

## History and Development of the Benjang Wrestling Organization in Ujungberung in 2000-2021

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### Abstract

#### Purpose:

The art of benjang wrestling has long lived and developed among the people of East Bandung from 1965-1970. The benjang wrestling arts organization was formed to accommodate and provide facilities for activists and actors who are involved in the world of benjang wrestling arts, especially for benjang athletes, to continue to preserve the benjang wrestling arts and regenerate benjang athletes so that they continue to exist.

#### Methodology:

This research uses the historical method, which consists of four stages, namely heuristics (source gathering), criticism (data selection), interpretation (data interpretation), and historiography (history writing).

#### Findings:

Based on the results of the research that has been done, it can be concluded that the Benjang Wrestling Arts Organization in Ujungberung in 2000-2021 is a Benjang wrestling arts organization that was formed to become a place or place for activists and actors who participate in the benjang wrestling arts. This organization was initially formed from a Paguyuban in 2000 and developed into an organization in 2015. The purpose of establishing this organization is to maintain and preserve the art of benjang wrestling to preserve it to the times and to contribute to always trying to regenerate the following benjang athletes. So that there will be a successor.

#### Implication:

With the regeneration carried out by the Benjang Wrestling Arts organization, successors will continue to emerge who can contribute and provide achievements for the Benjang Wrestling Arts so that this art will continue to exist and be maintained for the next generation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity, with over a thousand ethnic groups. The spirit of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" is a guideline for the Indonesian people to respect differences, especially regarding ancestral cultural heritage. Culture reflects national identity and consists of various universal elements, including art (Satoto, 2003). In West Java, a typical Sundanese art called benjang is an inseparable part of their traditions and culture. Benjang art consists of three main parts: benjang heleran, benjang mask, and benjang wrestling.

Benjang heleran is an art of procession in circumcision and harvests thanksgiving ceremonies that combines cultural elements and Islamic values (Widjaya, 2013). This ceremony is a form of respect and gratitude for the blessings received. After the benjang heleran, the benjang mask was also held, which is the art of mask dance with graceful movements and full of symbolic meaning. However, the most striking benjang art is benjang wrestling, a traditional martial art with distinctive movements and techniques (Supardi, 2020). This art of wrestling is not only entertainment for the community but also contains deep philosophical meaning. Through elegant and conscious movements, benjang wrestling teaches the values of honor, devotion to God, and humility.

Youth play an important role in preserving culture, including the art of wrestling. They are persistent agents of change in introducing and preserving this cultural heritage. The Indonesian Benjang Sports Arts Association (PSOBI) was established to meet their ardor. This organization aims to gather benjang athletes, develop their talents, and develop and promote the art of benjang wrestling at national and international levels.

Thanks to the continuous efforts and dedication of PSOBI and the youth, the art of benjang wrestling has succeeded in developing to the level of West Java and even participating in recreational sports championships such

as FORNAS. In this way, the art of benjang wrestling is increasingly known and appreciated as a local tradition and an essential part of national culture. The art of benjang wrestling has brought pride to the people of West Java and has become a symbol of Indonesia's beautiful cultural diversity. Hopefully, the youth's enthusiasm for preserving this art will continue to burn and inspire future generations to love and protect this noble cultural heritage.

## METHODS

The research method used in this writing is the Historical Research Method. Historical research methods are a systematic collection of principles and rules intended to effectively collect source materials from history, critically assess or examine those sources, and present a synthesis result (generally in written form) of the results achieved (Wasino & Hartatik, 2018). The method used in this research is a historical research method, which consists of four stages, namely heuristics (collecting sources), criticism (selection of data), interpretation (interpretation of data), and historiography (writing history) (Kuntowijoyo, 2003).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**A. History of Benjang Art.** The history of Benjang art begins with folk art that developed among the people of Ujungberung, Bandung City, Indonesia. Benjang art consists of wrestling and dance accompanied by Terebang, Kendang, Trumpet, Bedug, and Kecrek music (Rosidi, 2000). This art has deep cultural roots and is closely related to the customs and beliefs of the local community. Benjang art developed in the East Bandung area, especially at the feet of Mount Manglayang, such as Ujungberung, Cinunuk, Cibiru, and Cibolerang. As the birthplace of Benjang martial arts, Ujungberung has become the center of attention in developing this art.

