



The Playing Techniques of Balo-Balo in Kampung Tirang, Tegal Barat Subdistrict, Tegal City

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan teknik permainan kesenian tradisional Balo-Balo yang berkembang di Kampung Tirang, Kecamatan Tegal Barat, Kota Tegal, serta mengeksplorasi nilai-nilai pendidikan yang terkandung di dalamnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan etnomusikologi dengan merujuk pada teori Alan P. Merriam yang memandang musik sebagai satu kesatuan antara bunyi (sound), perilaku bermusik (behavior), dan konsep musik dalam kebudayaan (conception). Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi terhadap pelaku kesenian dan masyarakat setempat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teknik permainan Balo-Balo melibatkan spesialisasi peran dalam setiap instrumen musik, seperti Terbang Induk, Kempling, Kempyang, dan Konteng, yang dimainkan secara kolektif tanpa menggunakan notasi musik baku. Proses pembelajaran dilakukan secara turun-temurun melalui praktik langsung, yang mencerminkan pola transmisi budaya secara oral dan kinestetik. Nilai-nilai sosial seperti gotong royong, kedisiplinan, kerja sama, dan pelestarian budaya lokal tercermin dalam praktik pertunjukan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa teknik permainan Balo-Balo tidak hanya memiliki nilai musikal, tetapi juga memiliki potensi besar sebagai media pembelajaran seni berbasis budaya lokal, serta sebagai sarana pembentukan karakter dan penguatan identitas budaya dalam konteks pendidikan formal maupun non-formal.

Kata Kunci: Teknik permainan, Balo-Balo, Kampung Tirang, pendidikan seni, budaya lokal

Abstract

This study aims to describe the playing techniques of the traditional performing art Balo-Balo, which has developed in Kampung Tirang, Tegal Barat District, Tegal City, as well as to explore the educational values embedded within it. The research adopts an ethnomusicological approach based on Alan P. Merriam's theory, which views music as an integrated system comprising sound, musical behavior, and cultural concepts. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving local performers and community members. The findings reveal that Balo-Balo playing techniques involve role specialization for each musical instrument, such as Terbang Induk, Kempling, Kempyang, and Konteng, all of which are played collectively without the use of standardized musical notation. The learning process is carried out through oral tradition and direct practice, reflecting a cultural transmission model rooted in kinesthetic and non-written forms. Social values such as mutual cooperation, discipline, collaboration, and the preservation of local culture are reflected in the performance practice. These findings indicate that Balo-Balo's playing techniques not only hold musical significance but also possess strong potential as a medium for culturally rooted arts education, character development, and the reinforcement of cultural identity within both formal and non-formal educational settings.

Keywords: playing technique, Balo-Balo, Kampung Tirang, traditional music, arts education, local culture

Latar Belakang Penelitian

Indonesia is a country richly endowed with traditions, arts, and local cultural expressions that stretch from Sabang to Merauke. Each region holds unique value systems, artistic forms, and patterns of social interaction. One distinguishing feature of Indonesian culture compared to that of other nations is the continued existence of traditional art forms that remain integrated within community life, even amidst the growing influence of modernization. Among the various art forms that have emerged and evolved, traditional music holds a particularly significant position—not only serving as entertainment but also functioning as a means of communication, education, and social cohesion. One traditional music form that continues to thrive today is Balo-Balo, a musical art native to Kampung Tirang, Tegal Barat District, Tegal City (Yulia et al., 2017).

Tegal City, located on the northern coast of Central Java Province, possesses a distinctive cultural identity. Although it is not always regarded as a cultural center like Yogyakarta or Surakarta, Tegal exhibits a vibrant artistic dynamic, one of which is reflected in the traditional performing art of Balo-Balo. This art form has developed within the context of a coastal society, which tends to be open, expressive, and grounded in strong values of kinship and collectivity. The term Balo-Balo itself is derived from the Tegalese word “bolo”, meaning “companion”, symbolizing the spirit of togetherness and mutual cooperation deeply embedded in the local community (Nur Iqbal Siti Aesijah Abdul Rachman et al., 2020).

