



## Saving the Lost Melodies: Community-Based Documentation of *Gambang Kromong* Intangible Cultural Heritage

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### **Purpose**

*This study aimed to examine the documentation initiatives surrounding the *Gambang Kromong* intangible cultural heritage and to analyze the operational constraints faced by a grassroots movement, the *Tukang Tabuh* Community.*

### **Method**

*This research applied a qualitative approach with a case study design. Its primary data were collected from three key informants through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis. The validity of the data was established using both methodological and source triangulation.*

### **Results/findings**

*The findings revealed that the community transitioned from static live recording methods to an active digital audio engineering method using a track-by-track technique, complemented by valid visual curation. Significant operational constraints—including cognitive "repertoire shock," financial limitations, and instrumental deficits—were mitigated through oral memory incubation, budget rationalization for soundproof studio rentals, and multi-instrumentalism strategies. Multi-channel dissemination employing bilingual metadata also proved effective in converting oral traditions into global information assets.*

### **Conclusion**

*The *Tukang Tabuh* Community formulated an adaptive archival advocacy model, demonstrating that grassroots communities can effectively safeguard collective memory. This community-led digital preservation model should be replicated by other cultural organizations. Future research should investigate the long-term technological sustainability and infrastructure of such independent digital repositories.*

### **Keywords**

*Community Archives, Documentation, *Gambang Kromong*, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Knowledge Management.*

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## Abstrak

### Tujuan

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara kritis proses pendokumentasian warisan budaya tak benda Gambang Kromong serta menganalisis kendala operasional yang dihadapi oleh pergerakan akar rumput, khususnya Komunitas Tukang Tabuh.

### Metode

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data primer dikumpulkan dari tiga informan kunci melalui wawancara mendalam semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumentasi. Keabsahan data diuji secara ketat menggunakan triangulasi metode dan triangulasi sumber.

### Hasil/Temuan

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunitas ini berhasil bertransformasi dari metode perekaman langsung (live recording) yang statis menjadi metodologi rekayasa audio digital aktif melalui teknik track-by-track, yang disempurnakan dengan kurasi visual berlandaskan validitas sejarah. Selain itu, kendala operasional yang signifikan—seperti "gegar repertoar" kognitif, keterbatasan finansial, dan defisit instrumen—berhasil dimitigasi secara efektif melalui taktik inkubasi memori lisan, rasionalisasi anggaran untuk penyewaan studio, dan strategi multi-instrumentalisme. Diseminasi multikanal menggunakan metadata dwibahasa juga terbukti sangat sukses dalam mengubah tradisi lisan menjadi aset informasi global.

### Kesimpulan

Komunitas Tukang Tabuh telah berhasil merumuskan model advokasi kearsipan yang adaptif, membuktikan bahwa masyarakat akar rumput mampu menjaga memori kolektif secara mandiri dan bermutu tinggi. Direkomendasikan agar model pelestarian digital berbasis komunitas ini direplikasi oleh entitas budaya lainnya. Penelitian di masa mendatang perlu menyelidiki keberlanjutan teknologi jangka panjang serta infrastruktur dari repositori digital independen tersebut.

### Kata kunci

arsip komunitas, dokumentasi, Gambang Kromong, warisan budaya tak benda, manajemen pengetahuan.

## المخلص

### الهدف

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة عملية توثيق التراث الثقافي غير المادي لشعب غامبانغ كرومونغ دراسة نقدية، وتحليل التحديات العملية التي تواجه الحركات الشعبية، ولا سيما مجتمع توكانغ تابوه.

### المنهجية

استخدم هذا البحث منهجًا نوعيًا مع تصميم دراسة حالة. جُمعت البيانات الأولية من ثلاثة مُبشرين رئيسيين من خلال مقابلات معمقة شبه منظمة، والملاحظة بالمشاركة، ودراسات التوثيق. جرى اختبار صحة البيانات بدقة باستخدام التثليث المنهجي وتثليث المصادر.

