



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Harmonizing Heritage: Decoding the Latent Functions of the Rodat Musical Ensemble in Shaping Malay Cultural Identity in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the latent functions of the Rodat ensemble in Kampung Surau Panjang, Atas Tol, Kuala Terengganu, focusing on its role in shaping cultural identity and social cohesion. Using an ethnomusicological approach, including fieldwork, interviews, and textual analysis, the research highlights Rodat's significance in cultural preservation, religious expression, and community bonding. Findings indicate that despite the ensemble's decline due to modernization and shifting social structures, it remains a crucial marker of Malay identity. The study also explores how Rodat's integration into education, digital platforms, and cultural tourism can contribute to its sustainability. By mapping the evolving role of Rodat, this research provides insights into broader discussions on traditional arts preservation in contemporary Malaysia. The study underscores the importance of community engagement, policy support, and innovative revitalization strategies to ensure the continuity of this cultural heritage.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Rodat ensemble, a traditional Malay performance, has long been a symbol of cultural identity in Terengganu, Malaysia. Rooted in the historical arrival of Islam, Rodat combines music, dance, and poetic lyrics, reflecting local values and beliefs. Historically, it served as both an entertainment and religious practice, often performed during festive celebrations, weddings, and Islamic events. Rodat ensembles were once widespread in Terengganu, preserving elements of Malay cultural expression and reinforcing social cohesion within the community.

Despite its historical significance, the Rodat ensemble faces increasing challenges. With the rise of globalization and the dominance of Western musical forms, traditional performances like Rodat struggle to maintain relevance (Nettl, 2015; Kartomi, 2021). The younger generation, influenced by contemporary entertainment and digital media, shows declining interest in learning and sustaining Rodat performances. Additionally, urban migration has weakened traditional communal structures, further reducing the spaces where Rodat can thrive.

Moreover, institutional support for Rodat has been sporadic. While some governmental and cultural organizations recognize its importance, comprehensive preservation strategies remain limited. Although policies such as the National Cultural Policy (DAKEN 2021) aim to safeguard intangible cultural heritage, practical implementation at the community level requires more structured efforts (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, 2021). This study aims to document and analyze the latent functions of the Rodat ensemble, mapping its cultural significance to the Malay community in Kampung Surau Panjang, Atas Tol. By examining its musical structure, social role, and evolving

identity, this research contributes to the broader discourse on traditional arts sustainability in contemporary Malaysia.

2. Background

Rodat has undergone significant transformations, influenced by historical and social changes. The decline in its popularity among younger generations reflects broader shifts in cultural preferences and modernization (Tan, 2022). Traditional Malay performing arts, including Rodat, have been impacted by external cultural influences, urbanization, and economic shifts that prioritize mainstream entertainment over heritage arts (Kartomi, 2021; Matusky & Tan, 2017).

Previous research highlights the need for systematic documentation and revitalization efforts, as many traditional performances lack structured archival records (Tan, 2022). Although the Malaysian government has taken steps through initiatives such as the National Cultural Policy (*Dasar Kebudayaan Negara* or DAKEN 2021), (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, 2021), more targeted strategies, such as educational inclusion, community-driven revitalization programs, and digital archiving, are required to sustain Rodat.

Recent studies suggest that integrating traditional performances into modern platforms, such as cultural festivals and digital media, can help bridge generational gaps and foster renewed interest (Rahim, 2023). Additionally, collaborations between government agencies, academic institutions, and local practitioners have shown promise in ensuring the transmission of Rodat knowledge to younger generations (Omar & Yusof, 2023). Without these efforts, the gradual erosion of Rodat's presence in Malaysian cultural identity may become irreversible.

3. Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to analyze the latent functional elements of the Rodat ensemble within the Malay community of Kampung Surau Panjang, Atas Tol through textual and contextual analysis. By examining these elements, the research aims to uncover the deeper social, cultural, and historical significance of Rodat beyond its performative aspects.