Initially, Benjang art took the form of dugong art, namely the art of male dexterity using a rice-pounding tool called a pestle (Hamdan, 2006). Subsequently, the art of dogong developed into a movement of pushing each other with the head called mumundingan or adu munding (Widjaya, 2013). Along the way, this art interacted with other martial arts, including the arts of gedut and terebang, and finally emerged as the martial art of Benjang Wrestling.

The art of Benjang wrestling continued to develop over time. In 1925, the art of Benjang was exhibited at an agricultural and livestock crafts exhibition by the Dutch East Indies government in Bandung. This art received awards and praise from local officials. In 1930, the kink technique appeared as an addition to the art of Benjang wrestling. This technique uses the strength of the leg muscles to hit and slam the opponent. This art continues to develop and undergo refinement, and in 1969, Abdul Gani, a master, won a gold medal in the sport of wrestling at PON VII Surabaya (Widjaya, 2013). It is a source of pride for the people of West Java and attracts more people's interest in becoming graduates.

In the 1970s, the art of Benjang wrestling experienced a decline in the intensity of its performances due to several brawls that occurred during performances. It led to the government's ban on Benjang wrestling performances in 1977. However, the public still demands Benjang helaran art, even though its quality and quantity have decreased compared to its heyday from 1950 to 1966. Even though it has experienced ups and downs, Benjang art remains part of Indonesian cultural heritage and continues to live in the Ujungberung community and its surroundings.

### B. History of the Benjang Wrestling Organization

**Benjang Wrestling Arts Association.** Benjang Gulat art is a martial art and traditional dance typical of the West Java region, Indonesia. During the New Order era, to be precise, in 1977, the art of Benjang Gulat was prohibited from being performed by the government. However, after the end of the New Order period and the transition to the reform period, Benjang arts activists began to become enthusiastic again to restore the activity of this art, which had been on hiatus.

On June 16, 2000, Drs. H. Maman Abdurachman, who served as Head of Ujungberung District, and Ir. H. Farid Muliadi, who served as the Municipal Patih, formed an association called "Paguyuban Mitra Seni Benjang Bandung Raya" (Widjaya, 2013). This association aimed to establish and maintain friendships between fellow Benjang Gulat arts activists and existing performers at that time. However, as time went by, this association had a

broader task, namely to try and revive the passion for the frequency of Benjang art, in particular, lifting the ban on Benjang Gulat art performances, which has been in effect since 1977.

The impact of forming the Greater Bandung Benjang Arts Partners Association is that Benjang Gulat art performances have become increasingly widespread. As this art continues to develop, both art practitioners and art lovers are starting to develop more critical and mature thinking to avoid divisions and brawls that have occurred in the past.

In September 2000, Benjang leaders met to establish the "Benjang Kodya Bandung Traditional Wrestling Arts Association." At this meeting, Abdul Gani, a Benjang figure from the late 1960s, was elected chairman of the association. Abdul Gani had a service in 1969 because he succeeded in winning a gold medal at PON VII in Surabaya. He was highly respected and respected and charismatic when meeting friends and opponents of his time.

Along with the development of the Benjang Gulat art, various Benjang Gulat pagurons (schools) began to appear in various areas in the east Bandung area, such as the Ujungberung, Cibiru, Cinunuk, and Cibolerang areas. These pagurons function as a training ground for pebenjang (Benjang Players) and contribute to preserving the art of Benjang Gulat. Recruitment of young people is also carried out through invitations from the family level, but it still needs to be on an extensive scale.

