Reconceptualizing the Jepin Dance Festival as an Ethno-Sustaining Pedagogical Arena for Malay Cultural Identity

Winda Istiandini

Art Education/ Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
windaistiandini@students.unnes.ac.id

Muhammad Jazuli
Art Education/ Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
jazuli61@mail.unnes.ac.id

Malarsih
Art Education/ Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
malarsih@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

Traditional dance festivals face the challenge of sustaining cultural knowledge while accommodating creative change and diverse regional practices. This study examines how the Jepin Dance Festival in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, functions as an ethno-sustaining pedagogical arena for Malay cultural identity. Employing a qualitative ethnographic design, the research draws on participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and festival documentation. Participants were selected purposively from dancers, trainers, cultural authorities, organizers, and adjudicators. Data were examined through condensation, display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis identifies three interconnected dimensions: community-based learning through documentation and practitioner exchanges; negotiation between regional performance conventions and choreographic innovation; and recognition of embodied cultural knowledge through festival representation and evaluation. These dimensions suggest that the festival's pedagogical significance depends on opportunities to explain inherited practices, acknowledge regional differences, and discuss the cultural grounds for adaptation. The study develops Ethno-Sustaining Pedagogy as a contextual framework connecting cultural transmission, aesthetic negotiation, and community recognition. It highlights the importance of collaborative festival guidelines and continued learning between editions, while treating long-term effects on young participants' identities and cultural resilience as questions requiring further investigation.

Keywords: *Malay cultural identity; cultural resilience; ethno-sustaining pedagogy; Jepin Dance Festival; performing arts*

Corresponding Author:
Winda Istiandini
windaistiandini@students.unnes.ac.id
Art Education/ Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability of traditional performing arts depends on the continued transmission of knowledge, skills, and meanings within the communities that practise them.Preserving a dance repertoire therefore involves more than maintaining recognizable movements or presenting performances at cultural events. It also requires opportunities for younger generations to understand, interpret, and participate in the social relationships through which traditions remain meaningful. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognizes this relationship by identifying transmission through formal and non-formal education as a safeguarding measure. It further understands living heritage as continually recreated by communities in relation to their environments and histories, providing a sense of identity and continuity (UNESCO, 2003). This perspective establishes an educational basis for examining cultural festivals as settings for the transmission and renewal of traditional arts.

In West Kalimantan, Jepin Dance Festival brings this concern into a setting where regional traditions encounter shared performance expectations. The interviews informing this study describe a varied repertoire whose movements, musical practices, and local names cannot readily be accommodated within a single standardized model. Kusmindari Triwati, a member of the Malay Customary and Cultural Council (Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu, MABM) and a festival organizer, stresses the importance of identifying and documenting these regional repertoires. She questions the assumption that one movement vocabulary can represent Jepin across West Kalimantan. Ismunandar, a Malay cultural practitioner and an adjudicator at the Malay Jepin Dance Festival, recounts a related difficulty: competition guidelines requiring particular instruments prompted changes among groups whose local musical traditions used different instruments. Their accounts, informed by their respective roles in festival organization and adjudication, raise a practical question for organizers and educators: how can common guidelines support a festival without narrowing the cultural diversity that gives it meaning?

This relationship between continuity and change can be understood through Hall's (1990) account of cultural identity. Hall conceptualizes identity through both shared historical experiences and an ongoing process of becoming, shaped by representation, history, and power. Applied to Jepin, this perspective suggests that Malay cultural identity is articulated through decisions about movement, music, costume, and the presentation of regional traditions. Festival participants engage with inherited practices while interpreting how those practices should be represented in contemporary public settings. The festival can thus be examined as an arena in which cultural belonging is expressed and the boundaries of legitimate innovation are negotiated. This interpretation avoids assuming that Malay identity is homogeneous or that cultural continuity requires every regional community to perform Jepin in the same way.

The question of how cultural identity becomes recognizable in performance can be further examined through Marco De Marinis's (1993) semiotics of performance. His concept of the performance text directs attention to the relationships among expressive elements, cultural codes, and the circumstances in which a performance is presented and interpreted. Applied to Jepin, this approach encourages an examination of movement, musical accompaniment, costume, and spatial arrangement as interconnected parts of a culturally situated performance. Their significance needs to be considered

in relation to the conventions through which practitioners and audiences recognize and interpret Jepin. This perspective helps clarify the concerns expressed by Kusmindari Triwati and Ismunandar. Their accounts suggest that decisions about movement vocabularies and musical instruments affect how regional traditions are represented on stage. From a semiotic perspective, a change introduced to meet competition requirements may also alter the relationships among the elements through which a community recognizes its performance tradition. Whether that change constitutes an acceptable adaptation therefore becomes a matter for discussion among practitioners, organizers, and adjudicators.

Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital bring the social conditions of learning into this discussion. Bourdieu (1977) understands habitus as durable dispositions formed through experience that shape how people perceive, judge, and act. In the context of Jepin, this concept offers a way to examine how repeated participation in rehearsals and community activities cultivates a practical familiarity with movement, musical cues, and performance conventions. A dancer's sense of what feels appropriate may develop through observing experienced practitioners, receiving corrections, and performing alongside others. Such dispositions should not be assumed to be identical across Malay communities; different histories of participation may produce different understandings of how Jepin should be performed.

These acquired capacities can also be examined as embodied cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986) explains that this form of capital requires time and personal investment to acquire. Applied to Jepin, it may include movement proficiency, familiarity with regional repertoires, and the ability to explain performance conventions. Its value within the festival, however, depends partly on which competencies organizers and adjudicators recognize. A dancer may possess considerable knowledge of a local tradition while encountering evaluation criteria that privilege another performance convention. This possibility makes recognition an important analytical issue. Festival awards may confer symbolic recognition, but they should not automatically be equated with institutionalized cultural capital, which Bourdieu associates particularly with educational qualifications.

Read together, De Marinis and Bourdieu connect two dimensions of the festival: how cultural meanings are organized in performance and how participants acquire the capacities to produce, interpret, and evaluate them. An ethno-sustaining pedagogical approach can build on this relationship by creating opportunities for younger dancers to develop practical competence while discussing whose knowledge is represented and recognized. The festival's contribution to cultural continuity would therefore need to be assessed through both learning opportunities and the conditions under which regional cultural knowledge receives recognition.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy offers a complementary framework for examining the educational significance of these negotiations. Paris (2012) argues that education should sustain cultural and linguistic pluralism rather than merely acknowledge learners' cultural backgrounds. Paris and Alim (2014) further emphasize that the practices and identities of young people are plural and evolving, requiring attention to both inherited traditions and contemporary community practices. Although developed within a different sociopolitical context, this framework provides a useful starting point for considering how Jepin learning might support cultural continuity alongside creative participation. In the festival context, sustaining tradition would involve helping younger performers understand the sources and meanings of their repertoires, recognize regional differences, and make informed choices about

adaptation. Creativity would consequently become a process of cultural engagement whose relationship to inherited practice remains open to discussion.

The pedagogical potential of the festival also extends beyond the performance itself. Wenger's (1998) theory of communities of practice explains learning as participation in social practices through which knowledge, meaning, and identity develop together. From this perspective, rehearsals, workshops, exchanges between regional groups, and interactions with experienced practitioners may constitute interconnected opportunities for learning. The interview materials describe workshops and discussions concerning the development of Jepin choreography, indicating that festival-related activities can include explicit exchanges about what may be changed and what participants consider important to retain. However, a periodic event does not automatically constitute a sustained community of practice. Its educational significance needs to be examined through the relationships and opportunities for participation that connect festival preparation, public performance, and subsequent community activity.

Building on these perspectives, this article develops the concept of an ethno-sustaining pedagogical arena to examine the Jepin Dance Festival as a setting where culturally situated knowledge, embodied practice, and collective identity are transmitted and negotiated. The term is used here as a contextual elaboration of culturally sustaining pedagogy, with particular attention to regional diversity, community authority, and intergenerational learning in Malay performing arts. The analytical problem concerns how these dimensions interact within a festival shaped by both cultural expectations and competitive regulations. Accordingly, this study aims to examine how festival-related practices support cultural learning, how participants negotiate continuity and choreographic innovation, and how these processes articulate Malay cultural identity in West Kalimantan. The guiding question is: How does the Jepin Dance Festival function as an ethno-sustaining pedagogical arena for the transmission and negotiation of Malay cultural identity in West Kalimantan?

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic design to investigate cultural transmission and community-based arts education within the Jepin Dance Festival ecosystem in West Kalimantan. Sugiyono (2019) characterizes qualitative research as an inquiry conducted in natural settings, with the researcher serving as the principal instrument and interpretation emphasizing contextual meaning. Drawing on the educational ethnographic tradition represented by Spindler (1982), the study examined how cultural knowledge and values are communicated through situated interactions among dancers, trainers, cultural authorities, and festival organizers. This orientation enabled learning to be investigated across community settings, including dance studios, classrooms, and festival-related activities. Jepin Dance Festival is held biennially, normally in October. The 2026 edition has been rescheduled for November because of haze conditions. As this edition had not taken place at the time of writing, accounts of its planned activities were distinguished from descriptions of earlier festival practices. The analysis therefore did not treat anticipated activities as completed events or evidence of educational outcomes.

