

Social Dynamics in the Preservation of the Incung Script: A Sociological Study of the Role of the Jambi Community in Maintaining the Cultural Heritage of the Kerinci Tribe

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the social dynamics in the preservation of the Incung script among the Kerinci community in Jambi Province amidst cultural changes and modernization, as well as explore the strategies employed by the community and local institutions to ensure its sustainability. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis related to cultural preservation policies. The findings indicate that although customary communities and local educational institutions still teach the Incung script, the declining interest among the younger generation is attributed to the dominance of the Latin script and the development of digital technology. However, various preservation efforts have been implemented, such as teaching the Incung script in schools, creating digital fonts, and integrating it into batik art and local cultural products. This study contributes to the understanding of the preservation of traditional scripts in the context of modernization and provides insights for the development of more relevant cultural policies for younger generations.

Keywords: script preservation, Incung script, modernization, cultural policies, younger generation.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dinamika sosial dalam pelestarian aksara Incung di kalangan masyarakat Kerinci di Provinsi Jambi di tengah perubahan budaya dan modernisasi, serta mengeksplorasi strategi yang diterapkan oleh masyarakat dan institusi lokal untuk memastikan keberlanjutannya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen terkait kebijakan pelestarian budaya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun komunitas adat dan lembaga pendidikan lokal masih mengajarkan aksara Incung, penurunan minat di kalangan generasi muda disebabkan oleh dominasi aksara Latin dan perkembangan teknologi digital. Namun, berbagai upaya pelestarian telah dilaksanakan, seperti mengajarkan aksara Incung di sekolah-sekolah, menciptakan font digital, dan mengintegrasikannya dalam seni batik serta produk budaya lokal. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi dalam pemahaman tentang pelestarian aksara tradisional dalam konteks modernisasi dan memberikan wawasan untuk pengembangan kebijakan budaya yang lebih relevan bagi generasi muda.

Kata kunci: pelestarian aksara, aksara Incung, modernisasi, kebijakan budaya, generasi muda.

INTRODUCTION

The Incung script is a cultural heritage with significant historical value for the Kerinci people (Masunah, 2003). This script has been passed down through generations and used in various important records, ranging from genealogy customary law to religious rituals. However, with social changes and the development of civilization, the use of the Incung script has declined (Nahak, 2019). The influence of Islamization, Dutch colonialism, and modernization has changed the way people communicate and store information, causing the abandonment of this script (Powa, 2020). In recent decades, only a few communities have continued to teach the Incung script, leading to younger generations becoming less familiar with it (Metro Jambi, 2017).

This condition reflects a social shift in cultural inheritance within the Kerinci community. Globalization and digitalization have accelerated the transition to the Latin script as the standard for daily life, including in education and administration (Jauhari, 2015). This phenomenon creates a gap between efforts to preserve the Incung script and the social reality of an increasingly modern society. Without intervention from the community and the government, the Incung script is at risk of becoming extinct, reducing it to a mere historical artifact with no relevance in the lives of the people. Therefore, this research is crucial to understand the social dynamics of preserving the Incung script and to identify strategies that can ensure its survival and development.

Several previous studies have discussed the preservation of regional scripts from various perspectives, including linguistics, technology, education, and socio-culture. Raden et al. (2019) researched the transformation of tradition in preserving the Sundanese script by integrating technology and local culture in efforts to maintain the script's sustainability. In a follow-up study, Raden et al. (2020) further discussed the transformation of the Sundanese script by examining the challenges and opportunities in its use within modern society. From a digitalization perspective, Iskandar et al. (2023) explored the digitalization of the Javanese script and its use as an Ethno pedagogy-based learning medium, demonstrating how technology can be a vital tool in keeping regional scripts relevant for younger generations.

