



SPATIAL INTERPRETATION OF ORANG ASLI PERFORMANCE HERITAGE

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Abstract

This paper identifies the cultural spaces sustaining Orang Asli (OA) performing arts within a planning-oriented framework for Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Domain 2. Existing records often isolate dances, chants, healing ceremonies, instruments and symbolic enactments, obscuring their relationships within performance settings. The study combined semi-structured interviews with OA knowledge holders and community representatives with ethnographic materials, studies and heritage reports. Content analysis classified manifestations by performance form, occasion, cultural purpose, symbolic meaning and practice setting. Inductive-deductive thematic analysis interpreted their ritual, sonic, bodily and communal functions. Six experts assessed the framework using the Content Validity Index, informing four themes and sixteen facets. These encompass ritual and ceremonial performances, vocal and oral expressions, embodied enactments and instrument-led performances. Spatial analysis produced four conceptual layers and eight performance spaces, including healing grounds, ancestral settings, seasonal landscapes, processional routes and soundscapes. The framework strengthens performance-space inventories, landscape assessment, development screening and place-sensitive safeguarding.

Keywords: Orang Asli, Performing Arts, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Cultural Performance Spaces, Cultural Landscape

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INTRODUCTION

This paper forms part of a continuing effort to document and classify Orang Asli [OA] Intangible Cultural Heritage [ICH] across five ICH domains, with this paper focusing on Domain 2, Performing Arts.

OA performances in Peninsular Malaysia combine ritual, voice, movement, music and symbolic enactment. Distinct from related papers on oral traditions, social practices and ecological knowledge, this paper examines performative acts such as dances, chants, instruments and narrative performances. The study generates an expert-informed framework linking OA performance arts to ritual grounds, ancestral settings, seasonal landscapes, processional routes, vocal settings, soundscapes, movement arenas and symbolic stages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performing arts include music, dance, theatre, and embodied expressions that sustain cultural identity, social ties, and community values (UNESCO, 2003; Abu Bakar et al., 2025b). Among the OA, performance is rarely confined to one artistic form; song, movement, instruments, ritual and spiritual mediation often operate together. Studies of *Sewang* and related ceremonies show how performance translate to healing, ancestral relations and ecological balance (Jalaludin & Abdullah, 2020; Chan & Saidon, 2021; Salem et al., 2025a). *Hari Moyang* and masked performances likewise combine offerings, staged movement and symbolic objects to sustain ancestral memory and communal participation (Linggang et al., 2024; Zamzuri et al., 2024). Performative vocal traditions derived from dreams, ritual encounters and inherited narratives carry cosmological knowledge and collective memory, while instrumental and dance forms organize rhythm and gestures (Chan, 2023a; Narasid & Abdul Rahman, 2025). These studies establish the interdependence of performance forms, yet documentation remains dispersed across communities and subtypes, limiting comparative interpretation and access to heritage records.

OA performances largely depend on spatial conditions. Communal grounds accommodate circular formations and collective movement; ceremonial settings structure proximity between performers, healers and participants; and ancestral-related sites establish the spiritual context of particular rites (Chan & Saidon, 2021; Salem et al., 2025b; Linggang et al., 2024). Place therefore influences choreography, sound, audience arrangement, ritual sequence and the use of instruments or symbolic objects. Heritage mapping can record performance locations alongside their spatial configuration, seasonal use, access, environmental setting and community custodianship. A structured Domain 2 framework is needed to thematically classify OA performing arts and their spatial conditions, strengthening digital documentation, heritage planning, and community safeguarding (Abu Bakar et al., 2025a, 2025b).

METHODOLOGY

This study forms part of a broader effort to document and classify OA ICH across five ICH domains. Although the related OA ICH papers use comparable methodological phases and validation procedures, this paper applies the process specifically to Domain 2: Performing Arts, with attention to embodied, vocal, ritual and instrumental expressions.

The corpus combined interview transcripts with OA knowledge holders and community representatives, supported by ethnographic records, academic publications and heritage reports. Analysis focused on performative manifestations, including healing rites, ceremonial performances, chants, dances, narrative enactments, instrumental practices and ensemble traditions. Each manifestation was examined through content analysis based on performance form, occasion, cultural function, symbolic meaning, participant role and practice setting. The coded materials were then interpreted using inductive-deductive thematic analysis to develop manifestation codes, facets and broader themes. This process enabled OA performing arts to be understood through ritual, sonic, bodily and communal dimensions. The resulting framework was reviewed by OA cultural and heritage experts using the Content Validation Index [CVI] to assess clarity, relevance, coherence and cultural suitability.

Table 1: Framework Development Stages

Phase	Description of Process	Output
Stage 1: Data Extraction and Coding	Interview transcripts and documents were analyzed using content analysis in ATLAS.ti to identify OA ICH Domain 2 manifestations. Symbolic meaning, performance form and cultural function were recorded.	Dataset of identified ICH manifestations, segmented corpus of data excerpts
Stage 2: Coding of ICH Manifestations under Domain 2	Identified manifestations were assigned manifestation codes to organize recurring cultural performances, ritual enactments, instrumental practices and ensemble forms.	Coded dataset of OA Performing Arts
Stage 3: Categorization of Themes and Facets	Coded manifestations were grouped into facets and organized into themes using thematic analysis to refine conceptual groupings within each theme and facet.	Structured set of themes and corresponding facets
Stage 4: Framework Drafting	Themes and facets were structured into a conceptual framework, mapping relationships into a coherent visual matrix guided by theoretical reasoning.	Initial framework showing classification hierarchy
Stage 5: Iterative Refinement	The framework was reviewed against coded data using thematic analysis to improve clarity, consistency and reduce overlap between codes, facets and themes.	Refined ICH Domain 2 framework ready for validation
Stage 6: Validation Preparation	The framework was converted into a validation tool with definitions of themes and facets and manifestation codes as well as guidance for expert evaluation.	Validation package with framework and scoring sheets
Stage 7: Validation Study Execution	Experts evaluated the framework, and I-CVI and S-CVI were calculated to assess content validity.	Expert feedback and CVI scores
Stage 8: Framework Refinement	Validation results were used to revise labels, structure, and grouping for improved coherence.	Revised Framework of OA ICH Domain 2

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-Structured interview sessions followed a checklist that ensured consistent coverage across communities while allowing participants to expand on their own performance knowledge. The checklist first recorded settlement background, social organization, household context, socio-demographic and socio-economic conditions, governance, environmental setting and heritage continuity. The interview directed discussion toward performing arts practices, including ritual performances, chants, songs, dances, narrative enactments, instruments, performer roles, learning processes, and performance settings. Participants comprised *Tok Batin*, elders, committee representatives and village members from different OA subgroups. Names were anonymized using codes, while role, subgroup and village location were retained for contextual analysis.