Participants were selected purposively through criterion-based selection. The principal criteria were direct involvement in the Jepin festival ecosystem and relevant experience in performing, teaching,

organizing, or evaluating Jepin. Participants included Generation Z dancers representing districts and municipalities, trainers working in non-formal Malay arts education, cultural authorities, festival adjudicators, and dance studio administrators. The trainers included Habibi from Sambas, Budi from Pontianak, Firsta from Ketapang, and Decky from Mempawah. Cultural authorities included Kusmindari Triwati, a member of the Malay Customary and Cultural Council (Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu, MABM) and a festival organizer, and Professor Ahadi, also associated with MABM. Ismunandar participated as a Malay cultural practitioner and an adjudicator at the Malay Jepin Dance Festival. These different roles enabled the study to examine cultural transmission from the perspectives of learners, educators, organizers, and evaluators, while retaining attention to differences among regional traditions.

Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation. Following Spradley's (1980) approach, participant observation involved engagement with artists, cultural authorities, and dancers in their everyday learning environments. Observations addressed teaching and rehearsal practices in dance studios and classrooms, alongside the festival performance activities covered by the fieldwork. Attention was given to how movement was demonstrated and corrected, how performance conventions were explained, and how participants discussed acceptable forms of adaptation.

In-depth interviews were conducted in late March 2026. They explored participants' accounts of performance conventions, the histories and names of movement repertoires, symbolic meanings, and the relationship between tradition and choreographic development. Interviews with organizers, cultural authorities, and practitioners also addressed how festival regulations shaped the representation of regional Jepin traditions. Focus group discussions brought together experts to discuss movement repertoires and interpretations of choreographic development. These discussions provided opportunities to examine shared understandings and differences in participants' accounts. Documentation included draft performance designs, festival technical guidelines, photographs, audio recordings, and videos of previous Jepin performances. The documentary materials supported contextual interpretation and comparison with interview and observational data. The researchers served as the principal instruments of inquiry, supported by structured observation guides, interview guides, and documentation protocols. This position follows Lincoln and Guba's (1985) naturalistic approach, in which researchers interpret social practices within their contexts while reflecting on their own involvement in the inquiry. Sugiyono (2019) emphasizes the researcher's role in determining the focus of inquiry, selecting information sources, collecting and interpreting data, and developing conclusions.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Analysis proceeded alongside data collection, allowing emerging interpretations to inform subsequent attention to the materials. Data condensation involved selecting, coding, and organizing relevant passages from interview transcripts, field notes, focus group discussions, and documents. Coding addressed cultural transmission, performance conventions, regional variation, creative negotiation, and the recognition of cultural expertise. The aim was to preserve the contextual meaning of participants' accounts while developing categories relevant to the research question.

Data were displayed through analytical narratives, matrices comparing movement repertoires and performance conventions, and diagrams connecting learning practices with festival organization. These

displays facilitated examination of similarities, differences, and relationships across participants and regional contexts. Conclusions were developed by revisiting the underlying evidence, comparing sources, and examining accounts that complicated emerging interpretations. Theoretical concepts supported interpretation without replacing participants' accounts. Hall's (1990) understanding of cultural identity informed the examination of continuity and change in representations of Malayness. De Marinis's (1993) semiotics of performance directed attention to relationships among movement, music, costume, and performance context. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital informed the analysis of how practical knowledge was acquired, embodied, and recognized within the festival ecosystem (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). Culturally sustaining pedagogy provided a framework for interpreting the relationship between cultural continuity, regional diversity, and younger participants' creative engagement (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014)

Trustworthiness was addressed through source triangulation, triangulation across data collection techniques, and peer debriefing, drawing on Lincoln and Guba (1985). Accounts from dancers, trainers, cultural authorities, and adjudicators were compared with observational and documentary materials. Differences were retained for analysis rather than treated solely as inconsistencies to be eliminated. Peer debriefing supported critical examination of the relationship between the evidence and the proposed interpretations. The research proceeded through preparation, fieldwork, analysis, and synthesis. Preparation involved reviewing relevant literature, developing research instruments, and establishing relationships with participants. Fieldwork involved observation, interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation in the settings described above. Analysis was conducted iteratively through condensation, display, and verification. The final stage brought the empirical interpretations into dialogue with the theoretical frameworks to develop the article's account of the Jepin Dance Festival as an ethno-sustaining pedagogical arena.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. From a Competitive Event to a Community-Based Pedagogical Arena

