

Analysis of Traditional Art Performances as a Representation of Local Wisdom in Purwokerto in the Digital Era

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***Abstract:** This study examines traditional arts in Purwokerto, such as Ebeg, Lengger Calung, and Buncisan. These arts serve not only as entertainment but also as a means of preserving the values, norms, and outlook of the Banyumasan people. In the digital era, changing interests of the younger generation and the commercialization of culture pose unique challenges, but social media opens up new opportunities for the promotion and revitalization of traditional arts. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method to understand how local wisdom values are maintained and adapted digitally. The results show that digitalization is effective in maintaining the existence of traditional arts, as long as they maintain their authenticity and philosophical meaning.*

***Keywords:** Traditional Arts, Local Knowledge, Purwokerto, Digital Age, Ebeg, Lengger Calung.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji seni tradisional di Purwokerto, seperti Ebeg, Lengger Calung, dan Buncisan. Seni-seni ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai hiburan, tetapi juga menjadi sarana pelestarian nilai, norma, dan pandangan hidup masyarakat Banyumasan. Di era digital, perubahan minat generasi muda dan komersialisasi budaya menimbulkan tantangan tersendiri, namun media sosial membuka peluang baru bagi promosi dan revitalisasi seni tradisional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode studi kasus untuk memahami bagaimana nilai-nilai kearifan lokal dipertahankan dan diadaptasi secara digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa digitalisasi efektif dalam menjaga eksistensi seni tradisional, selama tetap mempertahankan keaslian dan makna filosofisnya.

Kata Kunci: Kesenian Tradisional, Pengetahuan Lokal, Purwokerto, Zaman Digital, Ebeg, Lengger Calung.

Introduction

Indonesia is rich in tradition and culture. This phenomenon is most clearly reflected in the various performing arts that are still alive and thriving throughout the country. Traditional arts are not just for performance; they are a major part of people's social and spiritual lives (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). Recently, with globalization and the rise of digital technology, these traditional arts face various challenges. However, there are also new opportunities. Thanks to technology, people are discovering and appreciating art in new ways, and digital platforms are helping to keep these traditions alive (Hidayat, 2020).

Purwokerto, a city in Central Java, boasts a diverse array of traditional arts that reflect local wisdom, including social ethics, spirituality, and togetherness. Performances here are not just about entertainment. They teach, preserve, and pass on culture from one generation to the next. This aligns with Rahmawati (2021)'s argument: digital documentation and online broadcasts are effective in preserving traditional arts and reaching new audiences. Therefore, with digitalization, the forms and styles of performance have also changed. Now, there are digital archives, live broadcasts, and even virtual interactions with audiences. This shift opens up new ways to keep culture strong, but artists must continually adapt to stay relevant.

One concrete example of cultural preservation is "Peken Banyumasan," a regular event in Purwokerto. Here, you'll witness performances such as ebeg, lengger, and calung, all aimed at reconnecting the community with Banyumas cultural values. That's what sparked this research: examining how traditional performances in Purwokerto demonstrate local wisdom, especially now, when everything moves so quickly in the digital age. This research aims to analyze how traditional arts performances in Purwokerto represent local wisdom values in the context of the digital era.

From a social and cultural perspective, traditional arts serve as a means of expressing the identity and personality of the local community. Every movement, rhythm, and symbol in the performances has moral, ethical, and philosophical meaning that reflects the nature and character of the local community. According to Sedyawati (2007), traditional arts are a form of cultural heritage that serves to maintain social and spiritual balance within communities. However, in the era of globalization, this function has begun to change due to the influence of popular culture and digital media, which are increasingly attracting the interest of the younger generation.

The Banyumas regional government, through the Banyumasan Week event, has made efforts to preserve traditional arts by incorporating modern elements into performances.

This step aligns with a cultural preservation policy based on local wisdom, which aims to adapt traditional forms to remain relevant to current developments. This effort demonstrates that cultural preservation is not solely the responsibility of

artists but also requires the support of the community and the younger generation to maintain it.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. The author conducted direct observations at the Pekan Banyumasan event held at Banyumas Old City Park in October 2025. Observations included three types of performances: Ebeg, Lengger Calung, and Buncisan. In addition, the author conducted interviews with artists and visitors to gain a deeper understanding of their opinions on efforts to preserve traditional arts.

The data analysis process consisted of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, as described by Miles and Huberman (in Mukhtar, 2013). Observations were conducted over a single day, October 4, 2025, in the main area of Banyumas Old City Park. The researcher observed how artists interacted with the audience and how the community responded to the traditional performances. To understand differing views on art preservation amidst the development of digital technology, the researcher interviewed five artists and three visitors of various ages. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, then analyzed using thematic analysis. This analysis focuses on three main topics: (1) the cultural values displayed in the performance, (2) artistic efforts to adapt to digital technology, and (3) the role of the community in supporting cultural preservation.

In addition, the researcher took photographs and videos as additional evidence to strengthen the analysis. This documentation helps understand the visual context of the performance, particularly in examining facial expressions, clothing, and stage decorations that reflect local Banyumasan values. The collected data is grouped according to several themes, such as cultural values, symbolic meaning, and adaptation to digital technology. To ensure data reliability, source triangulation was used through comparisons of interviews, documentation, and references from relevant books.

