

Participatory Arts for Community Empowerment in Indonesia: A Comparative Review of Urban and Rural Contexts

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ABSTRACT: Participatory arts have been increasingly recognized as an effective approach for promoting community empowerment by engaging local residents as active contributors to artistic creation, cultural governance, and community development. Despite growing implementation of such initiatives in Indonesia, comparative evidence on how community empowerment differs between urban and rural contexts remains limited. This study examines the characteristics, implementation processes, empowerment outcomes, and sustainability of participatory arts programs in urban and rural Indonesia, identifying the contextual factors shaping their effectiveness. A comparative qualitative literature review was conducted using structured focused comparison of secondary data published mainly between 2015–2025, integrating peer-reviewed articles, government publications, and institutional reports. A standardized evidence matrix guided extraction of program characteristics, participation levels, and empowerment outcomes, analyzed through narrative synthesis, thematic analysis, and cross-case comparison within a framework combining Empowerment Theory, Social Capital Theory, Cultural Democracy, Creative Placemaking, and Community Resilience. Findings show urban initiatives benefit from stronger institutional partnerships, diversified funding, and bridging/linking social capital, while rural initiatives demonstrate stronger community ownership, cultural continuity, and bonding social capital. Across both contexts, meaningful participation through co-creation and shared decision-making generated stronger multidimensional empowerment than mere consultation or attendance. Institutional collaboration, participatory governance, and diversified funding support sustainability, while tokenism and power asymmetries remain key challenges. The study concludes that empowerment depends more on participation quality, ownership, and institutional support than geographical location, offering a multidimensional evaluative model for policymakers and practitioners.

Keywords: Participatory Arts, Community Empowerment, Urban Communities, Rural Communities, Cultural Democracy, Social Capital, Indonesia



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INTRODUCTION

Participatory arts have gained increasing recognition as an interdisciplinary approach to community development that extends the role of artistic practice beyond aesthetic production toward social transformation, civic engagement, and community empowerment. Unlike conventional artistic activities that position individuals primarily as audiences or consumers,

participatory arts actively engage community members as collaborators, co-creators, performers, facilitators, decision-makers, and custodians of cultural narratives. Contemporary scholarship consistently emphasizes that the defining characteristic of participatory arts lies in the collaborative process through which participants contribute to the conception, production, interpretation, and governance of artistic activities rather than merely attending cultural events. Consequently, participatory arts have evolved into an important mechanism for strengthening social inclusion, enhancing community agency, and promoting sustainable development across diverse social, cultural, and geographical contexts. This perspective aligns with recent international research that conceptualizes participatory arts as a co-creative process characterized by shared decision-making, participant agency, ethical collaboration, and measurable social outcomes rather than passive cultural consumption (Matamala & Vilageliú, 2022). Such an understanding positions participatory arts as a strategic instrument for community development because artistic creation becomes inseparable from processes of empowerment, collective learning, and social innovation.

Beyond its artistic dimension, participatory arts have increasingly been examined through the lens of community empowerment, recognizing that artistic participation can generate meaningful improvements in individual capabilities, social relationships, and collective action. Empirical evidence from multiple international contexts demonstrates that participatory arts contribute to enhanced self-confidence, self-efficacy, social connectedness, cultural identity, leadership, and community resilience. Studies involving older adults, intergenerational communities, marginalized populations, and culturally diverse groups indicate that collaborative artistic activities promote psychological well-being while simultaneously strengthening community cohesion and opportunities for civic participation (Ho et al., 2021; Pesata et al., 2022). Moreover, participatory arts have been associated with broader community outcomes, including strengthened social capital, improved community dialogue, greater public participation, and enhanced organizational capacity. Nevertheless, previous studies also acknowledge that empowerment generated through participatory arts is inherently multidimensional and context-dependent. Rather than representing a single measurable outcome, empowerment encompasses interrelated individual, relational, organizational, and community dimensions that require theoretically informed and culturally sensitive evaluation frameworks. Recent reviews therefore recommend the development of multidimensional indicators capable of capturing both the processes and outcomes of participatory artistic engagement while remaining responsive to local social and cultural conditions.

The importance of contextual conditions has become increasingly evident in discussions concerning participatory arts and community development. Urban and rural communities differ substantially in their demographic composition, institutional infrastructure, cultural resources, governance arrangements, and opportunities for public participation, all of which shape the implementation and outcomes of participatory arts initiatives. Urban environments generally provide greater access to cultural institutions, professional artists, funding opportunities, digital infrastructure, and cross-sector partnerships that facilitate creative collaboration and public visibility. In contrast, rural communities frequently rely on place-based cultural traditions, intergenerational knowledge transfer, local governance structures, and strong social cohesion as the primary foundations for participatory cultural activities. Comparative studies further suggest that urban programs often emphasize inclusion, diversity, and network building, whereas rural

initiatives commonly prioritize cultural continuity, community ownership, and the preservation of local identity. Despite these contextual differences, successful participatory arts initiatives in both settings consistently depend on meaningful community engagement, culturally relevant program design, and locally appropriate evaluation criteria. Consequently, scholars increasingly argue that empowerment cannot be understood solely through universal indicators but must instead be interpreted within the specific socio-cultural, institutional, and geographical contexts in which participatory arts are practiced. This perspective provides a strong rationale for undertaking a comparative review of participatory arts in urban and rural Indonesia, where cultural diversity and uneven development create distinctive opportunities and challenges for community empowerment.

Despite the growing recognition of participatory arts as an effective approach to community development, important conceptual and methodological challenges remain unresolved. One of the most significant issues concerns the absence of a universally accepted definition of participatory arts and the continuing overlap between related concepts such as community arts, socially engaged art, co-creative practice, and participatory cultural activities. Although these concepts share an emphasis on public engagement, recent scholarship argues that participatory arts are distinguished by the degree of participant agency, shared decision-making, and collaborative production throughout the artistic process rather than by participation in cultural events alone (Matamala & Vilageliú, 2022). This distinction is particularly important because different conceptualizations inevitably influence how participation and empowerment are interpreted and evaluated. Furthermore, many empirical studies continue to measure participation primarily through attendance rates or participant satisfaction, providing limited insight into whether communities genuinely influence artistic decisions, exercise ownership, or sustain initiatives beyond externally funded projects. Consequently, there remains a need for more theoretically grounded frameworks capable of distinguishing symbolic participation from substantive community engagement while simultaneously capturing the multidimensional nature of empowerment.

To address these limitations, recent research increasingly advocates participatory and co-creative approaches that integrate artistic practice with community development, participatory action research, and collaborative governance. Across diverse international contexts, scholars have demonstrated that participatory arts are most effective when community members actively contribute to planning, implementation, evaluation, and long-term management rather than functioning solely as beneficiaries. Evidence from community-based cultural programs involving older adults, refugee communities, newcomer youth, and intergenerational groups indicates that meaningful participation can strengthen self-efficacy, resilience, social cohesion, leadership, and collective capacity while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity and social inclusion (Skyrme & Hogan, 2023). Nevertheless, these studies also acknowledge substantial variation in evaluation methods, empowerment indicators, and contextual conditions, making comparisons across programs difficult. Recent reviews therefore recommend the development of standardized yet context-sensitive evaluation frameworks that combine qualitative and quantitative evidence, integrate multiple dimensions of empowerment, and recognize that local cultural values, governance systems, and community priorities shape both participation processes and program outcomes. Such recommendations provide an important methodological foundation for

comparative secondary-data research because they support systematic synthesis while preserving sensitivity to cultural diversity and contextual complexity.

