reflected in Kang Bayu Nopa’s desire to uphold the good name of the group, which belongs not only to him but to all members and to the predecessors who founded it.

3.6 The Subjective Meaning of Sundanese Reak Art

The interplay between the because-motives and in-order-to-motives described in the two preceding subsections shapes the subjective meanings that the performers attach to Reak. Data reduction revealed five mutually reinforcing meanings: Reak as Sundanese cultural heritage, as the identity of both the group and the community, as a responsibility of the successor generation, as a space of togetherness and kinship, and as a source of pride.

The first and most prominent meaning is Reak as a cultural heritage that must be safeguarded because it has become one with the identity of the Sundanese people. This meaning arises directly from the because-motives described above: because Reak has been passed down across generations and has “become part of their flesh” since childhood, the performers do not see it as a choice that can simply be abandoned.

The second meaning, Reak as the identity of both the group and the community, is evident in Kang Bayu Nopa’s account that when people come to know Reak, they automatically come to know the group that cares for it; for him, introducing Reak is the same as introducing himself. The third meaning,

Reak as a responsibility of the successor generation, is reflected in Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana's view that the success of an arts group is measured not by how often it performs but by its ability to foster a new generation that carries on its cultural values, a view consistent with Abah Rusmana's hope that Reak will continue even when he is no longer active.

The fourth meaning, Reak as a space of togetherness and kinship, grows out of regular rehearsals and offstage conversations that strengthen relationships among members, as described in the subsection on the performers' experiences and communication. The fifth meaning, Reak as a source of pride, is felt both by the younger generation, who wish to introduce Reak to a wider public, and by the founders, who are proud that the group has survived and continues to grow. This pride is also confirmed from outside the group: Kang Asep Hanafi has observed growing public interest in Reak each year, while Pak Emen has witnessed how Reak performances consistently draw crowds of villagers, especially during celebrations such as Independence Day.

These five meanings do not stand alone but grow out of each informant's different life path, so that an emphasis on one meaning in fact strengthens the others held by the remaining informants. This finding is consistent with Schutz's phenomenology, which treats meaning as the product of a person's subjective experience of their life-world: a person understands reality not merely from what appears before them but from what they have experienced, the relationships they have formed, and the motives underlying their actions (Schutz in Budiarko, 2021). For its performers, Reak is ultimately not merely a traditional art but an identity, a responsibility, a space of togetherness, and a source of pride that colors their life paths; and, as the accounts of the two supporting informants show, this meaning is also recognized by the community beyond the group itself.

3.7 Data Triangulation

The validity of these findings was examined through source, technique, and time triangulation. In terms of sources, the three key informants, who come from three generations and occupy three different roles in the group's structure and who did not know one another's answers, all stated that Reak began as the family's *kuda lumping* before developing into its present form. The accounts of the supporting informants, Kang Asep Hanafi from the village government and Pak Emen from the community of spectators, further confirm that Reak is widely known and has a place in the social life of Tegalluar Village.

In terms of technique, interview statements about the rehearsal schedule and the musical instruments used were checked against direct observation at the rehearsal site, while claims about Reak's involvement in various events were checked against photographic documentation and activity records. In terms of time, triangulation could be fully applied only to the data from Kang Bayu Nopa, who agreed to be interviewed more than once over a span of almost three months, whereas Abah Rusmana and Aki Sesepuh Cahya Hadiyana each agreed to only one interview, so the validity of their data rests more on source and technique triangulation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the performers' involvement in Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS does not emerge as a choice separate from their lives but as a continuation of experiences that have grown since childhood within families and communities already familiar with this art. This conclusion answers the first research question regarding the performers' experiences of involvement in Sundanese Reak art in Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS.

In answer to the second research question, the performers' because-motives are rooted in family and social environment, which together shape both their motivation to hone their artistic skills and their identity as members of the group. Their in-order-to-motives are directed toward three aims: preserving Reak through selective adaptation to changing times, nurturing the younger generation through the values of discipline and togetherness, and introducing the art to a wider public.

In answer to the third research question, the interplay of these two motives shapes a meaning of Sundanese Reak art that goes beyond entertainment: Reak is understood as a cultural identity integrated into the performers' selves, as a medium that conveys values of togetherness and solidarity, and as a space of self-expression where creativity and personal ability are displayed. This finding affirms Alfred Schutz's view that human action rests on two temporal directions at once, namely past experiences that shape consciousness and future hopes that direct action, which for the performers of Reak Rajawali SPMS converge into a single coherent meaning: Reak as identity, as a medium of cultural communication, and as a tangible effort to safeguard ancestral heritage in an ever-changing era.

4.1 Research Implications

Theoretically, this study reinforces the relevance of Alfred Schutz's phenomenological framework for explaining social action in traditional arts communities, particularly in unpacking the relationship between the *because motive* and the *in-order-to motive* as two sides of the same coin that together form a single, coherent subjective meaning. The findings also extend the application of this framework to cultural and interpersonal communication in folk performing arts communities, whereas it has previously been applied mostly to issues of family, social media, and professions (Hidayati, 2025; Alfaridzki, 2024; Sitompul, 2024).

Practically, this study offers Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS a picture of the values that have held the group together, which can serve as material for reflection in designing regeneration programs and strategies for introducing Reak to younger generations. For the Tegalluar Village government and relevant cultural agencies, the findings on the group's social functions and challenges can inform policies or forms of support that are better targeted at preserving traditional arts at the village level.

4.2 Research Limitations

This study is limited to a single Reak group in one village, namely Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS in Tegalluar Village, so its findings are not intended to be generalized to all Reak groups in West Java, each of which has its own history and characteristics. Another limitation is that time triangulation could be fully applied to only one key informant, as described in the Data Triangulation subsection, so some findings rest more on source and technique triangulation.

5. SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the conclusions, implications, and limitations above, several suggestions are offered. First, Regu Reak Rajawali SPMS should institutionalize regeneration in a more structured way, for example through tiered training schedules for young members, so that the group's continuity does not depend solely on individual initiative. Second, the Tegalluar Village government and the local cultural office should broaden their existing support beyond recognition and ceremonial visits to include concrete assistance, such as the provision of musical instruments, rehearsal space, and welfare guarantees for performers, as has begun to be initiated.

Third, spectators' awareness of maintaining order and cleanliness during performances needs to be continually fostered, given that both issues are real challenges faced by the group, as described in the subsection on challenges. Fourth, future researchers could extend the study to other Reak groups in West Java to examine variations in motives and meanings across groups, or adopt perspectives from group communication and symbolic communication theory to enrich understanding of how traditional culture is preserved amid changing times.

6. CO-AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

[To be completed by the authors: a conflict-of-interest statement and the contribution of each author. Example: The authors declare no conflict of interest in this article. Author 1 conducted the fieldwork and prepared the manuscript; Authors 2 and 3 supervised the methodology and reviewed the manuscript.]

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