Results and Discussion

The Banyumasan Festival in Purwokerto is a tangible demonstration of the Banyumas people's efforts to preserve their traditional arts. The event is always bustling, featuring a variety of performances, including ebeg, lengger, and calung—all maintained authentically by local artists who truly love their culture. Each performance is not merely entertainment, but also a way to introduce the audience to Banyumas' unique values, whether it's about togetherness, simplicity, or respect for nature and ancestors. The enthusiasm of the residents is evident in the large number of visitors who come, watch, and sometimes even perform.

Take lengger, for example. This dance has long been a symbol of Banyumas culture. At the Banyumasan Festival, lengger is always the main performance, a sort

of "must-see" to preserve cultural values amidst the rapidly changing creative economy. Lengger is also unique because of the balance between male and female dancers, a symbol of social harmony. Although female dancers (lengger wadon) are now more common, the Lengger Lanang tradition, where male dancers dress and move like women, remains a prominent feature and an important part of the event.

Then there's ebeg, better known outside Banyumas as kuda lumping (horse dance). Ebeg serves two purposes at Peken Banyumasan: it provides exciting and lively entertainment, and it also strives to preserve traditional dances rich in historical and spiritual values. Ebeg usually performs alongside lengger, allowing audiences to directly witness how feminine, spiritual, and heroic, energetic elements come together on one stage. The extreme and energetic ebeg performances consistently attract attention. Many local ebeg groups are striving to preserve this art form, even in increasingly modern times.

Furthermore, a discussion of the Banyumas calung would be incomplete without mentioning it. Calung is not merely accompanying music but has become a symbol of Banyumas culture itself. Calung is a constant presence in every lengger and ebeg performance, and without calung, the atmosphere of the folk arts would be lacking. Calung unites dance and music, creating a harmony that is the identity of Banyumas. The process of nglaras, tuning bamboo strings, requires high dedication from the artists. In Peken Banyumasan, the calung community holds a special place, especially now that they have to compete with modern music. Through this event, calung is becoming increasingly known to the younger generation, with many starting to learn and love this bamboo instrument again. The calung is like the "soul" of Peken Banyumasan, making this event a unique combination of a folk market, an arts performance, and the preservation of local cultural identity. The values promoted also align with Koentjaraningrat's (2009) opinion that culture is a way of life of a society that is continuously passed down through symbols, ceremonies, and art.

But now, times have changed dramatically. Technology and the digital world have completely transformed the way people enjoy traditional arts. Many audiences or arts communities record Peken Banyumasan performances and upload them to YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok. The result? Banyumas arts can be enjoyed by people from outside the region, even abroad. Photos and videos of the performances uploaded are now always high-quality, making Banyumas traditional arts appear more modern and engaging, perfect for Gen Z and millennials. This also aligns with Hidayat's (2020) opinion that the digital world opens up new opportunities for cultural preservation, as access to traditional arts becomes broader without diminishing their importance.

Traditional arts today are not merely surviving but truly adapting to the times. Artists are not only preserving the original forms of the performances but also using technology to promote and educate the public about culture. Digital recording is key to ensuring traditional arts remain known and loved by the younger

generation. This is how Peken Banyumasan remains alive in an ever-changing world. Rahmawati (2021) states that the use of digital media can strengthen the preservation of traditional dances through more effective dissemination of information and cultural promotion. In this way, Peken Banyumasan serves as an example of how regional learning can endure by capitalizing on the opportunities afforded by the digital age.

Overall, observations reveal that traditional arts in Purwokerto serve not merely as entertainment but also as a means of education and strengthening the cultural identity of the Banyumas people. The combination of local values and technological advancements demonstrates that traditions can adapt to changing times without losing their meaning. This aligns with the values embraced by the Banyumas people, who emphasize simplicity, honesty, and togetherness as manifestations of their local learning.

The use of technology and public space at Peken Banyumasan, driven by academics and supported by the community, has become a successful creative placemaking initiative. This space not only restores the image of the Old Town area but also builds an inclusive ecosystem where artists, MSMEs, designers, and the general public have the opportunity to connect and exchange knowledge, reflecting the unique Banyumas tradition of *paguyuban* (unity). Peken Banyumasan demonstrates that preserving tradition and developing the creative economy can go hand in hand, making it a powerful social resource in the face of external cultural influences in the modern era.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and observations, this study concludes that the preservation of traditional arts in Purwokerto, such as *Ebeg*, *Lengger Calung*, and *Buncisan*, is highly dependent on their ability to adapt to digital technology. These arts serve not only as entertainment but also as a means of preserving the values, norms, and outlook of the Banyumasan people. Although the digital era presents challenges in the form of changing interests among the younger generation and commercialization, social media opens up new opportunities for promotion and revitalization, reaching a younger and broader audience. This study found that digitalization is effective in maintaining the existence of traditional arts, as long as the process maintains their authenticity and philosophical meaning. The greatest challenge faced is ensuring that the essence of culture is not reduced to mere entertainment content. Therefore, collaboration between the local government, artists, and the community is crucial to ensuring the continuity of traditions amidst changing times.

The results of this study also demonstrate the importance of collaboration between local governments, educational institutions, and the arts community in creating a system that can sustain cultural preservation. Activities like Banyumasan Week can serve as an example for other regions in developing local potential based

on creativity and digital technology. Academically, further research can be conducted using a participatory approach to further explore the role of the younger generation in preserving traditional arts. Thus, preserving cultural heritage is not only the responsibility of artists but also part of shaping the nation's character today.

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