Originally, Balo-Balo emerged as a medium for Islamic preaching (dakwah) as well as a vehicle for delivering social and religious messages to the community. Over time, along with shifts in local culture and societal dynamics, the function of this musical art has undergone significant transformation. Today, Balo-Balo no longer serves solely as a channel for conveying religious values, but has evolved into a

platform for artistic expression among the coastal communities of Tegal—blending spiritual elements, humorous nuances, and social criticism in a creative and communicative manner (Firman Syafa’at dkk., 2021).

The uniqueness of Balo-Balo becomes increasingly apparent in its performance context, particularly through the use of traditional musical instruments dominated by various percussion types such as rebana genjring, kendang induk, kencer, gong rebana, and kempling. The rhythmic arrangements and playing techniques of these instruments serve as distinctive elements that set Balo-Balo apart from other forms of traditional performing arts (Pratama et al., 2020). In addition to its entertainment value, Balo-Balo is frequently performed at various social and ceremonial events, such as mantu poci (a traditional Tegal wedding ritual), circumcision ceremonies, thanksgiving gatherings (tasyakuran), and other community-based occasions, ensuring its continued presence in the daily lives of local residents.

In recent years, many traditional art forms including Balo-Balo have faced serious challenges, particularly in terms of generational regeneration, which involves passing down traditions to younger generations. Efforts to preserve these traditions are increasingly urgent in order to ensure their sustainability amidst rapid social and cultural changes. The influx of popular culture and globalization has contributed to shifting musical preferences, especially among the youth, who now tend to be more attracted to modern music genres. However, in some regions of Indonesia, there are still young people committed to preserving traditional arts. On the other hand, documentation of traditional musical techniques remains extremely limited, raising concerns that these skills may gradually disappear over time. One of the most endangered aspects is the playing technique itself—including the specific

drumming patterns, performance styles, forms of improvisation, and accompaniment structures—which are considered the very soul of Balo-Balo (Amanda Excel Frenadya & Annisa Fitri Safara 2, 2024).

This research emerged from the urgent need for documentation and a deeper understanding of the playing techniques of Balo-Balo as an integral part of preserving traditional art forms. According to Putra (2016), playing techniques are not merely about striking instruments rhythmically, but rather reflect the musical structure, local values, and informal pedagogical practices embedded in the community. Within the context of arts education, examining Balo-Balo's playing techniques offers insights into how cultural values are transmitted through musical practice.

Accordingly, these techniques are not only relevant as objects of study in musicology or ethnomusicology, but also play a vital role in arts education based on local cultural wisdom. The techniques can serve as sources of inspiration for learning in schools, community training programs, and the development of locally integrated curricula. Through this research, it is hoped that awareness will grow regarding the importance of documenting playing techniques as part of a broader strategy for preserving traditional arts in a manner that remains adaptive to changing times (Murcahyanto, 2022).

Historically, Balo-Balo music has deep roots in the lives of the Tegal community, particularly in Kampung Tirang, Muarareja Subdistrict, Tegal Barat District. Several oral and written sources indicate that this traditional art form has existed since the early 20th century. During Indonesia's struggle for independence, Balo-Balo music was used as a tool to disguise the activities of freedom fighters who were organizing resistance strategies. By performing music collectively, the local community created the illusion of celebration or festivity, thereby deceiving the Dutch colonial authorities.

Following the colonial period, the function of Balo-Balo music continued to evolve in line with the changing social dynamics of the community. It became part of religious rituals, Islamic propagation (*syiar Islam*), and popular entertainment at various social events, such as *mantu poci*—a symbolic wedding ceremony between a human and a teapot (*poci*), which serves as a cultural hope for couples longing to have children. In this context, Balo-Balo functions both as a spiritual medium and a form of collective entertainment (Gita Mumtazah & Widodo, 2019).

