



Analysis of Spirituality and Trance Elements in Kuda Lumping and Sintren from a Cross-Cultural Counseling Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the relevance of Kuda Lumping and Sintren culture to psychological dynamics, spirituality, and individual emotional expression from a cross-cultural counseling perspective. The study employed a literature review, examining various national and international journals on traditional culture, cultural psychology, spirituality, and multicultural counseling. The findings indicate that the traditions of Kuda Lumping and Sintren contain elements of trance, spirituality, and communal values that function as media for emotional expression, strengthening cultural identity, and psychological coping within society. Trance experiences are understood as part of cultural meaning systems and individuals' transpersonal experiences. These findings emphasise that understanding local culture can help counselors comprehend clients' worldviews, spirituality, and psychological expressions in their specific contexts. This study concludes that integrating local cultural perspectives into cross-cultural counseling can enhance counselors' cultural sensitivity in assessment and intervention. The contribution of this study lies in providing a cultural understanding framework that supports the development of multicultural counseling competencies in Indonesia.

KATA KUNCI

Unsur-unsur Spiritualitas dan
Sintren;
Kuda Lumping;
Sintren;
Perspektif Konseling Lintas
Budaya

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis relevansi budaya Kuda Lumping dan Sintren terhadap dinamika psikologis, spiritualitas, serta ekspresi emosi individu dalam perspektif konseling lintas budaya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan menelaah berbagai jurnal nasional dan internasional yang membahas budaya tradisional, psikologi budaya, spiritualitas, dan konseling multikultural. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi Kuda Lumping dan Sintren mengandung unsur trance, spiritualitas, dan nilai komunal yang berfungsi sebagai media ekspresi emosi, penguatan identitas budaya, serta coping psikologis masyarakat. Pengalaman trance dipahami sebagai bagian dari makna budaya dan pengalaman transpersonal individu. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pemahaman budaya lokal membantu konselor memahami worldview, spiritualitas, dan ekspresi psikologis klien secara kontekstual. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi perspektif budaya lokal dalam konseling lintas budaya dapat meningkatkan sensitivitas budaya konselor dalam proses asesmen dan intervensi. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah memberikan kerangka pemahaman budaya yang dapat mendukung pengembangan kompetensi konseling multikultural di Indonesia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is the product of human thought and intellect that shapes systems of values, behaviours, and the quality of social life. The term "culture" originates from the phrase *budi daya*, which refers to the human capacity to create meaning and social practices (Munawaroh et al., 2022). In counseling, culture plays an important role by

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shaping how individuals understand themselves, express emotions, build social relationships, and interpret life experiences (Lusi Ramadhani et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding clients' cultural backgrounds is an integral part of the counseling process.

In line with this perspective, cross-cultural counseling has emerged as an approach that emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity in understanding clients' diverse experiences (Nata Septi Mulyani et al., 2022). This approach requires counselors to understand clients' worldviews, values, beliefs, and behavioural patterns based on their cultural contexts. In addition, cross-cultural counseling aims to prevent counselor encapsulation, which refers to the tendency of counselors to use their own cultural values and perspectives as standards for understanding clients (Widodo et al., 2023). Thus, the implementation of cross-cultural counseling should be grounded in respect for cultural diversity, enabling the counseling process to be conducted effectively and contextually (Adrian, 2023).

Indonesia possesses various traditional cultures rich in spiritual elements, including the Sintren tradition in Pemalang and Kuda Lumping performances practised across several regions of Java. Both traditions contain elements of trance, spiritual symbolism, collective rituals, and relationships between humans and supernatural forces. Previous studies indicate that Sintren is understood as a medium of spiritual communication with supernatural powers, while Kuda Lumping is interpreted as a cultural ritual that represents ancestral power, social solidarity, and communal identity (Adrian, 2023; Widodo et al., 2023).