On the other hand, research by Widayati and Mr (2019) highlighted the educational values contained in the manuscript "Ngelmi Karoyalan" as part of the local wisdom of the Javanese people, reflecting how regional scripts are not only a writing system but also a medium for conveying cultural and social values. Ricci (2015) discussed the changes in the Javanese script system in the context of cultural heritage, religion, and the influence of colonialism, showing how historical dynamics affect the existence of scripts in the archipelago. Furthermore, Indrawan and Paramarta (2019) developed a method of transliterating the Latin script to the Balinese script using the Bali Simbar font technology, contributing to the preservation of traditional scripts through a digital approach.

In the context of traditional manuscripts, Nasution (2021) studied the transcription and transformation of Minangkabau oral literature, illustrating how traditional texts are adapted and reinterpreted in the modern literary context. This research emphasizes that regional scripts are not just tools of past communication; they also have the potential to develop into various forms of contemporary cultural expression.

Although these studies provide valuable insights into the preservation of regional scripts in Indonesia, there is still a gap in the social study of the specific preservation of the Incung script. Previous studies have focused more on the linguistic, digitalization, and educational aspects of regional script preservation in general but have not

thoroughly investigated how the community interacts with the Incung script in a social context, how social changes affect its inheritance, and what strategies are being applied in its preservation efforts.

This research fills that gap by highlighting the impact of social change on the inheritance of the Incung script within the Jambi community and the role of communities and institutions in preserving it as part of their cultural identity. Therefore, this study contributes to enriching the understanding of how social interaction and cultural dynamics influence the existence of the Incung script in the modern era.

This research aims to analyze the social dynamics in the preservation of the Incung script amidst cultural change and modernization. Specifically, this study will explore the social barriers that lead to the declining interest in the Incung script and the strategies employed by the community and local institutions to ensure its sustainability.

This study argues that the preservation of the Incung script relies not only on historical or linguistic aspects but is also profoundly influenced by social, economic, and cultural policy factors. Efforts to revitalize this script require active involvement from various community elements, including customary communities, government, and education. Therefore, this research highlights how the social dynamics of the Jambi community in preserving the Incung script can keep it relevant and beneficial in the modern era.

METHOD

This study focuses on the preservation of the Incung script in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, which is one of the main areas where this script is still known and preserved by the indigenous community (Watson, 2009). We selected this location based on the important role of Kerinci Regency as the cultural center of the Kerinci Tribe, which continues to maintain the tradition of using the Incung script, both in customary contexts and in revitalization efforts undertaken by the community and local institutions (Miksic, 2015). This study examines how the local community preserves the Incung script amidst social changes and how it carries out preservation efforts in various aspects of life, such as education, arts, and the role of the indigenous community (Helida et al., 2015).

This study uses a qualitative approach because it aims to understand the social phenomena occurring in the efforts to preserve the Incung script (Lune & Berg, 2017; Malik et al., 2020; Setia & Rosele, 2024). The data collected consists of primary data, obtained through interviews with customary leaders, cultural practitioners, and community members involved in the preservation of the Incung script in Kerinci Regency. In addition, this study also uses secondary data from various sources, such as government documents related to cultural policies, literature on the Incung script, and previous studies discussing traditional scripts and the social role of communities in preserving local cultures (Snyder, 2019).

We conduct the research process in several stages. The first stage is field observation, where the researcher visits Indigenous communities and institutions active in preserving the Incung script to understand how this script is still used and taught. We conducted observations from 2022 to 2024 to monitor the preservation of the Incung script. The second stage involves in-depth interviews with customary leaders and community members who know the Incung script, with the aim of gaining direct perspectives on the challenges and strategies in maintaining this script.

