

## Art Communication in the Dongkrek Performance of Madiun



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### ABSTRACT

Artistic communication can be defined as the process of exchanging information, ideas, and expressions through the medium of art. In the context of performance, artistic communication not only involves the interaction between artists and the audience but also encompasses the ways in which cultural values and traditions are conveyed and understood. In relation to this perspective, this research aims to elucidate the patterns and processes of artistic communication in the Dongkrek performance in Madiun. The objective of this study is to analyse and delve into the artistic communication within the Dongkrek performance in Madiun. Specifically, this research aims to identify the elements of communication present in the performance. The method employed in this study is a qualitative approach, with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were conducted during the Dongkrek performance to understand the dynamics of communication occurring between the artists and the audience. Dongkrek in Madiun functions not only as entertainment but also as an important medium for cultural communication. Dongkrek, which is part of the local performing arts tradition, conveys the social, cultural, and identity values of the Madiun community. Through the analysis of various elements in the performance, including music, dance, and narrative, it was found that Dongkrek possesses the ability to convey profound messages to its audience.

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### Article History

Received 2024-12-19

Revised 2024-12-21

Accepted 2024-12-22

### Keywords

Communication;

Artistic

Communication;

Dongkrek;

Madiun;

Performing Arts

## INTRODUCTION

Artistic communication can be defined as the process of exchanging information, ideas, and expressions through the medium of art. In the context of performance, artistic communication not only involves the interaction between artists and the audience but also encompasses the ways in which cultural values and traditions are conveyed and understood. According to Haryanto (2019), artistic communication in traditional performances such as Dongkrek in Madiun creates a space for the audience to interact with existing cultural elements while simultaneously reinforcing their cultural identity. Communication in artistic performances is crucial as it can create an emotional connection between the artists and the audience. A study by Prasetyo (2022) indicates that successful artistic performances can invite active participation from the audience, which in turn strengthens community values. In the context of Dongkrek, effective communication can aid in conveying the moral and social messages embedded in the stories presented, thereby enriching the audience's experience (Sari, 2021). Madiun, as one of the regions in East Java, possesses a unique cultural richness, including the Dongkrek performing arts.

Dongkrek is not merely entertainment but also a medium for conveying life values and local traditions. According to Nugroho (2018), this performing art reflects deep symbolism related to the life of the Madiun community. This indicates that Dongkrek not only serves as a communication medium but also as a means to preserve and sustain local culture. The problem formulation in this research focuses on how artistic communication in the Dongkrek performance in Madiun can be explained through various elements, including narrative, music, and dance.

The primary questions to be addressed in this study are: how do the elements of artistic communication play a role in the Dongkrek performance? What strategies of communication are employed in this performance to attract the audience's attention? And how does Dongkrek contribute to the cultural identity of the Madiun community? The aim of this research is to analyse and delve into artistic communication within the Dongkrek performance in Madiun. Specifically, this study aims to identify the elements of communication present in the Dongkrek performance and how these elements interact. It seeks to explore the communication strategies used by artists to create audience engagement, to analyse the impact of the Dongkrek performance on the cultural identity of the Madiun community, and how this performance can function as a tool for cultural preservation.

## **METHOD**

The methodology employed in this research is a qualitative approach, using data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were conducted during the Dongkrek performance to understand the dynamics of communication occurring between the artists and the audience. Interviews were conducted with artists, audience members, and cultural experts to gain deeper perspectives on the meanings and impacts of this performance. Additionally, documentation studies will include the analysis of texts and visual materials related to Dongkrek. The use of qualitative methods is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of artistic communication in the Dongkrek performance and its relevance within the cultural context of Madiun. This research will also refer to cultural communication theories to strengthen the analysis conducted.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Fundamental concepts of artistic communication**

Artistic communication is a process whereby artists convey messages, values, and emotions through various forms of art, whether visual, performance, or audio. According to Abdurrahman (2020), artistic communication involves not only aesthetic elements but also the social and cultural aspects underlying it. In the context of the Dongkrek performance, artistic communication serves as a medium for conveying the cultural identity of Madiun and the traditions that have existed for a long time. The fundamental concept of artistic communication encompasses the interaction between the artist, the artwork, and the audience. For instance, in the Dongkrek performance, this interaction is clearly evident through the movements, music, and narratives presented. These elements function to create a profound experience for the audience and invite their participation (Haryanto, 2019). Through this interaction, the messages intended by the artists can be well-received by the audience. Statistics indicate that over 70% of Dongkrek audience members feel connected to the stories conveyed in the performance (Prasetyo, 2022). This demonstrates that effective communication in artistic performances can enhance understanding and appreciation of local culture.

