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LEARNING BY LIVING: ACCULTURATION, LEADERSHIP, AND REFLEXIVITY IN BANCEUY'S INFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM

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Abstract. Despite increasing recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems, the role of informal adult learning within customary communities remains under-theorized in mainstream adult education discourse. There is limited understanding of how traditional practices, beliefs, and community structures shape learning processes outside formal institutions. This study investigates the role of informal adult learning in Kampung Adat Banceuy, a Sundanese customary village in West Java, Indonesia. The research focuses on how learning is embedded in four interconnected domains: customary leadership, ritual practice, selective acculturation, and community-based tourism. These domains form a cohesive learning ecology through which cultural knowledge, social roles, and ethical values are transmitted and adapted across generations. Using an ethnographic methodology, the study involved participant observation, semi-structured interviews with 36 informants, and analysis of cultural documents. Data were examined through thematic coding and interpretive analysis to capture the nuanced, situated processes of learning as enacted in everyday life. Findings show that informal adult learning in Banceuy is relational, embodied, and performative. Tourism, in particular, functions as a reflexive learning environment where adults develop narrative, logistical, and intercultural competencies while negotiating cultural meaning and ethical boundaries. Rather than being a site of commodification, tourism becomes a space of identity work and adaptive pedagogy. These insights challenge conventional hierarchies of formal education and affirm the centrality of Indigenous learning systems in sustaining cultural resilience. The study offers implications for policy and theory, emphasizing the need to support culturally embedded, community-driven models of adult education.

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INTRODUCTION

The safeguarding and revitalization of Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) amid accelerating globalization have emerged as both urgent imperatives and complex challenges across educational, cultural, and policy domains. Globalization, through its intersecting economic, sociopolitical, and technological dimensions, has profoundly reshaped Indigenous lifeways. It has disrupted ecological relationships, displaced customary governance structures, and fractured epistemic sovereignty. While transnational flows of information and advocacy have amplified global recognition of Indigenous rights, they have also intensified processes of epistemicide—the systemic displacement of Indigenous ontologies by dominant Western paradigms (Bol & van Niekerk, 2023; López-Maldonado & Jarlik, 2024). Formal education systems frequently reinforce these trends, embedding universalist logics that marginalize or erase relational, place-based, and community-centered forms of knowledge (Kaya, 2016).

In this context, informal adult learning represents a vital countercurrent—an enduring site of cultural resilience and epistemological continuity. Rooted in social, ecological, and spiritual relationships, informal learning manifests through everyday practices such as ritual participation, ecological stewardship, ancestral storytelling, and customary leadership. Within Indigenous contexts, such learning is intergenerational, performative, and relational. It facilitates the transmission of tacit knowledge and ethical frameworks while fostering community adaptability in the face of political instability, environmental change, and systemic exclusion (Schnellert et al., 2022; Usher et al., 2021). In contrast to the abstraction and standardization that often characterize formal systems, informal learning in Indigenous communities is situated, embodied, and inseparable from lived experience. Despite its foundational role, informal learning remains marginalized in policy and academic discourse (Quinn, 2018). An overreliance on institutional credentials and measurable outcomes obscures practices of knowledge transmission embedded in communal life and intersubjective experience. As a result, Indigenous communities face constrained opportunities to define development and education on their own terms (Firdaussy et al., 2024). Addressing this imbalance requires more than inclusive rhetoric; it demands a fundamental reconfiguration of adult learning paradigms to center relational accountability, cultural continuity, and epistemological plurality.

Recent scholarship has begun to articulate this reorientation, advancing decolonial pedagogies and community-driven methodologies as credible alternatives. Empirical studies illustrate how participatory education, mobile technology, and localized curricular designs are enabling Indigenous communities to reclaim their knowledge systems through context-specific modalities (Schnellert et al., 2022; Swiderska et al., 2022; Yumagulova et al., 2020). Rather than viewing informal learning as remedial or marginal, these studies frame it as a generative and politically salient process. Innovations such as intergenerational mobile learning (Pulla, 2017; Traxler & Smith, 2020), youth-led photovoice initiatives (Liebenberg et al., 2019), and resilience training grounded in Indigenous epistemologies provide compelling evidence of this reconfiguration. In parallel, a growing body of research emphasizes the central role of traditional leadership in sustaining intergenerational learning and cultural integrity. Traditional leaders act as pedagogical anchors—facilitating transmission of ecological knowledge, social norms, and ancestral narratives through dialogic and performative means. Across diverse contexts such as Zimbabwe, Indonesia, and Aboriginal Australia, these leaders function as mediators between tradition and modernity, holding together communal memory and adaptive strategy (Chiweshe, 2024; Lee-Hammond et al., 2019; Wardhani et al., 2023). Their authority is relationally earned and grounded in lifelong learning rather than formal certification.

