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INTERNALIZATION OF CULTURAL VALUES IN DEWA RUCI THROUGH THE ARTISTIC EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG NGESTIPANDOWO MEMBERS

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Abstract

This study examines how the cultural values embedded in the Dewa Ruci narrative are internalized through the artistic experiences of young members of the Ngestipandowo Wayang Orang community and considers their relevance to identity exploration and character development. A descriptive–interpretive qualitative approach was adopted in Semarang, Indonesia. Data were gathered through observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and a literature review involving the director, young and senior performers, and group administrators. Analysis involved data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing and verification; source and methodological triangulation supported the trustworthiness of the findings. The findings suggest that values are not transmitted directly from the narrative to young performers. Rather, senior performers and the director mediate them through interpretation, rehearsal, enactment, interpersonal interaction, and performance. Five interrelated analytical dimensions were identified: recognition, understanding, experience, affective engagement, and meaning-making. Whereas Yusuf Arifin emphasized obedience to teachers, Fajri emphasized steadfastness, perseverance, and responsibility. Their differing interpretations demonstrate how artistic participation creates opportunities to relate inherited cultural values to personal experience. The evidence supports interpretations in terms of moral knowing and moral feeling, with only tentative indications of moral action; it does not establish a causal relationship between performance and character formation. Ngestipandowo thus serves not only as a site for sustaining traditional performing arts but also as a setting for cultural learning, intergenerational value transmission, and self-reflection.

Keywords: Dewa Ruci; cultural values; Ngestipandowo; artistic experience; identity exploration.

INTRODUCTION

Amid social and cultural change, the sustainability of traditional performing arts cannot be reduced to the preservation of performance forms. It also depends on communities' capacity to transmit knowledge, values, experiences, and ways of interpreting art to subsequent generations. In the case of Ngesti Pandowo Wayang Orang, Puguh et al. (2019) demonstrated that preservation requires sustained support, including performer development, while Irianto and Hadiyanto (2021) showed that changing social conditions call for revitalization if the art form is to retain its function and relevance. Together, these studies establish regeneration as a significant dimension of community sustainability, but they do not specifically explain how young participants experience and interpret cultural values through performance practice.

Wayang Orang can be understood as a sociocultural environment in which learning occurs through direct participation. Arts education not only generates aesthetic experiences but may also foster value-oriented learning that contributes to personal development (Jazuli, 2005). Within artistic communities, learning involves observation, imitation, rehearsal, correction, guidance, interaction, and

performance. Halverson et al. (2023) found that out-of-school arts education can provide opportunities for identity exploration, narrative construction, creativity, and collaborative learning. Artistic practice, therefore, enables young people to learn not only how to perform but also how to participate and assume roles within a community.

As Ngestipandowo recruits and develops younger performers, participants encounter artistic skills alongside communal rules, customary practices, intergenerational relationships, and interpretations of characters and dramatic narratives. Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981) conceptualized cultural transmission as a social process through which knowledge and cultural orientations are passed between generations. Accordingly, the central question extends beyond young performers' technical ability to stage Wayang Orang: it concerns how values embedded in a dramatic narrative are transmitted through social and artistic practices and subsequently experienced and interpreted by younger participants.

This question is pertinent to identity development during adolescence and youth. Erikson (1968) identified adolescence with the psychosocial tension between identity and role confusion, while Crocetti (2026) described identity development in terms of exploration and consolidation. Social and cultural experiences form part of these processes. Hölscher et al. (2024) likewise highlighted the importance of relationships and connections to cultural heritage in adolescents' cultural identity development. At Ngestipandowo, rehearsals and performances provide settings in which young members assume roles, engage with older generations, and bring artistic experience into dialogue with everyday life.

The Dewa Ruci narrative offers a particularly relevant context because the journey of Bima, also known as Brotoseno, encompasses obligations, obstacles, quests, perseverance, and the acquisition of knowledge about the self. Wicaksana and Wicaksandita (2023) suggested that Bima's journey in Dewa Ruci lends itself to reflection on identity formation. At Ngestipandowo, the director, Budiono Lee, interprets Brotoseno's journey in relation to attitudes and choices about how to live. Dewa Ruci thus functions not merely as dramatic material but as a narrative through which young members may interpret their own experiences.

