

Analysis of Balamut Performance Structure for Cultural Preservation in Southern Kalimantan

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ABSTRACT

Lamut is a traditional art form that has evolved and flourished alongside society. This performance art involves a solo theatrical presentation by an individual known as the Palamutan. Facing the threat of extinction due to modern societal dynamics, this study investigates lamut art, identifying the factors behind its decline, exploring **methods** for its revitalization, particularly among youth, and evaluating its contribution to national and local development, underscoring its cultural importance and need for preservation. This **study highlight** the rich cultural history of Lamut and its significance in the Banjar community. The study is to **understand** the decline of lamut, identify the factors affecting its practice, and propose methods to preserve it for future generations. The **methodology** employed is descriptive qualitative research, providing an explanatory framework for the findings. The study categorizes lamut into two types: entertainment lamut and therapeutic lamut. **Results indicate** that factors contributing to the decline include the long duration of performances, ritualistic aspects incompatible with Islamic teachings, and the marginalization of traditional arts in the face of modernity. The **emphasis** is that the preservation of lamut requires collaboration between artists, cultural practitioners, and relevant institutions to ensure its continuity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

South Kalimantan, located on the island of Borneo, Indonesia, is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, including the Banjar, Dayak, Bugis, Javanese, Madurese, and Sundanese [1]. The Banjar tribe, the predominant group in the province, is descended from the Malay tribe, with significant migration from Sumatra, alongside the Dayak people who embraced Islam [2]. The Banjar community has a rich tradition of oral culture, with various forms of speech arts evolving alongside the group [3]. One such form is lamut, a solo storytelling theatrical performance accompanied by a tarbang (tambourine), known as tarbang lamut. Lamut performances are categorized into two types, entertainment lamut, which is performed solely for amusement, and therapeutic lamut, known as lamut tatamba, which is used for healing purposes [4].

The narrative of lamut centers on the character of lamut, who functions as a guide, protector, and caretaker of the king's descendants [5]. Lamut is considered the embodiment of the celestial deity Sanghyang Batara Wedi, who descends to Earth to protect the progeny of Prabu Awang Selenong [6]. The term lamut is derived from the Arabic phrase "la mauta", meaning "unable to die", reflecting the immortality of the character [7]. The lamut narrative typically spans thirty nights and consists of ten chapters, including key figures such as Sanghyang Batara Wedi and Prabu Awang Selenong [8].

However, lamut art faces significant challenges due to modernity and the influence of contemporary popular culture [9]. As lamut has been largely abandoned by its supporters, the art form is on the brink of extinction [10]. The decline of traditional art forms like lamut represents a loss of cultural identity and valuable local wisdom [11]. The lamut tradition is deeply intertwined with the community, and its loss would also mean the erosion of the cultural values it embodies. Therefore, revitalizing and preserving lamut is crucial [12]. From a broader development perspective, efforts to safeguard lamut are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which emphasizes the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage, and SDGs 4 (Quality Education), which promotes inclusive and equitable learning through the transmission of local wisdom and cultural knowledge. Positioning lamut within this SDGs framework highlights that its revitalization is not only a local cultural agenda but also part of a global commitment to sustainable development. Several recent studies have explored various aspects of lamut, such as its role as a communicative traditional medium, its performance dynamics, and its connection to other traditional arts like Madihin and Pantun [13]. Despite these efforts, the preservation of lamut necessitates greater collaboration between artists, cultural practitioners, and relevant institutions to ensure its survival [14]. Additionally, integrating modern tools like digital archives or contemporary performance formats could play a crucial role in preserving lamut for future generations [15].

This study aims to investigate the art of lamut to elucidate its decline within the supporting community, explore methods for its revival among the younger generation, and assess lamut's contribution to national and state development, thereby establishing its significance for preservation. The issues in this research are:

- What is the characterisation of lamut art in South Kalimantan?
- What circumstances have led to the abandonment of lamut art by the supporting community, and
- How may it be revitalized, particularly among the younger generation?
- What is the significance of lamut in the advancement of the country and state that warrants its preservation?

