

Research Article

Pandu Budaya School: Regeneration Agent and Strategy to Preserve Culture in Jalawastu Traditional Village

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Nadia: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1769-2985>**Abstract.**

Cultural diversity reflects the identity and noble values of a society, making its preservation essential to prevent cultural degradation. Without proper efforts, cultural diversity has the potential to fade over time. This study focuses on Jalawastu Cultural Village, Brebes Regency, Central Java, where cultural traditions are actively maintained through the *Pandu Budaya* School. This study explores the role of *Pandu Budaya* School as a youth regeneration strategy in cultural preservation efforts. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. Findings show that the school serves three main functions: as a cultural safeguard that maintains values and norms, as an educational platform that introduces traditions to the younger generation, and as a forum for empowering youth, encouraging active participation in cultural customs and rituals. The program has proven to be able to increase cultural awareness, strengthen a sense of belonging, and foster responsibility among the younger generation in maintaining cultural heritage. As a result, the *Pandu Budaya* School can serve as a model for community-based education supporting cultural preservation in other indigenous communities.

Keywords: culture, *Pandu Budaya* school, youth

1. Introduction

Cultural diversity in Indonesia is an undeniable historical and social reality (Mahdayeni et al., 2019). This cultural wealth shapes the mindset, behavior, and character of individuals in social life (Najmina, 2018). The different traditions that grow in various regions, especially between tribes, reflect the characteristics of each community. However, interactions that occur in the midst of these differences can trigger conflict if not accompanied by good understanding and appreciation (Rohman et al., 2022). Therefore, the weakening of a nation's identity is often seen in the declining appreciation of cultural values in a society.

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According to data from the Central Statistics Agency, there are 1,128 tribes spread around 13,466 Indonesian islands, reflecting cultural wealth (Latifah et al., 2021). This diversity encourages the phenomenon of assimilation, acculturation, and cultural diffusion in the social dynamics of society (Nafi'ah, 2020). To maintain culture in society, each community has a view of life, knowledge, traditions, and strategies that serve as the basis of life. This serves as a guide in living life in society (Sofii & Salik, 2022).

Indonesia's cultural diversity is a great strength in enriching the nation's identity. In the midst of globalization, many young people tend to forget or ignore local cultural values in their place (Zulkarnan, 2022). However, in reality, there are still areas that continue to be committed to maintaining and prioritizing local cultural values, one of which is the Jalawastu Traditional Village located in Ciseureuh Village, Ketanggungan District, Brebes Regency, Central Java. This village is a real example of preserving cultural diversity amid the challenges of modernization. As a form of appreciation for its efforts, Jalawastu Traditional Village was awarded as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in the category of traditional rites by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture since 2019 (Brebeskab, 2020).

The well preserved cultural diversity in Jalawastu attracted the attention of the government, so that in early 2023 the Ministry of Education and Culture provided assistance through the implementation of the *Pandu Budaya* School program in the area (Interview with Mr. Gunawan, 2023). *Pandu Budaya* School plays an important role in maintaining and passing on local culture to the younger generation. If cultural diversity is not passed on in a sustainable manner, there is a risk of cultural values being eroded over time. This can open a gap for external cultural influences that have the potential to shift the original values of the local community.

The openness of the indigenous people of Jalawastu Traditional Village to visitors has made this village more widely known and attracted the attention of the Brebes Regency government to utilize the area as a cultural village and be recognized as a national tourist destination (Khaqqi, 2024). The utilization of Jalawastu Traditional Village as an arena for cultural reproduction requires the preparation of superior human resources who are able to internalize the inherited cultural values. This value inheritance process is carried out by directing the teenage generation through hands-on activities integrated in the *Pandu Budaya* School program.