After the data is collected, the next stage is data analysis. The data obtained from interviews and observations are reduced and categorized based on main themes, such as challenges in script preservation, the role of the Indigenous community, and revitalization strategies. The data is then analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative approach (Miles & Huberman, 2013), explaining the social patterns found in the preservation efforts of the Incung script. Additionally, we triangulate the data by comparing interview results with secondary data from documents and previous studies to ensure the validity of the findings. Thus, this research provides a deep understanding of the social dynamics in the inheritance of the Incung script in the Kerinci Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Dynamics in the Inheritance of the Incung Script in the Kerinci Community

Kerinci Regency, located in Jambi Province, is one of the centers for the preservation of the Incung script (Auliahadi & Salmal, 2022). As the only local script that has survived in Central Sumatra, this script has a long history within the traditions of the Kerinci people. Since the 14th century, people have used the Incung script in various ancient manuscripts, one of the oldest being the *Kitab Undang-Undang Tanjung Tanah*, which Uli Kozok discovered in 2006. The existence of this script indicates that the Kerinci people already had their writing system

before Islam arrived in the region (Jamaludin, 2015). Over time, people used the Incung script not only to record customary laws and family genealogy but also in various manuscripts containing literature, mantras, and customary regulations (Syaputra, 2021). The indigenous community developed this script and passed it down through generations via social and cultural practices that are still evident today (Mafardi, 2022).

Figure 1. The letters and pronunciation of the Incung script of Kerinci

	<i>incung</i>	<i>rencong</i>	Tj. Tanah
ka	↖	↗	
nga	N/	//	
ta	—	↗	
da	↖	↗	
ma	W	X	
ca	8	↗	
ja	W	↗	
sa	//	↗	
ra	↖	↗	
wa	+	X	

Source: Kozok, 2006

Although the Incung script holds significant historical value, its usage in daily life has drastically declined. The use of this script has become increasingly limited to the elders and cultural practitioners. The inheritance of the Incung script to younger generations presents a major challenge due to the forces of modernization, which have led the younger generation to turn away from their ancestral traditions. Since the introduction of the Arabic-Malay script and the Latin alphabet in formal education, the Incung script is rarely taught systematically in schools. As a result, younger generations are more familiar with the Latin script as the primary communication system in their daily lives.

In addition to limitations in the education system, social changes and modernization have further accelerated the shift in cultural values in the Kerinci community. Globalization has brought popular culture that is more appealing to younger generations, making the Incung script no longer part of their daily lives (Mafardi, 2022). Learning resources for this script are also very limited, causing the general public, especially the younger generation, to struggle to understand and practice it. Nevertheless, the Incung script has unique characteristics that reflect the cultural identity of the Kerinci people, both in terms of its form, letter structure, and its use in various historical manuscripts (Sadzali et al., 2019).

In efforts to preserve the script, various cultural communities, artists, and local governments have started taking strategic steps to reintroduce the Incung script to the public. One of the main initiatives has been integrating the script into textile arts, particularly Kerinci batik (Auliahadi & Salmal, 2022). Since the 2000s, people have rapidly developed batik production in Kerinci, and they have started to introduce the Incung script as part of batik motifs. This initiative aims to rekindle public awareness of the Incung script, especially through a medium that is closer to everyday life. The motif of the Incung script on batik is not only a decorative element but also carries symbolic meaning, reflecting the cultural identity of the Kerinci people (Pitri, 2019).

Figure 2. The Incung script used on Batik



Source: Febrianti/JurnalTravel.com, 2018.

In addition to batik, the Incung script is also beginning to be integrated into traditional musical instruments. One example is the *Gong Buleuh*, a bamboo musical instrument used in various art performances and traditional ceremonies. By utilizing the arts as a medium for preservation, we can more easily introduce the Incung script to the younger generation and the broader public.

However, the challenges in preserving the Incung script are significant. Younger generations still exhibit low levels of involvement in learning the script due to changes in social patterns caused by modernization. Further steps are needed to ensure the survival of the Incung script, focusing not only on historical documentation but also on strengthening cultural awareness in everyday life. The integration of the Incung script into arts, creative industries, and the education system is key to maintaining its existence and enabling it to thrive in the era of globalization.

Based on field observations, there are significant challenges in preserving the Incung script caused by rapid social changes. Modernization and globalization affect how younger generations communicate and identify themselves, leading to the marginalization of the Incung script (Harianto et al., 2021). The inheritance of the Incung script does not solely depend on indigenous communities but also requires support from the education system and stronger, more structured government policies. Without this intervention, the Incung script risks losing relevance and may even face extinction.