The interview accounts provide grounds for reconsidering the Jepin Dance Festival as an arena of cultural learning. Its educational significance becomes visible in activities surrounding the staged performances: identifying regional repertoires, documenting movement names, discussing performance conventions, and exchanging knowledge about choreographic development. These activities connect festival participation with questions about what communities know, how that knowledge is communicated, and which aspects of a tradition should be carried forward. Kusmindari Triwati, a member of the Malay Customary and Cultural Council (MABM) and a festival organizer, describes an effort to use festival participation to identify Jepin traditions across West Kalimantan. Regional groups were asked to provide written information about their repertoires, including available historical accounts and the names of traditional steps. In her account, this process brought previously dispersed knowledge into a shared setting and revealed a wider repertoire than could be represented by a small selection of standardized movements. Her emphasis on documentation suggests that the festival creates opportunities for regional practitioners to contribute knowledge rather than participate solely as performers. Ismunandar, a Malay cultural practitioner and an adjudicator at the Malay Jepin Dance Festival, describes a related educational function through workshops. He recalls that the 2024 activities

included an exhibition and a workshop in which representatives from different regions presented their inherited repertoires and discussed possibilities for development. This account indicates that the festival ecosystem accommodates forms of participation in which explanation and exchange become explicit parts of the activity. The educational value lies in the opportunity to make practical knowledge available for discussion: participants demonstrate what they perform and consider how it might be adapted.

These practices can be interpreted through educational ethnography, which directs attention to how cultural knowledge is transmitted in situated social relationships (Spindler, 1982). The workshop and documentation activities described by the interviewees make the festival a relevant setting for examining community-based education. Wenger's (1998) theory of communities of practice further helps explain how knowledge may develop through shared activity among experienced practitioners and newer participants. However, the presence of a workshop does not by itself establish a sustained community of practice. The continuity of relationships between festival editions remains an empirical question. That distinction matters because the festival is held biennially. Ismunandar's discussion of local festivals, regional participation, and financial constraints draws attention to the activities needed between provincial events. His account suggests that the wider educational potential of the festival depends on opportunities in districts, municipalities, and dance studios. A provincial event may bring practitioners together, but sustained transmission requires settings in which participants can continue learning and practicing.

The concept of Ethno-Sustaining Pedagogy (ESP) developed brings culturally sustaining pedagogy into dialogue with ethnopedagogy. Paris and Alim (2017) emphasize educational practices that sustain cultural pluralism while engaging with the changing cultural lives of young people. Alwasilah et al. (2009), meanwhile, position local knowledge and wisdom as resources for education and innovation. ESP draws on these complementary concerns to examine how inherited knowledge becomes available for continued practice, interpretation, and development within a community-based festival. Its proposed contribution is contextual: it focuses on the relationships among aesthetic practice, community authority, and cultural learning in the Jepin festival ecosystem. Documentation remains important, but its pedagogical value depends on how recorded knowledge is subsequently used. Kusmindari's account of identifying regional movement repertoires illustrates this connection. Information about movement names and histories can become a resource for teaching, comparison, and discussion rather than remaining separate from practical learning. Ismunandar's account of workshops similarly suggests opportunities to connect the presentation of inherited repertoires with dialogue about their development. From this perspective, the festival may be understood as a living cultural laboratory: a setting in which practitioners demonstrate knowledge, discuss its interpretation, and negotiate its contemporary expression. The term describes the interaction of these activities rather than an experimentally validated intervention. Whether they support sustained learning depends on their continuation within dance studios and communities between festival editions. . The festival can therefore be conceptualized as a pedagogical arena connecting several forms of engagement: performance, documentation, dialogue, and regional exchange. This interpretation does not establish that every participant experiences the same learning process. It identifies the practices through which learning becomes possible and the organizational conditions that may support or constrain its continuity.