Research conducted by Muhaemin et al. (2021) revealed that one of the traditions in Jalawastu, namely the *Ngasa* traditional ceremony, is a traditional ritual that contains

peace education values, this can be seen in every stage of its implementation, from preparation to the main procession, so it is very important to maintain the value in this tradition. Then, research by Adawiyah in 2022 added that the people of Jalawastu Village not only maintain traditions and culture strongly, but are also open to modern technological advances. Electricity, television, cell phones, motorbikes, and cars are wisely accepted without ignoring the value of local wisdom. This reflects the balance between preserving traditions and accepting innovations that strengthen cultural identity in the midst of changing times.

The urgency of this writing is based on the importance of preserving culture in the midst of modernization that often ignores traditional values. In addition, there is no study that comprehensively discusses the role of *Pandu Budaya* School, even though this program has great potential in the process of regenerating cultural heritage to the younger generation. Therefore, this study presents a new, deeper perspective on the role and implementation strategies of *Pandu Budaya* School as a means to preserve culture and support regeneration to the younger generation through an effective cultural inheritance approach.

2. Research Methodology

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with the aim of describing in depth the role and strategy of *Pandu Budaya* School as an educational tool in regenerating cultural heritage in Jalawastu Traditional Village, Brebes. The research location is located in Jalawastu Traditional Village, Ciseureuh Village, Ketanggungan District, Brebes Regency, Central Java. The location was chosen because it is the center of the implementation of various local cultural traditions. The selection of this location was also based on the importance of Jalawastu Traditional Village as a historical place that holds religious and cultural values of the local community.

The data used in this research comes from primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through three collection techniques: observation, interview, and documentation. Observations were made to directly observe the implementation of traditions and social interactions that occur at the research location. Interviews were conducted with traditional leaders of Jalawastu Village and local teenagers involved in the implementation of the tradition, thus aiming to explore more detailed information. Documentation includes data collection in the form of photos of cultural activities.

Secondary data was obtained through literature studies from various relevant articles to support the analysis in this study.

The data analysis process refers to the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages, namely data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Himma, 2022). The data reduction stage aims to filter relevant information in accordance with the research focus. Data presentation is done to display the results clearly through descriptions, tables, and pictures. Drawing conclusions aims to provide reinforcement to the research results found, especially related to the role and strategy of *Pandu Budaya* School in supporting the regeneration process of cultural heritage.

3. Research Result and Discussion

3.1. Socio-cultural Conditions of Jalawastu Traditional Village

Jalawastu Traditional Village, located on the slopes of Mount Kumbang or also known as Mount Sagara, has now become a widely recognized cultural tourism destination in Brebes and its surroundings (Brebeskab, 2024). Its beautiful and natural environment creates a comfortable, peaceful, and cool atmosphere for visitors. The beauty is reinforced by the hospitality and polite attitude of the indigenous people who are humble in welcoming guests who visit. Jalawastu is often referred to as the “*Badui* tribe of the Javanese” because it has a unique culture by combining two ethnicities in one region, namely the Javanese and the Sundanese (Adawiyah, 2022). The existence of these two ethnic groups enriches the cultural diversity that the local community still adheres to. In daily life, the Jalawastu indigenous people use Sundanese as the main language.

One form of respect that is firmly held is the culture of saying “*sampurasun*” which means “I beg your forgiveness” when entering the village area, especially when crossing a wooden gate with a thatched roof with the words “*Wilujeng Sumping Kampung Budaya Jalawastu*”. This expression symbolizes an apology and respect for the local ancestors. The people of Jalawastu Hamlet uphold the cultural values and customary taboos that have been passed down from generation to generation. These principles are part of the community identity that continues to be maintained and respected. Thanks to its cultural wealth, Jalawastu Hamlet has been inaugurated as a national tourist destination.

Jalawastu Traditional Village has a wealth of tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. Among its cultural uniqueness are the *Deng Dong* art and the *Centong*

War dance, two performances that are usually staged to welcome visitors. Furthermore, one of the intangible traditions that has been recognized by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture is the traditional ceremony of “*Ngasa*,” which falls under the category of traditional rites. This tradition reflects the strong spiritual ties and respect for ancestors that continue to be preserved from one generation to the next (Muhaemin, et al., 2021).