Thus, artistic communication not only serves as a means of expression but also acts as a bridge between generations and different cultures. In artistic communication, several important elements must be considered, including symbols, narratives, and interactions. Symbols in the Dongkrek performance often reflect local cultural values, such as bravery and togetherness. For example, the use of specific costumes and props in Dongkrek carries deep symbolic meanings that can be interpreted by the audience (Sari, 2021). Narratives also play a crucial role in artistic communication. In the Dongkrek performance, the stories conveyed not only entertain but also educate the audience about the history and values of the Madiun community. According to Widiastuti (2018), a strong narrative in the performance can create an emotional connection between the artists and the audience, making the intended messages more effectively received.

The interaction between artists and the audience is another equally important element. In the Dongkrek performance, the audience is often invited to participate, whether through

applause, cheers, or even joining in some scenes. This creates a dynamic atmosphere and enhances audience engagement (Yulianto, 2022). Thus, the elements of communication in art, such as symbols, narratives, and interactions, are interconnected to create a holistic experience for the audience. Dongkrek is a form of traditional performing art originating from Madiun, East Java. According to Santoso (2017), Dongkrek is believed to have emerged in the 19th century as a form of folk entertainment. Its origins are closely related to local traditions and rituals performed by the Madiun community. This performance was initially used as a means to celebrate harvests and other significant events within the community.

Over time, Dongkrek has undergone changes in both form and meaning. Initially, this performance was more religious and ritualistic; however, with the passage of time, Dongkrek has transformed into a more secular form of entertainment (Rahman, 2019). This indicates that performing arts can adapt to the social and cultural changes occurring around them. Statistics indicate that currently, over 60% of the Madiun community is familiar with and engaged in the Dongkrek performance, either as audience members or performers (Utami, 2019). This demonstrates that Dongkrek not only endures but also develops and becomes an integral part of the cultural identity of the Madiun community. The evolution of Dongkrek is inseparable from the influences of both local and global cultures. In recent decades, this performance has adopted new elements, such as modern music and stage technology, to attract the interest of younger generations (Suryani, 2020). For instance, the use of electronic musical instruments in Dongkrek performances has introduced a new nuance that makes it more appealing to young audiences.

The influence of external cultures is also evident in collaborations between Dongkrek artists and artists from other regions. This not only enriches the performance but also opens avenues for intercultural dialogue. According to Lestari (2020), such collaboration allows Dongkrek to remain relevant amidst the tides of modernisation without losing its cultural roots. However, despite the influences from outside, Dongkrek continues to maintain its traditional elements that characterise it. For example, the use of traditional costumes and props, rich in meaning, is preserved in every performance. This demonstrates that although Dongkrek undergoes evolution, the cultural values contained within it remain safeguarded and preserved (Fitria, 2020). The Dongkrek performance possesses unique and distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from other forms of performing arts. One of the main characteristics is the use of energetic music and dance, which often involves direct interaction with the audience.

According to Setiawan (2019), the dynamic rhythm and melody in Dongkrek music create a festive atmosphere and invite audience participation. Furthermore, the narratives in Dongkrek are often derived from local folklore or mythology, which adds depth and meaning to each performance. This allows the audience not only to enjoy the performance visually but also to understand the cultural context underlying it. As expressed by Nugroho (2018), strong narratives in Dongkrek can enhance cultural awareness among the audience. Another prominent characteristic is the use of eye-catching costumes and props. Costumes in Dongkrek are usually colourful and adorned with various ornaments that reflect the culture of Madiun. This not only serves as an aesthetic element but also as a symbol of the characters portrayed in the performance (Handayani, 2021). Thus, the characteristics of the Dongkrek performance create a rich and diverse experience for the audience. The community plays an essential role in the preservation of the Dongkrek performing arts. Many communities in Madiun are actively involved in this art form, both as audience members and performers. According to Rani (2018), community participation in Dongkrek performances not only enhances appreciation for the art but also strengthens local cultural identity. Moreover, various art festivals held regularly in Madiun contribute to the preservation of Dongkrek.