These methodological and conceptual issues are particularly relevant in Indonesia, where participatory arts are implemented across highly diverse urban and rural environments characterized by different cultural traditions, institutional capacities, and socio-economic conditions. Although numerous Indonesian initiatives demonstrate the potential of participatory arts to strengthen community identity, preserve cultural heritage, encourage civic participation, and support local development, the available evidence remains fragmented across individual case studies and disciplinary perspectives. Comparative investigations examining how urban and rural contexts influence participation processes, empowerment pathways, and program sustainability are still limited. Existing studies also employ inconsistent conceptualizations of empowerment and rarely integrate complementary theoretical perspectives such as Empowerment Theory, Social Capital Theory, Cultural Democracy, Creative Placemaking, and Community Resilience within a single analytical framework. As highlighted in recent international reviews, developing countries including those in Southeast Asia continue to face a shortage of comparative, theory-driven studies capable of producing contextually grounded yet internationally comparable evidence. Addressing these limitations requires a comprehensive comparative review that synthesizes empirical findings using standardized indicators while remaining responsive to Indonesia's diverse cultural landscapes and community development contexts. Such an approach not only advances scholarly understanding of participatory arts but also provides practical guidance for policymakers, cultural practitioners, and community organizations seeking to design more inclusive, sustainable, and empowering arts initiatives.

Despite the expanding body of literature on participatory arts, several important research gaps remain. First, existing studies are predominantly based on individual case studies conducted within specific cultural or institutional settings, making it difficult to identify broader patterns across different community contexts. Comparative investigations that systematically examine participatory arts in both urban and rural environments remain relatively scarce, particularly in developing countries where socio-cultural diversity and uneven development significantly influence community participation. Second, although numerous studies report positive outcomes such as increased confidence, social cohesion, cultural identity, and civic participation, the conceptualization and measurement of community empowerment remain highly inconsistent. Different studies employ diverse definitions, indicators, and evaluation methods, limiting the comparability of empirical findings and hindering the accumulation of robust evidence. Third, recent reviews emphasize the need for theoretically integrated and context-sensitive evaluation frameworks that combine qualitative and quantitative evidence while respecting local cultural values and governance structures (Petriello et al., 2024; Vojtek, 2021). Finally, the literature highlights a shortage of comparative studies from Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, where participatory arts operate within exceptionally diverse cultural, social, and institutional environments. Consequently, there remains a clear need for comparative secondary-data research capable of synthesizing existing evidence through standardized analytical indicators while remaining sensitive to contextual differences. Such an approach can contribute to stronger

theoretical development, improve methodological consistency, and provide evidence-based guidance for future community arts policies and practices.

In response to these gaps, the present study conducts a comparative review of participatory arts for community empowerment in urban and rural Indonesia using a structured secondary-data approach. The study aims to compare the characteristics, implementation processes, and empowerment outcomes of participatory arts initiatives across contrasting geographical contexts while integrating multiple theoretical perspectives, including Empowerment Theory, Social Capital Theory, Cultural Democracy, Creative Placemaking, and Community Resilience. Rather than treating community empowerment as a single outcome, the study adopts a multidimensional framework encompassing individual, social, cultural, civic, economic, organizational, spatial, and digital empowerment. It further examines how different levels of participation from contribution and co-creation to co-decision and community ownership influence empowerment outcomes and long-term program sustainability. The principal novelty of this research lies in its development of an integrated comparative framework that combines standardized empowerment indicators, structured cross-case analysis, and context-sensitive interpretation for Indonesian participatory arts programs. Guided by the comparative propositions developed from the literature, the study proposes that urban initiatives generally benefit from stronger institutional networks, digital infrastructure, and opportunities for bridging and linking social capital, whereas rural initiatives are more likely to strengthen bonding social capital, cultural continuity, place-based identity, and community ownership. Nevertheless, the study argues that sustainable community empowerment is influenced less by geographical location itself than by participation quality, institutional embedding, cultural authorship, and participatory continuity. Accordingly, the scope of this review is limited to participatory arts initiatives implemented in Indonesia and reported primarily between 2015 and 2025, with emphasis on programs demonstrating substantive community participation beyond attendance or consultation. By synthesizing evidence across urban and rural contexts, this study seeks to advance theoretical understanding of participatory arts while providing a practical analytical framework to support future research, policy formulation, and community-based cultural development initiatives.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a comparative qualitative literature review using a structured focused comparison to examine how participatory arts contribute to community empowerment in urban and rural Indonesia. The research design was selected because the existing body of literature is characterized by considerable diversity in research settings, methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives, artistic practices, and empowerment outcomes, making statistical meta-analysis inappropriate. Instead, the study adopts a theory-informed comparative review that enables systematic synthesis while preserving the contextual richness of individual case studies. Structured focused comparison provides a consistent analytical framework by examining each case through

the same set of predefined research questions, analytical variables, and evaluation criteria, thereby facilitating meaningful comparisons across diverse geographical and socio-cultural contexts.

The methodological approach is informed by recent developments in qualitative evidence synthesis that recommend combining scoping review principles with realist-informed analysis for complex community interventions. Scoping reviews are particularly appropriate when research fields are heterogeneous or conceptually evolving because they enable comprehensive mapping of available evidence, identification of conceptual boundaries, and recognition of knowledge gaps before undertaking comparative interpretation (Garry et al., 2020; Mansfield et al., 2024). Complementing this approach, realist-informed synthesis emphasizes understanding the relationships between context, mechanisms, and outcomes, allowing researchers to explain not only whether participatory arts contribute to community empowerment but also how, why, and under which circumstances empowerment occurs across different community settings (Gale et al., 2024). The integration of these approaches strengthens the explanatory capacity of the review while maintaining sensitivity to contextual variation, an essential consideration when comparing participatory arts initiatives implemented within Indonesia's culturally diverse urban and rural environments.

Research Paradigm

The study is situated within an interpretivist research paradigm that views community empowerment as a socially constructed and context-dependent process rather than a universally measurable outcome. From this perspective, empowerment emerges through interactions among community members, cultural practices, institutional structures, and local governance arrangements. Consequently, the interpretation of empowerment requires careful consideration of social, cultural, historical, and political contexts rather than reliance on standardized quantitative indicators alone.

Consistent with this paradigm, the review recognizes participatory arts as a collaborative process in which communities actively shape artistic production, cultural representation, and collective decision-making. Accordingly, the analytical framework draws upon multiple complementary theories including Empowerment Theory, Social Capital Theory, Cultural Democracy, Creative Placemaking, and Community Resilience to interpret how participatory arts influence individual agency, collective action, cultural identity, and institutional relationships. Rather than privileging a single theoretical perspective, the study adopts an integrative framework that accommodates the multidimensional nature of empowerment and acknowledges that different mechanisms may operate across urban and rural settings.

