



PRESERVING MINAHASAN FOLKLORE THROUGH PERFORMING ARTS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: A LITERATURE-BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT. *This article examines the preservation of Minahasan folklore through performing arts digital technology. Using a qualitative literature-based method, the study reviews scholarly works, cultural documentation, and relevant sources on folklore, performance, digital preservation, and local literature. The findings show that performing arts can transform Minahasan folklore into visible, emotional, embodied, and communal experiences through drama, dance, music, storytelling, monologue, and theatre. Digital technology can support this process through documentation, archiving, dissemination, translation, QR-code access, and educational use. The study also shows that performing arts and digital technology can work together as a complementary preservation strategy. Performing arts keep folklore alive as cultural expression, while digital technology makes it more accessible and reusable. This article concludes that Minahasan folklore can remain meaningful in contemporary cultural life when preserved responsibly without losing its cultural roots.*

Keywords: Minahasan Folklore, Performing Arts, Digital Technology, Local Literature, Cultural Preservation

ABSTRAK. Artikel ini membahas pelestarian folklor Minahasa melalui seni pertunjukan dan teknologi digital. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis kajian pustaka, penelitian ini menelaah karya ilmiah, dokumentasi budaya, dan sumber relevan tentang folklor, pertunjukan, pelestarian digital, dan sastra lokal. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa seni pertunjukan dapat mengubah folklor Minahasa menjadi pengalaman yang terlihat, emosional, hidup, dan komunal melalui drama, tari, musik, storytelling, monolog, dan teater. Teknologi digital dapat mendukung proses ini melalui dokumentasi, pengarsipan, penyebaran, penerjemahan, akses QR code, dan pemanfaatan pendidikan. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa seni pertunjukan dan teknologi digital dapat bekerja bersama sebagai strategi pelestarian yang saling melengkapi. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa folklor Minahasa dapat tetap bermakna dalam kehidupan budaya masa kini jika dilestarikan secara bertanggung jawab tanpa menghilangkan akar budayanya.

Kata Kunci: Folklor Minahasa, Seni Pertunjukan, Teknologi Digital, Sastra Lokal, Pelestarian Budaya

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INTRODUCTION

Local literature plays an important role in preserving the cultural identity of a community. (Nazurty et al., 2025). It does not only function as entertainment, but also as a medium for transmitting values, beliefs, collective memory, and local wisdom from one generation to another (Erni et al., 2025; Firnadia & Afnita, 2021). In many communities, local literature appears in the form of oral tradition, myths, legends, folktales, songs, and ritual narratives. These forms of literature are closely connected to the everyday life, history, and worldview of the people who produce and inherit them.

Minahasan folklore is one example of local literature that reflects the cultural identity of North Sulawesi. Local tale such as *Toar* and *Lumimuut*, the narratives surrounding *Watu Pinawetengan*, and other local tales contain important cultural meanings related to origin,

kinship, morality, nature, and social harmony. These stories are not only literary materials, but also cultural documents that show how Minahasan people understand their past, their environment, and their relationships (Madilah, 2023; Tumengkol et al., 2023).

However, the transmission of local folklore faces serious challenges in contemporary society. Many young people are more familiar with global digital culture than with local oral traditions. Folklore that was once transmitted through family storytelling, community gatherings, traditional ceremonies, and local performances may become less visible if it is not documented and reintroduced in forms that are relevant to present-day audiences (Novianti et al., 2025). This condition makes the preservation of local literature an urgent cultural and educational concern.

One possible way to preserve and reintroduce Minahasan folklore is through performing arts. Folklore can be transformed into drama, storytelling performance, dance, music, monologue, or other forms of cultural performance. Through performance, folklore does not remain only as written or spoken text. It becomes embodied, visual, emotional, and communal (Nazurty et al., 2025; Purnani & Azizah, 2025; Santosa et al., 2021). Performing arts can make local stories easier to understand because audiences can see characters, conflicts, movements, expressions, and cultural symbols directly (Jaeni, 2023; Sugiarta et al., 2025).