Figure 1: *Centong War Dance* (Left) and *Deng Dong Art* (Right). (Image Source: Researcher Documentation, 2023).

The cultural wealth that exists in Jalawastu needs to be preserved, therefore since 2023 the Ministry of Education and Culture has initiated the *Pandu Budaya* School program. This program is designed to instill local wisdom values, preserve traditions, and maintain the identity of Jalawastu Village as a Traditional Village. Involving traditional leaders or *kokolot* councils as teachers, a hands-on experiential learning approach is applied so that the younger generation not only understands, but also actively participates in maintaining these traditions. The *Pandu Budaya* School in Jalawastu Village is expected to ensure the preservation of local culture amid the challenges of globalization.

3.2. The Importance of Cultural Preservation in Jalawastu Traditional Village

The people of Jalawastu Village believe that violation of traditional taboos can bring disaster to their village. This belief is reflected in the culture that is still maintained today, such as house buildings that do not use walls with roofs made of wood or zinc, not roof tiles. The staple food consumed is also corn rice, in line with local crops, while foods derived from animate beings such as meat and fish are taboos that must be avoided (Kemendikbud.id, 2020 in Rahma & Susilowati, 2023).

These traditions and lifestyles show that culture has been rooted in people’s lives since long ago and has become a guideline in living life. These practices are not just ancestral heritage, but part of local wisdom that reflects the principle of maintaining balance with nature. Therefore, maintaining cultural preservation as carried out by the Jalawastu Village community is important so that these values remain relevant and continue to be passed on to future generations.

Cultural preservation, as explained by Halimastusa’diah (2011) in Setiawan et al. (2018), is an effort to maintain traditional values in a dynamic way so that they remain in accordance with the times. Instead of simply freezing old habits, this preservation aims to maintain the existence of culture by allowing its values to continue to develop. Sedyawati (2008) in Setiawan et al. (2018) suggests that cultural preservation includes three main aspects, namely (1) protection, (2) development, and (3) utilization.

TABLE 1: Aspects of Cultural Preservation in Jalawastu Traditional Village.

Cultural Aspects	Preservation	Goals and Actions
Protection		Protecting culture so that it does not fade with the times, such as the “ <i>Ngasa</i> ” traditional ceremony and other local traditions that must be preserved and taught to the younger generation.
Development		Developing the <i>Pandu Budaya</i> Scholl program so that the younger generation can become cultural successor actors who understand the essence and values of lokal culture.
Utilization		Utilizing local culture to support the tourism sector, including holding cultural events that can attract tourists and introduce Jalawastu Village more widely.

Source: Researcher Analysis, 2023.

Cultural preservation in Jalawastu Village is oriented towards a balance between maintaining the values of ancestral heritage and responding to the dynamics of the times. Protection of traditions is carried out by ensuring that various traditions and arts are maintained and passed on through cross generational education. Through the development of programs such as *Pandu Budaya* School, the younger generation is not only introduced to traditions, but also equipped with in depth understanding so that they are able to become guardians and successors of culture. The concept of cultural experience and cultural knowledge is the main approach in the learning process at *Pandu Budaya* School as an effort to preserve local wisdom in Jalawastu Traditional Village.

The two concepts complement each other in building cultural awareness and responsibility of the younger generation for their ancestral heritage. Cultural experience in *Pandu Budaya* School is realized through the young generation’s direct participation

in various traditional activities, such as Ngasa rituals, traditional art performances, and involvement in other traditional ceremonies. Through this engagement, participants not only observe but experience firsthand the cultural values and practices that live within the community. This experience creates a strong emotional bond with the local culture, strengthens a sense of belonging, and builds a deep cultural identity.

Cultural knowledge focuses on the transfer of theoretical and historical cultural knowledge. In the context of *Pandu Budaya* School, this knowledge is delivered through lectures, discussions, and historical documentation provided by traditional leaders and community teachers. The materials taught include the history of village origins, symbolic meanings in rituals, the philosophy of local wisdom, and the values underlying local cultural practices. This knowledge serves to strengthen the younger generation's conceptual understanding of their cultural heritage.