In 2003, the "Benjang Wrestling Arts Association, Cilengkrang District, Bandung Regency" was also formed, chaired by H. Ade Dharma. Many associations and pagurons have sprung up to regenerate pebenjang and preserve the art of Benjang Gulat. On September 12-13, 2003, the management of the Bandung City Traditional Wrestling Arts Association held a Regional Conference (MUSDA) for the Arts of Benjang Wrestling throughout West Java at the Pajajaran Sports Hall, Bandung. As a result, MUSDA agreed to appoint Drs. H. Uu Rukmana as General Chair and Drs. Andang Segara as Daily Chair (Widjaya, 2013). Apart from that, the art of Benjang Wrestling is also included in managing the West Java All Indonesian Wrestling Association (PGSI), the main branch of the West Java Indonesian National Sports Committee (KONI) organization.

In 2008, the art of Benjang Gulat shifted its guidance from PGSI to the Indonesian Community Recreational Sports Federation (FORMI). With this move, the art of Benjang Gulat was recognized as a recreational or community sport. This community sport aims to obtain health, physical fitness, and joy, build social relationships, and preserve and increase regional and national cultural riches.

With the increasing number of Benjang Gulat arts events and festivals being held, there should be a structured organization to facilitate this arts paguron with adequate facilities and infrastructure, as well as to find and regenerate Benjang Gulat athletes so that this art continues to excel and continues to preserve its heritage. Traditional culture.



**Figure 1.** Benjang wrestling event at the event on August 17

**Indonesian Benjang Association Organization (PBI).** The Indonesian Benjang Association Organization (PBI) is a benjang wrestling arts organization formed in 2015 in Ujungberung. The main aim of this organization is to preserve the art of benjang wrestling and to look for seeds of benjang wrestling who can compete on the sporting stage. This organization is a forum for pagurons in the East Bandung area, which are now under the auspices of PBI.

As time passes, PBI has made several new regulations to maintain safety and increase competition among athletes. Some of the rules applied are age categorization and weight class. There are two categories for the age

category: junior (aged 13-17 years) and senior (aged 17 years and over). Age is calculated based on the year of birth and the year the benjang championship was held regardless of the date and month of birth.

Meanwhile, five classes apply to junior and senior age classes in the weight class categorization. Every athlete who competes must comply with these rules and compete in the weight category appropriate to their body weight. However, in the senior weight class category, advanced athletes are allowed to choose a weight category that is one level higher than their actual weight category, based on the athlete's wishes, as long as they are ready to take responsibility for their choice.

PBI is part of the Indonesian Community Recreational Sports Federation (FORMI), which periodically organizes recreational sports championships for the Indonesian people, known as FORNAS (Indonesian Community Recreational Sports Festival). PBI has participated in several previous FORNAS, with increasing achievements over time. However, after FORNAS in 2019 in Samarinda, the art of benjang wrestling experienced a decline in the existence of performances and a decline in the number of future benjang athletes. It was caused by several members and founders of the organization becoming inactive. Apart from that, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on the decline in the art of benjang wrestling.

The art of benjang wrestling still faces challenges to maintain its existence and continues to look for seeds of talent who can excel at national and international levels. Support and active participation from members and administrators of the organization are critical to maintaining and developing the art of benjang wrestling in Indonesia.

**Benjang Indonesian Sports Arts Association (PSOBI).** The Indonesian Benjang Sports Arts Association (PSOBI) was founded to foster and develop the traditional art of benjang wrestling. Initially, this organization was called the Indonesian Benjang Association (PBI), but due to problems with the name already being used by another organization, PBI changed its name to PSOBI (Yustiawan, 2022).