### النتائج/المخرجات

يشير البحث إلى أن هذا المجتمع قد نجح في التحول من أساليب التسجيل الحي الثابتة إلى منهجية هندسة الصوت الرقمي النشطة من خلال تقنيات التسجيل المقطعي، معززة بالتنسيق البصري القائم على الصلاحية التاريخية. علاوة على ذلك، جرى التخفيف بفعالية من التحديات العملية الهامة - مثل "صدمة الذخيرة" المعرفية، والقيود المالية، ونقص الآلات الموسيقية - من خلال أساليب تنمية الذاكرة الشفوية، وترشيد ميزانية استئجار الاستوديوهات، واستراتيجية العزف على آلات موسيقية متعددة. أثبت النشر متعدد القنوات باستخدام البيانات الوصفية ثنائية اللغة نجاحًا كبيرًا في تحويل التقاليد الشفوية إلى أصول معلوماتية عالمية.

### الخلاصة

نجح مجتمع توكانغ تابوه في صياغة نموذج تكيفي للدعوة إلى الأرشفة، مما يدل على قدرة المجتمعات المحلية على الحفاظ بشكل مستقل على ذاكرة جماعية عالية الجودة. يُوصى بتكرار هذا النموذج المجتمعي للحفاظ الرقمي من قبل كيانات ثقافية أخرى. ينبغي أن تبحث الدراسات المستقبلية في استدامة البنية التحتية والتقنية لهذه المستودعات الرقمية المستقلة على المدى الطويل.

### الكلمات المفتاحية

الأرشفة المجتمعية، التوثيق، غامبانغ كرومونغ، التراث الثقافي غير المادي، إدارة المعرفة.

## INTRODUCTION

Preserving collective memory is crucial for maintaining a society's historical consciousness and identity. Intangible cultural heritage is the most fragile manifestation of this collective memory. Theoretically, this heritage extends beyond tangible artifacts or physical monuments; it encompasses a vulnerable dimension that includes oral traditions, indigenous knowledge systems, and performing arts (UNESCO, 2024). Within the Indonesian archipelago, the *Gambang Kromong* musical tradition stands as a quintessential example of this fragility. Emerging from *Betawi* society through a harmonious synthesis of indigenous elements and Chinese cultural influences, this hybrid art form faces a severe threat of obsolescence. The root cause of this vulnerability lies in its non-literate mode of transmission. When cultural preservation relies on the memories of senior maestros without adequate recorded archives, the death of a practitioner results in an irreversible loss of tacit knowledge.

This cultural crisis has become a complicated information management issue, requiring significant action from Library and Information Science (LIS). The contemporary paradigm within LIS has evolved beyond the mere administration of physical books or formal state records. Today, information institutions and professionals hold a crucial mandate as agents of cultural safeguarding, responsible for managing the entire information lifecycle—from the capture of tacit indigenous knowledge to its digital dissemination (Ilabakho & Rasmita, 2025). Therefore, the vulnerability of oral traditions like *Gambang Kromong* can only be mitigated through precise archival methodologies that convert ephemeral cultural performances into authentic, accessible information assets.

The discourse surrounding cultural heritage and local wisdom has long been a focal point of sustained academic inquiry. Within the contemporary publication record of the *Buletin Al-Turas* journal, recent attention has focused on the intersection of local traditions, social reconciliation, and cultural resilience within Indonesia's pluralistic society. For example, recent studies by Hartimah et al. (2021) and Yono et al. (2023) have highlighted the efficacy of local wisdom and traditional ceremonies as fundamental instruments for maintaining societal values. However, much of this prior research has focused on the sociological or theological impacts of these traditions, or on preservation efforts driven by formal state institutions. Too little attention has been paid to the specific mechanisms of independent, community-driven archival advocacy concerning hybrid, marginalized art forms like *Gambang Kromong* that require urgent audio-visual documentation.