The review follows a multi-method qualitative synthesis designed to integrate evidence from diverse research traditions. Previous methodological studies recommend narrative synthesis and thematic analysis when primary studies differ substantially in design, participant characteristics, intervention types, and outcome measures, as these approaches preserve contextual detail while enabling cross-case interpretation (Chong et al., 2022; Collins et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2023).

Accordingly, the present study combines narrative synthesis, thematic coding, and structured cross-case comparison to identify recurring patterns, contextual differences, and explanatory mechanisms across the selected literature.

To enhance methodological transparency, the review is further guided by the Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework, which is widely recommended for scoping and comparative qualitative reviews. Within this framework, the population comprises communities participating in arts-based initiatives, the concept refers to participatory arts as mechanisms of community empowerment, and the context encompasses urban and rural communities in Indonesia. The PCC framework provides explicit boundaries for literature identification, study selection, and evidence extraction while supporting systematic comparison across heterogeneous cases (McAneney et al., 2021). In addition, the review is informed by participatory research principles that recognize community knowledge, stakeholder engagement, and contextual interpretation as essential components of evidence synthesis. Although the study analyzes secondary data rather than conducting primary fieldwork, these principles guide the interpretation of findings by emphasizing community agency, co-creation, and cultural relevance when evaluating empowerment outcomes.

Literature Search Strategy

A systematic literature search was conducted to identify empirical and theoretical studies relevant to participatory arts and community empowerment. The search strategy was designed according to the Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework, which is widely recommended for scoping and comparative qualitative reviews because it enables transparent identification of heterogeneous evidence while maintaining clear conceptual boundaries (Wong et al., 2024; McAneney et al., 2021). Within this framework, the population consisted of communities participating in arts-based initiatives, the concept referred to participatory arts as a mechanism for community empowerment, and the context encompassed urban and rural communities in Indonesia. This framework ensured that studies were selected according to consistent conceptual criteria rather than disciplinary boundaries alone.

Electronic searches were undertaken in major international bibliographic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, Dimensions, and Crossref, together with Indonesian academic repositories where appropriate. To strengthen contextual understanding, additional evidence was collected from government publications, cultural policy reports, community development reports, and documentation produced by cultural organizations and non-governmental institutions. Reference lists of relevant publications were also examined to identify additional studies that satisfied the inclusion criteria.

The search combined controlled vocabulary and free-text keywords using Boolean operators. Representative search terms included participatory arts, community arts, socially engaged art, co-creation, community empowerment, community development, creative placemaking, social capital, urban community, rural community, and Indonesia. Because terminology varies across disciplines,

related concepts were deliberately included to maximize retrieval while subsequent screening ensured conceptual consistency with the study objectives.

The review focused primarily on literature published between 2015 and 2025, reflecting the rapid development of participatory arts research during the last decade. Earlier publications were retained when they provided foundational theoretical frameworks or methodological guidance relevant to empowerment, participatory research, or community development. This strategy balanced contemporary empirical evidence with established theoretical perspectives.

Eligibility Criteria

Explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before the screening process to enhance transparency and reproducibility. Studies were included if they:

1. examined participatory arts or closely related co-creative artistic practices;
2. involved identifiable community participation beyond passive audience attendance;
3. reported empirical evidence related to community empowerment, social participation, cultural development, or community capacity;
4. were conducted within Indonesian contexts or provided internationally relevant theoretical or methodological insights applicable to the Indonesian case;
5. contained sufficient methodological information to permit quality assessment; and
6. were published in peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books, conference proceedings, government reports, or other credible institutional publications.

Studies were excluded if they focused exclusively on professional artistic production without community participation, described cultural events solely from promotional perspectives, lacked empirical evidence, duplicated previously reported findings, or provided insufficient methodological detail for comparative analysis.

These criteria are consistent with recommendations from recent scoping and realist-informed review methodologies, which emphasize transparent study selection, explicit conceptual boundaries, and careful documentation of inclusion decisions when synthesizing heterogeneous evidence (Mansfield et al., 2023; Gale et al., 2024).

Data Sources

To capture the multidimensional nature of participatory arts, the review incorporated multiple categories of secondary evidence. Academic literature included qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies examining participatory arts, community development, cultural participation, and empowerment. Complementary evidence was obtained from national cultural statistics, government reports, community program evaluations, policy documents, and reports published by non-governmental organizations and cultural institutions.

The inclusion of diverse evidence sources reflects recommendations from comparative qualitative review methodologies, which argue that complex community interventions cannot be adequately understood through peer-reviewed studies alone. Government publications and institutional reports often provide contextual information regarding policy environments, demographic characteristics, funding mechanisms, and implementation processes that are absent from conventional academic publications. Integrating these complementary sources therefore improves contextual interpretation while supporting triangulation across different forms of evidence.

Study Selection Process

Study selection was conducted through a sequential screening procedure. Initially, duplicate records were removed and publication titles were screened for relevance. Abstracts were subsequently reviewed to assess conceptual alignment with participatory arts and community empowerment. Full-text articles meeting the preliminary screening criteria were then examined against the predefined eligibility criteria.

Throughout the screening process, particular attention was given to the nature of community participation. Studies describing audience attendance or passive cultural consumption were excluded unless they demonstrated meaningful community involvement in planning, artistic creation, governance, or long-term program management. This distinction reflects current conceptual developments in participatory arts, which emphasize participant agency, co-creation, and shared decision-making rather than simple participation in cultural events (Matamala & Vilageliú, 2022).

Following full-text assessment, eligible studies were organized according to urban or rural context, artistic form, participant characteristics, participation level, empowerment dimensions, theoretical orientation, and methodological design. This standardized classification enabled systematic cross-case comparison while preserving contextual diversity across individual studies. In accordance with recommendations for comparative qualitative synthesis, all screening decisions were documented to ensure transparency and facilitate replication of the review process (Mthembu et al., 2023).

Data Extraction

Data extraction was undertaken using a standardized evidence matrix to ensure consistency across all included studies. The extraction framework was developed from the study objectives, the integrated theoretical framework, and recommendations for comparative qualitative evidence synthesis. Standardizing the extraction process enabled systematic comparison while preserving the contextual characteristics of individual cases.

For each study, information was recorded on bibliographic details, geographical location, urban or rural classification, community type, artistic form, participant characteristics, program duration,

implementing organization, funding source, and level of participation. In addition, data were extracted on empowerment outcomes, including individual, social, cultural, civic, economic, organizational, spatial, and digital dimensions. Information concerning leadership, institutional partnerships, community ownership, program sustainability, implementation challenges, and reported limitations was also documented. Each study was further classified according to its theoretical orientation, research design, data collection methods, and analytical procedures.

Consistent with recommendations for comparative qualitative reviews, the extraction process emphasized both descriptive information and explanatory mechanisms. Rather than merely cataloguing program characteristics, the evidence matrix captured how contextual conditions, participation quality, institutional support, and cultural practices influenced empowerment outcomes. This approach facilitated structured cross-case comparison while maintaining sensitivity to differences between urban and rural communities. Furthermore, the standardized coding framework enhanced transparency and reproducibility by ensuring that equivalent variables were examined across all cases.