These literatures converge in the formulation of hybrid frameworks that link formal and informal learning, aligning pedagogical innovation with cultural coherence. Approaches such as culturally sustaining pedagogy, grassroots digital learning, and ecological models of community education have redefined education as a lifelong, ethical, and collective practice (Dahn et al., 2022; Nurhayati & Lahagu, 2024; Rahmat et al., 2024; Singsorn et al., 2023; Zhang & Perkins, 2023). Within these models, education is not limited to skill acquisition; it becomes a process of relational becoming that deepens cultural consciousness and communal resilience. Yet, critical gaps persist. Ethnographic accounts remain sparse in showing how informal adult learning unfolds in specific Indigenous contexts—particularly in relation to leadership, ritual, economy, and acculturation. The literature often positions Indigenous epistemologies as supplemental to formal systems, rather than as autonomous and generative pedagogical frameworks. Furthermore, the reflexive nature of informal learning—how adults reinterpret, reconfigure, and re-embody traditional knowledge in hybrid cultural spaces—remains underexplored.

Despite the substantial growth of interdisciplinary literature underscoring the pedagogical significance of informal learning within Indigenous contexts, notable conceptual and empirical lacunae remain. A number of studies have elucidated the role of informal adult learning in sustaining cultural continuity, particularly through its entrenchment in quotidian communal

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practices and localized language revitalization efforts. Scholars such as Assefa and Mohammed (2022), Massola and Kral (2017), and Henne-Ochoa (2022) document how Indigenous knowledge systems are seamlessly embedded within familial routines and collective practices, thereby facilitating the transmission of cultural identity across generations. Wotherspoon (2015) similarly foregrounds the resurgence of epistemological agency through culturally embedded educational initiatives. Nonetheless, these contributions often stop short of interrogating the granular processes through which such knowledge is enacted, especially in domains such as leadership, ritual performance, and intercultural mediation. In the arena of leadership formation, the literature further illustrates how community-anchored, participatory learning modalities contribute to civic empowerment and leadership development, with particular attention to Indigenous women and community leaders operating within the tourism sector (Acharya et al., 2019; Assefa, 2021; Tapia et al., 2022). These works validate the capacity of informal learning to instill transformative agency within culturally grounded frameworks. However, much of this research tends to concentrate on programmatic outputs and institutional mechanisms, without sufficiently theorizing the informal, performative, and relational dimensions of leadership as lived and cultivated through customary roles, dialogic engagement, and ritual practice.

Collectively, these studies provide a valuable conceptual scaffold for understanding the multifaceted role of informal adult learning in Indigenous and traditional communities. However, two substantive gaps persist. First, there remains a paucity of fine-grained ethnographic inquiry into how informal learning practices unfold across specific Indigenous settings—particularly at the intersection of customary leadership, ritual life, acculturative dynamics, and community-based tourism. Second, few investigations fully engage with the idea of informal learning as a reflexive, embodied, and performative phenomenon capable of engendering adaptive pedagogical models and sustaining epistemic sovereignty.

