JUPIIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu-ilmu Sosial, 16 (1) (2024): 101-108

DOI: 10.24114/jupiis.v16i1.56071

### JUPIIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu-ilmu Sosial

Available online http://jurnal.unimed.ac.id/2012/index.php/jupiis



# TRADITIONAL BATAK MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF WORSHIP: CASE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF MUSICIANS

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Accepted: June, 27th 2024 Published: June, 29th 2024

#### **Abstract**

When hearing traditional music presented as accompaniment to worship, the author has a desire to know how much church management has put into preparing the presentation of music to accompany worship, as well as the role of musicians in delivering the worship musically. The aims of this research are to find out 1) how the presentation of Batak cultural worship is managed using traditional music, 2) to find out the role of musicians as accompanists of worship. The type of research used in this research is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. This research was conducted at the HKBP Pardamean church. The selection of research samples was based on the researcher's initial observations, where the researcher saw the phenomenon of presenting traditional music performances in the context of worship with various church management that were different from each other. Then the researchers also saw the phenomenon of the role of musicians who present worship music in services at the HKBP Pardamean Church HKBP Pardamean holds a Cultural Service once a month as an effort to exist "Batak" in the context of presenting worship. At HKBP Pardamean, a presentation of worship is carried out by management. HKBP Pardamean holds a Cultural Service once a month as an effort to exist "Batak" in the context of presenting worship. Where nowadays it is almost eroded by the current of globalization. One of the symbols of culture that has begun to disappear from the Batak identity itself is traditional music.

Key words: batak music, worship, protestant.

**How to Cite:** Situmorang. V. M. T. L., Purba. M., Ginting. P. B.(2024). Traditional Batak Music In The Context Of Worship: Case Study Of Management And The Role Of Musicians. JUPIIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu-ilmu Sosial (101-108)

#### INTRODUCTION

Music is something that has a very important role in human life, where music is part of human civilization itself. In Christianity, music is an interrelated and inseparable component in worship. A worship service in Christianity cannot be carried out without musical accompaniment. Christianity is known as a religion that sings and there is even an expression that states "Christian congregations are congregations that sing". This statement is motivated by the fact that in Christian worship there is one main element, namely singing.

In Christian worship there is a main element that is very interesting, namely the presence of songs and instruments that are part present as of the procession/service in the church, in other words offerings through singing are part of church music which is one part of church worship. In its presentation, music is an internal part of church worship, because almost all church services use music. Where in its use music is presented in vocal and instrumental form. The meaning of music in the church's liturgy itself is that it is an offering of the congregation's faith. Thus, music is a component that is included and becomes the most important part in Christian worship processions, as well as for the life of Christian faith.

In other words, music and singing play a very important role in the growth of the faith and life of Christians as a congregation. So this is what makes music always accompany every Christian religious ritual, and is difficult to separate from the life of faith. Music and singing themselves are an important part of the service, where their value is the same as prayer in the service itself. Music is also considered part of the worship ceremony, because God is glorified through songs of praise from a clean heart filled with love and worship of Him. Apart from all that, music is also a major requirement in presenting worship in a church. Where all churches use music to accompany worship and help the congregation sing.

In Christian worship, music is used as a means to introduce the formation of emotions in praise and an atmosphere that is calm, joyful, peaceful, and even sad (appreciation). In that sense, music plays a role in providing value and sharpening the expression of the meaning of faith and feelings which are not enough if only expressed in words. So that worship activities do not only involve the sense of feeling, but also

enter into the spiritual.

Through music and praise, the spiritual space for appreciation and awareness of the greatness, power and love of God for Christians is enriched. However, the importance of music in the church does not necessarily mean that all church management pays attention to it at the same level. In this process, the researcher gained very valuable empirical experience, especially regarding the development of the presentation of accompanying worship music in services at the HKBP Pardamean church. In the author's observations regarding the presentation of accompanying music in worship, there was the use of traditional music in the presentation of worship. When hearing traditional music presented as accompaniment to worship, the author has a desire to know how much church management has put into preparing the presentation of music to accompany worship, as well as the role of musicians in delivering the worship musically.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The type of research used in this research is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. According to Nelson (1992) qualitative methods are as follows: "Qualitative research interdisciplinary, is an transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective, and to the interpretive understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political positions".

