



Riau malay dance preservation strategies: a digital ethnographic study of Riau malay dance education and promotion practices on tiktok



Syefriani ^{a,1}, Muhammad Fazli Taib Saearani ^{a,2*}

^aUniversiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim, Perak 35900, Malaysia

¹ syefriani@edu.uir.ac.id; ² fazli@fmosp.upsi.edu.my;

* Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization marked by the influence of foreign cultures, the Riau Malay dance, as a cultural heritage, is crucial to preserve and the local cultural identity of the Riau community. This study aims to explore the tikTok application as an effective medium for educating and promoting the Riau Malay dance. The method employed in this research is digital ethnography with a qualitative approach, involving participatory observation of TikTok content as well as in-depth interviews with content creators engaged in the education and promotion of the Riau Malay dance. Data were analyzed to identify communication patterns, promotion strategies, and forms of digital interaction that strengthen awareness of local cultural. The findings indicate that tikTok plays a significant role in disseminating information and increasing the participation of the younger generation on promoting the Riau Malay dance through educational and interactive content. The study also reveals collaboration among artists, educators, and content creators resulting in sustainable cultural innovation. However, challenges related to cultural simplification and the dominance of entertainment content need to be managed to ensure that the authentic values of local culture are preserved. These findings contribute new insights into understanding the role of social media as a tool for local cultural education and offer strategic recommendations for the development of cultural promotion in the era digital, particularly concerning the Riau Malay dance.

Article History

Received 2025-02-04

Revised 2025-06-10

Accepted 2025-06-26

Keywords

Cultural education

Local culture

Cultural promotion

Riau Malay dance

TikTok



©2025 The Authors

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license



1. Introduction

Local Wisdom as a Cultural Heritage occupies a central position as an inspiration in strengthening the identity or cultural self of a community. The reinforcement of the identity of an ethnic group or nation becomes critically important in the era of globalization [1]. In today's global era, issues related to culture, religion, ethnicity, gender, and lifestyles are considered more significant than economic conflicts that characterized the industrial age [2]. Cultural heritage, as a product or outcome of physical cultural traditions and spiritual achievements in the form of values from the past, constitutes a fundamental element in the identity of a group or nation [3]. Many forms of local culture are on the verge of extinction, with most of their inheritors being elderly, while younger generations show less interest in local culture and traditional arts such as the Riau Malay dance, exacerbating the challenges of cultural transmission. Cultural values stem from the local cultures across the Indonesian archipelago, encompassing traditions, folklore and legends, native languages, oral histories, creativity (dance, songs, theatrical performances), adaptability, and the uniqueness of local communities [4]. The existence and development of the arts, particularly dance, in Riau Province is a critical issue that requires the joint involvement of all levels of society and government [5]. Both society

and government must undertake preservation efforts and assume responsibility to maintain the existence of the Riau Malay dance so that it remains alive and recognized as the cultural identity of the Malay Riau people.

The Indonesian society perceives schools as highly influential institutions in transforming culture to the next generation; however, cultural transformation more often occurs through social interactions between students and the broader community outside of school [6]. In the current digital era, social media platforms have become highly rapid and efficient channels for information dissemination [7]. Social media also enables cross-regional interactions, both between islands and countries, facilitating individuals in obtaining what they need [8]. When utilized appropriately, social media can have positive impacts on society by facilitating various activities and communications [9]. Its role as an effective platform for disseminating cultural information allows for the education and promotion of local culture to a wider audience. However, social media also poses risks of cultural commodification and simplification if not properly managed [10]. Utilization may involve a single factor such as making work easier, more useful, increasing productivity, effectiveness, and improving job performance. When considering two factors, utilization and effectiveness are categorized with dimensions as follows: (1) Utilization includes making work easier, more useful, and increasing productivity; (2) Effectiveness includes enhancing effectiveness and developing job performance [11]. Effective use of social media can enhance the reach and promotion of local culture. Social media enables users to represent themselves in interactions, build collaborations, share, and communicate with others in forming virtual social relationships [12]. TikTok, a social media platform originating from China, has become highly popular across various user groups due to its user-friendly nature [13]. TikTok is an application used to create content by recording videos combined with editing and audio recording tools that facilitate users [14]. The use of TikTok has become a popular culture embraced by many people from diverse backgrounds and is easily accessible [15].

