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## Considering Gowok Cultural Traditions as Prostitution is a Logical Fallacy

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### Abstract

Gowok is a cultural tradition that ever existed in Banyumas. This tradition aims to provide understanding, education, and training for a boy who is about to become a teenager or is about to enter the stage of marriage, by a woman who will act as his partner, so that when the boy gets married he can provide physical and spiritual support for his wife. The lack of information about the Gowok cultural tradition makes the construction of the social reality of the community towards the tradition to be bad and negative. Some even think that the Gowok cultural tradition is hidden prostitution. This assumption needs to be straightened out again because it is not entirely true. There are several significant differences between the Gowok cultural tradition and prostitution. This study uses historical research methods with qualitative analysis which is based on literary literacy research and Sin Po newspaper documents in 1941. This study shows that the Gowok cultural tradition experiences misperceptions that continue to mean decadence and ultimately lead to a logical fallacy.

**Keyword:** Gowok, Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk, local wisdom, prostitution, logical fallacy

### Abstrak

Gowok merupakan salah satu tradisi budaya yang pernah ada di Banyumas. Tradisi ini bertujuan memberikan pemahaman, pendidikan dan pelatihan terhadap seorang anak laki-laki yang akan beranjak remaja atau hendak memasuki jenjang perkawinan, oleh seorang wanita yang akan bertindak sebagai pasangannya, agar ketika anak laki-laki tersebut menikah mampu memberikan nafkah lahir dan bathin bagi istrinya. Minimnya informasi tentang tradisi budaya Gowok membuat konstruksi realitas sosial masyarakat terhadap tradisi tersebut menjadi buruk dan negatif. Bahkan ada yang beranggapan tradisi budaya Gowok merupakan salah satu bentuk praktik prostitusi terselubung. Anggapan tersebut perlu diluruskan kembali, karena tidak sepenuhnya benar. Ada beberapa perbedaan signifikan antara tradisi budaya Gowok dengan praktik prostitusi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian sejarah dengan analisis kualitatif yang di dasarkan pada riset literasi sastra serta dokumen koran Sin Po tahun 1941. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa tradisi budaya Gowok mengalami mispersepsi yang berlanjut pada dekadensi makna dan akhirnya bermuara pada logical fallacy.

**Kata kunci:** Gowok, Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk, kearifan lokal, prostitution, logical fallacy

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## Introduction

Long before the existence of technology that was able to present various information quickly, precisely, concisely, and perhaps also accurately, education and learning were often done manually. Continuous education and learning are provided through schools and colleges. The transfer of knowledge and skills is carried out by always being guided by the book accompanied by the direction and guidance of the teacher.

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However, now after the development of information technology, the world seems to be getting smaller and can be on one hand, the existence of books and teachers, has begun to be excluded. Information technology has broken up the borders, even as if it was able to put broad knowledge to be packaged in smartphones, overriding the role of books and teachers (Jamun, 2018).

Likewise with the process of human maturation. As time goes by, and it is easy to get various access to information, technology has opened all the limitations that are in it. Things related to sex and intimate relationships between men and women are increasingly easy to find. All can be obtained easily without restrictions. Its existence can even be directly chewed without having to wait for advice or direction from adults wisely.

With the impact of such wide disclosure of information, the process of human maturation becomes faster. Children and adolescents mature prematurely. Problems that arise and become obstacles are the impact of the disclosure of information, free sex is massive, pregnancies outside of marriage are commonplace, even the tendency to have abortions is commonplace and infanticide is becoming increasingly common. This is in contrast to when sex and intimate relationships are still considered taboo to be discussed openly. This is the negative impact of excessive disclosure of information, which tends to mislead rather than provide a correct understanding of sex and intimate relationships that are wise and legal.

In the form of local wisdom, the people of Banyumas at that time knew how to provide knowledge and learning about sex and intimate relationships to a man who wanted to enter the gate of marriage. Guidance and direction on married life are given in a directed manner, not only discussing sexual rituals and intimate relationships between men and women but also accepting responsibility and the right and proper way to treat their life partners well. The form of local wisdom in the Banyumas community is known as the *Gowok* cultural tradition.

Along with the times and technology, the existence of *Gowok* slowly but surely has begun to recede from society. Its existence began to be considered contrary to the religious norms and morals of society in general. Its position is starting to be replaced by information technology, where all information and sexual education can be obtained instantly.

However, there is something that is forgotten, that building a husband and wife relationship at the level of marriage is not just talking about meeting physical needs, sex, and sexual relations, but there are other needs that are much more important, namely how

to treat partners well, complement each other and know each other, what are the weaknesses and strengths of each partner and also try to be able to accept. This is something that cannot be provided instantly by information technology, because efforts to build relationships ideally cannot be provided in one direction, namely from the information technology provider to its users.

In addition, the existence of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, which has begun to be marginalized by the times and information technology, is gradually being considered a "perverted" cultural tradition and is even considered hidden prostitution in the name of culture (Septiningsih, 2010). This view is constructed because some communities or community groups are only based on an understanding of a rule or at least norms that are based on religious beliefs and norms that are believed by themselves or are in their community environment, not values and norms that exist in the society where the cultural tradition exists, life grows and develops. So that the bad opinion and assessment of the *Gowok* cultural tradition has been first formed (constructed by information) before being able to understand the actual *Gowok* cultural tradition, and what distinguishes it from prostitution.

An incomplete understanding of the *Gowok* cultural tradition actually builds a misperception that tends to quickly conclude that the *Gowok* cultural tradition is synonymous with disguised prostitution. Even though this assumption is only based on assumptions without going through any form of critical analysis that dissects its existence.

## Research Problems

For some members of the general public, the *Gowok* cultural tradition is considered and identified as disguised prostitution that hides behind the meaning of "justification" of a tradition and local wisdom from community groups. Even in several research texts that also use literary literacy as the main source of information, the *Gowok* cultural tradition is vulgarly perceived as a moral decadence in a civilized and modern society that upholds the existence of morals, and religious norms, and legal norms.

Incomplete information and presumptions of an act based on a preconceived notion will certainly lead to a misunderstanding, it can even lead to conclusions that tend to discredit actions that lead to absolute rejection because the act has been assessed first without doing real research to understand. Referring to the background of the problems that have been stated in the previous description and also to get a critical understanding that approaches the integrity of the perception of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, in this study text, several problems will be formulated as follows:

1. What is meant by the *Gowok* cultural tradition in the Banyumas community?
2. What are the significant things that distinguish the *Gowok* cultural tradition from prostitution?

## Research Method

The research method used is a historical research method on the cultural traditions of local wisdom which is carried out qualitatively by using secondary data in the form of literary literacy as the main source supported by several related news documentation and equipped with various opinions published in a journal which supports the discussion of the

topic. Qualitative methods are used as a tool to collect data as well as to carry out analysis, where information is obtained from initial literacy which continues to search for further information in depth.