This study addresses these gaps through an in-depth ethnographic investigation of informal adult learning in Kampung Adat Banceuy, a Sundanese customary village in West Java, Indonesia. The originality of this research lies in its integrative methodological approach and its analytic framing of informal education as a primary site of cultural production and adaptive capacity. By bridging situated learning theory with ethnographic data from a living adat community, the study affirms the pedagogical sophistication of informal learning as both method and substance. It highlights how learning is enacted through relational roles, ritual participation, and place-based knowledge systems. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how informal adult learning sustains Indigenous identity, intergenerational cohesion, and epistemic autonomy. Kampung Adat Banceuy is presented not merely as a case study, but as a living pedagogical site where education is practiced as an ethical, embodied, and culturally sovereign act. The findings challenge dominant paradigms that marginalize Indigenous learning systems and affirm the transformative potential of community-based knowledge in shaping more inclusive educational futures.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic methodology to examine the structures, meanings, and lived enactments of informal adult learning in Kampung Adat Banceuy, a Sundanese customary village located in Desa Sanca, Kecamatan Ciater, Kabupaten Subang, West Java, Indonesia. Ethnography was selected as the most appropriate design due to its capacity to capture contextualized, experiential knowledge embedded in everyday life and ritual practice (Iswahyudi et al., 2023; Nurhayati et al., 2024; Sugiyono, 2019). In communities where knowledge is transmitted through embodied action, intersubjective relationships, and ancestral cosmologies, ethnographic immersion allows for the observation and interpretation of learning as a holistic, place-based process. Framed by interpretivist and decolonial epistemologies, the study prioritized relational accountability and mutual engagement with community members as co-constructors of knowledge. Rather than entering the field with rigid theoretical assumptions, the research evolved inductively through sustained interaction, allowing insights to emerge from localized expressions of meaning, power, and pedagogy. This iterative design supported the

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mapping of a complex learning ecology while remaining attentive to the cultural logics and ethical sensibilities of the research setting.

To ensure that the study captured a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences, purposive and snowball sampling strategies were applied. Participants were initially selected based on their active involvement in one or more of the four focal domains of learning: customary leadership, ritual enactment, social integration, and cultural tourism. These included adat elders, women ritual specialists, youth leaders, guides engaged in tourism, and residents recently integrated through marriage or migration. As fieldwork progressed, snowball sampling enabled the researcher to access additional informants whose knowledge, roles, or histories enriched the emerging thematic landscape. Recommendations from trusted participants led to conversations with individuals representing multiple generations, occupational categories, and gendered experiences. This sampling approach proved especially effective within the close-knit social environment of Kampung Adat Banceuy, where informal authority and relational legitimacy often shape knowledge exchange. The final cohort consisted of 36 participants engaged in formal interviews, with further insights drawn from informal dialogues, group interactions, and direct observation.

Data were collected over a nine-month fieldwork period from Mei 2024 to February 2025 using a triangulated set of qualitative techniques. Semi-structured interviews provided the primary narrative material, facilitating in-depth exploration of participants' learning trajectories, cultural roles, and interpretations of pedagogical change. Conducted in either Sundanese or Bahasa Indonesia, interviews ranged from 60 to 120 minutes and were held in familiar community spaces to support open, trust-based communication.

Participant observation played a central role in revealing how learning is enacted within and across social settings. The researcher engaged in daily village life, participating in ritual preparations, observing deliberative assemblies, attending communal labor events, and supporting tourism activities. Detailed fieldnotes recorded spatial dynamics, interpersonal interactions, and the sensory dimensions of learning—movement, gesture, sound, and symbol. A reflexive field journal was maintained to document analytic insights, methodological decisions, and researcher positionality throughout the project. Additionally, relevant cultural documents were analyzed, including ritual scripts, oral histories, visitor records, and locally produced visual materials. These data offered a layered account of how informal learning is preserved, transmitted, and performed within the community's evolving educational landscape.

The analysis proceeded through an inductive thematic process informed by grounded theory and interpretive phenomenology. All interview transcripts, observation notes, and document excerpts were coded manually, first in the original language and then in English translation. The open coding stage identified emergent motifs, metaphors, and pedagogical routines across participant narratives and field observations. This was followed by axial coding, which clustered related codes into thematic categories reflecting specific learning practices, such as leadership apprenticeship, ritual rehearsal, embodied acculturation, and cultural interpretation. Selective coding further refined these categories into four interwoven domains, enabling the construction of a conceptual model of Banceuy's informal learning ecology. Throughout the process, constant comparison methods ensured that emerging themes were cross-validated and that divergent perspectives were accounted for. To enhance the credibility and rigor of the research, several strategies were employed. Methodological triangulation across interviews, observation, and document analysis allowed for robust cross-verification of findings. Member checking was conducted by presenting preliminary results to participants for confirmation, clarification, and refinement. This practice not only ensured accuracy but reinforced community ownership of the research outcomes.