Qualitative research tends to be used to study the lives of groups of people. However, this does not mean that research in art cannot be carried out using quantitative methods, because research that uses qualitative methods also requires quantitative data. According to Moleong (2005:4), the qualitative descriptive approach is a research approach where the data collected is in the form of words, pictures and not numbers. This data can be obtained from interviews, field notes, photos, video tapes, personal documentation, notes, or memos and other documentation. This research will describe and understand events in society that are considered to be included in the position of a role in society or a community,

which in the research is limited to the role of musicians and performance management in the context of worship in the five Protestant churches that have been determined to be the sample in the research. This. This qualitative descriptive approach aims to study and clarify the existence of a phenomenon that occurs in society or groups. A phenomenon or reality in society that reveals that the qualitative descriptive method can be used as a procedure to solve the problem being researched. The problem being investigated is based on facts that exist and are visible in society.

This research was conducted at the HKBP Pardamean church. The selection of research samples was based on the researcher's initial observations, where the researcher saw the phenomenon of presenting traditional music performances in the context of worship with various church management that were different from each other. Then the researchers also saw the phenomenon of the role of musicians who present worship music in services at the HKBP Pardamean Church.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. Enculturation HKBP in Batak Society

The background of the HKBP, which originated from the German RMG mission, meant that the existing culture of the Batak tribe began to erode and seemed to be disappearing one by one. The mindset that assumes that religion is the most important part of living a system of life is the initial basis for reducing and even eliminating the culture that exists in the "Batak Christian" section. In fact, belief systems and culture are two different things, where religion is vertical and culture is horizontal through its social structure.

Before the introduction of the belief system in the Tapanuli area specifically, the Tapanuli people only had their identity as the Batak tribe. But as time went by, the Tapanuli area became increasingly known to the world and finally gave birth to missionary aspirations to preach the Gospel to the Batak people. The failures experienced by Samuel Munson and Henry Lyman did not dampen evangelizing enthusiasm. Awareness of the condition of the Batak people who lived in darkness and believed in the idols of world power further increased the missionaries' determination. The development Christianity within the Batak tribe so that it was able to give birth to the HKBP should be a solid foundation that can make the HKBP much bigger than what it currently is. Two united elements, namely Christianity and Batak, are a very extraordinary element if they are truly empowered. HKBP with the title "Batak" currently does not really show its identity as "Batak". The church which is currently developing is actually quicker to follow the traditions and progress of the modern world without even examining further whether it is worth adopting or not. The fact that the church is flexible is increasingly visible in every aspect.

Some elements of culture have begun to be abandoned and some have disappeared from cultural civilization. Symbols and rituals, which are the outermost images of culture, no longer contain meaning in religion itself. On the one hand, the church believes that some cultural symbols are animistic. In fact, it is not difficult to harmonize these two things, namely church and culture, so that they can walk side by side without having to subjugate one part of these two identities. Deepening theology, which should be the duty and responsibility of religious leaders, must have a useful purpose for maintaining the culture itself.

One of the symbols of culture that has begun to disappear from the Batak identity itself is traditional music. Before the arrival of religion into the Batak nation, "Gondang Sabangunan" was an important part of tradition and culture. However, the presence of missionaries who did not really understand the value of cultural symbols gave them success in spreading other types of musical instruments such as keyboards and trumpets. Considering that traditional musical instruments have animist values and giving birth to the mindset that trumpets and keyboards are the most sacred musical instruments. Even though we know that the measure of a person's faith and beliefs cannot be judged from his attitude and way of life.

Increasingly, the title "Batak" within the HKBP as a whole seems to be just a name. Even today, in big cities there are HKBP churches that no longer use Batak language to worship. In fact, HKBP should be the party at the forefront in maintaining the values of Batak culture. The symbols currently in the HKBP do not rule out the possibility of combining religion and culture. The altar cover used every week may use ulos which is a symbol of the Batak people. The Christmas tree which is a

characteristic in commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ could use a christmast tree which also has many theological meanings. HKBP, who was born from Batak, must return to his Batak world. The church must not prioritize culture because the church basically comes from within culture. Symbols, traditions, and ways of acting both in thought and deed within the church and culture must be able to be harmonized without erasing parts of these two things. music, traditions, architecture and fashion systems must be re-developed from what is the basic identity of Batak culture. The HKBP empowerment year is the best way to empower all the resources within the HKBP, including those that have been lost and those that will exist in the future. At HKBP Pardamean, the Batak identity is brought back into worship by carrying out Batak Cultural worship which is held 1 (one) time in 1 (one) month. In its presentation, the HKBP church performed songs to accompany worship using traditional Batak instruments such as Gondang, Taganing, Sulim.