This change was made after FORNAS in 2019 in Samarinda, where several PBI founders and members were inactive. This condition causes the sporting arts activities of benjang wrestling to have no follow-up and experience setbacks. In 2020, the organization's chairman, Abdul Gani, instructed to reconstruct the structure and members of the organization to raise the level of this organization to the national level (Eman, 2022). However, this plan was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic that hit Indonesia. In 2021, there will be changes at the national level, with the Indonesian Community Recreational Sports Federation (FORMI) being parallel to KONI (Indonesian National Sports Committee). FORMI changed to KORMI due to the national deliberation (Munas) in East Kalimantan. This change is expected to improve the performance of the art of wrestling from the provincial level to the national level.

PSOBI was legally established based on the Decree of the Minister of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia in 2021. Abdul Gani was appointed as chairman of the national-level PSOBI organization (Eman, 2022). This organization has the primary function of maintaining and developing the traditional art of benjang wrestling as part of efforts to enrich the artistic and cultural treasures of the archipelago.

PSOBI is a forum for paguron around Bandung to channel talented pebenjang (benjang wrestling athletes) to the national level and include them in the sport of wrestling (Yustiawan, 2022). This organization also provides facilities and infrastructure for Paguron, which has talented educators. Apart from that, PSOBI has three main principles in organizing benjang wrestling activities: democratic, non-discriminatory, and upholding religious values, national cultural values, and the value of national pluralism.

In carrying out its functions, PSOBI has the task of determining and implementing the traditional art of benjang wrestling. In addition, this organization has the authority to regulate, guide, empower, develop, coordinate, and supervise the implementation of the traditional art of benjang wrestling, resolve disputes, and provide sanctions for violations and organizational regulations. PSOBI's vision is to create superior, cultured, virtuous traditional sports arts activists by preserving the nation's culture. The mission of this organization is to spread the art of traditional benjang wrestling throughout the country and stimulate the development of traditional wrestling in every region in Indonesia.

The motto or motto held by the PSOBI organization is 'Bersih Hate Handap Asor,' which means 'clean heart and humble heart (Eman, 2022). 'This motto aims to encourage members of the organization, especially athletes and leaders, to maintain good relationships with each other and not harbor feelings of resentment. Apart from that, this motto teaches the importance of a humble attitude for athletes with superior abilities so they always

remain humble and respect others. With its various principles, duties, authority, vision, mission, and motto, PSOBI is expected to continue to preserve and develop the traditional art of benjang wrestling to make the art of benjang wrestling proud at the national level.



**Figure 2.** Office of the Wrestling Arts Organization, Namely the Arts Association Indonesian Benjang Sports

### C. Development of the Benjang Wrestling Organization in Ujungberung in 2000-2021.

**Development of the Benjang Gulat Arts Organization.** The art of benjang wrestling has experienced an exciting journey in its development. In 1977, the government banned holding benjang wrestling arts because of brawls between residents regarding these artistic performances (Widjaya, 2013). As a result, the art of benjang wrestling experienced a vacuum for approximately 23 years. After the New Order era ended and the transition to the reform period, benjang wrestling arts activists lifted the ban. In 2000, Drs. H. Maman Abdurachman, who served as Head of Ujungberung District, and Ir. H. Farid Muliadi, who served as the Municipal Patih, together with benjang wrestling arts activists, formed an association called "Paguyuban Mitra Seni Benjang Bandung Raya" to build relationships and re-develop the passion for the frequency of Benjang arts.

As time passes, this association has a particular goal: to lift the ban on performances of the art of benjang wrestling, which has been implemented since 1977. This goal is to preserve the art of benjang wrestling so that it does not become extinct and also to avoid divisions and brawls that have occurred.

In 2015, a benjang wrestling arts organization was formed, which was named "Persatuan Benjang Indonesia" (PBI), which then transitioned into "Indonesian Benjang Sports Arts Association" (PSOBI) in 2021. This organization has an essential role in organizing benjang wrestling arts performances, coordinating and supervising this art, and contributing to regenerating benjang players so that this art continues. With the formation of this organization, pagurons of benjang wrestling arts in various regions became sheltered under it. This organization also has an administrative structure and mechanism responsible for maintaining and developing the art of benjang wrestling. Apart from that, this organization also facilitates wrestling arts activities and ensures that this art can develop well.

