



Process of Transmitting the Babalu Dance at Putra Budaya Studio Batang Regency

Chandra Dewi Kusumaningtyas^{✉1}, Agus Cahyono^{✉2}, Wahyu Lestari^{✉3}

Department of Drama, Dance, and Music Education, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia.

Article Info

Article History:

Received: 11-06-2025

Accepted: 23-06-2025

Published: 31-07-2025

Keywords:

*Inheritance Process, Babalu
Dance, Sanggar Putra
Budaya*

Abstract

Babalu Dance is a traditional art form from Batang Regency that carries significant historical meaning related to local resistance against colonial powers. As globalization advances, the younger generation's interest in Babalu Dance has decreased. This study describes the inheritance process of Babalu Dance conducted at Sanggar Putra Budaya. A qualitative method with an ethnographic approach was applied. Data were collected through observation, interviews, literature review, and documentation. The research shows that Babalu Dance consists of various movements, themes, make-up, costumes, musical accompaniment, properties, floor patterns, and stage formations reflecting resistance values. The inheritance process follows a diagonal system, using non-formal education that includes regular training, cultural value dissemination, and active youth participation. Sanggar Putra Budaya serves as a crucial institution in maintaining Babalu Dance preservation amidst modernization challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is endowed with a rich diversity of cultural arts, with traditional dance serving as one of the most prominent expressions of regional cultural identity (Aditya & Ramadhan, 2024). Traditional dance functions not only as an aesthetic medium but also as a form of social communication, a reinforcement of cultural values, and a preservation of historical heritage (Handayani et al., 2025). As a dynamic cultural artifact, traditional dance embodies the collective memory and cultural worldview of its people.

Among Indonesia's many traditional dances, the Babalu Dance from Batang Regency, Central Java, holds significant historical value. Created around the 1940s during the colonial era, Babalu Dance functioned as a covert strategy used by the local community to resist colonial forces. Its choreographed movements and the use of props such as whistles served as secret communication tools to signal the arrival and direction of enemy troops. Thus, Babalu Dance is not merely an art form but also a symbol of local resistance and solidarity.

However, as time progresses particularly in the era of globalization the existence of Babalu Dance faces serious threats. The younger generation increasingly gravitates toward popular culture and modern dance forms disseminated through social media and television (Yunus Ahmad et al., 2024). Consequently, there has been a marked decline in the interest of younger generations to learn, practice, and preserve Babalu Dance. Even among the local community, familiarity with the dance's historical significance has diminished (Wijayanto, 2024). This situation reflects a broader crisis in the intergenerational transmission of traditional cultural knowledge.

In response to this transmission crisis, non-formal institutions such as community-based art studios have emerged as key agents in cultural preservation (Handayani et al., 2025). Sanggar Putra Budaya in Batang Regency serves as a tangible example of such an institution, consistently transmitting Babalu Dance to younger generations. Through regular training, performance participation, and cultural education, the

studio applies a *diagonal transmission model* an approach that extends beyond familial lines and utilizes organized institutional settings for cultural inheritance (Rochayati, 2017). This model has proven to be adaptive and effective in contemporary socio-cultural contexts where familial transmission has weakened (Elvandari, 2020).

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the transmission model of traditional performing arts through non-formal, community-based institutions, specifically emphasizing the diagonal transmission approach. To date, most research on the transmission of traditional dance in Indonesia has primarily concentrated on family-based (vertical transmission) systems or formal educational institutions (institutional vertical transmission). Studies that systematically explore the role of community-based institutions such as art studios as cultural transmission agents remain relatively limited.

In the context of Babalu Dance in Batang Regency, this study represents one of the first comprehensive investigations that documents, analyzes, and explains how a non-formal institution, Sanggar Putra Budaya, operates as an effective medium for cultural transmission through a diagonal transmission system. Through an ethnographic approach, this research not only describes the structure of Babalu Dance performances but also explores how local cultural values are transmitted, the pedagogical strategies employed, the active participation of younger generations, and the challenges of transmission amidst globalization.

The novelty of this research includes, a specific object of study: the transmission of Babalu Dance, which has rarely been explored in previous academic studies, The diagonal transmission model via non-formal, community-based institutions, beyond family lines and formal institutions, a deep ethnographic approach that provides a holistic description of cultural transmission practices within the real-life setting of a performing arts community.

Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of alternative models for cultural transmission of traditional performing arts in the modern era and offers a valuable analytical framework within the field of

community-based arts education. Practically, the findings of this study may serve as a strategic reference for local governments, cultural communities, and educational institutions in designing more adaptive and sustainable traditional arts preservation programs.

While prior studies have extensively explored transmission processes of other traditional dances such as *Baris Jojo* (Abdul Hadi WM, 2012), *Ngagah Harimau* (Marvelia & Asriati, 2024), *Tanggai* (Agustina et al., 2021), and *Sere Api* (Ummah, 2019) specific studies addressing the transmission of Babalu Dance through community-based studios remain limited. This research thus aims to address this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of both the performance structure and the transmission process of Babalu Dance as conducted by Sanggar Putra Budaya, using an ethnographic approach. Academically, this study contributes to the enrichment of theoretical frameworks on cultural transmission in performing arts education, while practically offering insights for the sustainable preservation of Indonesia's intangible cultural heritage.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. The ethnographic approach was chosen as it allows the researcher to deeply understand the socio-cultural phenomena within the art community, particularly in the context of transmitting the Babalu Dance at Sanggar Putra Budaya, Batang Regency (Tarbiyah & Keguruan, 2023). Ethnography provides the researcher with the opportunity to directly observe the cultural transmission practices in their natural settings, in accordance with the principles of naturalistic qualitative research (Triyanto, 2018).

Research Location and Participants

The study was conducted at Sanggar Putra Budaya, located on Jl. Dr. Cipto, Proyonanggan Tengah, Batang Regency, Central Java. Key informants involved in data collection included, The Head of the Studio: Mr. Suparyitno, S.Kar., M.Si. The Choreographer of Babalu Dance: Mrs. Suningsih, S.Pd., M.Si. The Music Arranger for Babalu Dance: Mr. Sukiyanto, S.Pd.,

M.Si. These informants were selected purposively as they are central figures with comprehensive knowledge of the Babalu Dance transmission process.

Data Collection Techniques (Moleong, 2013). Data were collected using triangulation techniques, including participant Observation: The researcher directly engaged in training sessions, performances, and learning processes at the studio, documenting interactions among studio members, training processes, movement instruction, and the inculcation of cultural values, In-Depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the head of the studio, the choreographer, and the music arranger to explore their understanding of the Babalu Dance transmission process, Literature Review: Relevant literature was reviewed, focusing on cultural transmission theories, traditional dance studies, and ethnographic research, Documentation: Visual evidence such as photographs, video recordings of training sessions and performances, as well as administrative records of the studio, were collected.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to confirm consistency and accuracy of findings. Additionally, member checks were conducted with informants to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected the actual conditions in the field. **Data Analysis Techniques.** Data analysis followed an inductive qualitative approach. The analysis process involved several stages (Miles et al., 1992).

Data Reduction: Selecting, simplifying, and organizing data from interviews, observations, and documentation according to the research focus.

Data Display: Presenting data in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding of data relationships.

Conclusion Drawing: Interpreting synthesized data to answer research objectives and identify transmission patterns of the Babalu Dance at Sanggar Putra Budaya.

Through the ethnographic approach, this study not only describes how the

transmission of the Babalu Dance takes place but also examines the cultural values being transmitted, the actors involved, and the social dynamics influencing the transmission process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the transmission of the Babalu Dance in Batang Regency is conducted through the non-formal institution of Sanggar Putra Budaya. This studio applies a *diagonal transmission system*, which refers to a transmission process that is not limited to familial (vertical) or peer-based (horizontal) pathways, but instead utilizes formal or non-formal institutions as intermediaries (Rochayati et al., 2016).

The transmission of Babalu Dance at Sanggar Putra Budaya is carried out through several stages, including:

Regular Training



Figure 1. Regular Training (Source: Chandra Dewi, 2025)

Sanggar Putra Budaya regularly conducts Babalu Dance training sessions attended by the younger generation. These training sessions not only focus on teaching dance techniques but also emphasize the understanding of the cultural values embodied in the Babalu Dance itself. As stated by (M. Jazuli., 2021) in the transmission of traditional dance, mastery of movement techniques must be accompanied by the internalization of cultural meanings to ensure that the dance remains authentic and meaningful.