TikTok plays an important role in supporting creativity and initiative in learning [16]. It has become a significant social media platform for preserving and promoting traditional culture at both national and international levels. With its growing user base, TikTok offers a space for Indonesian culture to be recognized and appreciated by younger generations and global communities [17]. For art enthusiasts, especially in dance, TikTok's features are advantageous as they eliminate the need for multiple additional applications to create dance content [18]. According to Soedarsono [19] dance is one of Indonesia's great cultural heritages that must be developed in line with societal progress [20]. Malay dance has evolved over centuries and is an integral part of the social and cultural life of the community. The influence of ancient Malay kingdoms is strong in the development of dance arts in this region. Types of Malay dance such as Zapin, one of the most famous Malay dances, bear influences from Arab and Malay cultures [21]. Malay dance is not only entertainment but also a means to strengthen the cultural and social identity of the Malay community [22]. Malay dances are often performed at weddings, traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and official government events [23]. The government and local communities collaborate to preserve Malay dance through formal and non-formal education. Dance studios and cultural centers play vital roles in teaching younger generations about Malay dance and its embedded values. Globalization and modernization pose challenges to the preservation of Malay dance. Foreign cultural influences and lifestyle changes threaten the continuity of this traditional art [24].

Riau Malay dance is an art form originating from the Malay community in the Riau region and is heavily influenced by the culture of the Malay ethnic group in Riau. It reflects the identity, values, and philosophy of the Malay Riau people and constitutes an important part of the local cultural heritage. Riau Malay dance functions not only as entertainment but also as an educational medium, a means of conveying moral messages, and a component of various traditional ceremonies such as welcoming honored guests or community celebrations. It is characterized by graceful and gentle movements, with specific rhythmic patterns underlying its choreography, including lenggang, inang, joget, and zapin styles. In the context of globalization and foreign cultural influences, this local cultural identity faces serious challenges. The

utilization of TikTok as a promotional medium for Riau Malay dance offers significant opportunities. Through engaging video formats and broad audience reach, TikTok can serve as an effective tool to disseminate and popularize Riau Malay dance. The younger generation can actively participate in preserving local culture, thereby fostering deeper awareness and appreciation of cultural identity. This study aims to explore how TikTok can be utilized not only as an entertainment platform but also as an effective educational and promotional medium for Riau Malay dance. Therefore, local cultural education through platforms like TikTok is essential to preserving and promoting the Malay Riau cultural heritage to younger generations. However, this study also acknowledges challenges and limitations in using TikTok as a medium for cultural education and promotion, as the platform's short and viral content format may lead to simplification or distortion of the original cultural meanings if not carefully managed. Considering both positive aspects and challenges, this study is expected to provide recommendations for developing more effective and sustainable educational and promotional strategies for Riau Malay dance in the digital era.

2. Methods

The method employed in this study is digital ethnography, with the manuscript written using a qualitative approach. Digital ethnography “studies and explores the dimensions of contemporary society’s world, which are then methodologically recounted based on theoretical academic research reports” [25]. Digital ethnography can also be conducted via the internet or cyberspace, reflecting the desire to learn about life in the virtual world and to assess virtual activities over time. Identifying existing behavioral patterns, studying forms of life, and social relationships within communities must be conducted continuously, and direct communication with social groups over a relatively extended period is a crucial feature of ethnographic research [26]. In conducting digital ethnography, one technique involves writing narratives about personal experiences or conducting monologues regarding an informant’s life during open interviews. When informants provide detailed accounts of their experiences, the researcher can utilize these narratives in the form of storytelling within the study. The experiences shared by informants become the primary information obtained and thus form part of the researcher’s understanding [27]. Digital ethnography enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth observation of educational and promotional content related to the Riau Malay dance on TikTok. It allows direct observation of communication patterns, cultural practices, and social interactions occurring in the virtual realm without the need for physical presence. Digital ethnography is suitable for uncovering culturally mediated practices through technology and for examining how local cultures, such as the Riau Malay dance, are adapted within the context of digital globalization.