In terms of playing technique, Balo-Balo is known for its distinctive and dynamic rhythmic style. Instrumentalists playing *rebana genjring*, *kendang induk*, and *kempling* perform interlocking patterns that collectively create a strong rhythmic unity. This technique does not rely solely on technical mastery of the instruments, but also requires sensitivity to tempo, group dynamics, and musical intuition. In essence, each player must be able to actively listen to one another and adjust their performance accordingly—an approach that reflects the communal values embedded in the musical practice (Liao et al., 2024).

Training in Balo-Balo's playing techniques is conducted informally within the community. Learning usually takes place through direct practice, where novice players observe and imitate senior musicians. There is no use of formal notation or written scores; instead, the entire process is transmitted orally and kinesthetically. As a result, these techniques are highly vulnerable to loss if generational transmission does not occur. In this respect, Balo-Balo is considered a form of traditional art that is on the verge of extinction.

On the other hand, technological developments and changing times have also influenced the way Balo-Balo music is performed. Today, some performing groups have begun incorporating modern musical instruments such as electric guitars,

keyboards, and bass into their performances. The inclusion of these instruments inevitably alters the overall musical structure and playing techniques. For instance, synchronizing traditional percussion with electric instruments demands technical adaptation, both in rhythm and in sound dynamics.

Nevertheless, not all groups have embraced these changes. Some traditional artists remain committed to preserving the original playing techniques in their purest form, using only traditional instruments without the inclusion of modern elements. The tension between preserving authenticity and embracing innovation has become an integral part of Balo-Balo's contemporary performance dynamics. Therefore, any understanding of Balo-Balo's playing techniques must be situated within the socio-cultural context of the communities that sustain it.

The development of Balo-Balo's playing techniques reflects the flexible nature of this art form, which is not confined to rigid structures. Balo-Balo represents a living art that continues to evolve, adapting to social transformations and the demands of the times without losing its core identity. Amidst the rapid currents of modernization, Balo-Balo emerges as a responsive art form, revitalizing its performance elements to remain relevant to contemporary audiences. This highlights the critical understanding that preserving traditional arts does not necessarily mean maintaining their original forms in absolute terms. On the contrary, effective preservation requires innovative approaches that continue to uphold fundamental values and embedded cultural essence. In this context, the continuity of evolving playing techniques while remaining grounded in traditional rhythmic patterns and musical structures demonstrates Balo-Balo's resilience and ability to interact harmoniously with modern culture. This adaptation reinforces the idea that Balo-Balo is not merely a historical legacy, but an active component of a dynamic

cultural system that continues to engage with the present generation. In the realm of arts education, traditional music-playing techniques such as those found in Balo-Balo can serve as a comprehensive learning medium. These techniques involve not only conceptual understanding of rhythm and striking patterns but also foster motor skills development, as well as cultivate emotional attitudes and social values.

Playing traditional instruments such as rebana genjring and kendang in Balo-Balo performances requires precise movement coordination, musical sensitivity, and the ability to work collaboratively within a cohesive group. The playing techniques in Balo-Balo are not merely related to musicality or technical proficiency in handling instruments, but also encompass crucial educational dimensions particularly in the context of character education. The training process and performance practices inherently involve close social interaction among players, demanding attitudes of mutual understanding, respect for individual roles, and adaptability within group dynamics. In practice, a performer cannot adopt an individualistic or ego-centered approach, as the success of the performance depends heavily on team harmony and collective unity. Consequently, values such as cooperation, discipline, responsibility, and the ability to listen and respond collectively are inseparable from the learning process embedded in this traditional art form.

These values are not only learned theoretically but are internalized organically through direct experience in rehearsals and group performances. Thus, the playing techniques of Balo-Balo can be understood more broadly as an effective medium for character education rooted in local culture, as they instill social and moral values through a contextual, enjoyable, and community-relevant approach.

