



Program Studi

**Bahasa dan
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Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan
UNIVERSITAS TOMPOTIKA LUWUK

PENELITIAN DPRPS DAN MAHASISWA

*Symbolic Meanings and Social Functions
of Traditional Dance of Banggai Tribes in
the Context of Local Cultural Preservation*

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LEMBARAN PENGESAHAN PENELITIAN

Judul Penelitian : Symbolic Meanings and Social Functions of
Traditional Dance of Banggai Tribes in the Context
of Local Cultural Preservation

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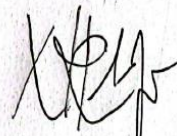
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Symbolic Meanings and Social Functions of Traditional Dance of Banggai Tribes in the Context of Local Cultural Preservation

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ABSTRAK

Suku Banggai memiliki aset sejarah, identitas lokal yang bermakna. Namun, modernisasi dan kurangnya dokumentasi mengancam kemerosotannya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif melalui observasi lapangan, wawancara mendalam dengan para pemimpin adat. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan makna dan fungsi tari tradisional suku Banggai yang memiliki banyak nilai dan prinsip identitas budaya. Upaya pelestarian yang diusulkan membutuhkan kesadaran dari generasi muda akan pentingnya warisan budaya dan membutuhkan kolaborasi dari berbagai komunitas dan lembaga dengan melakukan program pelestarian. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang pentingnya melestarikan budaya daerah sebagai bagian dari warisan yang harus dilestarikan.

Kata kunci: Suku Banggai, aset budaya, identitas lokal, pelestarian budaya, tari tradisional, generasi muda

ABSTRACT

The Banggai has a historical asset, a meaningful local identity. However, modernization and lack of documentation threaten deterioration. The research method used is a qualitative approach through field observations, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders. The results of this study show the meaning and function of traditional dance of the Banggai tribe which have many values and principle of cultural identity. The proposed preservation efforts require awareness from the younger generation of the importance of cultural heritage and require collaboration from various communities and institutions by conducting preservation programs. This research contributes to the understanding of the importance of preserving regional culture as part of the heritage that must be preserved.

Keywords: Banggai tribe, cultural asset, local identity, cultural preservation, traditional dance, young generation

A. INTRODUCTION

Traditional dance is one of the elements of cultural expression that shows existence, social principles, and reflects people's worldview. Dance plays a crucial role in conveying the cultural identity, historical values, and beliefs of the community that have been passed down through generations (Chen, H. 2025). For the Banggai tribe, who inhabit coastal areas in Central Sulawesi, traditional dance is not only a form of recreation, but also serves as a means of cultural communication, a means of collective tradition, and an element of the social and spiritual system. Every aspect of dance, from movements, costumes, to formations, conveys meaningful cultural messages that are passed down through generation.

Over time, globalization and modernization have had a significant impact on the existence of local culture. The transformation of people's lifestyles, changes in entertainment preferences, and the declining interest of the younger generation in traditional arts are real challenges for the preservation of traditional dance. The process of globalization and the tendency of cultural homogenization can threaten the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage, including traditional dances (Ravikumar, D. 2024). In this context, changing social values, increasing

urbanization, the dominance of popular culture, and the declining interest of the younger generation in local culture are the main factors that cause traditional dances to be increasingly marginalized from everyday life. Most are rarely performed, and could even be lost if they are not effectively documented and preserved. Scientific studies also have the potential to revive the essence and social role of traditional dance. However, scholarly discussion on traditional Banggai dance is still limited, especially regarding their symbolism and social role in the present. Efforts like these are crucial to understanding how local cultures are changing and preserving the core values inherent in them.

Based on the background that has been described, the purpose of this scientific research is to examine the symbolic meaning and social function of the Banggai tribe in the framework of local cultural preservation. This approach is proposed to be a real contribution in strengthening the cultural entity of Central Sulawesi and enriching the scientific treasure in the field of cultural research.

