

Revitalisation and Innovation Based on Tradition as a Strategy for Cultural Sustainability Through Film Media

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization and rapid technological progress, local cultural values face challenges in maintaining relevance, particularly among younger generations. This study explores revitalisation and tradition-based innovation as strategic approaches to achieving cultural sustainability through film media. Revitalisation refers to the process of restoring traditional meanings and values, while innovation introduces new ways of expressing them within modern contexts. Film serves as a powerful medium to revive traditions through emotionally engaging and visually creative narratives that bridge the past and present. Using SWOT analysis and a strategic framework, the study highlights the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration, digital cultural archives, and ethical representation in film production. Drawing from cultural studies and visual anthropology, it concludes that cultural sustainability can be achieved when traditional values are revitalisation through creative innovation that resonates with contemporary audiences.

Keyword: Cultural sustainability; revitalization; innovation; tradition; film; visual anthropology



INTRODUCTION

In this fast-paced era, culture is often vulnerable. Social changes, technological advances, and the influence of global culture are causing societies—especially the younger generation—to drift further from their traditional practices. Local cultural values that once guided people's lives are slowly losing their appeal amid modern, practical, and digital lifestyles (Sanjaya, 2025). However, culture is never truly lost; it simply awaits rediscovery in new ways. Culture can always adapt, if there is a conscious effort to revive it through relevant approaches. Therefore, revitalisation and innovation are key (Bihari, 2023; Della Lucia & Trunfio, 2018; Othman & Heba, 2018; Quattrone, 2017).

Revitalisation means reviving the meaning, value, and spirit of traditions that are beginning to fade (Bihari, 2023; Coté, 2015; Purba et al., 2024; Tahseen & Al-Jumaily, 2020). Innovation focuses on new ways of conveying traditions to keep them relevant today. The two are not contradictory but complementary steps toward enhancing cultural sustainability (Purwanto, 2022). Cultural sustainability involves not only preserving the past but also ensuring that cultural values remain alive and meaningful for future generations. Therefore, culture should be conveyed in a language easily understood by modern society (Rahmat et al., 2024, p. 22). According to an article from ejournal.unsrat.ac.id, almost all individuals in society experience socio-cultural changes, especially when faced with new social and cultural

environments. This supports the notion that revitalisation and innovation are not threats to cultural authenticity but part of culture's natural dynamics (Gainza, 2017; Qu & Zollet, 2023).

Film is one of the most effective media for achieving this (Anggreanie, 2025, pp. 1-12). Film has great power to build awareness, convey values, and recreate cultural realities in attractive, emotional visual forms. For example, montage can connect various cultural elements into a unified narrative that shapes audience perceptions (Lankhuizen, 2025; Qu & Zollet, 2023; Wright, 2018). Diegetic sound creates an authentic atmosphere that reinforces the visual experience. The right color palette can also communicate the emotional nuances of portrayed traditions. Through film, traditions can be revived not only as spectacles but as felt experiences that audiences can reinterpret (Bau et al., 2025, p. 462). Film brings together the past and present, tradition and innovation, in a shared creative and communicative visual space (Block, 2020; Lai, 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Xiong & Li, 2021). Thus, film bridges cultural roots with contemporary life, fostering lively intergenerational dialogue (Maijar, 2018, p. 30). Research by Riksa Belasunda and colleagues shows how Garin Nugroho's film *Opera Jawa* uses diverse visual elements to shape messages and meanings, demonstrating that Indonesian cinema often engages tradition in a creative dialogue between community, history, and modernity. Recognizing the potential of local arts and culture is essential for revitalisation and innovation (Rembulan, 2023).