Such a process must be distinguished from the mere communication of moral messages. Portraying a character does not automatically make the values of the narrative part of the performer's personal orientation. Kalidjernih (2010) and Johnson (1986) approach internalization as the process whereby social values and orientations become integrated into an individual's understanding and outlook. Within character education, Lickona (1991) distinguished moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. This framework provides a means of interpreting degrees of understanding, affective engagement, and possible orientations toward action, but it does not justify inferring a causal relationship between theatrical performance and character formation.

Previous research on Ngestipandowo has predominantly addressed performers' experiences, the group's historical development, preservation, and revitalization, while studies of Dewa Ruci have generally examined the meanings of Bima's journey and the values represented in the narrative. The present study takes a different analytical position by examining mechanisms through which values are internalized in young members' artistic experiences. A gap remains in explaining the relationships among narrative values, mediation by experienced performers, rehearsal and enactment, personal experience, and young participants' interpretations. Its contribution is to conceptualize Dewa Ruci value internalization as a socially and artistically mediated process rather than a linear transfer of

prescribed values. Values acquire personal significance through mediation, participation, affective engagement, and their encounter with lived experience.

To address this gap, the study analyzes the internalization of cultural values in Dewa Ruci through the artistic experiences of Ngestipandowo's young members and examines how they interpret those values in relation to identity exploration and possible dimensions of character development. It supports the understanding of traditional art as a setting for cultural education while extending this perspective by identifying social and artistic processes that transform cultural inheritance into personally meaningful experience. The relationship between artistic participation and character is therefore treated as a potential reflective process, not as a demonstrated causal effect.

Research on traditional arts and young people likewise emphasizes the active involvement of emerging generations. Liu and Kalimyllin (2026) showed how dance education and practice may support the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage to younger people. Cen et al. (2024) suggested that the sustainability of traditional performing arts requires forms of engagement that reach younger audiences and participants and connect tradition with their practices of interaction and learning. Through a qualitative study, Loke and Liu (2025) associated adolescents' performing arts participation with personal experiences, self-development, and identity exploration. These findings position young people as active agents in both artistic experience and cultural inheritance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study draws on four interconnected bodies of scholarship already introduced above and subsequently mobilized in the discussion: cultural transmission, communities of practice, identity development, and character education through the arts. This section delineates their conceptual contributions and clarifies the study's analytical position; it does not introduce additional empirical evidence.

Cultural transmission is understood as an intergenerational social process through which knowledge and cultural orientations are both passed on and reinterpreted (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981). In artistic communities, transmission is enacted through participation in shared practices, observation, imitation, correction, and interaction with more experienced members. Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice helps explain how learning is embedded in participation and social relationships rather than confined to the verbal communication of knowledge.

Within traditional performing arts scholarship, studies of Ngesti Pandowo have investigated the group's development, preservation, and revitalization (Azhari et al., 2019; Irianto & Hadiyanto, 2021; Puguh et al., 2019; Wijanarko & Setyawan, 2016). Studies of Dewa Ruci have addressed the meaning of Bima's journey and the search for identity (Mulyana, 2018; Wicaksana & Wicaksandita, 2023). Meanwhile, research on arts education and participation suggests that artistic engagement can offer contexts for social experience, reflection, and identity exploration, although its developmental effects must be assessed in light of the particular activity and available evidence (Holochwost et al., 2021; Halverson et al., 2023; Loke & Liu, 2025; Liu & Kalimyllin, 2026).

Identity development during adolescence is conceptualized as a process of exploration and consolidation shaped by social and cultural experience (Erikson, 1968; Crocetti, 2026; Hölscher et al., 2024). Lickona's (1991) framework of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action is used

cautiously as an interpretive lens for the dimensions of value engagement. It is not employed to argue that performance experience directly causes changes in character.

Taken together, this scholarship leaves insufficiently explained the mechanisms connecting dramatic narratives, mediation by directors and senior performers, artistic practice, and young people's personal meaning-making. The present inquiry therefore addresses not simply which values Dewa Ruci contains, but how participants encounter and interpret those values through their engagement at Ngestipandowo.

