

Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge in Indonesia: Cultural Conservation Effort

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous knowledge is the knowledge owned by local communities that needs to be preserved and passed down from generation to generation. The objective of this research is to analyze preserving indigenous knowledge in Indonesia based on the World Bank's process of preserving indigenous knowledge. Data for this research were obtained from journal articles on the preservation of indigenous knowledge in Indonesia, published between 2017 and 2023, obtained from GARUDA, Google Scholar, and ProQuest journals. This study has undertaken a systematic literature review using the PICOC methodology. The outcomes explain that the types of indigenous knowledge in Indonesia consist of various categories, namely language, arts, architecture, oral culture, and customs. The study also indicates that in the preservation stage, indigenous knowledge has reached the recognition and validation phase. However, it is still not optimal in implementing other stages, namely recording and documentation, storage, transfer, and dissemination. The results also show that in the process of preserving local knowledge, the tools and techniques used are mobile phones, cameras, computers, social media, online databases, books, photo collections, CDs, and websites.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge; knowledge preservation; knowledge management

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge serves as a guiding framework for human activities and is shaped through the process of social construction within society. Additionally, knowledge is also interpreted as an individual's understanding of something, such as descriptions, abilities, or information obtained through the processes of discovery, analysis, or learning (Nakashima et al., 2002). Knowledge is divided into two types: explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is knowledge that has been documented through some form of media. Explicit knowledge is easier to disseminate from one another and can be done systematically. In

contrast to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is knowledge that has not been documented and is still in the individual's mind. The dissemination of tacit knowledge is difficult because of this. However, this knowledge can be shared by communicating through consistent relationships. For example, a child learning to sing from a professional musician. Nevertheless, the transfer of such knowledge may not even occur (Gilanie, 2022). Ethnic groups are rich in tacit knowledge, often referred to as indigenous knowledge.

A systematic approach to acquiring, organizing, and sharing explicit and tacit knowledge is crucial in knowledge management to maximize the utilization of knowledge within an organization or community (Seghroucheni et al., 2023). To enhance knowledge creation, storage, retrieval, and transfer, various processes and practices fall under the domain of knowledge management. Effective knowledge management is essential for fostering innovation, improving efficiency, and maintaining a competitive advantage (Paliwal et al., 2024). It ensures that valuable information is not only captured and stored but also made accessible to those who need it. This is particularly important when dealing with indigenous knowledge, as it often exists in tacit form and is passed down through generations within certain communities. Managing indigenous knowledge is challenging due to its intrinsic nature, which is deeply rooted in the cultural and social context of the community (Dei, 2024). Therefore, knowledge management approaches must be tailored to respect and preserve the cultural integrity of the knowledge while facilitating its documentation and dissemination in a sustainable and ethical manner.

Currently, indigenous knowledge has become an intriguing term to discuss in various fields, including the field of library and information science. Omarsaib (2023) states that the theme of indigenous knowledge is a prominent theme in the field of library and information science. Many professionals are making efforts to research the role of libraries in preserving indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is a form of insight, understanding, and experience held by a specific community (Gray, 2016). It is an expression of a particular group that gives it distinct characteristics, setting it apart from other groups. Indigenous knowledge is the result of experiences passed down from ancestors and adapted to the environmental conditions of the ethnic group. Additionally, indigenous knowledge is preserved orally from generation to generation, providing strength in the application of indigenous knowledge in daily life. This aligns with the views of Mpofu and Miruka (2009) "Indigenous knowledge is developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local environment. Indigenous knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation through an enabling environment like the existence of a strong social capital."

Rajasekaran, as cited by the World Bank, states that indigenous knowledge is formed through the accumulation of experiences, experiments, and a deep understanding of environmental conditions within a specific culture (World Bank, 1998, in Utami, 2016). This characteristic gives indigenous knowledge the advantage of being easily and inexpensively utilized without the need for technology. Indigenous knowledge has assisted local communities in meeting their needs for many years, fostering an appreciation and utilization of locally based knowledge practices. Different types of indigenous knowledge within a group can create self-sufficiency. Afful-Arthur's research highlights that indigenous knowledge is suitable for use in culturally diverse developing countries, such as the digitalization of sign language among the Oroo tribe, facilitating creative communication practices for the unspoken indigenous group (Afful-Arthur et al., 2022).