Figure 1. Dance contingent from Pontianak and Ketapang West Kalimantan at Festival Melayu 2024

2. Negotiating Regional Diversity and Creative Continuity in Jepin Performance

A central issue in both interviews concerns the relationship between retaining recognizable Jepin conventions and allowing choreographic development. The accounts indicate that cultural continuity is understood through discussions about movement, music, performance structure, and regional variation. What should remain recognizable is not necessarily identical across communities, making the boundaries of adaptation a matter of negotiation. Kusmindari questions the claim that a limited movement vocabulary can be regarded as the standardized repertoire of Jepin throughout West Kalimantan. She distinguishes between creating simplified movements for a particular performance purpose and defining those movements as the authoritative representation of an entire regional tradition. Her objection concerns the consequences of the latter claim: locally inherited repertoires may become less visible when one version is treated as universally representative. This distinction places regional diversity at the centre of the festival's cultural responsibility. Ismunandar's account of musical requirements illustrates a similar difficulty. He recalls that a technical guideline requiring marwas prompted adjustments among participants whose local traditions used other percussion instruments. The account suggests that a regulation intended to make Malay identity recognizable can also privilege a particular version of that identity. The tension lies between the organizational need for evaluative criteria and the cultural need to accommodate legitimate regional differences.

At the same time, neither interview presents tradition as incompatible with creativity. Kusmindari discusses development through the choreographic elements of space, energy, and time while retaining a relationship with inherited steps and performance conventions. Ismunandar likewise describes possibilities for modifying levels, movement designs, spatial arrangements, and tempo, provided that the source motifs and the character of Jepin remain recognizable. He also distinguishes Jepin creation

from broader Malay creative dance, in which several dance vocabularies may be combined. These distinctions demonstrate that practitioners evaluate innovation through its relationship to an identifiable tradition. De Marinis's (1993) concept of the performance text provides a useful framework for interpreting these accounts. Movement, musical accompaniment, costume, and staging acquire significance through their relationships and the cultural conventions within which they are interpreted. Applied to Jepin, this perspective suggests that an alteration to one element may affect how the performance as a whole is recognized. The interviewees' concerns about instruments, movement sources, and performance structure can consequently be understood as concerns about the coherence and cultural legibility of the staged work. Hall's (1990) account of cultural identity adds a further dimension. Identity involves shared historical references alongside continuing processes of representation and becoming. The negotiations described in the interviews exemplify this relationship: practitioners refer to inherited repertoires while considering their presentation in contemporary festival settings. Regional traditions remain important sources of identification, but their public expression involves choices shaped by staging, audiences, and competition.

From the perspective of culturally sustaining pedagogy, these negotiations are educationally significant because they concern both the continued practice of inherited knowledge and the participation of younger generations in its development (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). An ethno-sustaining approach would make the grounds for adaptation explicit, allowing learners to discuss the origins of a movement, the conventions associated with it, and the consequences of changing it. The interview evidence supports the relevance of such an approach; it does not demonstrate that this reflective process occurs consistently among all dancers. The festival's contribution to cultural continuity thus depends partly on how its regulations are formulated and discussed. Guidelines that recognize regional differences and explain the rationale for shared requirements can provide a stronger basis for learning than criteria whose cultural assumptions remain implicit. In this respect, the negotiation of tradition and creativity is itself an important subject of festival-based education.

Turino's (2008) examination of music as social life helps situate these negotiations within the relationship between aesthetic organization and participation. His distinction between participatory and presentational performance directs attention to the different relationships people establish through making and encountering music. Applied to the Jepin festival, this perspective encourages analysis of how rehearsals, workshops, and staged presentations organize opportunities for involvement. It also raises the question of whether the demands of a competitive presentation support or constrain the exchanges through which cultural knowledge is shared. The distinction between performance conventions and choreographic flexibility is developed here from the interview evidence. The practitioners discuss mawal or taksim, tahto, gencat, and tahtim as elements associated with the musical and movement organization of Jepin. Ismunandar's explanations, however, indicate more than one arrangement, including differences in the placement of transitions and closing sections. These accounts do not justify imposing a single sequence on every regional tradition. They instead suggest that creative development needs to be examined in relation to the conventions of the repertoire being performed.

Within ESP, retaining these recognizable relationships can coexist with the exploration of space, energy, and time. Changes to floor patterns, movement levels, or dynamics can become opportunities for learners to explain what they have adapted and how their choices relate to inherited motifs. The pedagogical task is therefore to make the reasoning behind creative decisions available for discussion.

De Marinis's (1993) performance-text framework complements this interpretation by showing why movement and musical conventions need to be considered relationally within the staged work.