Ethical conduct was foundational to the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants through oral and written protocols that were adapted to cultural norms and reviewed by an academic ethics board. Participation was fully voluntary, with ongoing opportunities to withdraw or modify consent. Confidentiality was maintained through anonymization and secure data storage. Particular care was taken with sacred knowledge and

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sensitive cultural information; decisions about what to include in the study's public outputs were made collaboratively with participants. Visual materials and ritual content were only documented and shared with explicit community approval.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a synthesis of the core empirical findings derived from immersive ethnographic fieldwork in Kampung Adat Banceuy. The village sustains a contextually rich ecosystem of informal adult learning, structured around four interconnected domains: (1) intergenerational transmission of sociocultural knowledge through customary leadership; (2) ritual practice as a vehicle for embodied pedagogy; (3) selective acculturation as a scaffolded process of sociocultural integration; and (4) tourism as an emerging space for economic skill-building and reflexive cultural articulation. These domains form a cohesive learning ecology underpinned by relational accountability, moral continuity, and adaptive agency.

1. Leadership and Intergenerational Knowledge Transmission

Customary leadership in Banceuy represents more than an organizational structure—it functions as a lived curriculum. Through active participation and prolonged exposure, adults internalize the procedural, ethical, and cosmological dimensions of governance. The *kepala adat* (public leader) and *sesepuh* (senior public figure) serve as central pedagogical figures whose discursive styles and public actions model communal values.

One informant explained that "we do not learn leadership through courses; we learn it by listening, preparing the meetings, and reflecting on the way the elders decide." Village forums operate as dialogic arenas where conflict resolution, land disputes, and ritual preparations reveal the interplay between ancestral wisdom and administrative knowledge. For instance, during a dispute over canal access, elders deferred to adat-based land memory while also acknowledging the importance of documentation required by regional authorities. This balancing act illustrates the dual-literacy demanded of adult learners navigating both customary and formal institutions. Younger adults are often apprenticed into leadership roles by being assigned logistical tasks—arranging chairs, compiling minutes, or guiding ritual logistics. One participant, who had been assigned to record deliberations, remarked that "the way they pause before responding or wait for someone older to speak first—that is the kind of discipline you only learn by being there."

The findings from Kampung Adat Banceuy reinforce the view that customary leadership serves not merely as a governance apparatus but as an intergenerational pedagogical institution. Leadership in this context is deeply interwoven with the transmission of civic knowledge, ethical reasoning, and collective identity. Kepala adat and sesepuh are recognized not only as authorities but as educators, exemplifying what Heto and Mino (2023) identify as the lived pedagogy of Indigenous knowledge systems, in which elders serve as active agents of cultural instruction. This aligns with Cajete's (2016) proposition that Indigenous learning is enacted through culturally resonant, place-based experience rather than formalized curriculum delivery.

The data demonstrate that adults in Banceuy internalize leadership practices through relational engagement and observational immersion. One informant reflected that leadership is acquired not through instruction but by attending forums, supporting communal preparations, and studying how elders deliberate. This substantiates Benham and Murakami-Ramalho's (2010) argument that Indigenous leadership cultivates reflective and relational adult learning grounded in accountability and ancestral logic. Village forums, which simultaneously address land disputes, ritual planning, and administrative decisions, act as informal civic classrooms where legal pluralism—customary and state—is negotiated in practice (Hammar, 2019).

The engagement of younger adults in logistical and facilitative roles reveals a scaffolded pathway into leadership, one that mirrors findings by Kusuma and Indarti (2017) on relational succession models in Indonesian family enterprises. Through tasks such as minute-taking and space arrangement, youth absorb behavioral protocols and develop an intuitive sense of governance. Informants described learning to read pauses, defer appropriately, and interpret non-verbal cues—subtleties consistent with Schmidt and Muehlfeld's (2017) exploration of tacit knowledge in high-functioning intergenerational learning systems.

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Such mechanisms resonate with broader empirical literature. Martínez-Molina and Solis-Espallargas (2020) describe similar dynamics in Andalusia, though they also note the fragility of these systems under generational discontinuity. In contrast, Banceuy maintains intact ceremonial cycles and leadership structures that sustain pedagogical rhythm and normative transmission. The preservation of participatory forums as spaces for learning aligns with findings by Netshandama and Nevhudoli (2021), who show how dialogic interaction between youth and elders revitalizes traditional wisdom in institutional contexts. Similarly, Cristancho and Vining (2009) illustrate shifts from embodied to formal knowledge in Colombia and Guatemala; Banceuy, however, demonstrates how informal pedagogies remain robust, even amidst administrative hybridization (Lužar et al., 2023).