Previous research has explored various dimensions of cultural sustainability and media. For instance, Anggreanie (2025) examined digital film preservation as a medium for documenting national struggles, highlighting film's role in maintaining historical memory. Similarly, Bau et al. (2025) investigated reinforcing cultural identity through film, focusing on preserving the Gorontalo language and traditions among youth. Dewi et al. (2023) explored perceptions of eco-agro tourism, linking environmental sustainability with cultural narratives—a theme relevant to visual storytelling in film. However, these studies often treat cultural preservation, media innovation, and sustainability as separate domains. A gap remains in research that systematically integrates tradition-based revitalisation and innovation within a strategic framework for cultural sustainability through film media, particularly using analytical tools like SWOT and actionable implementation plans. This study fills that gap by proposing a holistic strategy connecting cultural theory, media practice, and sustainability outcomes.

Effective cultural revitalisation is a two-way process: preserving roots while growing new branches. It involves not just safeguarding the past but ensuring cultural values remain alive and meaningful in the future. By involving communities, utilizing technology, strengthening education, and fostering tradition-based innovation, Indonesian culture can evolve as a dynamic identity relevant to every era (Astuti & Gunawan, 2025). Tradition-based innovation does not merely modernize culture for trends but keeps it alive and thriving without losing identity. By analyzing socio-cultural dimensions, we see how cultural spaces in contemporary media and art become vessels for transformation, breathing new life into tradition through innovation and adaptation. According to articles in this edition, respect for the past manifests in contemporary cultural expressions. Tradition does not merely survive as

nostalgia but moves with the times, shaping national identity and affirming that true progress means advancing without forgetting our roots.

Through innovation, tradition finds new life. It does not merely survive in nostalgia but moves with the times to become part of modern life, shaping national identity and affirming that true progress means advancing without forgetting our roots (Nasruddin, 2011).

Based on the above description, two main research questions emerge. The first is: What are the forms of effective cultural revitalisation and innovation strategies through film? The second is: What is the action plan for implementing these strategies in contemporary cultural contexts?

This research aims to analyze strategies for tradition-based revitalisation and innovation through film media to support cultural sustainability and to formulate an actionable implementation plan within contemporary cultural contexts. The benefits include contributing to academic discourse in cultural and media studies, as well as providing practical recommendations for cultural practitioners, filmmakers, and policymakers to preserve and transform culture in ways that resonate with present and future generations.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative research design using SWOT analysis and strategic frameworks to explore how film could serve as a medium for cultural revitalisation and innovation. The research process began with a comprehensive literature review of cultural studies, visual anthropology, and film theory, focusing on Indonesian cinematic works that integrated traditional themes, such as Garin Nugroho's *Opera Jawa*. The analysis applied a SWOT matrix to identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats, in using film for cultural sustainability. This was followed by the development of strategic action plans (SO, WO, ST, WT) based on the SWOT results. The study incorporated case studies of relevant films and drew on theoretical approaches from cultural studies and visual anthropology to interpret how tradition was represented and transformed through visual narratives. Ethical considerations, such as respectful cultural representation and community involvement, were integrated into the proposed strategies. The methodological design aimed not only to analyze existing practices but also to propose practical frameworks for filmmakers, cultural practitioners, and policymakers to enhance cultural sustainability through film.

Cultural revitalisation through film was not merely static documentation but a strategy for adapting traditional values to the modern era. In practice, films served as bridges between traditional socio-cultural functions and modern lifestyles. For example, Garin Nugroho's film *Opera Jawa* successfully revived traditional values by combining rich visual elements with powerful narratives. *Opera Jawa* used traditional elements such as dance and Javanese gamelan music to retell the *Ramayana* story in a modern context. This kind of innovation allowed local values to be re-presented through visual aesthetics and narrative techniques that reached across generations, especially younger audiences far removed from their traditional roots.