The *Gowok* cultural tradition is one form of culture in the Banyumas area whose existence has almost disappeared and can only be found in tracing literary literacy studies. In the meaning of social ethnography, we will find it difficult to find sources of scientific literacy that describe the *Gowok* cultural tradition, because until now the literacy sources that describe the problem of the *Gowok* cultural tradition have mostly referred to literary literacy. Why use literary literacy as a source of research, because literary literacy can also be a solution to understand the dimensions of the field of study that has a scope of culture and community traditions (Rosadi, 2022), besides that literary literacy can be used to increase community empowerment in understanding the value of widely absorbed ethical, aesthetic and moral values. Through the study of literary literacy, it is possible to learn languages as well as cultural traditions that may still be considered strange to people outside of these traditions (Abdullah, 2019).

Meanwhile, literary works also have the possibility or can also provide information and knowledge about non-fantasy aspects in which the work is made. However, through this work, the authors will also provide information to the public about the prevailing point of view at a certain time. It is at this point that literary works are interpreted as a product of time, place, and conditions whose composition is not just a work that is separate from its author (Farokhah, 2021).

The data in this study initially only referred to several literary literacies that carried the *Gowok* theme. However, according to the qualitative method, the information becomes more in-depth, even referring to secondary data sources originating from an old newspaper in 1941 which had specifically discussed and uploaded the *Gowok* cultural tradition of its time. This data was obtained in the *Sin Po* newspaper in digital data from the Australian Monash University library.

The theoretical analysis used to dissect people's perceptions and understanding of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is the theory of social reality construction developed by Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckman. This concept describes how the public's understanding of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, both formed through literary literacy, as well as real information in old newspapers that once contained information about the *Gowok* cultural tradition. This is what then helped shape the public's misperceptions, causing a decadence of meaning in the *Gowok* cultural tradition, which ultimately led to the logical fallacy that the *Gowok* cultural tradition was identical as prostitution.

## Discussion

### Literary literacy about sex and *Gowok* cultural traditions

At first, it was difficult to open up and discuss the issue of *Gowok* within the scope of the Banyumas cultural tradition. Because apart from the lack of scientific literature that presents and discusses this matter, the tradition of *Gowok* culture for some Banyumas people is also considered taboo to be discussed openly. Let alone to be researched and studied scientifically as an object of research, to be opened and discussed as behavior in the corridor of culture, sometimes it still often raises pros and cons.

The existence of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is often covered up by the people of Banyumas because it is considered a cultural product that only creates and exploits an inappropriate sex life so people are often reluctant to admit it or even try to eliminate it as traditional culture and local wisdom.

After paying attention to several literary literacies that discuss sex issues, ranging from traditional literary literacy to those from other countries, it is undeniable that literary literacy helps build people's knowledge about sex in accordance with the philosophy that exists and develops in their environment. The knowledge that appears and continues to be understood as a belief is increasingly forming the construction of social reality about the meaning and philosophy of sex, not only intimate relationships between men and women but also how domestic life is built based on knowledge and understanding of existing philosophy (Supriatin, 2011)

The *Gowok* nomenclature first appeared to the public in the realm of literary literacy after the independence period, introduced by Ahmad Tohari. He is a writer from Tinggarjaya Village, Banyumas. This terminology was put forward in one of his novels entitled "Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari" (LKDH) and "Jantera Bianglala" (JB), the second and third novels of his novel trilogy which later became known as "Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk" (RDP).

As a literary work, the RDP trilogy was first published in 1981 and was followed by two subsequent novels. The first book was entitled RDP, the second book was given the LKDH label in 1985 and the third book as closing was wrapped under the name JB in 1992. The storyline in this book flows in a single-story, where Srintil plays the main character as well as the center of graffiti in the novel. The story journey is wrapped in Javanese Banyumasan culture, where the character *blakasuta* (Priyadi, 2007), becomes very dominant, much different from the nuances of Javanese culture commonly known to the public, namely "high culture" Javanese culture which is full of taste, politeness, respectful, and the packaging of ethical values is very strict, it even tends to be closed and taboo to talk about sex issues openly (Idrus, 2012).

In his work, Ahmad Tohari tries to describe various actions and behaviors according to the culture of the people in the background of his novel, so that his customs, language, and behavior also adopt local cultures that are not rooted in the generally accepted Javanese culture. This peculiarity then gives its own color to describing the values and norms that exist in the background society of the novel (Pelawi, 2016).

The second literature, after the RDP, which dares to carry and discuss the *Gowok* cultural tradition is the book "Nyai *Gowok*" (NG), the Kamasutra novel from Java written by Budi Sardjono (Sardjono, 2014). Although the writing style is not as vulgar as "Enny Arrow's" stencil novel (Anggraini, undated) or "Nick Carter's" novel, the historical investigation and description of the *Gowok* cultural tradition by Budi Sardjono can at least provide a more complete picture of information so that it can approach the reality of the existing *Gowok* cultural tradition.

Based on literary literacy written by Budi Sardjono, the nomenclature of *Gowok* comes from the pronunciation of the tongue of Javanese people who cannot properly pronounce the name of a woman from China, namely Goo Wook Niang, wherein this name is known as *Gowok*, even then this nickname is used so on to become the nomenclature of cultural traditions that are said to have originated from China.

The third literature that discusses *Gowok* is secondary information material, because it is indirect information that dissects the material discussed, but is the second information from the first information, namely the ethnographic novel “*Gowok*” is the book *Malay Literature and Cosmopolitan Tradition*, Paper Work Sastera'85 which was published by the Language and Library Council of the Ministry of Education of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur in 1987. In this literature it is stated that literary literacy about the *Gowok* cultural tradition was written in the form of an ethnographic novel by Liem Khing Hoo in 1936, before independence. In a footnote to the book *Malay Literature and Cosmopolitan Tradition*, Paper Working on Literature '85 which explains the existence of the novel, it is also stated that in the novel “*Gowok*” it was first published in March 1936 in *Tjerita Roman* edition VII number 87. The setting of the story discussed in this story includes the existence of local culture in the form of hereditary customs about *Gowok* in Soediredja village, Banyumas Wetan.

Indeed, the three kinds of literature are literary works packaged as a novel and are not scientific literature, but for now, these three kinds of literature are often the first references in discussing the *Gowok* cultural tradition. It is undeniable that in almost every research, thesis, and several scientific journals that discuss the issue of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, only two books that discuss the *Gowok* cultural tradition are the main support, namely the LKDH or RDP book written by Ahmad Tohari and the NG novel written by Budi Sardjono. Meanwhile, the novel which is the first literary literacy reference and entitled “*Gowok*” by Liem Khing Hoo, which is an old literary text, is rarely found, even if it still exists it is only limited to certain circles and even then it is only as a reprinted manuscript, not the original manuscript. The rest of the discussion literature on the *Gowok* cultural tradition will be obtained from various related journals.

In addition to the three literary references mentioned above, there is other information sourced from the Tegal Javanese–Indonesian Dictionary and the Banyumasan Javanese –Indonesian Dictionary which states that the *Gowok* nomenclature refers to a narrow cavity in a large tree either made by woodpeckers as well as those that occur naturally and are used for laying or storing bird eggs.

