



**NONFORMAL CULTURAL EDUCATION, THE PRESERVATION OF
BENJANG, AND CULTURAL AWARENESS: A CASE STUDY OF SEKOLAH
BENJANG INDONESIA**

***Putri Permata Amir¹, Siti Komariah², Mirna Nur Alia Abdullah³**

^{1,2,3}Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

*Email: permatamir@upi.edu

Abstract

This study examines the nonformal education strategies implemented at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* (Indonesian Benjang School) to preserve *Benjang*, a traditional art form associated with Ujung Berung, Bandung City, and to explore their contribution to cultural awareness among participants. The study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected from seven informants, comprising the founder of the Wallagri Foundation, the school principal, a *Benjang* trainer, two students, and two community members. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, direct observation, document analysis, and visual documentation of training sessions, public performances, cultural outreach activities, and the school's launching event. The data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing or verification, supported by source triangulation, technique triangulation, and *member checking*. The findings show that *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* organizes cultural preservation through institutional goal-setting, a staged curriculum based on *Panca Niti Atikan Sunda* (a Sundanese educational framework), regular training, public performances, ceremonial activities, and the *Nyeni di Sakola* (arts in schools) outreach program. These activities provided students with opportunities to develop knowledge of the history and cultural meaning of *Benjang*, artistic skills, responsibility, and self-confidence. Public programs also expanded the visibility of *Benjang* in community and school settings, while creating opportunities for cultural participation and local support. Public performances further generated temporary opportunities for informal vendors and community networks, representing a latent social consequence of cultural activities. The study concludes that nonformal cultural education can support the continuity of *Benjang* by connecting cultural knowledge, artistic practice, public participation, and institutional collaboration. The findings are limited to one institutional setting and should not be generalized beyond the participants and context examined.

Keywords: *Benjang; Cultural Awareness; Cultural Preservation; Nonformal Education; Traditional Arts*

A. Introduction

Benjang is a traditional art form associated with Ujung Berung District, Bandung City. It combines martial arts, dance, and traditional music that have been transmitted across generations in the local community. The practice is closely connected to collective

values, including discipline, solidarity, respect for tradition, and a sense of belonging. *Benjang* is part of Indonesia's *Warisan Budaya Takbenda* (intangible cultural heritage), a category that recognizes cultural expressions sustained by communities as part of their inherited traditions and social identity (Direktorat Warisan dan Diplomasi Budaya, 2019).

The continuity of *Benjang* requires sustained intergenerational transmission. Social change, shifting leisure preferences, and the broad circulation of global popular culture may affect younger generations' engagement with local artistic traditions. Shafa et al. (2025) identify *Benjang* as an important cultural expression through which local identity can be maintained, while also emphasizing the need for continued preservation efforts. Cultural preservation therefore involves more than the continuation of public performances. It requires opportunities through which cultural knowledge, artistic skills, values, and local attachments can be learned, practiced, and transmitted. UNESCO (2003) emphasizes that intangible cultural heritage remains viable when communities, groups, and individuals continue to recognize, recreate, and transmit it across generations. This perspective is consistent with Ahmad's (2006) argument that heritage extends beyond physical objects to include living practices, meanings, and cultural expressions sustained through social transmission.

Education provides an important setting for this process. Article 28C paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution guarantees every person's right to develop themselves through the fulfillment of basic needs, education, science, technology, art, and culture (Republic of Indonesia, 1945). Indonesia's national education system recognizes formal, nonformal, and informal pathways, each of which may support learning according to different institutional and social contexts (Republic of Indonesia, 2003). Nonformal education is particularly relevant to cultural transmission because it can be organized through flexible, community-based learning activities. Such activities may facilitate the transmission of local knowledge, cultural values, artistic competencies, and social practices in ways that respond to the needs of particular communities.