On a global scale, recent evidence suggests a profound paradigm shift. Research by Mendoza, Franco & Gomez (2023) and Swords et al. (2021) demonstrates that integrating digital technology is the most efficacious mechanism for transitioning cultural preservation into a digital heritage framework. Archival discourse has emphasized the concept of Community Archives. Irfaniah (2023) and Rodriguez (2016) argue that the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage remains suboptimal if it relies on top-down governmental directives alone. This view is supported by the Archival Advocacy theory posited by Hackman (2012), which contends that the preservation of collective memory causes grassroots initiatives to ensure that local knowledge keeps its original essence.

The aim of this study is to fill this empirical gap by investigating the documentation initiatives orchestrated by the *Tukang Tabuh Community*. This pioneering non-governmental entity is dedicated to salvaging the *Gambang Kromong* repertoire through active digital audio-visual archiving. This community employs high-fidelity track-by-track recording methodologies and multichannel digital dissemination via streaming platforms such as YouTube, fortified by bilingual metadata standards, rather than generic information technology. By defining these specific technological parameters, this article examines the archival process while evaluating the severe operational constraints—ranging from cognitive repertoire limitations to studio financing—that accompany this grassroots preservation effort. Ultimately, this analysis aims to formulate a robust model of community archival advocacy within the field of Library and Information Science.

## METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach, using a case study design. This approach is appropriate for the field of library and information science, for dissecting the ecosystem of community archives. By employing this design, it was possible to explore how the information lifecycle—spanning the creation, processing, and dissemination of archives—operates organically outside the formal structures of memory institutions or state archival bodies (Zavala et al., 2017). The primary focus of this investigation was the documentation process of the *Gambang Kromong* intangible cultural heritage orchestrated by the *Tukang Tabuh* Community.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique to get primary data sources possessing empirical depth and authority in managing the community's information lifecycle. Three key informants were selected: IF, the community founder, who provided data on historical dynamics and archival policies; DL, the production manager, who explained operational procedures, audio engineering, and constraint mitigation; and FI, the videographer, who offered insights into visual curation and the transformation of performing arts into digital heritage. To define the scope of this research, the data collection was delimited to the "creator's perspective" (the production and management side). The evaluation of external user reception or wider community impact remains outside the parameters of this specific study.

Data for this study were collected using three primary techniques. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews served as the central instrument for extracting the tacit knowledge of the informants. Second, passive participant observation was conducted over a defined period from Juli to September 2025 to monitor the pre-production processes, memory incubation sessions, track-by-track audio recording, and video shooting. Third, documentary analysis was conducted, which involved examining the community's digital archive products, their descriptive metadata practices (rather than auditing metadata completeness against formal schemas), and dissemination across digital platforms.

To establish the validity of the findings, this study employed both methodological and source triangulation (Yin, 2018). This process involved comparing the interview results with observational field notes and then validating them against the physical evidence of the digital archives. Data analysis was conducted following the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), comprising three concurrent streams of activity: data condensation to filter relevant information, data display through thematic categorization matrices, and conclusion drawing to formulate theoretical interpretations regarding the grassroots archival advocacy model.

## RESULT/FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Historical Dynamics and the Ecosystem of Community Archives

Drawing upon the concept of community archives within the contemporary library and information science paradigm, it is now accepted that non-governmental, grassroots entities play a pivotal role in safeguarding marginalized heritage (Flinn, 2007). Traditionally, the discipline has centered its focus on formal memory institutions, such as state archives and national libraries. However, a major problem with this state-centric approach is its tendency to overlook the dynamic, lived experiences of local practitioners. The *Tukang Tabuh* Community emerges as a vital counter-narrative to this limitation. The initial phase of this research sought to explore the historical genesis of this community and its evolution into an autonomous information ecosystem dedicated to the preservation of the *Gambang Kromong* musical tradition.

Interview data revealed that the establishment of the *Tukang Tabuh* Community was not driven by commercial motives, but by a profound sense of archival responsibility. Arising from a historical divergence with a predecessor group, the founders started a grassroots movement designed to rescue the classic *lagu dalem* repertoire from obscurity. What is striking about this finding is the community's inherent capacity to construct an

independent, self-sustaining archival ecosystem. Rather than awaiting external institutional interventions, the community members assumed the role of active information agents. They transformed their creative space into a living repository where indigenous knowledge is not only performed but documented.

