

Expressive Communication and Cultural Meaning in Sarafal Anam

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ABSTRACT

Sarafal Anam is a religious and cultural tradition practiced within the Tengah Padang community in Central Bengkulu Regency, Indonesia, combining religious recitation with collective verbal and nonverbal expression. This study examines how expressive communication is manifested in Sarafal Anam and interprets the cultural meanings embedded in its performance. A descriptive qualitative design with an ethnographic approach was employed. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with six purposively selected informants, and documentation, and interpreted using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic framework of signifier and signified. The findings show that expressive communication is constructed through religious verses, synchronized bodily movements, facial expressions, rebana rhythms, and collective positioning. Religious verses communicate praise for Prophet Muhammad SAW, prayer, moral guidance, and devotion, while nonverbal expressions communicate togetherness, unity, discipline, cooperation, solemnity, and social solidarity. These expressive elements function as culturally recognizable signifiers understood through shared religious and social values. Sarafal Anam therefore operates as a multimodal and collective form of expressive communication in which religious devotion and social relationships are simultaneously expressed. Its continuity requires preserving both its performance forms and the intergenerational transmission of cultural meanings and community values.

Keywords: *Expressive Communication; Cultural Meaning; Sarafal Anam; Semiotics; Religious Tradition; Social Solidarity*

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural traditions are not merely inherited forms of artistic performance; they also function as systems through which communities communicate shared values, emotions, social expectations, and collective identity. Koentjaraningrat (2009) describes culture as a complex system of ideas, actions, and material expressions that is learned and transmitted within social life. From a communication perspective, these cultural forms become meaningful because participants repeatedly use verbal and nonverbal symbols to express how a community understands itself and its relationship with others. Mulyana (2019)

emphasizes that expressive communication is especially important in this process because communication may serve to convey feelings, attitudes, and identity rather than simply transfer factual information.

Religious traditions provide a particularly rich setting for examining this expressive dimension of communication. Ritual performance commonly combines words, sound, bodily movement, spatial arrangement, and shared participation, allowing religious meaning to be experienced collectively rather than communicated only through formal statements. Littlejohn and Foss (2009) note that meaning is produced through symbolic practices embedded in social interaction. In Indonesian communities, religious-cultural traditions therefore often operate simultaneously as devotional practices, social gatherings, and communicative events in which participants reaffirm moral and cultural relationships.

One such tradition is Sarafal Anam, a religious-cultural performance that remains part of community life in Bengkulu. The tradition combines the recitation of praise for Prophet Muhammad SAW with rhythmic rebana accompaniment and coordinated bodily expression. Tarobin (2015) identifies togetherness, aesthetic value, and religiosity as important meanings associated with Sarafal Anam in Bengkulu. More recent research also positions the tradition within the interaction between religious communication and cultural expression; Cahyadi et al. (2024) describe Syarafal Anam in Bengkulu as a culturally integrated form of da'wah through which religious and social values are communicated.

In Central Bengkulu Regency, Sarafal Anam continues to be practiced in religious and social occasions, including weddings and community celebrations. Its continued presence means that Sarafal Anam cannot be understood only as a staged performance. Prayuda et al. (2023) show that continuity of Syarafal Anam in Bengkulu depends on preservation efforts and involvement of younger generations. Fadhilah et al. (2024), meanwhile, highlight the role of Sarafal Anam in strengthening moral values among young people. These functions indicate that the tradition remains connected to religious orientation, social cohesion, and cultural continuity.

The communicative significance of Sarafal Anam becomes clearer when attention is directed to how meaning is expressed during the performance. The recited verses constitute an obvious verbal component, yet participants also communicate through facial expression, bodily movement, rhythmic rebana playing, coordinated seating, and the atmosphere created by collective participation. Birdwhistell (1970) demonstrates the communicative importance of bodily movement, while DeVito (2011) explains that nonverbal behavior can reinforce and contextualize verbal messages. In Sarafal Anam, these expressive modes operate together rather than independently.

This combination is particularly relevant to the concept of expressive communication. According to Mulyana (2019), expressive communication enables individuals and groups to communicate emotions and social meanings through both verbal and nonverbal symbols. Within Sarafal Anam, expressions of devotion, respect, gratitude, solidarity, and togetherness are not confined to the semantic content of the verses. They are also enacted through synchronized performance. Consequently, the tradition provides

an empirical setting in which communication can be examined as embodied, rhythmic, collective, and culturally situated.

