



Preserving Cultural Identity of Angklung Paglak through Visual Identity-based Approach

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Abstract. Angklung Paglak, a traditional musical instrument rooted in the rich cultural heritage of Kemiren Village, Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia, has played a pivotal role in entertaining farmers and expressing gratitude during the Great Harvest ceremonies. However, with the gradual decline of traditional harvest practices and the advent of modernization, the once vibrant Angklung Paglak tradition faces the risk of extinction. This study used the endogenous development theory to investigate the historical existence of Angklung Paglak and its evolution under the influence of tourism, emphasizing the structure of awareness, social relations, and practical techniques. In summary, by employing an ethnographic approach, the research involved real-world observations and interactions with local participants for one year to gain first-hand insight into the complex interplay between Angklung Paglak as a cultural asset and tourist attraction. The envisioned visual identity plays a significant role in fostering cultural continuity and unity, thus revitalizing and preserving Angklung Paglak's significance within the community's collective memory.

Keywords: *Angklung Paglak; design-based ethnographic study; development theory; endogenous tourism influence; visualization of tradition.*

1 Introduction

Angklung, a bamboo-based traditional musical instrument, is primarily associated with West Java in Indonesia and is also referred to as Angklung Sunda. Nevertheless, the instrument holds a presence within diverse regional traditions across Indonesia, including Banyuwangi Regency in East Java. In this context, angklung represents a historical and continuously evolving cultural manifestation in the realm of ethnic music. Angklung Banyuwangi, characterized by its spirited performance, serves as a platform for skill development and exhibition among its participants, thereby embodying the fervor of Banyuwangi's folk artistic tradition [1]. A notable component of this cultural tapestry is the practice of Angklung Paglak, which has firmly established itself as an indigenous tradition originating from Banyuwangi.

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Angklung Paglak (see Figure 1) is a traditional musical instrument crafted from bamboo (*angklung*) played on a bamboo tower (*paglak*), rooted in the rich cultural heritage of Kemiren Village, Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia. It has played a pivotal role in entertaining farmers and expressing gratitude during the Great Harvest ceremonies. What distinguishes Angklung Paglak from other forms of angklung is its incorporation of five introductory notes, a characteristic feature akin to the pentatonic scale or *laras selindro* in gamelan music. It is undoubtedly different from Angklung Sunda, which has only one essential diatonic scale. Angklung Paglak ethnic music is part of the wealth of local traditions of the people of Kemiren Village. It is considered the oldest and has social value as a means of communication and giving news to the community [2]. The performance of the music is a call for the people to gather and carry out cooperative activities in the fields or announces the time when a communal work will begin.

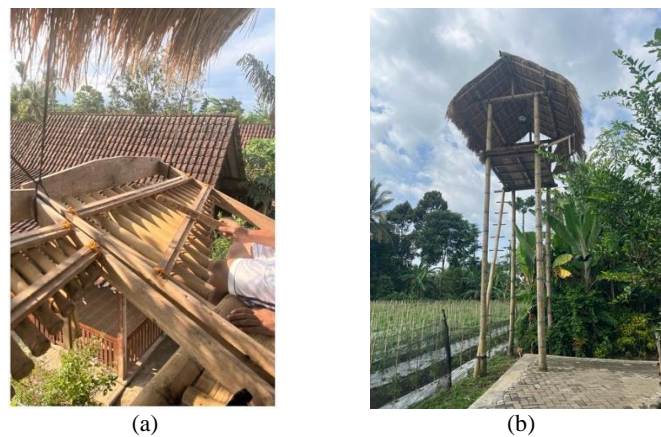


Figure 1 (a) Bamboo instrument (*angklung*); (b) bamboo tower (*paglak*).