This study shows that the ecosystem established by the *Tukang Tabuh* Community operates significantly beyond the mere recording of audio. It has become apparent that the community functions as a catalyst for information literacy among its members and the broader public. By curating their historical narratives and standardizing their documentation workflows, the community educates its members on how to identify, capture, and manage their own cultural data. This finding corroborates the assertion of Zavala et al. (2017), who argue that community archives challenge dominant modes of archival practice by democratizing the creation of records and empowering local actors.

Taken together, these results suggest that the historical dynamics of the *Tukang Tabuh* Community represent a successful model of bottom-up heritage management. In library and information science, their ecosystem shows that the preservation of indigenous knowledge does not require massive bureaucratic infrastructure. Instead, a robust community archive ecosystem—fueled by cultural militancy, shared identity, and localized information literacy—can protect intangible cultural heritage from the corrosive impacts of modernity.

### **The Epistemological Transformation of Documentation: Moving from Passive Recording to Active Audio Engineering**

In the contemporary discourse of cultural preservation, documentation can no longer be viewed as a mechanical activity of capturing sound and moving images. Scholarly works increasingly identify documentation as a fundamental epistemological act, shaping collective memory's construction, storage, and transmission of collective memory (Swords et al., 2021). Historically, research in this area has shown that the documentation practices of traditional performing arts in Indonesia have often been trapped in the static format of live recording (Soedarsono, 2002). This outdated approach executes the recording process while artists perform on an open stage, placing microphones haphazardly amidst the ensemble. A major problem with this kind of application is its extreme susceptibility to external ambient noise, frequency imbalances among instruments, and losing essential acoustic details. To overcome this issue, the *Tukang Tabuh* Community has introduced a radical methodological shift that deconstructs this obsolete paradigm, making a tangible contribution to the development of library and information science, in the domain of audiovisual archive management (Irfaniah et al., 2023).

Observational data revealed that the documentation process spearheaded by this community is divorced from simultaneous live performance techniques. Instead, the community has adopted modern studio-scale audio engineering protocols. The recording of the *Gambang Kromong* musical instruments and vocals is executed using a discrete method known in the industry as track-by-track recording. Specifically, this system isolated each sonic element into an independent recording track. An individual musician records their instrumental part alone in a soundproof room, guided by a metronome or a foundational pitch track, while the remaining instruments are recorded in subsequent, separate sessions. This revolutionary methodological transformation is facilitated through the utilization of a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), Cubase 5, serving as the central operational hub for recording, mixing, and mastering.

Further analysis showed that the community's commitment to the authenticity of its audio archives is evidenced by its meticulous attention to hardware infrastructure. Analog signals from traditional instruments are converted into raw digital data through a Yamaha Steinberg CI2+ soundcard, eliminating latency and signal distortion. The precision of this documentation is further reflected in the exact calibration of microphone specifications to the unique acoustic characteristics of each traditional instrument. For example, this study found that the production team selected the Shure SM58 dynamic microphone to capture

the Gambang instrument. This choice was predicated on the microphone's capability to dampen excessive reverberation and capture the thick, natural resonance of wood. Conversely, for the *Kromong* instrument—which is forged from bronze or iron—they employed the AKG C1000 condenser microphone, capitalizing on its high sensitivity to capture the distinctive, piercing, and sharp metallic frequency range.



**Figure 1.** The Video Recording Process in the Documentation of Gambang Kromong Cultural Heritage  
(Source: Author's documentation)

From a library and information science perspective, this shift represents a crucial stage in preserving the value of information (Basuki, 1992). The track-by-track technique empowers the community's sound engineer to conduct post-production processes—such as mixing and frequency balancing—with granular detail, devoid of any inter-instrumental auditory interference or track leakage. The results show that the traditional music archives generated through this scientific process are no longer dusty, obsolete audio artifacts. Rather, they have been transformed into high-fidelity digital intellectual property, competitive and ready for distribution across contemporary digital streaming platforms (Rodriguez, 2016). This is consistent with the findings of Ilabakho and Rasmita (2025), who assert that the adoption of advanced technology is vital to ensure that intangible heritage can compete and endure amidst the onslaught of the modern entertainment industry.