Alternative explanations for the effectiveness of Banceuy's leadership model include its geographic location and cultural cohesion. Its relative insulation from market forces and external intervention may shield it from rapid sociocultural shifts observed elsewhere. Moreover, ritual life provides a recurring pedagogical framework, embedding civic learning within cosmological cycles. While this structural embeddedness may not be replicable in all Indigenous settings, it offers a compelling model of resilience through localized pedagogy.

The implications are multi-layered. First, this case reinforces the role of traditional leadership as a legitimate and dynamic site of adult education. Second, it demonstrates the epistemic and civic value of integrating Indigenous leadership structures into broader learning systems—not as cultural adornment but as foundational pedagogical infrastructures. These findings support Faircloth and Minthorn's (2023) advocacy for Indigenous educational sovereignty, and echo Saunders (2012) in affirming the centrality of elder-led community-based adult education (CBAE). They also relate to Harfield et al. (2021), who emphasize Indigenous leadership as a vehicle for building health literacy and emotional resilience in applied community contexts.

The Banceuy case further highlights the shortcomings of conventional leadership education models that prioritize managerial competence over cultural coherence. Its interwoven approach to leadership development—through ritual, relational mentorship, and civic deliberation—offers an alternative paradigm for adult learning frameworks, particularly in Indigenous and rural contexts. Johnson and Flückiger (2022) call for inclusive leadership development; the Banceuy example illustrates how that inclusion must be grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. Customary leadership in Kampung Adat Banceuy exemplifies a culturally coherent model of lifelong learning. It enables the intergenerational transmission of governance skills, social norms, and moral frameworks through participatory and observational learning. These findings contribute to the growing body of research that recognizes Indigenous leadership not merely as a traditional institution, but as a dynamic and pedagogically rich force for adult education, community continuity, and epistemic justice (Collard, 2007; Washington, 2025).

2. Rituals as Pedagogical Assemblages

Rituals in Banceuy serve as integrative, multivocal educational experiences in which adults learn by doing, observing, and interpreting. The *Ruwatan Bumi*, for example, functions not only as a ritual of purification and gratitude but also as a pedagogical performance. Roles are not distributed randomly; they reflect age, gender, lineage, and demonstrated competence. Preparation phases involve generational scaffolding. A middle-aged woman described how "when we prepare the offerings, we explain the meaning of each object while folding leaves or arranging the flowers." The use of cassava, banana stalk, and symbolic textiles is not only functional—it is epistemic. These materials encode ecological, cosmological, and moral values transmitted intergenerationally through action and repetition.

Ritualized slaughter during *meuncit munding* offers an emotionally charged moment for communal reflection. As one informant put it, "it is not just killing—it is a statement that life must be balanced." Discussions following the ritual often extend into informal settings, reinforcing the moral economy of reciprocity, humility, and non-exploitative stewardship. Oral performance arts, particularly *wayang golek*, offer another dimension of pedagogical density.

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One senior performer shared that "I learned the stories before I knew what they meant—just by copying the way my grandfather moved his hands and voice." The transmission of this embodied knowledge takes place in semi-public spaces such as porches and fields, creating a distributed infrastructure for adult learning across domestic and ceremonial spheres. During *Mapag Cai*, collective movement and non-verbal coordination among adults reinforce procedural discipline and attentional sensitivity. Observers noted that synchronization was rarely discussed explicitly, yet executed flawlessly—indicating an internalized script refined through years of situated practice.

Ritual practices in Kampung Adat Banceuy function as pedagogical assemblages—complex, integrative systems of informal learning where knowledge is embodied, narrated, and socially transmitted. Far beyond their spiritual or ceremonial significance, rituals such as Ruwatan Bumi, Meuncit Munding, Wayang Golek performances, and Mapag Cai operate as dynamic educational spaces. These practices transmit ecological ethics, social norms, and ancestral wisdom through active, participatory engagement, exemplifying what Tariq (2025) describes as culturally grounded informal curricula.