Recent scholarship has begun to examine the performative and symbolic dimensions of Sarafal Anam more closely. Ramadani and Damanik (2025) show that Sarafal Anam can transmit religious and social values through collective ritual practice, while Anugrah et al. (2025) discuss Syarafal Anam as a medium for communicating Islamic values. From a musical perspective, Dita et al. (2026) demonstrate that Syarafal Anam aesthetics are constructed through the relationship among religious poetry, rebana rhythm, vocal expression, and a solemn performance atmosphere. These studies show that the meaning of the tradition is produced through multiple expressive components rather than through religious texts alone.

A recent study in Central Bengkulu provides an even closer point of comparison. Sari et al. (2026) examine cultural identity in the Bishahri poem of Sarafal Anam through Roland Barthes' semiotic framework of denotation, connotation, and myth. Their study demonstrates the symbolic importance of the poem for spiritual guidance, moral values, social solidarity, and cultural identity. The present study differs in both analytical focus and empirical scope. Rather than concentrating primarily on textual meaning, it examines the interaction of religious verses, bodily movements, facial expressions, rebana rhythms, and collective positioning as interconnected components of expressive communication.

This distinction establishes the specific research gap addressed in the present study. Existing studies have provided valuable explanations of the religious, aesthetic, social, moral, and symbolic dimensions of Sarafal Anam, but less attention has been directed toward how its verbal and nonverbal performance components operate together as an integrated system of expressive communication within a particular community setting. The present study therefore investigates how expressive communication is manifested in Sarafal Anam and how the Tengah Padang community interprets the cultural meanings embedded in its performance. By integrating expressive communication with a signifier-signified interpretation, the study seeks to explain how religious devotion, social solidarity, discipline, togetherness, and cultural identity are communicated through the combined verbal and nonverbal forms of the tradition.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design with an ethnographic approach. The qualitative design was selected because the study sought to describe and interpret the meanings of expressive communication in Sarafal Anam rather than to measure predetermined variables. Fitrah and Luthfiyah (2017) explain that qualitative research enables social phenomena to be examined within their contextual settings. The ethnographic approach was used to understand the tradition as a living cultural and social practice from the perspectives of community members. Ethnography is particularly relevant to culturally situated research because it emphasizes holistic understanding, rich description, and interpretation from the perspectives of members of the cultural

community (Siddiq & Salama, 2019). This approach enabled the study to examine how verses, rhythm, bodily movement, facial expression, and other culturally meaningful forms were experienced and interpreted within the Tengah Padang community.

Research Site and Informants

The research was conducted in Tengah Padang Village, Talang Empat District, Central Bengkulu Regency, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. Six informants were selected purposively according to their knowledge of, participation in, or long-term familiarity with Sarafal Anam. They comprised the leader of the Sarafal Anam group, a customary leader, a group member, the village imam, a long-term community resident, and a female community representative. The interviews were conducted between 2 and 12 March 2026. This selection provided perspectives from performers, customary and religious figures, and community members who directly experienced or regularly observed the tradition.

Data Collection

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was conducted directly during Sarafal Anam activities in Tengah Padang and focused on the preparation and performance process, religious recitation, rebana playing, bodily movements, facial expressions, interaction among performers, and collective positioning. In-depth interviews explored informants' interpretations of the meanings contained in movement, verses, facial expression, rhythm, religious values, togetherness, and cultural continuity. Documentation consisted of photographs of activities, field notes, and interview recordings used to support and contextualize the interview and observational data. The use of these three techniques enabled the researcher to compare participants' accounts with observable practices and documentary evidence.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted descriptively through organizing the collected material, identifying relevant information, describing recurring patterns, and drawing conclusions from the findings. Sugiyono (2021) explains that qualitative analysis emphasizes the organization and interpretation of data to produce meaningful descriptions. Interview statements, participant-observation notes, and documentation were grouped according to recurring expressive elements and the meanings attributed to them. The findings were then interpreted using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic relationship between signifier and signified. Observable or audible elements including verses, bodily movement, facial expression, rebana rhythm, and positioning were treated as signifiers, while the religious, social, emotional, and cultural concepts associated with those elements were interpreted as signified meanings.