### **Cinematographic Curation Based on Historical Validity: Visual Reconstruction of Intangible Heritage**

Besides the revolution in sound engineering, another significant aspect of the *Tukang Tabuh* Community's documentation practice lies in their rigorous application of historical approaches to visual cinematography. Within the current framework of library and information science, a visual recording functions as a "memory container" that bridges the intangible dimension of heritage with its tangible physical manifestation (ISPRS, 2023). Therefore, perhaps the visual conceptualization of a documentary production should not be designed for the sake of cinematic aesthetics. It must be curated to align with the precise historical periodization of the recorded object.

A striking example of this was observed when the community documented the *lagu dalem* repertoire. As the highest hierarchy within the *Gambang Kromong* repertoire, *lagu dalem* comprises classical songs with strong Chinese nuances inherited from the first generation of this art form. During the data collection phase, it was noted that the production team and videographers consciously designed the camera blocking to exclude the *gendang* (traditional drum) and gong from the video frame. Though this radical decision seems unconventional to a layperson, it stems from profound historical research the founders conducted before pre-production.

To understand this decision, it is necessary to examine the historical context of the mu-

sical ensemble. Historically, during the era when *lagu dalem* was created, the pure *gambang* orchestra formation did not recognize the beats of the *gendang* or *gong* (Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kebudayaan, 2021). The early ensemble consisted solely of melodic instruments such as the *gambang*, stringed instruments (*tehyang*, *kongahyan*, *sukong*), plucked instruments, and the flute. Historical records show that Nusantara percussion instruments were integrated into the orchestra in the late nineteenth century, through a collaborative innovation in a *Peranakan* musician named Tan Wangwe and a Chinese community leader in Pasar Senen named Bek Teng Tjoe (Soedarsono, 2002). It was this specific addition that subsequently gave birth to what is now known as *lagu sayur*—*Gambang Kromong* songs characterized by a more upbeat, popular, and comedic nuance.

By eliminating instruments proven non-existent during the creation era of *lagu dalem*, the documentary videos produced by the *Tukang Tabuh* Community avoid the biases of disinformation, cultural misrepresentation, and historical anachronism. The results of this strict visual curation suggest a dual impact: on the one hand, the video functions as contemporary musical entertainment; This finding highlights the grassroots community's capacity to conduct archival practices with a level of care (*provenance*) and preservation of originality (*original order*) that parallels the rigorous standards of global cultural heritage preservation institutions (UNESCO, 2024).

### **Cognitive Constraint Mitigation: Unraveling the Phenomenon of 'Repertoire Shock'**

Within the discourse of library and information science concerning community archives, it has become an accepted axiom that grassroots memory preservation initiatives operate under the shadow of constraints (Flinn, 2007). Independent communities must navigate a trichotomy of challenges: human resources (cognitive), financial limitations, and technical deficits (Zavala et al., 2017). The most striking operational constraint to emerge from the observation data was related to human resources—not in terms of personnel quantity, but the cognitive capacity of the artists themselves.

The *Tukang Tabuh* Community's orientation toward prioritizing the rescue of the *lagu dalem* category (the oldest and most classic *Gambang Kromong* repertoire) triggered a complex issue. Within the context of oral history preservation, this phenomenon is recognized as memory degradation (Thomson, 2011). Because these archaic classical songs have rarely been performed on commercial entertainment stages for decades, artists and vocalists frequently experience what can be termed as 'repertoire shock' (*gegar repertoar*).