In an interview with Meka Algazi (Abak Meka), a customary leader from Kerinci, he explained:

“The Incung script has been passed down through generations in the Kerinci indigenous community. This script does not only serve as a writing system but also as a symbol of our identity. In customary ceremonies, the Incung script is used to record family genealogies and various important customary regulations. Therefore, preserving this script is part of preserving our identity and cultural heritage.” (Interview, June 17, 2024).

Field documentation also supports this finding, where photos and recordings show how the Indigenous community preserves the use of the Incung script in customary life through mediums like bamboo, tree bark, and traditional musical instruments, even though its usage is limited. Some images show how the Incung script is used in carvings on musical instruments and as motifs on batik, which serve as visual media to introduce this script to the public, especially the younger generation.

Despite the many challenges in preserving the Incung script, various creative efforts, such as its integration into batik and traditional musical instruments, demonstrate that this script still has the potential to develop, provided there is strong support from the community, education, and proactive government policies.

Social Barriers to the Preservation of the Incung Script

The preservation of the Incung script faces several significant social barriers that have led to its decline in daily use. One of the main factors influencing this is modernization and globalization (Syafitri, 2024). Modernization, with all its technological and communication advancements, has brought about a major change in the way society interacts and communicates (Feinberg, 2023). As a result, the Latin script and digital communication systems have become increasingly dominant in people's lives, pushing the Incung script, which was originally used in historical records and social life in the Kerinci community, into the background. Globalization, which introduces foreign cultures, has also caused society, especially the younger generation, to gravitate toward more modern and practical forms of communication, making traditional scripts like Incung increasingly marginalized (Dahwal & Fernando, 2024). This phenomenon becomes more evident with the loss of enthusiasm among younger generations to preserve local culture, including the Incung script, which is seen as outdated and irrelevant to their lives (Husyam et al., 2024). For example, Aza, a 17-year-old youth, expressed in an interview:

“Before being introduced by Abak Meka, I didn't even know what the Incung script was. I mostly use slang on social media and talk with my friends in a more easy and modern language. This script feels foreign and not that interesting to us.” (Interview, June 18, 2024).

This shows that the influence of globalization, especially through social media and smartphone usage, has changed the way the younger generation communicates, distancing them from an interest in preserving local cultures such as the Incung script.

The lack of human resources proficient in the Incung script also represents a major barrier to its preservation. In the Kerinci Regency, only three customary leaders and cultural practitioners still master this script. Even among the indigenous community, the mastery of the Incung script is declining. Many elders no longer introduce the Incung script to their children because they no longer use it in their daily lives. The limited academic documentation of the Incung script exacerbates this. Although some ancient manuscripts still exist, documentation of the script in the form of books or teaching materials that are easily accessible is very limited. Some writings about the Incung script do exist, such as the one in Metro Jambi (2017), but the lack of resources to develop further studies on the script has led to stagnation in its preservation.

These pieces of evidence show that the social barriers in the Kerinci community played an important role in the extinction of the Incung script. Without a strong understanding and support from the broader community, the Incung script is becoming increasingly marginalized. The teaching and maintenance of this script require larger structural interventions from the indigenous community and government policies. According to Abak Meka, “We need support from the government and the community to revive the Incung script. Without that, this culture will be hard to sustain in the future.” (Interview, June 17, 2024). This data supports the hypothesis that to ensure the continuity of the Incung script; preservation efforts must involve various parties, including formal education, the government, and Indigenous communities.

Moreover, the shift to digital communication systems further exacerbates the situation. The widespread use of technology and social media has made the Incung script increasingly rare (Li et al., 2023). People, especially the younger generation, more frequently use the Latin script in everyday conversations and online. The advanced technology offers faster and more practical communication methods, pushing traditional scripts like Incung, which are seen as outdated, into irrelevance (Rumra, 2024). Although there are efforts to introduce the Incung script through batik art and traditional musical instruments, the impact of modernization and digitalization remains a significant challenge. The younger generation's inclination toward slang and technology-based communication only worsens the situation, as the Incung script is increasingly viewed as irrelevant and unappealing to learn in a fast-paced, digital world.

