

PRESERVING *BEGENDANG* SARAWAK THROUGH DIGITALIZATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the digitalization of *Begendang* Sarawak, a traditional Malay percussion performance from Sarawak, Malaysia, as a means of preserving cultural heritage. In response to the challenges posed by cultural erosion and the need for sustainability, the research investigates how digital platforms can be utilised to enhance the accessibility and longevity of this art form. Employing an ethnographic approach, including fieldwork and interviews with practitioners, the study documents the current state of *Begendang* Sarawak and the efforts to digitise it. The findings highlight the significant role of digitalization in safeguarding cultural practices, making them accessible to a global audience while fostering collaboration between local and international artists. The study contributes to the broader discourse on cultural preservation by demonstrating how tradition and technology can coexist, ensuring the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage for future generations.

Keywords : Digitalization, Preservation, Traditional Malay, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Preserving cultural heritage has become increasingly challenging in an era marked by rapid technological advancements and globalisation. Traditional art forms like *Begendang* Sarawak, a key element of Malay cultural identity in Sarawak, Malaysia, face the risk of diminishing as younger generations gravitate towards modern entertainment. In this context, sustainability extends beyond the conservation of natural resources to encompass the safeguarding of cultural practices that are essential to community identity (Thani, 2021). As technology evolves, so too must the strategies employed to preserve these intangible cultural assets, ensuring they remain vibrant and relevant for future generations.

This paper explores the potential of digitalization as a strategy for sustaining *Begendang* Sarawak, a performance art that combines drumming, quatrain singing, and dance. Digitalization offers a unique opportunity to document, preserve, and disseminate traditional cultural practices, making them more Idris, M.