3. Embodied Cultural Knowledge and the Recognition of Malay Identity

The reconceptualization of the festival also requires attention to how cultural knowledge is acquired and whose knowledge receives recognition. Performing Jepin involves practical familiarity with steps, musical cues, transitions, and relationships among dancers. The interview accounts point to this knowledge through discussions of inherited repertoires, teaching experiences, and the criteria used to distinguish Jepin from other forms of performance. Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus offers a way to interpret the practical dispositions that may develop through sustained participation in such activities. Repeated engagement in learning and performing can cultivate a sense of timing, coordination, and appropriateness that is not reducible to the verbal statement of rules. In the Jepin context, habitus is useful for examining how dancers come to recognize and enact performance conventions through their experiences with teachers and fellow performers. Nevertheless, changes in individual dancers' dispositions cannot be established from the organizers and adjudicator's accounts alone. Here, habitus functions as an interpretive concept for understanding the transmission processes described, rather than as a measured outcome.

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of embodied cultural capital similarly directs attention to competencies that require time and personal investment to acquire. Familiarity with regional repertoires, movement proficiency, and knowledge of performance conventions can be interpreted as capacities whose value depends on the social setting in which they are exercised. The festival brings these capacities into a public evaluative context. Its criteria help determine which forms of competence receive visibility and recognition. This relationship is particularly important when the conventions of one region become the basis for evaluating participants from others. Ismunandar's account of the instrumental requirement and Kusmindari's criticism of repertoire standardization suggest that recognition is not culturally neutral. Participants may possess substantial knowledge of a local tradition while encountering expectations organized around a different version of Jepin. The issue is therefore not simply whether performers have cultural competence, but how the festival defines and acknowledges that competence.

The two interviewees also occupy positions through which such definitions are negotiated. As an organizer and cultural council member, Kusmindari contributes to decisions about documentation and festival direction. As a cultural practitioner and adjudicator, Ismunandar participates in interpreting performance conventions and evaluating their development. Their accounts show how these responsibilities intersect with debates about regional knowledge. This does not imply that their interpretations represent all Malay communities; rather, their positions reveal some of the processes through which cultural authority operates within the festival. The expression of Malay identity also appears in explanations of performance conduct. Ismunandar relates tahto to the marking of entry and transition, drawing an analogy with the practice of seeking permission before beginning an activity. This explanation offers a situated connection between a performance convention and an understanding of appropriate social conduct. It should be read as his interpretation rather than assigned automatically to every Jepin tradition. Such accounts nevertheless show why cultural learning needs to include opportunities to discuss meaning alongside the acquisition of movement skills.

The reconceptualization of the festival also requires attention to how cultural knowledge is acquired and whose knowledge receives recognition. Performing Jepin involves practical familiarity with steps, musical cues, transitions, and relationships among dancers. The interview accounts point to this knowledge through discussions of inherited repertoires, teaching experiences, and the criteria used to distinguish Jepin from other forms of performance. Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus offers a way to interpret the practical dispositions that may develop through sustained participation in such activities. Repeated engagement in learning and performing can cultivate a sense of timing, coordination, and appropriateness that is not reducible to the verbal statement of rules. In the Jepin context, habitus is useful for examining how dancers come to recognize and enact performance conventions through their experiences with teachers and fellow performers. Nevertheless, changes in individual dancers' dispositions cannot be established from the organizers and adjudicator's accounts alone. Here, habitus functions as an interpretive concept for understanding the transmission processes described, rather than as a measured outcome.

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of embodied cultural capital similarly directs attention to competencies that require time and personal investment to acquire. Familiarity with regional repertoires, movement proficiency, and knowledge of performance conventions can be interpreted as capacities whose value depends on the social setting in which they are exercised. The festival brings these capacities into a public evaluative context. Its criteria help determine which forms of competence receive visibility and recognition. This relationship is particularly important when the conventions of one region become the basis for evaluating participants from others. Ismunandar's account of the instrumental requirement and Kusmindari's criticism of repertoire standardization suggest that recognition is not culturally neutral. Participants may possess substantial knowledge of a local tradition while encountering expectations organized around a different version of Jepin. The issue is therefore not simply whether performers have cultural competence, but how the festival defines and acknowledges that competence.

The two interviewees also occupy positions through which such definitions are negotiated. As an organizer and cultural council member, Kusmindari contributes to decisions about documentation and festival direction. As a cultural practitioner and adjudicator, Ismunandar participates in interpreting performance conventions and evaluating their development. Their accounts show how these responsibilities intersect with debates about regional knowledge. This does not imply that their interpretations represent all Malay communities; rather, their positions reveal some of the processes through which cultural authority operates within the festival. The expression of Malay identity also appears in explanations of performance conduct. Ismunandar relates tahto to the marking of entry and transition, drawing an analogy with the practice of seeking permission before beginning an activity. This explanation offers a situated connection between a performance convention and an understanding of appropriate social conduct. It should be read as his interpretation rather than assigned automatically to every Jepin tradition. Such accounts nevertheless show why cultural learning needs to include opportunities to discuss meaning alongside the acquisition of movement skills.