This study will focus exclusively on the oral tradition associated with lamut. Lamut art constitutes a singular form of storytelling theatre. The entire narrative is conveyed by a one individual named Palamutan. The narrative solely relies on the palamutan's imaginative depiction, eschewing the use of symbolic intermediaries typical of puppetry.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is explanatory, with the aim of elucidating lamut art in South Kalimantan and its evolving dynamics [16]. The qualitative descriptive analysis methodology is suitable for examining occurrences, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and individual and collective thinking [17]. Qualitative research involves descriptive data derived from written or verbal expressions about individuals and observable behaviours [18]. This approach does not rely on numerical data but instead focuses on the qualitative assessment of interactions between ideas in empirical contexts [19].

The research methodology integrates library study techniques and observational methods. The literature review was used to gather relevant resources from libraries and personal collections [20]. The observational method was used during lamut performances, focusing on live observation of both the performance dynamics and audience reactions. Observations were structured to assess how lamut is presented, performed, and received in its cultural setting. Specific aspects such as the performance duration, storytelling techniques, use of ritualistic elements, and engagement with the audience were closely analyzed [21]. Observations were conducted during multiple lamut performances to capture a variety of contexts and conditions [22].

Furthermore, data analysis employed thematic analysis, in which data were reviewed and categorized to identify recurring themes and patterns within performances [23]. This qualitative approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to the decline and possible revitalization methods for lamut, especially among the younger generation [24]. The analysis was further enriched by examining the sociocultural and economic context that shapes the art form's current state [25].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Description of the Balamut Oral Tradition in South Kalimantan

Lamut art is not an original creation of the Banjar people. Lamut is the indigenous oral tradition of the Chinese community. The skill of lamut was introduced to Banjar by Chinese traders and subsequently evolved into pahuluan in Amuntai [26].

The term lamut derives from the Arabic phrase *la mauta*, which translates as "not dead". The term "lamut art" is derived from the name of the protagonist in the narrative, referred to as Lamut [27]. Lamut is the embodiment of a celestial deity known as Sanghyang Batara Wedi [28]. This manifestation of the deity renders lamut immortal. Lamut subsequently dedicated himself to the family of Prabu Awang Selenong, extending his commitment to the progeny and descendants of the Prabu. The narrative of Lamut's dedication throughout multiple generations of Prabu Awang Selenong's lineage embodies the essence of lamut's artistic storytelling [29].

The lamut narrative adheres to a conventional structure comprising ten chapters:

- Sanghyang Batara Wedi.
- Prabu Awang Selenong.
- Raden Bungsu.
- Raden Kasan Mandi.
- Bujang Maluala.
- Bujang Busur.
- Bujang Jaya.
- Bambang Teja Aria.
- Bambang Indra Perkasa.
- Brama Syahdan.

The lamut character is central to the narratives of these works. All narratives are transmitted from generation to generation by the palamutan. Consequently, a lamut narrative typically includes modifications or omissions from the original story [30].

The narratives of the lamut serving the family of Prabu Awang Selenong are conveyed by a palamutan, employing storytelling skills that encompass poetry, rhymes, and narration [31]. The storyteller must possess exceptional talents to ensure the audience remains engaged throughout the performance [32].

Lamut is a solo performance art executed through spoken word by the palamutan. Consequently, lamut is referred to as a solo storytelling theater [33]. The palamutan delineates the characters in the narrative, relying on imagination rather than symbolic intermediaries, such as in Javanese *pedalangan* (puppetry) [34]. The distinction is that *pedalangan* uses puppets to represent the characters, while lamut relies entirely on imaginative storytelling [35].

The unique performance setup of Lamut, with the palamutan performing on a small stage referred to as *cacampaan* [36]. This elevated stage (approximately 2 by 2.5 meters) ensures that the audience can effectively observe the performance, even from a distance. Along with the small stage, lamut performances can occur in small, roofed halls [37]. The *tarbang lamut* (tambourine) is the primary instrument to enhance the performance, providing rhythm and atmosphere throughout the narrative [38].

The performance is often conducted at night until sunrise, creating a mystical atmosphere for the audience [39]. The lamut presentation structure includes three main stages: the introduction with tatabuhan tarbang, the narration with rhymes and humour, and the conclusion with vocalizations and tatabuhan (clapping). This structured performance format is essential for maintaining audience participation during long performances [40].