Sekolah Benjang Indonesia (Indonesian Benjang School) is a nonformal educational institution established under the Wallagri Foundation in response to local concerns about the continuity of *Benjang*. The school is located in *Kampung Wisata Bendjang Oedjoengberoeng* (Bendjang Oedjoengberoeng Tourism Village), Ujung Berung District, Bandung City. It organizes regular learning and training activities for younger participants and members of the surrounding community. These activities include instruction on the history and values of *Benjang*, artistic training, and preparation for cultural performances. The school provides a community-based setting in which participants can encounter, practice, and transmit local cultural traditions.

The educational process at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* is examined through the concept of *cultural awareness* (an individual's understanding, appreciation, and active engagement with cultural heritage). In this article, *cultural awareness* refers to participants' understanding of the history and values of *Benjang*, appreciation of its cultural significance, sense of belonging toward the tradition, participation in cultural activities, and willingness to contribute to its continuity. This understanding is consistent

with heritage scholarship that views cultural heritage as a social practice shaped through interpretation, participation, and the relationship between communities and inherited cultural expressions (Smith, 2006). Intangible cultural heritage is sustained through active transmission, community participation, and continuing social recognition of its value (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004; UNESCO, 2003). Kurin (2004) further cautions that safeguarding intangible heritage cannot rely solely on documentation or formal recognition; it requires the continuing involvement of the communities and practitioners who create, maintain, and transmit the tradition.

The role of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* can be interpreted through structural functionalism. Parsons (1951) explains that social institutions contribute to social continuity by fulfilling interconnected functions. The AGIL framework includes *adaptation* (the capacity to respond to changing conditions), *goal attainment* (the pursuit of collective objectives), *integration* (the coordination of social relations), and *latency* (the maintenance and transmission of values and cultural patterns). In the present context, *goal attainment* refers to efforts to sustain *Benjang* through organized educational and cultural activities, whereas *latency* concerns the maintenance and transmission of cultural values across generations. *Integration* is relevant to the coordination of relationships among the school, participants, cultural practitioners, local communities, and public institutions. This use of structural functionalism is consistent with Indonesian scholarship that applies the perspective to explain the role of education in maintaining social values and institutional cohesion (Wahyuni et al., 2021).

Merton's (1968) distinction between manifest and latent functions also assists in identifying intended outcomes and additional social consequences that emerge through the school's activities. The intended function of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* concerns the transmission and preservation of *Benjang*. Its activities may also generate broader consequences, including strengthened social interaction, expanded cultural participation, and local economic opportunities associated with cultural performances. Pradana et al. (2026) identify the economic relevance of *Benjang* through its value chain and its contribution to local economic activity. This perspective is relevant to the present study because cultural preservation may produce social and economic effects that accompany its primary educational purpose.

Research on community-based arts education has shown that cultural learning spaces can support the transmission of artistic knowledge, practical competencies, and social values. Ananda et al. (2023) found that an art studio may function as a nonformal educational space in which children develop artistic interests, practical skills, confidence, responsibility, and social awareness. Wanimbo et al. (2022) likewise describe education as a social institution that contributes to value transmission and social change within local communities. These studies demonstrate the relevance of community-based education to cultural continuity. They do not, however, examine how a nonformal institution specifically organizes cultural learning to develop participants' understanding, appreciation, participation, and commitment toward a local artistic tradition.

This study examines the nonformal education strategies implemented at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* to preserve *Benjang*. It further explores how these strategies contribute to the development of *cultural awareness* among students and members of the surrounding community.

B. Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the nonformal education strategies implemented at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* (Indonesian Benjang School) and their contribution to the preservation of *Benjang* and the development of *cultural awareness*. A case study design was selected because the research focused on the practices, learning processes, and social consequences associated with one community-based educational institution. The study was conducted at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia*, located in *Kampung Wisata Bendjang Oedjoengberoeng* (Bendjang Oedjoengberoeng Tourism Village), Pasanggrahan Village, Ujung Berung District, Bandung City, West Java. Fieldwork was conducted over six months, from November 2025 to April 2026.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in, knowledge of, and experience with the educational and cultural activities of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia*. The study involved seven informants: the founder of the Wallagri Foundation, the school principal, a *Benjang* trainer, two students, and two community members. Their roles and relevance to the study are presented in Table 1. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Seven interviews were conducted with the selected informants, while ten observations were undertaken during training sessions, learning activities, and cultural performances. The documents analyzed included the school curriculum, activity records, and visual documentation of training sessions, public performances, cultural outreach activities, and the launching of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia*. Visual documentation was analyzed as supporting documentary data to identify the forms of student participation, performance settings, cultural representation, and institutional collaboration associated with *Benjang* activities. Participant codes were used in the findings to protect confidentiality, particularly for student informants.