The nomenclature of *Gowok*, in other contexts, can also refer to the names of local fruits that used to be widely grown and spread on the islands of Java and Kalimantan. The fruit tastes sweet and sour, but sometimes it is sourer and mat (Purwaningsih, 2018). According to Dyah Raina Purwaningsih, Ika Maratus Sholikhah, Erna Wardani, the naming of the Banyumasan batik motif with the name *Peksi Gowok*, firstly refers to the type of fruit that is considered very popular, widely liked and cheap so that anyone can buy it without having to spend a lot of money. Second, the *Peksi Gowok* nomenclature also refers to a taboo habit that is usually carried out by a woman aged 23 to 30 years, where the woman carries out a tradition commonly known as “*Gowokan*”.

Based on the theory of batik put forward by Dyah Raina Purwaningsih, Ika Maratus Sholikhah, Erna Wardani about the motifs in a piece of batik, there is a direct relationship between *Peksi* (Birds) and the belief system of the Banyumas people. Birds, known as *Peksi* nomenclature, are the embodiment of a *mulyo* and perfect life form. This is shown if a Banyumas man in particular and Javanese in general has been able to achieve and complete his five basic needs, namely a house, wife, horse, weapons, and birds (*wismo*, *garwo*, *turonggo*, *curigo* and *kukilo*) (Wijayatno, 2011).

Likewise the meaning of the word *Gowok* with local values of the Banyumas people cannot be found in other Javanese cultural traditions. Whereas in the view of local philosophy (the view of the Banyumas people), a man in the Banyumas area is only considered glorious and perfect if he has fulfilled the philosophy as symbolized by the *Peksi Gowok* motif. A philosophy that not only leads to material perfection but also spiritual perfection (Sholikhah, 2017).

### **Understanding the description of the *Gowok* cultural tradition based on literary literacy.**

The oldest source of literary literacy that describes the *Gowok* cultural tradition is obtained through a second source of information, namely, information that explains information from the main source in Liem Khing Hoo's ethnographic novel entitled "*Gowok*" in 1936. The second source of information referring to the main source explains that:

"What is called a *Gowok* in some areas of the island of Java, especially in the Banyumas area, is a woman who is called before the wedding to convey to the groom the necessary teaching. He can stay with the bride-to-be for a few nights and receive a reward for it" (Liem Khing Hoo, 2019).

The next source that can describe the *Gowok* cultural tradition is obtained through the RDP novel trilogy, especially in the second book of LKDH and the third book, JB. In Ahmad Tohari's work and first published in 1981, the *Gowok* cultural tradition is described as follows:

"That a *Gowok* is a woman hired by a father for his son who has grown up, and before marriage *Gowok* will teach the boy many things about married life. From kitchen needs to how to treat a wife well, for example, how to take her wife to an invitation and so on. As long as he was a man, he lived alone with the boy in a separate kitchen. *Gowok* implementation period only a few days, at most a week. One thing that does not need to be explained but should be known by everyone is the thing that concerns the core duties of a guy. That is to prepare a young man so as not to be embarrassed on the night of the newlyweds" (Tohari, 1992).

Although traditionally the *Gowok* culture is similar to sexual services, but in practice, not everyone can force themselves to accept the *Gowok* cultural tradition services. In addition to several binding traditional criteria, for example, the recipient of the service must come from a noble family, royal or prominent family, the recipient of the *Gowok* cultural tradition service must be a boy or teenager or will be getting married. This means that if the person is an adult or is married, then a *Gowok* may refuse to serve him, even with the lure of any amount of money, property, or gifts.

In the third literary literacy written by Budi Sardjono, this *Gowok* cultural tradition is said to have often been practiced in the Chinese royal empire, and was only given to boys who had royal blood or royal bloodline or other courtiers who had a great opportunity to do so get "special education" from women who are deliberately selected and determined to provide these "special lessons".

## Determining the location of the *Gowok* cultural tradition based on literary literacy.

Determining the location used as the background in the story based on existing literary literacy is certainly not as easy as determining the location as well as determining the location in scientific research manuscripts. In determining the location as the background where the story is built and told sometimes it is never told openly in the story script. It's even possible that because it involves certain things that the author feels are very sensitive or can cause a certain sense of offense. It is possible that the background of the location in the story or the script of the story has to be obscured or not explicitly stated which points to a location that is real. It is possible for a writer to use a location name from the middle of nowhere, to avoid offending ethnic groups, residents, or regions who feel that their lifestyle is being uploaded as stories or story scripts.

However, even though the background location of the story or story script is uploaded in a disguised manner or refers to a location name that doesn't actually exist, or only exists in the author's imagination. However, it is undeniable that descriptions of nature, culture, environmental conditions, education level, economic level, and typical food offerings, even more referring to the use of language in daily life, will lead to locations that can be easily guessed by the readers of the literary literacy.

The RDP novel trilogy, consisting of RDP, LKDH, and JB, states that the background location of the story or the script of the story is in a village called Dukuh Paruk, Dawuan District. Subsequent searches lead to the mention of musical instruments which then also refers to a song with a certain regional style. In his novel, Ahmad Tohari wrote "*Perhaps calung music with Banyumasan songs is too common for them*", and secondly "*There is no mistake. That's the song Eling-eling Banyumasan with a special parikan*". The two sentences taken in the paragraphs in the two novels refer to culture, both in the form of musical instruments of "*calung*" and "*tembang Banyumasan*" and "*Eling-eling Banyumasan*" from the story or script this story is lifted.

Subsequent searches as an effort to strengthen the location background, refer to the type of special food that only exists in the Banyumas area, namely "*bongkrek*" tempeh. The mention of the name of the food can be found in the three novels and is used many times. This further strengthens the assumption that the background location in this story is in the Banyumas area.

Based on the narrative of the storyline, the time allocation used in the story or script of this story ranges from 1960 to 1966. Referring to the historical background, during the period 1960 to 1966, the area which is mentioned as "*Banyumas*" in the novel, leads to the Banyumas residency area which includes five regencies consisting of Cilacap/Dayeuhluhur Regency, Banyumas Regency, Ajibarang/Purwokerto Regency, Purbalingga Regency, and Banjarnegara Regency.

In the novel NG, written by Budi Sardjono, the author explicitly mentions the names of certain areas that are the background locations in his work. Several regional names that emerged as part of a series of the early history of the existence of the *Gowok* cultural tradition were stated openly covering the areas of Banyumas, Dieng (Wonosobo), Semarang, Temanggung, and Ambarawa. This shows the journey of the actors in the literacy script which is still close to the cultural traditions of Central Java, especially Banyumas. Especially for the Wonosobo and Temanggung areas, although historically it was included in the Kedu Residency, several cultural traditions are similar to Banyumas.



In the novel *Gowok* by Romano alias Liem Khing Hoo, the author also mentions the name of the area, namely Sudireja (Soediredja) and the village of Banyumas Wetan. Referring to the mention of the location in the novel, it can be stated that the *Gowok* cultural tradition was carried out in the Sudireja area and Banyumas Wetan village. However, considering that this is only limited to the mention of the location in the novel, it is not necessarily true that the mention of the location raises the name of the location of Sudireja and Banyumas Wetan village as locations that know the *Gowok* cultural tradition.