In addition, the playing techniques of Balo-Balo offer rich material for the development of arts education curricula in schools, particularly in subjects such as

cultural arts and skills. Learning that is rooted in local culture aligns with the principles of Merdeka Belajar and the strengthening of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, both of which emphasize the importance of local wisdom in shaping students' identities. Through a contextual approach to regional arts, students not only learn art as a form of aesthetic expression but also gain an understanding of the noble values embedded within their communities.

Balo-Balo's playing techniques are not only relevant in formal education settings but also hold great potential for utilization in various community-based arts training programs conducted outside the school context. Such programs can be developed through local art studios (*sanggar seni*), cultural communities, or extracurricular initiatives organized by community institutions, youth organizations, or regional governments. By utilizing these non-formal platforms, efforts to preserve Balo-Balo can reach broader segments of society, especially younger generations who may not have direct access to formal education systems. For these training efforts to be effective and sustainable, comprehensive and systematic documentation of the playing techniques is essential whether in written, audio, or visual form. Such documentation serves as a guide or teaching resource that can be used by trainers and participants alike to understand the structure, rhythmic patterns, striking styles, and performance dynamics of Balo-Balo in a holistic way. The pedagogical approach should be based on hands-on practice or learning by doing, in accordance with traditional learning methods passed down orally and practically by the art masters. Therefore, community-based training becomes not only a means of expanding access to local arts but also a strategic tool for sustaining traditional skills and creating spaces for regeneration enabling the emergence of young players capable of continuing the legacy of Balo-Balo in a meaningful and enduring manner.

However, a major challenge in preserving Balo-Balo's playing techniques

lies in the lack of written and audiovisual documentation that can serve as references for learning. Until now, knowledge of these techniques has largely been retained in the memories of senior practitioners, whose ages continue to advance. Without a systematic effort to document these practices, there is a significant risk that such skills may disappear within one or two generations.

This is where the urgency of this research becomes particularly important. By systematically describing the playing patterns, rhythmic structures, striking techniques, and collaborative processes among players, this study contributes to the development of both academic references and educational materials in the field of arts education. The approach employed in this research is not only aimed at recording techniques, but also at understanding the deeper values embedded in the practice—ranging from aesthetic and pedagogical dimensions to sociocultural significance.

In a broader context, the preservation of playing techniques in the Balo-Balo tradition cannot be separated from the larger framework of intangible cultural heritage protection strategies that have become a national priority. These playing techniques encompass not only the technical aspects of musical performance but also contain aesthetic, social, and historical values that represent the cultural identity of the supporting community. According to the mandate of the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 5 of 2017 on the Advancement of Culture, the preservation of traditional arts—including the playing techniques of Balo-Balo—is a collective responsibility that involves the state, society, and individuals alike. This responsibility includes efforts in documentation, revitalization, and knowledge transmission to future generations through various educational and training pathways. As a central element of Balo-Balo performances, the playing techniques must not only be preserved in their physical and functional forms but

should also be developed to remain relevant amidst modern societal changes. Such development must be rooted in traditional foundations while embracing contextual innovation, allowing this art form to continue thriving as an integral part of Indonesia's multicultural cultural life. Therefore, the preservation of Balo-Balo's playing techniques constitutes a concrete manifestation of the commitment to safeguarding the nation's cultural wealth, as well as an active contribution to the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage in the era of globalization.

Accordingly, this research offers not only scientific value within the fields of ethnomusicology and arts education, but also delivers practical impact on local cultural preservation efforts. Playing techniques are not merely tools for producing musical sound—they serve as symbols of cultural continuity, collective expression, and communal identity that deserve to be protected and sustained (Syafutra et al., 2022).