Indonesia, as a developing archipelagic country with the world's largest land area, supports diverse cultures and ethnicities. According to 2023 data from GoodStat, Indonesia

has over 300 ethnic groups spread across 34 provinces. The Javanese ethnic group, the largest in population, comprises 95,217,022 individuals, predominantly residing in East Java, Central Java, and Yogyakarta. The Sundanese ethnic group ranks second with a population of 36,701,670, mainly residing in West Java, Banten, and Jakarta. Other ethnic groups include the Batak, Sulawesi, and Madura (GoodStats Data, 2023). Each group possesses indigenous knowledge integral to their daily activities, covering aspects such as art, music, language, cultural games, crafts, and natural resource management (Forutnani et al., 2018).

Indigenous knowledge is a means to carry out the practice of knowledge because indigenous knowledge is related to the products, application, and meaning of knowledge. The indigenous knowledge held by ethnic communities in Indonesia can be applied and beneficial in various fields. The embodiment of indigenous knowledge can take the form of songs, legends or stories, proverbs, food, skills, beliefs, ceremonies, adaptations, innovations, language, ethical codes, art, and law (Gray, 2016). For instance, the Javanese community often uses spices for medicinal purposes, known as *"tanaman obat keluarga"* (family medicinal plants). Research by Sayuti suggests that ginger, a common component, has immune-boosting benefits and can support COVID-19 therapy (Sayuti & Rusita, 2022). Indigenous knowledge also contributes to environmental conservation, as seen in the case of *"sasi laut,"* a traditional marine conservation practice among the Misool community in Papua (Prasetyo et al., 2020). Additionally, in agriculture, the Minangkabau's indigenous knowledge known as *"Aia adat"* helps address water resource challenges (David & Ploeger, 2014). The various benefits of indigenous knowledge underscore the importance of its preservation.

Preserving indigenous knowledge can be achieved through specific methods, aiding local communities in safeguarding their indigenous knowledge (Boikhutso, 2012). Preserving cultural, traditional, artistic, and other forms of indigenous knowledge is essential to ensure the continuation of cultural practices for future generations. Without proper documentation, indigenous knowledge faces the risk of being lost, along with difficulties in analyzing its custodians and identifying its essence. Nurhayati's research indicates an increasing trend in the study of knowledge preservation in Indonesia (Nurhayati, 2023). However, there is a need for further research to analyze the extent to which the preservation of indigenous knowledge is carried out in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how ethnic groups in Indonesia preserve indigenous knowledge and examine the techniques and tools used to document indigenous knowledge. The current study not only contributes to understanding the cultural preservation efforts of Indonesian communities but also offers valuable insights into the broader global challenge of safeguarding indigenous knowledge.

2. METHODS

This research employs the systematic literature review method with the PICOC methodology. Systematic literature review is a method used to identify, select, and interpret research in-depth to answer research questions clearly. Dewey (2016) states that a systematic literature review aims to analyze all relevant publication evidence on a topic. The systematic literature review consists of three stages: planning, conducting and reporting. In the planning stage, the researcher formulates the research questions. The research questions are based on the PICOC methodology described in Table 1.

Table 1. PICOC

PICOC	Description
POPULATION	Articles on knowledge preservation in indigenous knowledge in Indonesia were obtained from journal databases.
INTERVENTION	Articles focusing on the preservation of Indigenous knowledge by ethnic groups in Indonesia
COMPARISON	Not set
CONTEXT	Summaries of comprehensive studies on the preservation process of knowledge belonging to various ethnic groups in Indonesia

(Source: Authors (2023))

Based on the PICOC methodology, this research seeks to address the following questions: First, what types of indigenous knowledge are held by communities in Indonesia? Second, how do local communities in Indonesia carry out the process of preserving their indigenous knowledge? And third, what specific tools and techniques are employed by these communities to ensure the preservation of their indigenous knowledge?

The literature search utilized electronic databases such as Google Scholar, GARUDA (Indonesia Digital References), and ProQuest, employing the keywords "knowledge preservation," "indigenous knowledge," and "Indonesia." Articles were selected based on three specific criteria, with one key exclusion: articles focusing on indigenous knowledge from ethnic groups outside Indonesia were omitted from the results. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are detailed in Table 2:

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion

Inclusion	Exclusion
Articles published from 2017-2023	Articles published before 2017
Articles explaining the preservation of Indigenous knowledge in an ethnic group	Articles not explaining the preservation of Indigenous knowledge
Ethnic groups originate from Indonesia	Ethnic groups not from Indonesia

(Source: Authors (2023))