Responding to the problem of the existence or absence of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, there is an interesting thing when this story was published in Roman Story Edition VII Number 87 as a novel in 1936. The novel was reviewed and was later published in the *Sin Po* newspaper, on the 13th. September 1941 pages 5-9. In this review, in addition to reviewing the novel *Gowok* written by Liem Khing Hoo, there is also a novel entitled "Raden Adjeng Moerhia: Peringatan Medan 1929-33" written by Njoo Cheong Seng and published in 1934. The novel also reviews the existence of a woman who also worked as a *Gowok* to support his life (Susanto, 2014). Regarding the review published in the *Sin Po* newspaper, A. Soejoedi wrote an article in response to the novel's review. In his writings published in the *Sin Po* newspaper on September 20, 1941, A. Soejoedi (1941) from Purwokerto, a location not far from Banyumas, stated that the *Gowok* cultural tradition was no longer practiced or no longer existed.

According to A. Soejoedi, the *Gowok* cultural tradition has not been practiced for a long time, in fact it has not been practiced for hundreds of years. However, several things can be conveyed by him so that an understanding of the *Gowok* cultural tradition can be obtained, based on the narrative of his parents, and even then it comes from the stories of his parents from his parents.

The word *Gowok* can refer to the name of the fruit, or if it is spoken in the western part of Central Java, the word *Gowok* can be interpreted as a hole in the tree where the sparrows nest. Furthermore, is there any connection between the name of the fruit and a hole in the tree where the sparrow nests have anything to do with the tradition of the *Gowok* culture? According to A. Soejoedi, there may be a connection. The explanation is thus:

The boy who will be trained by *Gowok*, his parents will first be assigned a room with no windows, while only one door. Precisely for those who want to enter this room, people must bow themselves (local language says "*mbrobos*"-A.Sj). By looking at these ways, there is a resemblance to the *Gowok* of a sparrow's nest. As readers know, the sparrow has only one door without any other openings. Besides, the door is very small" (Soejoedi, 1941).

Then, does it have anything to do with the *Gowok* cultural tradition and the *Gowok* fruit? According to A. Soejoedi, there is no direct connection, it's just how clever people are in making connections between the *Gowok* cultural tradition and the *Gowok* fruit. *Gowok* fruit that is small and shiny black at first glance indeed attracts people and birds to eat it. However, if the *Gowok* fruit is eaten too much, it will cause stomach pain and running out of water. This is likened to a man who is going to carry out the *Gowok* cultural tradition, then he should use the cultural tradition and opportunity wisely or sparingly. Do not make it a habit that is wrong, despicable, or excessive which can make it a problem or "disease" in the future. This is based on the explanation understood by A. Soejoedi that the actual

implementation of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is not as stated in the *Gowok* romance story written by Romano (Liem Khing Hoo) or the *Gowok* reviewer in Sin Po Newspaper Number 963 dated September 13, 1941.

According to A. Soejoedi, the *Gowok* cultural tradition is only carried out within the scope of certain honorary limits, without violating the boundaries of morality or having sex. Likewise the *Gowok* is in charge of providing lessons for the groom, so that the bride and groom can give the best for his wife. On the other hand, if both of them cannot maintain their moral attitude and behavior, even sexual intercourse occurs, it can be concluded that the prospective groom is indeed a "masher" type of man who has often played with women, meaning that he is no longer able to control his lust, as well as his honor, because he is proven to be an expert and "smart at playing love" with women. On the other hand, if the *Gowok* refuses to have sexual intercourse, and during the implementation of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, both of them can still be properly maintained, then that is the real process of mending.

Furthermore, A. Soejoedi also added that not all *Gowok* are always identified with immoral traditional culture, because it is said that there was once a *Gowok* who was forced to commit suicide, to protect his honor from sexual attacks from the groom who intended to "violate the man's honor. Responding to A. Soejoedi's view, the editor of Sin Po newspaper mentioned another source of information, namely information written by B. Prawoto entitled "*Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal; Land-en Volkenkunde*, 1931, Afl 1-2" which ensures that the customs and traditions of the *Gowok* culture still exist and are maintained in the Bukateja area near Banyumas.

Other information uploaded by Petrik Matanasi stated that Ben Anderson had learned of the *Gowok* cultural tradition in the Bagelen area, Purworejo from one of his students (Matanasi, 2017). According to the student's narrative, in his village area lived a woman who was approximately 40 years old. She is not married, lives alone without relatives and her existence is highly respected by the community leaders in the village. The uniqueness of this woman's existence is to provide and teach sex education to young men. When the student was 15 years old, he was told to sleep with her for one night.

The effort to determine the location of the *Gowok* cultural tradition area is not easy. This collides with primary data which can hardly be found. The rest of the determination of the location of the *Gowok* cultural tradition area only relies on secondary data in the form of available literary literacy. Even then, it must be done through logical interpretation by referring to the key clues in literary literacy.

It is difficult to determine the actual location of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, which is only based on indirect clues to literary literacy, of course, it will be a little difficult to determine the location of the *Gowok* cultural tradition happened. However, if we refer to some of the clues in literary literacy, coupled with some results of literature searches that lead to the first source of information on the *Gowok* cultural tradition in the Sin Po newspaper in 1941, it can be concluded that there are strong indications about the existence of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, in certain areas.

If the results of the search for literary literacy and library information sources on the *Gowok* cultural tradition, as conveyed by Ahmad Tohari, Budi Sardjono, Liem Khing Hoo, Petrik Matanasi and "*Buku Sastera Melayu dan Tradisi Kosmopolitan Kertas Kerja Hari Sastera '85*", and the Sin Po newspaper, then in general the *Gowok* cultural tradition does exist, or at least is considered to have existed in the residency of Banyumas (including

Purwokerto, Banjarnegara and Bukateja), plus the areas of Dieng (Wonosobo), Temanggung, Ambarawa, Semarang and Bagelen (Purworejo).

**Critically understand the tradition of Gowok culture.**

In several research manuscripts that have been uploaded in several journals, there is a tendency to identify the *Gowok* cultural tradition with prostitution (Septiningsih, 2010). The researchers only see narrowly that there is no difference between the *Gowok* cultural tradition and prostitution. Both of them lead to the implementation of sexual relations and for their actions one of the parties, in this case, the sexual service provider gets wages or benefits of economic value that are given in the form of money or goods from the users of the sexual services.

However, if you pay close attention, the *Gowok* cultural tradition is not synonymous with prostitution. There are some significant differences between *Gowok* cultural traditions and prostitution. The view that considers the two things the same, shows that researchers are not able to understand substantially what is carried out in the *Gowok* cultural tradition with prostitution. They only focus on the practice of sexual intercourse and tend to be a priori to the process and purpose of the two acts.