Table 2: Profile of Orang Asli Interview Participants

Code	Roles in Village	Subgroup	Village Name and Location
PO01	Director, Cultural Institution	Mah Meri	Kampung OA Sungai Bumbun, Pulau Carey
PO02	OA Youth Representative	Mah Meri	Kampung OA Sungai Bumbun, Pulau Carey
PO03	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Jakun	Kampung OA Sungai Bot, Karak, Bentong
PO04	Village Chairperson	Temuan	Kampung OA Cinta Manis, Karak, Bentong
PO05	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Temuan	Kampung OA, Ulu Pareh, Karak, Bentong
PO06	OA Representative	Temuan	Kampung OA, Ulu Pareh, Karak, Bentong
PO07	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Jah Hut	Kampung OA Pian, Kuala Krau, Temerloh
PO08	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Jah Hut	Kampung OA Pian, Kuala Krau, Temerloh
PO09	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Che Wong	Kampung Kuala Enggang, Temerloh
PO10	Village Elder	Che Wong	Kampung Kuala Enggang, Temerloh
PO11	OA Representative	Che Wong	Kampung Kuala Enggang, Temerloh
PO12	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Semelai	Kampung OA Pelawan, Pos Iskandar, Bera
PO13	OA Representative 1	Semelai	Kampung OA Pelawan, Pos Iskandar, Bera
PO14	OA Representative 2	Semelai	Kampung OA Pelawan, Pos Iskandar, Bera
PO15	OA Representative 3	Semelai	Kampung OA Pelawan, Pos Iskandar, Bera
PO16	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Bateq	Kampung OA Kuala Atok, Jerantut
PO17	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Semoq Beri	Kampung OA Sungai Tiang, Jerantut
PO18	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Semai	Kampung OA Rening, Cameron Highlands
PO19	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Semai	Kampung OA Kuala Boh, Cameron Highlands
PO20	Leader / <i>Tok Batin</i>	Jakun	Kampung OA Gumum, Tasik Chini, Pekan

Table 3: Coding Trail from Content Analysis to Theme Development

Coding Stage	Coding Output
1 Verbatim Transcription	PO14: ...zaman dulu, lubuk besar bawah jambatan jadi tempat orang menuba ikan. Orang lama percaya bila muncul Ikan Sebarau semasa menuba tandanya hujan dan kilat akan datang. Jadi kena balik, berteduh ka selamatkan diri...
2 Transcript Excerpt	The participant explained that the river pool beneath the bridge was once used for poisoning fish, and that the appearance of <i>Ikan Sebarau</i> was believed to signal approaching rain and lightning, prompting people to leave for safety.
3 Condensed Meaning	The appearance of Hampala Barb during river fish-poisoning activity is interpreted as a warning sign of approaching rain and lightning.
4 Initial Codes	Animal Omen, Animal-based Environmental Warning
5 Final Code	Animal Interaction Folktales
6 Facet	Animal Folktales
7 Theme	Folktales, Legends, and Narrative Forms

Document Analysis

Document analysis strengthened the interview findings through a review of 403 academic, institutional, community and media sources related to OA performing arts. Materials were selected for subgroup context, performance evidence and ICH Domain 2, performing arts relevance, then condensed into meaning units and organized into manifestation codes, facets and themes to support the performance-heritage classification (refer to Table 4).

Table 4: Document Sources and Screening Criteria

No	Types	Sources	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	Peer Reviewed Articles	Mainly retrieved from MyCite, followed by Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, DOAJ SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online	Evidence on OA ritual performances, songs, chants, dances, musical instruments, movement, performance setting, and subgroup context.	No ICH or performing arts evidence; focused only on development, education, health or socio-economy.
2	Conference Papers	Academic conference proceedings, seminar papers and heritage-related conference publications.	Relevant findings on OA performance arts, ritual enactment, music, dance, ceremonial performance or cultural presentation.	Too brief, duplicated published articles, or did not provide usable evidence for coding.
3	Book Chapters	Edited academic books on Orang Asli, indigenous studies, anthropology, heritage and culture.	Subgroup-specific evidence on dances, chants, music, ritual performances, and performance roles.	General discussion without sufficient detail for coding.
4	Books and Monographs	Ethnographic books, cultural monographs, Orang Asli studies and indigenous community publications.	Detailed descriptions of OA performing arts, rituals, musical practices, dance forms, instruments or performance contexts.	Outdated claims without cultural relevance, unclear source basis or no link to performing arts.
5	Theses and Dissertations	University repositories, institutional libraries and postgraduate research databases.	Empirical or ethnographic findings on OA embodied expression or heritage transmission.	Unavailable full text, unrelated focus or no extractable cultural evidence.
6	Government Reports	Mainly JAKOA, with related government and agency reports.	Official information on OA subgroups, village context, and cultural activities	Administrative data only, irrelevant to ICH documentation.
7	UNESCO documents	UNESCO ICH documents, safeguarding guidelines and conceptual references.	Definitions, safeguarding principles and conceptual guidance relevant to ICH domains and oral traditions.	Unrelated to ICH concepts or documentation.
8	Museum Archives	Museum records, exhibition notes, archive descriptions and heritage documentation.	Descriptions of OA performance objects, instruments, costumes, recordings and exhibition.	Records with unclear provenance and no identification of subgroups.
9	Community Publications	NGO materials, local publications, blogs, community websites and informal documentation.	Community-based accounts of OA dances, songs, rituals, performers, instruments or events.	Unverifiable claims, or unidentifiable community context.
10	Media Recordings	Audio and video documentaries, online news articles, and media features related to Orang Asli communities.	Recorded or reported performative expressions, cultural practices, beliefs, musical performances or heritage transmission.	Sensationalized reporting, unclear informant source or insufficient detail for coding.

Multi-Phase Framework Development and Validation Workflow

Figures 1 and 2 summarize the two-stage framework process, showing initial source coding and thematic structuring, followed by expert validation, refinement, restructuring and final framework confirmation.