From a psychological perspective, trance is understood as an altered state of consciousness, characterized by changes in awareness that affect individuals' emotions, perceptions, and self-control (Sun & Kim, 2024, p. 2). Neuropsychological studies show that trance experiences are associated with changes in brain activity while individuals are in particular states of consciousness (Gosseries et al., 2024). Therefore, from the perspective of cross-cultural counseling, trance experiences should not be viewed merely as psychological disorders but rather as part of the cultural meaning system and spiritual experiences of society (Novitasari et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, previous studies have primarily discussed Sintren and Kuda Lumping as cultural heritage or performing arts without connecting them to cross-cultural counseling practices (Aditama, 2017; Hardiarini & Firdhani, 2022; Putri et al., 2025). Studies integrating local culture, spirituality, and multicultural counseling approaches (Alfaiz et al., 2022; Daniyatillah et al., 2026; Sari, 2026) remain relatively limited. In practice, counselors frequently encounter clients whose spiritual experiences, cultural rituals, or traditional beliefs influence their psychological conditions. Limited understanding of these cultural contexts may lead to misinterpretations of clients' experiences.

The need for counseling practices that are sensitive to culture and spirituality has become increasingly relevant in modern mental health services. Keçeci and Eksi (2019) explained that integrating spiritual values and traditional practices into counseling can enhance the relevance of interventions for culturally diverse clients. Similarly, Dixon and Bell (2025) emphasised that spiritual experiences constitute an important aspect of mental health that should be accommodated within professional counseling practice. This perspective is further supported by indigenous counseling approaches, which position local wisdom as a foundation for developing contextually effective psychological interventions (Tambunan, 2024).

Based on these considerations, this study proposes a counseling perspective that integrates local culture, spirituality, and multicultural counseling principles by analysing the Sintren and Kuda Lumping traditions. Such integration is important because people's spiritual experiences cannot always be fully understood through universal Western psychological perspectives. Within the Indonesian cultural context, trance experiences and traditional rituals are often closely related to cultural identity, psychological coping mechanisms, and emotional expression within society.

This study aims to explore the spiritual meanings embedded in the Sintren and Kuda Lumping traditions and to analyse their implications for cross-cultural counseling practices. The study also seeks to understand how spiritual experiences, such as trance and traditional rituals, may be viewed as part of individuals' cultural identities and psychological dynamics. Furthermore, this study is expected to contribute a conceptual framework to support the development of multicultural counseling competencies in Indonesia, enabling counselors to provide services that are more culturally sensitive, empathetic, and appropriate to clients' cultural backgrounds.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach, using a literature review and cultural analysis. This approach was selected because the study aimed to understand cultural meanings, spiritual values, and trance phenomena within the traditions of Sintren, Kuda Lumping, and Mudang, and to relate them to the theories and practices of cross-cultural counseling. Cultural analysis was used to explore the symbolic meanings, spiritual values, social functions, and psychological contexts embedded in each ritual tradition. This design enabled the researchers to identify cultural patterns and examine their implications for counseling processes..

2.2 Research Scope and Period.

As a literature review study, this research did not involve a specific physical location for data collection. However, the study was conducted by accessing various scientific sources through Google Scholar and other academic databases. The scope of the study included literature on Javanese culture, Korean shamanism, cross-cultural counseling theories, spirituality in psychology, and trance phenomena in cultural psychology. The research was conducted in 2026 as the period of analysis and manuscript preparation.

The literature review procedure included the following stages: 1) Identifying relevant literature based on predetermined keywords; 2) Selecting literature according to inclusion and exclusion criteria; 3) Organizing data according to research themes; 4) Analyzing cultural meanings and their relevance to counseling; 5) Drawing theoretical and practical conclusions.

2.3 Data Collection

In literature review research, the subjects are not individuals but relevant scientific sources. The subjects of this study consisted of: 1) Cultural and anthropological literature, including articles on the Sintren tradition in Peralang and journals and ethnographic studies on Kuda Lumping; 2) Psychological and counseling literature, including cross-cultural counseling theory (Sue et al.), spiritually integrated counseling (Pargament), indigenous psychology (Kim & Berry), and studies on trance phenomena in cultural psychology.