Research Questions

1. Based on the background described earlier, there are several fundamental issues that underlie this research. The traditional music of Balo-Balo, which thrives in Kampung Tirang, features distinctive and culturally valuable playing techniques, yet has not been thoroughly explored in academic studies, particularly from the perspective of arts education. In the midst of limited documentation and the declining interest of younger generations in traditional music, the following key question arises: How is the structure of Balo-Balo's playing techniques in Kampung Tirang, Tegal Barat District, characterized?
2. What educational and cultural values are embedded in these playing techniques, and how are they related to local culture-based arts education?

Research Objectives

This study has two main objectives:

1. To systematically describe the playing techniques of Balo-Balo music in Kampung Tirang, including the types of instruments used, playing patterns, striking styles, and the musical structure formed during performances.
2. To analyze the educational and social values embedded in Balo-Balo's playing techniques and their relevance to the development of culture-based arts education, as well as their contribution to the preservation of the community's cultural identity.

Research Benefits

This study is expected to provide the following benefits:

Theoretical Benefits:

This research contributes to the development of academic discourse in the field of arts education, particularly within the domain of traditional Indonesian music. The study of Balo-Balo's playing techniques can enrich the literature on ethnomusicology, culture-based arts education, and pedagogical approaches in arts learning. By documenting and systematically analyzing these techniques, the research is expected to serve as a scientific reference for future studies in related fields.

Practical Benefits:

For Teachers:

The findings of this study can serve as teaching materials, references, and inspiration for designing local wisdom-based arts education in line with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum and the Profil Pelajar Pancasila framework.

For Traditional Art Communities and Practitioners:

The documentation of Balo-Balo's playing techniques can help ensure the continuity of musical practices amid contemporary challenges, and serve as a guideline for the regeneration of young performers within the Kampung Tirang community.

For Local Governments and Cultural Agencies:

This research provides data that can be used in formulating cultural preservation policies, developing local art studios (*sanggar seni*), and archiving traditional arts as part of intangible cultural heritage.

For Students and Researchers:

The study can serve as an academic reference for further research in the fields of traditional music, instrumental techniques, arts education, and cultural anthropology.

RESEARCH METHODS

According to Moleong (2017), qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observed individuals and behaviors. This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. The research was conducted in Kampung Tirang, Tegal Barat District, Tegal City. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. The primary focus of data collection was on local residents of Kampung Tirang and the Balo-Balo performers themselves. After all data had been collected, the researcher analyzed the findings using a data analysis technique designed in accordance with the objectives and structure of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Muarareja Subdistrict is one of the administrative regions in Tegal City, geographically located in the coastal area along the northern shore of the Java Sea. In line with the general characteristics of coastal communities, most residents of Muarareja rely on marine and aquatic sectors for their livelihoods, such as working as fishermen or managing fishponds. This lifestyle as

fishermen and fish farmers also influences various aspects of the community's life, including religious practices.

The level of religious understanding and practice among the Muarareja population tends to be relatively low. This condition is suspected to be one of the contributing factors to the declining presence of traditional art forms with strong religious elements, such as Balo-Balo. The lack of community attention and limited efforts to preserve this art form have pushed it to the brink of extinction. Fortunately, there is a local religious study group (*pengajian*) composed of elderly members in Muarareja. Although the gatherings are not held regularly, they have inspired the revival of Balo-Balo practices. Before being known as Balo-Balo, this art form was referred to as Syrakal or Srakalan a type of traditional art rooted in spiritual beliefs and religious practices of local communities. Syrakal did not only serve as entertainment but also as a medium of spiritual communication between humans and supernatural forces, such as ancestral spirits, deities, or God. The sacred elements in this art form were usually expressed through specific rules, including performance timing, sacred spaces, and designated performers believed to possess special powers or knowledge (Pudentia, 2018).

In Indonesia, Syrakal-like art forms are found in many regions, taking diverse forms such as ritual dances, musical performances in traditional ceremonies, and folk theatre. Examples include gamelan music in religious ceremonies in Bali, or *debus* art with spiritual elements in Banten. All of these reflect a strong connection between art and local belief systems (Sari, 2020). However, modernization and globalization have led to a shift in meaning for many of these traditions. A significant number have undergone desacralization a process in which sacred art forms become profane or are performed merely as tourist attractions, stripped of their spiritual significance (Rahman, 2017). This presents a particular

challenge for efforts to preserve the cultural and spiritual values inherent in traditional art.