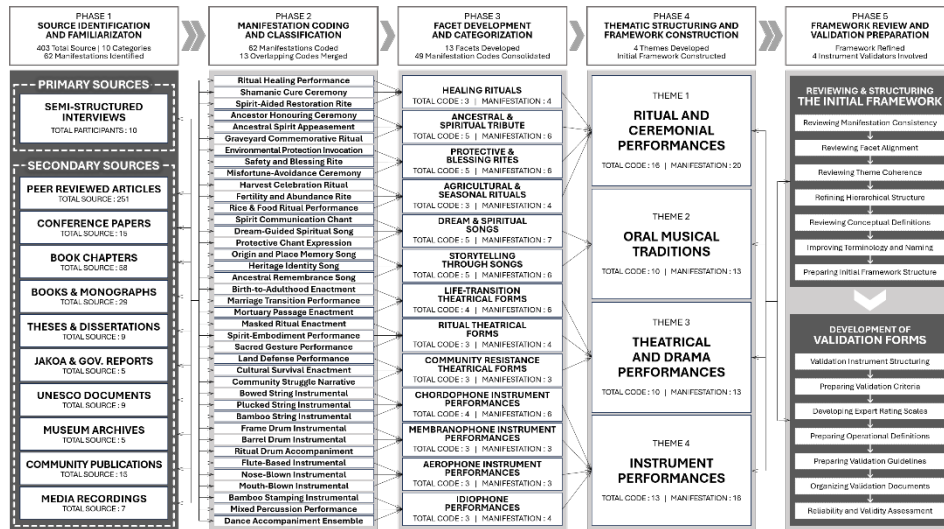


Figure 1: Initial Development and Construction of the ICH Domain 2 Framework

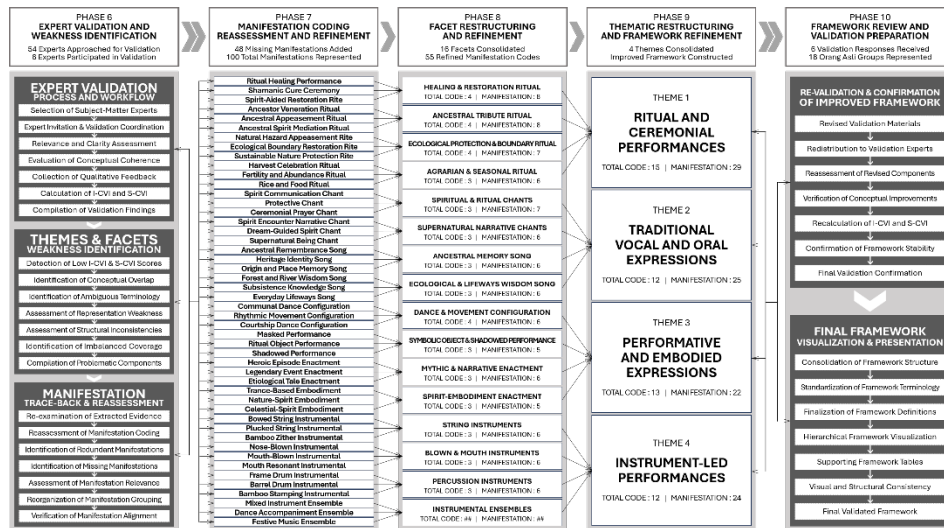


Figure 2: Expert Validation and Refinement of the ICH Domain 2 Framework

RESULTS

The expert validation process involved six experts. To ensure confidentiality, validators were anonymized using coded identifiers (Expert 1 to Expert 6). Table 5 presents each expert's background, field of expertise, and feedback.

Table 5: Validators' Feedback and Corresponding Revisions

Validator	Feedback	Corresponding Revision
Expert 1 Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) Expert in Indigenous welfare management and community support services	Suggested adding pathways, directions, landmarks, and culturally significant places, as location carries meaning in Orang Asli communities. Overlapping manifestations need clearer differentiation.	Landscape meanings are captured through ecological boundary, seasonal, forest-river wisdom, and harvest codes. Vocal forms and narrative enactment are separated by classifying chants, songs, and embodied stories under distinct performance categories.
Expert 2 Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) Expert in Indigenous welfare management and community support services	Recommended that terms such as performer, audience, and genre should be localized or redefined, so they better reflect Orang Asli modes of practice, narration, and transmission.	Manifestations were refined to distinguish localized narratives, ancestral systems, and culturally specific oral traditions. Community and ancestral narratives were reorganized under <i>Ancestral Origins and Historical Narratives</i> .
Expert 3 GERIMIS Art Project (Cultural Organization) Expert in Indigenous Knowledge, Cosmologies, and Eco-Critical Cultural Studies	Recommended adding occasion, community significance, and belief-system integration. Each manifestation should state the Orang Asli group, area, and village, as practices vary by community and location. Indigenous terminology needs greater specificity.	The revised themes and facets clarify ritual purpose, belief-related performance, and sound-based forms. Metadata on tribe, locality, occasion, and context is needed because similar forms differ across OA groups. Analytical names ensure consistency, while Indigenous names remain at manifestation level to preserve community-specific terminology.
Expert 4 Institute of Environment and Development, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Expert in Sustainable Livelihoods of Indigenous Communities, Heritage Conservation	Noted that the framework is a valuable effort but highlighted the overlapping and intersecting nature of domains, themes, and facets as a classification challenge requiring further refinement.	The framework was reorganised into four clearer themes to separate ritual action, vocal performance, embodied enactment, and instrumental expression, while still allowing intersections between belief, movement, sound, and ceremonial practice to be recognized.
Expert 5 Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Expert in Indigenous people studies, Social Anthropology	Suggested incorporating Orang Asli pre-tree-cutting rituals, as they reflect belief systems and customary practices tied to the natural environment.	Theme 1 was refined by replacing the broad protective category with Ecological Protection and Boundary Ritual, capturing ecological and landscape rituals involving ceremony, invocation, or performative practice.
Expert 6 Kulliyyah of Sustainable Tourism and Contemporary Languages, International Islamic University Malaysia Expert in Humanities, Linguistic and Literature, Malay Language and Literature	Highlighted overlap across ritual, healing, and performance domains. Recommended clearer cross-domain mapping improve consistency. Some terms also require refinement to better reflect local cultural context.	Healing practices are placed under Restoration Ritual only when expressed through ceremony, chanting, or embodied action. Theme 2 was refined as <i>Traditional Vocal and Oral Expressions</i> , covering ritual chants, supernatural chants, and ancestral songs.

Table 6 presents the content validation summary for the initial framework, while Table 7 outlines the revised themes and facets.