**Table 1.** The significant differences between prostitution and the cultural tradition of *Gowok*

No	Item	Prostitution	Gowok Cultural Tradition
1	Implementation of sexual intercourse	In prostitution, sexual intercourse is the main goal.	In <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, sexual intercourse is not the main goal but is part of a long process in building a husband and wife relationship.
2	Goals to be achieved.	In prostitution, reaching the climax point of orgasm in the form of ejaculation/outward satisfaction from users of prostitution services is the desired end goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, providing knowledge and understanding about the procedures for treating wives, both physically and mentally, so that they can obtain mutual satisfaction later.</li> <li>• Achieving the climax point of orgasm in the form of ejaculation is not the goal, but the end result of a long process in building a husband and wife relationship.</li> </ul>
3	Goals to be achieved.	In prostitution, the goal is simply to have sexual intercourse without any educational or training purposes.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, the goal to be achieved is to make the service users of the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition a man who knows his functions and duties in building a household, starting with fulfilling physical and spiritual needs, including sexual needs

4	Orientation.	In prostitution, the orientation is only to seek money or wealth (money-oriented) or mere satisfaction (having fun).	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, although they still use money or assets (as payment, living costs, and gifts), they are still based on the process of education and character and skill training to be a good husband
5	Who pays.	In prostitution, in general, payments for services are made by people who directly receive these services or who have sexual relations.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, it is the parents of the boy who receive services from the <i>Gowok</i> who make payments for the tradition, not the child who receives services from the <i>Gowok</i> .
6	Time period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prostitution is carried out briefly or for a certain period of time, according to the agreement until the user of services reaches the climax point of orgasm in the form of ejaculation.</li> <li>• Usually ejaculation is used as a measure of the duration of intercourse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition is usually carried out from one, three to five days, a maximum of a week prostitution to ten days, and is declared "passed" by the <i>Gowok</i>.</li> <li>• The achievement of the climax point of orgasm in the form of ejaculation, is</li> </ul>

7		<p>Emotional link. In prostitution there is no (deep) emotional connection between the service provider and the service user, so the relationship is only tied to a</p>	<p>not used as a measure of time. In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, although it is required not to build an emotional relationship in the meaning of love or affection, person being trained must be built in order to understand each other in receiving directions for their future marriage.</p>
8	Acceptance of customers.	<p>In prostitution, as long as the customer is able to pay the rate, then she will be accepted and served according to the agreement, meaning that the economic/money-oriented motive is stronger.</p>	<p>In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, a <i>Gowok</i> can refuse to serve a prospective service user if she has a student or is not willing, or the prospective student does not meet the criteria, even though they are lured with money, property, or any other object.</p>
9	Understanding to build a harmonious relationship between husband and wife.	<p>On prostitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no effort to provide understanding in building a harmonious relationship between husband and wife.</li> <li>• The engagement is for sexual intercourse only.</li> <li>• Sex is done without emotion/chemistry.</li> </ul>	<p>In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts to build an understanding of the husband and wife relationship are very important because this is indeed the main goal.</li> <li>• Sex is part of a long process that builds on chemistry but it's not everything.</li> <li>• There are other household knowledge that needs to be known</li> </ul>
10	Form of Service.	<p>On prostitution: brief agreement ("commitment")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services are carried out as necessary, according to the wishes of the user, according to the payment agreement, to reach the orgasmic climax point in the form of ejaculation.</li> <li>• Users are more dominant than providers</li> </ul>	<p>In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural the emotional relationship between the <i>Gowok</i> and the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service is carried out in totality according to the knowledge, counseling, direction, and practice of <i>Gowok</i>.</li> <li>• <i>Gowok</i> is more dominant than users so users can understand the intent and purpose of implementing the process of <i>Gowok</i>.</li> </ul>
tradition:	11	<p>Continuity. In the Prostitution can be carried out continuously or it can also be done many times, both with the same provider or with different providers.</p>	<p>cultural tradition, <i>Gowok</i> can only be done once in a certain time (once in a lifetime), not many times, either with the same <i>Gowok</i> or</p>

with different *Gowok*.

12	Organizer's permission from the family of services, it	Prostitution does not require tradition, the implementation must get permission/blessing can even be done secretly.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural permission. users of prostitution from the boy's parents, even known or ordered by his parents.
13	Advertising/ Advertisement.	On prostitution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prostitution can be carried out openly or privately with the risk of violating the law.</li> <li>• Cultural value factors do not support (blame) the act.</li> <li>• Cultural value factors</li> </ul>	On the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gowok</i> cultural traditions are carried out very openly and openly without the risk of breaking the law.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><del>support (justify) the act.</del></p>
14	Age of users. limited by any age and according to the agreement,	In prostitution, the age of users tradition, the age of users is criteria. As long as able to pay children to teenagers, or for those who especially want to get married.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural is not limited, only to the age of service will be provided.
15	bad stigma	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, people still respect provide services.	Stigma against In prostitution, a will be attached to people people who provide services to the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At that time, respected people still entrusted their</li> </ul>
16	sons to get education and training from <i>Gowok</i> to become adult men. In prostitution, a bad stigma will be given to people who use services.	In the tradition of <i>Gowok</i> culture, people who receive prostitution services.	Stigma against education and training from a <i>Gowok</i> are considered normal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even if he received education and training from a famous <i>Gowok</i>, then he would be considered great and honorable, and could help raise his prestige as a man.</li> </ul>
17	Social status of users	In prostitution, everyone who has the economic ability to pay according to the agreement can use prostitution services and is not limited to certain social status.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, not everyone can get the opportunity to get education and training from <i>Gowok</i> . Only people of social status can acquire the tradition of the <i>Gowok</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Gowok</i> cultural traditions can become users of prostitution only be given to people with certain social statuses such as nobles, king breeds or respected in society.</li> </ul>

18	Requirements to become a service provider	In prostitution, anyone can become a prostitution service provider.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, not everyone can become <i>Gowok</i> , apart from being done by the chosen one, to become <i>Gowok</i> must have certain knowledge and skills.
19	Level of knowledge and skills	In prostitution, to become a service provider for prostitution, it is enough to rely on appearance and not need to have or master special knowledge or skills.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, to become a <i>Gowok</i> one must have and master the knowledge and skills in particular, such as herbal medicine, knowledge of health, and soul, and skills in dress, behavior, and manners.
20	After service	In prostitution, the provision of continued "service" or after service is always available, even if necessary there are some prostitution service providers who use " <i>pelet/gendam/witchcraft</i> " so that they are always in demand or the users of their services always come back again or continue to subscribe.	In the tradition of <i>Gowok</i> culture there is no re-service or afterservice, meaning that service recipients only have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to receive education and training, and practice. After that it will not be accepted again.
21	Location	Prostitution can occur and be carried out everywhere, not limited by cultural traditions, not limited by territory, and not limited by community groups.	The implementation of <i>Gowok</i> cultural traditions only exists in certain areas, and certain communities and is limited by local traditional values and norms based on the culture and scope of the region and society.
22	Risk of Violence	In prostitution, the risk of violence can occur to prostitution service providers, either because of psychological disorders or because the "services" are not right.	In the <i>Gowok</i> cultural tradition, the risk of violence in <i>Gowok</i> is minimal, because in the <i>Gowok</i> process, it is carried out with the consent of all parties within a certain amount of payment and time.

### **Misperceptions, Meaning Decandency and Logical Fallacy regarding *Gowok* cultural tradition.**

Concerning the discussion of people's perceptions of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, it can be noted that there has been a misperception of the public's view of the *Gowok* cultural tradition. In the view of the community, the *Gowok* cultural tradition is seen as an act that is identical to the model of prostitution (Septiningsih, 2010). Even at a more radical level, views that the *Gowok* cultural tradition is considered a very immoral act because it has

carried out free sex practices that lead to disguised forms of prostitution that exploit women as a means of releasing mere male sexual desires (Asmida, 2020), both starting from the mildest of sexual harassment to acts of sexual violence such as sexual intimidation to rape (Sumiati, undated). This view is very wrong and can even be considered as not understanding the essence of the *Gowok* cultural tradition itself and considering it as prostitution.