As time progressed, the art form known as Syrakal evolved and came to be known as Balo-Balo. Historical accounts note that Balo-Balo was already being performed during the Dutch colonial period, serving multiple functions: not only as a medium for Islamic preaching (dakwah), but also as a strategic disguise for the activities of independence fighters, who appeared to be merely "playing music" to avoid arousing suspicion from colonial authorities (Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Tengah, n.d.). The name Balo-Balo itself is interpreted as a symbol of "companionship in struggle."

Following Indonesia's independence, Balo-Balo developed into an important component of community ceremonies and events, such as mantu poci a symbolic marriage or divorce ritual in both Muarareja Village and Kampung Tirang. This art form often contains elements of guyon wangsalan Tegal (Tegal-style humor and wordplay), social critique, and religious praise (Gita Mumtazah & Widodo, 2019).



Figure 1. *Kampung Tirang Performing Group*

a. History of Balo-Balo Art

The people of West Tegal, particularly the residents of Muarareja Subdistrict, began to recognize the traditional art form of Balo-Balo around the year 2003. The reintroduction of this art form cannot be separated from the role of a community figure named Mr. Wage, a native of Muarareja and a central figure in the preservation of this tradition. He is known to have inherited knowledge and skills in performing Balo-Balo from his ancestors

through oral tradition and hands-on practice. Since 2003, Mr. Wage has actively promoted and disseminated Balo-Balo practices to the surrounding community through both social and religious activities.

Around 2015, as a concrete effort toward preservation and regeneration, he initiated the formation of a performing arts group dedicated to staging Balo-Balo. This group was named "Balo-Balo Kampung Tirang," referring to the name of the village where Mr. Wage lives and carries out his daily activities. The naming was chosen as a tribute to the local roots of the art form and to assert the group's identity as part of the Kampung Tirang community. The establishment of this group marked a strategic step in preserving the existence of Balo-Balo amidst the ongoing currents of social and cultural change. This traditional art continues to utilize instruments whose authenticity is carefully maintained, including:

Terbang Induk is the main type of musical instrument in the Balo-Balo ensemble, characterized by its medium size. This instrument is equipped with a relatively long soundboard made of wood, which produces strong resonance. Its function goes beyond merely contributing to the overall sound; it also serves a central role in directing the performance, acting as a command instrument that sets the reference for the other instruments.



Figure 2. *Terbang Induk : the central instrument in the Balo-Balo ensemble*

Terbang Kempling is a percussion instrument that is smaller in size compared to

the Terbang Induk. Its primary role is to maintain rhythm or beat patterns, making it essential for ensuring tempo stability throughout the Balo-Balo musical performance.



Figure 3. *Terbang Kempling : a smaller percussion instrument that maintains rhythmic stability in Balo-Balo performances*

Terbang Kencer is a traditional percussion instrument that belongs to the rebana family. It is commonly used in folk arts such as Balo-Balo and is played rhythmically to reinforce the tempo or underlying beat of a performance. This medium-sized, round instrument is covered with skin on one side and produces a light yet sharp sound. It often functions as a rhythm keeper or a complementary instrument to the main one, such as the Terbang Induk. In the context of Balo-Balo, Terbang Kencer contributes to creating dynamic and harmonious rhythmic patterns.



Figure 4. *Terbang Kencer – medium-sized rhythm support instrument in Balo-Balo)*

Terbang Konteng is a relatively large instrument within the Balo-Balo ensemble. It functions similarly to a gong in gamelan, marking phrase endings and emphasizing musical dynamics. It also serves as a kind of

contra bass, providing low tonal color and enhancing musical depth.