Figure 1. Lamut Performance Setup

Figure 1 showcases the typical setup of a lamut performance, where the palamutan performs solo storytelling on a small elevated stage, with the accompaniment of the tarbang lamut (tambourine). This setup highlights the unique nature of lamut as a solo art form where the palamutan creates all the characters and actions through oral narration, supported only by music. The small stage, or cacampaan, enables the audience to observe the palamutan closely, despite the distance, emphasizing the intimacy of the performance [41].

The tarbang lamut is central to enhancing the mystical ambiance of the performance [42]. Alongside the use of incense and a censer (burning incense), incense plays a critical role in creating a sacred and otherworldly atmosphere during the performance [43, 44]. This combination of music, ritual, and storytelling creates a rich sensory experience for the audience [45].

3.2. Ritual and Ceremonial Aspects of Lamut Tatamba

In comparison to the simpler entertainment lamut, the tatamba (medicinal or therapeutic) performance is more intricate. The ceremonial apparatus used during lamut tatamba performances [46]. The essential items include offerings such as perapin (hearth for incense), tapung tawar (water and oil emulsion), and various flowers like kenanga and cempaka [47]. These offerings serve as symbolic elements that represent different body parts in need of healing.



Figure 2. Ceremonial Apparatus for Lamut Tatamba

Figure 2 illustrates the ceremonial apparatus required for a lamut tatamba performance. It includes items such as coconut, egg, bananas, and thread, each symbolizing a part of the body in need of healing [48]. The piduduk (offering) plays a vital role in rectifying any inadequacies in the ritual offerings, further highlighting the spiritual significance of the performance. This aspect of lamut underscores its dual function as both an art form and a therapeutic practice, where the palamutan serves as a conduit between the spiritual realm and the physical world to heal ailments caused by malevolent spirits [40].

3.3. Role of Ancestors and Malevolent Spirits in Lamut Tatamba

The spiritual aspect of lamut tatamba is central to its therapeutic function. The palamutan, acting as a healer, summons the ancestral spirits and malevolent entities to confront and communicate with the afflicted individual. This ritual is thought to provide spiritual healing and moral support, helping the afflicted individual overcome the turmoil caused by malevolent spirits.

Figure 3 illustrates the ceremonial aspects of this spiritual interaction. The palamutan invokes the spirits and facilitates the healing process through spoken word and rituals, which are believed to have a direct effect on the spirit of the afflicted person [49]. This interaction is essential for restoring the individual's spiritual and emotional well-being.



Figure 3. Ceremony and Interaction with Spirits

Figure 3 showcases the ritual interaction during a lamut tatamba performance, where the palamutan acts as a conduit between the physical world and the spiritual realm. The figure highlights the ceremonial process of invoking ancestral spirits and malevolent entities to provide healing. The ritual's significance is evident in the healing process, where the palamutan's performance serves to bring the affected individual back to a state of balance.

3.4. Challenges to Lamut and Its Decline

The rise of modernity, especially through the influence of Islam and globalization, has significantly impacted the survival of lamut. The ritualistic aspects of lamut, particularly in tatamba, have been seen as incompatible with Islamic teachings, leading to a reduction in participation. Many members of the Banjar community perceive the rituals involving spirits as forms of idolatry or syirik (polytheism), which has led to the gradual decline of lamut [50].

Despite these challenges, the preservation of lamut remains crucial for maintaining cultural identity and local wisdom. Efforts to revitalize the tradition, such as workshops organized by the Language Centre of South Kalimantan Province, aim to engage the younger generation. Bengkel Sastra (literary workshops) have been instrumental in introducing modern adaptations of lamut characters to ensure their continued relevance. These initiatives are essential in securing the future of lamut by fostering youth involvement and community engagement.

4. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Digital Transformation and Platform Strategy

One of the key managerial implications for preserving lamut art is the strategic integration of digital platforms and technological solutions. As lamut faces declining interest, particularly among younger generations, cultural managers need to view digital transformation not as an option but as a core preservation strategy. Digitizing performances, recording oral narratives, and developing multimedia documentation can turn lamut into accessible digital assets that are easier to archive, distribute, and reuse in various cultural programs.

In practice, cultural institutions can develop dedicated websites, social media channels, and streaming-based platforms that feature curated lamut content. Interactive features such as subtitles, behind-the-scenes footage, storyteller profiles, and short-form content adapted for platforms like TikTok or Instagram can expand

the reach of lamut beyond traditional performance spaces. Mobile applications or microsites can also host digital archives, allowing users to search, watch, and learn about lamut anytime and anywhere.