In local cultural research, the interpretation of symbols in traditional dance is rarely the main focus. In fact, the symbols and the social functions of dance are central to how a community defines its identity and collective consciousness. The Banggai tribe, has rich cultural potential in the form of traditional dances, which are still an important cultural practice today. However, research on these traditions, particularly in the area of local cultural preservation, is still rare. Therefore, this research investigated the symbolic meanings contained in the traditional dances of the Banggai tribe, the social function of the dance in community life, and the efforts to preserve traditional dances.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional dances among the Banggai tribe are not only an aesthetic expression, but also serve as an important tool in preserving social values and collective identity. Dance can act as a repository of cultural knowledge, passing on wisdom, teachings, and stories from one generation to the next (Hou, 2025). This demonstrates the role of dance as a crucial means of passing on cultural identity, historical values, and social beliefs between generations. In this context, every element of dance, from movements, floor patterns, musical accompaniment, to costumes and attributes, contains symbols that reflect social structure, community solidarity, and local worldviews. The social function of traditional dance is reflected in its role as a medium of cultural communication, a means of moral education, and a reinforcer of social cohesion. Its practice is often found in celebrations of the cycle of life, traditional ceremonies, processions to welcome honored guests, and ritual moments that bind collective participation. Therefore, traditional dance is not only entertainment, but also strengthens collective awareness and maintains the continuity of traditions that form the foundation of local cultural stability. Symbolic meaning in performing arts, including traditional dance, encompasses the deeper meanings inherent in each element of the performance. According to Jones (2018), symbols in performing arts provide a way to convey complex ideas and emotions, allowing the audience to engage with the narrative on multiple levels. In the context of traditional dance of the Banggai tribe, every movement, costume color, and musical accompaniment possess rich symbolism.

In line with this, another view states that ethnic dance is an important medium in building cultural identity while strengthening community resilience. Folk dance is not only an important bearer of cultural memory, but also a philosophical practice for achieving rural community resilience and cultural prosperity (Chu, 2025). This approach enriches the understanding that dance not only functions as an aesthetic expression but also as a philosophical practice that

unites individuals with their communities and bridges tradition and modernity. Given the importance of the social function of dance emphasized by these experts, a big question arises regarding the sustainability of this tradition amid the rapid tide of globalization. In the era of globalization, many forms of cultural heritage are threatened with extinction, threatened by cultural standardization, armed conflict, the negative consequences of mass tourism, industrialization, rural exodus, migration, and environmental degradation (Lenzerini, 2011). This shows that various global processes, social changes, and economic pressures are factors that threaten the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, including traditional dance. To overcome these challenges, strategic steps are needed, including systematic scientific documentation, integration of dance material into formal and non-formal education curricula, revitalization of art studios, and regular cultural festivals. The use of digital media and tourism platforms based on local wisdom can also broaden appreciation and introduce traditional dances to a wider audience, both nationally and internationally. The success of this preservation depends on multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving local governments, traditional institutions, artists, academics, and the younger generation as the main agents of cultural heritage preservation. This approach not only preserves the physical form and aesthetics of dance, but also preserves its philosophical values and symbolic meanings, ensuring that traditional dance remains relevant and adaptive to contemporary social dynamics.

Concerns about the threat of globalization are reinforced by (Dissanayake, 2024), who notes that Lai Haraoba is beginning to lose its appeal to younger generations due to rapid social change. (Taim et al., 2025) shows that globalization also influences traditional dance choreography and poses new challenges in preserving cultural identity. However, contrary to views that emphasize threats, some research also show that modernization can be an opportunity for preservation. Through digitization and visualization, traditional dances can be documented, relearned, and even re-taught in ways that are more relevant to younger generations (Kico et al., 2018). This means that modernization is not necessarily destructive, but can be a creative tool for cultural revitalization and inheritance.

Traditional dance is also interpreted as a reflection of a community's cultural identity, encompassing the values, norms, and history woven into everyday life. Traditional dance serves as a living archive of cultural heritage, representing the beliefs, customs, and stories that define a community (Smith, 2020). In the context of the Banggai tribe, dance not only serves as entertainment but also as a means of conveying profound cultural messages. Each traditional dance contains elements that reflect the social and cultural characteristics of the community. For example, the costumes and musical instruments used in the dance provide insight into natural resources, spiritual beliefs, and social interactions within the community. In addition, dance is often integrated into various rituals and celebrations, making it an integral part of community life. Therefore, traditional dance serves as an important symbol that connects the past with the present, ensuring the continuity of existing cultural values.

The symbolic meaning in performing arts, including traditional dance, encompasses deeper meanings contained within each element of the performance. Symbols in performing arts provide a way to convey complex ideas and emotions, allowing audiences to engage with the narrative on multiple levels (Jones, 2018). As an example of the role of symbolic meaning in traditional arts, the Baleele tradition in the Mabangun Tunggal ritual in the Banggai community shows how cultural symbols are passed down and internalized from generation to generation. This ritual involves various elements of Banggai society, including traditional leaders, and features people who enter a trance at Kamali Boneaka. Here, historical messages and cultural values are conveyed through song, even though the participants in the trance do not remember them after they wake up (Samatan et al., 2023). The Baleele tradition also serves as a means of

exploring Banggai's history and conveying important messages for the community's survival. In this case, this tradition supports the relationship between performing arts and symbolic meaning in the context of local culture.