Table 1.
Research Participants

No.	Participant Category	Code	Age	Gender	Role and Relevance to the Study
1	Wallagri Foundation Chair	SW	67	Male	Founder of the Wallagri Foundation and <i>Sekolah Benjang Indonesia</i>
2	School Principal	AE	55	Male	Oversees the operational activities of <i>Sekolah Benjang Indonesia</i>
3	<i>Benjang</i> Trainer	BY	50	Male	Conducts <i>Benjang</i> training and cultural learning activities

4	Student 1	TL	16	Female	Student since 2024 and student coordinator
5	Student 2	DR	14	Male	Student since 2025; previously participated in a <i>Benjang</i> extracurricular activity
6	Community Member 1	AM	21	Female	Resident of the Ujung Berung area
7	Community Member 2	YM	47	Female	Community member involved in <i>Benjang</i> -related cultural activities

Source: Interview data and researcher documentation.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials were coded and organized into themes concerning institutional goals, curriculum and learning practices, cultural programs, participant development, community participation, and the broader social consequences of *Benjang* activities. The analysis also considered indicators of *cultural awareness*, including cultural understanding, appreciation, participation, a sense of belonging, and commitment to preservation. Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and *member checking* (the confirmation of the researcher's interpretation with the participants). Source triangulation involved comparing accounts from foundation leaders, school administrators, trainers, students, and community members. Technique triangulation compared findings across interviews, observations, and documents.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Institutional Goals of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia*

The establishment of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* was guided by educational and cultural objectives centered on the continuity of *Benjang*. Based on an interview with the school principal and supporting activity records, the school seeks to preserve and develop *Benjang*, provide character-oriented cultural education, encourage students to appreciate local artistic traditions, support student achievement through cultural activities, and maintain the meaning and ethical foundations associated with *Benjang*. These objectives position the school as a community-based educational institution that connects artistic training with cultural transmission. This orientation is consistent with studies that describe traditional arts as an important medium for sustaining local identity and cultural continuity, particularly when younger generations are involved in preservation activities (Shafa et al., 2025).

The school principal explained that the institution was established to cultivate students' character through arts and culture, strengthen their attachment to local artistic traditions, provide opportunities for achievement, and sustain *Benjang* as a living cultural practice:

“The first objective is to educate students’ character, particularly through arts and culture. The second is to encourage them to appreciate local arts. The third is to provide a bridge for achievement in arts and culture, including opportunities to continue to higher levels of education. The fourth is to preserve *Benjang* so that it does not disappear or become extinct. Preservation also involves restoring the practice of *Benjang* in accordance with its proper principles.” (AE, School Principal)

This account indicates that the school understands preservation as a process of transmitting cultural knowledge, artistic competence, discipline, responsibility, and appreciation of local identity. The emphasis on restoring *Benjang* “in accordance with its proper principles” suggests that the institution seeks to maintain the cultural meaning and integrity of the tradition alongside its performance practices. This finding corresponds with Ananda et al. (2023), who show that community-based art institutions may function as nonformal educational spaces through which artistic skills, confidence, responsibility, and social values are developed.

These institutional objectives correspond to *goal attainment* (the pursuit of collective objectives) in Parsons’ structural functionalism. *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* directs its learning and cultural activities toward a shared objective: sustaining *Benjang* through the participation of younger generations and the surrounding community. The objectives also relate to *latency* (the maintenance and transmission of cultural values and patterns), since the school introduces and maintains values associated with *Benjang* through regular learning and training activities. This interpretation is consistent with Wahyuni et al. (2021), who explain that educational institutions can function as social systems through which values, norms, and cultural patterns are maintained and transmitted.