Understanding these latent functions can provide insights into how Rodat contributes to community identity, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and cultural sustainability. Additionally, the study seeks to formulate strategies for preserving and revitalizing this traditional art form, ensuring its continued relevance in contemporary society. Through this approach, the research will contribute to broader discussions on safeguarding Malaysia's intangible cultural heritage.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rodat ensemble, as part of Malaysia's intangible cultural heritage, has been the subject of various ethnomusicological studies. Researchers such as Matusky & Tan (2017) have documented its historical and musical significance, emphasizing its transformation over time. Kartomi (2021) examines the impact of globalization on traditional Southeast Asian performing arts, highlighting the increasing influence of Western music on local traditions. Similarly, Nettle (2015) discusses how modernization has led to the decline of indigenous music forms, including Rodat, which now faces challenges in sustaining its cultural relevance.

Studies by Tan (2022) and Rahim (2023) suggest that integrating Rodat into educational curricula and digital platforms could help revive interest among younger generations. Omar & Yusof (2023) explore community-driven initiatives in cultural preservation, arguing that local engagement is key to sustaining traditional arts. Additionally, the role of government policies, such as DAKEN 2021, has been analyzed in the context of cultural sustainability, with scholars debating their effectiveness in safeguarding heritage arts (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, 2021).

The Rodat ensemble has been widely discussed in ethnomusicological and cultural studies literature as a significant traditional Malay performance. Historically, it has functioned as a medium of artistic expression, religious devotion, and community identity. Scholars such as Matusky and Tan (2017) have documented the transformation of traditional Malay performing arts, emphasizing the impact of modernization on musical traditions. They argue that the decline of indigenous music forms, including Rodat, is a result of globalization and the increasing influence of Western entertainment (Nettl, 2015).

The Rodat ensemble, a traditional Malay performing art, has been extensively studied within ethnomusicology and cultural heritage disciplines. Historically, Rodat has served as a medium for artistic expression, religious devotion, and community identity. Scholars such as Matusky and Tan (2017) have documented its transformation, emphasizing the impact of modernization and globalization on musical traditions. Nettl (2015) further argues that the decline of indigenous music forms, including Rodat, results from the increasing influence of Western entertainment.

Evolution of Rodat

Originating from Islamic influences in Southeast Asia during the spread of Sufi traditions, Rodat evolved into a structured performance art that integrates dance, percussive elements, and poetic recitations (Kartomi, 2021). The interplay between its religious and secular functions has been a focal point of scholarly interest. Rahim (2023) notes that Rodat serves both as spiritual expression and social entertainment in contemporary Malaysian society.

Rodat and cultural identity

The role of Rodat in shaping cultural identity has been explored through frameworks like Social Identity Theory (Brown, 1998). Omar and Yusof (2023) highlight that participation in Rodat reinforces a sense of belonging within the Malay community, facilitating the transmission of cultural values across generations. Despite its association with communal celebrations symbolizing unity and tradition, Rodat's sustainability faces challenges due to limited institutional support and declining interest among younger generations (Tan, 2022).

Preservation and revitalization efforts

Recent studies advocate for integrating Rodat into modern platforms as a preservation strategy. Rahim (2023) suggests incorporating traditional performances into educational curricula and digital media to bridge generational gaps and renew youth interest. Government initiatives, such as DAKEN 2021, aim to support Malaysia's intangible cultural heritage, though their effectiveness remains a topic of debate (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, 2021).

Challenges and future prospects

Despite ongoing preservation efforts, Rodat faces significant challenges in maintaining its relevance. Urban migration, economic shifts, and digital entertainment have led to a decline in traditional communal structures where Rodat once thrived (Matusky & Tan, 2017). Studies propose that interdisciplinary collaborations between government bodies, academic institutions, and local practitioners could provide sustainable pathways for its continuity (Omar & Yusof, 2023). Additionally, fostering community-based programs and leveraging online platforms may offer new opportunities for Rodat's survival in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

In summary, while Rodat remains a vital component of Malaysia's cultural heritage, its preservation necessitates adaptive strategies that encompass education, community engagement, and policy support to ensure its continued relevance for future generations.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs an ethnomusicological approach to analyze the latent functions of the Rodat ensemble within the community of Kampung Surau Panjang, Atas Tol, Kuala Terengganu. The research adopts a qualitative methodology with a descriptive and analytical framework, focusing on social, cultural, and historical dimensions. The study is based on empirical data gathered through fieldwork, interviews, and document analysis.