In addition to performing arts, digital technology also offers new opportunities for local literature preservation. Folklore performances can be recorded, archived, subtitled, uploaded to digital platforms, linked through QR codes, or used as learning materials in English literature and cultural studies classes (Aljamaliah, 2022; Virginiya et al., 2025; Widyawan et al., 2025; Yuaziva, 2025). Digital technology can help local stories reach wider audiences, including students, researchers, tourists, and international readers. In this sense, technology does not replace tradition, but can support the continuity and accessibility of tradition.

This study examines how Minahasan folklore can be preserved through performing arts and digital technology. It views folklore not only as traditional oral stories, but also as an important form of local literature that carries cultural identity, values, collective memory, and local wisdom. Performing arts can help present Minahasan folklore in more visible and engaging forms, such as drama, storytelling performance, dance, music, and monologue. At the same time, digital technology can support its documentation, archiving, dissemination, and use as learning materials.

This article does not report an experimental project, classroom implementation, or the development of a digital product. Instead, it is a literature-based study that uses scholarly works, cultural documentation, and relevant written sources to discuss the potential of performing arts and digital technology in preserving Minahasan local literature.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative literature-based method. This method is suitable because the study does not report an experimental project, field performance, digital product development, or classroom implementation. Instead, it examines existing written sources, cultural documentation, and relevant scholarly works to discuss how Minahasan folklore can be preserved through performing arts and digital technology. The main focus of this method is to understand, interpret, and synthesise ideas from previous studies and cultural materials related to folklore preservation. Based on this methodological focus, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How can performing arts contribute to the preservation of Minahasan folklore?
2. How can digital technology support the documentation, dissemination, and accessibility of Minahasan folklore?
3. How can performing arts and digital technology work together to support the preservation of Minahasan folklore?

The data in this study consist of approximately 45 written sources related to folklore, local literature, performing arts, digital technology, cultural preservation, and Minahasan cultural narratives. These sources include journal articles, conference papers, books, cultural documentation, and online institutional materials. The sources were limited to materials that directly discuss one or more of the following themes: folklore and oral tradition, local literature and cultural identity, performing arts as cultural expression, digital documentation and archiving, QR-code-based access, digital storytelling, and Minahasan folklore such as *Toar and Lumimuut* and *Watu Pinawetengan*.

The sources were found through several stages. First, scholarly sources were searched using academic databases and online platforms such as Google Scholar, journal websites, and university or institutional repositories. The keywords used included “Minahasan folklore”, “*Toar and Lumimuut*”, “*Watu Pinawetengan*”, “folklore preservation”, “local literature”, “performing arts and folklore”, “digital preservation”, “digital storytelling”, “QR code

folklore”, and “oral tradition documentation”. Second, the search was limited mainly to sources published between 2020 and 2026 in order to keep the discussion relevant to current debates on digital technology and cultural preservation. However, several older sources were also included when they were considered important for the theoretical or methodological foundation of the study.

The selection of sources was based on three criteria. First, the source had to be relevant to folklore, local literature, performing arts, digital technology, or cultural preservation. Second, the source had to provide conceptual, methodological, or contextual support for discussing Minahasan folklore. Third, the source had to be accessible and verifiable. Sources that were not directly related to the topic, lacked clear publication information, or did not support the research focus were excluded from the analysis.

The data were analysed through descriptive and interpretative analysis (Creswell, 2007, 2009). First, the selected sources were read carefully to identify important ideas related to local literature preservation. Second, the information was grouped into three main themes based on the research questions: the role of performing arts in preserving folklore, the role of digital technology in documentation and dissemination, and the integration of performing arts and digital technology as a preservation strategy. Third, the findings from the literature were interpreted to explain how these two approaches can support the preservation of Minahasan local literature.

