

Ulin Barong Sekeloa as an Intangible Culture of Bandung

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Abstract

Ulin Barong Sekeloa is one of art culture were born from the local community in Bandung has been designated as an intangible cultural heritage of West Java Province from Bandung City. The meaning of Ulin is to play, Sirah Barong is the head of the barong, and Sekeloa is the name of a place in Bandung. This attraction is accompanied by traditional Sundanese musical instruments with an accompaniment of 12 peoples. Ulin Barong Sekeloa has appeared since 1885, the pioneer figure was Muhamad Tharwi and the development was carried out by Atjeng Sulaeman who is a living figure of Ulin Barong Sekeloa. The aim of the research is to describe the Ulin Barong Sekeloa for the preservation of traditional art culture and the potential for quality Bandung City cultural tourism attractions, especially for improving the economy of artists after the Covid-19 pandemic. The method used is descriptive analytic by exploring the potential of the Ulin Barong Sekeloa attraction to become a Cultural Tourism Attraction in Bandung City. The results show that the community empowerment ecosystem has made Ulin Barong Sekeloa one of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bandung city still exists until today which has the potential to become a cultural tourism attraction which can become a quality cultural destination in Bandung City. The conclusion obtained is that the existence of Ulin Barong Sekeloa until now has been formed from the results of the adaptation of society to changing times as the spearhead of the conservation of Ulin Barong Sekeloa.

Keywords: Ulin Barong Sekeloa, Culture, Tourism Attraction, Marketing Ecosystem, Adaptation

A. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is an integral part of the growth and development of any area, be it urban or rural. In Indonesia, cultural heritage can be found in almost all regions as tangible and intangible heritage. Intangible heritage includes human creativity from the past such as ceremonies, dances, songs, and sports, whereas tangible heritage encompasses buildings, sites, and cultural significance. The country has various laws that regulate cultural heritage in almost every region, including Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Promotion of Culture.

Bandung City has a variety of intangible and tangible cultural heritage spread throughout the sub-districts. Bandung is the capital of West Java Province with the highest urban population in West Java, which is 2,452,900 people (Statistics of Bandung City, 2022). The development of Bandung as the capital city of West Java Province has made Indonesia's new culture an urban culture in general (van Klinken & Berenschot, 2014: 17). City development is one of the supporters of urban culture that aims to improve the welfare of the city.

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Figure.1. Map of Bandung Municipality
(Source: Bandung in numbers, 2022)

Tourism components consist of amenities, accessibility and attractions. Attraction is one of three tourism component which is a tourist attraction of an area. All tourism products begin with an attraction, without which no further discussion is needed (Stange; Brown, 2015).

One of Bandung's intangible cultural heritages is the Ulin Barong Sekeloa Performance, a form of performing arts traditional Sundanese attraction born from local community.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is descriptive analytic, aimed at exploring the potential of the Ulin Barong Sekeloa attraction to evolve into a recognized Cultural Tourism Attraction within Bandung City. Ulin Barong Sekeloa, a traditional cultural expression, is deeply embedded in the identity of the Sekeloa community, representing their intangible heritage and historical values. By analyzing the attraction's unique characteristics and its resonance with cultural tourism, the study seeks to highlight its role in preserving local traditions while contributing to Bandung's tourism landscape.

The research draws insights from key informants, including community members from Sekeloa, cultural figures associated with Ulin Barong Sekeloa, as well as academics and government representatives. This collective input underscores the necessity of implementing the Pentahelix collaboration model, which integrates the community, academics, business, government, and media in a collaborative effort to support and promote cultural tourism. This model not only reinforces the preservation of Ulin Barong Sekeloa but also enhances the potential for sustainable tourism development by involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes.

Through this descriptive analysis, the study underscores the importance of intangible cultural heritage in fostering a unique and authentic cultural tourism experience. By positioning Ulin Barong Sekeloa as a cornerstone of Bandung's intangible cultural assets, the article calls attention to the need for policies that encourage cultural preservation and promote the involvement of various sectors in sustaining the richness of Bandung's traditional practices.

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Ulin barong Sekeloa was born from local community. It dates back to 1885 and has been preserved for four generations. Ulin Barong Sekeloa is a typical art of the Sekeloa community which involves kaulinan or ngulinkeun sirah barong (playing the barong head) accompanied by traditional musical instruments.



Figure. 2. Attraction practice *ngulinkeun sirah barong* (playing the barong head) at Sekeloa
(Source: Badranaya, 2022)

Every member practice of music instrument regularly in the community with or without Barong. They practices at the field or houses terrace.