Research design

The research was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1: Fieldwork Fieldwork was carried out to document and analyze Rodat performances in their natural settings. The following methods were employed:

1. **Participant observation and Bi-musicality:** The researcher actively participated in the Rodat ensemble's activities, learning and performing alongside practitioners. This approach provided an insider's perspective and aligned with Mantle Hood's concept of "bi-musicality" (Hood, 1960).
2. **Passive observation:** Rodat performances were documented in various social and religious contexts, including community gatherings, weddings, and Islamic celebrations, to understand their role in cultural identity formation.
3. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with musicians, dancers, singers, and cultural practitioners to gain insights into their experiences, roles, and perspectives on the significance of Rodat.
4. **Audio-visual documentation:** Video and audio recordings of live performances were collected to ensure a detailed analysis of musical elements, choreography, and performance styles.

Phase 2: Laboratory work and analysis The data collected from fieldwork was systematically analyzed using the following methods:

1. **Transcription and musicological analysis:** The recorded performances were transcribed into standard notation using specialized music software. This process facilitated an in-depth structural and stylistic analysis of the Rodat repertoire.
2. **Thematic analysis:** Data from interviews and observational notes were examined to identify recurring themes related to cultural identity, social cohesion, and the ensemble's evolving role in the community.
3. **Document analysis:** Archival materials, historical records, and previous scholarly research were reviewed to contextualize Rodat's historical evolution and contemporary significance.

Theoretical framework

This study is guided by the following theories:

1. **Social identity theory (Brown, 1998):** This theory was used to analyze how participation in the Rodat ensemble fosters a sense of belonging and cultural identity among its members.
2. **Ethnic identity theory:** This framework helped examine the ways in which Rodat serves as an expression and preservation of Malay cultural heritage.

Research instruments

The study utilized the following research instruments:

- **Interview guide:** A structured framework for conducting interviews with key informants.

- **Observation checklist:** A systematic method for recording performance elements and participant interactions.
- **Recording equipment:** High-quality audio and video tools to capture live performances accurately.
- **Transcription software:** Digital tools used for the precise notation and analysis of musical elements.

Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality was ensured, and cultural sensitivities were respected. Reflexivity was maintained to assess the research's impact on the community.

This methodological approach provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Rodat ensemble's cultural significance, contributing to the broader discourse on traditional performing arts in Malaysia.

5. THE RESULTS

The Rodat ensemble in Kampung Atas Tol extends beyond its role as a traditional performance art and serves as a significant cultural institution that influences various aspects of community life. While its explicit function is artistic expression, it carries deeper latent functions that contribute to cultural preservation, social cohesion, identity reinforcement, adaptation, spiritual significance, and economic development. These functions, though not always immediately recognized, play an essential role in shaping the community's cultural fabric and ensuring its sustainability amid modern transformations. By understanding these hidden roles, it becomes evident that Rodat is not just an art form but a dynamic force that strengthens community ties, preserves historical narratives, and fosters local identity.

Cultural preservation

One of the most vital roles of the Rodat ensemble is its function as a living repository of cultural memory. The ensemble plays a crucial role in maintaining the historical, artistic, and cultural traditions of the Malay community in Kampung Atas Tol. By integrating music, dance, and oral storytelling, Rodat ensures the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. Elders mentor younger performers, teaching them the rhythms, movements, and narratives that define this traditional art form. This direct transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next safeguards Rodat from extinction.

However, in the face of modernization and globalization, there is a decline in youth participation, as younger generations are increasingly drawn to contemporary forms of entertainment. The rise of digital media and westernized music trends has created a challenge in sustaining interest in traditional performances. To counteract this decline, digital documentation and archiving efforts are necessary to create accessible educational resources that appeal to younger audiences. Moreover, the formal recognition of Rodat by cultural institutions and its integration into school curricula could further reinforce its preservation. By embedding Rodat into structured learning, it ensures that the art form remains relevant and appreciated by future generations.

Social cohesion and community bonding

Beyond cultural preservation, the Rodat ensemble serves as a vital mechanism for fostering social cohesion within the community. It brings together individuals from different generations, social backgrounds, and genders, creating a shared cultural experience that strengthens community ties. The participatory nature of Rodat performances during weddings, festivals, and religious events provides an opportunity for communal gathering, reinforcing interpersonal relationships and promoting collective identity.