The initial step involves participatory observation on TikTok by following accounts that educate and promote the Riau Malay dance, observing dance videos, comment interactions, hashtag usage, and communication patterns among users. The second step is digital content analysis, which involves reviewing videos, captions, and comments to understand the cultural messages conveyed and how the promotion of the Riau Malay dance is carried out creatively and educationally. The next step involves interaction, conducted digitally through comment sections, private messages, and participation in live streams. The researcher fosters friendly and open relationships to ensure informants feel comfortable sharing their experiences and perspectives regarding the education and promotion of the Riau Malay dance on TikTok. Data were collected through observation of TikTok video content and interactions, in-depth interviews (via chat, video call, or face-to-face), as well as digital documentation such as screenshots and comments. The narratives obtained from interviews and online interactions were recorded in detail. The study involved 10 content creators with different TikTok accounts, each producing content related to various Riau Malay dances. Sampling was conducted by selecting TikTok accounts with the highest viewership for each Malay dance featured on the platform. By adopting a digital ethnographic approach, this study not only examines TikTok as a promotional medium for the Riau Malay dance but also seeks to understand the broader educational and social contexts that influence how local culture is disseminated and preserved.

This research is expected to provide valuable insights into the utilization of social media in maintaining and strengthening local cultural identity in the digital era.

3. Results and Discussion

Each region possesses unique art forms distinct from others, influenced by factors such as climate, culture, customs, livelihoods, and even beliefs. The arts are regarded as ancestral heritage whose existence must be respected and trusted. Art serves as a means of communication within society, functioning as a medium to convey messages, stories, life lessons, and more. To this day, art remains an essential necessity for communities [28]. Art is an expression of individuals or social groups through rhythmic movements, beautiful and meaningful sounds, roles, forms, or combinations thereof, embodying the values, norms, and traditions prevailing within society. Art is born, lives, and develops alongside the community itself [29]. Art forms constitute the core of national culture and serve as vital means for fostering art literacy and cultural identity [30]. In reality, traditional arts in Riau society are still frequently performed and preserved in their integrity within various regions. Almost every area in Riau maintains traditional arts that have been passed down from generation to generation. As a province, Riau consists of various regencies and cities, each possessing its own distinctive art forms that serve as regional identities [31].

Riau Malay dance is one form of traditional dance that represents the cultural identity of the Malay community in Riau Province. According to Surya, W. K., & Nerosti, traditional dance encompasses all dances that have undergone a long historical journey and are consistently based on established traditional patterns [32]. Riau Malay dance is not merely an artistic expression or entertainment but also reflects the values, history, local wisdom, and cultural identity that bind the Malay Riau community and are transmitted across generations. Broadly speaking, Riau Malay dance includes forms such as the welcoming dance, Zapin Meskom, Zapin Siak, Zapin Pecah Dua Belas, Zapin Api, Zapin Bagan, Joget Sonde, Inai, Olang-Olang, Rentak Bulian, Cegak, and others. Through distinctive dance movements accompanied by traditional music, Riau Malay dance must be continuously preserved as an integral part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Given the rich potential of Riau Malay dance as a cultural legacy, the TikTok application can serve as an effective bridge to introduce and educate younger generations about this dance.

The utilization of media as a tool for promoting local culture to the world positively impacts the enhancement of local cultural values [33]. Rapid advancements in modern technology and the deepening of globalization have created an urgent need for the preservation and promotion of arts education [34]. The appeal of local culture holds the potential to add value to the tourism sector. This can be realized through sustainable efforts to preserve and develop local cultural values, thereby becoming an attraction for the people of Riau. The researcher collected and analyzed TikTok videos related to Riau Malay dance to explore visual elements, music, captions, and hashtags. Selected videos were those with high-quality visuals, engaging captions, and substantial viewership. The analysis also included comments and interactions on the videos to understand audience responses. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 content creators who published Riau Malay dance videos. The interviews were designed to explore the experiences, motivations, and perspectives of users regarding the use of TikTok as a medium for education and promotion. The researcher also participated in videos related to Riau Malay dance, noting interaction patterns and elements that attracted viewers' attention. Importantly, the researcher engaged in observing TikTok activities both as a user and as an observer.