The study analysed approximately 30–40 literature sources published between 2017 and 2024 in accordance with academic standards for review studies. The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and scientific publications on spirituality, trance, traditional culture, cultural psychology, indigenous counseling, and multicultural counseling. Sources unrelated to the study's focus or lacking scientific credibility were excluded from the analysis.

The primary instrument used in this study was a literature review matrix designed to classify and organise findings by themes, concepts, theoretical perspectives, and research results. Data collection was conducted through documentation, identifying, reviewing, and recording relevant information from selected literature sources.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using thematic and comparative analysis techniques. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns, concepts, and meanings related to spirituality, trance experiences, cultural values, and psychological functions within the traditions of Sintren, Kuda Lumping, and Mudang. The researchers categorised the findings into several major themes, including spiritual meaning, emotional expression, communal values, altered states of consciousness, and implications for counseling practices.

In addition, a comparative analysis was used to examine similarities and differences among the three cultural traditions in ritual practices, spiritual dimensions, social functions, and psychological meanings. The analysis process involved data reduction, data categorisation, interpretation of cultural meanings, and synthesis of findings into a cross-cultural counseling framework. To ensure the credibility of the analysis, the researchers compared findings from various scientific sources and theoretical perspectives in cultural psychology, spirituality, and multicultural counseling.

The results of the analysis were interpreted descriptively to explain how local cultural spirituality and trance experiences can contribute to culturally sensitive counseling practices and the development of multicultural counseling competencies.

2.4 Data Analysis

The research procedure was conducted through the following stages: 1) Formulating the research problems and objectives; 2) Identifying and searching relevant literature; 3) Selecting literature based on inclusion and exclusion criteria; 4) Organising and classifying data according to research themes; 5) Conducting thematic and comparative analyses of cultural meanings, spirituality, and trance phenomena; 6) Integrating the findings into a cross-cultural counseling framework; 7) Writing the research report and concluding. Through these procedures, the study aimed to generate a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between local cultural spirituality and cross-cultural counseling practices.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

a) Studies on Spirituality, Trance, Local Culture, and Cross-Cultural Counseling

The literature review indicates that studies on spirituality, trance phenomena, local culture, and cross-cultural counseling within the traditions of Sintren and Kuda Lumping demonstrate a close relationship between the psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of Javanese society. Previous studies explain that trance experiences in cultural traditions are not always perceived as psychological disorders, but rather as part of cultural meaning systems, collective identity, and the spiritual experiences of the community.

In addition, previous research shows that spirituality embedded in local culture contributes positively to individuals' psychological well-being. Spirituality helps individuals find meaning in life, achieve emotional calm, and develop more adaptive coping mechanisms to deal with life stressors. Therefore, in cross-cultural counseling, spiritual experiences need to be understood in the context of clients' cultural backgrounds and belief systems.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Studies on Spirituality, Trance, Local Culture, and Cross-Cultural Counseling