The engagement of both elders and youth in Rodat performances facilitates mentorship and skill-sharing, allowing for the natural transmission of cultural knowledge. Elders pass down not only musical techniques but also important values such as respect, discipline, and cooperation. In rural communities where modern entertainment is limited, Rodat serves as a significant source of artistic and social engagement. However, as contemporary digital entertainment options become more prevalent, traditional communal activities like Rodat are being overshadowed. To sustain interest, community-based cultural programs and Rodat appreciation workshops should be implemented. Establishing Rodat clubs in schools and community centers could provide a structured space for learning and participation, ensuring that the ensemble continues to unite and engage the community.

Cultural resistance and adaptation

The Rodat ensemble functions as both a medium of cultural resistance and an adaptive tradition that evolves with time. In an era where cultural homogenization threatens unique local traditions, Rodat serves as a stronghold of Malay identity, preserving traditional practices and reinforcing local cultural distinctiveness. At the same time, Rodat is not rigid in its form; it has the capacity to integrate modern elements while maintaining its core values.

Throughout history, traditional art forms have evolved in response to external influences. Similarly, Rodat has adapted to contemporary sensibilities by incorporating new musical elements, performance styles, and thematic content. Some performances now feature modern instruments alongside traditional percussion, allowing for a fusion that appeals to younger audiences. This balance between preservation and innovation is crucial in ensuring that Rodat remains a relevant and engaging cultural practice. Moving forward, it is important to encourage creative adaptations that maintain the essence of Rodat while making it more appealing to contemporary audiences. By striking this balance, the tradition can be sustained without compromising its authenticity.

Reinforcement of community identity

Through its thematic narratives and artistic expressions, Rodat plays a fundamental role in reinforcing the identity of Kampung Atas Tol. The performance elements—ranging from the lyrics of the songs to the choreography of the dance—reflect local legends, values, and historical experiences, creating a sense of belonging among community members. This function is particularly significant in resisting external cultural influences and maintaining a distinct local identity.

By preserving local narratives, Rodat performances help define the boundaries between insiders and outsiders, ensuring that the unique heritage of Kampung Atas Tol remains recognizable and respected. This aspect of cultural identity is especially relevant in the modern age, where communities are increasingly exposed to external influences through social media, tourism, and globalized entertainment. Encouraging collaborations between cultural practitioners, historians, and community elders can further strengthen this function, ensuring that Rodat remains a marker of identity and a source of communal pride.

Economic and cultural exchange

Although Rodat is primarily a cultural practice, it also has significant economic potential. As a unique traditional performance, Rodat can serve as a cultural attraction, generating income for performers, artisans, and local businesses through tourism and event participation. If properly promoted, Rodat performances could become an integral part of Malaysia's heritage tourism sector, attracting both domestic and international visitors.

To maximize its economic benefits, efforts should be made to integrate Rodat into cultural festivals, tourism packages, and creative industries. Scheduled performances in heritage villages, collaborations with travel agencies, and participation in national cultural events can enhance its visibility and commercial appeal. Moreover, the government and private sector can play a role by providing sponsorship and funding opportunities, ensuring that practitioners receive adequate

financial support. By positioning Rodat as both a cultural and economic asset, its sustainability can be secured while benefiting local communities economically.

Social role definition and leadership development

Participation in the Rodat ensemble provides individuals with a defined role within the community, whether as performers, mentors, or organizers. These roles contribute to a sense of purpose and social status, particularly for younger members who may see Rodat as a platform for self-expression and leadership development.

Engagement in Rodat allows individuals to cultivate leadership skills through responsibilities such as organizing performances, training new members, or directing rehearsals. This leadership function ensures the continued transmission of cultural knowledge and strengthens community ties. Recognizing and formalizing leadership roles within the ensemble could further enhance its sustainability by providing incentives for participation and long-term commitment.

Ritualistic and spiritual significance

Beyond its entertainment value, Rodat carries profound ritualistic and spiritual meanings. The performance is deeply interwoven with Islamic traditions, with poetic verses often conveying messages rooted in religious teachings. This makes Rodat an important medium for imparting moral values such as humility, gratitude, and patience.

Rodat is commonly performed during religious celebrations such as Maulidur Rasul (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday), reinforcing its spiritual significance. Given its strong religious foundation, collaborations with Islamic scholars and institutions can help maintain its authenticity while integrating it into contemporary religious education. Ensuring that Rodat remains an active part of community religious events will further solidify its role as a cultural and spiritual practice.