Pandu Budaya School combines these two concepts by emphasizing a balance between theory and practice. This process ensures that young people not only understand culture cognitively but also experience and internalize cultural values through real experiences. Thus, cultural preservation becomes more effective as it is supported by deep understanding and active engagement.

This approach can be a relevant community based education model to be applied in other indigenous communities in order to maintain the sustainability of cultural heritage. In addition, the utilization of cultural wealth is carried out by making tradition a tourist attraction that supports preservation while introducing Jalawastu Village to a wider community.

3.3. The Role of *Pandu Budaya* School in Preserving Cultural Heritage

Pandu Budaya School is held twice a month on Sundays, starting at 9.00 a.m. until 2.00 p.m. This program serves as a platform to create awareness of the values contained in customs and provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between culture and the environment. The program also seeks to build a sense of pride in local cultural identity among teenagers, as well as shaping their character to better appreciate and preserve the values inherited by the ancestors. Local traditional leaders play an important role in running this program as liaisons who teach local wisdom directly to teenagers who are expected to maintain and become actors of cultural preservation.

The following is the role of *Pandu Budaya* School as a means of cultural preservation for local teenagers:

First, *Pandu Budaya* School has an important role as a cultural control by maintaining the values and norms that apply in the local community. This role is realized by direct teaching from traditional leaders who ensure that traditions and customs are passed down while maintaining the essence of culture in accordance with ancestral values. Through this approach, values such as gotong royong, respect for others, and adherence to local customs can be maintained in the midst of growing modernization. This information is similar to what was conveyed by one of the local traditional leaders when interviewed:

“The goal is for young people to understand all the customs that exist and that Jalawastu preserves.” (Interview with Pak Gunawan, March 2023)

Second, *Pandu Budaya* School acts as a cultural education tool that introduces youth to local history, values and cultural norms. The aim is to strengthen the younger generation’s understanding of the importance of customs and traditions in everyday life. Through hands-on learning methods such as listening to stories from traditional leaders and observing real traditional practices, teenagers are expected to appreciate and understand the meaning behind each tradition taught.

Third, *Pandu Budaya* School empowers the younger generation by equipping them with in-depth cultural knowledge in order to become active cultural successor agents. Thus, the young men and women of Jalawastu Village have a role in developing cultural activities, such as local art performances, traditional rituals, and environmental conservation activities. These efforts not only strengthen local cultural identity but also ensure the continuity of cultural values and norms in the future.

The program is run by local customary leaders who have in depth knowledge and experience of long-standing local traditions and wisdom. The program involves local communities who are young and active in maintaining the continuity of traditions. In addition, the activities in this program are designed with a flexible and participatory approach that allows participants to learn through various methods, such as direct learning from traditional leaders, training in traditional rituals, and discussion of cultural values and local norms. This is in line with the statement of local traditional leaders:

“The traditional leaders here assist the cultural guides in their activities, for example by providing knowledge or by telling stories.” (Interview with Pak Gunawan, March 2023)

The program takes place at the Hall of culture Jalawastu Traditional Village, a place that serves as a center to bring together traditional leaders and teenagers in a more informal and open atmosphere. Here, teenagers are given the opportunity to dig deeper into culture through various activities that aim to maintain and develop an understanding of local culture. The program also focuses on the introduction of nature reserves and the importance of preserving the environment around Jalawastu Village, thus teaching teenagers to have cultural environmental awareness with good natural preservation.

3.4. Material Structure of *Pandu Budaya* School

The implementation process of *Pandu Budaya* School includes materials that focus on an in-depth introduction to culture. This material includes understanding the history and origins of Jalawastu Village, including the background of the establishment of the village, the philosophical values behind the customs, as well as various stories passed down from generation to generation. In addition, the teaching of traditional arts and crafts is an important part of the material, such as learning traditional dances, regional musical instruments, and the symbolic meanings contained in each art form.