Taken together, Hall, De Marinis, and Bourdieu illuminate different aspects of the festival's pedagogical potential. Hall helps explain identity as a continuing process of representation; De Marinis directs attention to the relationships through which performance becomes meaningful; and Bourdieu highlights the acquisition and recognition of practical cultural knowledge. Culturally sustaining pedagogy connects these concerns to the conditions under which younger generations can maintain and develop community practices. On this basis, the Jepin Dance Festival can be understood as an ethno-sustaining pedagogical arena when its activities support the transmission of embodied knowledge, accommodate regional diversity, and create opportunities to discuss cultural meanings and evaluative criteria. This is a conditional interpretation grounded in the practices and tensions described by the interviewees. Establishing its effects on younger participants requires direct evidence of their learning experiences and continued engagement. The present findings clarify the mechanisms and organizational questions through which that pedagogical contribution can be examined.

Taken together, Hall, De Marinis, and Bourdieu illuminate different aspects of the festival's pedagogical potential. Hall helps explain identity as a continuing process of representation; De Marinis directs attention to the relationships through which performance becomes meaningful; and Bourdieu highlights the acquisition and recognition of practical cultural knowledge. Culturally sustaining pedagogy connects these concerns to the conditions under which younger generations can maintain and develop community practices. On this basis, the Jepin Dance Festival can be understood as an ethno-sustaining pedagogical arena when its activities support the transmission of embodied knowledge, accommodate regional diversity, and create opportunities to discuss cultural meanings and evaluative criteria. This is a conditional interpretation grounded in the practices and tensions described by the interviewees. Establishing its effects on younger participants requires direct evidence of their learning experiences and continued engagement. The present findings clarify the mechanisms and organizational questions through which that pedagogical contribution can be examined.

The discussion of Malay identity can be extended through the collection edited by Barnard (2004), which examines Malayness across historical and geographical boundaries. This perspective supports attention to the diversity of experiences through which Malay identity is articulated. In the Jepin festival, regional differences should consequently be treated as part of the cultural knowledge under consideration, rather than as departures from an assumed homogeneous Malay tradition. Read alongside Bourdieu (1977, 1986), this understanding highlights the relationship between cultural continuity and the recognition of acquired competence. A repertoire becomes embodied through time spent learning and practising, while its standing within the festival depends partly on evaluative conventions and cultural authority. ESP therefore concerns both access to learning and the conditions under which different regional competencies are acknowledged. Cultural knowledge contributes to continuity when younger participants can practise it, understand its significance, and take part in discussions about its development.

The Malay maxim "Adat Bersendi Syarak, Syarak Bersendi Kitabullah," discussed in the earlier manuscript supplied for this study, provides a further interpretive reference for considering relationships among customary practice, religious values, and performance conduct. Its relevance should be examined through participants' explanations of particular practices, including costume, movement, and interaction. The maxim should not be treated as assigning a single meaning to every choreographic element or as evidence that all participants interpret those elements identically. Taken together, these perspectives position ESP as a proposed framework connecting the transmission of embodied

knowledge, the recognition of regional diversity, and opportunities for creative interpretation. The festival may contribute to cultural resilience when these relationships sustain participation beyond the event itself. In the present analysis, resilience remains an implication requiring further evidence of continued practice and intergenerational engagement, rather than a demonstrated consequence of festival participation.