#### 2. Music in Protestant Church worship

The processes and dynamics that occur in the presentation of worship rituals illustrate the interaction between worship supporters, in this case supporters of Sunday worship in Protestant churches, including musicians, worship leaders, song leaders, choirs, dancers and the congregation through the media of music and singing. Where this is done to build a certain atmosphere that is expected to emerge in the worship procession. Every action of worship supporters tries to create a special impression and encourage the congregation to react in a special way. Thus, worship activities involve strong musical supported by other elements can give rise to certain emotional or mental experiences related to the needs and goals of worship which are considered to have a certain meaning and impression for the perpetrators. Observing these events, it would be interesting to understand the facts, processes and musical functions that are expected to achieve the goal of developing an atmosphere of worship. It is also important to see the complexity of musical methods, structures and systematization in building an atmosphere of worship through certain patterns and methods of worship supporters.

According to Roman Guy (2009), musical

strategy in the view of musicians is interpreted as the act of analyzing (interpreting) musical elements and techniques of a musician in presenting music or playing a musical instrument. This musical analysis is an important basis and consideration musicians to provide 'influence' or convey a musical 'message' to the congregation in musical presentations or performances. In accordance with the problems in this paper, the discussion of aspects of musical strategy is more directed at the relationship between the characteristics, patterns of musical elements and practices and the characteristics and behavior patterns of listeners or participants so that in this way it will be possible to identify factors that may be the reason for the behavior. euphoria (joy), laughter, sadness, emotion, and other forms of emotional indication. This can empirically be a reference to show the influence of musical practice on the inner situation of the congregation (participants) so that suggestive musical practice is able to generate movement in the congregation (participants) to represent or express emotions and inner moods through certain behavioral patterns.

Based on this idea, the systematization of music as a structure and way of arranging musical idioms and practices is an important concern to see effective strategies in building musical dramatizations that can create movement for the listener or congregation. Technical ability, musical intuition, teamwork and sensitivity to space and time of a musician or musical performer are important factors in effective musical strategy. This idea agrees with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as quoted by Turino (2008) as follows:

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (psychologist) has created theory of optimal experience or flow that helps explain how art and music aid individuals in reaching a fuller integration of the self (1988;1990). Flow refers to a state of heightened concentration, when one is so inten on the activity at hand that all other thoughts, concerns, and distractions disappear and the actor is fully in the present. The experience actually leads to afeeling of timelessness, or being out of normal time, and to feelings of transcending one's normal self. Perhaps the most important condition for flow is that the activity must include the proper balance between inherent challenges and the skill level of the actor. A second condition for activities to readily

produce flow states, then, is that they have a continually expanding ceiling for potential chalenges. The third key condition for achieving flow is that the activity must contain the potential for immediate feedback on how one is doing, which, again, keeps the maind focused on the activity at hand. As fourth condition for creating flow, activities should be clearly bounded by time and place so that participants can more fully concentrate on what they are doing and tune out 'the every day'. The final feature that enhances the potential for intense concentration and flow is clear, well established goals that are reachable within the bounded time and place and in relation to the skillchalange balance (Turino, 2008, pp. 4-5)

## 3. The Role of Musician in Protestant Church Worship

Musical aspects in the presentation of worship are elements of music and songs that, technically, aesthetically, and in their form of expression, can influence or support a certain atmosphere in the worship process. Therefore, the assessment or observation of this aspect is based on the competence of the musicians (musicians and singers), namely the ability and commitment of the musicians technically and aesthetically to provide support for the formation of the atmosphere and goals of the worship process. The consideration of liturgical aspects is based on two parts, namely structural and textual demands. Structurally, the liturgy itself will actually provide an illustration of the restrictions on the appropriate type of music, as well as the choice of chants, songs, and singers that are appropriate to the parts of the service.

The choice of song parts, the balance between the singing, and the style of the musical background are used as a basis for reflecting the importance of each part of the service. Meanwhile, the textual part is based more on the role of music in emphasising the meaning or expressing the content or ideas of verses contained in the Holy Bible and liturgical sources. Pastorally, or 'shepherding' (guiding) the congregation, implementation of music also takes into account the cultural and social aspects of the congregation. This aspect is considered to see the relevance of music and the congregation's expression and appreciation of its beliefs according to time and space in its cultural context. Musical, liturgical, and pastoral aspects are a unified form of evaluation. These three are starting points for providing an evaluation of the implementation of music in the context of worship. The process and steps will appear in the selection and placement procedures for music in worship.

The main task of a musician in a service is music and accompany the congregation's singing. The effectiveness of music can influence the atmosphere of worship, so the presentation of music by the players is expected to play a role in improving and helping the quality of singing for the congregation. In carrying out their duties, the musicians always pay attention and follow the song leader's directions through certain gestures and words. This signal is a sign to repeat or stop a song that is being sung. However, musicians have the freedom to improvise in presenting music within certain limits according to the structure and atmosphere of the worship service.