METHOD

A descriptive–interpretive qualitative approach was employed to investigate young members' experiences, actions, interactions, and meaning-making within the natural setting of an artistic community rather than to measure relationships between variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interpretive dimension enabled these experiences to be examined through the concepts of value internalization, cultural transmission, arts education, identity development, and character education.

The research was conducted within the Ngestipandowo Wayang Orang association at the Raden Saleh Cultural Park complex in Semarang, Indonesia. This site was selected because Ngestipandowo has sustained a history of performance practice while involving younger generations in its ongoing regeneration. The site was treated as a socio-artistic setting in which rehearsal, direction, intergenerational interaction, character enactment, and performance preparation take place.

The study drew on primary and secondary sources. Primary data were generated through observations and interviews with individuals directly involved in rehearsal, performance, and regeneration: director Budiono Lee; young members or adolescent performers; senior performers; and Joko, a manager or leader of the association. The contrasting experiences of two young performers, Yusuf Arifin and Fajri, provided particularly important material for analyzing variation in meaning-making. Secondary materials comprised the Dewa Ruci narrative, group archives, photographs, videos, activity records, books, journal articles, and previous studies.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, and a literature review. Observation focused on rehearsals and performances, director–performer and senior–junior relationships, correction and guidance, processes of enactment, and interactions before and during performances. Interviews explored participants' understanding of the narrative, interpretations of characters, perceptions of salient values, performance experiences, learning experiences, and perceived connections between those values and their everyday lives. Documentary materials were used to support the observational and interview evidence.

Trustworthiness was examined through source and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing accounts from the director, younger members, senior performers, and the group manager. Methodological triangulation involved comparing observations, interviews, and documentation. Differences among accounts were not automatically construed as errors; rather, they were examined as evidence of variation in experience and interpretation across participants.

Data analysis followed the interactive approach of Miles et al. (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During condensation, materials were organized around the Dewa Ruci narrative, cultural values, mediation by senior performers and the director, rehearsal, enactment, personal experience, identity exploration, and character. Evidence

was then compared across participants and collection methods. Interpretation related recurring patterns to the concepts of internalization, cultural transmission, communities of practice, identity development, and character education. Five analytical dimensions emerged from this engagement between field materials and the conceptual framework: recognizing, understanding, experiencing, affectively engaging with, and making meaning of values. These dimensions are not advanced as fixed theoretical stages, but as analytical categories developed in relation to the empirical material.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Ngestipandowo as a Setting for Regeneration and the Transmission of Performing Arts

The Ngestipandowo Wayang Orang association provides a setting in which the group's history meets the challenge of sustaining participation across generations. According to Joko, Ngesti Pandowo was established on 1 July 1937 and underwent a lengthy historical development before taking root in Semarang. In its early period, recruitment and the transfer of performance knowledge often followed family and kinship lines. Subsequent developments opened participation to younger people outside those familial networks. This shift is significant because the transmission of Wayang Orang no longer takes place exclusively through genealogical relationships, but also through social participation and firsthand experience.

Ngesti Pandowo's performance history encompasses relocation, changes in performance forms, and adjustments to stage requirements. Joko's account of performances at night fairs, the move to the GRIS building, and the adoption of stage innovations illustrates the group's capacity to adapt without abandoning its performance identity. This history matters because value internalization does not occur in a social vacuum: young members enter a community with established knowledge, habits, and conventions for carrying out artistic practice.

Joko also recounted historical achievements, including performances at the Presidential Palace, the Wijayakusuma award, musical productions by Lokananta, and overseas tours, which situate Ngestipandowo within Semarang's performing arts history. Such history is presented here not as a principal research outcome but as context for understanding why generational renewal matters. Cultural sustainability depends not only on the survival of an organization but also on its capacity to pass knowledge and values to incoming performers.

Regeneration through social participation broadens the meaning of cultural inheritance. Young members do more than acquire a repertoire: they develop relationships with senior members, learn artistic conventions, and encounter responsibilities associated with belonging to the group. The community thereby becomes a setting for transmission in which values are learned through practice.

Young people's position is particularly important because they participate actively in productions. Their involvement as dancers, actors, and members of staged ensembles brings them into direct contact with learning processes. These observations accord with Puguh et al. (2019) and Irianto and Hadiyanto (2021) on the significance of regeneration and revitalization. The present study extends those accounts by demonstrating that regeneration also provides a means of transmitting values through artistic experience.