In-depth interviews with the production management revealed that during initial rehearsal sessions, even senior singers often experienced a significant loss of auditory memory. They encountered acute difficulties in reconstructing the original lyrics, which utilize an ancient Chinese-Betawi dialect. They lost their intuitive touch for *cengkok* (the specific vocal ornamentation that makes up the soul of traditional singing) and struggled to achieve precise pitch intonations under the traditional *pelog* and *slendro* scales. Viewed from the perspective of knowledge management, this phenomenon makes up a form of tacit knowledge decay, primarily caused by the severing of the intergenerational oral information transmission chain (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

To overcome this cognitive deadlock, the community devised a highly adaptive intervention. The production management refused to conduct instant vocal recordings. Instead, they implemented a tactic of oral memory incubation (*memory retrieval incubation*). Before entering the vocal take phase in the recording studio, the documentation cycle is preceded by a rigorous pre-conditioning phase. This phase encompasses intensive mentoring, lyric dissection, and the continuous playback of auditory memory references. These intensive rehearsal sessions function purely as stimuli to evoke and reconstruct the dormant musical memories of the artists.

This cultural mitigation strategy holds profound implications for information science. It shows that memory retrieval is an absolute prerequisite before the knowledge living

within an artist's mind (tacit knowledge) can be extracted, converted, recorded, and standardized into permanent, explicit archival data (Dalkir, 2011). Therefore, it is evident that the community does not merely record sounds; they actively engage in the cognitive restoration of the artists prior to the archival capture.

### **Logistical and Financial Resilience: The Strategy of Multi-Instrumentalism and Studio Management**

A further operational constraint that shadows this grassroots movement is chronic financial limitation. Without the injection of an endowment fund from government agencies or large-scale commercial sponsors, funding is driven by the independent contributions of members, residual income from sporadic stage performances, and small-scale cultural grant initiatives. Faced with these economic constraints, the community's management showed strategic acumen through implementing preservation triage—the determination of extreme resource allocation priorities (Conway, 2010).

Field observations revealed that the community prioritizes its entire operational budget for renting a professional, soundproof recording studio. This non-negotiable decision was made solely to guarantee the integrity of the control audio recording data, ensuring it remains uncontaminated by ambient noise from the surrounding environment. Within the theory of audiovisual archival preservation, maintaining data purity during the initial capture stage is paramount, as defects in the control recording can never be restored (Edmondson, 2016).

The logical consequence of this budget policy is the sacrifice of secondary production sectors. Musician honorariums are reduced and redefined as appreciation money based on brotherhood, falling far below the commercial standards of the music industry. In the visual sector, makeup and cinematography needs are circumvented by eliminating the budget for stage costumes. Artists are recorded wearing their own neat, casual attire. However, perhaps this limitation provides an aesthetic added value; it stresses the essence of the musical art's purity and presents a visual representation of community archives that is grounded, authentic, and non-artificial (Flinn et al., 2009).

Besides financial hurdles, a third structural deficit relates to the limitation of logistical facilities and infrastructure. Because of a historical split with a predecessor group in the past, *Tukang Tabuh* began its community with a complete void of instruments. Although they have attempted to purchase and borrow equipment during recording sessions, they frequently lack a complete set of instruments and the corresponding players simultaneously.

It is here that the brilliance of integrating human resource flexibility and technological adaptability becomes clear. As elaborated previously, the adoption of the track-by-track recording method via DAW provides limitless flexibility (Rodriguez, 2016). Under conditions of personnel shortages for playing different instruments, the community optimizes the concept of multi-instrumentalism. A single artist with high musical qualifications and mastery of various instruments can be assigned to record several vacant instrument tracks alternately. For instance, a musician might record the *Kromong* beats during the morning session and then transition to recording the *Tehyan* melodies in the afternoon session, all within the same digital project file.

This strategy empirically demonstrates that within the community archive ecosystem, physical logistical deficits and quantitative human resource ratios can be comprehensively patched through the superiority of individual skills and the elasticity of information technology engineering. The ability of a grassroots community to execute such technical maneuvers reinforces the thesis of Zavala et al. (2017), which postulates that the sustainability of community archives is determined not by the magnitude of their facilities, but by how adaptively and creatively they use available production tools to ensure their ancestral heritage remains well-documented.