Table 6: Content Validation Summary of the Initial Framework

Themes	I-CVI	Facets	I-CVI	S-CVI
Ritual and Ceremonial Performances	0.67	Healing Rituals	0.67	0.67
		Ancestral and Spiritual Tribute	0.67	
		Protective and Blessing Rites	0.67	
		Agricultural and Seasonal Rituals	0.67	
Oral Musical Traditions	0.50	Dream and Spiritual Songs	0.67	0.67
		Storytelling Through Songs	0.67	
Theatrical and Drama Performances	0.67	Life-Transition Theatrical Forms	0.67	0.61
		Ritual Theatrical Forms	0.67	
		Community Resistance Theatrical Forms	0.50	
Instrument Performances	0.67	Chordophone Instrument Performances	0.67	0.67
		Membranophone Instrument Performances	0.67	
		Aerophone Instrument Performances	0.67	
		Idiophone Performances	0.67	

Table 7: Revised Theme and Facets

Themes	Facets
Ritual and Ceremonial Performances	Healing and Restoration Ritual
	Ancestral Tribute Ritual
	Ecological Protective Blessing Ritual
	Agrarian and Seasonal Ritual
Traditional Vocal and Oral Expressions	Spiritual and Ritual Chants
	Supernatural Narrative Chants
	Ancestral Memory Songs
	Ecological and Lifeways Wisdom Songs
Performative and Embodied Expressions	Dance and Movement Configuration
	Symbolic Object and Shadow Performance
	Mythic and Narrative Enactment
	Spirit-Embodiment Enactment
Instrument-Led Performances	String Instruments (Chordophones)
	Blown and Mouth Instruments (Aerophones)
	Percussion Instruments (Membranophones & Idiophones)
	Instrumental Ensembles

The initial performing arts framework required refinement because several categories combined forms that operate differently in OA performance contexts. Songs, chants, ritual movements, spirit embodiment, symbolic objects, and instrumental practices were not clearly separated. The revised framework responds to this by distinguishing ritual and ceremonial performances, vocal and oral expressions, embodied enactments, and instrument-led performances. These groupings make it easier to identify how healing, ancestral tribute, ecological ritual, chant, dance, narrative staging, and musical accompaniment function within performance. Rather than treating OA performing arts as isolated artistic forms, the revised structure presents them as interconnected expressions shaped by sound, movement, belief, and communal participation.

Table 8: Revised Themes and Facets Definitions

Themes & Definitions	Facets & Definitions
Ritual and Ceremonial Performances <i>Performative acts carried out in sacred, communal, or ceremonial contexts to restore balance, honour spiritual relations, secure protection, or mark seasonal cycles.</i>	Healing and Restoration Ritual <i>Ritual acts aimed at curing illness, restoring balance, and renewing spiritual or communal well-being.</i>
	Ancestral Tribute Ritual <i>Ritual acts honouring ancestors, Moyang, or spiritual predecessors through offerings, music, dance, or invocation.</i>
	Ecological Protection and Boundary Ritual <i>Ritual acts protecting communities from natural misfortune and restoring respectful human–nature relations.</i>
	Agrarian and Seasonal Ritual <i>Ritual acts marking planting, harvest, fertility, seasonal change, or human relationships with land and nature.</i>
Traditional Vocal and Oral Expressions <i>Orally transmitted songs, chants, and verbal forms that preserve cultural memory, spiritual knowledge, ecological values, and communal identity.</i>	Spiritual and Ritual Chants <i>Chanted vocal forms used in healing, trance, Sewang, spirit contact, or sacred ritual communication.</i>
	Ancestral Memory Songs <i>Songs preserving ancestral remembrance, village history, past events, lineage memory, or inherited communal knowledge.</i>
	Spirit Encounter Songs <i>Songs narrating encounters with spirits, dragons, Moyang, forest beings, or other supernatural presences.</i>
	Ecological and Lifeways Wisdom Songs <i>Songs conveying ecological knowledge, everyday experiences, moral values, social norms, gratitude, warnings, and cultural identity within community life.</i>
Performative and Embodied Expression <i>Cultural expressions using bodily movement, dramatic enactment, staged play, or symbolic embodiment to communicate shared meanings.</i>	Dance and Movement Configuration <i>Bodily performances using coordinated movement, gesture, rhythm, or dance to express cultural meaning.</i>
	Symbolic Object and Shadowed Performance <i>Performances using crafted figures, objects, shadows, or symbolic forms to animate stories and cultural meanings.</i>
	Mythic and Narrative Enactments <i>Dramatized storytelling that performs myths, origin tales, legends, or heroic episodes through narrated action.</i>
	Spirit-Embodiment Enactment <i>Ritualized performances where performers embody spirits, animals, ancestors, or sacred beings through movement and presence.</i>
Instrument-Led Performances <i>Musical expressions centred on traditional instruments that shape rhythm, melody, atmosphere, accompaniment, or ensemble participation.</i>	String Instruments <i>Instruments producing sound through vibrating strings, used for melody, accompaniment, or expressive performance.</i>
	Blown and Mouth Instruments <i>Instruments sounded by blown air, through the mouth, tube, reed, or bamboo body, used for melody, signalling, ritual ambience, or communication.</i>
	Percussion Instruments <i>Instruments producing rhythm through striking, shaking, scraping, stamping, or vibrating bodies and membranes.</i>
	Instrumental Ensembles <i>Combined instrumental performances where multiple instruments create coordinated rhythm, melody, or communal accompaniment.</i>

Tables 9–12 present the thematic classification of ICH manifestations. The examples are partly representative, with each theme comprising four facets, each facet three to five codes, and each code covering multiple ICH manifestations.