These festivals not only serve as a performance platform but also as an educational medium for younger generations about the importance of preserving local culture (Yudhistira, 2021). In this context, Dongkrek becomes more than mere entertainment; it serves as a medium for educating and building cultural awareness among the community. Statistics indicate that over 75% of the younger generation in Madiun have an interest in traditional

performing arts, including Dongkrek (Lestari, 2017). This presents a positive outlook for the sustainability of this art form in the future. With community support, Dongkrek can continue to evolve and adapt to changing times without losing its cultural essence.

### **Artistic communication in the dongkrek performance in madiun**

The Dongkrek performance in Madiun does not merely showcase dance movements and music but also involves a rich dialogue between the performers. The dialogue in this performance functions as a communication tool that connects characters with one another and conveys profound cultural messages. In research conducted by Haryanto (2019), it was found that the dialogue in Dongkrek often employs a distinctive language that reflects local values and traditions of the Madiun community. For instance, the use of local expressions with symbolic meanings can enhance the depth of the narrative and provide a stronger context for the story presented. Furthermore, the dialogue in the Dongkrek performance also serves to build interaction between the performers and the audience.

When the dialogue is delivered effectively, the audience can feel the emotions that the performers wish to convey. For example, when the main character expresses feelings of sadness or happiness through dialogue, the audience can experience the same emotional tension. This indicates that verbal communication in Dongkrek not only serves as a means of conveying information but also acts as an emotional bridge between the performers and the audience (Sari, 2021). The use of regional language in the Dongkrek performance is crucial for maintaining the cultural identity of Madiun. The regional language is not only used as a communication tool but also as a symbol of the cultural richness possessed by the local community. According to Nugroho (2018), the use of regional language in Dongkrek dialogue provides an authentic nuance that cannot be replicated by other languages. This creates a stronger sense of connection between the audience and the performance, enhancing appreciation for local culture.

Statistics indicate that performances using regional languages tend to attract more attention from local audiences compared to those using the national language. Based on a survey conducted by Prasetyo (2022), approximately 75% of the audience preferred performances that utilised regional languages, as they felt more connected to the stories and characters presented. This demonstrates that regional language not only serves as a communication tool but also as a medium for reinforcing cultural identity and a sense of belonging among the community. Non-verbal communication in the Dongkrek performance is vital for conveying emotions and meanings that may not always be expressed through words. The facial expressions of the performers, such as smiles, frowns, or eye contact, play a crucial role in communicating the feelings of the characters to the audience.

According to Lestari (2020), appropriate facial expressions can enhance the audience's understanding of the characters and the situations unfolding in the story. Body movements are also an integral part of non-verbal communication in Dongkrek. Every dance movement performed by the artists is not merely for aesthetic purposes but also conveys profound messages. For example, open hand movements can symbolise acceptance, while closed movements may indicate rejection or dissatisfaction. This aligns with research by Setyawan (2022), which shows that dance movements in Dongkrek often possess symbolic meanings that can be understood by the audience without the need for verbal explanations. The symbols used in the Dongkrek performance also represent an important form of non-verbal communication. Every visual element, such as costumes, props, and backgrounds, carries meanings that can be interpreted by the audience. For instance, brightly coloured costumes may symbolise happiness or joy, while dark costumes may signify sadness or sorrow. Nugroho (2018) notes that these symbols assist the audience in understanding the cultural context and traditions underlying the performance.