The discussion of traditional Banggai dance as a representation of culture has strong relevance to previous studies. Heniwaty (2018) emphasizes that the Gayo Saman Dance is not merely entertainment, but also functions as an identity, a means of spreading religious teachings, a communication tool, and an instrument of social integration. The symbols of movement in the Saman Dance, such as chest slapping and head movements, contain religious meanings in the form of zikr and prayer, thus showing that traditional dance is a medium for conveying spiritual and social values that have been passed down from generation to generation. This view is in line with the results of (Aristawati et al., (2025) researched the Palang Yudho Dance in Madiun. She emphasizes that traditional dance is a symbolic system in which every element of movement, floor pattern, costume, music, and props has a deep meaning. In the Palang Yudho Dance, these symbols express the values of struggle, protection, and balance in life. In addition, this dance also serves to revive the Dongkrek art form in a new format, thus becoming a means of cultural preservation and strengthening the local identity of Madiun.

D. METHOD

The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the method of cultural ethnography. This approach allows researchers to understand cultural phenomena in depth through direct participation and interaction with local communities. The qualitative approach was chosen because it provides space for researchers to explore the meanings attached to cultural practices. The ethnographic method provides an integrated understanding of cultural symbols, values and social functions in people's lives. Through this strategy, researchers obtain documentation of specific cultural processes, conditions and understandings. This results in a comprehensive portrayal of the subject under research.

This research location is in Banggai Island Regency, specifically in a community that still actively preserves the traditional dance traditions of the Banggai tribe: Lumbi-Lumbia village, Buko Selatan District, Banggai Island Regency, Central Sulawesi. The research subjects included traditional leaders and traditional dancers, instructors or choreographers from art studios, cultural stakeholders (related institutions), as well as audiences or the younger generation.

Data collection techniques include participatory observation with direct strategies during dance performances or rehearsals, in-depth semi-structured interviews with cultural leaders, dancers, and community members, as well as documentary research, including analysis of archival photos, videos, song lyric, or accompanying musical instruments, and audio-visual recordings for more detailed documentation and symbolic analysis. Research tools include interview guides, field observation notes, documentation and transcription formats, and cameras or audio recorders, if necessary.

E. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to understand the symbolic meaning and social function of traditional dance of the Banggai tribe. The focus of this research is to understand how dance functions as an expression of cultural identity. By examining issues related to this dance, we seek to highlight their relevance to contemporary society and the challenges they face in the modern context.

Thus, this study aims to preserve culture and raise awareness of the importance of traditional dance as part of rich cultural heritage.

Origin of the Salendeng Dance

Within in the Banggai ethnic group, the Salendeng dance has proven to be the foundational element that gave rise to various other traditional dances, creating a rich cultural heritage. The dance is not only known for its distinctive physical movements but also has meanings about life and hope. Within the framework of this research, it is imperative to investigate the origins and symbolism implied in the Salendeng dance.

The traditional Salendeng dance begins with the story of a husband and wife who desperately wanted a child. When they were finally blessed with a child, the father involuntarily jumped up and down for joy. However, several years later, their child fell ill and was on the verge of death. In this situation, the child asked their father if he wanted his child to recover, he must jump up and down for joy, just as he had done at their child's birth. Miraculously, the child recovered. From then on, the father began performing the dance every year at his child birthday celebration, embracing it as a symbol of gratitude and hope.

In our perspective, the Salendeng dance serves more than just a cultural manifestation, but also a reminder of the importance of family and hope in life. In an increasingly progressive world that often marginalizes traditional values, this dance serves as a link between the younger generation and their cultural core. In this way, we see the Banggai people maintaining their existence and instilling positive values in their culture. Preserving the Salendeng dance and other cultural heritage is crucial for maintaining cultural pluralism in Indonesia and strengthening social solidarity within the community.

The Banggai people use the Salendeng dance as a symbol to strengthen their social and cultural harmony. This dance is often performed at various events, such as welcoming ceremonies, traditional celebrations, and cultural festivals, as a means of conveying noble values to future generations. Therefore, the Salendeng dance is crucial for preserving and maintaining the cultural identity of the Banggai people amidst changing time.

Description of the Salendeng Dance, Movements, and Lyrics

The salendeng dance is not only captivating due to its historical roots, but also rich in musical elements and movements that showcase the culture of the Banggai people. In Practice, it is accompanied by spontaneous sounds created by striking any available objects. Over time, traditional gendang drums (locally known as 'gendang') and 'gong' began to be used as regular accompaniment to the Salendeng dance. As a vital part of the performance, they provide a more varied and structured dimension.