This study has several limitations. Since it is a literature-based study, it does not include interviews, audience responses, field observations, or direct implementation of folklore performances and digital media. Therefore, the findings are conceptual and interpretative rather than experimental. However, this method is useful as an initial academic discussion for developing future research, cultural projects, classroom materials, or digital documentation programmes related to Minahasan folklore.

RESULTS

The findings of this literature-based study are presented based on the three research questions. The first finding discusses how performing arts can contribute to the preservation of Minahasan folklore by transforming local stories into visible, embodied, emotional, and communal forms. The second finding explains how digital technology can support the documentation, dissemination, and accessibility of Minahasan folklore through recording, archiving, subtitling,

online sharing, QR codes, and digital learning materials. The third finding shows how performing arts and digital technology can work together as a complementary preservation strategy. In this study, performing arts are understood as a way to keep folklore alive through cultural expression, while digital technology is understood as a way to make folklore more accessible, reusable, and sustainable in contemporary society.

Performing Arts as a Medium for Preserving Minahasan Folklore

The study shows that performing arts can contribute to the preservation of Minahasan folklore by transforming local stories into visible and embodied forms. Folklore is often transmitted through oral storytelling, but performance can expand this transmission by using body movement, voice, gesture, music, costume, space, and visual symbols (Ahmedova, 2025; Santosa et al., 2021; Yuliastutik et al., 2025). Through performance, stories are not only heard, but also seen and experienced by the audience.

Minahasan folklore such as *Toar* and *Lumimuut* and the narratives surrounding *Watu Pinawetengan* contain characters, conflicts, moral messages, and cultural symbols that can be adapted into drama, storytelling performance, dance, music, monologue, or theatre. For example, the story of *Toar* and *Lumimuut* can be presented through dramatic dialogue, symbolic movement, traditional music, and visual representation of Minahasan cultural identity (Kobis et al., 2023; Madilah, 2023; Tumengkol et al., 2023). In this way, the story becomes more accessible to audiences who may not be familiar with the oral version of the folklore.

Performing arts also allow folklore to be communicated through different artistic elements (Syam et al., 2024). Drama can present the conflict, dialogue, and moral message of the story (Santosa et al., 2021). Dance can express emotions, relationships, and symbolic meanings through movement. Music can create atmosphere and strengthen the cultural identity of the performance (Purnani & Azizah, 2025; Rahmah et al., 2025). Storytelling performance can maintain the oral character of folklore while making it more engaging for contemporary audiences. Monologue can be used to highlight the voice of a particular character and present the inner meaning of the story in a simple but expressive way.

In the context of Minahasan folklore, those forms of performance can help audiences understand the cultural meanings behind the stories. The story of *Toar* and *Lumimuut*, for example, can be used to introduce ideas about origin, kinship, identity, and social relations (Rottie et al., 2025). The narratives surrounding *Watu Pinawetengan* can be connected to ideas

of unity, ancestral memory, and the historical imagination of the Minahasan people (Sompe & Jura, 2021). Through performance, these meanings can be shown through characters, movements, costumes, music, and stage symbols rather than explained only through written description.

Performing arts can also strengthen the communal function of folklore. A performance usually involves performers, audience members, space, sound, and shared cultural experience. This communal aspect is important because folklore traditionally belongs to the community, not only to individual readers or writers (Nikolena, 2023). When folklore is performed, it can create a collective moment where cultural memory is remembered, shared, and reinterpreted together (Gülüm, 2023).

Another important finding is that performing arts can make folklore more attractive to younger generations. Many young people may find traditional oral storytelling less familiar because their daily lives are strongly connected to digital media and popular culture. However, when folklore is presented through drama, dance, music, or visual performance, it can become more lively and easier to understand (Angela et al., 2025; Cintya, 2023). Performance can bridge the gap between traditional stories and contemporary audiences without removing the cultural roots of the folklore (Nurhayati et al., 2025).