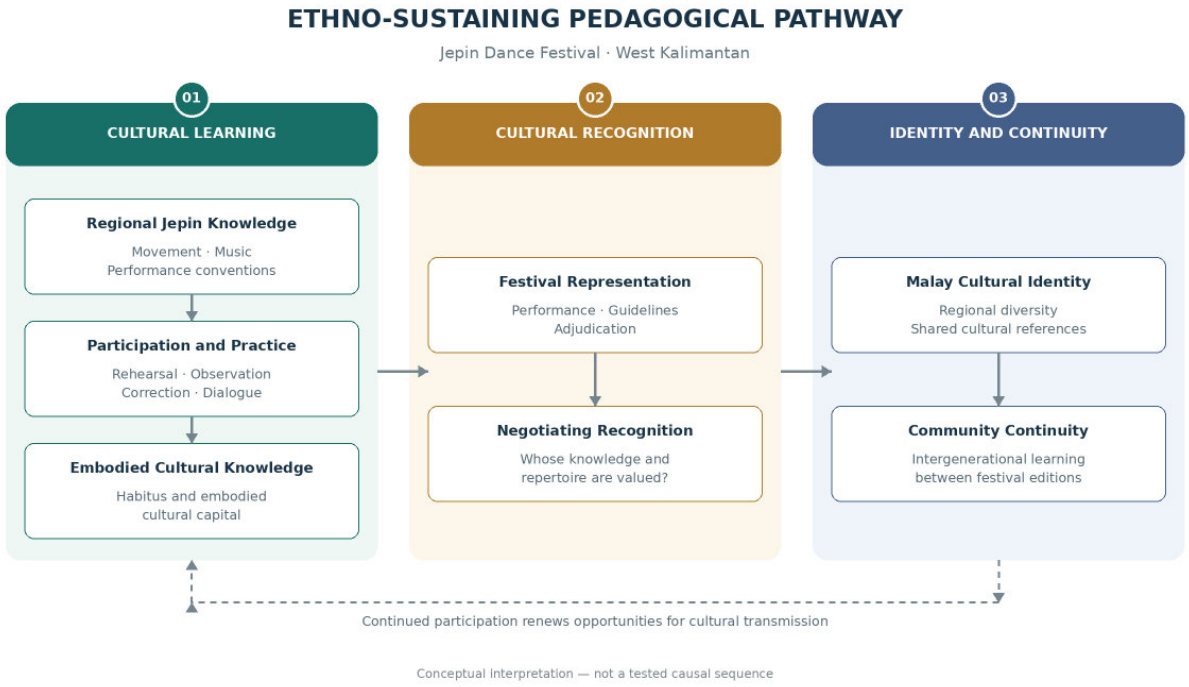


Figure 2. Conceptual pathway of embodied cultural learning, cultural recognition, and Malay identity within the Jepin Dance Festival.

CONCLUSION

This study reconceptualizes the Jepin Dance Festival in West Kalimantan as an ethno-sustaining pedagogical arena through which cultural knowledge is shared, performance conventions are negotiated, and Malay identity is publicly articulated. The analysis identifies three interconnected dimensions of this role: community-based learning through documentation, workshops, and exchanges among practitioners; negotiation between regional traditions and choreographic development; and the recognition of embodied cultural knowledge within festival organization and adjudication. The findings indicate that cultural continuity depends on opportunities to understand and discuss inherited practices alongside their performance. Regional movement repertoires and musical conventions provide resources for creative development, while festival guidelines influence which forms of knowledge receive recognition. Maintaining the cultural legibility of Jepin therefore requires attention to regional differences and dialogue about the grounds for adaptation. Within this relationship, Malay identity

emerges as a situated process of interpretation and representation rather than a uniform expression shared identically across communities.

The article's conceptual contribution is an account of Ethno-Sustaining Pedagogy that connects cultural transmission, aesthetic negotiation, and community recognition within a festival setting. Practically, this framework supports collaborative guideline development, culturally informed adjudication, and sustained learning opportunities in dance studios and local communities between festival editions. The festival can function as a living cultural laboratory when performance is connected with explanation, reflection, and continued participation. These conclusions identify pedagogical opportunities and organizational tensions rather than demonstrate long-term changes in young dancers' habitus or cultural identity. Further research should follow participants across rehearsals, festival activities, and subsequent community engagement to examine whether these opportunities contribute to sustained intergenerational transmission and cultural resilience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (12 PT, GARAMOND, BOLD)

This section is optional and possibly excluded from the manuscript. If any, you may wish to thank those who have supported you and your work. Personal acknowledgements will be limited to appropriate professionals who contributed to the paper, including technical assistance and/or financial material support.

REFERENCES (12 PT, GARAMOND, BOLD)

Bourdieu, P. (1977). Outline of a theory of practice (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812507

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education (pp. 241–258). Greenwood Press.

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), Identity: Community, culture, difference (pp. 222–237). Lawrence & Wishart.

De Marinis, M. (1993). The semiotics of performance (A. O'Healy, Trans.). Indiana University Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. SAGE Publications.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. Educational Researcher, 41(3), 93–97. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. Harvard Educational Review, 84(1), 85–100. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.982l873k2ht16m77

Spindler, G. (Ed.). (1982). Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Sugiyono. (2019). Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D. Alfabeta.

UNESCO. (2003). Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803932