The main appeal of cinema in an academic context was its ability to preserve the essence of tradition without being trapped in romanticism of the past. For example, integrating

ecotourism and agrotourism themes in films exemplified tradition-based innovation. According to Dewi (2023), exploring natural resource conservation and local technology in stories strengthened environmental sustainability and positively impacted cultural development. Visualizations of motifs, such as repeated shots of terraced rice fields, illustrated connections between environmental themes and cultural narratives, showing how the land symbolized harmony between humans and nature. These visual elements emphasized the importance of conservation and traditional technologies for maintaining local ecosystems, making films a medium that combined environmental themes with deeper cultural narratives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through this medium, viewers are invited to "see" culture and feel the relevance of local technology and ecological wisdom in the current context. Films with these themes are powerful tools for education and entertainment. (Film as a medium for cultural heritage preservation, 2025) Innovation through film does not obscure cultural authenticity, but rather strengthens cultural sustainability by making it part of a dynamic and proud modern identity in a multicultural society. Themes such as rituals, indigenous communities, and food security in rural communities are interesting topics to explore. Therefore, one key insight that can be drawn from the SWOT analysis is its ability to highlight opportunities and strategies that can ensure cultural sustainability through film. This discussion begins with the following SWOT analysis.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Cultural Revitalisation and Traditional Innovation through Film

Aspect	Description
Strengths	Indonesia's rich and diverse culture is an unlimited creative resource for Local cultural values Films There is potential for cross-disciplinary collaboration Support from the national creative economy ecosystem
Weaknesses	Lack of ethnographic knowledge and philosophical understanding of the traditions being portrayed. Limited funds, facilities, and infrastructure for cultural film production in the regions. Cultural documentation and archives are not yet The distribution of cultural films is still limited (small festivals, not yet on major platforms). The regeneration of traditional cultural practitioners
Opportunities	The development of digital technology and social media has opened new spaces for cultural promotion. The global trend towards cultural narratives and local content is increasing. Cultural films can be integrated Opportunities for international collaboration and cultural diplomacy through

Aspect	Description
	Support for arts education and cultural research in various film and cultural campuses.
Threats	The risk of cultural commodification The dominance of global popular culture shifts interest away from local culture. Issues of representation and cultural ethics (cultural appropriation) in film production. Inequality of access to technology in cultural source regions. Dependence on short-term trends without a long-term sustainability strategy.

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The following are examples of analyses that utilise strenght and and opportunities as par of revitalisation and innovation.

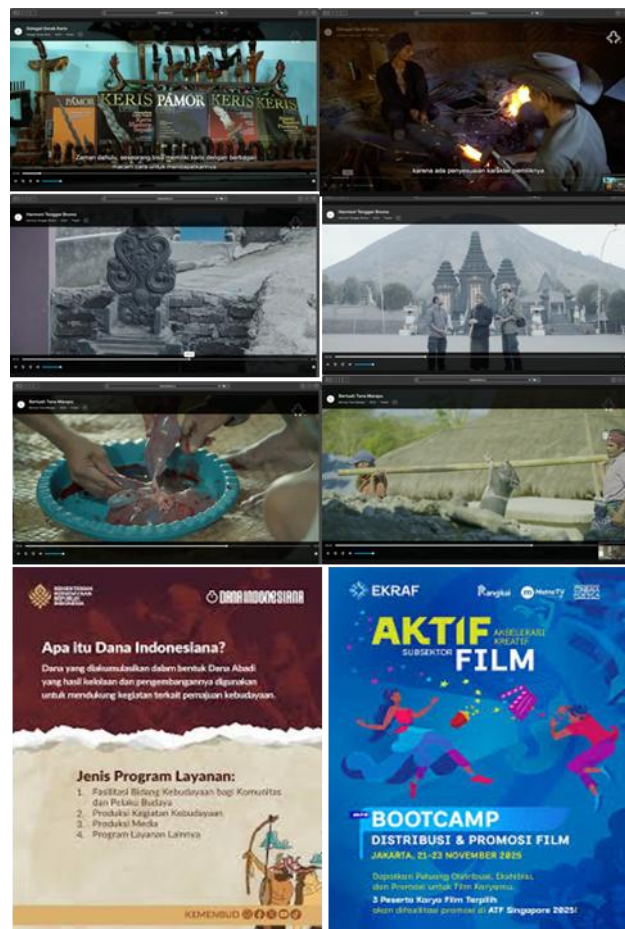


Figure 1. Analyses that utilize strengths and opportunities revitalisation and innovation

Sources: (please use HD Picture)