During each training session, instructors provide explanations regarding the historical background of the Babalu Dance, which was originally used as a form of resistance by the people of Batang Regency against colonial powers. Secret codes, understood only by the local community, were embedded in the

dance movements. This is consistent with (Koentjaraningrat, 1992) view that culture is not merely a collection of artifacts but also a system of values and meanings that must be passed down from one generation to the next.



Figure 3. Participation in Performances (Source: Sanggar Putra Budaya, 2024)

After the training process, the studio provides opportunities for students to participate in various performance events at local, regional, and national levels. This active participation enhances their self-confidence, fosters a love for local culture, and strengthens their cultural identity as the next generation (Marvelia & Asriati, 2024).

The full support from studio administrators, family involvement, partnerships with schools, and local government collaboration further strengthen the success of this transmission process. Sanggar Putra Budaya functions not only as a training center but also as a space for cultural character development. This effort aligns with the concept of community-based arts education, which emphasizes active community involvement in the cultural learning process (Hera, 2023).

Challenges in the transmission process

The transmission process also faces several challenges, including, The declining interest of younger generations in traditional dance due to the influence of popular culture (Yunus Ahmad et al., 2024). Limited funding and inadequate facilities to support the studio's development, a shortage of trainers or instructors who possess an in-depth understanding of the philosophical values of the Babalu Dance, a Profound Understanding of the Philosophical Meaning of Babalu Dance.

This challenge aligns with the findings of (Hera, 2023) regarding the transmission of

Bringbrung art in Bandung, which emphasize that globalization may marginalize the existence of traditional arts without strategic support from both government and society.

Overall, the transmission process implemented by Sanggar Putra Budaya demonstrates the effectiveness of the diagonal transmission model, which remains adaptive amid modernization challenges. This model allows broader cultural transmission beyond family lineage, as similarly applied in the transmission of Tanggai Dance (Agustina et al., 2021) and Sere Api Dance (Ummah, 2019). Collaborative efforts among multiple stakeholders are essential to ensure the sustainable preservation of Babalu Dance in the future.

Strategies and solutions

To overcome the obstacles faced in the transmission of Babalu Dance, several strategic solutions can be implemented, Enhancing Youth Interest Efforts to attract younger generations can be pursued through creative approaches, such as integrating Babalu Dance with modern technology, utilizing social media and digital platforms, and introducing it within schools and youth communities to cultivate an early appreciation for traditional arts, Preserving Culture Amid Socio-Cultural Changes In order to maintain the relevance of Babalu Dance amid social transformations, community participation should be encouraged through festivals, performances, cultural education, and the organization of workshops and seminars to foster awareness and pride in local cultural heritage, Improved Funding and Promotion, Funding can be strengthened through partnerships with government agencies, sponsors, and the private sector, as well as fundraising through art activities. Aggressive promotion via social media, websites, and local media is also crucial to expand audience reach and enhance the appeal of Babalu Dance, Maintaining Authenticity Through Innovation Innovation in Babalu Dance must be conducted carefully to preserve its authenticity. Collaboration between

choreographers and instructors can produce updates in costumes, music, and choreography without compromising its traditional essence, ensuring its continued relevance for younger generations while remaining rooted in its cultural values.

Through these strategies, it is expected that existing challenges can be addressed, enabling the continued preservation and development of Babalu Dance for future generations. Collaboration among government bodies, communities, and art practitioners is key to the successful preservation of this traditional art form.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the transmission of Babalu Dance at Sanggar Putra Budaya, Batang Regency, is systematically carried out through a non-formal education approach based on art studio training. The transmission follows a *diagonal system*, meaning that it does not rely solely on family lineage (vertical) or peer networks (horizontal), but instead utilizes institutions that actively educate the younger generation.

Regular training serves as the primary medium for transmission, which not only develops technical dance skills but also instills an understanding of the historical values of resistance embedded in Babalu Dance. The introduction of local cultural values plays a crucial role in preserving the philosophical meaning of the dance, in line with the essence of culture as a value system that must be passed down (Koentjaraningrat, 1992).