Achieving these objectives requires cooperation beyond the school itself. *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* has developed relationships with cultural practitioners, community members, and public institutions, including the Bandung City Education Office. One form of collaboration involves efforts to introduce a *Benjang*-based curriculum for possible integration into extracurricular activities in formal schools. This cooperation illustrates *integration* (the coordination of social relations), because the continuity of *Benjang* depends on coordinated participation among educational institutions, cultural actors, community members, and government agencies. Wanimbo et al. (2022) similarly note that education can contribute to value transmission and social change when it is connected to the social environment in which learning takes place. The collaboration developed by *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* therefore expands institutional support for cultural learning and creates additional opportunities for younger generations to encounter *Benjang* in educational settings.

2. Curriculum and Learning Practices

The curriculum of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* organizes *Benjang* learning as a gradual educational process. Based on the school curriculum document and an interview with the school principal, the learning structure adapts Bloom’s taxonomy through *Panca*

Niti Atikan Sunda (a Sundanese educational framework that describes stages of personal and cultural development). The curriculum is intended to guide participants from initial recognition of *Benjang* toward practical competence, reflective understanding, and participation in cultural activities. This structure indicates that *Benjang* is taught as a cultural tradition with historical, ethical, artistic, and social dimensions.

The initial stage is *Niti Harti* (knowing), through which participants are introduced to the history of *Benjang*, its position within the cultural identity of Ujung Berung, its artistic forms, and the values associated with the tradition. Learning then progresses through *Niti Surti* (understanding), *Niti Bakti* (applying), and *Niti Bukti* (evaluating). At these stages, participants learn to understand the meaning of *Benjang*, practice its movements, play traditional musical instruments, and develop the skills required for cultural performances. The highest stage, *Niti Sajati* (authentic realization), is associated with participation in competitions, public performances, and cultural events. The sequence suggests that the curriculum moves from cultural knowledge to artistic practice and public participation.

The principal explained that curriculum development was responsive to conditions in the field:

“In developing the curriculum, we first observe the conditions in the field and identify an appropriate formulation. The material is then adjusted, designed, and presented. Some elements are adopted from existing guidelines, while others are developed from the needs that emerge at the grassroots level.” (AE, School Principal)

This explanation indicates that the curriculum is not treated as a fixed instructional structure. It is developed through consideration of participants’ needs, local cultural conditions, and available institutional guidance. The combination of *top-down* (derived from institutional guidance or existing policy) and *bottom-up* (developed in response to local needs and experiences) elements enables the school to sustain cultural learning while adjusting its activities to the circumstances of participants and the surrounding community.

The curriculum contributes to cultural transmission by placing historical knowledge, cultural identity, and local values before advanced artistic practice and public performance. This sequence is relevant to the development of *cultural awareness*, particularly participants’ understanding of *Benjang*, appreciation of its cultural significance, and willingness to participate in its continuity. Ananda et al. (2023) similarly found that community-based arts education can connect skill development with confidence, responsibility, and social values. The learning structure at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* therefore provides an institutional basis for developing cultural knowledge, artistic competence, and participation in *Benjang*.

This process corresponds to *latency* (the maintenance and transmission of values and cultural patterns) in Parsons’ structural functionalism. Structured learning enables the school to introduce and sustain cultural values associated with *Benjang* across generations. The curriculum also reflects *adaptation* (the capacity of an institution to

respond to changing conditions), because its development considers local needs and the practical circumstances of cultural learning. The curriculum thus functions as a mechanism through which the continuity of *Benjang* is maintained while its educational practices remain responsive to the community context.

3. Cultural Programs, Public Participation, and Visual Documentation

The programs implemented by *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* function as practical spaces for cultural learning, public participation, and the transmission of *Benjang*. Learning activities are not confined to routine training sessions. Students are also involved in public performances, ceremonial welcome activities, and cultural outreach programs in formal schools. These activities allow participants to apply the knowledge and skills acquired through training while presenting *Benjang* to wider audiences. Such public engagement is relevant to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage because cultural practices remain meaningful when they continue to be recognized, performed, and transmitted by communities across generations (UNESCO, 2003; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004).