Ngestipandowo's sustainability can therefore be considered on two levels: the continuity of the organization and its performances, and the continuity of cultural knowledge and values. The second

level is central to this inquiry because values cannot be sustained simply as information to be handed down; subsequent generations need opportunities to experience and interpret them.

2. Dewa Ruci as a Narrative Resource for Learning Cultural Values

Observations and interviews indicate that Dewa Ruci serves as a narrative resource for learning cultural values. Bima's journey encompasses commands, obstacles, quests, perseverance, and the acquisition of insight into the nature of the self. The narrative is thus more than material to be mastered for performance: it offers a point of reflection through which young members can relate characters' actions to the demands of their own lives.

Denarno, a senior performer, described Bima's journey as he obeys the instruction of Resi Durna to seek Tirta Perwitasari, ultimately encountering Dewa Ruci. For Denarno, this journey concerns the pursuit of knowledge and self-understanding. His account illustrates that a narrative's significance within the community derives not only from its plot but also from the ways experienced performers interpret that plot.

Denarno's interpretation of Bima Ngaji emphasizes wisdom, genuine strength, understanding of the nature of life, self-discovery, and spirituality. In this interpretation, Dewa Ruci is a source of values whose significance remains open to further interpretation. This finding resonates with Wicaksana and Wicaksandita (2023), but the present study shifts attention from the symbolic meaning of Bima's journey to the ways that meaning enters young performers' experiences.

Values are not communicated to young members solely through formal explanations. Narratives, characters, rehearsals, role enactment, interaction, and performance constitute interconnected experiences through which values become accessible. Liu and Kalimyllin (2026) showed that dance education and practice can facilitate the transmission of cultural heritage to younger generations. At Ngestipandowo, this process operates through Wayang Orang: the dramatic narrative provides a cultural frame, while the community provides the social setting in which that narrative is experienced.

3. Senior Performers and the Director as Mediators of Value Transmission

The values expressed in Dewa Ruci do not automatically become part of young members' personal orientations. The findings indicate that senior performers interpret the narrative and explain the meanings of characters' actions. Denarno, for example, understands Bima's journey as a pursuit of knowledge and of the nature of the self. Senior performers thus mediate both knowledge and values.

The director also shapes the ways young performers approach the narrative. Budiono Lee interprets Brotoseno's journey in relation to personal attitudes and life choices, linking the dramatic material to broader questions of living. Value transmission consequently involves mediation: the values represented in the story are selected, interpreted, and framed before younger performers encounter them in practice.

On this evidence, the transmission process can be summarized as follows: the Dewa Ruci narrative → senior performers' interpretations → the director's interpretation → rehearsal and enactment → young members' experiences → personal meaning-making. This sequence synthesizes the findings and is not intended as a causal model. Meanings are transformed through social interaction and artistic practice before they acquire personal relevance.

These findings also suggest that young members are not passive recipients. Senior performers and the director offer interpretive frames, but younger participants continue to understand values in relation

to their own experiences. This is consistent with cultural transmission as a social process (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981) and with the concept of a community of practice, in which learning is embedded in participation in shared activities (Wenger, 1998). The study's contribution lies in explaining how intergenerational transmission becomes internalization when inherited values intersect with personal experience.

4. Rehearsal and Role Enactment as Contexts for Experiential Learning

Rehearsal provides a principal setting in which artistic knowledge and values are practiced. Young members learn dialogue, movement, expression, and characterization while observing senior performers, responding to corrections, repeating actions, and adapting to group conventions. Rehearsal, in this sense, is not merely technical preparation for a performance; it also constitutes an informal educational environment.

Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice helps account for this process. Young members learn by participating in activities undertaken collectively. Knowledge is not always presented verbally; it is acquired by watching, imitating, attempting, receiving feedback, and repeating. Artistic skills thus develop alongside norms, attitudes, responsibilities, and ways of interacting with others.

Role enactment introduces a more embodied dimension because young performers must bring characters to life through their bodies, voices, expressions, and actions. Fajri, who portrayed Dewa Ruci, did not merely learn the sequence of events; he attempted to understand the conflicts, characters, and trajectory of Bima's journey. The experience brought values initially encountered at the narrative level into bodily and emotional engagement.