Figure. 3. Practice of traditional music instrument at Sekeloa
(Source: Badranaya, 2022)

The art was pioneered by Muhamad Tharwi, a religious figure in Sekeloa, Bandung City, West Java Province. He was also involved in community activities such as managing zakat, funeral management, environmental cleanliness and other positive activities related to the surrounding community. In his time, Muhamad Tharwi was also a Muslim figure who mastered the art of rudat, which is Islamic chanting accompanied by a drum/rebana instrument (Sulaeman, 2018).

The story behind Ulin Barong Sekeloa art is that during a performance by Muhamad Tharwi in the Tasikmalaya area, a head appeared from the surface of the sea, which inspired the formation of a barong head with scales but no sharp teeth. This is because the creature from the sea was considered good. The regional and geographical factors influence the customization of the shape and form of a work of art. Therefore, the shape and form of the barong head were influenced by this incident. Muhamad Tharwi collaborated with Mr. Abah Suryadikarta, a silat player of the Cikalong Sabanar style from South Sekeloa, and Mr. Abo from Bogor, to create movements in the art of Ulin Barong. The word Ulin means playing the barong with Cimande Buhun moves.



Figure. 4. Appearance of Ulin Barong Sekeloa
(Source: Disbudpar Kota Bandung, 2021)

In the world, humans live not alone but interact with living things and non-living things such as air, water, soil, climate, and others (Rambo, 1984; Iskandar, 2009). Humans, culture and environment are three factors that are integrally interconnected. Humans are understood as creatures that are biosocial culture (Adimihardja, 1993).

Human ecology includes material, energy, information, ecosystems, ecosystem principles, environment and others. Material flows from one food chain to another. If living things die, it does not mean the flow of matter is stopped but dead living things become food for other living things. Therefore matter never runs out from the bodies of beings one and from the live world into a world that does not live.

An ecosystem has order because of the flow of material and energy that is controlled by information. Receiving information means that a person gets new knowledge whose intensity depends on the size of the information received. Conversely, if the information received has been known before, the weight of the information is very small. Information can be physical or object, nature, color, behavior, temperature, state, shape and signal (Soemarwoto, 2004; Mufid, 2010). The reciprocal interactions between social systems and ecosystems are integrated in Figure 3:

The adaptation of Ulin Barong Sekeloa to the changing times, while preserving ancestral beliefs and contemporary culture, has posed its own set of challenges. As a traditional art form, cases of 'trance' in the middle of a performance are not uncommon, but they can be difficult to manage. These contradictions can arise both within the art context and the external environment.

The musical accompaniment of Ulin Barong Sekeloa has evolved over time, now including instruments such as cymbals, gembeng, trumpet and sinden, in addition to the original kendang pencak, bedug and ketuk tilu. Ulin Barong Sekeloa is characterized by the use of movements from martial arts, particularly the Cimande Buhun Silat style. Its head is made from bamboo shavings shaped to resemble a barong and has a distinctive appearance, including a prominent forehead, mirrored eyeballs, distinctive lips and ears, and large cheeks. The strips part of the sack is paired as hair, eyelashes, and beard. The shape of Ulin Barong Sekeloa itself is inspired by the body of a Naga and the head is played by two people



Figure. 6. Music instrument of Ulin Barong Sekeloa
(Source: Disbudpar Kota Bandung, 2021)

The development program goes in hand with human growth and development. Development is carried out to fill human needs and achieve prosperity. Development have the meaning of a planned sociocultural change (Marzali, 2005). The implementation of development that prioritizes the economic sector creates an imbalance with the maintenance of the environment and socio-culture as mandated by sustainable development (Abdoellah, 2016).

In Sekeloa Village and Lebak Gede Village, there are 16 different art organizations that support the activities of Ulin Barong Sekeloa. Each organization has unique characteristics, but Mr. Atjeng explains that the principles used remain the same. The only modifications are made to the colors and songs. This is due to Ulin Barong's Intellectual Property Rights, which have established a standard that is legally recognized and stable.

Ulin Barong art has become an integral part of the Sekeloa community's culture. Originally used as a means of summoning rain and celebrating joy, it has grown and developed into a distinctive identity of the Sekeloa community. Its development has not been affected by the presence of immigrants, but rather by technological advancements and the community's interest in contemporary and modern arts.

The art of Ulin Barong and the Sekeloa community have adapted to survive in changing times. This art form has not only become a distinctive identity of the Sekeloa community but also of the people of Bandung City. In fact, it has been designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bandung City in 2022.



Figure. 7. Group of Performance of ulin Barong Sekeloa
(Source: Disbudpar Kota Bandung, 2022)

Ulin Barong Sekeloa focuses on developing and fostering Indonesia's national culture, formulating its cultural values, encouraging critical thinking towards these values, and promoting freedom of creativity in the arts. It also aims to develop the Indonesian film industry, preserve traditional arts and culture, and utilize them for tourism development. The ultimate goal is to empower communities and improve their welfare through a whole-system approach.