Figure 5. *Terbang Konteng – a large, gong-like instrument enriching the low tones in Balo-Balo*

The playing techniques of Balo-Balo do not differ significantly across various performance contexts such as mantu poci (traditional wedding), circumcision ceremonies, or thanksgiving events (tasyakuran). The basic technique remains the same, with differences found only in the songs performed. A distinctive feature of Balo-Balo is its use of songs in Ngapak the local dialect of Tegal. One example is the song “Balo-Balo Ratu Ayu Aja Pulang.” For events like mantu poci, circumcisions, and tasyakuran, the performances typically include Islamic-themed verses or shalawatan (religious chants).



gambar 1 (Doc. Ferdianto Zain)

During practice sessions led by Mr. Wage, the Muarareja community typically encounters no significant difficulties, as the performance practices of Balo-Balo are not substantially different from those of Syrakalan. The group holds rehearsals twice a week, with the specific days and times

adjusted to accommodate the daily routines of Muarareja residents. Given that Muarareja is a coastal subdistrict located directly along the shoreline, it is unsurprising that most members of the Balo-Balo traditional music group in Kampung Tirang work as fishermen or fishpond farmers. This social context gives Balo-Balo in the area a unique characteristic worthy of further study. The uniqueness lies in the fact that most of the performers do not come from artistic family backgrounds or formal arts education. Instead, they are ordinary community members whose daily lives are centered around the marine and aquaculture sectors.

In the learning process of Balo-Balo, according to Mr. Wage the leader of the group not all members are trained to play various instruments. This is due to the implementation of a strict division of roles, whereby each individual focuses exclusively on mastering a single type of instrument. This strategy is deliberately applied by Mr. Wage to ensure optimal performance quality. Specializing in one instrument is expected to enhance each performer's technical skill and consistency, allowing the entire performance to unfold in a harmonious and professional manner.

The performance of Balo-Balo differs significantly from that of other popular music genres such as dangdut or modern band groups. Unlike most music performances, Balo-Balo does not include an instrumental introduction. The Balo-Balo group from Kampung Tirang also has its own signature song titled "Balo-Balo Pitutur," composed by the Tegal City Arts Council. Although the art form can be performed by people from all walks of life, only a few individuals are truly committed to studying it in depth. This presents a considerable challenge for Mr. Wage, who bears the responsibility of encouraging more community members to become familiar with this nearly extinct traditional art form especially among the younger generation, most of whom show little interest in the traditional arts of Tegal.

In particular, youth in the Muarareja area tend to favor modern entertainment forms

such as pop bands, DJs, and K-pop. This poses a serious concern for the community, as there is a growing need to preserve and transmit the traditional Balo-Balo art form to younger generations, so that it may continue to live and develop rather than face extinction.

b. Values and Arts Education

According to Mr. Wage, the leader of the Balo-Balo ensemble, Balo-Balo performances embody a number of noble values that are essential in community life, particularly within the Kampung Tirang environment. The values of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and togetherness are highly evident in every performance, where community members help one another in preparing musical instruments, the performance space, and even refreshments for both performers and audiences. The value of collaboration is also reflected in the harmonious coordination among players, which cannot be achieved individually but requires strong group synchronization. These performances also represent cultural preservation, as the community consciously maintains and passes on this tradition to the younger generation as part of their local cultural identity.

Children and teenagers in Kampung Tirang have, in principle, been introduced to the Balo-Balo tradition either through their families or through community-based cultural activities that still uphold this heritage. However, in practice, the younger generation's interest in Balo-Balo tends to be declining. This is largely influenced by modern lifestyle shifts and changing entertainment preferences, where youth are more drawn to contemporary expressions such as boybands, pop bands, or other popular art forms they find more attractive and aligned with current trends. As a result, their involvement in traditional art has become minimal, posing a serious threat to the continuity of Balo-Balo as a local cultural heritage. Nevertheless, over the past month, there has been a growing interest among some young people to learn and reconnect

with Balo-Balo. This emerging awareness indicates hope for the preservation of traditional arts provided it is supported by the right approach and active involvement from community leaders, families, and educational institutions.