However, with the gradual decline of traditional harvest practices and the advent of modernization, the once vibrant Angklung Paglak tradition faces the risk of extinction. To revitalize this significant cultural asset, it has been positioned as a tourist attraction, leading to various philosophical and functional transformations within the local community. At this time, Angklung Paglak is mainly conserved as a performing art for tourism purposes, such as welcoming guests and during certain other events. On various occasions, several presenters are often invited to give Angklung Paglak performances abroad in an international scope. Therefore, its preservation is upheld by the local community with government assistance [1].

Culture, including all forms of human behavior and ways of thinking, has developed and is rooted with in a society [3]. Although reasonably practical, a

track record in archiving is needed for continued development. Traditions and culture need to be preserved in visual archives that function as assets of a society or as study objects in the academic realm. One of the crucial things needed to attract tourists is to form branding through visual identity. Visual identity is an essential element that attracts visitors to tourist destinations [4]. A visual identity, historical reviews of the activity, and the existence of a cultural location or object can be traced and recorded.

This research initially assessed tourism's impact on Angklung Paglak, a cultural asset of Kemiren Village, leading up to several objectives, including exploring its significance among locals, analyzing tourism's influence on its intrinsic values, and developing strategies for preserving its cultural integrity while accommodating tourism using a visual identity approach.

2 Contents

This research employed a qualitative methodology, utilizing an ethnographic perspective to gain a more profound understanding of Angklung Paglak in Banyuwangi Regency. A literature review was incorporated to elucidate the concept of visualizing the cultural identity inherent in Angklung Paglak. This study was carried out in three consecutive stages.

2.1 Ethnographic Approach in Rediscovering Angklung Paglak

In this section, the results of the excavation of the Angklung Paglak tradition in Banyuwangi Regency will be presented through an ethnographic approach. An ethnographic approach is usually used to discover and explore how people live, think, and behave [5]. Hence, this approach was selected with the intention of tracing the origins of the Angklung Paglak phenomenon. This stage of the study was carried out in two phases, emphasizing the endogenous development theory by Tsurumi Kazuko by adopting this more specific approach, which takes into account the unique characteristics of individual societies. It is less abstract and instead focuses on the particularities of local communities. Tsurumi's endogenous development theory, or *Naihatsuteki Hattenron* in Japanese, has been extensively applied in various studies in Japan, especially in economics, rural studies, and international development cooperation. Her theory centers on a diverse process of social change, aiming to meet the basic needs of individuals and nations while allowing them to achieve their full potential. It emphasizes the significance of cultural heritage in shaping autonomous paths towards sustainable development, considering unique natural ecosystems and incorporating imported knowledge and technologies. The endogenous development theory is characterized by several key elements: (1) it emphasizes balancing value

pluralism and normativity, rejecting a singular value standard and advocating for sustainable social development; (2) it focuses on the relationship between dynamics in people's daily lives and broader social transformations; (3) it revolves around the philosophy that human beings are an integral part of nature; (4) it embraces endogeneity as an element of creativity.



Figure 2 Phases in this study's ethnographic approach.

Projecting this theory, ethnographic research was conducted to collect data and the complex relation between Angklung Paglak as a cultural artifact, a tradition, and cultural asset inside the community of Kemiren. As illustrated in Figure 2, the first phase (December 2021-March 2022) involved location surveys, interviews, and observations to understand the surface aspects of traditions, ethics, and cultural aspects related to tourism. The second phase (February 2023-March 2023) employed a live-in approach, the researchers being immersed within the community, actively engaging in daily activities and social interactions to reveal hidden behaviors and dynamics influencing Angklung Paglak. In-depth interviews with researchers from relevant fields supplemented these findings.

Tsurumi's endogenous development theory offers a valuable lens through which to understand and promote sustainable development in communities. By recognizing the importance of local assets, cultural practices, and social networks, this approach empowers communities to harness their resources and potential. By incorporating Tsurumi's theory into the research framework, this study aimed to contribute to the preservation of local culture, the appreciation of local wisdom, and the promotion of sustainable tourism practices in the modern era.