The misperception of the *Gowok* cultural tradition was further exacerbated when the movie “Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng” which was adapted from the RDP book was shown, which made the construction of the social reality of the community towards the Ronggeng profession and the *Gowok* cultural tradition, becoming increasingly minimal and negative. This was once stated by Ahmad Tohari, when met at his residence in Tinggarjaya, that how he was very disappointed with the visualization of the movie which was inspired by the RDP novel. He said that the movie, although it uses characters and storylines adapted from the novel, the message to be conveyed between the novel and the movie is much different. According to him, the movie “Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng” content and the message to be conveyed are far from the topic, and completely different from the original intention of the novel. The mission to be conveyed from the novel is to see the side of village human life in a simple environment of thought, concerning the relationship between humans and humans, humans and their Creator, and humans and their natural surroundings both in the culture and in the appreciation of religion which is believed to be hereditary. The concept of *Bukak Klambu* or the *Gowok* cultural tradition is just a spice whose existence cannot be separated from the community itself. This is what then cannot be accommodated and the moral message cannot be conveyed in the movie “*Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng*”.

Furthermore, Ahmad Tohari said that the movie puts more emphasis on body beauty, sexual erotic fantasies, and the exploitation of sexual violence. The process of exploiting women, buying and selling virginity, and even bed scenes that are colored with violence are shown in a vulgar manner, in the movie at that time often became "seasoning" in the movie following the wishes of Indonesian local movie consumers who wanted "thighs and chests" rather than nuanced learning by elevating the values and norms of certain community groups in a cultural frame. This of course will greatly impact in the building of a wrong perception of the personification of a ronggeng.

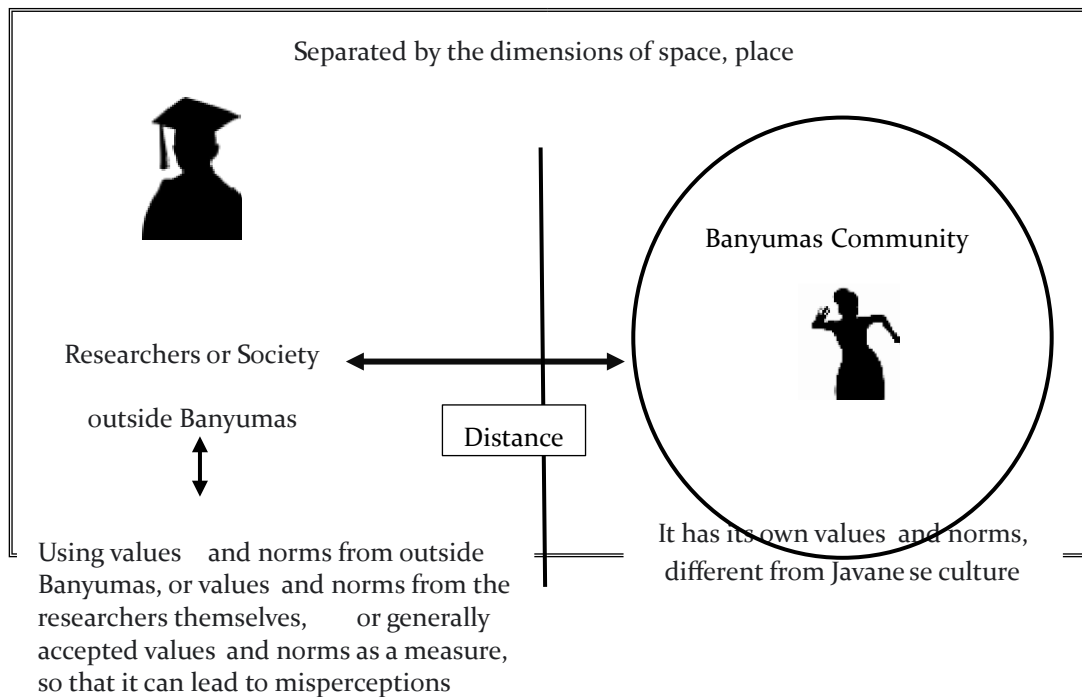
Ahmad Tohari's disappointment was relieved when the second movie was released and adapted from the same novel (RDP) with the title *Sang Penari*, directed by Ifa Isfansyah. Even though it is based on the same novel theme, the cold hands of the director have succeeded in carrying the cultural mission of society, without losing its “exotic spices”. The message to be conveyed from the novel is not lost, the natural feel of a village, the culture to be lifted, the understanding of history, the use of the local language and Banyumas dialect along with its distinctive swearing, succeeded in bringing the audience to understand the phenomena and values contained in it, within the framework of Banyumas culture itself. However, it is very unfortunate that the scene that discusses the character in the movie *Sang Penari* is not shown. This is not shown at all, considering the



length of time the movie has to be edited and manipulated by the moviemaking team, without losing the essence of the storyline.

Often the audience judges the show based on the values and norms that come from themselves, or outside the context of the storyline and the location setting of the movie itself so that it will lead to misperceptions, blasphemy, or "judgment" of the show. Likewise, an assessment of culture also occurs when a person performs an assessment measure using values and norms from outside the environment and the community where the culture originates, grows, and develops. Besides he is not in the cultural environment itself (in a scientific language known as a qualitative model with a quasi-participant method), so there will be a failure to understand the values and norms of the culture he wants to understand.

**Table 2.** Failure to understand the values and norms of a local culture

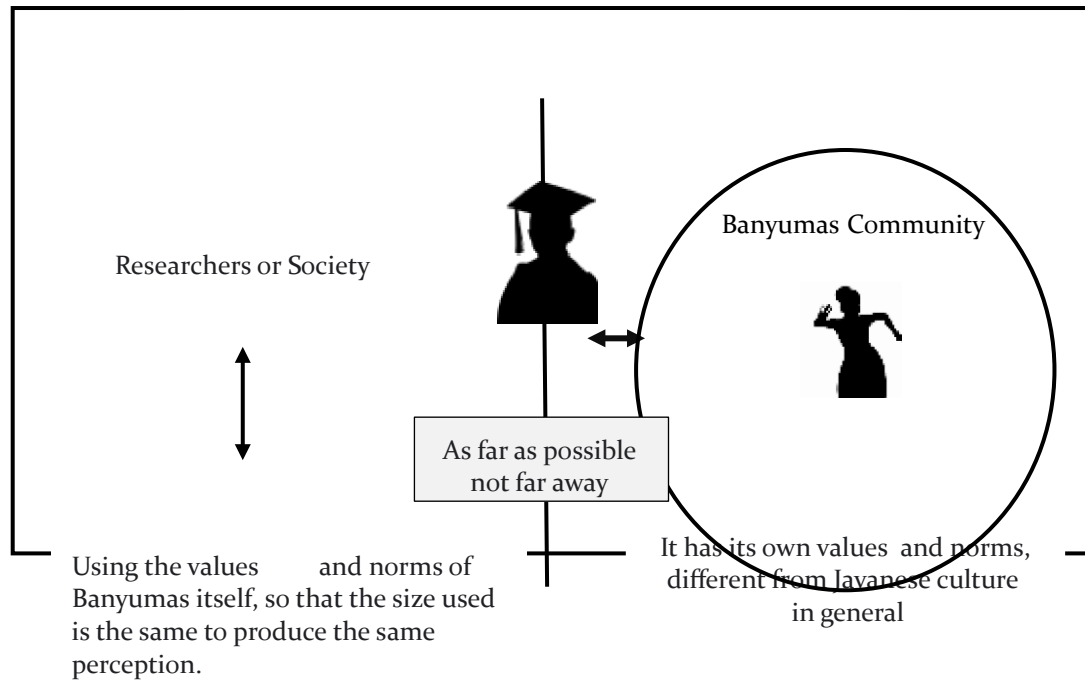


and time, so the information becomes incomplete.