Quality Appraisal

Methodological quality was assessed using a context-sensitive appraisal framework appropriate for heterogeneous qualitative and mixed-method evidence. Because the review included multiple study designs rather than randomized controlled trials, appraisal focused on methodological rigor, transparency, credibility, and relevance instead of statistical effect sizes alone. This approach is consistent with guidance for scoping, umbrella, and realist-informed reviews, which recommend evaluating methodological quality while acknowledging the diversity of evidence sources (Mthembu et al., 2023; McAneney et al., 2021).

Qualitative studies were evaluated using principles derived from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP), including clarity of research aims, appropriateness of methodology, transparency of data collection, analytical rigor, ethical considerations, and coherence between evidence and conclusions. Mixed-method and community-based participatory studies were additionally assessed according to the quality of community engagement, co-creation processes, stakeholder participation, and reflexivity. Particular attention was given to whether communities actively contributed to program planning, implementation, interpretation, and evaluation, since participatory integrity constitutes an essential indicator of quality in community arts research (Ozer et al., 2020a).

The appraisal also examined whether empowerment indicators were theoretically grounded and contextually appropriate. Recent methodological literature emphasizes that empowerment should not be evaluated solely through standardized universal measures but through indicators that reflect local cultural values, governance arrangements, and community priorities (Petriello et al., 2024; Vojtek, 2021). Consequently, studies demonstrating culturally relevant conceptualizations of empowerment and transparent methodological reporting were considered more robust for comparative interpretation. Potential sources of bias, including publication bias, selective

reporting, insufficient contextual information, and overlap among secondary reviews, were documented where identified to enhance transparency and strengthen interpretation of the synthesized evidence.

Data Analysis

The extracted evidence was analyzed through an integrated qualitative synthesis combining narrative synthesis, thematic analysis, and structured cross-case comparison. Narrative synthesis provided an overarching description of participatory arts initiatives across the selected literature, enabling the identification of similarities and differences among programs despite substantial variation in research design, participant characteristics, artistic forms, and outcome measures. This approach is widely recommended when evidence is too heterogeneous for statistical meta-analysis because it preserves contextual complexity while supporting meaningful interpretation across multiple studies (Brinck et al., 2023).

Subsequently, thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring concepts related to participation, empowerment, social capital, cultural democracy, creative placemaking, resilience, and sustainability. Themes were developed through iterative coding and constant comparison across studies, allowing emerging patterns to be interpreted in relation to the integrated theoretical framework. Finally, structured focused comparison was applied to examine how equivalent analytical variables operated across urban and rural contexts. This comparative procedure facilitated the identification of convergent findings, contextual differences, explanatory mechanisms, and transferable lessons while avoiding simplistic generalizations.

Interpretation of the findings was guided by the five comparative propositions developed in the Introduction. Rather than testing statistical hypotheses, the analysis assessed the extent to which empirical evidence supported, contradicted, or refined these propositions. In doing so, the review emphasized explanation over prediction, consistent with realist-informed qualitative synthesis that seeks to understand how context, mechanisms, and outcomes interact in complex community interventions (Gale et al., 2024).

Trustworthiness and Methodological Limitations

Several strategies were adopted to enhance the trustworthiness of the review. Methodological transparency was strengthened through explicit eligibility criteria, systematic search procedures, standardized data extraction, and documented quality appraisal. The integration of multiple evidence sources including peer-reviewed literature, government publications, institutional reports, and community documentation enabled triangulation of findings and reduced reliance on any single source of evidence. The use of an integrated theoretical framework further enhanced interpretive credibility by allowing findings to be examined from complementary perspectives rather than through a single conceptual lens.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the review depends on the availability and quality of published secondary data, which may underrepresent unsuccessful or undocumented participatory arts initiatives. Second, differences in terminology, research design, and empowerment measurement across studies may influence comparability despite the use of standardized analytical indicators. Third, the review does not establish causal relationships between participatory arts and community empowerment because it synthesizes existing evidence rather than generating primary empirical data. Finally, although the comparative framework is designed to maximize transferability, interpretations remain sensitive to the specific socio-cultural, institutional, and historical contexts in which individual programs were implemented.

Despite these limitations, the methodological approach provides a rigorous and transparent framework for synthesizing heterogeneous evidence on participatory arts and community empowerment. By combining systematic literature review procedures with theory-informed qualitative synthesis and structured cross-case comparison, the study offers a robust foundation for examining how participatory arts contribute to community empowerment across urban and rural Indonesia while generating findings that are both contextually grounded and analytically transferable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Participatory Arts Programs in Indonesia

The reviewed literature demonstrates that participatory arts in Indonesia encompass a diverse range of community-based initiatives that position local residents as active collaborators rather than passive audiences. Across urban and rural settings, participatory arts are consistently implemented through co-design, co-creation, and community-led cultural activities that integrate artistic production with broader community development objectives. Rather than emphasizing artistic outputs alone, these initiatives seek to strengthen local capacities, encourage collective decision-making, preserve cultural heritage, and support sustainable socio-economic development. Studies employing Participatory Action Research (PAR), Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), and related collaborative approaches reveal that participatory arts frequently function as mechanisms for dialogue, shared problem-solving, and community empowerment, particularly within tourism villages, cultural communities, creative industries, and local heritage initiatives (Nadhira & Basuni, 2021; Simanjuntak et al., 2023; Soedarwo et al., 2022). Similar patterns are evident in community filmmaking initiatives in Banyumas, where collaborative film production enables residents to document local wisdom, critically reflect on social issues, and strengthen collective identity through creative expression (Sumbogo & Mutmainnah, 2022). Collectively, these findings indicate that participatory arts in Indonesia are increasingly understood as community development processes that integrate artistic creativity with social participation, cultural preservation, and local governance rather than as isolated cultural events.

The literature further reveals considerable diversity in the community groups participating in these initiatives. Youth consistently emerge as one of the most actively engaged participant groups,

particularly in projects involving filmmaking, digital media, creative entrepreneurship, and participatory communication. Many programs intentionally position young people as co-designers, facilitators, and future community leaders while simultaneously strengthening technical skills, critical thinking, and civic participation. Women also represent a major participant group, especially in initiatives involving traditional performing arts, community crafts, and cultural entrepreneurship, where participatory approaches contribute to leadership development, economic opportunities, and social inclusion. Beyond youth and women, participatory arts frequently involve artisans, cultural practitioners, indigenous communities, village organizations, local entrepreneurs, educators, and marginalized populations as co-producers of artistic activities. Community leaders, civil society organizations, universities, and local governments commonly collaborate to facilitate participatory planning, strengthen local governance, and mobilize community resources. This broad participant composition demonstrates that Indonesian participatory arts extend beyond individual artistic practice by fostering collaborative networks that connect diverse social actors within shared community development processes (Kamil et al., 2021; Kristyanto et al., 2023; Syukri, 2024; Wati et al., 2021).