Table 2. Strategies for Cultural Revitalisation and Sustainability through Film

Strategy Type	Approach and Policy Direction
SO (Strength–Opportunity)	Promoting local cultural wealth as a theme for films with global value. Utilizing Integrating films with the tourism sector and regional creative economy. Encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration (artists, academics,
WO (Weakness–Opportunity)	Organizing Building a digital archive of regional culture as a reference for film production. Developing inclusive funding models (crowdfunding Expanding film distribution through educational spaces, social media, and digital festivals
ST (Strength–Threat)	Establishing ethical guidelines for cultural representation in films. Strengthening the image of local culture as a national identity in the film industry. Indigenous It is essential to establish cooperation with national cultural institutions to maintain authenticity
WT (Weakness–Threat)	Developing cultural regeneration programmes through education and culture-based film curricula. Forming a sustainable ecosystem between cultural preservation, the creative industry and public policy. Encouraging ongoing documentation and research on regional Strengthening local technological capacity so that communities can participate in digital cultural production

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The following are examples of utilizing strengths and opportunities as part of revitalization and innovation strategies.

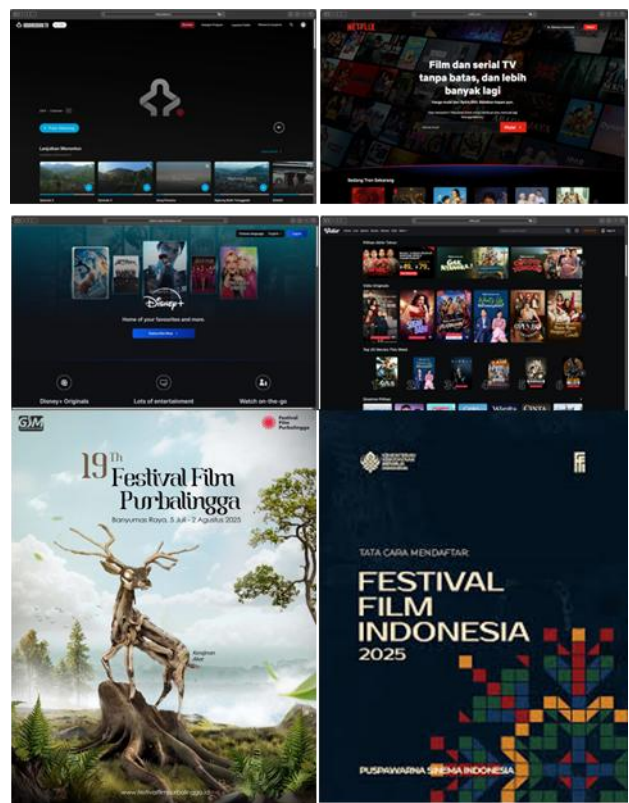


Figure 2. Utilizing strengths and opportunities revitalisation and innovation strategies
Sources: (please use HD Picture)

Table 3. Strategic Action Plan for Cultural Sustainability Through Film.

Strategic Focus.	Implementation Steps.	Expected Results.
Revitalization	Mapping regional culture and	Regional cultural databases and digital archives.
Innovation of Traditions in Film	Cultural film workshops and traditional film project incubation	Emergence of short
Distribution and Education	Archipelago Cultural Film Festival	Increased cultural literacy and public appreciation.
Collaboration and Cultural Diplomacy	Cooperation with international institutions and OTT platforms.	Increased visibility of Indonesian culture at the global level
Ecosystem Sustainability	Development of a creative economy based on regional culture.	Culture as a source of economic and sustainable identity.

Source: Data processed by the author (2025)

The following is an example of a Strategic Action Plan for Cultural Sustainability Through Film that can still be developed.