Table 9: Theme 1 – Ritual and Ceremonial Performances

Facets	Codes	Examples of Manifestation	Groups
Healing and Restoration Rituals	Ritual	<i>Niksoi Belak Penyakit</i> : A communal Sewang (singing and dancing) performed to heal someone who has fallen ill.	Jah
	Healing	<i>Ngilai Ritual</i> : A therapy for the sick and a strengthening community ties and spiritual balance.	Ter
	Performance	<i>Kabut Sewang</i> : A rite led by a shaman who sings <i>Jenulak</i> songs believed to have been gifted in dreams.	Sem
	Shamanic Cure Ceremony	<i>Cucaw Ritual</i> : A shaman-led ritual to protect family members from the deceased's harmful spiritual influence (<i>Badi</i>).	Sem
	Spirit-Aided Restoration Rite	<i>Tenamoh Ritual</i> : A gathering with songs, drumming, and dancing to comfort the deceased's spirit and family.	Sem
Ancestral Tribute Ritual	Ancestor Veneration Ritual	<i>Gabag Gelap Ritual</i> : A nighttime ritual in complete darkness to drive away sickness and danger.	Sem
		<i>Ari Muyang Darat</i> : A communal and family gathering within village with dance and music to joyfully honor the ancestors	Mah
	Ancestral Appeasement Ritual	<i>Berjerom Ritual</i> : A lively <i>Sewang</i> honoring ancestors through dance, music, songs, and carved spirit figures.	Jah
		<i>Jis Genggulang</i> : A three-night dance circle to appease land spirits and show communal respect before jungle clearing.	Sem
		<i>Sewang Chenchem</i> : Slow rhythmic dance in darkness, with shamanic song, guides a grieving spirit toward peaceful release.	Tem
Ecological Protection and Boundary Ritual	Ancestral Spirit Mediation Ritual	<i>Puja Pantai</i> : A beachward community procession of dance and song, accompanying the shaman's ancestral spirit descent.	Mah
		<i>Genabak Pehnooh</i> : a <i>Sewang</i> sing and dance to communicate with forefathers to heal illness, seek blessings and uplift spirits.	Tem
	Natural Hazard Appeasement Rite	<i>Sewang Karei</i> : Desperate chanting and frantic dancing appease thunder deity <i>Karei</i> after environmental taboos are broken.	Bat/Ken/Jai/Tem
		<i>Sewang Genggulang</i> : Altar dancing, incantations, and bamboo stamping ward off climate anomalies and environmental curses.	Sem/Mah
	Ecological Boundary Restoration Rite	<i>Sewang Selombang</i> : Frantic circle-dancing, chants, and bamboo rhythms to restore boundaries with water systems.	Tem
Agrarian and Seasonal Ritual	Sustainable Nature Protection Rite	<i>Sewang Kabut</i> : Overnight closed ritual dance and bamboo stamping to cool forest <i>ruwai</i> and restore balance.	Sem
		<i>Sewang Pungei</i> : Circle-dancing, chanting, and bamboo stamping appease plant spirits and prevent over-harvesting.	Sem/Tem
	Harvest Celebration Ritual	<i>Sewang Semak Alam</i> : Rhythmic animal mimicry encouraging interspecies empathy and sustainable harvesting.	Sem/Tem
		<i>Tarian Siamang Tunggal</i> : A harvest celebratory performance honoring the forest through animal-mimicry dance.	Tem
		<i>Ngengsaak</i> : Dance circle with singing (<i>jenulak</i>) and music (<i>gengsak</i>) staged for harvest thanksgiving celebration.	Sem
Agrarian and Seasonal Ritual	Fertility and Abundance Ritual	<i>Nopoh Bukau</i> : Sacred singing séance ritual performed to ask spirit to blossom more flowers in the forest for fruit seasons.	Che
	Rice and Food Ritual	<i>Pinloin</i> : A song-and-dance performance asking the spirit (<i>chenoi</i>) to help the tree produce abundant fruit.	Jah
		<i>Sewang Semangat Padi</i> : Post-harvest group <i>Sewang</i> thanking hill-rice spirits and celebrating completion of paddy harvesting.	Tem/Sem/Sel
		<i>Sewang Uwi</i> : A grateful <i>Sewang</i> honoring cassava and forest tubers through song, dance, and thanksgiving.	Tem/Sem

Note. ALL = All or almost all ethnic groups practiced the manifestation; Abbreviations refer to Orang Asli subgroups: Kensiu (Ken), Kintaq (Kiq), Jahai (Jai), Mendriq (Men), Bateq (Bat), Temiar (Ter), Semai (Sem), Jah Hut (Jat), Che Wong (Che), Semoq Beri (Seq), Mah Meri (Mah), Temuan (Tem), Jakun (Jak), Semelai (Sel), Orang Kuala (Orl), Orang Seletar (Ors), and Orang Kanaq (Ork).

Table 10: Theme 2 – Traditional Vocal and Oral Expression

Facets	Codes	Examples of Manifestation	Groups
Spiritual and Ritual Chants	Spirit Communication Chant	<i>Lagu Jo'o Balai</i> : An opening chant to o summon, greet, and open communication lines between Tok Halak and spirits.	Tem
		<i>Amek Tolong Jar</i> : A pleading chant to establish direct contact with ancestral protectors during times of great vulnerability	Bat
	Protective Chant	<i>Lagu Tepung Tawar</i> : A defence chant to ward off gunik and block bad luck from breaching the community.	Tem/Sem/Mah
		<i>Irama Rambutan Gading</i> : An ancient protective chant to ward off environmental toxins, spiritual decay, and misfortune.	Sem
	Ceremonial Prayer Chant	<i>Lagu Pusing Tamuk Tawin</i> : A rhythmic prayer song to seek communal rejuvenation, vitality, and health.	Bat
		<i>Lagu Pulai Bergantung</i> : A ceremonial chant of gratitude to the canopy and forest spirits for shelter and foraging materials.	Tem/Sel
Super-natural Narrative Chants	Spirit Encounter Narrative Chant	<i>Pinloin Cel Yop Selantis</i> : A vocal narrative of the shaman's owl-spirit encounter, tracing its calls, movements, and omens.	Jai
		<i>Moyang Bojos</i> : A song narrating an ancestral encounter with the playful yet volatile <i>Bojos</i> spirit in coastal mangroves.	Mah
	Dream-Guided	<i>Chinchem</i> : A dream-revealed chant restoring community morale and spiritual boundaries against outside chaos.	Tem
	Spirit Chant	<i>Pinloin Salom Pangwei</i> : A dream-taught chant tracing wild Salom fruit drifting through forest rivers.	Jai
	Super-natural Being Chant	<i>Awang Muda Diawan</i> : A heavy incantatory ritual song summoning <i>Awang Muda Diawan</i> from the celestial heavens.	Jah
		<i>Telei Bah Peb</i> : A ritual song invoking Telei, the flora deity of jungle vegetation, life cycles, and rebirth.	Tem
Ancestral Memory Song	Ancestral Remembrance Song	<i>Song of Ganding</i> : A lively rhythmic song performed during ancestral days, recalling Carey Island's natural environment.	Mah
		<i>Song of Tok Naning</i> : A song that narrates the story of Tok Naning, an ancestral spirit who protects the village.	Mah
	Heritage Identity Song	<i>Jinjang</i> : A song passed down from pre-war era as oral archive to retain and safeguard specific tribal histories.	Tem/Sem
		<i>Kamiq Kon Seletar</i> : A song narrating the history of nomadic sea people (<i>Orang Laut</i>) navigating Straits of Johor	Ors
	Origin and Place Memory Song	<i>Ajin</i> : A spirit-given settlement song guiding migration and founding Ajin through sung geographic knowledge.	Tem
		<i>Kod Angkod</i> : A rhythmic foraging song that maps ancestral lands and guides movement through forest food routes.	Bat/Men
Ecological and Lifeways Wisdom Song	Forest and River Wisdom Song	<i>Lagu Kuwang Kuit</i> : A lyrical river-lore song teaching river health through flying foxes, archer fish, and dusk fishing.	Mah
		<i>Lagu Ce'ep Tiong</i> : A bird-wisdom song tracking Hill Myna flight patterns to predict monsoon shifts and storms.	Tem
	Subsistence Knowledge Song	<i>Lagu Tualang</i> : A harvesting song whose rhythm and humming soothe wild honeybees during <i>Tualang</i> tree honey extraction.	Jak/Tem
		<i>Lagu Menyumpit</i> : A narrative hunting song about forest tracking, blowpipe traditions, and ipoh sap knowledge.	Sen/Tem
	Everyday Lifeways Song	<i>Lagu Menganyam Tikar</i> : A conversational song sung while weaving pandanus or nipah leaves into mats and baskets.	Tem/Mah
		<i>Lagu Dodoi Anak</i> : A gentle native lullaby using forest imagery to soothe infants to sleep.	Tem