To achieve this, Ulin Barong Sekeloa plans to develop performances, such as the Saung Angklung Udjo Bandung, which is sustainable for both the community and tourists, both domestically and abroad.

Tourism components consist of attractions, accessibility, and amenities that must be fulfilled in every tourism activity (Stange; Brown, 2015). However, the Ulin Barong Sekeloa organization faces challenges such as inadequate accessibility and amenities to perform live shows in Sekeloa. As a result, Ulin Barong Sekeloa performs in various art buildings and communities throughout all sub-districts in the city of Bandung, attracting cultural tourism typical of the city.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, all live performances were stopped, and Ulin Barong Sekeloa had to adapt to online or recorded performances. Although many of the performers took turns to play and perform, the income from Ulin Barong Sekeloa's performances decreased, and some of the players had to switch to other jobs to meet their daily needs.

Ulin Barong Sekeloa enhance a knowledge a marketing promotion. Marketing as a process and activity for anticipate requests, recognize demand, stimulate demand, and satisfying demand (William H. Keaven in Wahab, 1997). Ulin Barong Sekeloa tried to uses principle of marketing strategy i.e, intended marketing target and mix marketing carried out to achieve that target market (Kotler and Armstrong, 2009).

The implementation of of the pandemic situation, Ulin Barong Sekeloa have done a marketing mix concept, which consists of products, price, promotion, location/place, people, process and physical evidence (Armstrong and Phillip, 2012). The actions of the marketing mix done by Ulin Barong Sekeloa: 1). Products, standar art performance package; 2). Price, depend of the duration, still affordable; 3). Promotion, via social media e.g YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Web Tourism Board; 4). Location/Place, anywhere depend on invitation, at Sekeloa; 5). People, Professional art performing; 6). Process, demand, schedule, price, contract, performance, service before and after events; 7). Physical evidence, all physical evidence that can help consumers understand the products or services offered by the company which include physical facilities, branding, packaging design.

Despite the pandemic causing a significant decline in the demand for live performances, the surviving players of Ulin Barong Sekeloa have found creative ways to continue delivering online performances.

Events is a media to Ulin Barong Sekeloa still exist, Bandung City Government gave opportunity to Ulin barong Sekeloa held performance at Asia Africa Festival 2024. (see figure 8)



Figure 8
Performance of Ulin Barong Sekeloa at Asia Africa Festival 2024

The Pentahelix, which includes the Bandung City Government, academics, and private sectors, have collaborated to provide support and opportunities for the players to stay afloat during these challenging times. The government has facilitated both online and offline performances, but limited to the Bandung Creative Hub Building, with the assistance of their IT team. Academic experts have also contributed by improving the management of the art environment and developing creative products that can be sold as souvenirs to tourists. Meanwhile, the private sector, with the help of national television coverage, has been promoting Ulin Barong Sekeloa to the public.

Through perseverance and consistent practice, Ulin Barong Sekeloa has managed to survive the pandemic and has even received an Intellectual Copyright certificate. It has also been designated as a Cultural Heritage of Bandung City, with the support of various tourism stakeholders in the area.

D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the enduring presence of Ulin Barong Sekeloa today is a testament to the community's adaptive capacity and resilience in the face of changing times. As an intangible cultural heritage, Ulin Barong Sekeloa has not only survived but also evolved, reflecting a dynamic process where traditional values meet modern influences. This adaptability demonstrates the community's commitment to preserving their heritage, positioning Ulin Barong Sekeloa as a cultural symbol that resonates with the values and identity of Bandung's people. It serves as both a reminder of the past and a bridge to the future, preserving the unique aspects of Bandung's intangible culture.

To ensure its continued relevance and wider recognition, it is essential to enhance the performance and promotional capacity of Ulin Barong Sekeloa. With effective collaboration across the Pentahelix sectors—engaging local communities, academics, businesses, government bodies, and media—Ulin Barong Sekeloa has the potential to expand its reach beyond local audiences. By promoting its cultural significance on both national and international stages, this traditional heritage can draw interest from a broader audience, fostering greater appreciation and support for cultural preservation efforts.

Through this multi-faceted approach, Ulin Barong Sekeloa can serve as a model for sustainable cultural tourism, where heritage conservation and modern tourism meet. As Bandung continues to grow

as a cultural tourism hub, Ulin Barong Sekeloa stands as a powerful example of how intangible cultural heritage can adapt, thrive, and contribute to the social and economic vitality of the city. This recognition not only strengthens the cultural identity of Bandung but also inspires a new generation to engage with and protect their cultural heritage.

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1. YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpTcK2Ot-q0>
2. Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/badranaya_id/
3. Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=ulin%20barong%20sekeloa>