The teaching also includes learning about traditional rituals, such as traditional ceremonies performed in celebrations or important events, as well as the procedures for their implementation, which contain local wisdom values such as respect for ancestors and the surrounding nature. All materials are designed to form a comprehensive understanding, so that participants not only understand in theory, but are also able to practice and understand the values more deeply. The following is a classification of the structure of the material taught in *Pandu Budaya* School:

Pandu Budaya School has an integrated structure with an important role played by traditional leaders in assisting educational activities. Through materials that cover various aspects of culture, such as history, customs, and other local wisdom, the school aims to introduce and instill in the younger generation a deep understanding of the cultural values that exist in Jalawastu Village. Learning methods based on hands-on experience and knowledge from traditional leaders provide opportunities for participants to better appreciate and preserve local traditions. Through this approach, it is hoped that the younger generation can continue to maintain and continue the existing cultural heritage.

Strategy of *Pandu Budaya* School to Preserve Jalawastu Traditional Village Various implementation strategies are applied so that this activity can take place effectively and

TABLE 2: Material Structure of *Pandu Budaya* School.

Basic Structure	Material	Goals
Institutional Structure	The <i>Kokolot</i> Council or traditional leaders who accompany <i>Pandu Budaya</i> School in Jalawastu cultural education activities. This figure provides knowledge and history of traditional stories directly.	Connect teenagers with traditional leaders who serve as the main source of knowledge about Jalawastu culture.
Cultural Knowledge and Practice	The materials taught at <i>Pandu Budaya</i> School include the history of Jalawastu nature reserve, customs, folklore, natural cosmology, ethnobotany, arts, religion, language, livelihoods, ecology, and mythology.	Introducing youth to the history, customs, and cultural values that exist in Jalawastu so that they can understand and appreciate their cultural heritage.
Learning Methods	Learning based on cultural experiences and knowledge taught by traditional leaders.	Promotes understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage by involving younger generations in the learning process.

Source: Researcher Analysis, 2023

sustainably. The program is planned through good coordination between traditional leaders, local government, and the community. This activity is not only limited to one type of activity, but includes various aspects that aim to maintain local wisdom. The implementation of *Pandu Budaya* School in Jalawastu Village applies two main strategies designed to strengthen in depth cultural understanding.

The first strategy is role based teaching, where traditional leaders act as the primary teachers in conveying cultural knowledge. They share the stories, history and meaning behind traditions directly, so that the younger generation can understand cultural values from a trusted source.

The second strategy is a participatory learning approach. It aims to encourage participants to not only receive theoretical material, but also engage in hands-on cultural practices. For example, participants are taught art practices such as traditional dances, roles in art performances such as the *centong* war dance. Through this active involvement, teenagers are expected to experience first-hand the meaning of culture, strengthen their sense of belonging, and understand that tradition is a part of life that can be applied in their daily lives.

The impact of this program is expected to be seen in the long term, where teenagers are expected to be more concerned about cultural preservation, better understand the values of local wisdom, and be better able to preserve the nature around them. In addition, this program also strengthens social solidarity in the community. Through

active involvement in cultural activities, such as art practices and traditional rituals, a closer sense of community can be created between community elements.

A well maintained cultural identity will encourage collective participation in maintaining social harmony amid the challenges of modernization (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Through a well-planned strategy for implementing *Pandu Budaya* School, it is hoped that local cultural values can continue to live, be passed on across generations, and contribute to cultural sustainability in a sustainable manner.

4. Conclusion

Pandu Budaya School in Jalawastu Traditional Village is a special effort to maintain cultural heritage and regenerate cultural values to teenagers, considering that some traditional practices require in-depth knowledge to be applied correctly and not just anyone can do it. Therefore, from a young age they must be given proper instruction through this program which is designed to teach local history, traditions, and cultural values, while actively involving teenagers in customary activities. *Pandu Budaya* School is also a means to foster a sense of pride in local culture and strengthen cultural identity. Thus, it is hoped that the younger generation can practice traditions correctly, play an active role in preserving local culture, and ensure that the cultural heritage of Jalawastu Village remains alive and well in the midst of globalization.

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