Analysis of the reviewed studies also indicates substantial variation in artistic forms used to facilitate community empowerment. Visual and performing arts dominate the literature, including community filmmaking, theatre, traditional dance, karawitan (Gamelan performance), photography, photovoice, storytelling, exhibitions, murals, and community festivals. These artistic forms are frequently selected because they encourage collective creativity, dialogue, and cultural representation while remaining accessible to participants with diverse educational and social backgrounds. Heritage-based tourism initiatives additionally integrate participatory design with local crafts such as batik, weaving, and traditional performances to reinforce place identity and strengthen community cohesion. Several studies further demonstrate the growing application of arts-based approaches within health, education, and social inclusion programs, where storytelling, drama, photovoice, and intergenerational creative activities are employed to improve resilience, social connectedness, and psychological well-being (Ho et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023). Collectively, these findings suggest that the effectiveness of participatory arts is associated less with a particular artistic medium than with the extent to which creative activities facilitate collaboration, reflection, and shared ownership throughout the artistic process.

A consistent finding across the reviewed literature concerns the collaborative organizational structures supporting participatory arts initiatives. Most Indonesian programs operate through multi-stakeholder partnerships involving local governments, universities, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, artist collectives, and local residents. Funding mechanisms are similarly diversified, combining public funding, university outreach programs, NGO support, donor assistance, community contributions, volunteer labor, and in-kind resources such as venues, equipment, and technical expertise. Rather than relying exclusively on external financial support, successful initiatives frequently embed artistic activities within existing community development programs, tourism strategies, cultural preservation initiatives, or village development plans. Sustainability is therefore closely associated with participatory governance, community ownership, local capacity building, and institutional collaboration rather than financial investment alone. Several studies emphasize that long-term continuity depends upon

strengthening local leadership, providing continuous training for youth and community members, documenting organizational knowledge, and establishing participatory evaluation mechanisms capable of monitoring multidimensional empowerment outcomes over time. These findings collectively demonstrate that participatory arts in Indonesia function as collaborative governance processes in which artistic practice, institutional partnership, and community participation are mutually reinforcing components of sustainable community empowerment.

Urban Participatory Arts in Indonesia

The reviewed literature indicates that participatory arts have become an increasingly important mechanism for community empowerment within Indonesian urban neighborhoods, particularly in kampung settlements, heritage districts, creative villages, and areas undergoing socio-spatial transformation. Across these contexts, participatory arts extend beyond cultural production to function as platforms for social inclusion, collaborative governance, and collective problem-solving. Rather than positioning residents as passive beneficiaries of cultural programs, successful urban initiatives actively involve community members in identifying local issues, designing artistic activities, producing creative outputs, and evaluating program outcomes. This participatory orientation enables residents to strengthen community identity, reinforce neighborhood cohesion, and cultivate a greater sense of ownership over local cultural resources and public spaces. Studies examining urban villages further demonstrate that co-created artistic activities contribute to stronger place attachment by enabling residents to reinterpret neighborhood histories, preserve local narratives, and collectively imagine future community development. Consequently, participatory arts operate not merely as cultural interventions but as community development processes that reinforce collective agency and strengthen relationships among residents, institutions, and local stakeholders (Putra et al., 2021; Wardani & Suarthana, 2021).

A prominent characteristic of successful urban participatory arts initiatives is the presence of strong institutional partnerships that facilitate collaborative planning, resource mobilization, and long-term implementation. The reviewed studies consistently identify local governments, universities, cultural institutions, museums, artist collectives, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations as principal partners in the design and delivery of participatory arts programs. These partnerships contribute financial resources, technical expertise, training opportunities, exhibition spaces, and organizational support while simultaneously strengthening the legitimacy of community initiatives within broader urban development agendas. Participatory governance models based on co-production and shared decision-making are particularly important because they enable communities to negotiate program objectives, allocate responsibilities, and integrate artistic activities into existing cultural, educational, and tourism policies. Evidence from tourism-oriented urban initiatives further demonstrates that collaboration among municipal authorities, academic institutions, and local communities enhances organizational capacity and facilitates the continuation of programs beyond short-term project cycles. However, the literature also emphasizes that institutional collaboration is most effective when power-sharing mechanisms genuinely enable community members to influence strategic decisions rather than simply participating in implementation activities. Sustainable urban empowerment therefore depends not

only on the availability of institutional resources but also on the quality of participatory governance embedded within collaborative partnerships (Soedarwo et al., 2022).

Creative placemaking emerges as another dominant theme across the reviewed urban studies. Rather than treating public spaces as neutral physical environments, participatory arts initiatives employ murals, festivals, exhibitions, community performances, storytelling, and collaborative design activities to reconnect residents with local histories, collective memories, and neighborhood identities. Through these processes, public spaces become sites for dialogue, cultural expression, and community interaction, strengthening both symbolic and practical relationships between people and place. The reviewed literature suggests that creative placemaking enhances social cohesion by encouraging collaboration among residents from different social backgrounds while simultaneously supporting local economic activities through tourism, creative entrepreneurship, and cultural events. Importantly, successful placemaking initiatives emphasize locally grounded narratives and participatory decision-making, thereby ensuring that artistic representations reflect community values rather than externally imposed images of urban identity. These findings indicate that participatory arts contribute to urban regeneration not only by improving the visual quality of neighborhoods but also by strengthening social networks, reinforcing community identity, and expanding opportunities for collective action within urban environments (Wardani & Suarthana, 2021; Kristyanto et al., 2023).

Despite these positive outcomes, the reviewed literature also identifies several significant challenges affecting the sustainability and inclusiveness of urban participatory arts initiatives. One of the most frequently discussed concerns is token participation, in which community members are invited to contribute to activities without exercising meaningful influence over planning, resource allocation, or artistic decision-making. Such practices risk reducing participation to symbolic consultation rather than genuine co-creation and may weaken community ownership of project outcomes. Another recurring issue is eventization, whereby participatory arts are organized as short-term festivals or isolated cultural events without establishing long-term organizational structures, leadership development, or continuing community engagement. Although these events may generate temporary public visibility, their social impacts often diminish once external funding or institutional support ends. The literature further highlights the potential risk of gentrification, particularly when arts-led neighborhood regeneration increases the attractiveness of urban districts without adequately protecting existing residents from displacement or unequal distribution of economic benefits. Additional governance challenges include unequal power relations among institutional partners, insufficient evaluation of empowerment outcomes, fragmented funding arrangements, and limited mechanisms for documenting community learning over time. Collectively, these findings suggest that sustainable urban participatory arts require authentic community leadership, equitable governance, long-term institutional commitment, diversified funding strategies, and continuous participatory evaluation to ensure that artistic initiatives remain socially inclusive and genuinely empowering rather than becoming symbolic cultural interventions (Heard et al., 2023; Vedam et al., 2024; Mthembu et al., 2023; Ozer et al., 2020).

Rural Participatory Arts in Indonesia

The reviewed literature indicates that participatory arts in rural Indonesia are strongly embedded within local cultural traditions, community governance, and place-based development. Unlike many urban initiatives that frequently emerge in response to spatial regeneration or social inclusion agendas, rural participatory arts are commonly integrated into cultural preservation, tourism village development, traditional knowledge transmission, and local economic empowerment. Artistic activities are therefore closely connected to the social and cultural life of villages, where residents collectively participate in planning, implementing, and sustaining community initiatives. Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approaches are frequently employed to facilitate collaborative decision-making, enabling communities to identify local priorities, mobilize cultural resources, and develop creative strategies that respond to local development challenges. Studies of tourism villages, community craft production, and village-based cultural programs consistently demonstrate that participatory arts strengthen local governance by encouraging collective dialogue, enhancing community participation in planning processes, and fostering shared responsibility for community development (Rukayat et al., 2023). These findings suggest that participatory arts in rural Indonesia operate as mechanisms through which cultural practice, local governance, and community development become mutually reinforcing processes rather than separate domains of intervention.