In the second stage, the article selection process was conducted using the databases Google Scholar, GARUDA, and ProQuest, based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The initial search identified 263 articles from ProQuest, 16 from Google Scholar, and 5 from GARUDA that met the first inclusion criterion (published between 2017 and 2023). In the next step, the abstracts of these articles were analyzed to determine their relevance to the second criterion, which required a focus on the preservation of indigenous knowledge within ethnic groups. This abstract analysis yielded 180 suitable articles. However, further scrutiny revealed that several articles did not specifically address the preservation of indigenous knowledge in Indonesia. Ultimately, 9 articles were identified as meeting all criteria, focusing on the preservation of indigenous knowledge among Indonesia's ethnic groups.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the selection results, there are 9 articles found to meet the criteria. These 9 articles are described the table.

Table 3. Objectives of the Articles

Articles Code	Title	Authors	Objectives
1.	Preservation of Traditional Knowledge for the Sustainability of Indigenous Knowledge of the Kapur XI Community in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, Duriatinggi Village	Fajri Rahmad, Elva Rahmah (2018)	Understand how the community in Kanagarian Durian Tinggi, consisting of various Malay tribes, preserves indigenous knowledge for the benefit of future generations.
2.	Indigenous Knowledge Preservation of Oral Literature "Hawiwang" in West Lampung	Reza Nawafella Alya Parangu, Tamara Adriani Salim (2018)	To identify the oral tradition called "Hawiwang" and understand the efforts made to preserve the Hawiwang oral tradition in North Lampung.
3.	Knowledge Preservation of the Mystical Cultural Legacy of Kebo-Keboan Alasamalang	Bachrul Ilmi, Tamara Adriani Salim (2019)	To understand the preservation process of knowledge through communication in the Kebo-Keboan ceremony.
4.	The Preservation of Traditional Knowledge and the Cultural Expression of Craft Rumah Gadang's Walls as the Intellectual Property of West Sumatra	Armilia Riza, Surya Prahara (2018)	To analyze the issues faced in preserving the cultural expression of Rumah Gadang's walls.
5.	Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge Transfer in Oral Tradition of Seloko Adat Jambi	Rts. Tiara Hilda Safitri, Tamara Adriani Salim (2019)	To analyze the preservation process of local wisdom in the Seloko Adat Jambi culture
6.	The Preservation and Dissemination Strategy of Toba Batak Indigenous Knowledge for Millennial Generations	Afryna Veronica (2021)	This study focuses on the preservation of the language and script of the Toba Batak tribe.
7.	Indigenous knowledge values of bahuma as a preservation of the national culture of Indonesia	K.P Hastuti, D Arisanty, A.M Rahman, P. Angriani (2022)	To identify the values of local wisdom of the Banjar Tahuma tribe and understand the strategies used to preserve the culture of the Banjar Tahuma tribe.
8.	Preservation of Local Wisdom Values in the Oral Traditions of the Kabizu Beijello Community Through the Education Sector	Yulina Sesi Bitu, R. Kunjana Rahardi (2020)	To describe the values of local wisdom in the Teda oral tradition practiced in the Padede Uma Kalada culture and the role of the education sector in preserving Teda oral culture.
9.	Preservation of Tamaik Kaji Knowledge in Marriage Customs in Pariaman City, West Sumatra	Hany Nandia Putri, Desriyeni (2023)	To analyze the indigenous knowledge of the Pariaman community and understand the forms of preservation and the role of the community in wedding culture in Pariaman, West Sumatra.

(Source: Authors (2023))

It is known that local wisdom in Indonesia takes various forms, including oral traditions, arts, language, architecture, and customs as shown in the table. It can be observed that communities are still striving to preserve their local wisdom, ranging from oral traditions, culture, customs, and arts. This preservation is expected to serve as a means to sustain their culture so that the next generation can continue these cultural practices.

According to the World Bank (1988), as cited by [Utami \(2016\)](#), the process of preserving indigenous knowledge consists of six stages: recognition, validation, documentation, storage, transfer, and dissemination. Some local wisdom has already preserved activities successfully, following all six stages. However, some have not completed all six stages of local wisdom preservation according to the World Bank data.

a) Recognition and Identification

Recognition and identification are stages where a community can recognize and identify the culture they possess. Based on the analysis of nine articles (see Tabel 3), it is very clear that each community has implemented the recognition and identification stage. Each ethnic group or community is aware of and recognizes their local wisdom. Recognition manifests as communities know that their local wisdom originates from their area. For example, the community in *Kanagarian Durian Tinggi* recognizes their indigenous knowledge as a vital part of their cultural heritage.