Data Trustworthiness

Data trustworthiness was examined through technique triangulation. Information obtained from in-depth interviews was compared with participant observation and documentation concerning the same Sarafal Anam practices. This procedure was used to assess consistency across different forms of evidence and to reduce reliance on a single data-collection technique.

RESULTS

Sarafal Anam as Collective Expressive Communication

The findings show that community members did not regard Sarafal Anam merely as entertainment. Informants consistently described the performance as a meaningful collective activity in which religious devotion and social togetherness were expressed simultaneously. The recitation of praise, rhythmic accompaniment, bodily movement, and coordinated participation formed a unified communicative event. Rather than separating verbal expression from physical performance, participants experienced these elements as mutually reinforcing parts of the same tradition.

Interview accounts emphasized several recurring meanings. The performance was associated with respect and love for Prophet Muhammad SAW, gratitude, solemnity, togetherness, solidarity, and the maintenance of local cultural identity. These meanings were not communicated only through explicit statements. They emerged through the manner in which the performance was enacted collectively. In this sense, Sarafal Anam functioned as an expressive medium through which community members displayed values that they considered important and socially binding.

Verbal Expression through Religious Verses

The recited verses were the most direct verbal element of Sarafal Anam. Participants understood the verses as expressions of praise and devotion to Prophet Muhammad SAW and as a religious reminder for those present. The significance of the verses, however, was strengthened by the way they were delivered. Vocal rhythm, collective recitation, and the interaction between voice and rebana transformed the text from an individual utterance into a shared religious expression. The verbal message therefore operated within a wider performative context in which sound, rhythm, and participation contributed to its meaning.

Bodily Movement, Rhythmic Coordination, and Collective Positioning

Bodily movement emerged as one of the most visible forms of nonverbal expression in Sarafal Anam. Movements were generally performed in coordination with other members of the group and followed the rhythm of the performance. Informants interpreted this coordination as more than an aesthetic requirement; synchronized movement symbolized togetherness, cooperation, discipline, and the expectation that individuals should act in harmony with one another.

Informants consistently connected coordinated movement with cohesion and togetherness. They also interpreted the harmony of movement, sitting arrangements, and rebana playing as expressions of unity, discipline, and solidarity. These perspectives indicate that synchronized bodily expression was understood as a representation of communal values rather than merely as choreography.

Field observation further demonstrated that collective positioning formed an integral part of the expressive structure of Sarafal Anam. Performers commonly positioned themselves in an organized formation while maintaining rhythmic coordination with other

members of the group. This arrangement enabled participants to observe, respond to, and adjust their movements and rebana playing to one another. The collective configuration observed during a Sarafal Anam performance in Tengah Padang is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Sarafal Anam performance during a community wedding ceremony in Tengah Padang Village, Central Bengkulu Regency, Indonesia

Source: Field documentation, 2026.

The visual evidence in Figure 1 illustrates organized seating, rhythmic coordination, and collective participation. These observable signs were interpreted by informants as representing togetherness, solidarity, and discipline. Thus, bodily movement functioned not merely as an aesthetic accompaniment but as a nonverbal representation of how social relationships were expected to operate within the community.

Facial Expression and the Emotional Atmosphere of Performance

Facial expressions and the emotional atmosphere surrounding the performance provided another layer of expressive meaning. Informants associated focused and solemn expressions with sincerity, respect, and the religious character of Sarafal Anam. The emotional quality of the event was produced collectively: the verses, rebana rhythm, bodily coordination, and attentive presence of participants created an atmosphere in which religious feeling was publicly shared. Facial expression therefore operated as part of a broader nonverbal system rather than as an isolated individual signal.

Cultural Meaning and the Signifier-Signified Relationship

The findings can be summarized as a relationship between observable performance elements and the meanings attached to them by participants. The verses, rebana beats, synchronized movement, facial expression, and organized positioning functioned as signifiers. Informants connected these signifiers with signified concepts including devotion to Prophet Muhammad SAW, gratitude, solemnity, togetherness, unity,

discipline, cooperation, respect, and continuity of cultural identity. The meaning of Sarafal Anam therefore emerged not from one isolated symbol but from the interaction of multiple signs within a shared cultural context.