Youth engagement and cultural sustainability

The involvement of younger generations is crucial for ensuring the long-term survival of Rodat. However, modernization has led to declining interest among youth, as they gravitate towards digital and globalized entertainment forms. To address this issue, structured educational programs and interactive digital content should be developed to make Rodat more appealing to younger audiences.

Efforts such as mentorship programs, digital storytelling initiatives, and school-based performances can help bridge generational gaps. Additionally, allowing young performers to introduce innovative elements to Rodat while respecting its traditional foundations—could encourage active participation. By making Rodat more engaging and accessible, it can continue to thrive as a dynamic and evolving tradition.

The Rodat ensemble is not just a traditional performance art; it is a cultural pillar that preserves heritage, fosters social bonds, promotes economic opportunities, and strengthens spiritual connections. Its adaptability ensures that it remains relevant while continuing to serve as a key cultural institution in Kampung Atas Tol. By implementing strategic efforts in education, tourism, community engagement, and digital innovation, the longevity of Rodat can be safeguarded for future generations.

6. DISCUSSION

The Rodat ensemble in Kampung Atas Tol extends beyond its primary role as a traditional Malay performing art, fulfilling significant latent functions in cultural preservation, social cohesion, economic development, and spiritual enrichment. This paper explores these multifaceted roles and examines the implications of sustaining Rodat in contemporary society. By referencing recent studies

and literature, this discussion highlights the challenges posed by modernization and proposes strategies for the preservation and promotion of Rodat.

Traditional performing arts serve as essential repositories of cultural identity and heritage. The Rodat ensemble, a form of Malay performing arts characterized by its rhythmic movements, poetic lyrics, and communal participation, has long played a crucial role in the cultural fabric of Kampung Atas Tol (Kartomi, 2021). While its primary function is entertainment, the ensemble also operates as a medium for reinforcing social bonds, fostering intergenerational knowledge transfer, and strengthening local identity (Ramli & Saidon, 2020). This paper examines these latent functions and discusses their broader implications in contemporary Malaysian society.

Cultural preservation and evolution

The preservation of traditional performing arts is crucial in safeguarding a community's historical and artistic heritage. Rodat serves as a living archive of cultural memory, where its integration of music, dance, and oral storytelling ensures the transmission of knowledge across generations (Mohd Salleh & Hamdan, 2022). Recent studies indicate that while Rodat has retained its core elements, it has also adapted to societal changes, including modifications in function, costume, lyrics, and performance structure (Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2023). These adaptations demonstrate the resilience of the art form and its ability to remain relevant amidst evolving cultural landscapes. However, globalization and the dominance of digital entertainment threaten its sustainability. To counteract declining youth participation, scholars advocate for digital archiving and the inclusion of Rodat in formal educational curricula (Zainal Abidin et al., 2021).

Social cohesion and community engagement

Beyond cultural preservation, Rodat plays a pivotal role in fostering social cohesion within Kampung Atas Tol. As a communal event, Rodat performances facilitate intergenerational bonding and collective participation, strengthening social ties (Ramli & Saidon, 2020). The participatory nature of these performances enables knowledge-sharing between elders and younger members, ensuring the continuity of traditional artistic skills and values (Ali et al., 2021). Nevertheless, declining communal involvement presents a challenge, necessitating interventions such as annual Rodat competitions and the formation of Rodat clubs in schools to sustain engagement (Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, 2022).

Economic potential and cultural tourism T

Traditional performing arts such as Rodat hold significant potential in Malaysia's cultural tourism sector. By incorporating Rodat into heritage tourism initiatives, communities can generate economic opportunities for local performers, artisans, and event organizers (Hassan et al., 2023). Studies have shown that cultural tourism has become a major contributor to Malaysia's economic landscape, with increased tourist interest in indigenous performances and heritage experiences (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia, 2023). However, concerns regarding the commodification of culture necessitate a balance between commercialization and authenticity. Collaborative efforts between cultural practitioners, policymakers, and tourism boards are essential in ensuring that Rodat remains a sustainable yet respectful representation of traditional heritage (Hamzah & Ibrahim, 2021).