A defining characteristic of rural participatory arts is the central role of community ownership and cultural continuity. Across the reviewed studies, artistic activities are frequently organized around locally embedded cultural practices, including traditional dance, karawitan, craft production, batik, weaving, ritual performances, storytelling, and community festivals. Rather than simply preserving artistic traditions as cultural heritage, these initiatives encourage communities to reinterpret and adapt local knowledge in response to contemporary social and economic conditions. Community members, cultural practitioners, elders, artisans, and local organizations commonly act as co-creators and custodians of cultural knowledge, ensuring that artistic activities remain closely aligned with local values and collective identity. This process strengthens community ownership by allowing residents to determine how cultural resources are represented, transmitted, and utilized for local development. Several tourism-village initiatives further illustrate that integrating participatory arts with heritage conservation and cultural entrepreneurship can simultaneously preserve local identity while creating new opportunities for community livelihoods and cultural tourism (Wardani & Suarthana, 2021; Kristyanto et al., 2023). Consequently, cultural continuity within rural participatory arts is not understood as maintaining static traditions but as sustaining living cultural practices through collaborative adaptation and community participation.

Intergenerational participation also emerges as a significant empowerment mechanism within rural participatory arts. Many initiatives intentionally involve elders, youth, women, artisans, community leaders, and local organizations in shared creative processes that facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge while strengthening social cohesion. Through collaborative performances, storytelling, traditional music, community exhibitions, and craft-based activities, younger generations acquire artistic skills, historical understanding, and cultural values directly from experienced practitioners. Simultaneously, older community members gain opportunities to transmit knowledge, reinforce cultural authority, and participate actively in community development. This reciprocal learning process strengthens bonding social capital by reinforcing

trust, shared identity, and mutual support across generations. Furthermore, participation in community-based artistic production often enhances leadership capacity among younger participants by encouraging responsibility, collaboration, and engagement in village governance. These findings indicate that intergenerational participation functions not only as a mechanism for safeguarding cultural heritage but also as an important pathway for strengthening long-term community resilience and organizational continuity.

The reviewed literature further demonstrates that empowerment outcomes in rural participatory arts extend beyond cultural preservation to encompass social, organizational, civic, and economic dimensions. Community participation in tourism development, cultural entrepreneurship, and creative industries enables local artisans, performers, and cultural workers to mobilize social networks, generate income, strengthen local organizations, and increase community participation in village decision-making. Nevertheless, the sustainability of these initiatives depends upon several interrelated factors. Successful rural programs consistently emphasize community ownership, participatory governance, leadership development, capacity building, and integration within broader village development strategies. Multi-stakeholder partnerships involving village governments, universities, community organizations, and non-governmental institutions frequently provide technical assistance, training, and financial support while allowing communities to retain control over cultural decision-making. At the same time, the literature identifies continuing challenges, including limited financial resources, dependence on external funding, youth migration, unequal access to professional expertise, and organizational capacity constraints. These findings suggest that sustainable rural participatory arts require long-term institutional commitment combined with strong local leadership, continuous community participation, and adaptive governance capable of responding to changing social and economic conditions. Overall, the evidence indicates that rural participatory arts generate durable community empowerment when artistic practice remains embedded within local cultural systems, supported by participatory governance, and sustained through collective ownership rather than external intervention alone.

Comparative Empowerment Outcomes

Comparative analysis of the reviewed literature demonstrates that participatory arts generate multidimensional empowerment in both urban and rural Indonesia, although the pathways through which empowerment is achieved differ according to community context, institutional arrangements, and patterns of participation. Across both settings, empowerment extends beyond improvements in artistic skills to encompass individual confidence, social cohesion, cultural identity, civic participation, organizational capacity, and local economic development. Nevertheless, the comparative evidence suggests that geographical location alone does not determine empowerment outcomes. Rather, differences emerge primarily from variations in participation quality, governance structures, institutional support, and community ownership. This finding is consistent with recent methodological and theoretical literature emphasizing that empowerment should be understood as a context-dependent process shaped by interactions among social, cultural, institutional, and political factors rather than by geographical characteristics alone (Vojtek, 2021; Petriello et al., 2024).

The reviewed urban studies indicate that participatory arts most frequently strengthen bridging and linking social capital by connecting residents with local governments, universities, cultural institutions, artist collectives, and civil society organizations. Such partnerships provide access to financial resources, professional expertise, technical training, and policy networks that enhance organizational capacity and facilitate community participation in urban governance. Urban participatory arts also contribute to the development of inclusive public spaces through creative placemaking, collaborative cultural production, and neighborhood-based initiatives that encourage interaction among socially diverse groups. Consequently, empowerment within urban contexts is commonly associated with expanded institutional networks, increased civic engagement, and greater opportunities for cross-sector collaboration. However, these benefits remain highly dependent upon genuine power-sharing, as superficial participation may limit community influence over artistic production and reduce long-term program sustainability (Ho et al., 2021; Soedarwo et al., 2022; Kristyanto et al., 2023).

In contrast, rural participatory arts demonstrate particularly strong contributions to bonding social capital, community ownership, and cultural continuity. Programs implemented within villages, indigenous communities, and tourism-based cultural initiatives consistently emphasize intergenerational learning, collective decision-making, preservation of local traditions, and the maintenance of place-based identity. These characteristics enable rural communities to reinforce trust, solidarity, and shared cultural responsibility while simultaneously strengthening organizational resilience and local leadership. Rather than relying primarily on institutional diversity, rural empowerment frequently emerges from the ability of communities to mobilize existing social relationships, cultural knowledge, and collective action in support of locally defined development goals. The reviewed studies therefore suggest that community ownership functions as one of the strongest predictors of long-term sustainability because residents remain directly responsible for maintaining artistic activities after external interventions conclude (Wardani & Suarathana, 2021; Simanjuntak et al., 2023).

Across both contexts, the depth of community participation consistently emerges as a critical determinant of empowerment outcomes. Programs characterized by contribution, co-creation, shared decision-making, and community ownership report stronger improvements in leadership, self-efficacy, cultural identity, organizational capacity, and collective agency than initiatives limited to consultation or audience participation. These findings reinforce contemporary understandings of participatory arts as collaborative processes rather than event-based cultural activities. They also support the proposition that meaningful participation generates empowerment by enabling communities to influence program objectives, artistic content, governance arrangements, and long-term implementation. Conversely, initiatives characterized by token participation, externally determined priorities, or short-term event-based programming frequently report weaker organizational continuity and reduced community ownership. Accordingly, participatory quality appears to be more influential than artistic form alone in determining whether participatory arts contribute to sustainable community development (Matamala & Vilageliú, 2022; Ho et al., 2021).