3.1. TikTok in the Culture Preservation

In Riau Province, several well-known Zapin dances originate from various regions, namely Zapin Siak, Zapin Meskom, Zapin Api, Zapin Bagan, and Zapin Pecah 12. The existence of Zapin dance is believed to be inseparable from the history of the spread of Islam in the Nusantara around the 13th and 14th centuries, particularly marked by the arrival of traders from Hadramaut, South Yemen [35]. According to Muhammad Takari, Zapin dance is one of the Islamic art genres within Malay culture, initially adopted from Islamic civilization in the Middle East and subsequently developed into the distinctive Malay Zapin dance. Malay Zapin consists

of elements of dance, music, and text that merge into a unified performance [36]. Today, Zapin dance can be observed on various social media platforms. In Indonesia, TikTok has surpassed its role as merely an entertainment platform and has become an important tool for introducing, preserving, and even celebrating the diversity of local cultures. With more than 1,300 ethnic groups and diverse traditions, Indonesia possesses extraordinary cultural wealth, which can now be showcased to a global audience through TikTok [38]. Many content creators use TikTok to share content related to traditional arts, local cuisine, and regional dances. However, despite TikTok's vast potential to introduce Indonesian culture to the international community, there are challenges to consider. One such challenge is the risk of cultural homogenization, where global trends and popular culture often dominate the content on this platform [39]. Based on the analysis and interviews with content creator Mukhtar (34 years old), who uses the TikTok account Cik Utal (Fig. 1), he stated:

“The role of TikTok is quite significant in preserving Malay dance, especially the Zapin Pecah 12 dance originating from Pelalawan Regency. Through social media like TikTok, people can easily share knowledge about Zapin Pecah 12, which certainly serves as an effective platform for education and promotion related to the preservation of Riau Malay dance. Various groups, especially enthusiasts and activists of Malay dance art, can easily access and obtain information related to Riau Malay dance.”



Fig. 1. Zapin Pecah 12 Pelalawan Dance video on the TikTok account Cik Utal

Mukhtar, the founder of the Antan-Antan Bate Art Studio in Ukui Dua Village, Pelalawan Regency, Riau, stated:

“Through the social media platform TikTok, I have learned a great deal and shared various traditional Malay dance movements, which have become learning materials for members of the Art Studio I established. This experience is very meaningful to me, as I am not a teacher or an expert in dance, but simply someone who wishes to contribute to the preservation of Malay culture, especially Malay dance.”

Findings indicate that the TikTok application functions as an effective medium for promoting and preserving Riau Malay dance. TikTok creates a space where users not only learn about Riau Malay dance but also actively participate in its preservation. Interactions on TikTok provide opportunities for dancers and creators to explain the cultural significance of Riau Malay dance, thereby enhancing appreciation for local culture. For example, the Zapin Pecah 12 video uploaded by the account Cik Utal received 431 likes, 20 comments, and 13,600 views. In addition to Zapin Pecah 12, there is the Zapin Api dance, an indigenous dance of the North Rupa community that has existed for a long time. Zapin Api is a combination of fire dance and Zapin

from the pre-Islamic era. It was officially recognized as an Indonesian Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2017.

Historically, Zapin Api was used as a medium to spread Islamic teachings to the Rupert community in the 11th century. The songs sung during the Zapin Api performance praise the greatness of God and the Prophet Muhammad, while also strengthening the bonds among the Malay Muslim community. Several aspects make the Zapin Api dance in North Rupert particularly captivating, especially the act of dancing on fire. The performance is accompanied by gambus, bebano, and marwas instruments. Dancers move rhythmically to the music and approach the fire, dancing continuously on the burning embers until no embers remain. The Zapin Api dance video uploaded by the TikTok account Budaya Riau! (@sayebudaye) aims to introduce and promote the Zapin Api dance through the platform, Fig. 2. This content has garnered 471 likes, 9 comments, and 30,200 views. The Budaya Riau! account provides captions explaining the Zapin Api dance, thus offering important information and indirectly educating viewers about this cultural heritage. Through short videos, the younger generation is expected to learn about Malay cultural elements in a more engaging manner. Furthermore, interaction with other users allows them to observe how culture fosters a sense of togetherness and connection to their cultural heritage.