Table 1. Expressive elements and cultural meanings identified in Sarafal Anam

Expressive element	Observed form (signifier)	Cultural meaning (signified)
Religious verses	Collective recitation of praise, prayer, and moral messages	Devotion, love and respect for Prophet Muhammad SAW, religious guidance
Rebana rhythm	Synchronized rebana beats	Coordination, discipline, solidarity
Bodily movement	Synchronized movement and posture	Togetherness, unity, discipline, cooperation
Facial expression	Calm, solemn, or energetic expression according to the performance	Solemnity, spiritual engagement, religious enthusiasm
Collective positioning	Organized sitting, facing one another or forming a circle/row	Social order, togetherness, collective participation

Taken together, these results indicate that Sarafal Anam is a multimodal form of expressive communication. Religious meaning is voiced through the verses, while social meaning is simultaneously embodied through movement, rhythm, facial expression, and collective organization. The tradition thereby provides a communicative space in which religious devotion and communal identity are performed, recognized, and transmitted through repeated participation.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Sarafal Anam functions as a collective form of expressive communication in which religious devotion and social relationships are communicated simultaneously. Expressive communication in this context is not limited to the verbal delivery of religious verses. Mulyana (2019) explains that expressive communication enables individuals and groups to communicate emotions, feelings, and social orientations through verbal and nonverbal forms. In Sarafal Anam, these forms become interconnected through poetic recitation, synchronized bodily movement, facial expression, rebana rhythms, and collective participation. The performance therefore operates as a communicative event in which cultural meanings are enacted rather than merely stated.

This interpretation corresponds with earlier findings on Sarafal Anam in Bengkulu. Tarobin (2015) identified togetherness, aesthetic value, and religiosity as central meanings associated with the tradition. The present findings support the importance of togetherness and religiosity but add a more specific communication perspective. These meanings

become visible during the performance itself through coordinated movement, religious recitation, collective rhythm, facial expression, and organized participation. In this sense, Sarafal Anam provides a cultural setting in which shared values become observable forms of communication.

Expressive Communication as Collective Performance

One of the strongest findings concerns the relationship between physical coordination and social meaning. Participants repeatedly associated synchronized movement with cohesion, togetherness, unity, discipline, and cooperation. These interpretations demonstrate that bodily movement is not understood merely as choreography. It becomes an expressive representation of communal relationships.

This result can be understood through the communicative role of nonverbal behavior. Birdwhistell (1970) emphasizes that bodily movement becomes meaningful within socially learned systems of interaction, while DeVito (2011) treats nonverbal behavior as an important component that can complement or reinforce verbal communication. In Sarafal Anam, synchronized movement accompanies religious verses while simultaneously conveying social meanings that the words do not necessarily articulate directly. The performers therefore communicate unity partly through coordinated action.

The finding is also consistent with research conducted in another Lembak community. Zakaria and Asiyah (2019) found that Sarafal Anam performed during wedding ceremonies carried meanings of solidarity and togetherness. The present study extends that finding by showing the expressive mechanisms through which such meanings become visible. Collective seating, coordinated bodily movement, shared rhythm, and participation do not simply accompany social solidarity; they symbolically enact it.

Figure 1 provides visual support for this interpretation. The performers occupy an organized collective configuration and orient themselves toward other participants while holding and playing rebana instruments. Such positioning enables continuous coordination among performers. The spatial organization of the performance can therefore be interpreted as part of its expressive communication rather than merely as a practical arrangement.

Religious Verses and Expressive Devotion

The religious verses represent the most explicit verbal dimension of Sarafal Anam. Informants described the verses as containing praise for Prophet Muhammad SAW, prayers, moral advice, and religious messages. The verbal dimension therefore provides an explicit religious framework through which devotion is articulated.

Religiosity has long been identified as a major meaning of Sarafal Anam. Tarobin (2015) places religiosity alongside togetherness and aesthetic value among the dominant meanings of the tradition in Bengkulu. More recently, Ramadani and Damanik (2025) show that Sarafal Anam can enact and transmit religious and social values through collective ritual

practice. The present findings reinforce these conclusions while demonstrating that religious meaning is not confined to the linguistic content of the verses.

The solemn expressions of performers, rhythmic accompaniment, and coordinated participation contribute to the religious experience of the performance. Religious devotion is therefore communicated through both recitation and performance. Cahyadi et al. (2024) similarly position Syarafal Anam within culturally integrated da'wah in Bengkulu, while Anugrah et al. (2025) identify the tradition as a medium through which Islamic values are communicated. The present study adds that this religious communication is embodied through multiple expressive modes.