With the presence of the benjang wrestling arts organization at the national level, this art can also take part in championships at the national level, increasing exposure and appreciation of the art of benjang wrestling more widely. Overall, developing the art of benjang wrestling from a vacuum to forming an organization is an exciting story about the strenuous efforts of arts activists and local governments to preserve and advance traditional culture and arts.

**Contribution from the Benjang Gulat Arts Organization.** The Benjang Gulat Arts Organization has an essential role in preserving and introducing the typical arts of Ujungberung, namely the art of benjang gulat (Widjaya, 2013). As a traditional art originating from this area, the art of benjang wrestling is part of the national identity, which can unite and show the nation's identity. To preserve this art, the Benjang community was founded to introduce the traditional art of benjang wrestling to the community.

The Benjang Gulat Arts Organization's contributions are diverse and meaningful. This association acts as a driving force for the art of benjang wrestling by holding various stage activities and performances. Apart from that, the association is also collaborating with the government and trying to create associations in several areas to spread the art of benjang wrestling more widely and receive more significant support. Apart from the association, the wrestling arts organization has also contributed by participating in the FORNAS championship (National et al.

Festival). In 2015, 2017, and 2019, the art of benjang wrestling participated in FORNAS. Even though they did not succeed in 2015 and 2017, in 2019, representatives from the art of benjang wrestling managed to win a silver medal and place second in the championship (Ohid, 2022).

The success of winning a silver medal at FORNAS 2019 is a proud achievement for the art of wrestling. However, the wrestling arts organization must be bold with this achievement. Efforts must continue to be made to find and support talented benjang athletes so that the art of benjang wrestling continues to develop and contribute at the regional, provincial, and national levels. In this way, this organization can continue to play a role in preserving and elevating the dignity of the art of benjang wrestling as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

**Regeneration Efforts Made by the Benjang Gulat Arts Organization.** The benjang arts organization aims to preserve the art of benjang wrestling so that it does not disappear over time and regenerate benjang athletes to become its successors. Youth play an essential role in maintaining the art of benjang wrestling as a typical art from the East Bandung area to remain known and sustainable. Youth must be actively involved as arts and culture actors in the area and in organizing the art of benjang wrestling.

Along the way, youth have five essential roles in maintaining and preserving the art of benjang wrestling: First, the role of inheritance. Youth must be agents of passing on knowledge and skills in wrestling to the next generation of young people. They must teach and ensure this knowledge is preserved over time. Second, the role of the hermitage owner. Youth must act as owners or managers of the Benjang Wrestling Arts hermitage, where training and coaching for athletes occur. By managing a hermitage, youth can create a conducive environment for athletes to develop. Third, the role of the perpetrator. Youth must be active as practitioners of the art of benjang wrestling by being involved in performances and performances. By becoming actors, they help strengthen the existence and popularity of this art. Fourth, innovative role. Youth must play a role in creating innovation and creativity in wrestling. This art remains relevant and attractive to the younger generation by presenting a new touch. Fifth, educational role. Youth must help spread information and knowledge about the art of benjang wrestling through various educational activities, such as performances, seminars, or other social activities. In this way, this art is increasingly known and in demand by the wider community (Mantri, 2014).

Although youth play an essential role in preserving the art of benjang wrestling, they often face various obstacles that hinder their participation. However, efforts have been made to regenerate Benjang athletes by inviting young people from their families and through pagurons in the East Bandung area (Widjaya, 2013). Collaboration between the Benjang Wrestling Arts organization and Paguron is also a positive step in developing benjang athletes. Apart from that, the benjang wrestling arts organization is also trying to overcome this challenge by building the Indonesian Benjang School, which aims to become a learning and training center for the younger generation interested in participating in the art of benjang wrestling. This effort is likely to open up a pathway to achievement for athletes with talent and achievements in the field of wrestling arts. Overall, the benjang wrestling arts organization is committed to continuing to make efforts to regenerate athletes and preserve the art of benjang wrestling so that it remains alive and developing amidst increasingly advanced developments.