Note. ALL = All or almost all ethnic groups practiced the manifestation; Abbreviations refer to Orang Asli subgroups: Kensiu (Ken), Kintaq (Kiq), Jahai (Jai), Mendriq (Men), Bateq (Bat), Temiar (Ter), Semai (Sem), Jah Hut (Jat), Che Wong (Che), Semoq Beri (Seq), Mah Meri (Mah), Temuan (Tem), Jakun (Jak), Semelai (Sel), Orang Kuala (Orl), Orang Seletar (Ors), and Orang Kanaq (Ork).

Table 11: Theme 3 – Performative and Embodied Expressions

Facets	Codes	Examples of Manifestation	Groups
Dance and Movement Configuration	Communal Dance	<i>Sewang Lanok</i> : A full-community dance uniting villagers through parallel formations, and resonant bamboo percussion.	Tem
	Configuration	<i>Tarian Monggeng</i> : A communal festival dance mimicking forest animal migration through lines and circles.	Mah
	Rhythmic Movement	<i>Tarian Ketam Jengkeng</i> : A synchronized low-line dance mimicking mangrove crabs through sideways movements.	Ors
	Configuration	<i>Floor Stamping</i> : Tightly spaced dancers perform heavy synchronized foot-stamping to accent bamboo percussion.	Sem/Ter
	Courtship Dance	<i>Tarian Saputangan</i> : A courtship dance where dancers use cloths to create rhythmic closeness without physical contact.	Tem
	Configuration	<i>Ragam Kapek</i> : A formation using mirrored twists and shuffling steps to express playful attraction without physical contact.	Tem
Symbolic Object and Shadow Performance	Masked Performance	<i>Genggulang</i> : A masked land-clearing performance using woven leaf to symbolize forest gatekeepers.	Sem
		<i>Mayin Jo'oh</i> : A masked ancestral performance using carved wooden spirit figures to enact pranks and teach moral lessons.	Mah
	Ritual Object Performance	<i>Bunga Moyang</i> : Ancestral offering object carried and ritually activated during Hari Moyang ceremonies.	Mah
		<i>Lancang</i> : A boat-making and performance that carries away illness and misfortune through a miniature wooden vessel.	Mah
	Shadowed Performance	<i>Wayang Kulit Adaptation</i> : Shadow puppetry using bark or leaf figures to perform early encounters with jungle spirits.	Sem
		<i>Grassroots Silhouette</i> : A contemporary shadow theatre performance contrasting nature with destructive machinery.	Sem
Mythic and Narrative Enactment	Heroic Episode Enactment	<i>Tok Naning</i> : A dramatic song-and-dance re-enactment of Tok Naning defending Carey Island from historical invaders.	Mah
		<i>Mamak Bongsu</i> : A survival chant with bamboo stamping, voicing flood panic and heroic endurance triumphant tone.	Tem
	Legendary Event Enactment	<i>Bujang Manau</i> : Reenactment of the Rotan Manau harvesting expedition through synchronized hauling movements.	Tem
		<i>The Great Celau Deluge</i> : Reenactment of the great flood caused by broken taboos through frantic, panicked movements.	Bat/Tem
	Etiological Tale Enactment	<i>Moyang Ampai</i> : Reenactment portraying the legendary birth of the first jellyfish through drifting ocean-like movements.	Mah
		<i>The Origin of Sewang</i> : Reenactment the ancestral dream where spirits taught sacred healing rhythms and chants.	Sem/Ter
Spirit Embodiment Enactment	Trance-Based Embodiment	<i>Gabag Gelap</i> : A trance performance where dancers strike themselves with sacred flower bundles during Dark Sewang.	Ter
		<i>Sewang Nyuk</i> : A trance embodiment performance where <i>nyuk</i> dancers chant mantras before becoming possessed by spirits.	Sem/Ter
	Nature-Spirit Embodiment	<i>Sewang Panoh</i> : Embodiment of the tiger spirit through crouching, growling, and pouncing movements of a wild tiger.	Ter
		<i>Moyang Buaya</i> : Embodiment of the crocodile spirit through flatten body, slithering and snapping movements.	Mah
	Celestial-Spirit Embodiment	<i>Sewang Chenoi</i> : Embodiment of the sky entity (<i>cenoi</i>) through ethereal vocals and weightless movements.	Ter
		<i>Sewang Karei</i> : Embodiment of thunder (<i>karei</i>) through urgent chanting, forceful footwork, and storm-calming movement.	Ter/Sem

Note. ALL = All or almost all ethnic groups practiced the manifestation; Abbreviations refer to Orang Asli subgroups: Kensiu (Ken), Kintaq (Kiq), Jahai (Jai), Mendriq (Men), Bateq (Bat), Temiar (Ter), Semai (Sem), Jah Hut (Jat), Che Wong (Che), Semoq Beri (Seq), Mah Meri (Mah), Temuan (Tem), Jakun (Jak), Semelai (Sel), Orang Kuala (Orl), Orang Seletar (Ors), and Orang Kanaq (Ork).

