

## Bungai Jarau as a Psychology tool for Communication among the Iban Community in Sarawak

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### ABSTRACT

**Background and Purpose:** This study is about *Bungai Jarau*. *Bungai Jarau* is an art and cultural object in the Iban community in Sarawak<sup>1</sup>. In ancient times, *Bungai Jarau* was used as a message tool psychology or an intermediary tool. A messenger letter of the Iban people used *Bungai Jarau* to ask for help or to inform urgent news that befell the Iban longhouse. This *Bungai Jarau* is created for defensive purposes prior to if the enemy wants to attack the longhouse. Then the Iban people used chicken blood on this *Bungai Jarau*. *Bungai Jarau* will be sent to other longhouses to ask for help as soon as possible. In addition, *Bungai Jarau* is an important object in the Gawai festival of the Iban people. *Bungai Jarau* is a symbol of the glory and identity of the greatness of the Gawai festival. The purpose of *Bungai Jarau* in Gawai celebration is to welcome the arrival of extraordinary powers and also humans in general. *Bungai Jarau* is produced from *Purang* wood because this wood is not hard and it is easy to carve. But nowadays, *Bungai Jarau* is a cultural and artistic object that has changed its function. *Bungai Jarau* has become an object of adornment (decoration object) due to the cultural change but it remains the pride of traditional art passed down from generation to generation by the ancestors of the Iban community until today.

**Methodology:** The focus of this research is to understand and interpret descriptively the cultural object of the Iban community in producing of traditional art. This research used qualitative methods by doing fieldwork and collecting data from informants based on three settlements of the Iban community in Sarawak, namely in Rumah Sawing Kandau, Kampung Dayak, Jalan Kejatau, Simanggang, Kampong Po Ai, Dau Melugu, Sri Aman, Rumah Serau, San Pandak Lubok Antu, Sri Aman, Sarawak, Malaysia, Rumah Ayom Bujet, Kampung Selepong, Sri Aman and Henry Anyie, Majlis Adat Istiadat Sarawak, Malaysia. The research methods used in collecting data at the research location are the individual interview method (in-depth interview) and method (focus group interview). The researcher has interviewed several expert informants in the field under study. This interview was conducted in several longhouses in Sri Aman Division, Sarawak and also an interview with an official at the Sarawak Customs Council. All research findings have been obtained through a qualitative method, which is by interviewing several home harvesters who are experts in the field of culture and experts in the affairs of *Bungai Jarau* traditional art production. All the primary data that has been obtained has been analyzed to explain the new findings through the research.

**Findings:** The studies have established that *Bungai Jarau* is not limited to merely a heritage legacy for the Iban in Sarawak, but has significant extended aesthetic value within tradition, art, Culture and civilization. Nowadays, *Bungai Jarau* has more contemporary role in the Iban culture. However, it is still widely accepted as an icon, ritual object, identity and relevant as traditional art shared by many.

**Contributions:** Through this research, it is hoped to help preserve the traditional art, local knowledge, and the significant of the making of *Bungai Jarau* as an Iban cultural icon, ritual object, and identity at Sarawak.

**Key Words:** Culture, Iban, Traditional Art, *Bungai Jarau*, message tool, cultural object, decoration, cultural change

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Cultural manifestations are one of the basic understandings in understanding the social and way of life of an ethnic group. According to Linton (1995: 259-260), the culture of a society is a view of a group of ideas and habits that

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