These findings support Jazuli's (2005) argument that artistic experience can have a value-educational dimension and accord with Holochwost et al.'s (2021) caution that the potential benefits of arts participation for personal development depend on the form and context of the activity. The study does not, therefore, claim that rehearsal and character enactment automatically produce character development. It shows, more modestly, that these activities create conditions for learning and reflection in which value internalization may occur.

5. Recognizing and Understanding Values: Yusuf Arifin's Experience

Yusuf Arifin's experience suggests that the depth of interpretation is not determined solely by portraying a principal character. Although Yusuf performed the role of Anoman, he also studied the plot and values of Dewa Ruci and expressed an interest in Bima. His account indicates that participation in the wider performance environment can introduce young people to cultural values even when they do not portray the character at the center of the narrative.

Yusuf interpreted Bima's journey primarily in terms of a student's obedience to a teacher. In his view, teachers possess experience and knowledge that can guide their students. He connected this understanding to parents, who have lived through experiences before their children. Yusuf thus moved beyond identifying Bima's actions toward articulating the reasons for those actions and their significance in his own life.

Within the study's analytical framework, Yusuf's account illustrates a movement from recognizing values toward understanding them. He identified the character's conduct and then explained its normative rationale. This corresponds to Lickona's (1991) dimension of moral knowing: the capacity

to identify and understand moral values. The available evidence does not establish behavioral change, so the interpretation at this point remains limited to value understanding.

Yusuf also expressed evaluative endorsement when describing obedience to a teacher as conduct worth emulating. This suggests an element of moral feeling: obedience was no longer simply information contained in a story, but a value he regarded as desirable and relevant. However, the consistency with which he enacted this value in daily life was not adequately observed; no conclusion can therefore be drawn concerning moral action.

6. Experiencing and Emotionally Engaging with Values: Fajri's Experience

Fajri's account reveals a different form of engagement. As a young member who portrayed Dewa Ruci, he participated directly in role enactment and described Bima's journey as an experience with which he identified emotionally. He emphasized steadfastness, resilience, perseverance, and responsibility as important qualities for confronting obstacles.

This affective engagement is significant because Fajri did more than identify values: he attributed personal importance to them. During interviews, he linked Bima's journey to the demands of education and university study, the practical needs associated with attending university, artistic commitments, and responsibilities toward his family. Narrative values acquired significance through their relationship to situations he was actually facing.

This connection suggests a shift from encountering values through enactment toward emotionally engaging with them. Artistic participation enabled Fajri to inhabit a character's situation, while his life experiences provided a context for reinterpreting the character's actions. Perseverance consequently became a reflective vocabulary for understanding his own difficulties. Internalization, from this perspective, does not arise solely from the messages of a story but from the interaction between artistic and personal experiences.

Fajri's experience is consistent with Halverson et al. (2023), who described out-of-school arts education as a setting for experience and identity exploration, and with Loke and Liu (2025), who linked performing arts participation to personal experience and self-development. This study extends those perspectives by showing how a traditional dramatic narrative can become a medium of reflection when a character's values are interpreted in relation to a young performer's everyday life.

7. Making Meaning through Personal Experience: Comparing Yusuf and Fajri

Comparing Yusuf and Fajri demonstrates that the same narrative may generate different interpretations. Yusuf emphasized obedience to teachers and educational relationships, while Fajri focused on steadfastness, perseverance, and responsibility. These differences do not indicate a failure of transmission; rather, they reveal the dialogic and personal character of internalization.

Fajri related these values to education, artistic activity, practical concerns, and family life, whereas Yusuf connected them to learning and relationships with parents. Personal experience therefore plays an important part in shaping which values individuals consider relevant. Cultural values are not extinguished by interpretive differences. Indeed, the plurality of meanings suggests how cultural heritage may remain alive through the interpretations of successive generations.

The comparison also indicates that the role a performer plays does not uniquely determine their interpretation. Yusuf did not portray Bima, yet he developed an understanding of obedience. Fajri portrayed Dewa Ruci and reported substantial affective involvement, but the significance he ultimately

attributed to the narrative emerged when he connected performance experience to the problems of everyday life. The findings thus reinforce the argument that internalization involves an interaction among the narrative, the social setting, artistic engagement, and personal experience.