The unique lyric of Salendeng dance is divided into two parts (1) the main lyric that is sung clearly, and (2) spontaneous humming that is sung freely according to the atmosphere. These verses can be adapted and used in the context of both happy and sad occasions. Therefore, this dance embodies a very significant instrument of expression in the life of the community.

The basic movement involves small jumps, corresponding to their meaning (salendeng) in the Banggai language. Variations develop depending on the type of lyric being performed, such as Salendeng Tatabua, Basasunggon, or Ndibul, each with its own distinct movement is determined after the lyric is written, creating harmony between the music and body movements. This demonstrates the importance of collaboration between artistic elements in creating meaningful engagement for the dancers.

Menaning and Social Function of the Salendeng Dance

Salendeng is a dance that means 'jumping' (small jumps). It symbolizes joy and cheerfulness, always performed in the context of community social events. It aims to enliven an event and showcase the unique characteristics of the Banggai tribe. This dance serves not only as entertainment but also as a means to strengthen social bonds among community members. In the performance, the jumping movements create a cheerful atmosphere that, with enthusiasm, can attract collaborative participation from the audience, making the atmosphere at each event more enjoyable.

Furthermore, the Salendeng dance serves a primary function in preserving the unique culture of the Banggai community. Through performances at every celebration, the community can showcase the characteristics and richness of its traditions to current generations and external audiences.

Costume and Participation in the Salendeng Dance

The attire worn in the Salendeng dance varies, but the most important aspect is the use of a long shawl or cloth draped over the dancer's shoulders. In our opinion, the shawl is not only an attribute but also reflects the beauty and elegance of Banggai culture. In each performance, the colors and motifs of the cloth used are not strictly regulated, adding to the visual impact of the dance.

Participation in the Salendeng dance involves men and women of various ages, including children. However, generally, most women participate as dancers, while men play the gendang drum and gong. The number of dancers varies, depending on the occasion. Thus, the active involvement of the community serves as a symbol of unity and strength in preserving traditions and culture inherited from the past.

Preservation Efforts of the Salendeng Dance

The Salendeng dance, which began as a simple dance, has evolved into various variations over time. Although special training for the younger generation is still held, the challenges are increasingly formidable. In an interview with a cultural activist from the Batu Mesea Art studio, he stated that the lack of awareness, understanding, and interest in traditional culture among young people is a major obstacle. He stated that without clear efforts, cultural heritage will be further eroded by the influence of modernization.

This hope preservation is crucial and a primary focus. The traditional elder emphasized the need for future generation to recognize that the Salendeng dance is a Banggai cultural asset must be protected and preserved by involving the community and creating engaging programs such as cultural festivals, the cultural activist hopes to increase young generations interest in Salendeng.

Our observations demonstrate the importance of collaboration between various parties, such as community organizations, government agencies, and educational institutions, in supporting preservation efforts. Educational programs about the importance of traditional and cultural heritage for children can foster understanding and recognition of their own cultural identity. With strong support from various groups, preserving the Salendeng dance is more than just a success; it can also strengthen the cultural existence of the Banggai people amidst the challenges of modern development.

F. CONCLUSION

This research evaluates the symbolic meaning and function of the Banggai tribe as a cultural identity and preservation effort. This traditional dance is rooted in folklore that evokes gratitude, joy, and hope through small leaps. Despite the challenges of modernization, including a lack of interest from the next generation, its preservation is essential and can be achieved through collaboration between the government, community, and educational through educational programs and cultural activities. As a result, Salendeng dance is more than a rich cultural heritage, as well as an important mechanism to uphold and sustain social solidarity amidst in the middle of a transitional era.

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Ketua LP2M Universitas Tumpotika Luwuk, dengan ini memberikan tugas kepada:

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Untuk melaksanakan penelitian dengan judul *"Symbolic Meanings and Social Functions of Traditional Dance of Banggai Tribes in the Context of Local Cultural Preservation"* pada tanggal 9 – 11 Mei 2025 di Desa Lumbi-lumbia Kecamatan Buko Selatan Kabupaten Banggai Kepulauan Provinsi Sulawesi Tengah.

Demikian surat tugas ini dibuat untuk dilaksanakan dengan sebaik-baiknya.

Luwuk, 06 Mei 2025

Ketua LP2M UNTIKA Luwuk

Jufri Aziz M., ST., MT
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DOKUMENTASI PENELITIAN