The school's programs include performances at community events in Ujung Berung, *Syukuran Lembur* (a local community thanksgiving event), National Education Day celebrations, and the 2026 Bandung Festival. The school has also participated in ceremonial welcome activities during Independence Day events and other local cultural gatherings. A further program, *Nyeni di Sakola* (arts in schools), was conducted in collaboration with the Bandung City Culture and Tourism Office. Through this program, students from *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* introduced *Benjang* through cultural presentations and performances at SMPN 31 Bandung, SMPN 30 Bandung, SMKN 5 Bandung, SMPN 49 Bandung, and SMP Ciujung. Table 2 summarizes the main forms of cultural programming and their contribution to the school's educational and preservation activities.

Table 2.
Cultural Programs of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia*

No.	Program Category	Activities	Contribution to Cultural Learning and Preservation
1	Public performances	Community events in Ujung Berung, <i>Syukuran Lembur</i> , National Education Day, and the 2026 Bandung Festival	Provides opportunities for students to apply artistic skills, assume collective responsibilities, and introduce <i>Benjang</i> to wider audiences
2	Ceremonial welcome activities	Independence Day events and local ceremonial welcome activities	Enables students to participate in cultural representation and practice performance skills in public settings

3	<i>Nyeni di Sakola</i>	Cultural socialization and <i>Benjang</i> performances at SMPN 31 Bandung, SMPN 30 Bandung, SMKN 5 Bandung, SMPN 49 Bandung, and SMP Cijung	Extends cultural outreach to formal-school students and creates initial opportunities for cultural recognition and engagement
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Source: Interview data and researcher documentation.

The programs indicate that *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* positions public performance as part of its educational process. Public presentations require students to coordinate movement, music, costumes, timing, and shared responsibilities. These experiences provide practical contexts in which artistic competence, discipline, responsibility, confidence, and participation can be developed. Ananda et al. (2023) similarly found that community-based art spaces can function as nonformal learning environments that support artistic development alongside confidence, responsibility, and social awareness. The present findings support this interpretation, although the available data do not establish that every participant experienced the same degree of development. The contribution of performance activities should therefore be understood as an educational opportunity created by the institution, not as an automatic outcome for all students.

The *Nyeni di Sakola* program expanded the social reach of *Benjang* beyond the immediate environment of the school. Students from *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* acted as performers and cultural representatives, while the Bandung City Culture and Tourism Office facilitated access to formal-school settings. Documentary video records showed that students in the host schools paid attention to the presentations, participated in interactive sessions, and expressed appreciation during the performances. These responses indicate an initial encounter with *Benjang* among students outside the Ujung Berung community. They do not, however, demonstrate a sustained change in cultural understanding, appreciation, or commitment. Brown (2005) cautions that safeguarding intangible cultural expressions can become problematic when heritage is treated primarily as an object of formal recognition or public display, detached from the communities and practitioners who sustain it. In this context, the *Nyeni di Sakola* program should be understood as an initial opportunity for encounter and participation, not as sufficient evidence of lasting cultural attachment. Smith (2006) cautions that heritage is shaped through continuing interpretation, participation, and social negotiation; a single cultural event may create recognition, but longer engagement is required to examine deeper forms of cultural attachment.

Visual documentation provides additional evidence of how *Benjang* was presented through the school's public programs. Figure 1 shows student participants performing *Benjang* during a public cultural activity. The image documents the direct involvement of students in the presentation of movement, music, and collective performance coordination. This visual evidence supports interview and observation data indicating that public performances served as practical spaces where students applied the skills developed during training.