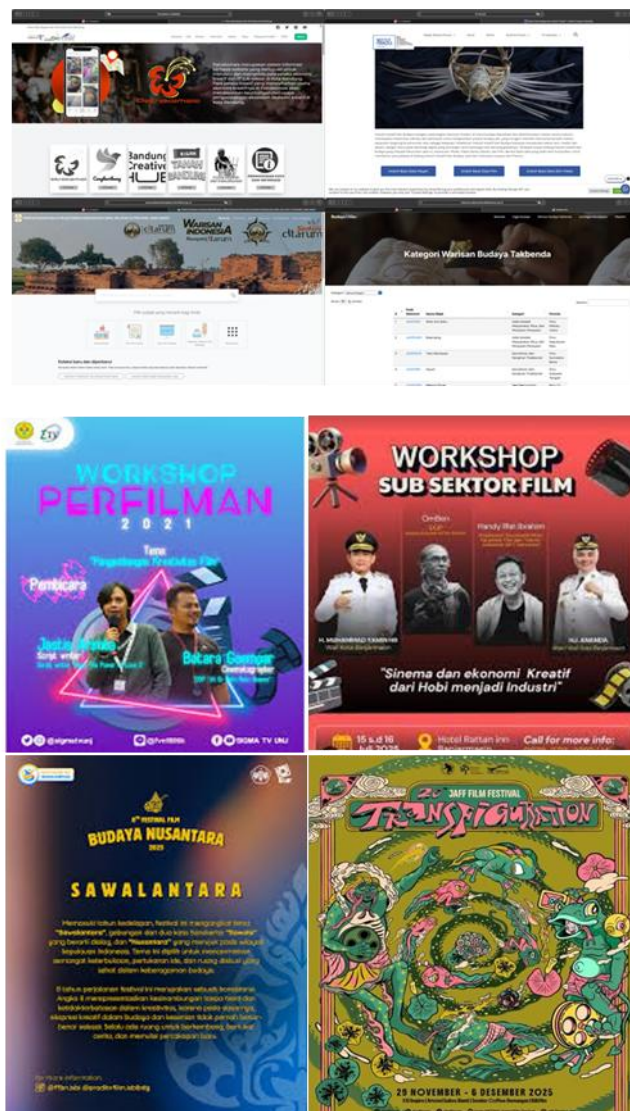


Figure 3. Strategic Action Plan for Cultural Sustainability Through Film that can be developed
 Sources: (please use HD Picture)

Relevant Theoretical Approaches

Cultural studies and visual anthropology approaches are highly relevant for analyzing the interaction between tradition and innovation in film. Cultural studies, as developed by Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha, focus on how culture is represented, displayed, and negotiated in media. This is suitable for exploring issues of identity, resistance, and hegemony in films with traditional themes, such as the Ramayana. Visual anthropology, as developed by Jay Ruby and Sarah Pink, emphasizes the analysis of cultural visualization practices such as documentary films or digital performances, paying attention to context, community participation and symbolic value. This approach helps us understand how films visually depict the lives of Indigenous peoples and local traditions.

Furthermore, Hobsbawm's (1983) theory of 'invented traditions' asserts that many traditions are actually modern constructions that are considered to be ancient heritage. This view is important for assessing authenticity and discourse in traditional revitalization projects

(Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Such changes raise questions about which elements of the rituals depicted are actually new inventions, inviting viewers to question their perceptions of authenticity. Judith Butler and Victor Turner's theory of cultural performativity is also relevant, as it highlights how culture is repeatedly staged in films or public media as a way of shaping social meaning.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that tradition-based revitalisation and innovation through film media effectively enhanced cultural sustainability by producing inclusive representations relevant to younger generations, answering the first research question on strategy forms; enabling participatory, context-appropriate processes over mere symbolic preservation, addressing the second question on contemporary application; positioning visual media as arenas for contesting and adapting cultural values; and underscoring that sustainability hinges on articulating local values within dynamic social ecosystems. In conclusion, these outcomes highlight the need for multidisciplinary collaboration, technological support, and culturally conscious approaches to keep traditions evolving without losing identity, aligning directly with the research objectives. For future research, scholars could empirically test these strategies through longitudinal case studies of implemented film projects in diverse Indonesian regions, measuring long-term impacts on audience engagement and cultural retention via mixed-methods surveys.

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