Efforts to Preserve the Incung Script by the Community and Local Institutions

The preservation of the Incung script has received serious attention from the Kerinci community, who strive to revive and maintain the existence of this script as part of their cultural heritage. One of the largest efforts in preserving the Incung script is through education and cultural communities. Since 2016, schools in Kerinci have included the Incung script in their curriculum, teaching 28 Incung letters. The learning material begins with

introducing the letters, reading, writing, and limited punctuation marks such as (u), (i), (ng), and (ah). This is an important step to ensure that the younger generation not only recognizes the Incung script but is also able to learn it actively. However, besides formal education, many cultural communities have started to teach the Incung script informally, such as the Incung School, founded by the indigenous leader Iskandar Zakaria. This school aims to eliminate illiteracy in the script and preserve the Kerinci culture, involving around 15 volunteer teachers from various regions in Kerinci who teach in classes held at the school's secretariat without government assistance or complete facilities.

“Actually, what motivated me was my concern about the decreasing number of young people who know and understand the Incung script, which is an inseparable part of Kerinci's cultural identity. This script is a valuable ancestral heritage, and if we do not take immediate steps to preserve it, in a few generations, it could disappear. The Incung School exists as a solution to that. We want to teach our young people not only how to write and read the Incung script but also to help them feel proud of their own culture.” (Interview, July 24, 2024).

Figure 3. Incung School by Iskandar Zakaria



Source: Research Findings, 2024.

“The Incung School involves around 15 volunteers from various regions of Kerinci, who freely serve as teachers in the classes, with about 20-25 students per class. The Incung School is voluntarily established without the assistance of the surrounding community or the government. The Incung School is not like a typical school; it is a community-based initiative, not a school with a building or complete facilities. The classroom used for teaching the Incung script is quite large, and the funding for materials such as books, pens, pencils, whiteboards, and others relies solely on the personal funds of the founders.” (Interview, July 24, 2024).

Local government initiatives also strengthen the preservation efforts of the Incung script. The Sungai Penuh City Government, through the Department of Tourism and Culture, has held a painting competition of various Incung

character decorations, which not only introduces this script to the wider community but also provides an opportunity to enrich local art with traditional cultural elements. At the same time, the Kerinci Regency Government plans to incorporate the Incung script and other local cultures into local content subjects in elementary, middle, and high school curriculums. This step shows the government's awareness of supporting the preservation of local culture and scripts, as well as creating space for the younger generation to learn and appreciate their local culture.

Figure 4. Painting Competition of Various Incung Character Decorations



Source: Jambi Terbit, 2018.

The inheritance of the Incung script has also begun to take place through learning classes initiated by indigenous communities and local governments. In recent years, policies supporting the preservation of the Incung script in various aspects of the Kerinci community's life have further strengthened this effort. One concrete step taken by the government is to require the use of batik with Incung script motifs as official uniforms for government employees in Sungai Penuh City. This policy aims to boost the community's creative economy and reintroduce the Incung script as part of Kerinci's cultural identity, which the community must preserve and pass on to future generations.

"Preserving the Incung script is our collective responsibility, from the Indigenous community, the government, to the younger generation. The policy requiring batik with Incung script motifs as official uniforms in government institutions in Sungai Penuh City is a concrete step that greatly supports this effort. It is not just about pride but also about the creative economy of the community that can grow with the demand for locally based cultural products. We hope that through this policy, the community will increasingly recognize the Incung script in their daily lives and feel connected to their history and cultural identity. This is an investment to preserve an invaluable cultural heritage." (Interview, June 17, 2024).

Figure 5. Learning Community for the Incung Script in Sungai Penuh City



Source: Research Findings, 2024.