Rhythm, Movement, and Social Coordination

Rebana rhythm occupies an important position in this communicative system because it links sound, bodily movement, and group coordination. The performers must follow a shared temporal structure, listen to one another, and adjust their movements and playing accordingly. Rhythm therefore performs an organizational function while also contributing to the expressive meaning of the performance.

This finding is particularly significant because social values such as solidarity and cooperation are usually expressed as abstract concepts. In Sarafal Anam, these values become physically observable. Performers maintain a common rhythm, coordinate movement, and remain attentive to the actions of others. Dita et al. (2026) similarly identify religious poetry, rebana rhythm, vocal expression, and a solemn atmosphere as interconnected aesthetic components of Syarafal Anam. The present study extends that perspective by interpreting rhythmic synchronization as a form of social coordination and expressive communication.

Facial Expression and Emotional Meaning

Facial expressions provide another important layer of expressive communication. The findings show that calmer passages were associated with peaceful and solemn expressions, whereas more energetic passages produced correspondingly more animated expressions. Informants interpreted solemn facial expression as part of sincerity and religious engagement within the performance.

The importance of facial expression supports the argument that the meaning of Sarafal Anam cannot be reduced to its textual content. DeVito (2011) recognizes facial expression as an important channel of nonverbal communication because it provides cues concerning emotional states and interpersonal orientation. Within Sarafal Anam, however, facial expression is culturally embedded: a solemn or focused expression becomes meaningful because it occurs together with religious verses, rhythmic accompaniment, and a shared understanding of the occasion.

Sarafal Anam as a Cultural Sign System

The findings can be further interpreted through the relationship between signifier and signified. The observable and audible components of Sarafal Anam, including religious

verses, bodily movements, rebana rhythms, facial expressions, and collective positioning, function as signifying forms, while community interpretations of devotion, gratitude, unity, discipline, respect, solidarity, and cultural belonging represent the meanings associated with those forms. Meaning therefore does not arise from the physical characteristics of the performance elements alone but from culturally shared interpretations developed within the community.

This relationship is particularly evident in synchronized bodily movement. Movement is directly observable, yet participants interpret its coordination as representing togetherness, discipline, and social harmony. Religious verses similarly function as audible signs whose meanings extend beyond their literal linguistic form to include devotion, moral guidance, prayer, and respect for Prophet Muhammad SAW. Rebana rhythms and collective positioning also acquire social meanings because participants associate coordinated performance with unity, cooperation, and solidarity.

A recent semiotic study provides an important point of comparison. Sari et al. (2026) examine the Bishahri poem within Sarafal Anam in Central Bengkulu using Roland Barthes' concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth. Their analysis demonstrates how textual symbols within the poem represent spiritual guidance, moral ideals, social solidarity, and cultural identity. The present findings complement that perspective but shift the analytical emphasis from textual representation to the interaction of verbal and nonverbal performance elements. Consequently, cultural meaning in the present study is examined not only through what the verses signify but also through how movement, facial expression, rhythm, and collective positioning become meaningful within the performance.

This distinction is theoretically important because Sarafal Anam operates through several communicative modes simultaneously. Religious verses communicate through language, rebana rhythms through sound, bodily movements through visual coordination, facial expressions through emotional display, and collective positioning through spatial organization. These elements interact within the same cultural event. The cultural meaning of Sarafal Anam therefore emerges from an integrated system of signs whose significance is recognized through shared community interpretations.

The Relationship between Expressive Communication and Semiotics

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in explaining the relationship between expressive communication and culturally interpreted signs within Sarafal Anam. Expressive communication directs attention to how feelings, values, and collective orientations are communicated, whereas semiotic interpretation helps explain how observable and audible performance forms become associated with particular cultural meanings.

The empirical findings demonstrate this relationship across different components of the performance. Coordinated movement becomes meaningful as an expression of togetherness because community members associate physical synchronization with social unity. Religious verses communicate devotion verbally, while collective recitation transforms that devotion into a shared expressive experience. Facial expressions

communicate emotional and spiritual involvement, whereas rebana rhythms and collective positioning reinforce cooperation and social coordination. These components therefore operate together rather than functioning as independent channels.