2.2 Implementation of Endogenous Development Theory to Revitalize Angklung Paglak's Philosophical Value

In this stage, the data that was collected using an ethnographic research approach was elaborated on using the endogenous development theory proposed by Kazuko Tsurumi in 1989 to investigate the historical existence of Angklung Paglak and its evolution under the influence of tourism, emphasizing the level of structure of awareness, social relations, and practical techniques. Tsurumi's

endogenous development theory has also become a reference for implementing cooperation and community development [6]. This bottom-up approach resembles a participatory approach, where endogenous development here not only involved participants and beneficiaries but also emphasized the impact on the natural environment by utilizing the existing culture and vernacular knowledge of the community itself [7].

2.3 Visualizing the Tradition Concept of Angklung Paglak

This section emphasizes the urgency of how much influence a tradition or a culture's visual identity has on tourism, emphasizing the structure of awareness, social relations, and practical techniques based on related literature studies found by the researchers. Managing and developing a visual identity is essential because it can play a vital role in the intense competition between international destinations, ultimately leading to tourism. *Visual identity* can be defined as characteristics or tangible objects from the activities of a community group or tradition that are designed to make identification easier [8]. The evolution of visual identity associated with tourist destinations proliferated in the 20th century [4], where it was widely used as a communication medium. The visual identity of a tourist and tourism destination, when appropriately designed, can bring an identity that is appropriate for the area and culture that is represented. This paper reviews the concept of visual identity to attract tourist interest and as a visual archive media so that preservation is upheld. This is done by taking a case study of the community in Kemiren Village with its characteristic cultural heritage, namely, Angklung Paglak.

3 Results

3.1 Perspectives and Current Conditions of Angklung Paglak

Traditionally, Angklung Paglak has played a vital role in uniting local farmers through *royongan* or communal work. Positioned on bamboo towers resembling broadcasting structures, it symbolizes traditional communication, attracting villagers nearby. The grand harvest celebration, Panen Raya, occurs twice a year. Angklung Paglak uplifts and motivates farmers during labor-intensive times, fostering a community spirit and gratitude to God for bountiful harvests.



Figure 3 Performing Angklung on top of a *paglak* [9].

Traditionally, Angklung Paglak performances held during harvest seasons were a source of vibrant and festive entertainment. As shown in Figure 3, the performers perched on bamboo towers experienced a sense of joy and pride while overlooking the picturesque landscape. The towers' swaying, influenced by both the wind and the players' movements, added dynamic motion that captivated observers. This energetic display conveyed positivity to the farmers below, effectively transferring enthusiasm and joy through the medium of Angklung Paglak.

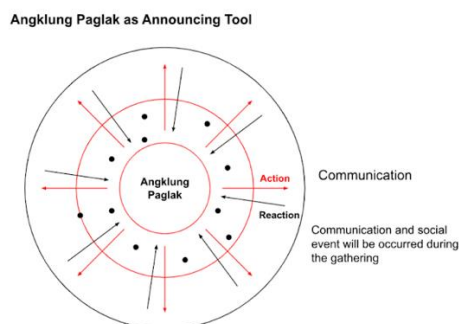


Figure 4 Angklung Paglak as a center of social activity during the grand harvest.

This diagram (Figure 4) illustrates the initial state of Angklung Paglak as a center of social activity during the grand harvest, which was synthesized based on the data and resources gathered during the field research. Kemiren Village is an agrarian society, where Angklung Paglak is a focal point of attention and entertainment. The farming activities, particularly during harvest periods, revolve around the paddy fields, serving as the epicenter of community engagement. However, with the shift away from traditional farming practices and the onset of

political instability, the significance of Angklung Paglak has begun to disappear. The absence of some of the customary farming practices has led to a gradual decline in the performance of Angklung Paglak. The fading relevance of its traditional context resulted in its gradual disappearance from the local cultural landscape.