Music players must be sensitive in understanding the context and celebrating the right moment or time to present music so that it can support the atmosphere of worship. What is important is the way musicians use context as a consideration in their musical performances. Context is an active ingredient that is the effect of the performance. The things contained in the context are not only physical things but also ideological things that can be used as stimulants when playing on stage. For this reason, they carry out musical technical preparations to master the praise songs that will be used in the service together with the song leader, singer, and choir. This is intended to coordinate the cooperation of these elements in presenting effective music singing. The accompanist (instrumentalist) must have the technical ability to demonstrate their role (both keyboard accompaniment) in presenting music as a stimulus to create an atmosphere of worship. A musician must be confident and sensitive (smooth). This is because the musician's role is to smooth the movement from one moment to another. ' (moment or event) of worship to the next'moment' of worship. The players, in supporting or accompanying the leader's singing (congregation or praise), must have sensitivity to the song, the liturgical moment, and the situation of the congregation. This is a clear sign when the congregation lifts the praise and

steps to be sung, especially the prelude to the congregational song.

Furthermore, when the song ends, the music can provide a good and clear signal so that the congregation can understand when they need to stop singing. There are three types of aspects to processing or cultivating the technical musical elements of praise and worship, namely: arrangement, theme, and song structure. Arrangement is a creative effort to arrange and enrich a melody, song, or composition into a new format and style. The medium can use a single instrument up to an orchestra. Making arrangements is often also influenced by the background and type of music that each player likes.

A player with a musical background will certainly bring his musical influence when he creates an arrangement. A theme is the main idea of a composition whose musical elements can later be developed. The song structure consists of: intro, verse, prechorus, chorus, vamp, bridge, interlude, coda, and ending. Intro (opening of the song): in this section, WL must determine the song's theme, chords, beat, and theme melody to give a strong musical impression. Verse (verse): in this section, all instruments are not played in full voice and use dynamics that do not exceed the chorus. This is intended so that congregational singing can be heard more clearly because the message can be expressed or stated more clearly. Pre-chorus (bridge to chorus): in this section, the dynamics build towards the chorus. Chorus (refrain); in this part, the musical dynamics of the song are strong. A vamp is a repetition of one part of a song or uses words from the song but differs in tone. Bridge is the repetition or emphasis of the same theme words. Interludes are used when necessary as a bridge to repeat the song's theme. Its function is to avoid monotony, provide song variety and beauty, and show off the skills of the musician. This element is presented, for example, by repeating the song instrumentally; you can also play chord or beat patterns while one of the instruments does an adlib (solo); or also by making a unison. The coda is the final part of the song that is repeated over and over again. Another alternative presentation variation can also be done by changing the chord progression. The ending is the part of the musical composition that concludes the song. The pattern at the ending usually repeats the song intro using a

chord, beat, or unison pattern.

In this study, researchers consider musicians to have an important role in influencing each other and achieving the expected ritual goals. The relationship between the artist's skill level and their sensitivity, ability to understand space and time in artistic presentations or activities is an important factor in creating participant concentration and involvement in optimal mental conditions or expected in situations as a worship presentation at HKBP Pardamean. Musical aspects in the presentation of worship are elements of music and songs which technically, aesthetically and in their form of expression can influence or support a certain atmosphere in the worship process. Therefore, the assessment or observation of this aspect is based on the competence of the musicians (musicians and singers), namely the ability and commitment of the musicians technically and aesthetically to provide support for the formation of the atmosphere and goals of the worship process. Consideration of liturgical aspects is based on two parts, namely structural and textual demands. Structurally, the liturgy itself will actually provide an illustration of the restrictions on the appropriate type of music, as well as the choice of chants or songs and singers that are appropriate to the parts of the service.

The choice of song parts, the balance between the singing and the style of the musical background are used as a basis for reflecting the importance of each part of the service. Meanwhile, the textual part is based more on the role of music in emphasizing the meaning or expressing the content or ideas of verses contained in the Holy Bible and liturgical sources. Pastorally or 'shepherding' (guiding) the congregation, the implementation of music also takes into account the cultural and social aspects of the congregation. This aspect is considered to see the relevance of music and congregation's expression appreciation of its beliefs according to time and space in its cultural context. Musical, liturgical and pastoral aspects are a unified form of evaluation. These three are starting points for providing an evaluation of the implementation of music in the context of worship. The process and steps will appear in the selection and placement procedures for music in worship. The main task of a musician in a service is to play music and accompany the congregation's

singing. The effectiveness of music can influence the atmosphere of worship, so the presentation of music by the players is expected to play a role in improving and helping the quality of singing for the congregation.