Fig. 2. Zapin Api Dance video on the TikTok account Budaya Riau!

3.2. Cultural Identities in the Digital Era

Cultural identity is not only understood as a heritage that must be preserved but also as an element that must continuously be renewed and promoted [40]. TikTok enables the expression of cultural identity in modern and relevant forms, strengthening the sense of community among creators and audiences [41]. This study reveals that despite the influence of foreign cultures, TikTok can serve as a medium to revitalize local cultural identity. Traditional elements can be adapted in a modern context without losing their original meanings. The findings show that many content creators express their pride in cultural heritage through the videos they produce, and viewers feel a closer connection to their culture after watching TikTok content. For example, a study titled Globalization and Indonesian Cultural Identity through the TikTok Application [38] states that TikTok users can observe various cultural characteristics. TikTok is evidence of technological advancement and a form of globalization in the field of technology. Users can witness activities from different parts of the world without physically visiting those places. TikTok encourages its users to continue engaging with the platform anytime and anywhere without limitations, which also diminishes the cultural notion of modesty that is part of Indonesia's local culture.

Zapin Siak is a form of Zapin dance that originated from Arab Zapin and was developed in the Siak Kingdom region. However, as it came under the Siak Kingdom's influence, its movements adapted to the character of the Siak Kingdom at the time. Zapin entered Siak during the reign of the first Siak King, Raja Kecil, based in Buntan. Initially, Zapin Siak was a palace dance performed only within the royal court. Since this Zapin is associated with Siak, it is known

as Zapin Siak, indicating that it is the local cultural identity of Siak. A Zapin Siak dance video on the TikTok account Seni SMAN 1 Siak received 220 likes, 14 comments, and 12,800 views, Fig. 3. This indicates that the uploaded video serves as an educational learning resource for viewers. Moreover, the video represents a conscious effort to promote Zapin Siak as the cultural identity of Siak in Riau Province. Based on an interview with a dance art teacher (Siska Merianti) who manages the TikTok account Seni SMAN 1 Siak, she stated:

“Previously, many young people considered traditional culture outdated, but now many have begun to appreciate and recognize the beauty and richness of Malay culture, such as the Zapin Siak dance. Today’s youth are prouder and more willing to participate in its preservation. In my experience as a school teacher, TikTok content helps students better appreciate and understand local culture in a highly interactive and entertaining way. Through TikTok videos, they not only watch dance performances but also hear explanations about the dances, which enhances their understanding. Educational content, such as dance tutorials or collaborations between artists and users, makes young people feel closer to their local culture and cultural identity.”

Historically, before Zapin developed in Bengkalis Regency, at its place of origin in Siak Sri Indrapura, Zapin was frequently performed within the palace environment, although these performances were not limited to the palace alone. Most of the Malay community currently residing in Bengkalis originates from Siak Sri Indrapura. The Zapin that developed in Meskom Village, Bengkalis, was brought by Malay artists from Siak Sri Indrapura. Zapin first entered Bengkalis in the 1940s, brought by Abdullah Noer, an artist from Deli Medan, and later developed by Muhammad Yazid from Meskom.