Figure 1.***Benjang Performance by Student Participants during a Public Cultural Activity***

Source: Researcher documentation (2026)

Figure 2 documents a *Benjang* performance during the launching of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia*. The event publicly introduced the school as a community-based institution for cultural learning and preservation. The presence of student performers and the public setting indicate that the launching functioned as an occasion for representing *Benjang* and communicating the school's educational purpose to the surrounding community. The image should be read as supporting documentary data. It confirms the occurrence and public character of the activity, but it does not independently demonstrate changes in participants' *cultural awareness*.

Figure 2.***Benjang Performance during the Launching of Sekolah Benjang Indonesia***

Source: Researcher documentation (2026)

Duffy (2000) notes that festival participation and public cultural performance may contribute to the expression of place-based identity by bringing people together around shared cultural expressions. The visual documentation in this study supports this interpretation at the level of public representation, although it cannot establish how audiences interpreted or internalized the cultural meanings of *Benjang*.

Interviews, observations, program records, and visual documentation indicate that public programs created opportunities for cultural participation and representation. This pattern is consistent with Shafa et al. (2025), who identify *Benjang* as a cultural expression connected to local identity and emphasize the importance of sustained preservation efforts. Public performances and school outreach increased the visibility of *Benjang* in community and educational spaces, although visibility alone does not ensure

long-term preservation. The continuity of a traditional art form also depends on regular learning, community support, institutional collaboration, and the willingness of younger participants to remain involved in its practice (UNESCO, 2003; Smith, 2006).

These findings can be interpreted through *integration* (the coordination of social relations) in Parsons' structural functionalism. The programs involved coordination among students, trainers, school management, community members, government offices, and formal schools. Such coordination enabled cultural learning to extend beyond the school's internal activities and enter wider social settings. Merton's (1968) distinction between manifest and latent functions further clarifies the findings. The manifest function of these programs concerned the presentation and preservation of *Benjang*, whereas broader social interaction, public recognition, and possible expansion of cultural networks may be understood as latent consequences. The evidence does not yet justify a claim that all programs produced enduring cultural awareness; however, the activities provided institutional conditions through which cultural understanding, participation, and appreciation could develop.

4. Participant Development through *Benjang* Learning

The educational activities at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* contributed to several forms of participant development identified through interviews, observations, and supporting documentation. The findings indicate changes in four closely related areas: cultural understanding, artistic skills, responsibility, and self-confidence. These outcomes should be interpreted as experiences reported by the participating students, not as uniform effects experienced by every student enrolled in the program.

The first area concerns cultural understanding. Participants described an increased familiarity with the history of *Benjang*, its development in Ujung Berung, and the values associated with the tradition. This knowledge was acquired through explanations provided by trainers and through participation in cultural activities. One student explained:

"The trainer taught us and explained the history of *Benjang*. There was a difference between what I understood before joining and what I understood afterward." (TL, Student)

This finding suggests that learning at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* involves more than technical performance training. Historical explanation and direct exposure to cultural activities provide participants with opportunities to understand *Benjang* as part of the cultural identity of Ujung Berung. Such learning is relevant to the cognitive dimension of *cultural awareness*, particularly participants' ability to recognize the historical background and cultural meaning of a tradition. Research on arts education has similarly shown that sustained engagement with artistic activities can support learning processes that connect practical experience, reflection, and broader forms of understanding (Burton et al., 2000). However, the present study does not measure the depth or long-term retention of participants' historical knowledge. The evidence only indicates that students perceived an increase in their understanding after participating in the program.

The second area concerns artistic skills. Students reported developing abilities in dance, musical performance, and *Benjang* martial arts movements through regular practice. One participant described gaining confidence in performing *topeng* dance and assisting with dance instruction, while another referred to learning musical instruments through observation and interaction with peers during training:

“I was not very good at playing musical instruments. After joining SBI, I learned *topeng* dance and was trained by Bah Yoni. Sometimes Hasan also trained us to play instruments, and eventually I helped train the dancers.” (TL, Student)

“I learned by watching friends who practiced the musical instruments. Before joining SBI, I had already been in another group, and then a friend invited me to join SBI. Since then, I have become more capable.” (DR, Student)

These accounts indicate that skill development occurred through structured instruction, repeated practice, peer learning, and participation in collective performance. This pattern is consistent with research showing that participatory arts activities can support the development of practical competence, collaborative learning, and personal engagement when participants have sustained opportunities to practice and perform (Daykin et al., 2008; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011). At the same time, artistic participation does not automatically produce equivalent outcomes for all learners. The quality of instruction, frequency of practice, prior experience, and participants’ level of involvement may shape the extent of skill development.