Therefore, performing arts can be seen as a creative preservation strategy. They do not change folklore into something entirely new, but help present it in forms that are more visible, emotional, and participatory. In this way, Minahasan folklore can continue to live not only as oral tradition or written text, but also as a cultural experience that can be watched, felt, remembered, and shared.

Digital Technology as a Tool for Documentation, Dissemination, and Accessibility

The study also shows that digital technology can support the preservation of Minahasan folklore by making local stories easier to document, store, share, and access. Folklore performances can be recorded in audio or video format, archived in digital collections, uploaded to websites or social media platforms, subtitled in Indonesian or English, and linked through QR codes (Aljamaliah, 2022; Nugroho et al., 2025; Reshma et al., 2023). These practices can help local stories reach wider audiences beyond their original community context.

One important function of digital technology is documentation (UNESCO, 2023). Many oral traditions depend on memory, oral transmission, and community practice (Bashori et al., 2024). If they are not documented, they may become less visible over time, especially when the

number of storytellers or cultural practitioners decreases. Audio recording, video recording, photography, and written transcription can help preserve the content, performance style, language, expression, and cultural context of Minahasan folklore (Bakar et al., 2024). This documentation can become an important cultural archive for future generations.

Digital archives can also help organise and store folklore materials more systematically (Irfaniah, 2023). For example, stories such as *Toar* and *Lumimuut* or narratives about *Watu Pinawetengan* can be collected in digital folders, websites, online libraries, or local cultural databases. These archives may include written versions of the stories, video performances, photographs of cultural sites, explanations of symbols, and bilingual translations (Muhsyanur, 2025). In this way, digital technology can help folklore become more accessible not only to local communities, but also to students, teachers, researchers, and cultural institutions.

Digital technology is also useful for dissemination (Novianti et al., 2025). Local folklore can be shared through websites, YouTube, social media, podcasts, digital exhibitions, and online learning platforms (Ariani & Sulistyorini, 2025; Kasemsarn & Nickpour, 2025). These platforms can help Minahasan folklore reach audiences who may not have direct access to traditional storytelling spaces or cultural events. For young people who are already familiar with online platforms and digital media, digital dissemination can make folklore easier to encounter in their everyday lives.

Another important form of digital support is the use of subtitles and translation (García-escribano & Fernández-costales, 2024). When folklore performances are translated and subtitled in Indonesian or English, they can be understood by wider audiences, including students from other regions, researchers, tourists, and international readers (Ismailia, 2019; Sukaesih et al., 2025). English subtitles can be especially useful for introducing Minahasan folklore beyond North Sulawesi and Indonesia. This can strengthen the position of Minahasan folklore as part of Indonesian local literature and also as part of wider cultural heritage.

Furthermore, QR codes can also connect physical and digital spaces. Printed books, posters, tourism brochures, classroom modules, museum displays, or cultural site information boards can include QR codes that lead users to digital folklore content (Aljamaliah, 2022; Virginiya et al., 2025; Widyawan et al., 2025). For example, a QR code placed near a cultural site or in a learning module can direct readers to a video performance, story text, audio narration, or short explanation of Minahasan cultural symbols. This makes folklore more interactive and easier to access.

Digital technology can also support academic and educational purposes. Recorded folklore performances can be used as teaching materials in English literature, cultural studies, folklore studies, translation studies, and local literature classes. Students can analyse the plot, characters, symbols, moral values, cultural context, language, and performance elements of the stories (Nopasari et al., 2023; Sulistinayanti et al., 2025). In this way, digital folklore materials can support both literary learning and cultural education.

In addition, digital media can help connect folklore preservation with tourism and cultural promotion. Minahasan stories can be introduced through digital brochures, tourism websites, QR-code-based guides, short documentary videos, or digital storytelling materials. Tourists who visit North Sulawesi may not know the cultural meanings behind local stories and sites. Digital media can help them understand the narratives, values, and symbols connected to Minahasan culture.