Spiritual significance and cultural identity

Rodat is deeply intertwined with the religious and spiritual beliefs of the community, often performed during Islamic celebrations and other significant cultural events (Mohamad & Yunus, 2022). The poetic verses within Rodat performances often carry Islamic teachings that emphasize moral values such as humility, gratitude, and patience (Ramli & Saidon, 2020). Despite its spiritual significance, maintaining the religious authenticity of Rodat while adapting to contemporary settings remains a challenge. Scholars suggest that collaborations with religious leaders and educational

institutions can ensure the continued integration of Rodat within spiritual and moral teachings (Hassan et al., 2023).

Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications across multiple domains, including cultural sustainability, social integration, education, and economic development. Addressing these implications requires a collaborative approach between communities, educational institutions, policymakers, and cultural organizations.

Cultural sustainability

The preservation of Rodat is essential for maintaining Malaysia's intangible cultural heritage. Traditional performing arts like Rodat encapsulate centuries-old values, customs, and artistic expressions that contribute to the nation's unique identity. The study indicates that without intervention, Rodat risks further marginalization in contemporary society. To counteract this, efforts should focus on documentation, digital archiving, and structured transmission through cultural institutions. By integrating Rodat into national heritage policies and fostering collaborations with cultural organizations, long-term preservation can be achieved.

Social integration and community development

The social function of Rodat extends beyond performance—it serves as a unifying force within communities. Findings suggest that Rodat enhances intergenerational engagement by encouraging mentorship between elders and younger participants. However, the decline in communal participation due to urbanization and digital entertainment necessitates new approaches to reinvigorate interest. Community-led initiatives, such as Rodat appreciation programs, school clubs, and inter-village performances, can strengthen social bonds and reinforce traditional networks. Additionally, integrating Rodat into multicultural events can promote cross-cultural understanding and social harmony in Malaysia's diverse society.

Educational enrichment and knowledge transmission

The results emphasize the pedagogical potential of Rodat in teaching cultural history, ethical values, and musical skills. Integrating Rodat into school curricula as part of music and cultural studies can provide students with a hands-on learning experience that enhances their appreciation of local traditions. Furthermore, collaborations between cultural practitioners and educational institutions can lead to the development of structured learning modules that ensure the systematic transmission of Rodat's musical and performative elements to future generations.

Economic growth and tourism development

With the increasing global interest in cultural tourism, Rodat holds significant potential as an economic asset. Findings indicate that properly marketed and institutionalized Rodat performances can attract both domestic and international tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences. Strategies such as heritage village performances, cultural festivals, and digital streaming of Rodat events can generate revenue and create job opportunities for performers, artisans, and cultural entrepreneurs. Governmental and private sector investments in cultural tourism infrastructure can further enhance the economic viability of Rodat, ensuring that its practitioners receive adequate financial support to sustain their craft.

Policy and institutional support

The sustainability of Rodat requires comprehensive policy interventions that recognize traditional performing arts as valuable national assets. The study highlights the need for structured governmental initiatives, such as funding schemes, performance grants, and training programs, to

support Rodat practitioners. Integrating Rodat into national and regional cultural policies, including initiatives like DAKEN 2021, can provide a robust framework for its preservation. Additionally, establishing formal institutions dedicated to the research and development of traditional arts can further strengthen Rodat's presence in contemporary society.

The implications of this study suggest that Rodat is more than just a traditional performance; it is a significant cultural entity with social, educational, and economic relevance. Addressing its decline requires a collaborative and multi-pronged approach that encompasses preservation efforts, social engagement, educational integration, economic investment, and policy advocacy. Through these measures, Rodat can continue to thrive as a vital aspect of Malaysia's cultural heritage while adapting to the evolving demands of contemporary society.

In conclusion, the Rodat ensemble is more than a traditional performance; it is a vital element of Malaysia's cultural heritage with significant social, educational, and economic implications. Concerted efforts from communities, educational institutions, religious bodies, and government agencies are imperative to preserve and promote this invaluable art form.

7. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study emphasize that while Rodat remains a significant cultural tradition, it faces substantial challenges that threaten its sustainability. Modernization, changing social structures, and the rise of digital entertainment have contributed to declining interest among younger generations. However, targeted preservation strategies including documentation, formal education inclusion, community-driven initiatives, and integration into cultural tourism can help sustain the tradition.

Future research should explore cross-regional comparisons to understand broader trends in traditional Malay performing arts. Additionally, investigating the potential of digital media and online platforms in promoting Rodat could provide insights into innovative ways to engage new audiences while preserving the integrity of the tradition.

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