Table 12: Theme 4 – Instrument-Led Performance

Facets	Codes	Examples of Manifestation	Groups
String Instrument	Bowed String	Biola: Bowed string performance producing sustained melody and ornamented phrasing through controlled bowing.	ALL
	Instrumental	Rebab: Bowed lute performance producing melodic tones through bowing, fingering, and pitch shaping.	ALL
	Plucked String	Gitar Kayu: Wooden six-string performance using finger-plucked tones from a triangular-bodied chordophone.	ALL
	Instrumental	Ukulele: Modern-adapted plucked string performance producing bright chords and light melodic accompaniment.	ALL
	Bamboo Zither	Kereb: Bamboo zither performance using plucked or struck strings to create resonant melodic-rhythmic patterns.	Sem/Ter/Jah/Seq
	Instrumental	Keranting: Bamboo string performance using plucked multi-string resonance to produce layered melodic-rhythmic tones.	Sem/Ter/Jah/Seq
Blown and Mouth Instrument	Nose-Blown Instrumental	Pensol: Nose-flute performance producing breath-softened melodies through nostril airflow and finger-controlled pitch.	Sem
		Bangsi: Nose-flute performance producing airy melodies through nasal airflow, controlled fingering, and tonal shading.	ALL
	Mouth Blown Instrumental	Seruling: Mouth-flute performance producing clear melodies through breath control, embouchure, and finger-hole variation.	ALL
		Si-oi/Sioi: Transverse bamboo flute performance producing side-blown melodies through breath control and fingering.	Sem/Ter/Jah/Seq
	Mouth Resonant Instrumental	Ginggong: Natural mouth-resonant performance producing insect-like tones through finger-and-tongue vibration.	ALL
		Genggong: Metal mouth-resonant performance producing buzzing tones through finger-and-tongue vibration.	ALL
Percussion Instrument	Frame Drum Instrumental	Rebana: Frame-drum performance producing hand-struck rhythmic accents, rolling beats, and repeated pulse structures.	ALL
		Kompong: Hand-held frame-drum performance producing interlocking beats, syncopation, and rhythmic layering.	ALL
	Barrel Drum Instrumental	Tambur: Barrel-drum performance using beaters to produce deep rhythmic pulses and strong percussive emphasis.	ALL
		Gendang Semarang: Drum performance using alternating strikes to produce rhythmic variation and dynamic accents.	Mah/Ors/Orl/Jak
	Bamboo Stamping Instrumental	Tung-Tung: Bamboo percussion performance using paired striking to produce hollow rhythmic cycles and tempo control.	Mah
		Buluh Centong: Bamboo stamping performance producing repeated pitched rhythms through floor-struck bamboo tubes.	ALL
Instrumental Ensembles	Mixed Instrument Ensemble	Kereb–Pensol Ensemble: Instrumental pairing of kereb and pensol producing string resonance and nose-flute melody.	Sem
		Contemporary String Ensemble: Combination of Gitar Kapok, Ukulele, Biola, or Seruling for evolving performance.	ALL
	Dance Accompaniment Ensemble	Oghayo-Oghayo: Ensemble using <i>Buluh Centong</i> with rhythmic stamping patterns to support Seletar dance movement.	Ors
		Sewang Ensemble: Ensemble combining <i>pensol</i> , <i>tung-tung</i> , <i>rebana</i> , and vocal rhythm to support Sewang movement.	ALL
	Festive Music Ensemble	Drum-Led Festivity: Ensemble using <i>Tambur</i> , <i>Gendang Semarang</i> , <i>Rebana</i> , or <i>Kompong</i> for rhythmic accompaniment.	ALL
		Puja Pantai Ensemble: Coastal festival ensemble using drums, gongs, and bamboo rhythm for procession performances.	Mah

Note. ALL = All or almost all ethnic groups practiced the manifestation; Abbreviations refer to Orang Asli subgroups: Kensi (Ken), Kintaq (Kiq), Jahai (Jai), Mendriq (Men), Bateq (Bat), Temiar (Ter), Semai (Sem), Jah Hut (Jat), Che Wong (Che), Semoq Beri (Seq), Mah Meri (Mah), Temuan (Tem), Jakun (Jak), Semelai (Sel), Orang Kuala (Orl), Orang Seletar (Ors), and Orang Kanaq (Ork).

Tables 9–12 establish the internal classification of OA performing arts through themes, facets and manifestation codes. To develop the cultural spaces component, these codes were then re-read for the spatial conditions embedded in their examples. Healing rituals, shamanic cure ceremonies, spirit-aided restoration rites and trance-based embodiments pointed to healing and restoration spaces. Ancestor veneration, ancestral appeasement, *Moyang*-related rituals and spirit mediation indicated ancestral tribute spaces. Ecological boundary rituals, harvest celebrations, fertility rites and rice or food rituals pointed to seasonal ritual landscapes. *Puja Pantai*, festive ensembles and ceremonial movements indicated processional routes. Chants, ancestral songs, spirit encounter songs and ecological wisdom songs pointed to vocal transmission spaces. Instrumental codes involving strings, blown instruments, percussion, bamboo stamping and ensembles indicated soundscape spaces. Dance formations, courtship movement, masked performance, symbolic objects, mythic enactments and spirit embodiment pointed to movement arenas and staged performance spaces.

Based on this reading, Table 13 groups the recurring spatial meanings into four planning-oriented cultural spaces: restorative and ancestral ritual, ritual landscape and procession, vocal and instrumental soundscape, and embodied performance and symbolic staging. The eight cultural spaces under these layers were derived from the performance functions and spatial requirements found across the manifestation codes. Table 14 then applies these spaces back to each code, showing how OA performing arts can inform planning concerns related to ritual grounds, processional routes, performance arenas, soundscape protection, symbolic staging areas and culturally appropriate spaces for safeguarding living performance heritage.