In the identification stage, communities understand that their local wisdom can take various forms. This includes oral traditions, customary ceremonies, arts, language, architecture, and techniques related to daily activities. For instance, the oral tradition "*Hawiwang*" in West Lampung and the mystical cultural legacy of "*Kebo-Keboan Alasmalang*" are identified as the key cultural elements.

At this first stage, it can be identified that recognition and identification are crucial steps in the efforts to preserve local knowledge. The analysis shows that communities have carried out recognition and identification well. This stage explains that the community can recognize and understand the importance of their local knowledge to be passed down to the next generation.

b) Validation

Validation is the stage when the community comprehends the relationship between local wisdom and values in daily life. The analysis of the nine articles revealed that each piece of local wisdom embodies messages that convey cultural values and positive norms. Values in local wisdom can be divided into several aspects: related to ethics, techniques of performing certain tasks, and respect for the community's ancestors. At this stage, each community is aware that their local knowledge contains important moral and ethical values that shape individual behavior. For instance, the oral tradition "*Seloko Adat Jambi*" includes advice pertaining to social norms in the Jambi community and has been recognized as an intangible cultural heritage of Jambi. Another example of validation is the understanding of the Batak proverb "*Umpasa Ni Halak Batak*" in daily life. In the Wewea community, validation is achieved through the understanding of the expression "*Teda*" which is considered to have magical value and is only uttered during cultural ceremonies. The validation stage also serves as a mediator for adapting to modern developments. This process helps individuals understand that the values embedded in local knowledge can be applied to modern life, such as in education and social interactions within the community.

c) Recording and Documentation

Recording and documentation are critical stages in passing down tacit local wisdom to future generations within the community. The analysis of the nine articles indicates that six have undergone the recording and documentation process, while three have not. The tools used for recording include smartphones, cameras, websites, and online media. The resulting documentation is presented in various forms, such as videos, short films, audiovisual content, and written articles that discuss local wisdom.

This stage will help the community preserve and facilitate the recognition of culture in the future. The utilization of technology in this stage is essential as it simplifies the process of storing and accessing local knowledge. The use of technology such as cameras and smartphones will help ensure that local knowledge is well documented. Forms of documentation like videos, short films, or written articles can aid in the visual and written transmission of knowledge. This documentation activity has already been undertaken by communities, such as documenting the *Kebo-Keboan* tradition using cameras during cultural ceremonies in Banyuwangi. Meanwhile, written documentation is carried out by the Minangkabau community by writing and collecting religious readings from the *Tamaik Kaji* ceremony. This is crucial to ensure that the knowledge can be preserved in the long term. However, this stage faces challenges such as community awareness and limited access to technology and resources necessary for documentation activities. The inability to address these challenges will result in local knowledge remaining unrecorded. Consequently, local knowledge will be at risk of disappearing with the passage of time.

d) Storage

Storage is the continuation of the recording and documentation process. In this stage, the identification of storage techniques used in preserving local wisdom takes place. Storage is also related to retrieval activities and maintenance methods for local wisdom. Based on the analysis of nine articles, it is known that six articles have already implemented the storage stage, while three have not. Commonly used storage techniques involve utilizing technology, such as computer storage, online databases, and social media like YouTube. Traditional storage methods, such as books and collections of photo albums or archives from the implementation of local wisdom, are also employed.

Based on the analysis, there are two storage techniques used by communities: digital storage and traditional storage. Digital storage involves saving data on online databases that provide large storage capacity and can be accessed by many people from various locations. For example, the Batak Toba community stores the Batak language on compact discs and online websites. The second type of storage is traditional storage. This involves using physical media such as books or photo albums. These books contain traditional knowledge that serves as an important archive for the community. Examples include archives containing ceremonial mantras in the *Kebo-Keboan* tradition and the *Seloko Adat Jambi* guidebook compiled by the Minangkabau community.

Similarly, storage is a crucial stage in the process of preserving local knowledge. By ensuring that this knowledge is safely stored and accessible, communities can preserve their culture for future generations. Hence, there needs to be a well-organized combination and protection of both digital and traditional storage to ensure the existence of local knowledge. Well-organized storage will provide long-term benefits for cultural preservation.

e) Transfer

Transferring is the stage when local wisdom is passed down to future generations. Eight articles have already gone through the transferring stage, each in different forms. One article has not implemented the transferring stage. The transferring stage is generally done in three forms: orally, practically, and through educational integration.