However, the use of digital technology should still respect the cultural roots of folklore. Digital adaptation should not simplify, commercialise, or remove the deeper meanings of the stories. Local communities, cultural practitioners, and scholars need to be involved so that digital materials remain accurate, respectful, and culturally meaningful (Fida et al., 2025; Lapian et al., 2025). In this sense, digital technology should function as a supporting medium, not as a replacement for oral tradition or community-based cultural practice.

Therefore, digital technology can be seen as an important tool for documentation, dissemination, accessibility, education, and cultural promotion. It allows Minahasan folklore to move from limited oral or printed circulation into wider digital spaces. At the same time, it can help younger generations, students, researchers, tourists, and international audiences engage with Minahasan local literature in ways that are more accessible and relevant to contemporary life.

Integrating Performing Arts and Digital Technology as a Preservation Strategy

The third finding shows that performing arts and digital technology can work together as a complementary strategy for preserving Minahasan folklore. Performing arts make folklore visible, emotional, embodied, and communal, while digital technology makes folklore documented, accessible, shareable, and reusable. These two approaches have different functions, but they can support each other (Siliutina et al., 2024), especially in strengthening the continuity of Minahasan local literature.

Performing arts can be understood as the first stage of cultural activation. Through drama, dance, music, storytelling performance, monologue, or theatre, Minahasan folklore can be brought back into public and educational spaces. Stories such as *Toar* and *Lumimuut* or *Watu Pinawetengan* can be performed in ways that allow audiences to see the characters, conflicts, cultural symbols, and moral meanings directly. This helps folklore become a living cultural experience rather than only a story preserved in written form.

Digital technology can then extend the life and reach of these performances. A folklore performance that is only presented once may disappear after the event ends if it is not documented. However, when the performance is recorded, archived, subtitled, uploaded, or linked through QR codes, it can be accessed again by different audiences. In this way, digital technology helps performance move beyond the limits of time and place.

The integration of performing arts and digital technology can also create a preservation cycle. First, folklore is selected and interpreted from oral or written sources. Second, the story is adapted into a performance form. Third, the performance is documented through video, audio, photography, or transcription. Fourth, the documentation is stored in digital archives or uploaded to digital platforms. Fifth, the digital materials can be reused for education, research, tourism, and cultural promotion. This cycle shows that preservation is not a single action, but an ongoing process (Qi et al., 2025; Rafianti et al., 2026).

This combined strategy is especially useful for younger generations. Performing arts can make folklore more lively and easier to understand, while digital technology can place folklore in platforms that young people already use. For example, a performance of *Toar* and *Lumimuut* can be recorded as a short video, subtitled in English, uploaded to a website or YouTube channel, and linked through QR codes in classroom modules or tourism materials. Through this process, young people can encounter Minahasan folklore in both artistic and digital forms.

The integration of performance and digital technology can also support cultural accessibility. Local communities can use it to preserve their stories, teachers can use it as learning material, researchers can use it as cultural documentation (Rejeki et al., 2025), and tourists can use it to understand the cultural meanings behind Minahasan sites and narratives. This shows that preservation is not only about keeping folklore from disappearing, but also about making it meaningful and accessible for different audiences.

However, this strategy needs to be carried out carefully. The use of performance and digital technology should not remove the cultural roots of Minahasan folklore. Adaptation should

respect local meanings, community memory, cultural symbols, and traditional values. Digital materials should also be prepared responsibly so that folklore is not reduced only to entertainment or tourism content (Calista & Fitriningtyas, 2024). Community involvement is important to ensure that the stories remain accurate, respectful, and culturally grounded.