Table 13: Planning-Oriented Cultural Space Framework

Layers	Code	Cultural Spaces	Definition
Restorative and Ancestral Ritual	A	Healing Trance Performance Space	Spaces for healing rituals, shamanic curing, trance, and spirit restoration.
	B	Ancestral Tribute Performance Space	Spaces for ancestral honouring, <i>Moyang</i> veneration, offerings, and spirit mediation.
Ritual Landscape and Procession	C	Ecological Seasonal Ritual Landscape	Landscapes for ecological protection, harvest thanksgiving, fertility, and seasonal renewal.
	D	Processional Festive Performance Route	Routes for ceremonial movement, beachward procession, village circulation, and festivity.
Vocal and Instrumental Soundscape	E	Vocal Chant Transmission Space	Settings for ritual chants, spirit communication, ancestral memory, and songs.
	F	Instrumental Ensemble Soundscape Space	Spaces structured for bamboo stamping, rhythm, melody, and other instruments ensembles.
Embodied Performance and Symbolic Staging	G	Communal Dance Movement Arena	Arenas for dance circles, formations, courtship movement, and communal participation.
	H	Spirit Narrative Staging Space	Stages for myths, spirit embodiment, masked enactment, and symbolic objects.

Table 14: Spatial Interpretation of ICH Manifestation Codes

Themes	Facets	Manifestation Codes	Cultural Spaces (Coded)							
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ritual and Ceremonial Performances	Healing & Restoration Ritual	Ritual Healing Performance	/				/		/	
		Shamanic Cure Ceremony	/				/		/	
		Spirit-Aided Restoration Rite	/				/	/	/	/
	Ancestral Tribute Ritual	Ancestor Veneration Ritual		/			/	/	/	/
		Ancestral Appeasement Ritual		/	/		/		/	/
		Ancestral Spirit Mediation Ritual		/		/	/	/	/	/
	Ecological Boundary Ritual	Natural Hazard Appeasement Rite			/		/	/	/	/
		Eco-Boundary Restoration Rite			/		/	/	/	/
		Sustainable Nature Protection Rite			/		/	/	/	/
	Agrarian and Seasonal Ritual	Harvest Celebration Ritual			/	/	/	/	/	
		Fertility and Abundance Ritual			/		/		/	/
		Rice and Food Ritual			/	/	/		/	/
Traditional Vocal and Oral Expressions	Spiritual and Ritual Chants	Spirit Communication Chant		/			/		/	
		Protective Chant			/		/		/	
		Ceremonial Prayer Chant	/		/		/		/	
	Supernatural Narrative Chants	Spirit Encounter Narrative Chant			/		/		/	
		Dream-Guided Spirit Chant			/		/		/	
		Supernatural Being Chant			/		/		/	
	Ancestral Memory Songs	Ancestral Remembrance Song		/	/		/		/	
		Heritage Identity Song		/		/	/		/	
		Origin and Place Memory Song		/	/	/	/		/	
	Lifeway Wisdom Songs	Forest and River Wisdom Song			/		/		/	
		Subsistence Knowledge Song			/		/		/	
		Everyday Lifeways Song					/		/	
Performative and Embodied Expressions	Dance and Movement Configuration	Communal Dance Configuration			/	/		/	/	
		Rhythmic Movement Config.			/			/	/	
		Courtship Dance Configuration							/	
	Symbolic Object Performance	Masked Performance		/	/				/	
		Ritual Object Performance	/	/					/	
		Shadowed Performance			/				/	
	Mythic and Narrative Enactment	Heroic Episode Enactment		/	/	/	/	/	/	/
		Legendary Event Enactment			/	/			/	/
		Etiological Tale Enactment		/	/		/	/	/	/
	Spirit-Embodiment Enactment	Trance-Based Embodiment	/				/		/	/
		Nature-Spirit Embodiment			/				/	/
		Celestial-Spirit Embodiment			/		/		/	/
Instrument-Led Performances	String Instruments	Bowed String Instrumental						/		
		Plucked String Instrumental						/		
		Bamboo Zither Instrumental						/		
	Blown and Mouth Instruments	Nose-Blown Instrumental						/		
		Mouth-Blown Instrumental						/		
		Mouth-Resonant Instrumental						/		
	Percussion Instruments	Frame Drum Instrumental						/		
		Barrel Drum Instrumental						/		
		Bamboo Stamping Instrumental						/	/	
	Instrumental Ensembles	Mixed Instrument Ensemble						/		
		Dance Accompaniment Ensemble					/	/	/	
		Festive Music Ensemble			/			/	/	

DISCUSSION

The validation findings guided refinement of the initial framework. Theme-level I-CVI values ranged from 0.50 to 0.67, while S-CVI values ranged from 0.61 to 0.67, indicating overlap among vocal, theatrical, ritual and instrumental categories. Expert feedback informed a revised structure comprising (i) Ritual and Ceremonial Performances, (ii) Traditional Vocal and Oral Expressions, (iii) Performative and Embodied Expressions, and (iv) Instrument-Led Performances. These themes distinguish healing, chanting, storytelling, movement, symbolic enactment and musical accompaniment while retaining their interconnections.

The result further shows that OA performing arts depend on spatial conditions. Healing and trance practices require restorative ritual settings; ancestral ceremonies occupy tribute and mediation spaces; ecological and seasonal performances are tied to forests, agricultural areas, beaches and other ritual landscapes. Processions rely on connected routes, while chants and instrumental traditions require settings that support vocal transmission, rhythm and communal listening. Dance formations, spirit embodiment, masks and ritual objects also require movement arenas and culturally appropriate staging areas.

Tables 13 and 14 translate these relationships into four heritage-mapping layers and eight performance spaces. This broadens heritage planning beyond fixed venues by recognizing ritual grounds, processional routes, soundscapes, seasonal landscapes, dance arenas and symbolic stages as living cultural infrastructure. The framework support cultural landscape assessment, performance-space inventories and community-based safeguarding.

CONCLUSION

OA performing arts emerge from this study as integrated systems of ritual, voice, movement, symbolic enactment and instrumental sound. Their organisation into four themes and sixteen facets provides a clearer basis for distinguishing performance functions without separating elements that operate together in practice. The heritage-mapping analysis adds an important planning dimension by identifying the settings that enable these performances to continue. Ritual grounds, ancestral spaces, ecological landscapes, procession routes, soundscapes, dance arenas and symbolic staging areas function as cultural infrastructure for the ICH manifestations. Recognizing these spaces strengthen heritage inventories, cultural landscape assessment and community-based safeguarding.

As a planning foundation, the framework guide later site-level mapping across OA communities by documenting performance locations, movement routes, spatial requirements, access conditions and seasonal use. Its application should be sustained through long-term collaboration with communities, while respecting local performance contexts, community custodianship and the protection of sacred or restricted knowledge.

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