Researcher	Title	Research Method	Main Findings
Wachyudi & Shabrina (2025)	<i>Analysis of the Attraction Value of Sintren Dance as a Cultural Tourism Attraction in Cirebon City</i>	Qualitative field study	Sintren dance contains cultural and spiritual values that function as a cultural tourism attraction and a medium for preserving local cultural identity. The study also found that younger generations' interest in Sintren has begun to decline, highlighting the need for sustainable cultural preservation efforts.
Marwah et al. (2025)	<i>Sintren Dance, Women, and Power Contestation on the North Coast of Java</i>	Qualitative study using cultural and gender approaches	Sintren dance is not merely a cultural performance but also a space for power contestation, women's identity, and spiritual symbolism within Javanese coastal communities. The tradition reflects the relationship between culture, spirituality, and gender-based social construction.
Azizah Nurul Khasanah et al. (2024)	<i>The Art of Kuda Lumping at Sanggar New Suryo Budoyo in Lahat District, Lahat Regency</i>	Descriptive qualitative study	Kuda Lumping has developed in transmigration areas where most residents are of Javanese origin. The performance contains cultural elements, music, costumes, makeup, and spiritual symbols that reinforce Javanese cultural identity in migrant communities.
Hardiarini & Firdhani (2022)	<i>Kuda Lumping Art: A Multiperspective Study Review</i>	Qualitative multiperspective study	Kuda Lumping is understood not only as traditional entertainment but also as a cultural practice containing spiritual, social, and communal values. Trance rituals within the performance are viewed as part of collective belief systems and cultural expression.
Ryff (2021)	<i>Spirituality and Well-Being: Theory, Science, and the Nature Connection</i>	Literature review and theoretical analysis	Spirituality has a positive relationship with psychological well-being, meaning in life, personal growth, and mental health. The study emphasizes that human relationships with nature and spirituality contribute to psychological well-being.

Researcher	Title	Research Method	Main Findings
Ridley et al. (2021)	<i>The Process Model of Multicultural Counseling Competence</i>	Literature review and conceptual model development	This study developed a multicultural counseling competency model emphasizing the integration of culture throughout the counseling process, including preparation, assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Counselors need cultural awareness, therapeutic alliance skills, and intervention adaptation abilities based on clients' cultural backgrounds.
Keçeci & Eksi (2019)	<i>Multi-Cultural Counseling and Spiritual Interventions</i>	Literature review and conceptual analysis	Spirituality plays an important role in multicultural counseling. Counselors need to understand clients' cultural and spiritual values to create more effective, empathetic, and culturally appropriate counseling processes. Integrating spiritual approaches into counseling helps counselors understand clients' psychological experiences more holistically.

Based on the analysis presented in Table 1, spirituality and trance experiences within the Sintren and Kuda Lumping traditions provide psychological, social, and cultural benefits for Javanese communities. These rituals serve as media for emotional expression, strengthen cultural identity, and facilitate spiritual and psychological coping mechanisms.

Furthermore, studies on multicultural counseling indicate that counselors must understand clients' spiritual and cultural experiences in their specific contexts. By understanding local culture, counselors can establish therapeutic relationships that are more culturally sensitive, empathetic, and aligned with the values of Indonesian society.

3.2. Discussion

b) Sintre

Sintren is a ritual performance tradition originating from the coastal communities of Java, featuring a dancer who enters a trance state following a spiritual invocation ritual led by a handler or shaman. In this tradition, trance is understood as a sacred condition rather than a pathological disorder and serves as a means of maintaining the community's spiritual balance. Previous cultural studies have identified trance rituals such as Sintren as mechanisms of collective healing and symbols of local belief systems (Wachyudi & Shabrina, 2025).

Trance within Sintren is interpreted as a medium of transition between the physical and spiritual worlds, serving as a cathartic space that enables the release of emotional tension for both the dancer and the surrounding community. In addition, Sintren functions as part of the cultural identity of coastal communities, strengthening social bonds and preserving moral values passed down through generations. The tradition symbolises the community's effort to preserve collective memory and ancestral narratives embedded in everyday life (Marwah et al., 2025).

The continued existence of Sintren demonstrates the adaptive capacity of coastal communities to preserve traditional values amid modernisation (Hartini et al., 2024). Although certain aspects of the performance have evolved, the core elements of spirituality and trance remain intact, ensuring that the cultural and philosophical values embedded in the tradition are preserved (Nurhasanah & Utina, 2025). Studies on Indonesian traditional arts emphasise that performances such as Sintren are not merely forms of entertainment but also serve as intergenerational media for cultural transmission through which ethical, spiritual, and aesthetic values are shared collectively (Lephen, 2025).