These preservation efforts are not limited to formal education and government initiatives. Several indigenous leaders and cultural practitioners have tried to develop the Incung script in a modern context, one of which is by creating a digital font based on the Incung script. This allows the traditional script to be practiced in the digital world and integrated into various modern cultural products. Therefore, the Incung script is not only preserved in its ancient form but can also adapt to the times, maintaining its relevance in an increasingly connected global world. Such innovations show that the Incung script still has a place in the modern world despite originating from a distant past. The social media accounts Instagram and Facebook Ardirexo Rectopaty are making one such effort. These social media accounts are very active in writing the Incung script on the internet.

Figure 6. Incung Script Digitized by Ardirexo Rectopaty



Source: Ardirexo Rectopaty, 2024

The preservation of the Incung script through education and cultural arts shows that this effort can align with the development of the times (Setiawan, 2020). The data above supports the argument that we can achieve the preservation of the Incung script by integrating it into modern cultural products, such as batik art, digital fonts, and traditional musical instruments combined with the Incung script. This proves that the Incung script does not need

to be trapped in history but can continue to develop and remain relevant to the younger generation if developed in the right and engaging ways.

Several pieces of evidence for this finding include documentation of the Incung script preservation programs, such as the painting competition of various Incung character decorations and the teaching of the script at the Incung School. Furthermore, interviews with cultural communities like Abak Meka, who explained their efforts to introduce the Incung script to the younger generation, provide deeper insight into how this script is still taught informally and integrated into daily activities. The community is committed to preserving the Incung script, even with limited funds and facilities, because they believe that preserving Kerinci's culture is a collective responsibility that they must safeguard to keep it alive in a world increasingly influenced by modernization. Despite all the limitations, through education, the arts, and supporting policies, the Incung script can survive and even thrive, becoming a part of the cultural identity that is relevant to the development of the times.

Discussion: Social Dynamics and the Preservation of the Incung Script

The Incung script, as a symbol of cultural identity and social inheritance, plays an important role in reflecting the cultural characteristics of the Kerinci Tribe. This study shows that although certain indigenous communities still maintain the Incung script, its use in society is increasingly declining. This decline coincides with social and cultural changes, where the Incung script is not only a means of communication but also an expression of culture that binds the community into their collective identity (Fatmawati, 2021). However, the Incung script is now marginalized by the more dominant Latin script in everyday life, along with modernization and globalization that bring new values and communication systems. The process of globalization, which introduces foreign cultures, has made the younger generation more inclined to modern and practical forms of communication, causing the Incung script to become increasingly irrelevant in the face of technological advancements and digital communication (Syafitri, 2024).

This social change, particularly the shift in cultural values due to modernization, has worsened the survival of the Incung script. For example, the cultural shift toward using the Latin script and digital communication systems has made traditional scripts, like Incung, less commonly used in daily life. The digitalization of communication systems has had a significant impact, as the Latin script has become the standard in almost all aspects of life, from education to social interaction, replacing the Incung script, which was once a key symbol of the Kerinci community's cultural identity. This phenomenon highlights the major challenges in preserving the Incung script as people increasingly sideline it in favor of a more practical and fully digital communication system (Feinberg, 2023).

Anthony Giddens' modernization theory (1991) emphasizes how changes in social and cultural structures can affect various aspects of life, including writing systems. Modernization has brought about significant changes in how societies interact, communicate, and store information, leading to the decreasing use of the Incung script in the Kerinci community. This suggests that the preservation of traditional scripts like Incung does not only depend on indigenous communities but also requires adaptation to the changes of the times. The Kerinci community, as reflected in this study's findings, is experiencing a similar phenomenon where the Latin script displaces the Incung script due to the influence of modern education and technology.

Based on Pierre Bourdieu's cultural inheritance theory (1983), culture is inherited through habitus and cultural capital passed on in specific social environments. In this case, the Incung script, as part of the cultural capital of the Kerinci community, should be passed on through structured social practices, such as in formal education and customary activities. However, this study shows that the lack of knowledge transfer regarding the Incung script in both the educational system and social communities has resulted in the script losing its relevance among the younger generation. The lack of teaching about the Incung script, both in schools and within social communities, contributes to its diminishing understanding and use so that its inheritance is limited to certain groups only.