The third area concerns responsibility and collective discipline. Students described being entrusted with tasks such as caring for musical instruments, following training schedules, preparing for performances, and coordinating group activities. These responsibilities encouraged participants to recognize the importance of shared roles in a collective artistic setting:

“Because I have been trusted, I feel that I have to be responsible.” (TL, Student).

“For example, when we bring equipment, we have to return it to its original place.” (DR, Student)

The accounts suggest that responsibility emerged through repeated participation in group-based activities and the allocation of practical tasks. This finding is consistent with scholarship that views community-based arts participation as a setting where young people can develop cooperation, accountability, and social relationships through shared creative work (Heath & Roach, 1999; Wright et al., 2013). Nevertheless, responsibility in this study is inferred from participants’ descriptions of specific practices. The data do not justify a broader conclusion that participation in *Benjang* transformed all aspects of students’ behavior outside the school environment.

The fourth area concerns self-confidence. Public performances gave students opportunities to appear before audiences, demonstrate their skills, and manage anxiety associated with performance. One student described experiencing nervousness before appearing in public, despite having completed rehearsals:

“When we were going to perform, the trainer taught us what to do. On the day of the performance, my confidence sometimes dropped. Even though I had practiced,

I still experienced stage fright, but I tried to convince myself to be confident.”
(TL, Student)

This account indicates that confidence developed through a gradual process of rehearsal, guidance, and repeated exposure to public performance. The presence of stage fright also demonstrates that confidence should not be treated as a fixed or automatic outcome of participation. Research on performing arts participation similarly reports that artistic activities can provide conditions for self-expression, confidence, and social engagement, while recognizing that outcomes depend on the learning environment and participants’ individual experiences (Daykin et al., 2008; Goldstein et al., 2017).

The findings indicate that *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* provides a learning environment in which students can develop cultural knowledge, artistic skills, responsibility, and confidence. These outcomes correspond to the school’s manifest function, namely the intended educational and cultural development of participants. Merton’s concept of manifest functions is relevant because the school deliberately organizes training, cultural instruction, and performance activities to support the continuity of *Benjang* and participants’ development (Merton, 1968). The findings also support the study’s concept of *cultural awareness*, especially in relation to cultural understanding, participation, and the gradual development of a sense of connection to *Benjang*. However, the evidence remains limited to a small number of student accounts and should not be generalized beyond the participants and institutional context examined in this study.

5. Potential Local Economic Activities and Latent Consequences of *Benjang* Performances

Beyond participant development, the public programs associated with *Benjang* also generated broader social consequences for the surrounding community. The findings indicate that public *Benjang* performances may generate local economic activity in addition to their educational and cultural functions. This outcome emerged through interviews with community members who described how performances attracted audiences and created temporary opportunities for vendors to sell food, drinks, and other goods near event locations. These activities were particularly visible during community celebrations and cultural gatherings where large numbers of spectators attended.

One community member explained that *Benjang* performances could create temporary marketplaces for local vendors:

“Sometimes, when there is a celebration in a place and there is a *Benjang* performance, people see that there are many spectators and they can open stalls selling drinks, meatballs, and other things. There are micro, small, and medium enterprise groups. When *Benjang* performs, they all sell goods, creating a temporary market. That is the *Pasukan Benjang* [Benjang community network]; they come not only to watch but also to sell.” (YM, Community Member)

This account suggests that the economic contribution of *Benjang* is associated with audience concentration and the temporary circulation of people, goods, and information around performance venues. The finding should not be interpreted as

evidence that *Benjang* has produced sustained income growth or measurable economic development in Ujung Berung. The available data do not include sales records, income comparisons, visitor counts, or information about the frequency of vendor participation. They do, however, indicate that cultural performances can create short-term opportunities for informal trade and small-scale enterprise.