Taken together, the comparative evidence supports a multidimensional interpretation of community empowerment in which individual, social, cultural, civic, organizational, economic, spatial, and digital outcomes are mutually reinforcing rather than independent dimensions. Urban

and rural participatory arts therefore should not be viewed as competing development models but as complementary approaches responding to different contextual conditions and community priorities. Urban initiatives demonstrate comparative strengths in institutional collaboration, resource mobilization, and public engagement, whereas rural initiatives excel in cultural continuity, community ownership, and intergenerational participation. Across both settings, however, sustainable empowerment depends upon authentic participation, collaborative governance, diversified institutional support, continuous capacity building, and culturally grounded evaluation frameworks capable of capturing the complexity of community transformation over time. These findings collectively provide empirical support for the integrated analytical framework proposed in this study and establish a foundation for the discussion of theoretical implications presented in the following chapter.

The findings of this comparative review demonstrate that participatory arts constitute a multidimensional mechanism for community empowerment in both urban and rural Indonesia. Rather than functioning solely as artistic or cultural activities, participatory arts operate as collaborative social processes through which communities strengthen agency, collective identity, organizational capacity, and civic participation. Consistent with Empowerment Theory, the reviewed studies indicate that empowerment extends beyond improvements in individual artistic competence to include relational and collective dimensions that enable communities to influence local development, preserve cultural identity, and participate in decision-making. However, the review also reveals that empowerment is neither automatic nor uniformly distributed across contexts. Instead, empowerment outcomes are shaped by the interaction between participation quality, institutional arrangements, cultural ownership, and local governance structures. This finding supports theoretical perspectives emphasizing that empowerment emerges most effectively through co-creation, shared decision-making, and community control rather than through externally designed interventions or symbolic participation (Ozer et al., 2020b; Wendt et al., 2023). Consequently, the comparative differences identified between urban and rural participatory arts should not be interpreted simply as geographical variations but as reflections of distinct social, institutional, and cultural ecosystems within which participatory practices evolve.

The comparative findings further reinforce the explanatory value of Social Capital Theory in understanding how participatory arts generate different empowerment pathways across urban and rural communities. Urban participatory arts are characterized by extensive institutional networks involving local governments, universities, cultural organizations, creative industries, and civil society groups. These diverse partnerships facilitate the development of bridging and linking social capital by connecting community members with external knowledge, funding opportunities, technical expertise, and decision-making institutions. Such networks expand opportunities for civic participation and organizational development while strengthening community capacity to influence urban governance. Nevertheless, the literature simultaneously warns that unequal access to institutional resources may produce power imbalances, token participation, or arts-led redevelopment that benefits external stakeholders more than local residents if governance mechanisms fail to distribute decision-making authority equitably (Heard et al., 2023; Vedam et al., 2024). In contrast, rural participatory arts derive much of their strength from bonding social capital embedded within longstanding kinship relationships, shared cultural practices, and place-based

identities. These social networks reinforce trust, reciprocity, and collective responsibility, thereby supporting community ownership and the continuity of cultural traditions. While such locally embedded relationships provide a strong foundation for sustainable community participation, rural communities may experience greater difficulty accessing broader institutional networks, financial resources, and technical expertise necessary to expand or replicate successful initiatives. Accordingly, the review suggests that balanced development of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital is essential for achieving sustainable empowerment across both urban and rural contexts (Soedarwo et al., 2022; Simanjuntak et al., 2023; Kristyanto et al., 2023).

The findings also provide strong support for Cultural Democracy and Creative Placemaking as complementary theoretical perspectives for interpreting participatory arts. Cultural Democracy emphasizes that empowerment is strengthened when communities possess genuine authority to define cultural meanings, represent local identities, and participate directly in cultural governance. Across the reviewed studies, programs demonstrating high levels of community ownership consistently reported stronger outcomes in cultural continuity, organizational sustainability, and local leadership than initiatives dominated by external institutions or professional artists. This observation reinforces the argument that cultural participation should be understood not merely as access to artistic activities but as the right of communities to determine how their cultural resources are created, interpreted, and sustained. Similarly, Creative Placemaking explains how collaborative artistic production transforms public spaces into environments that foster social interaction, collective memory, and community identity. In urban settings, participatory murals, festivals, performances, and public art projects contributed to neighborhood cohesion and strengthened residents' attachment to place when artistic decisions remained locally grounded. In rural settings, arts-based tourism, traditional performances, and heritage initiatives reinforced local identity by connecting contemporary community development with indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, both theoretical perspectives caution that artistic interventions may lose their empowering potential when participation becomes symbolic, cultural narratives are externally controlled, or placemaking initiatives prioritize economic branding over community well-being. The literature therefore consistently emphasizes that meaningful participation, equitable governance, and respect for local cultural values are fundamental conditions for sustainable empowerment through participatory arts (Wardani & Suarthana, 2021; Kristyanto et al., 2023; Heard et al., 2023; Vedam et al., 2024).

Finally, the review demonstrates that Community Resilience Theory provides an integrative explanation for the long-term significance of participatory arts in community development. Across both urban and rural contexts, participatory arts contribute to resilience by strengthening social learning, collective problem-solving, adaptive capacity, and community identity. Artistic participation enables communities to mobilize local knowledge, strengthen intergenerational relationships, diversify livelihood opportunities, and develop collaborative responses to social and economic change. However, resilience does not emerge solely from repeated artistic activities. Instead, the evidence indicates that resilient community arts programs require continuous institutional support, diversified funding, adaptive governance, and mechanisms that enable communities to maintain ownership of both cultural processes and development outcomes. These findings highlight that resilience should be understood as an evolving social capacity generated

through sustained collaboration among communities, institutions, and cultural actors rather than as a fixed outcome of individual arts projects.

The interaction between institutional support, community ownership, and participation quality emerged as one of the most significant findings of this review. Rather than operating independently, these three components function as mutually reinforcing conditions that determine whether participatory arts generate temporary engagement or long-term community empowerment. Institutional support provides essential resources, technical expertise, organizational legitimacy, and opportunities for collaboration through partnerships involving local governments, universities, cultural institutions, schools, and civil society organizations. Such support enables communities to access funding, training, public spaces, and policy networks that would otherwise remain unavailable. However, the findings also indicate that institutional involvement does not automatically produce empowerment. When institutions dominate decision-making, prioritize externally defined objectives, or reduce community participation to consultation, empowerment becomes largely symbolic and program sustainability declines. Conversely, initiatives characterized by genuine community ownership, shared governance, and culturally responsive decision-making consistently demonstrate stronger organizational continuity, leadership development, and community resilience. These findings support participatory governance and Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) principles, which argue that long-term community development depends on equitable power-sharing and collaborative decision-making rather than institutional control alone (Habib et al., 2023; Kristiyono et al., 2022; Soedarwo et al., 2022). Participation quality therefore mediates the relationship between institutional support and empowerment by determining whether communities exercise meaningful influence over planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuation of participatory arts initiatives (Ho et al., 2021; Ozer et al., 2020).