### **Multichannel Dissemination and Digital Literacy: Converting Oral Traditions into Global Information Assets**

Within the architecture of library and information science, the preservation of collective memory does not conclude at the acquisition and storage stages. It is widely acknowledged that the information lifecycle reaches completion only when the rescued archives can be accessed, utilized, and disseminated back to the public (Terras, 2015). The postmodern archival paradigm posits an archive is rendered meaningless if it is merely confined within physical storage or left to decay in a hard drive with no effort toward the democratization of access (Bastian, 2006; Caswell, 2014). Recognizing this crucial postulate, the *Tukang Tabuh* Community designed a downstream archival strategy through structured multichannel dissemination and digital literacy initiatives, positioning them far beyond the standard operational procedures of typical cultural preservation communities.

Based on field observations and an analysis of the community's digital footprint, the distribution of *Gambang Kromong* audio-visual works is not executed haphazardly. The management has adopted principles of information marketing implemented by modern library institutions (Rowley, 2006). Anticipating the launch of a new documentary work—for the highly historical *lagu dalem* repertoire—the production team designed pre-publication digital campaigns. They create teaser posters and short visual snippets labeled coming soon, (see Figure 2) which are distributed across various social media ecosystems such as Instagram and video-sharing platforms.



Figure 2. Promotional Teaser (Coming Soon) for the Documentary Video of Gambang Kromong Cultural Heritage (Source: *Tukang Tabuh* YouTube Channel)

This pre-publication strategy has profound implications for both psychological anticipation and archival management. From the perspective of library science, the creation of these teasers functions as an early information discovery system aimed at building awareness and curiosity among younger audiences before the complete archive becomes accessible (Pomerantz, 2015). This shows that grassroots communities can manage their cultural archives not merely as relics of the past, but as contemporary information commodities with popular appeal.

Perhaps the most revolutionary empirical finding to emerge from this study is the community's strategy regarding metadata curation and captioning. Observation results show that the community does not merely list song titles; rather, they enrich them with historical narratives presented in a bilingual format (Indonesian and English). The decision to include English captions is not a mere linguistic cosmetic but a significant leap in global digital literacy. In the study of digital cultural heritage management, the greatest barriers to promoting indigenous knowledge globally are language constraints and geographical isolation (Boast, 2011). By implementing a bilingual strategy, *Tukang Tabuh* is effectively conducting cultural translation. They dismantle geographic and demographic boundaries, facilitating international audiences, ethnomusicologists, and academics in accessing, understanding the historical context, and appreciating the richness of *Betawi* artistic heritage. This implementation is a tangible manifestation of the open access spirit, propelling local knowledge to transform into global information assets (UNESCO, 2024).

The utilization of social media and video streaming platforms as archival repositories

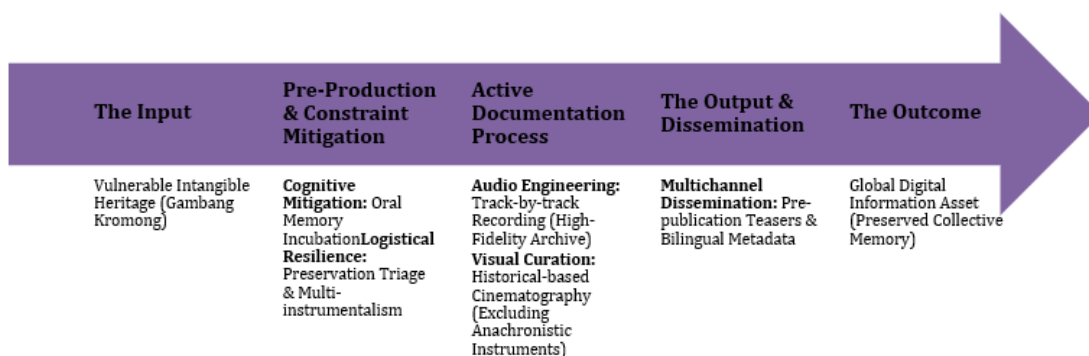
signifies a monumental media shift. Historically, the transmission of *Gambang Kromong* knowledge relied purely on oral tradition. Musical knowledge was transferred directly from the maestro to the students without standardized written notation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This non-literate transmission method was highly vulnerable to disruption upon the maestro's passing. Now, through track-by-track audio engineering and rigorous visual curation, this intangible oral tradition has been converted and frozen into a digital-born object. The high-resolution audio-visual files are subsequently uploaded to cloud computing infrastructures via social media, transforming them into ubiquitous archives—archives that are omnipresent and accessible anytime by anyone connected to the internet (Greene & Meissner, 2005).