Moreover, the direct involvement of younger generations in performances provides a space for self-expression and strengthens their cultural identity. Active participation in performances significantly contributes to the successful transmission of cultural values (Hera, 2023).

However, the transmission process also faces several challenges, including the declining interest of youth due to the influence of global popular culture, the limited availability of human resources with deep knowledge of the dance's philosophical meanings, and financial constraints. Therefore, collaborative support from the

government, educational institutions, communities, and the private sector is essential to ensure the sustainability of Babalu Dance transmission.

Overall, the diagonal transmission model implemented by Sanggar Putra Budaya has proven to be adaptive to globalization challenges and may serve as an effective model for the preservation of other traditional performing arts in Indonesia.

REFERENCES

- Abdul Hadi WM, et al. (2012). *Prosiding Seminar Internasional Festival Seni Melayu Asia Tenggara*.
- Aditya, M. C. P., & Ramadhan, I. (2024). Kesenian Tari Orang-Orang Bertopeng: Memperkuat Relasi Sosial dan Warisan Melayu Kalimantan Barat. *Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya Dan Perubahan Sosial*, 8(1), 10–22.
- Agustina, H., Hera, T., & Ilhaq, M. (2021). Pewarisan Tari Tanggai Melalui Pendidikan: Studi Kasus Sanggar Putri Batang Hari Sembilan. *GETER: Jurnal Seni Drama, Tari Dan Musik*, 4(1), 23–33. <https://doi.org/10.26740/geter.v4n1.p23-33>
- Elvandari, E. (2020). Sistem Pewarisan Sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Seni Tradisi. *GETER: Jurnal Seni Drama, Tari Dan Musik*, 3(1), 93–104. <https://doi.org/10.26740/geter.v3n1.p93-104>
- Handayani, S., Sumarno, & Indriasih, A. (2025). Eksistensi dan nilai-nilai kearifan lokal dalam Tari Silampari kayangan tinggi di kota Lubuklinggau. *Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sejarah, Sosial, Budaya Dan Kependidikan*, 6(2), 82–95. <http://ejurnalunsam.id/index.php/jsnbl/index>
- Hera, T. (2023). Pendidikan Seni Berbasis Masyarakat: Sebuah Pewarisan, Apresiasi, Arena Ekspresi Kreatif. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana*, 831–839.
- <https://proceeding.unnes.ac.id/index.php/snpasca/article/view/2226/1709>
- Koentjaraningrat, K. (1992). *Mentalitas dan Pembangunan di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- M. Jazuli. (2021). *Seni Tari: Suplemen Pembelajaran Seni Budaya* (Issue June). <https://:ciptaprimanusantara@gmail.com>
- Marvelia, A., & Asriati, A. (2024). Pewarisan Tari Ngagah Harimau Desa Pulau Tengah Kecamatan Keliling Danau Kabupaten Kerinci. *Dharma Acariya Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa Dan Budaya*, 2(1), 159–169.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., Rohidi, T. R., & Mulyarto. (1992). *Analisis data kualitatif: buku sumber tentang metode metode baru*. Penerbit Universitas Indonesia (UI-Press).
- Moleong, L. J. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya. Mosal.
- Rochayati, R. (2017). Seni Tari Antara Ruang Dan Waktu. *Jurnal Sitakara*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.31851/sitakara.v2i2.1194>
- Rochayati, R., Elvandari, E., & Hera, T. (2016). Menuju Kelas Koreografi. *Palembang: Komunitas Lumbung Kreatif*.
- Triyanto. (2018). Pendekatan Kebudayaan dalam Penelitian Pendidikan Seni. *Jurnal Imajinasi*, XII(1), 65–76.
- Wijayanto, A. (2024). *Revitalisasi Ilmu Sejarah, Seni, dan Budaya dalam Dunia Pendidikan* (Issue October). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13864570>
- Yunus Ahmad, M., Irwan, I., Ruhamah, R., Jannah, N. I., Hasanah, I., & Fadlul Arabi, R. (2024). Fenomena Korean Wave pada Kehidupan Mahasiswa di Kota Banda Aceh. *Jurnal Adabiya*, 26(1), 110. <https://doi.org/10.22373/adabiya.v26i1.21626>