According to the informants, traditional Balo-Balo music is highly appropriate to be used as a learning medium, especially in cultural arts education for children and adolescents. This art form not only contains aesthetic and musical value but also carries rich educational elements such as cooperation, discipline, and cultural preservation. Unfortunately, in practice, most educational institutions today tend to prioritize modern music such as band performances in their arts curriculum. As a result, traditional arts like Balo-Balo have yet to gain proportional space within the formal education system. Even so, there are promising signs that this tradition could still enter the realm of formal education. A notable example is Mr. Wage's grandchild, who currently attends SMP Negeri 3 Tegal and has already been introduced to Balo-Balo in school. This indicates that with willingness from both schools and local communities, Balo-Balo can be integrated into arts education curricula.

Furthermore, Mr. Wage believes that the introduction of traditional arts like Balo-Balo would be far more effective if started early at the elementary or even preschool level. Early exposure can help children form emotional and cultural bonds with local traditions from a young age, eventually fostering an awareness of the importance of preserving regional cultural heritage.

The informant responded positively to the possibility of incorporating Balo-Balo into school cultural arts subjects. According to him, such integration would be a strategic effort in preserving traditional art forms that are increasingly threatened by modern cultural shifts. Including Balo-Balo in the education system would not only introduce students to their local artistic heritage, but also nurture a sense of appreciation and pride for their own cultural identity. Furthermore,

he believes that teaching Balo-Balo in schools can serve as an effective means of instilling social values such as cooperation, responsibility, and discipline from an early age. Therefore, he strongly supports the idea that schools and relevant authorities begin to consider Balo-Balo as part of formal education, particularly within the framework of character education rooted in local culture.



Figure 7. *Documentation of a Balo-Balo practitioner (Source: Informant)*

According to the informant, Mr. Wage, there have been significant changes in the way Balo-Balo is performed compared to the past. In earlier times, Balo-Balo performances were relatively simple and featured limited variations in rhythmic patterns or beat structures. This may have been due to the limited musical knowledge at the time, as well as Balo-Balo's primary function as a sacred and ritualistic practice. However, over time particularly with the advancement of knowledge and skills among the younger generation Balo-Balo has undergone innovation, including the addition of more dynamic rhythmic variations and beat patterns. These changes reflect the community's ability to adapt to the times while also demonstrating their creativity in preserving traditional arts without abandoning their original values.

Mr. Wage expressed his full support for the documentation and formal teaching of Balo-Balo's playing techniques through educational institutions or cultural training programs. He emphasized that documentation is a crucial step in ensuring the sustainability of a traditional art form, especially one that is transmitted orally and through direct practice from generation to

generation. With proper documentation written, audio, or video the knowledge of Balo-Balo can be systematically preserved and made accessible to future learners, thus reducing the risk of cultural loss due to limited direct transmission.

Moreover, he believes that formally teaching Balo-Balo in schools or art institutions is an effective strategy for engaging younger generations in recognizing, understanding, and appreciating their regional culture. Mr. Wage even mentioned that this is one of his personal hopes as a practitioner of the art that Balo-Balo not only survives within traditional settings but also finds its place within the broader educational and cultural development system. In this way, the preservation of Balo-Balo becomes not merely ceremonial or symbolic, but an integral part of a meaningful and continuous learning process.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explain the playing techniques of the traditional Balo-Balo music found in Kampung Tirang, as well as to explore the educational values embedded within it as an effort to preserve local culture.

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Curriculum Vitae

Saya lahir pada 4 februari 2001 di tegal, dan memulai perjalanan hidup saya dengan penuh semangat dan harapan. setelah menyelesaikan pendidikan dasar dan menengah, saya melanjutkan pendidikan saya ke jenjang sarjana di universitas negeri Semarang, program studi seni musik, dan lulus pada ta