If you look closely at the tabulation of the differences between prostitution and the *Gowok* cultural tradition, you will find some significant differences between prostitution and the *Gowok* cultural tradition. In prostitution the phenomenon of victims leads to women who act as prostitution service providers. Where women who act as prostitution service providers are placed in a position that cannot choose, and are in a lower bargaining value than users of prostitution services, so that women who provide prostitution services seem to play a role as victims of sexual exploitation.

This is different from the *Gowok* cultural tradition where women who provide services are in a higher bargaining position than men who will use their services. This means that women who provide services may refuse to provide services, either for one or various reasons that are not in accordance with the criteria for organizing the *Gowok* cultural tradition. In the *Gowok* cultural tradition, women who provide services cannot be placed in their position as victims, because there is no predicate for the position of perpetrator or victim in the *Gowok* cultural tradition. After all, the act is carried out with the full consent of both parties, not just on the basis of mere economic considerations, or there is pressure or coercion from one of the parties, but solely based on cultural considerations and the educational goals of the users of the *Gowok* cultural tradition. Another unique difference is that the users of the *Gowok* cultural tradition must be known, permitted and even approved by a third party, which in this case is the parents of the *Gowok* cultural tradition users themselves. In contrast to prostitution, where in its implementation, it is usually carried out as far as possible without involving third parties. Thus, economically in the *Gowok* cultural tradition, no one is harmed, but both parties (including their parents) are equally benefited.

**Table 3.** The success of understanding the values and norms of a local culture



Trying to enter the dimensions of space, place and time, so as to obtain nearly complete information.

This misperception occurs because the process of forming the social reality construction of an understanding of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is incomplete, the lack of information, plus the lack of depth of information obtained, and only knowing some of the information incompletely has caused the construction of social reality understanding of the *Gowok* cultural tradition to be incomplete. This is in accordance with the theory of Social Construction of Reality, proposed Berger and Luckmann (Berger, 1990).

This theory shows that the formation of public perception of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is nothing but the lack of information about the *Gowok* cultural tradition itself.

Through phenomenological analysis, it can be seen that the perception of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is very much determined by the social environment. The social structure in society will create the perception of the *Gowok* cultural tradition in accordance with the knowledge in each social strata which at any time can develop or change along with social and material conditions. Furthermore, the social reality of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is constructed through existing knowledge, the meaning is that people's understanding of the *Gowok* cultural tradition is nothing but the result of social reality that is communicated within the community itself and becomes a justification based on shared information.

Moving on from the wrong perception of the *Gowok* cultural tradition, the construction of social reality about the *Gowok* cultural tradition is also affected. This has an impact on the decadence of meaning of the *Gowok* cultural tradition itself. The *Gowok* cultural tradition which was originally part of local wisdom to educate and provide direction on matters relating to efforts to foster domestic life in a broad and very personal sense to boys who want to grow up to be teenagers or who want to get married, its meaning is reduced to a narrow concept that only discusses sexual relations, intimate relationships between men and women.

The decadence of meaning or dwarfing of the meaning of *Gowok* also occurs as a result of the strong influence of basic moral norms that exist in Javanese society which still considers sexual relations taboo to be discussed, discussed, and even made one of the main processions in the wedding section (Roqib, 2007). This causes complete information about *Gowok* cultural traditions not to be fully absorbed and understood. Information about the tradition of *Gowok* culture, which is widely spoken about, is discussed only around issues that only highlight the sexual relationship, procedures for treating female partners so that they can reach orgasm, or also techniques and methods of intercourse. This is what turned out to be far more prominent, more publicized to the public than the role of the *Gowok* cultural tradition in other aspects of household development.

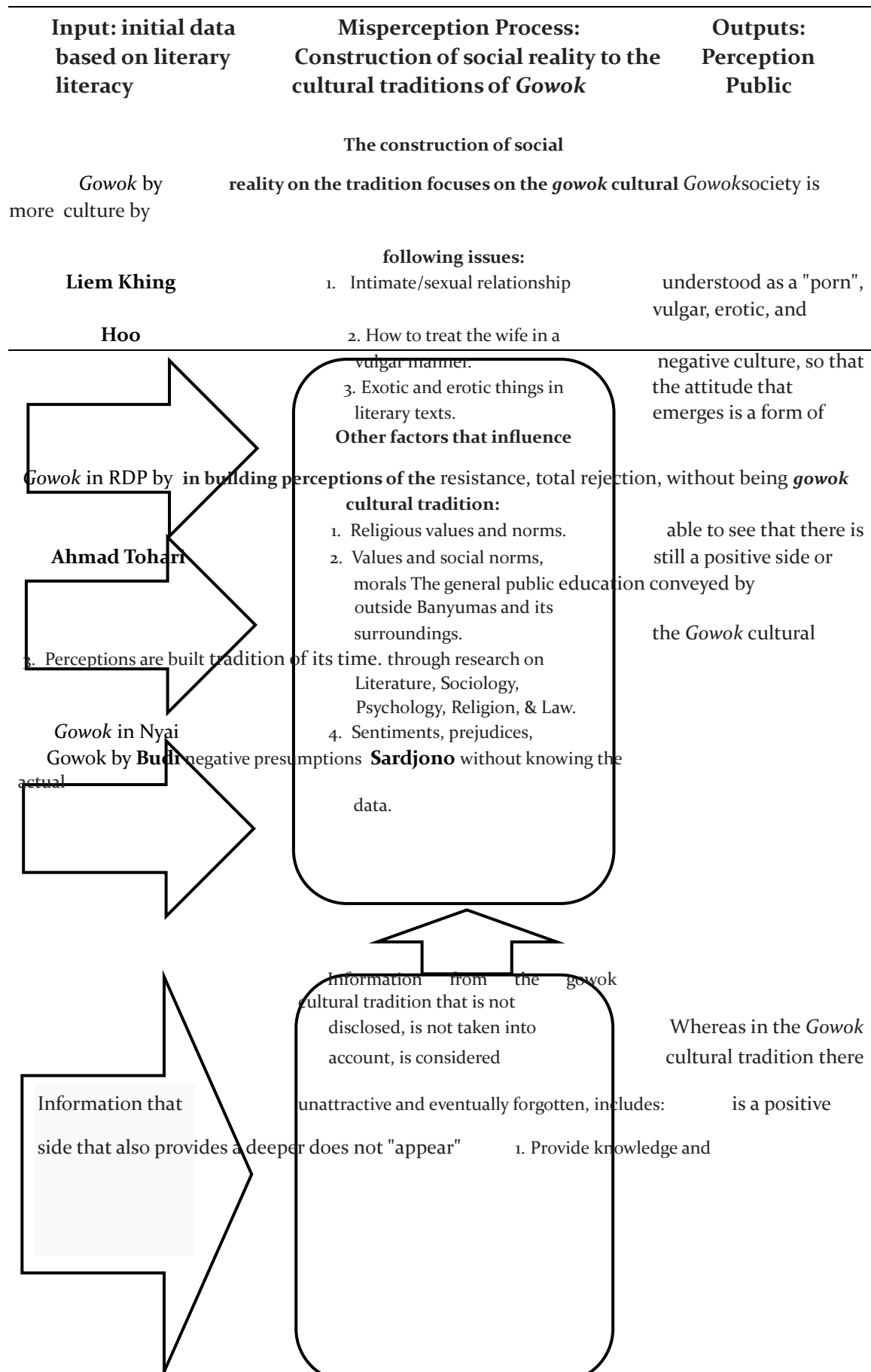
Literary literacy, which also uploads local wisdom about the *Gowok* cultural tradition in building a household, is rarely uploaded or discussed, even though it is also written in the description of the story. Likewise, the assumption of sexual violence in the *Gowok* cultural tradition from a journal article that gives a wrong perception of the existence of sexual violence in the *Gowok* cultural tradition (Meiliana, 2017).