Stuart Hall's theory of collective identity (2016) is also relevant in this context, where cultural identity is not static but continues to evolve and adapt to social changes. The Incung script, as part of the Kerinci people's collective identity, needs to be revitalized to remain meaningful and relevant in this modern era. This process includes efforts to integrate the Incung script into the daily lives of the community, such as through education, art, and digital media. The findings of this study support the idea that the Incung script can remain relevant if it is developed and adapted to the times without losing the cultural essence embedded within it.

The implications of this study can be seen from several aspects. First, the Indigenous community needs more structured efforts to preserve the Incung script and pass it on to the younger generation, both through formal and informal education. The Indigenous community, which is the frontline in preserving the script, needs to develop new strategies to introduce the Incung script in a more engaging way that aligns with modern developments. Using more modern teaching methods and integrating the Incung script into cultural products that are relevant to the younger generation, such as batik art or musical instruments, can be an effective strategic step.

Regarding government policy, this study shows that local governments must be more active in supporting the preservation of the Incung script. The government needs to develop clearer cultural and educational policies, such as making it a part of the regional cultural identity. By doing so, the Incung script will not only be preserved at the Indigenous community level but also be recognized more widely by the public. The integration of the Incung script into art and the creative economy, such as through batik motifs or digital fonts, can increase public interest in the script and make it relevant in the modern world.

In the context of education, this study highlights the importance of formal education in ensuring the continuity of the Incung script. A special curriculum or local content subjects teaching the Incung script in schools in Jambi are very important so that younger generations can understand and practice this script. With more structured education, educators can introduce the Incung script to the younger generation as part of the local cultural heritage that they should preserve.

One of the main reasons why this study shows such patterns is due to the lack of clear policies and regulations for the preservation of the Incung script. Without clear and directed policies, the Incung script is not integrated into the formal education system and continues to be marginalized by the more practical Latin script. Furthermore, changes in lifestyle due to globalization also play a significant role in this pattern. The younger generation prefers popular culture and digital communication, which do not support the use of traditional scripts, causing them to abandon the Incung script increasingly.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the Incung script, as an important part of the cultural identity of the Kerinci people, is becoming increasingly marginalized as modernization and globalization progress. One of the most important findings is the drastic decline in its use among younger generations, who prefer the Latin script and digital communication systems. Although the Incung script is still preserved in customary practices and by cultural communities, its survival faces significant challenges, especially within the education system, which has not fully integrated the script. The uniqueness of this study lies in the preservation efforts that are not only through traditional media but also through innovations like integrating the Incung script into batik art, musical instruments, and digitizing the script. This approach shows the potential for the development of the Incung script amid modernity.

This study significantly contributes to the understanding of the social dynamics in the preservation of traditional scripts, especially in Indonesia, which faces cultural globalization. The concepts of habitus and cultural capital, as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu, provide the foundation for explaining how the Incung script is socially inherited, both in families and indigenous communities. Furthermore, this study develops Stuart Hall's theory of collective identity by showing that the Incung script is not only a symbol of local culture but also a part of an identity that continues to evolve. Thus, this study suggests that the preservation of the Incung script must involve adaptation to the changes of the times to remain relevant to the younger generation, including through public policies that support the preservation of culture in the modern context.

The limitations of this study lie in its scope, which is limited to Kerinci Regency, and data collection, which only covers interviews and observations within Indigenous communities and a few local institutions. Future research could expand to other areas in Sumatra or Indonesia that also have threatened local scripts. Additionally, further research should examine the continued impact of digitalizing the Incung script and the influence of government policies on its preservation. Further studies on the integration of the Incung script into formal and non-formal education, as well as the development of more effective teaching methods, are also important directions for future research.

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