Internalization is therefore more convincingly understood as an interpretive process than as the transfer of predetermined values. The narrative offers possibilities for meaning; senior members and the director provide mediation; performance practice offers experience; and young participants assess the relevance of values through reflection. This mechanism helps explain why a shared cultural narrative may acquire different meanings for different individuals.

Table 1. Comparison of young members' interpretations of Dewa Ruci values

Participant	Principal values	Source of interpretation	Dimensions of internalization
Yusuf Arifin	Obedience to teachers	Teacher–student relationships and parental experience	Recognizing–understanding; moral knowing and indications of moral feeling
Fajri	Steadfastness, perseverance, and responsibility	Role enactment and experiences involving education, the arts, and family	Experiencing–affective engagement–meaning-making; moral knowing and moral feeling

8. Interpreting Dewa Ruci in Relation to Identity Exploration

Interpretations of Dewa Ruci may be understood in relation to identity exploration, provided that this relationship is treated as reflective rather than causal. Erikson (1968) associated adolescence with the challenge of identity versus role confusion, while Crocetti (2026) emphasized processes of identity exploration and consolidation. Ngestipandowo's young members navigate education, family life, social relationships, artistic activities, and future choices, all of which provide a context for interpreting the narrative.

Yusuf drew on Bima's journey to reflect on teacher–student relationships and his parents' experiences, while Fajri used it to interpret struggles associated with education, artistic work, and family responsibilities. For both, the story became a means of addressing concerns extending beyond its plot. Dewa Ruci offers a cultural narrative through which everyday experiences can be considered in light of a character's actions.

Identity exploration is therefore understood in this study as a reflective activity through which young participants consider who they are, how they enact their social roles, which values matter to them, and how they respond to the demands of life. This finding accords with the view that connections to cultural experience can contribute to identity development (Hölscher et al., 2024). The study further suggests that such reflection arises not only from the content of the narrative but also from the socio-artistic experiences made possible by community participation.

9. Value Internalization and Indications of Character Development

Character education serves here as a supplementary framework for interpreting the depth of engagement with values, not as a means of proving that performance causes changes in character. Lickona (1991) distinguished moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. These dimensions are applied cautiously to identify the kinds of evidence available in Yusuf's and Fajri's accounts.

In terms of moral knowing, Yusuf was able to explain Bima's obedience to his teacher and give reasons why he considered this conduct worthy of emulation. Fajri identified steadfastness, resilience, perseverance, and responsibility as salient values in Bima's journey. These accounts provide evidence of value recognition and understanding.

Moral feeling concerns the emotional salience and personal relevance of values. Fajri described an affective connection with Dewa Ruci and related it to his own struggles. Yusuf likewise expressed evaluative acceptance of obedience to teachers. The available material thus suggests that these values were not only understood intellectually but also acquired affective significance for the participants.

Evidence relating to moral action is more limited. Fajri connected perseverance and responsibility to his daily life, but the data do not establish whether any corresponding behavior resulted from his performance experience. Such observations should therefore be treated as tentative indications of moral action and possible character development, not as causal evidence of character formation.

This position is consistent with Holochwost et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of context in assessing the contributions of arts education to socioemotional development. Artistic experience can create conditions conducive to reflection on values, while character development remains shaped by experiences beyond the performance setting. Maintaining this distinction ensures that the study's claims remain proportionate to the evidence provided by its qualitative design.

10. Synthesizing Internalization, Identity Exploration, and Character Development

The findings suggest that Dewa Ruci value internalization emerges from the relationships among cultural narratives, intergenerational mediation, artistic practice, personal experience, and reflection. The narrative provides a source of values; senior performers and the director act as mediators; rehearsals and role enactment provide opportunities for experience; and young performers actively interpret and attribute meaning to what they encounter.

Analytically, these processes can be approached through five dimensions: recognizing → understanding → experiencing → affectively engaging → making meaning. Their presentation in this order does not imply universal or linear developmental stages. One participant may first encounter a value through observation, experience it in enactment, and understand it more fully through later reflection; another may understand a senior performer's explanation before developing affective engagement in rehearsal. The five dimensions function as a framework for interpreting the depth and variety of internalization experiences.