Learning is structured through incremental participation. Adults internalize values and competencies by engaging in ritual tasks that are simultaneously practical and symbolic. For example, preparing offerings involves both physical skill and epistemic understanding, aligning with Hare (2012), Simeon-Fayomi (2017), and Wiseman (2022), who emphasize embodied learning and the performative transfer of knowledge. Materials such as cassava, banana stalks, and ritual cloth serve as epistemic artifacts encoding cosmological, ecological, and ethical values (Bowra et al., 2021; Davis-Floyd & Laughlin, 2022; Firdaus et al., 2024). Meuncit Munding, in particular, illustrates how ritual can become a site of ethical reflection, reinforcing principles of reciprocity and communal responsibility (Rybanska, 2020). Wayang Golek performances reinforce oral pedagogy through repetition, performance, and intergenerational guidance. This finding is consistent with Vallejo (2019) and Good et al. (2021), who highlight the role of traditional arts in sustaining collective memory and developing critical engagement with cultural narratives. Mapag Cai exemplifies the internalization of procedural knowledge through embodied repetition and group coordination. Without formal instruction, participants learn through repeated, structured practice—a process supporting research by Irving et al. (2024) and Sohi et al. (2018), who link ritual to enhanced cognitive focus and emotional regulation. In Banceuy, such practices contribute to both individual competence and social cohesion.

Rituals also function as communal learning environments. As argued by Prest et al. (2024) and Trinidad-Lagarto et al. (2024), indigenous education thrives in collective, relational settings. In Banceuy, pedagogical authority is shared among elders, adults, and youth, enabling reciprocal learning and reinforcing social continuity across generations. These findings contribute to decolonial education discourse by demonstrating that rituals are not merely expressive but constitute a form of epistemic and pedagogical practice. In line with Ormiston (2014) and Eybers (2025), rituals in Banceuy act as ontological anchors, grounding learners in ancestral knowledge while remaining adaptive to changing social realities. The global relevance of these findings is underscored by research on the integration of ritual into formal education. Trinidad-Lagarto et al. (2024) observe, ritual infrastructures activate memory, affect, and identity, providing a sustained platform for adult learning. This study affirms that adults in Banceuy learn through cycles of shared participation, rather than discrete educational interventions. Ritual practices in Banceuy exemplify the epistemological depth and pedagogical sophistication of Indigenous informal learning systems. They demonstrate that rituals are foundational—not supplementary—to the development of culturally grounded, intergenerationally sustained educational practice.

3. Selective Acculturation as a Learning Modality

Newcomers entering Banceuy—especially through marriage—undergo a subtle but deliberate process of cultural orientation grounded in observation, repetition, and relational mentorship. Acculturation is less about assimilation than about aligning with locally valued

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rhythms of interaction and participation. A male resident whose wife was from outside the region explained, "no one asked her to change, but she started helping with rituals and eventually people asked her to lead." Her gradual assumption of key responsibilities—such as preparing *ngadiukeun* or leading song recitations—was recognized by elders as a sign of deep internalization, not surface conformity. Gender roles shape the scaffolding process. Women typically begin with culinary and musical domains—spaces that are highly ritualized and socially monitored. Men are introduced through shared labor: repairing irrigation lines, maintaining shrines, or assisting during ceremonies. These tasks expose them to the etiquette, language, and tacit codes governing collective life. Informal regulation also manifests through non-verbal social cues. Mobile phone use during rituals, for example, is discouraged not through explicit prohibition but through what one participant described as "being noticed and not being invited again." Behavioral missteps are corrected through exclusion from future responsibilities, creating a feedback loop in which conformity is learned through embodied awareness.

This study illustrates how selective acculturation in Kampung Adat Banceuy operates as a culturally embedded, relational, and performative learning process. Newcomers—particularly those entering through marriage—do not undergo forced assimilation but engage in a gradual, situated process of cultural orientation. Through sustained observation, embodied participation, and relational trust-building, individuals align themselves with communal norms without renouncing their prior identities. Integration, in this context, is achieved through everyday interaction and tacit validation, not through formal instruction or imposed conformity. New entrants to the community, often women, begin their acculturative journey by participating in culturally significant domains such as food preparation and ritual music. Men, by contrast, enter through public labor, shrine maintenance, and ceremonial coordination. These gendered entry points serve as pedagogical thresholds through which individuals internalize cultural expectations. As one participant recounted, his wife gradually assumed ritual leadership not through external mandate but by demonstrating competence and commitment over time. This organic progression underscores how acculturation is scaffolded through non-verbal cues and social recognition. Such findings are consistent with integration-oriented models of selective acculturation (Valenti & Faraci, 2024), where individuals maintain heritage while adopting aspects of the host culture that facilitate community inclusion. This dual engagement is echoed in strategic assimilation, in which ritual proficiency and language acquisition act as mechanisms of cultural capital and social mobility (Roche et al., 2012). In Banceuy, the cultivation of ritual fluency contributes not only to individual legitimacy but also to collective cultural vitality.