The superficial meaning of the *Gowok* cultural tradition which is only understood as sexual intercourse is wrong, especially if it is accompanied by sexual violence. Because what was conveyed by the *Gowok*, not only that but also several other aspects of married life that a man who wants to become a husband must know.

Likewise, the process of evaluating people who have already misperceived and experienced decadence of meaning towards the *Gowok* cultural tradition automatically forms a logical fallacy. Logical fallacy is a form of misguided way of thinking or thinking activity that occurs due to misinformation, or as misguided thinking/reasoning from a failure to understand meaning built on literacy or language. This also happens when a researcher evaluates culture using values or norms that come from outside and does not use

values, norms or criteria that exist and grow and develop in the society where the cultural tradition is located.

**Table 4.** Tabulation of the formation of misperceptions of the *Gowok* cultural tradition based on the theory of Social Reality Construction

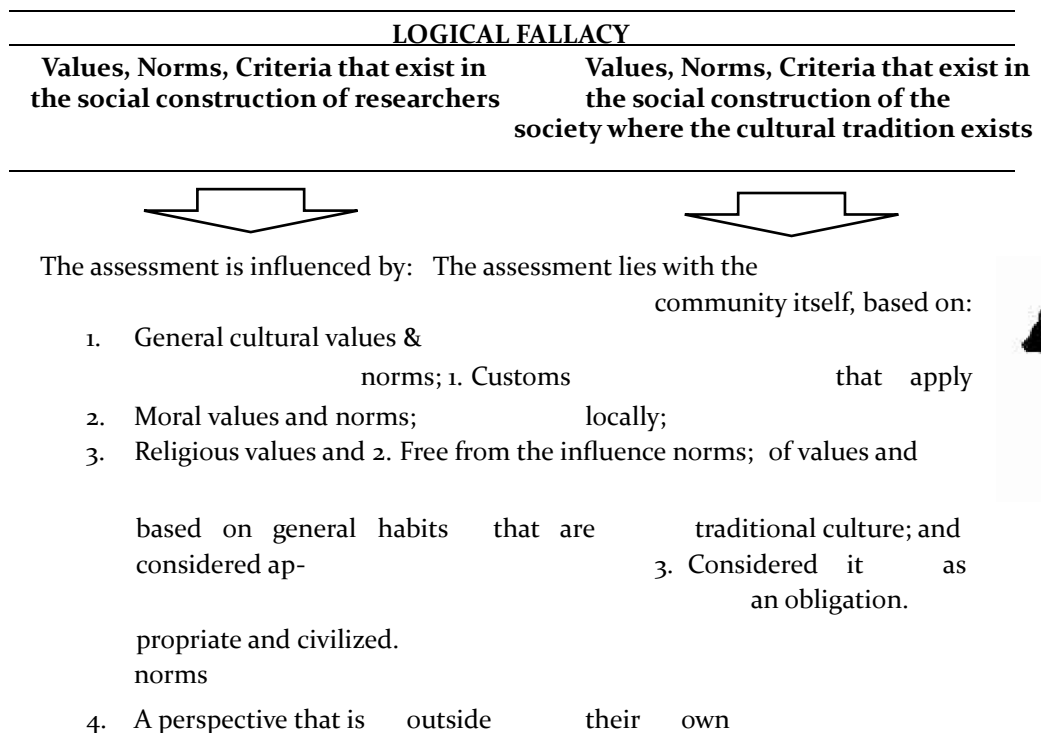


or is not paid attention to in building a marriage that the three is not only focused on the need to provide a living from the results of work, intimate relationships, sexual maturity. Provide an understanding of the procedures for building a household.

Literature activities, and the Literatures:

3. Treating wife in public,
4. Provide knowledge about eroticism of women's bodies.
5. Other matters related to life after marriage.

In this context, there has been a logical fallacy against the *Gowok* cultural tradition, where the *Gowok* cultural tradition is assessed and measured based on values or norms originating from outside Banyumas, where the *Gowok* cultural tradition exists, grows, lives, and develops. This means that the use of values and norms originating outside the community tends not to understand local wisdom carried by the *Gowok* cultural tradition so the arguments that arise are contradictory because the values and norms used as a measure use values and norms from outside the community.



If we are going to evaluate the local wisdom, then the values and norms that should be used are the order and size of the values or norms that exist in the society where the

cultural tradition exists, lives, grows, and develops. Don't then force yourself to judge everything with values or norms that apply in general, because every tradition and culture has its values and norms which then build its local wisdom.

## Conclusion

Based on some of the problems and descriptions in the previous discussion, it can be obtained several statements:

- a. The *Gowok* cultural tradition is a form of local wisdom that once existed in the residency of Banyumas, coupled with the areas of Dieng (Wonosobo), Temanggung, Ambarawa, Semarang, and Bagelen (Purworejo) is a form of education and training given by a woman to a boy who before adolescence or about to enter the stage of marriage to provide sufficient knowledge and skills, not only on sexual issues but also on the procedures for married life, especially in treating his wife well. The understanding people in some parts of Indonesia, especially Banyumas, tends to see that the *Gowok* cultural tradition only discusses sex issues, some even identify that the *Gowok* cultural tradition is the same as prostitution. This is built based on an incomplete understanding of literary literacy, resulting in misperceptions that continue to mean decadence and ultimately lead to a logical fallacy.
- b. The results of the comparison between the *Gowok* cultural tradition and prostitution, there are at least 22 significant differences which include: the implementation of sexual relations, the goals to be achieved, the goals to be achieved, orientation, who makes payments, time period, emotional connection, acceptance of customers/service users, understanding to build a harmonious relationship between husband and wife, a form of service, continuity, operating license, advertising/advertising, age of service user, stigma against people who provide services, stigma against people who use services, social status of service users, requirements to become providers services, level of knowledge and skills, after service, location, and acts of violence.

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