Oral tradition is the activity of transferring local knowledge through storytelling, meetings, religious study gatherings, and expressing proverbs in daily life. This method uses verbal communication and interaction between the knowledge holders and recipients, as practiced by the Minangkabau community in learning *Seloko Adat Jambi*. Practical transfer also occurs during traditional ceremonies or religious events. This approach is conducted directly to provide opportunities for younger generations to learn and participate in cultural practices within their communities. The practical transfer is performed by the Banjar Tahuma ethnic group, who apply the local knowledge of "*Bahuma*" through hands-on farming practices.

Another form of transferring is through the field of education, such as incorporating local wisdom into local curriculum content, extracurricular activities, and the existence of cultural studios and communities. This form is practiced by the Wewea ethnic group, who introduce the local knowledge of "*Teda*" into the educational field through extracurricular activities and local content in Southwest Sumba. The approach through formal education helps to reinforce the presence of local knowledge through school curricula. Likewise, the transferring stage is a vital component in the preservation of local wisdom. With methods of knowledge transfer that include oral traditions, direct participation, and education, local knowledge can be disseminated to the next generation effectively. Collaborative strategies using participatory, oral, and educational approaches can be the key to ensuring the effective transfer of local wisdom.

f) Dissemination

Dissemination is the final stage of local wisdom preservation. This stage involves spreading local wisdom to communities outside their own group. The aim of dissemination is to introduce local wisdom to external communities. It is studied that five articles have already undergone the dissemination process, while the rests have not reached the dissemination stage. The techniques used for dissemination include platforms like YouTube and other online media to spread local wisdom. The use of digital platforms like YouTube and other online media facilitates communities in uploading videos related to their culture, thereby supporting the cultural dissemination process. Additionally, dissemination is done by introducing local wisdom through cultural festivals on both national and international scales. Dissemination through festivals can help communities introduce their cultural heritage to a diverse and broader audience. Another form of dissemination is through cultural programs that provide opportunities for external communities to observe, learn and practice local wisdom. Activities that can be carried out using this method include organizing workshops, seminars, or performances that showcase important elements, values, and symbols of a particular culture.

Dissemination is the final stage in the preservation of local knowledge because it shows that the culture is not only maintained within the community but also appreciated and recognized by the global community.

Table 4. Six Stages of preserving indigenous knowledge

Stages	Articles Code	Tools and Technique
Recognition and Identification	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	-
Validation	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	-
Recording and Documentation	1,2,3,5,6,9	Camera, smartphone, and website; video, short film, audiovisual content, and written articles
Storage	1,2,3,5,6,9	Using a computer, online databases, and social media such as YouTube, CDs, books, a collection of photo albums, or archives from the implementation of the local wisdom and museum collection.
Transfer	1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9	Meetings, religious study gatherings, storytelling, and daily conversations; practicing traditional ceremonies, and religious rituals, and implementing indigenous knowledge.
Dissemination	1,2,3,5,9	YouTube, national and international cultural festivals, as well as cultural programs.

(Source: Authors (2023))

4. CONCLUSION

This research was conducted using a systematic literature review method aimed at observing and analyzing the implementation of the preservation of local wisdom in several ethnic groups in Indonesia. Based on the analysis, there is still some local wisdom that has not been maximally preserved. In the first stage (recognition and identification) and the second stage (validation), all literature explains that each group already known and recognized their culture and understood the meaning of the local wisdom. In the third stage (storage and documentation) and the fourth stage (storage), the majority have reached this stage by utilizing technology. However, some have not implemented these stages due to a lack of attention to storing and documenting the local wisdom. Meanwhile, in the fifth stage (transferring) and the sixth stage (dissemination), many have been carried out by some community groups through traditional ceremonies, religious activities, or direct practices. However, some have not yet implemented these stages. The lack of preservation stages in some areas is due to the insufficient concern of the next generation for their local wisdom. Additionally, the role of authorized institutions such as the government's assistance is also necessary for the knowledge preservation process to run smoothly.

The results of this research identify that the process of preserving local wisdom in Indonesia has not been fully implemented. This study still has limitations, as it has not deeply explored the inhibiting and supporting factors in the process of preserving local wisdom. So, it is suggested that future research could focus on analyzing specific types of local wisdom, such as oral traditions, arts, or cultural practices.

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