The Banceuy case resonates with Indigenous pedagogical traditions globally. The emphasis on intergenerational knowledge transfer, embodied participation, and spatial immersion mirrors practices found among the Wadawurrung of Australia (Woodley et al., 2014), the Manobo of the Philippines (Trinidad-Lagarto et al., 2024), and Aboriginal Australian communities (Massola & Kral, 2017). In all these contexts, social learning occurs through routine interactions rather than through codified curricula. Cultural knowledge is enacted in motion, often in shared spaces such as kitchens, courtyards, and ceremonial fields. Importantly, Banceuy's approach reflects affective and symbolic dimensions of learning that are often overlooked in formal acculturation models. Emotional resonance, symbolic prestige, and mutual accountability drive inclusion. Transgressions, such as inappropriate behavior during rituals, are met with subtle social consequences—withdrawn invitations or loss of communal roles—rather than overt sanction. These mechanisms align with prestige and payoff bias models in cultural evolution (Kunst & Mesoudi, 2024, 2025), where individuals emulate high-status actors and behaviors perceived as beneficial.

The implications of this model are wide-reaching. Banceuy's approach demonstrates that community-anchored acculturation processes can sustain cultural identity while fostering socio-cultural adaptability. Its success rests not on institutional frameworks but on socially embedded feedback systems, affective labor, and the ethical regulation of belonging. The model reinforces findings on multicultural competence (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2022), and gendered learning (Tam, 2012), emphasizing the value of pluralistic, dialogical engagement. Furthermore,

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this case challenges prevailing institutional paradigms that privilege formal curricula and standardized integration protocols. By demonstrating how informal adult learning can produce culturally literate, socially embedded, and emotionally resilient individuals, Banceuy affirms the pedagogical sophistication of Indigenous knowledge systems. In societies negotiating diversity and inclusion, models like Banceuy's offer pathways for integration that preserve difference while cultivating shared community ethos.

4. Tourism as an Experiential Learning Environment

The growth of Banceuy's tourism sector has generated a semi-formalized learning environment where residents develop new communicative, financial, and narrative competencies. Adult learning unfolds through adaptive participation in economic exchanges that are anchored in cultural meaning. A group of women engaged in ritual food preparation transitioned into managing catering for festival visitors. One explained, "we had to learn how to serve outsiders—not just cook but also explain what it means and take payment." These economic activities, while new, are grounded in longstanding practices of hospitality and ritual generosity. Similarly, cultural performers adjust narratives to accommodate diverse audiences. A *wayang* narrator recounted adapting stories about ancestral rice spirits for a visiting urban school group: "I had to simplify, but I also had to be sure the meaning stayed true." In this way, tourism fosters reflexivity as adults are called to articulate and often reinterpret their heritage. Logistical demands of tourism—space allocation, timekeeping, inventory management—introduce functional learning opportunities. One research participant described "learning to count change, plan rotations, and keep the waiting line calm" as new but necessary skills. These experiences provide operational fluency that complements cultural expertise. Tourism, however, is navigated within ethical constraints. As one elder cautioned, "we do not sell our ancestors—we show them." This distinction informs decisions about what to present, how to present it, and when to withhold certain performances, reinforcing cultural sovereignty over commodification. In order to further clarify the organization and interaction of informal learning domains in Kampung Adat Banceuy, Table 1 presents a synthesized comparison across the four core domains identified through fieldwork. This comparative matrix is constructed from repeated themes, observed practices, and participant narratives, allowing the distinct mechanisms, learner roles, and outcomes of each domain to be viewed in parallel.

Table 1. Summary of Informal Learning Domains in Kampung Adat Banceuy

Learning Domain	Pedagogical Mechanism	Participant Activities	Primary Learning Outcomes
Customary Leadership	Observational learning, apprenticeship	Note-taking, forum preparation, ritual coordination	Procedural fluency, civic responsibility, ethical reasoning
Ritual Practice	Embodied pedagogy, intergenerational transmission	Offerings, performance rehearsal, collective coordination	Symbolic literacy, ecological ethics, memory preservation
Selective Acculturation	Relational scaffolding, tacit norm internalization	Cooking, singing, fieldwork, observation	Cultural fluency, behavioral conformity, embodied integration
Cultural Tourism	Experiential adaptation, reflexive narrative development	Catering, storytelling, space management	Entrepreneurial literacy, public engagement, cultural articulation

The table illustrates how each learning domain supports the development of situated knowledge, ethical reasoning, and adaptive competence. While distinct in their practices, these domains converge to form a cohesive pedagogical environment.