The conversion of oral traditions into digital information assets transcends the boundaries of human mortality. Classical *Gambang Kromong* works, once threatened with extinction alongside aging artists, now possess digital immortality. This represents the ultimate triumph of the library and information science cycle: ensuring that knowledge, no matter how ancient, can consistently be retrieved, reproduced, and bequeathed to future generations without quality degradation (Conway, 2010).



**Figure 3.** Dissemination of the Gambang Kromong Cultural Heritage Documentation Results (Source: *Tukang Tabuh* YouTube Channel)

The success of this multichannel dissemination solidifies the position of the *Tukang Tabuh* Community not merely as a group of traditional musicians, but as an active information literacy agent. They educate the public—both locally and globally—about the historical validity, instrument structure, and philosophy of *Betawi* arts. This practice strongly supports Flinn's (2007) argument that community archives managed with a high level of digital literacy awareness can function as a counter-hegemonic medium against cultural marginalization, independently and honorably elevating local narratives onto the global information stage.



**Figure 4.** The Conceptual Model of Grassroots Archival Advocacy and Digital Preservation by the *Tukang Tabuh* Community (Source: Author's construct)

To synthesize the complex ecosystem of cultural documentation established by the grassroots movement, the entire operational workflow and mitigation strategies are visually represented in Figure 4. This conceptual model illustrates the sequential transformation of a vulnerable oral tradition into a resilient global information asset. As showed

in the figure, the preservation cycle is not a linear recording activity but a multidimensional intervention encompassing cognitive restoration (memory incubation), logistical triage (studio allocation), active audio-visual engineering, and strategic multichannel dissemination. Ultimately, this empirical model confirms that community archives, when managed with high digital literacy and historical rigor, can serve as a robust counter-hegemonic force against cultural marginalization.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the safeguarding of the *Gambang Kromong* intangible cultural heritage can be effectively managed by grassroots entities through independent digital archiving. Notably, the process orchestrated by the *Tukang Tabuh* Community is not a neutral, unedited documentation of an organic live event. Rather, by deliberately excluding anachronistic instruments and adopting track-by-track recording methodologies, the community engages in active historical curation and reconstructive archiving. This highlights a critical underlying tension within community archives: the complex balance between strict archival authenticity—preserving an event exactly as it naturally occurs—and the creative restoration of a marginalized repertoire to fit a classic ideal.

Despite these operational tensions, the community has successfully formulated a viable methodological framework for converting vulnerable oral memory into accessible digital assets without relying on formal state intervention. However, important limitations remain. The community's reconstructive approach may not fully align with traditional archival standards that demand unaltered documentation. While the study highlights a successful media conversion process, it did not comprehensively evaluate the long-term digital preservation infrastructure required to maintain these files over decades.

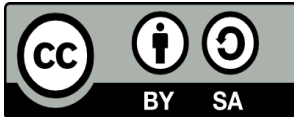
In terms of future directions, it is strongly recommended that further research investigate the long-term technological sustainability of community-led digital repositories. Future studies should explore the archival ethics of reconstructive documentation in traditional performing arts, ensuring that the diverse heritage of the Nusantara continues to be preserved with both historical rigor and cultural sensitivity.

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