These findings have important implications for cultural policy and community development in Indonesia. First, participatory arts should be recognized as an integral component of urban and rural development rather than as isolated cultural events or short-term creative projects. National and local governments should embed participatory arts within long-term cultural, educational, tourism, and community development strategies while establishing diversified funding mechanisms that combine public investment, community contributions, philanthropic support, and private-sector partnerships. Second, policy frameworks should institutionalize participatory governance by ensuring that local communities possess meaningful authority throughout program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Such governance arrangements reduce the risk of token participation while strengthening accountability and local ownership. Third, cross-sector collaboration among universities, cultural organizations, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and community groups should be encouraged to facilitate knowledge exchange, technical assistance, and organizational capacity building. Finally, cultural policies should incorporate context-sensitive evaluation frameworks using empowerment indicators that are co-developed with communities and responsive to local cultural values rather than relying exclusively on standardized external measures. Such approaches are expected to strengthen both the legitimacy and long-term effectiveness of participatory arts as instruments of community development (Pesata et al., 2022; Vojtek, 2021; McAneney et al., 2021). Furthermore, urban

cultural policies should include safeguards against token participation, cultural commodification, and gentrification by promoting transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms, inclusive governance, and protection of community cultural rights. At the same time, rural policies should prioritize leadership succession, youth engagement, heritage preservation, and institutional support that reinforces local autonomy without diminishing community ownership (Heard et al., 2023; Vedam et al., 2024; Wardani & Suarthana, 2021).

The review also identifies several priorities for future research. Comparative studies should expand beyond single-case analyses to examine participatory arts across diverse geographical, cultural, and institutional settings using theory-driven and mixed-method research designs. Greater methodological consistency is needed through the development of standardized core outcome measures that remain sufficiently flexible to capture locally specific expressions of empowerment, cultural identity, and social change. Future investigations should also extend the application of participatory design and CBPR approaches within Southeast Asia and other non-Western contexts to improve understanding of how cultural values, governance systems, and power relations shape empowerment processes. In addition, interdisciplinary research linking participatory arts with public health, education, environmental resilience, and local economic development would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which artistic participation influences community well-being. Longitudinal studies are particularly important for evaluating the durability of empowerment outcomes, organizational resilience, and leadership succession after external funding concludes. Finally, future scholarship should pay greater attention to policy translation, documenting how evidence generated through participatory arts can inform institutional reform, cultural governance, and equitable community development while critically examining unintended consequences such as cultural commodification, displacement, and unequal access to creative resources (Matamala & Vilageliú, 2022; Petriello et al., 2024).

Overall, this study advances current scholarship by demonstrating that participatory arts should be understood as a multidimensional process of community development rather than solely as a cultural or artistic intervention. By integrating Empowerment Theory, Social Capital Theory, Cultural Democracy, Creative Placemaking, and Community Resilience into a single comparative analytical framework, the study explains why participatory arts generate different empowerment trajectories across urban and rural Indonesia while identifying the common conditions that support sustainable outcomes. The evidence consistently indicates that durable empowerment depends not primarily on geographical location but on the interaction between authentic participation, community ownership, inclusive governance, institutional collaboration, and long-term capacity building. Consequently, participatory arts represent a strategic approach for strengthening community resilience, cultural sustainability, and democratic participation when implemented through equitable partnerships that respect local knowledge, cultural diversity, and community agency. These conclusions contribute both theoretically and practically by providing an integrated framework that can guide future comparative research, inform cultural policy, and support the design of more inclusive and sustainable community-based arts initiatives in Indonesia and comparable contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how participatory arts contribute to community empowerment in urban and rural Indonesia through a comparative review of secondary evidence. Drawing upon Empowerment Theory, Social Capital Theory, Cultural Democracy, Creative Placemaking, and Community Resilience, the study demonstrated that participatory arts extend beyond artistic production to function as collaborative processes that strengthen individual agency, collective identity, organizational capacity, civic participation, and sustainable community development. The comparative analysis confirmed that empowerment generated through participatory arts is multidimensional, encompassing individual, social, cultural, civic, economic, organizational, spatial, and digital domains. Across the reviewed literature, meaningful participation through co-creation, shared decision-making, and community ownership consistently produced stronger empowerment outcomes than programs characterized by consultation or passive participation.

The findings further revealed that urban and rural participatory arts follow different yet complementary pathways toward community empowerment. Urban initiatives generally benefit from broader institutional networks, stronger access to cultural infrastructure, diversified funding opportunities, and greater potential to develop bridging and linking social capital through collaboration with governments, universities, cultural organizations, and civil society. These characteristics facilitate innovation, cross-sector partnerships, and public engagement, but also expose urban programs to challenges such as token participation, eventization, unequal power relations, and arts-led gentrification. In contrast, rural participatory arts are more strongly embedded within place-based identity, local governance, cultural traditions, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Their principal strengths lie in reinforcing bonding social capital, preserving cultural heritage, strengthening community ownership, and supporting locally grounded development. However, rural initiatives frequently face limitations related to financial sustainability, institutional access, leadership succession, and youth migration.

A central contribution of this study is the demonstration that geographical location alone does not determine community empowerment. Instead, empowerment depends primarily on the interaction among participation quality, institutional support, community ownership, and inclusive governance. Programs that successfully integrate these elements are more likely to achieve durable outcomes, strengthen community resilience, and maintain long-term organizational continuity. Conversely, initiatives characterized by externally controlled decision-making, fragmented partnerships, or short-term event-based implementation are less likely to generate sustainable empowerment regardless of whether they are located in urban or rural settings. These findings reinforce the importance of understanding participatory arts as governance processes in which communities actively shape cultural production, development priorities, and collective action.

The study also makes several theoretical contributions. First, it develops an integrated analytical framework that combines five complementary theoretical perspectives to explain how participatory arts generate community empowerment across contrasting socio-cultural contexts. Second, it proposes a multidimensional model of empowerment that incorporates eight interrelated domains and provides a standardized framework for comparative analysis. Third, the

study introduces a structured evidence matrix that facilitates systematic comparison across heterogeneous participatory arts initiatives while preserving contextual sensitivity. Collectively, these contributions address limitations identified in previous research, particularly the lack of comparative studies, inconsistent empowerment indicators, and limited theoretical integration within the participatory arts literature.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that policymakers, cultural institutions, universities, and community organizations should recognize participatory arts as a strategic component of sustainable community development rather than as isolated cultural activities. Long-term policy support should prioritize participatory governance, equitable partnerships, diversified funding mechanisms, leadership development, and community ownership throughout program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Urban cultural policies should strengthen safeguards against token participation and displacement, while rural development strategies should reinforce cultural continuity, local leadership, and intergenerational participation. Context-sensitive evaluation frameworks that are co-developed with communities are also necessary to ensure that empowerment outcomes reflect local priorities and cultural values.

Finally, the study highlights several priorities for future research. Comparative investigations should expand across regions and cultural contexts using longitudinal and mixed-method designs to examine how empowerment evolves over time. Greater methodological consistency is needed through the development of context-sensitive core outcome measures that remain applicable across diverse settings while respecting local cultural diversity. Future studies should also explore the intersections of participatory arts with public health, education, environmental resilience, digital inclusion, and local economic development. Such research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the long-term mechanisms through which participatory arts strengthen community resilience and sustainable development. Overall, this study demonstrates that participatory arts represent an important pathway for fostering inclusive, culturally grounded, and sustainable community empowerment in Indonesia, offering valuable insights for both future scholarship and evidence-informed cultural policy.

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