From a psychological perspective, the Sintren tradition plays an important role as a source of spiritual coping, particularly in helping individuals deal with life stressors. Communities that uphold this tradition believe that the rituals and symbolism within the performance provide inner peace, hope, and psychological strength (Agustin Sapta Rini & Achmad Fauzi, 2024). This finding indicates that traditional performing arts continue to serve psychosocial functions despite ongoing cultural changes.

Within the context of cross-cultural counseling, understanding Sintren is essential to prevent counselors from misinterpreting transpersonal experiences among clients from coastal cultural backgrounds. Experiences such as

symbolic dreams, spiritual communication, or trance-like states often carry specific cultural meanings that cannot be fully understood solely through Western psychopathological frameworks. Therefore, counselors need to develop multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills as recommended in cross-cultural counseling competency standards. Understanding the spiritual values, ritual structures, and symbolic meanings embedded in Sintren enables counselors to interpret clients' experiences in context and to respect their worldviews (Suryadmaja & Saearani, 2025).

Thus, Sintren should not be viewed merely as a traditional performance but rather as a symbolic system that shapes the identity, spirituality, and coping mechanisms of Javanese coastal communities. Such understanding is important in developing culturally sensitive assessment and intervention practices in counseling.

c) Kuda Lumping

Kuda Lumping is a traditional Javanese performance art depicting horseback warrior using woven bamboo horses, accompanied by trance performances as the central element of the cultural ritual. In Javanese society, the trance experiences that occur during performances are not understood as pathological conditions but rather as spiritual expressions with deep symbolic meanings. Trance is perceived as a representation of courage, inner strength, and the relationship between humans and ancestral powers believed to be present within the ritual. Cultural studies indicate that Kuda Lumping has become an important element in shaping social identity, strengthening traditions, and serving as a symbolic communication medium connecting older and younger generations (Azizah Nurul Khasanah et al., 2024; Hardiarini & Firdhani, 2022).

As a cultural heritage tradition, Kuda Lumping functions not only as an artistic performance but also as a medium for strengthening social cohesion and reinforcing the social values of Javanese society. The performance is used to cultivate character, maintain group solidarity, and transmit heroic values inherited from ancestors. Values such as courage, group loyalty, and discipline are reflected in the warrior roles portrayed during the performance, becoming part of the psychological identity and character of Javanese communities (Rahmawati, 2021).

The trance element in Kuda Lumping is regarded as a valid and structured cultural experience. Its occurrence is not spontaneous but emerges through a sequence of rituals guided by a handler or shaman. The handler plays an important role in maintaining safety, organising the ritual, and controlling the spiritual dynamics of the performance. This demonstrates that trance experiences are understood as part of a systematic cultural process rather than as psychological disorders, and are socially accepted within the community as spiritual phenomena (Nurhasan et al., 2025). Values such as courage, loyalty, and discipline become embedded within the psychological identity of Javanese society (Yulanda & Iqbal, 2025). In this context, Kuda Lumping functions as an effective medium of cultural education because these values are transmitted through communal activities collectively witnessed and experienced by the community.

From an anthropological perspective, Kuda Lumping can be understood as a liminal ritual that creates a transitional symbolic space between the physical and spiritual worlds. This liminality provides participants with opportunities to experience psychological and spiritual transformation while strengthening their social roles within the community (Tiani et al., 2023). Furthermore, the religious and social values embedded within this tradition remain relevant in modern society. Consequently, Kuda Lumping represents not only local cultural identity but also Indonesia's broader cultural richness (Muhsinina et al., 2025).