The formation of *Pasukan Benjang* also illustrates how cultural events may generate social networks that support economic participation. According to the community member, the network circulated information about upcoming performances and enabled people to identify locations where audiences were likely to gather:

“For example, when people hear a performance from far away, they invite each other to watch. Even people who do not know one another may go together because they know there will be *Benjang*. They become acquainted, make plans, discuss *Benjang*, and share information about where the next performance will take place. There is a group called *Pasukan Benjang* in Ujung Berung.” (YM, Community Member)

The *Pasukan Benjang* network also indicates that cultural events may support forms of social connection through repeated interaction, shared information, and collective participation. Arcodia and Whitford (2006) argue that festival attendance can contribute to social capital by creating opportunities for social interaction, trust, and community engagement. The present study does not measure social capital directly; however, the circulation of information and informal relationships surrounding *Benjang* performances indicate a comparable community-level process.

This finding is consistent with scholarship on cultural events, which shows that festivals and public performances may stimulate localized economic activity by attracting visitors, increasing temporary demand for goods and services, and strengthening the visibility of a place or cultural practice (Getz, 2008; Quinn, 2005). At the same time, studies of cultural economics caution that claims about economic benefit should distinguish between direct spending, indirect circulation, symbolic value, and longer-term development effects (Throsby, 2001; Snowball, 2008). In the present case, the available evidence supports a limited claim: *Benjang* performances created opportunities for informal vendors and small business actors to participate in temporary economic activities around cultural events.

The finding also complements research on event-based cultural development, which emphasizes that local benefits depend on the scale of the event, the participation of local actors, institutional support, and the capacity of communities to retain economic value within the area where cultural activities take place (Gibson & Connell, 2012). The economic opportunities identified in this study were not planned as the primary objective of *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia*. They emerged alongside activities whose main purpose was cultural learning, public representation, and the preservation of *Benjang*. This distinction is important because the institution should not be assessed primarily through economic indicators when its central role remains educational and cultural.

Merton's concept of latent functions is useful for interpreting this pattern. The manifest function of public *Benjang* programs concerns the preservation, transmission, and public presentation of a traditional art form. Temporary vending opportunities, information-sharing networks, and expanded social interaction represent possible latent consequences because they arise beyond the school's stated educational objectives (Merton, 1968). These consequences may strengthen community engagement with *Benjang*, yet they should not be treated as automatic or permanent outcomes. Their continuity depends on the regularity of performances, audience attendance, the involvement of local vendors, and the broader institutional support available for cultural activities.

D. Conclusion

This study examined the nonformal education strategies implemented at *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* to preserve *Benjang* and to support the development of cultural awareness among participants. The findings indicate that the school organizes cultural preservation through interconnected institutional goals, a staged curriculum, regular artistic training, public performances, cultural outreach activities, and collaboration with community members and public institutions. The curriculum introduces participants to the history, values, artistic forms, and cultural identity associated with *Benjang* before guiding them toward practical performance, public participation, and cultural representation. These strategies position *Sekolah Benjang Indonesia* as a community-based educational setting through which cultural knowledge, artistic competence, and participation in local traditions can be sustained.

The findings further indicate that participating students reported increased familiarity with the history and meaning of *Benjang*, improved artistic skills, greater responsibility in collective activities, and growing confidence in public performance. These outcomes reflect the school's manifest educational function. Public performances and cultural outreach programs also created opportunities for wider cultural recognition, participation, and institutional collaboration. For the surrounding community, the activities supported local involvement in cultural events and generated temporary opportunities for informal trade and social networking. These economic and social effects represent latent consequences of cultural programs, rather than the school's primary objective. The study does not establish long-term changes in cultural awareness among all participants or community members. Future research may examine how sustained participation in *Benjang* learning influences cultural attachment, intergenerational transmission, and community support over time.

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