The differences between Yusuf and Fajri underline the personal nature of these outcomes. Obedience was particularly salient for Yusuf, whereas steadfastness, perseverance, and responsibility mattered most to Fajri. Variation does not mean that cultural transmission produces a single, standardized meaning. Cultural heritage may remain sustainable precisely because succeeding generations are able to connect inherited values to new circumstances.

This synthesis highlights Wayang Orang as a context for cultural education. Rehearsal and performance bring together skills, knowledge, norms, intergenerational relationships, embodied engagement, emotion, and reflection. Kim and Park (2023) emphasized the role of community-based artistic activity in cultural community development and sustainability, while Halverson et al. (2023) described out-of-school artistic experience as a context for identity and narrative. The present study

develops these perspectives by identifying mechanisms of value internalization within the Ngestipandowo Wayang Orang community.

The principal contribution is a shift from asking 'What values does Dewa Ruci contain?' to asking 'How do those values become experiences and meanings for young performers?' The findings indicate that this process involves mediation by senior performers and the director, rehearsal, role enactment, interpersonal interaction, performance experience, and personal reflection. Identity exploration and tentative indications of character development are thus considered possible dimensions of meaning-making rather than automatic consequences of performance.

The analytical synthesis may be expressed as follows: artistic experience → value transmission → value internalization → affective engagement and meaning-making → reflection on life experience → identity exploration → moral knowing → moral feeling → tentative indications of moral action. This sequence summarizes the findings; it is not a causal model. Its purpose is to show how traditional performing arts can provide socio-artistic environments in which cultural values move from narrative representations into personally meaningful experiences and reflection.

The study has limitations. Interpretations were drawn primarily from a small number of younger participants and artistic practitioners who contributed data. The findings are not intended to be generalized to every Ngestipandowo member or all young people engaged in Wayang Orang. Future research could include a wider range of participants, compare several dramatic narratives, and examine changes in value interpretation and enactment over longer periods. These limitations also clarify the study's contribution: an in-depth understanding of socio-artistic mechanisms of value internalization within the specific context of Ngestipandowo.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that cultural values embedded in Dewa Ruci are internalized through young Ngestipandowo members' artistic experiences by means of social and artistic processes, rather than a linear transfer from narrative to individual. The story provides a repertoire of values; senior performers and the director mediate their interpretation; and rehearsal, role enactment, interaction, and performance provide opportunities to encounter them. The process can be examined through recognizing, understanding, experiencing, affectively engaging with, and making meaning of values. These are analytical categories derived from the interplay of empirical materials and theory, not fixed theoretical stages. The differences between Yusuf and Fajri show how cultural values acquire relevance when related to personal experience. Yusuf primarily emphasized obedience to teachers and learning relationships, whereas Fajri stressed steadfastness, perseverance, and responsibility. Dewa Ruci consequently functions as a reflective narrative through which younger participants consider education, social relationships, artistic commitments, and everyday responsibilities in relation to cultural values. The data support interpretations of moral knowing and moral feeling, together with tentative indications of moral action, but do not establish a causal claim about character formation. The findings suggest that Ngestipandowo Wayang Orang may serve as a setting for cultural education, intergenerational transmission, and young people's self-reflection. Initiatives to preserve traditional performing arts should therefore consider not only the continuity of performances but also the quality of the learning experiences and interpretive opportunities offered to succeeding generations.

Young performers' interpretations show that a single dramatic narrative may generate different meanings in light of personal circumstances. Yusuf understood Bima's journey chiefly through obedience to teachers and his learning experiences, whereas Fajri interpreted it through steadfastness, perseverance, and responsibility. Such differences suggest that cultural values become relevant when connected to the concrete experiences of subsequent generations. As a resource for identity exploration, Dewa Ruci allows young members to reflect on a character's experiences in relation to their own education, social relationships, artistic pursuits, and life responsibilities.

From a character education perspective, the findings provide evidence of moral knowing and moral feeling and tentative indications of moral action. They do not, however, warrant causal conclusions about character formation. Artistic experience is better understood as providing social and artistic contexts in which young people can encounter, engage with, and reflect on values. Ngestipandowo Wayang Orang can accordingly be understood not only as a site for preserving traditional performing arts but also as a setting for cultural education, intergenerational value transmission, and self-reflection among younger generations.

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