In addition, the inadequate archiving system surrounding Angklung Paglak emerged as a significant concern during the field research. The performers rely on sound memory and music intuition rather than standardized notation. This condition represents the phenomenon of ‘tacit knowledge’, when it is challenging to express or transfer certain knowledge through writing or verbalization and it is more effectively taught through personal wisdom, experience, insight, and intuition [10]. The absence of a standardized notation system has resulted in insufficient archiving efforts of the *gending* (songs) associated with Angklung Paglak. The reliance on human archivers within the community makes the tradition vulnerable to extinction, necessitating urgent preservation efforts to safeguard this unique cultural heritage for future generations.

3.2 Endogenous Activity Making

Recognizing the importance of preserving this cultural heritage, the government intervened by designating Angklung Paglak as a valuable asset that supports regional tourism. Consequently, Angklung Paglak underwent a transformation, evolving into a performance primarily catering to tourists. This shift aimed to preserve the essence of Angklung Paglak and ensure its continued recognition and relevance in a changing societal context. Building upon the previous point, it becomes evident that tourism plays a significant role in preserving Angklung Paglak by promoting its performances to the outside world and reactivating its cultural activity. However, this influence from tourism has also brought about a transformation in the mindset surrounding Angklung Paglak, shifting it towards a more market-driven activity and commoditizing its value.

The involvement of tourism in preserving Angklung Paglak carries the potential for its transformation into a commodity, potentially placing economic interests ahead of its intrinsic community-oriented nature. Despite this transformation, Angklung Paglak maintains its role as a source of amusement, adjusting to the evolving global cultural landscape. Its enduring elements encompass feelings of nostalgia, familiarity, and unity, nurturing a sense of attachment and appreciation among the local populace. The traditional black attire worn by the performers, as shown in Figure 5, signifies the significance of togetherness within Angklung Paglak, symbolizing the celebration of harvest, the pleasure of communal gatherings, and collaborative endeavors.



Figure 5 Black attire of performers that represents the value of togetherness [9].

As this research focused on revitalizing Angklung Paglak's philosophical value through community-rooted activity-making, fostering an essential exchange of skills and knowledge, local people are central in initiating and sustaining internal activities, empowering them as cultural custodians. Possible efforts include raising awareness, recognizing resources, identifying potentials, and addressing challenges. Angklung Paglak is the focal point, evoking nostalgia, sparking conversations, and gathering stories that nurture cultural ownership. The results manifest themselves in a 'discussing-archiving-exhibiting' step-by-step pattern, emphasizing the urgency of preserving heritage within the community.

1. Step 1. *Discussing*: Empowering local youth generation capability

This study empowered the local youth by involving performers, locals, and organizations. The objective was to safeguard Angklung Paglak's tradition, emphasizing its philosophical value. Integrating its fundamental value into society ensures preservation and promotion for future generations. The youth's involvement triggers meaningful community discussions.

2. Step 2. *Archiving*: Building an immersive endogenous local archive

This study proposes an immersive endogenous local archive through the SLOC Activity Making framework. It involves three stages: 'discussing-archiving-exhibiting' led by local people and facilitated by a designer. People survey and record Angklung Paglak songs, creating an archive of various works. The iterative process forms a 'local archive' for cultural preservation, prioritizing local involvement and utilization of technology.

3. Step 3. *Exhibiting*: Exposing the potency of local gems

A well-designed exhibit serves as a vital means to effectively convey the intrinsic value of Angklung Paglak, particularly to outsiders like tourists.

The exhibit's primary objective is to create an immersive experience that enables visitors and locals to deeply comprehend Angklung Paglak's essence. It was initiated by small-scale activities in the exhibit's designated areas in Kemiren Village, including an Angklung Paglak melody corner, a story corner, an information corner, an experience corner, etc., which were collaboratively created by the local community. This approach evoked nostalgia among the locals and gradually amplified the essence of the tradition, allowing tourists to witness the profound value embodied in Angklung Paglak.