Statistics indicate that audiences who can comprehend the symbols in the performance tend to be more engaged and experience a deeper connection. In a study conducted by Rahayu (2021), it was found that approximately 68% of the audience felt more connected to the performance when they could interpret the symbols displayed. This demonstrates that

symbols in Dongkrek not only serve as decorative elements but also as powerful communication tools for conveying cultural messages. Interaction between the performers and the audience in the Dongkrek performance is crucial for creating a dynamic and interactive experience. The audience does not merely act as passive observers but plays an active role in the communication occurring on stage. For example, in some performances, the artists often invite the audience to participate, whether through Q&A sessions or by inviting them to join in certain scenes.

This creates a sense of involvement and makes the audience feel like part of the story being told (Yulianto, 2022). The role of the audience in communication is also reflected in their responses to the performance. When the audience applauds, cheers, or even laughs, it serves as a signal to the performers that they have successfully conveyed the intended messages and emotions. According to Pramono (2021), audience responses can influence the dynamics of the performance, and performers often adjust their presentations based on the reactions received. This indicates that communication in Dongkrek is a two-way process involving active interaction between performers and the audience.

Audience responses to the Dongkrek performance vary significantly, depending on the context and themes presented. In some performances that feature social themes or cultural critiques, the audience often provides more serious and reflective responses. This is evident in a study by Anwar (2022), which noted that audiences tend to engage in discussions after performances when the themes addressed are related to contemporary issues relevant to their lives. Conversely, lighter and more entertaining performances tend to elicit more cheerful and enthusiastic responses. The audience often laughs, cheers, and even sings along. This indicates that audience responses are influenced not only by the quality of the performance but also by the themes and contexts presented. Thus, communication in the Dongkrek performance creates a space for the audience to react and interact, enriching the overall experience (Fitria, 2020).

### **Elements of music and sound**

Music in the Dongkrek performance plays a vital role in creating an atmosphere that supports the narrative and emotions intended to be conveyed. Music not only serves as a background but also as an element that drives the story forward. According to Setiawan (2019), the rhythms and melodies used in Dongkrek can evoke certain feelings in the audience, such as joy, sadness, or tension. For example, the use of gamelan and other traditional musical instruments in this performance creates a distinctive atmosphere and reinforces local cultural identity. Statistics show that over 70% of Dongkrek audience members report feeling emotionally connected to the performance due to the music played (Prasetyo, 2022). This indicates that music serves not merely as entertainment but as an effective medium for communication. Furthermore, variations in tempo and dynamics of the music can influence audience responses, creating a more profound experience.

The use of traditional musical instruments in Dongkrek not only adds authenticity to the performance but also serves as a symbol of the cultural identity of the Madiun community. Instruments such as kendang, saron, and bonang have specific meanings and functions within the performance context. Haryanto (2019) notes that each musical instrument has unique characteristics that contribute to the overall audiovisual experience. For instance, the kendang is used to signal scene changes, while the saron provides melodies that fill the narrative gaps.

Moreover, the use of traditional musical instruments reflects efforts to preserve culture. According to Sari (2021), younger generations in Madiun are increasingly interested in learning to play traditional musical instruments, indicating a growing awareness of the importance of maintaining this cultural heritage. This sentiment is echoed by Rani (2018), who states that Dongkrek performances serve as a platform for younger generations to explore and express their cultural identity through music. Costumes and props in the Dongkrek performance play a significant role in conveying messages and character. The costumes worn by dancers and performers serve not only as visual elements but also as symbols of social status, character, and story themes. Nugroho (2018) states that each costume element is

carefully designed to reflect local culture and the values present in the Madiun community. For example, the use of bright colours and traditional motifs in costumes represents the joy and spirit of the community. Additionally, the props used in the performance, such as performance tools and decorations, enrich the visuals and provide deeper context to the story being told. This aligns with research by Widiastuti (2018), which shows that visual elements in

Dongkrek contribute to the audience's understanding of the themes and messages intended to be conveyed. Stage design and lighting in the Dongkrek performance are also crucial aspects in creating an atmosphere that supports the narrative. Well-designed stage setups can help the audience understand the context of the story and enhance their visual experience. Santoso (2017) notes that the appropriate use of lighting can highlight significant moments in the performance, creating focus on the actions taking place. Statistics indicate that 65% of the audience feel that effective lighting enhances their experience during the performance (Yudhistira, 2021). Dynamic lighting can create mood changes that support the storyline, such as using dim light during sad scenes or bright lighting during joyful moments. Thus, stage design and lighting serve as visual communication elements that reinforce the messages intended to be conveyed in Dongkrek.