Overall, performing arts and digital technology can work together to support the preservation of Minahasan folklore. Performing arts help folklore live through voice, body, movement, music, and shared experience. Digital technology helps folklore survive through documentation, archiving, dissemination, and wider access. When these two approaches are combined, Minahasan folklore can continue to be remembered, experienced, shared, and studied in contemporary cultural life.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that preserving Minahasan folklore requires both cultural expression and digital support. Performing arts help transform oral or written folklore into visible, emotional, and communal experiences. Through drama, dance, music, storytelling, monologue, and theatre, Minahasan folklore can become easier to understand and more engaging for contemporary audiences. This shows that folklore should not only be stored as cultural memory, but also experienced as a living tradition.

Digital technology strengthens this preservation process by extending the reach and life of folklore performances. When performances are recorded, archived, subtitled, uploaded, or linked through QR codes, they can be accessed beyond the original time and place of performance. This means that digital technology does not replace oral tradition or performing arts, but supports them by making folklore more visible, reusable, and accessible to students, teachers, researchers, tourists, local communities, and wider audiences.

The discussion also shows that performing arts and digital technology are complementary approaches. Performing arts activate folklore as a cultural experience, while digital technology preserves and circulates it through documentation, dissemination, and accessibility. However, this process must respect local meanings, community memory, cultural symbols, and traditional values. Community involvement is therefore important to keep the stories accurate, respectful, and culturally grounded.

To clarify the relationship between the main findings, Table 1 presents an integrated strategy for preserving Minahasan folklore. The table shows how performing arts, digital technology, their integration, and cultural responsibility contribute to the preservation process.

Tabel 1. Integrated Strategy for Minahasan Folklore Preservation

Main Aspect	Role in Preservation	Example in Minahasan Folklore	Main Contribution
Performing arts	Transform folklore into visible, embodied, emotional, and communal forms.	<i>Toar</i> and <i>Lumimuut</i> or <i>Watu Pinawetengan</i> can be adapted into drama, storytelling performance, dance, music, monologue, or theatre	Makes folklore easier to understand, more attractive, and more alive as cultural experience
Digital technology	Documents, stores, shares, and expands access to folklore.	Performances can be recorded, archived, subtitled, uploaded, or linked through QR codes	Makes folklore accessible to students, teachers, researchers, tourists, and wider audiences
Integration of both approaches	Creates a preservation cycle from performance to digital documentation and reuse.	Folklore is selected, performed, recorded, archived, shared, and reused for education, research, tourism, and cultural promotion	Supports long-term preservation without removing the cultural roots of the folklore
Cultural responsibility	Ensures that adaptation remains respectful and culturally grounded	Local meanings, symbols, values, and community memory must be considered	Prevents folklore from being reduced only to entertainment or tourism content

The table shows that preservation is not only about protecting folklore from disappearance. It is also about making folklore meaningful, accessible, and relevant for contemporary society. Performing arts help Minahasan folklore remain alive as cultural expression, while digital technology helps the stories reach wider audiences and remain available for future use.

Overall, preserving Minahasan folklore should be seen as an ongoing cultural process. Folklore can be adapted into performance, documented through digital media, stored in archives, shared online, and reused for education, research, tourism, and cultural promotion. Through this process, performing arts and digital technology can help Minahasan folklore remain alive, meaningful, and accessible in contemporary cultural life.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that performing arts and digital technology can support the preservation of Minahasan folklore in complementary ways. Performing arts help transform folklore into visible, emotional, and communal experiences through drama, dance, music, storytelling, monologue, and theatre. Digital technology supports this process by enabling documentation, archiving, dissemination, translation, QR-code access, and educational use.

The study also shows that preserving Minahasan folklore is not only about keeping old stories from disappearing. It is about making these stories alive, meaningful, and accessible for contemporary audiences. When performing arts and digital technology are used responsibly, Minahasan folklore can continue to be remembered, experienced, shared, and studied without losing its cultural roots.

As a literature-based study, this article does not report direct implementation or audience response. Future research may develop practical projects, such as folklore performances, digital archives, classroom materials, or tourism-based digital storytelling, to further support the preservation of Minahasan local literature.

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