In the management of the presentation of worship at the HKBP Pardamean church during the presentation of the Sunday service, it is under the responsibility of a marturia board assisted by the music section to distribute song material to accompany the worship to the musicians. The choice of songs to be sung at the Batak Cultural service is determined directly by the Resort Pastor, where usually the songs sung have an allegretto-allegro tempo (120-130 BPM). Furthermore, in the presentation of worship, HKBP Pardamean also regulates the selection of musical accompaniment for worship by means of distributing announcements through congregational newsletters. After registrant has confirmed their musical abilities, the music director will schedule the service. Before the service is carried out, the church management makes a training schedule every 1st day of worship, or every Saturday at 19.00 WIB in the HKBP Pardamean church room. HKBP Pardamean has an altar for serving worship with a length of 25 meters and a width of 10 meters, which can accommodate 25 worship presenters.

#### 4. Presentation Of Music in HKBP Worship

The musical accompaniment in Sunday worship at HKBP cannot be separated from the background of the founding of HKBP. The founding of HKBP began with the arrival of the arrival of the German RMG missionary, whose arrival influenced the existing Batak tribal culture to begin to erode and seem to be disappearing one by one. The mindset that considers religion to be the most important part of living a system of life is the initial basis for reducing or even eliminating the culture that exists in the "Christian Batak" section. In reality, belief systems and culture are two different things, where religion is vertical and culture is horizontal through its social structure. Before the introduction of the belief system in the Tapanuli region specifically, the Tapanuli people only had an identity as the Batak tribe. However, as time went by, the Tapanuli area became increasingly known to the world and finally gave birth to missionary aspirations to preach the gospel to the Batak people. Apart from preaching the gospel, missionaries also began to introduce musical instruments and teach songs derived from church hymns in Europe (Yusuf, 2017). Existing cultural elements are starting to be abandoned, and some are disappearing from cultural civilization. Symbols and rituals, which are the outermost images of culture, no longer contain meaning in religion itself. On the one hand, the church believes that some cultural symbols have animistic properties. When presenting worship services at the HKBP church, the Ende book is used as a source of singing. The songs contained in the Ende HKBP book have been performed by the HKBP church and have been going on for approximately 143 years without any new songs being added. In 2003, based on input from the congregation and also seeing developments over time, the HKBP authorities formed a team to compose new songs as additional songs to the Buku Ende songs. In 2004, through the HKBP Parhalado Meeting, it was legalised to use new songs (Buku Ende Suplemen) in worship services conducted by the HKBP church. Furthermore, apart from using ende books in worship presentations, HKBP also uses traditional music in Batak cultural worship. This is intended as an effort for cultural existence so that Batak culture does not suddenly disappear from the presentation of worship at HKBP. In this way, traditional Batak cultural arts can be used for meaning in the Christian community. In the HKBP worship order, which is specifically a tribal church and, more specifically, the majority of its congregation is from the Toba Batak tribe, it should have a Gondang ensemble in its worship. There are many modern musical instruments that can be collaborated with traditional musical instruments such as the flute, gondang, hasapi/harp, and many more musical instruments that can be collaborated on to develop musical accompaniment in the church.

#### **CONCLUSION**

At HKBP Pardamean, a presentation of worship is carried out by management. HKBP Pardamean holds a Cultural Service once a month as an effort to exist "Batak" in the context of presenting worship. Where nowadays it is almost eroded by the current of

globalization. One of the symbols of culture that has begun to disappear from the Batak identity itself is traditional music. The presentation of the Batak Cultural worship service is under the responsibility of a marturia council assisted by the music section to distribute song material to accompany the worship service to the musicians. The choice of songs to be sung at the Batak Cultural service is determined directly by the Resort Pastor, where usually the songs sung have an allegretto-allegro tempo (120-130 BPM). The use of traditional musical instruments is also displayed in Batak cultural worship presentations such as Gondang, Taganing, and Sulim.

Musicians have an important role in influencing each other and achieving the expected ritual goals. The relationship between the artist's skill level and their sensitivity, ability to understand space and time in artistic presentations or activities is an important factor in creating participant concentration and involvement in optimal mental conditions or situations as expected in a worship presentation at HKBP Pardamean. Apart from that, the main task of the musician in the service is to play music and accompany the congregation's singing. The effectiveness of music can influence the atmosphere of worship, so the presentation of music by the players is expected to play a role in improving and helping the quality of singing for the congregation.

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