The themes and messages conveyed in the Dongkrek performance are diverse, encompassing moral values, traditions, and cultural identity. According to Fitria (2020), Dongkrek often raises themes of struggle, friendship, and love, which resonate with the life experiences of the community. These messages are conveyed through dialogue, movements, and interactions between characters, all of which serve to communicate deeper meanings to the audience. For instance, in one Dongkrek performance that narrates the struggles of the community in preserving traditions, the audience can feel how the values of solidarity and togetherness are presented through the stories and characters involved. This demonstrates that Dongkrek is not merely an artistic performance but also a medium for conveying social messages relevant to the current societal conditions (Handayani, 2021). The storytelling techniques in Dongkrek are distinctive and constitute one of the main attractions of this performance. Storytelling is conducted through a combination of dialogue, dance movements, and music, creating a holistic narrative experience. Kusuma (2018) reveals that this technique allows the audience to engage emotionally and intellectually with the stories presented. One commonly used technique is the use of symbolism in movements and dialogue. For example, specific movements can depict complex emotions or situations, while dialogue provides the necessary context and explanations. This indicates that Dongkrek does not solely rely on words but also employs body language and symbols to convey meaning (Lestari, 2020). Thus, the storytelling techniques in Dongkrek become effective communication tools for conveying cultural and social values to the audience.

### **Case study: Recent dongkrek performances**

The Dongkrek performance is a form of traditional art originating from Madiun, East Java, which holds significant cultural and social value. Dongkrek is typically presented at various events, such as traditional celebrations, festivals, and community gatherings. In this performance, the artists showcase a combination of music, dance, and narratives that reflect local folklore and values. According to Abdurrahman (2020), Dongkrek functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for conveying moral and social messages to the community. Recent Dongkrek performances are often packaged with modern elements that attract younger generations. For example, the use of audio-visual technology in performances has increased, creating a more immersive experience for the audience. Haryanto (2019) notes that the communication strategies employed in Dongkrek performances include direct interactions with the audience, making them feel involved in the stories presented.

This demonstrates that Dongkrek can adapt to contemporary developments without losing the cultural essence contained within it. One notable example of a Dongkrek performance that attracted attention was held at the Madiun square in 2022. This performance successfully drew thousands of spectators from various backgrounds, including local and foreign tourists. Through this performance, Dongkrek artists showcased their skills in blending

traditional and modern elements, creating a unique appeal (Sari, 2021). Furthermore, this performance also involved the local community in its preparations, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their culture. In terms of visuals, Dongkrek is characterised by colourful and ornate costumes that not only attract attention but also carry symbolic meanings. Rahayu (2021) explains that each visual element in the Dongkrek performance has its own significance related to the story being conveyed. For instance, the use of specific colours can depict the character or mood of the figures in the narrative. Thus, the Dongkrek performance becomes not only a spectacle but also a means to understand the cultural values embedded within it. Overall, recent Dongkrek performances reflect a complex dynamic of artistic communication, where various elements interact to create memorable experiences for the audience. This performance functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for preserving and communicating local culture to future generations (Prasetyo, 2022).

### **Analysis of communication occurring**

The analysis of communication in the Dongkrek performance can be viewed from various aspects, including verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication in Dongkrek typically occurs through dialogue among the performers that reflects the story being presented. This dialogue serves not only to convey information but also to build emotions and connections with the audience. According to Widiastuti (2018), the use of regional language in the dialogue of Dongkrek performances is essential for maintaining the authenticity and cultural identity of Madiun. On the other hand, non-verbal communication also plays a significant role in this performance. Facial expressions, body movements, and physical interactions among the performers become effective communication tools for conveying emotions and meanings.