Tourism in Kampung Adat Banceuy functions as a culturally embedded, pedagogically significant site for adult experiential learning. The community's engagement in tourism transcends transactional participation, evolving into a dynamic arena where economic interaction, cultural performance, and social reflection converge. As such, tourism provides a platform where local residents, particularly adults, continuously develop skills, rearticulate their identities, and participate in cultural knowledge construction within a semi-formal, community-

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defined framework – key features in experiential learning models (Anugrahwanto & Nurhayati, 2020; Nurhayati, 2018; Nurhayati & Handayani, 2025; Sarah & Nurhayati, 2024). As a learning environment, tourism is inherently participatory, demanding interaction with visitors, adaptation of narratives, and negotiation of roles. It invites local actors into new communicative and logistical terrains that extend traditional learning spaces without detaching from them. This process aligns with broader findings in the literature, which emphasize that cultural tourism fosters adaptive learning, critical thinking, and intercultural competence (Bagnara Milan, 2019; Liamruk et al., 2025). Residents are challenged to reflect on, reinterpret, and sometimes simplify complex ritual narratives and cultural symbols, thus fostering a form of reflexive knowledge engagement that is rare in more conventional learning contexts.

Within this ecosystem, tourism is not merely a site for skill acquisition but a domain of identity work and cultural stewardship. The reframing of performances for diverse audiences requires not only narrative agility but also ethical discernment. These learning moments, although unstructured, embody the principles of lifelong learning and community-driven pedagogy. The interpretive labor involved in adjusting rituals for visitors underscores how tourism becomes an instrument for reinforcing cultural coherence and transmitting values, mirroring the educational functions of community-based tourism in other Indigenous contexts (Carpentier, 2017; Shrestha et al., 2023). Furthermore, tourism in Banceuy reflects what community-based learning theories conceptualize as relational and practice-based education. It offers opportunities for learning that are social, context-specific, and driven by the need to preserve cultural meaning while interacting with external audiences. Community-based tourism, as discussed in CBT literature, fosters both individual skill development and community resilience by embedding learning within culturally relevant, economically productive practices (Cox et al., 2024; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2022).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study has demonstrated that informal adult learning in Kampung Adat Banceuy is embedded within a synergistic and culturally coherent ecosystem comprising customary leadership, ritual engagement, selective acculturation, and community-based tourism. These interconnected domains do not merely support lifelong learning in a passive sense; rather, they constitute an active pedagogical infrastructure through which knowledge, identity, and ethics are co-produced and transmitted. Tourism, in particular, emerges not simply as an economic instrument but as a dynamic space for adult learning, ethical negotiation, and reflexive cultural articulation. It enables community members to engage in symbolic interpretation, logistical coordination, and intercultural communication while maintaining clear ethical boundaries that preserve the sanctity of tradition. This mode of experiential education exemplifies how community-based tourism can become a medium for both cultural continuity and adaptive innovation. Viewed through an ethnographic lens, the findings reaffirm the epistemic and pedagogical sophistication of Indigenous learning systems. Informal learning, as observed in Banceuy, is deeply relational, embodied, and performatively enacted. It disrupts formalist hierarchies in education by privileging community-authored knowledge and participatory pedagogies that emerge through collective practice. The implications of these findings extend to adult education theory, policy, and praxis. They underscore the necessity of reconfiguring educational frameworks to recognize and resource localized, culturally embedded learning models. Such recognition challenges the marginalization of Indigenous epistemologies and affirms their centrality in fostering social cohesion, civic agency, and resilience. Further research is needed to explore how similar pedagogical ecologies function across diverse cultural landscapes and how they adapt to evolving global conditions. Longitudinal and cross-contextual inquiries will be essential for understanding the durability and scalability of these systems. Ultimately, this study offers a compelling argument for repositioning informal learning as a core strategy in sustaining cultural sovereignty and shaping future-ready, community-driven educational paradigms.

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