Within the context of cross-cultural counseling, understanding Kuda Lumping helps counselors recognise that trance phenomena and spiritual beliefs are integral parts of clients' worldviews rather than indicators of psychopathology. Such understanding is essential for developing culturally sensitive assessment and intervention practices.

d) Comparative Analysis of Spirituality and Trance Elements in Sintren and Kuda Lumping

Sintren and Kuda Lumping both present trance phenomena as part of Javanese spirituality; however, each tradition demonstrates different nuances in ritual function, symbolism, and social structure. In Sintren, trance emerges through rituals involving spiritual invocation and closed ceremonial processes, making its spirituality more personal, transformative, and focused on the purity of the dancer. This perspective aligns with studies of Indonesian mystical spirituality that emphasise the body as a medium for spiritual contact and transcendental experiences (Septiya, 2024). In contrast, Kuda Lumping presents a more collective form of trance involving physical energy, warrior symbolism, and supernatural power, making the ritual more communal and expressive. Cultural studies indicate that communal rituals, such as Kuda Lumping, strengthen group identity and reinforce social control (Annisa & Ulfatun Najicha, 2021; Dewa Gede Edi Praditha, 2021).

Both rituals function as mechanisms of spiritual coping and communal catharsis, consistent with psychosocial studies that emphasise how local traditions can support mental health, morality, and spiritual connectedness (Harmadi & Willyam, 2024; Rahmawan & Wahyudi, 2025). Nevertheless, Sintren primarily emphasises meditative and symbolic spirituality, whereas Kuda Lumping highlights collective energy expressed through movement, music, and the ritual handler's or shaman's leadership. Studies on religious behaviour and character formation in Javanese rituals further demonstrate that both traditions embody distinct spiritual patterns while simultaneously reinforcing social and religious values within the community (Heri Isnaini, 2022).

From the perspective of trans-ritual experiences, Sintren involves a more personal transformation of the dancer's identity, whereas Kuda Lumping generates communal ecstasy strengthened by musical dynamics and collective participation. Anthropological literature suggests that these differences emerge from variations in the symbolic structures and spiritual cosmology of Javanese society (Lienardy, 2022). Therefore, the comparison between Sintren and Kuda Lumping demonstrates that Javanese spirituality is both pluralistic and adaptive. At the same time, trance phenomena serve as important mediums for maintaining psychological, social, and spiritual balance within the community.

e) The Relevance of Sintren and Kuda Lumping to Cross-Cultural Counseling

The cultural phenomena of Sintren and Kuda Lumping demonstrate that trance experiences, spiritual communication, and ritual expressions cannot be understood solely through the perspective of Western psychology. Within Javanese society, these practices serve important social and spiritual functions, including maintaining harmony, facilitating emotional recovery, and constructing collective identity. This perspective is consistent with global research findings emphasising that spirituality constitutes a fundamental aspect of mental health, personal identity, and coping mechanisms across cultures (Ryff, 2021).

In this context, cross-cultural counseling must recognise that trance experiences within Javanese culture represent legitimate meaning-making phenomena rather than signs of pathology. Contemporary counseling literature emphasises that understanding clients' spirituality and cultural beliefs is an essential component of culturally sensitive counseling services (Ridley, Sahu, et al., 2021). Counselors who ignore cultural values embedded in traditions such as Sintren and Kuda Lumping risk misinterpreting clients' experiences and creating cultural mismatches during counseling.

Several studies indicate that counseling becomes more effective when counselors understand clients' cultural worldviews and respect their spiritual practices as part of their identity and adaptive coping mechanisms (Gonzalez et al., 2024). This understanding is particularly relevant for communities with trance ritual traditions, as such phenomena are often perceived as forms of communication with ancestors or as spiritual experiences rather than psychological disorders.

In addition, the social dimensions of both traditions illustrate how ritual arts function as instruments for strengthening communities. Research shows that collective cultural activities, including rituals, traditional arts, and communal practices, contribute positively to psychological well-being, social connectedness, and life satisfaction (Yaden et al., 2022). Sintren and Kuda Lumping function as spaces of catharsis and communal healing through artistic and spiritual expression.

From a national cultural perspective, studies have also demonstrated that such traditions serve as protectors of moral values, local religiosity, and the social ethics of Javanese society (Gunawan et al., 2025). Sintren and Kuda Lumping are not merely performances but integral parts of cultural structures that shape relationships between individuals, society, and spirituality. In counseling contexts, these value systems play an important role in interpreting clients' behaviours and decision-making processes (Rakhmat & Najmuddin, 2022).