The exhibit's design was meticulously crafted to engage all visitors and local people, fostering a profound appreciation for the cultural heritage of Angklung Paglak. By carefully curating the artifacts, audio-visual elements, and interactive displays, visitors are immersed in the experience, leading to a deeper understanding and emotional connection with this tradition. This proposal provides a practical and effective method to initiate an immersive exhibit, wherein the value preserved by the local people is vividly felt by visitors, encouraging an endless exchange and appreciation that also revitalizes Angklung Paglak within the community once again.

3.3 Visualizing Traditions

This section elaborates a practical exploration of how visualizing tradition can significantly contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage, specifically focusing on the case of Angklung Paglak performers' musical intuition. An illustrative example can be drawn from the well-known Angklung Paglak composition 'Gondorio', which has gained popularity during performances across Banyuwangi. However, over time, the song's original significance, meaning, and cultural value have gradually faded, leaving behind only its name and melody in the collective memory. In response to this phenomenon, a preservation strategy has emerged that seeks to leverage the existing values within the local community: memories and melodies.

To rekindle these memories and unearth the essence of 'Gondorio', informal interviews were conducted, engaging local residents in an exploration of their perceptions of the song's significance within the context of Angklung Paglak. Prior to embarking on archival initiatives, this study prioritized the encouragement of local youth, recognized as key stakeholders, to spearhead activity development. Within this context, the local youth organization, Pokdarwis Kemiren, established in 2017, has assumed the responsibility for managing tourism endeavors in Kemiren, supported by government endorsement (see Figure 6). Through their well-established framework and expansive network, they drive tourism growth, identify potential opportunities, and showcase the

latent treasures of Kemiren. This initial phase, denoted as ‘Discussing’, was centered on data collection of potential assets and fostering collaborative engagement among all feasible parties. Subsequently, this amassed potential data served as a foundation for the ensuing phase, ‘Archiving’.



Figure 6 (a) Leader of Pokdarwis Kemiren (as representative) receiving the award certificate for Sustainable Tourism Village Certification 2020, by the Indonesian Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Sandiaga Salahudin Uno [11]; (b) members of Pokdarwis Kemiren actively engaged in the cultural and tourism activity [9].

The gathered data encompassed a range of intangible elements, including melodies and narratives, which presented challenges in terms of processing and widespread dissemination. In this intricate scenario, the concept of a robust visual identity emerges as a pivotal factor in bridging the gap between the intangible and the tangible realms of design. A well-crafted visual identity serves as a mechanism to translate the intangible aspects of tradition, such as melodies and narratives, into tangible visual representations that can be effectively communicated and shared with a broader audience.

This visualization of Angklung Paglak is an effort to preserve tradition through archival media. Archiving is needed for the preservation of cultural assets in Indonesia. The integrity of the effort of historical preservation is essential, such as maintaining the physical tradition itself or archiving it, to be helpful for future generations [12]. The civilization of a group of people can be reviewed through archives because history and even the nation’s characteristics can be reflected through the culture it embodies. Using archival media as a form of storage is also a solution to potential loss. Undeniably, traditions that are not archived can be eroded when unpredictable events occur.

The findings from both observations and interviews have shed light on a critical issue: the intangible nature of resources linked to Angklung Paglak, including song identities and stories, making them challenging to archive. This makes it difficult to expose the charm of Angklung Paglak within the context of tourism.

Referring to the data findings illustrated in Figure 7 (case study of the ‘Gondorio’ song), there is a concerning trend indicating that people are gradually losing their knowledge and connection to these invaluable resources. In response to this pressing concern, the present research endeavored to explore the potential of addressing these challenges through character development rooted in branding strategies. This investigation was prompted by the recognition of the high potential of visual branding to effectively tackle these issues and ensure the preservation and revitalization of Angklung Paglak’s cultural assets.