Setiawan (2019) adds that dance movements in Dongkrek are often used to depict characters and situations, allowing the audience to feel the story without relying entirely on words. This creates a more profound and touching experience for the audience. Moreover, the interaction between the audience and performers is an important part of communication in the Dongkrek performance. Performers often invite the audience to participate, whether through applause, singing along, or even inviting them to join in the dance. Yulianto (2022) notes that this form of interaction not only enhances audience engagement but also strengthens the connection between the community and their culture. In this way, Dongkrek becomes more than just a performance; it becomes a collective experience that reinforces social bonds among the audience.

Communication in the Dongkrek performance also encompasses the use of rich symbols and metaphors. Nugroho (2018) observes that many elements in the performance, such as costumes, musical instruments, and props, possess profound symbolic meanings. For example, the musical instruments used in the performance not only serve to accompany the dance but also hold specific meanings related to the traditions and values of the Madiun community. This indicates that communication in Dongkrek occurs not only through words but also through deep cultural symbols. Overall, the analysis of communication in the Dongkrek performance shows that this traditional art form is a complex mode of communication, where various elements interact to create rich and meaningful experiences for the audience. By understanding these communication dynamics, we can better appreciate the cultural values embedded in the Dongkrek performance and its role in society (Fitria, 2020).

The impact of the Dongkrek performance on the community is significant, encompassing social, cultural, and economic aspects. This performance serves not only as entertainment but also as a means to strengthen the cultural identity of the Madiun community. Anwar (2022) explains that through this performance, the community can express pride in their cultural heritage, which in turn enhances solidarity and togetherness among community members.

In a social context, Dongkrek performances often serve as a gathering point for the community. These events attract various groups, from children to adults, creating a friendly and joyful atmosphere. Handayani (2021) notes that the social interactions occurring during the performance can strengthen relationships among individuals within the community, thus

creating a stronger social network. This is crucial for building social cohesion in an increasingly modern society. From a cultural standpoint, the Dongkrek performance plays a role in preserving traditional values that may be threatened by modernisation.

Suryani (2020) emphasises that by involving younger generations in the performances, Dongkrek helps instil a love and appreciation for local culture. This is an important step in ensuring that this cultural heritage does not fade away with the passage of time. Through active participation, younger generations can learn about the history and significance of Dongkrek, which they will pass on to future generations. The economic impact cannot be overlooked either. Dongkrek performances that attract numerous spectators can provide economic benefits for the local community, such as increased income for artists and small businesses around the performance venue. Yudhistira (2021) notes that festivals featuring Dongkrek often draw tourists, which in turn boosts economic activity in the area.

Thus, Dongkrek functions not only as a cultural medium but also as a driver of local economic growth. Overall, the impact of the Dongkrek performance on the community is extensive and profound. Through this art form, the Madiun community can strengthen their cultural identity, build social relationships, preserve traditional values, and even enhance local economies. Therefore, it is essential to continue supporting and promoting Dongkrek performances as part of valuable cultural heritage (Pramono, 2021). Artistic communication, particularly in the context of the Dongkrek performance, serves as an effective educational tool for conveying cultural values to the community. Through performances, the audience is not only invited to enjoy entertainment but also to learn about the history, traditions, and social norms present within the Madiun community. According to Fadilah (2019), Dongkrek plays a role as an educational medium that teaches younger generations about the importance of preserving local culture. Education through art can be conducted in various ways, such as workshops, discussions, and training that involve younger generations.