**Figure 3.** Test match practice

**Organizational Influence on the Art of Benjang Wrestling.** The benjang wrestling arts organization has existed for a long time and has had a significant influence on the development of this art. Since its inception, this organization has been a community that has an essential role in maintaining and advancing the art of benjang wrestling. One of the association's primary roles is to lift the ban on the performance of benjang wrestling arts that was previously imposed (Widjaya, 2013).

Lifting this ban is an essential milestone for the art of benjang wrestling because it allows it to be performed and developed again. Thanks to the association's role, the existence of the art of bending wrestling, which had been on hiatus for 20 years, can be revived. It has led to an increase in the intensity of benjang wrestling arts performances and the emergence of various events and festivals related to the association's positive influence, which does not only stop there but also has an impact on the emergence of several paguron (teachings) for benjang wrestling arts in the east Bandung area. It shows how significant the association's role is in encouraging the development of the art of wrestling on a broad scale. Apart from the association, the Benjang Wrestling Arts organization also influences preserving this art. This organization is a forum for practitioners of the art of benjang wrestling, such as paguron, hermitage, and the benjang art environment, to continue contributing to preserving this art.

One of the influences that can be felt is the organization's efforts to regenerate young people as advanced athletes. The organization provides places, facilities, education, coaching, and training for young people interested in learning the art of benjang wrestling. It aims to ensure that the art of benjang wrestling has competent successors who can develop this art following current developments. Overall, the role of benjang wrestling arts associations and organizations is essential for the continuity and preservation of this art. Through their efforts to lift the ban and regenerate benjang athletes, the art of benjang wrestling can survive and continue to develop to this day.



**Figure 4.** Selection stage for FORNAS

## CONCLUSION

This research discusses the history and development of Benjang Gulat art in Ujungberung, especially from 2000 to 2021. The traditional art developed in Ujungberung is Benjang art, divided into three types: Benjang Gulat, Benjang Helaran, and Benjang Mask. Initially, Benjang art was inseparable from the role and development of Mas Hasandikarta's tapioca factory. One type of art in early Benjang art is Dogong art, the art of male dexterity using a rice pounder called a pestle. Dogong then developed into a pushing movement with the head called mumundingan/gedut, accompanied by a flying musical instrument. Benjang art developed from pushing each other into a movement of taking and carrying by force (genyenyeng) and pulling each other (pakenyang-kenyang). Another version of the acronym emerged, namely Genyang or Genjang, which later changed to Benjang.

Benjang Gulat was born in 1923 and experienced a golden age in 1966-1970 with the emergence of new champions such as Adang Hakim and Abdul Gani. However, the rise of Benjang Gulat must also improve, such as violating sportsmanship values and brawls between residents. In 1977, the government banned Benjang Gulat performances in various regions. After the New Order era ended in 2000, the Paguyuban Mitra Seni Benjang Bandung Raya was formed to return the passion for Benjang Gulat art and lift the ban on its performances. The art of Benjang Wrestling developed further and was integrated into recreational sports under the auspices of FORMI. The Indonesian Benjang Association (PBI) was founded in 2015 and participates in various championships, including FORNAS. After several changes, the organization's name changed to the Indonesian Benjang Sports Arts Association (PSOBI). The PSOBI organization is trying to regenerate Benjang Gulat athletes through various means, including collaborating with pagurons, establishing Benjang schools, and incorporating this art into extracurricular activities. This effort aims to preserve the art of Benjang Gulat and look for successor athletes to make the name of this art proud at the national level.

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