4.2. Engagement and Intergenerational Transmission

A second critical managerial implication concerns the systematic engagement of younger generations in the learning and practice of lamut. For managers, this implies building long-term intergenerational transmission programs rather than one-off events. Monitoring participation rates, collecting feedback from students and teachers, and continuously refining engagement methods are crucial. By fostering direct, meaningful interaction between youth and lamut practitioners, cultural managers can cultivate a new generation of storytellers, researchers, and audiences who will sustain lamut in the future cultural landscape.

4.3. Institutional Capacity Building and Policy Support

Another managerial implication lies in strengthening institutional capacity and aligning preservation efforts with supportive policies. Cultural institutions, museums, and local cultural centers need clear strategies, standard operating procedures, and human resource capabilities dedicated to safeguarding lamut. Without institutional readiness, even well-designed programs risk being unsustainable or fragmented.

Managers should prioritize training staff in cultural management, project planning, and digital documentation related to lamut. This can be complemented by developing internal guidelines for recording, archiving, and presenting lamut performances in both physical and digital spaces. Establishing units or task forces specifically responsible for intangible cultural heritage, including lamut, can help ensure continuity and accountability in program implementation.

At the policy level, collaboration with local governments is essential to embed lamut preservation within cultural, educational, and tourism regulations. Cultural managers can advocate for lamut to be recognized in regional cultural policies, receive earmarked funding, and be included in official cultural events or tourism packages. When institutional capacity and policy support work in tandem, preservation initiatives for lamut become more structured, resilient, and integrated into broader regional development agendas.

4.4. Collaboration and Sustainable Funding Models

Finally, sustainable preservation of lamut requires robust collaboration between cultural institutions, local governments, educational bodies, tourism agencies, and private-sector stakeholders. Strategic partnerships are crucial for securing the financial resources, expertise, and visibility needed to keep lamut alive. Managers should frame lamut not only as a cultural asset but also as a potential driver of creative economy and cultural tourism in South Kalimantan.

Collaborations with schools and universities can support research, documentation, and student involvement in lamut projects, while partnerships with tourism boards can position lamut performances as part of cultural tour packages or festivals. Private companies, especially those operating in the region, can be approached for sponsorships, corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, and co-branded events that feature lamut as a central cultural icon. These partnerships can create new performance venues, marketing channels, and revenue streams.

Managers should also develop sustainable funding models that combine public funding, grants, ticket sales, merchandise, and digital monetization strategies such as paid streaming or crowdfunding campaigns. By diversifying funding sources and ensuring that benefits are shared fairly with local storytellers and communities, cross-sector collaboration can transform lamut into both a preserved cultural heritage and a viable socio-economic asset. This multifaceted approach will create a stable framework for promoting lamut locally and globally, securing its place in contemporary cultural life.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the description presented in the previous chapter, the author concludes that the results of the qualitative descriptive analysis of sales promotions are good, and impulse buying is also high. The results of the quantitative descriptive analysis obtained linear regression results stating that the existence of sales promotions can positively and significantly influence impulse buying on the Shopee marketplace. In addition, the results of the correlation coefficient analysis state that there is a strong relationship between sales promotions and impulse buying on the marketplace.


From the conclusions above, it is necessary to put forward several suggestions that can be useful for the Shopee marketplace, namely to increase sales promotions on the Shopee marketplace, it is better to consider re-setting the minimum purchase with the condition of shipping discounts from areas outside Sumatra, considering providing tiered discounts during the flash sale period and providing special draws for members according to their level.

To optimize impulse buying, shopee should consider adding time limits or quantities with tiered discounts. Meanwhile, for the unplanned purchase dimension, shopee can consider reviewing the minimum spending that gets shipping discounts, especially for outside the merchant's area.

6. DECLARATIONS

6.1. About Authors


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6.2. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: TN; Methodology: AY; Software: SB; Validation: RA and JJ; Formal Analysis: MS and TN; Investigation: AY; Resources: SB; Data Curation: RA; Writing Original Draft Preparation: JJ and MS; Writing Review and Editing: TN and AY; Visualization: SB; All authors, TN, AY, SB, RA, JJ and MS, have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

6.3. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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6.5. Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, known competing financial interests, or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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