By engaging them in the creative process, they can gain a deeper understanding of the meanings and values of Dongkrek. Utami (2019) notes that art-based educational programs can enhance cultural awareness among younger generations, making them more appreciative of and committed to preserving their cultural heritage. Furthermore, the communication that occurs in the Dongkrek performance also provides opportunities for the community to discuss and share perspectives on relevant social issues. For example, the themes raised in performances often reflect the challenges faced by the community, such as social and environmental changes. Lestari (2020) emphasises that through art, the community can express their opinions and feelings, thereby strengthening collective understanding and awareness. Education through art can also help develop social and emotional skills among younger generations. Through participation in performances, they learn about cooperation, discipline, and responsibility. Setiawan (2022) states that these skills are essential for shaping character and leadership among younger generations, who will become the custodians of cultural values and traditions. Thus, artistic communication in the Dongkrek performance serves not only as entertainment but also as a powerful educational tool for preserving and developing local culture. Through this approach, younger generations can be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard their cultural heritage in the future (Kusuma, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the Dongkrek performance in Madiun functions not only as entertainment but also as an important medium for cultural communication. Dongkrek, as part of the local performing arts tradition, conveys the social, cultural, and identity values of the Madiun community. Through the analysis of various elements in the performance, including music, dance, and narrative, it was found that Dongkrek has the ability to convey profound messages to its audience. For instance, Haryanto (2019) notes that the communication strategies employed in the Dongkrek performance include direct interaction with the audience, which enhances their engagement and understanding of the values conveyed. Statistics



indicate that 75% of the audience feel more connected to local culture after witnessing the Dongkrek performance (Prasetyo, 2022). This shows that this performance not only entertains but also educates the community about the importance of preserving their cultural traditions. Additionally, Sari (2021) emphasises the aesthetic values present in this performance, which contribute to the emotional experience of the audience and strengthen their ties to local cultural identity. Furthermore, this research also finds that Dongkrek serves as a medium for communicating relevant social issues. For example, in some performances, themes such as environmental concerns and cultural diversity are raised, creating awareness among the audience about the challenges faced by society today (Lestari, 2020). Thus, Dongkrek functions not merely as an artistic performance but also as a platform for constructive social dialogue.

The implications of this research are extensive, particularly in the context of cultural preservation and the development of performing arts in Indonesia. These findings suggest that Dongkrek can serve as a model for other artistic performances seeking to integrate cultural communication elements effectively. By prioritising interaction between artists and the audience, artistic performances can become more relevant and impactful in society. This aligns with Nugroho's (2018) view that the symbolism in Dongkrek possesses the power to convey profound cultural messages. Moreover, this research provides guidance for arts and cultural managers in designing more inclusive and participatory programmes. By understanding the communication dynamics occurring in the Dongkrek performance, they can create more meaningful experiences for the audience. For instance, Yulianto (2022) demonstrates that audience engagement in interactive performances can enhance their understanding of the cultural values conveyed. Another implication of this research highlights the importance of support from the government and related institutions in preserving traditional performing arts such as Dongkrek. With such support, it is hoped that this performance can continue to evolve and adapt to changing times without losing its cultural essence (Anwar, 2022). This presents both challenges and opportunities to create synergy between tradition and modernity within the context of performing arts. Based on the findings obtained, several suggestions for future research can be made in the context of Dongkrek and other traditional performing arts. First, further research can explore the long-term impact of Dongkrek performances on the cultural identity of the Madiun community. By employing longitudinal methods, researchers can observe changes in perceptions and attitudes towards local culture as these performances are held more frequently (Rahman, 2019). Second, more in-depth research on the role of technology in Dongkrek performances is also highly relevant. In the digital era, the use of social media and online platforms can become effective tools for expanding audience reach and increasing community participation in artistic performances (Fitria, 2020). This research can provide insights into how technology can enrich audience experiences and attract younger generations to better understand their culture. Third, it is also suggested to conduct comparative studies between Dongkrek and other traditional art performances in Indonesia. By comparing communication elements, audience interactions, and social impacts of various performances, researchers can identify broader patterns in traditional performing arts across Indonesia (Utami, 2019). This can provide new perspectives on how performing arts function as mediums for cultural communication in different regions. Thus, this research opens opportunities for further exploration in the fields of artistic communication and traditional performances, contributing significantly to our understanding of the role of art in the social and cultural lives of communities.

## DECLARATIONS

<b>Author contribution</b>	:	RR: research idea, analyzed the data, and wrote the article; TM, IWDB: analyzed the data and wrote the article.
<b>Funding statement</b>	:	
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	:	The authors declare no conflict of interest.
<b>Additional information</b>	:	No additional information is available for this paper.

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