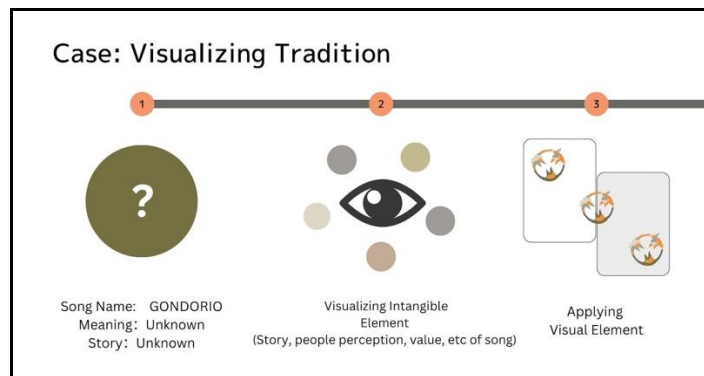


Figure 7 Creating visual branding, ‘Gondorio’ case study.

In order to enhance tourist attractions, a viable strategy is the formulation of branding based on data gathered. Nonetheless, establishing a lasting presence within the public consciousness through branding is no simple task. Before embarking on the journey of branding or constructing a favorable image, the initial step should be the establishment of a well-defined visual identity. Developing a visual identity comes before branding. A simple classification of visual identities can be achieved by distinguishing the name, the slogan, and the graphics [13]. Graphics consists of three derived components: logos/symbols, typography, and colors. These elements simultaneously provide a visual language that projects consistent, clear, and well-designed visuals so that the visual identity created is representative. One of the steps that can be taken to create the dynamics of Angklung Paglak preservation as a tourism destination is to create an event in the form of an archival exhibition. The exhibition must have an attractive visual identity to influence tourists, coupled with a representative identity design.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

Angklung Paglak beyond being a mere instrument embodies a profound philosophy, is a cultural activity, and revives cherished memories. Purposeful activities and a suitable documentation system are vital to safeguard this cultural

treasure. Restoring unity within Angklung Paglak through ‘discussing-archiving-exhibiting’ actively involves all strata of Kemiren society, fostering cultural ownership and stronger bonds. Effective communication of these values to the world is crucial, particularly to balance the influence of tourism in local tradition, deepening understanding and appreciation beyond Kemiren’s boundaries. Urgently, concerted efforts must preserve Angklung Paglak’s essence for future generations. Collaborative action, thoughtful preservation, and meaningful outreach will ensure its vibrancy as a symbol of cultural identity, connecting communities and resonating with its profound significance. Visualizing tradition in the form of an archival exhibition can be a good first step. Accompanied by a well-designed archiving system for future needs, both for academic purposes, tourism, or for developing the identity of the tradition itself.

Angklung Paglak serves as a singular illustration that underscores Indonesia’s extensive cultural heritage, rife with potential for progress, notably in its appeal to tourists. The act of attracting tourists can exert a profound influence on the local economy, furnishing a stable basis for stakeholders and local communities to nurture further advancement. Furthermore, this study proposes a range of suggestions. Firstly, augmenting the representation of cultural traditions through enriched content. This entails assimilating all dimensions of ethnic cultural customs into a visual narrative, with the intention of enhancing awareness, comprehension, and the acceptance of multicultural principles among the younger generations. Secondly, making a plea for the formulation of additional strategies and educational models that seamlessly integrate the visual depiction of cultural practices, complementing the existing inquiry-driven methodologies. Thirdly, highlighting the necessity for grassroots backing, encompassing collaborative endeavors from both the community and the government sector, to ensure the enduring safeguarding of this cultural legacy. Lastly, conceiving an exhibition-style event could constitute a sustainable initiative within the region, aligned with the essence and identity of the tradition itself. Creating an exhibition that is characterized by a compelling visual identity presents an intriguing avenue for exploration. An extensive analysis is required to ensure the viability and longevity of the exhibition within the local community. Adequate support from diverse stakeholders is also imperative for its successful realization.

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