This perspective also differentiates the present study from recent semiotic research on Sarafal Anam. Whereas Sari et al. (2026) focus on cultural identity represented within the Bishahri poem through Barthes' semiotic analysis, the present study examines a broader set of performance components and their relationship with expressive communication. The contribution of this study therefore does not lie in introducing semiotics to Sarafal Anam research, but in demonstrating how verbal, bodily, auditory, emotional, and spatial expressions operate together as a culturally meaningful communication system.

Social Solidarity and Cultural Identity

Togetherness emerged as the strongest social meaning alongside religiosity. Participants associated collective sitting, coordinated movement, shared rhythm, and participation with stronger social relationships. These findings suggest that solidarity does not emerge only because community members gather in the same place; it is actively produced through coordinated participation.

The convergence with previous research is notable. Zakaria and Asiyah (2019) identify solidarity and togetherness in Sarafal Anam within Lembak wedding ceremonies, while Tarobin (2015) similarly identifies togetherness as a central meaning of the tradition in Bengkulu. The contribution of the Tengah Padang findings lies in showing that solidarity is not only an interpretation attached to the tradition but an experience generated by the requirements of performance: participants listen to the same rhythm, coordinate movements, remain attentive to one another, and maintain collective timing.

Repeated participation also contributes to cultural identity because community members repeatedly encounter the same culturally recognizable signs and meanings. Sarafal Anam becomes associated with religious devotion, collective participation, and community continuity. This does not mean that the tradition represents the entire identity of the Tengah Padang community; rather, it constitutes one cultural practice through which that identity is expressed and maintained.

Cultural Continuity and Intergenerational Transmission

The findings concerning preservation reveal that community members are concerned not only with keeping Sarafal Anam performances active but also with maintaining the meanings embedded within them. Preservation is therefore understood as both continuation of practice and continuity of meaning.

This distinction is important because cultural traditions can remain physically visible while their meanings become weakened. Prayuda et al. (2023) identify modernization and declining youth attention as challenges to the continuity of Sarafal Anam and emphasize regular practice and younger-generation involvement as preservation efforts. The findings from Tengah Padang similarly indicate that cultural transmission

depends on opportunities for younger community members to encounter and participate in the tradition.

Cultural transmission occurs through participation rather than through formal explanation alone. Younger observers encounter synchronized movement, collective recitation, rhythmic coordination, religious language, and appropriate performance behavior repeatedly in community settings. Through such participation, cultural meanings become familiar and socially recognizable.

Theoretical and Contextual Implications

The theoretical implication of the findings is that expressive communication within cultural traditions should be understood as multimodal, relational, and collective. Sarafal Anam demonstrates that expressive meaning can emerge through interaction among language, sound, bodily movement, facial expression, rhythm, spatial arrangement, and participation. Mulyana's (2019) conception of expressive communication provides the foundation for understanding the emotional and identity-related dimensions, while semiotic interpretation clarifies how observable forms become culturally meaningful.

At the contextual level, the findings indicate that Sarafal Anam should not be preserved only as an artistic product. Maintaining verses, rebana patterns, movements, and performance arrangements is important, but their cultural significance also needs to remain intelligible to younger participants. Sarafal Anam is thus best understood not simply as inherited cultural material, but as a living communication practice through which religious devotion, solidarity, and community identity continue to be expressed.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Sarafal Anam among the Tengah Padang community in Central Bengkulu Regency functions as a collective form of expressive communication in which religious, social, and cultural meanings are communicated through the interaction of verbal and nonverbal expressions. The religious verses communicate devotion, prayer, moral guidance, and praise for Prophet Muhammad SAW, while synchronized bodily movements, facial expressions, rebana rhythms, and collective positioning express togetherness, unity, discipline, sincerity, cooperation, and social solidarity. From a semiotic perspective, these expressive elements function as culturally recognizable signifiers whose signified meanings are constructed and understood through the shared religious and social values of the community. The study contributes to communication research by demonstrating that expressive communication in Sarafal Anam is multimodal, relational, and collective, with verbal expression, bodily performance, rhythm, emotional expression, and spatial organization operating together as an integrated system of cultural communication. The continuity of Sarafal Anam therefore requires not only the preservation of its performance forms but also the intergenerational transmission of the religious, social, and cultural meanings that make the tradition significant to the Tengah Padang community.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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