These cultural rituals also reflect spiritual coping strategies communities use to manage stress, illness, and family conflicts. Global health literature acknowledges that culturally based practices and spiritual meaning systems contribute significantly to mental health recovery and psychological well-being (Long et al., 2024). Therefore, counselors need to understand that clients may integrate cultural rituals into their healing processes (Mani & Mansaray, 2025).

At the theoretical level, this understanding aligns with multicultural counseling approaches that emphasise integrating cultural values, spirituality, and social life into intervention processes (Ridley, Mollen, et al., 2021; Melani & Marnelly, 2025). Thus, the relevance of Sintren and Kuda Lumping in cross-cultural counseling lies in their capacity to provide alternative perspectives on spirituality, mental health, and the expression of collective identity.

Ultimately, the synergy between these two traditions confirms that trance experiences should not be viewed as pathological phenomena but rather as part of cultural meaning systems that deserve respect within counseling

assessment and intervention processes. In the context of increasingly multicultural and multireligious societies, counseling practices need to acknowledge the diversity of spiritual traditions, such as Sintren and Kuda Lumping, as part of professional multicultural competence (Melani & Marnelly, 2025).

4. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This study demonstrates that trance phenomena in Sintren and Kuda Lumping are cultural expressions that serve spiritual, social, and psychological functions and therefore should be understood as part of the worldview of Javanese society. These findings reinforce cross-cultural counseling theory, which emphasises that local spiritual experiences should not be viewed as pathological conditions but rather as legitimate cultural meanings.

In practice, counselors need to strengthen their multicultural competencies to understand clients' spiritual and cultural experiences in context. Educational institutions are encouraged to incorporate local cultural studies into guidance and counseling curricula to enhance students' cultural sensitivity and multicultural awareness. In addition, communities may continue to utilise traditional rituals as spaces for social cohesion, emotional expression, and communal healing. Future researchers are also encouraged to expand studies of other cultural traditions to deepen understanding of the relationships among culture, trance experiences, spirituality, and mental health.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Sintren and Kuda Lumping are important Javanese cultural traditions that embody spiritual, social, and psychological values that contribute to the formation of collective identity and community coping mechanisms. The trance phenomena present within these traditions should not be interpreted as pathological conditions, but rather as structured cultural expressions that possess symbolic, spiritual, and social meanings within local belief systems. Both traditions function not only as cultural performances but also as spaces for emotional expression, communal healing, social solidarity, and the preservation of ancestral values that continue to influence the lives of Javanese communities.

The findings of this study further demonstrate that spirituality and ritual practices play a significant role in shaping individuals' psychological experiences and worldviews. In the context of cross-cultural counseling, experiences such as trance, spiritual communication, and ritual participation need to be understood within clients' cultural backgrounds and systems of meaning. Counselors who fail to understand these cultural dimensions risk misinterpreting clients' experiences through purely Western psychopathological perspectives, which may result in cultural mismatch and ineffective counseling interventions. Therefore, multicultural counseling competence requires counselors to develop cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills that enable them to respect and appropriately interpret clients' spiritual and cultural experiences.

In addition, this study emphasises the importance of integrating local cultural understanding into counseling education and professional practice in Indonesia. The incorporation of indigenous cultural perspectives, spirituality, and traditional values can strengthen culturally sensitive counseling approaches that are more inclusive, contextual, and relevant to the diversity of Indonesian society. Through this integration, counseling services can better accommodate clients' psychological, social, and spiritual needs while promoting respect for cultural diversity as an essential component of mental health and human well-being.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed significantly to the completion of this study. The authors were involved in the conceptualisation of the research, literature review, data analysis, interpretation of findings, manuscript writing, and final revision of the article. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this study.

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