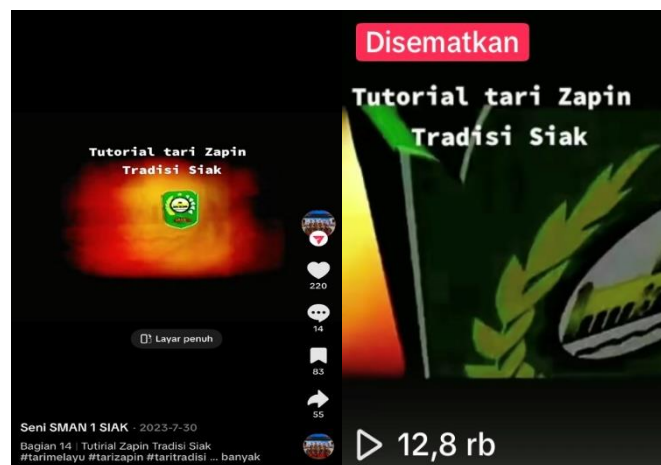


Fig. 3. Traditional Zapin Siak Dance video on the TikTok account Seni SMAN 1 Siak

A Zapin Meskom dance video on the TikTok account Oranglaut_ received 3,003 likes, 124 comments, and 67,600 views, Fig. 4. This indicates that the uploaded video is widely viewed and serves an educational purpose for viewers. Additionally, this video represents a conscious effort to promote Zapin Meskom as the cultural identity of Meskom Village, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province. The Zapin Meskom dance video on the Oranglaut_ account, managed by a young generation user, indirectly supports the promotion of Riau Malay dance. “Zapin Meskom is performed by male and female dancers, ranging from children to adults. It can be danced solo, in pairs, or in groups, with an odd or even number of dancers” [42]. Zapin Meskom is one of the traditional dances from Bengkalis Regency that has existed for a long time and remains vibrant today. However, Zapin Meskom must continue to be promoted to prevent it from disappearing amid globalization.



Fig. 4. Zapin Meskom Bengkalis Dance video on the TikTok account Oranglaut_

3.3. TikTok as an Effective Promotion Tool

The research findings indicate that TikTok is an effective promotional tool for the Riau Malay dance, featuring an interactive format that allows users to express their creativity. Videos of the Riau Malay dance not only introduce traditional elements but also reach thousands of users with significant engagement, including comments, likes, and shares. Unique dance movements, the use of appealing music and costumes, as well as relevant captions and hashtags such as #fyp, #tarimelayu, and #budayaRiau, enhance the visibility of the content and make the videos easier to discover. Furthermore, collaboration among dancers, art educators, and content creators produces material that is not only engaging but also educational, thereby strengthening cultural preservation among the younger generation. Rentak Bulian is a traditional dance originating from the indigenous Talang Mamak tribe in Indragiri Hulu Regency, Riau Province. Rentak Bulian is a healing ritual ceremony for the Talang Mamak people, derived from the words "Rentak" meaning stepping or stamping, and "Belian," referring to the resting place of supernatural beings or spirits known as Bunian in the local Indragiri Hulu language. A Rentak Bulian dance video uploaded by the TikTok account Bang Erik Z, a content creator from Indragiri Hulu Regency, Riau Province, received 8,382 likes, 6 comments, and 113,000 views, Fig. 5. The high number of views and likes demonstrates that TikTok can positively impact the local culture of the Riau Malay dance, specifically Rentak Bulian. This video provides information, education, and promotion accessible to a wide audience both within Indonesia and internationally.

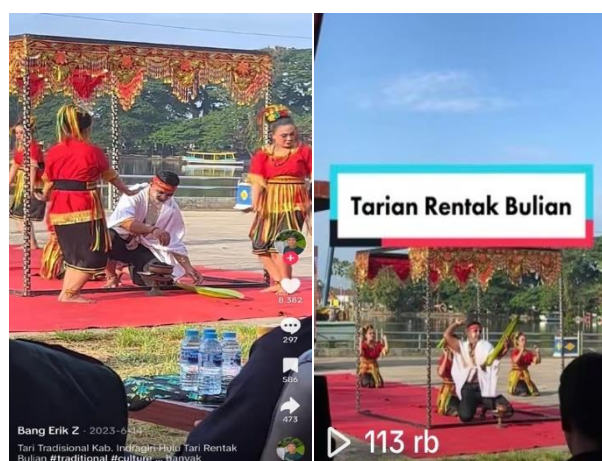


Fig. 5. Rentak Bulian Dance video on the TikTok account Bang Erik Z

In addition to Rentak Bulian, there is the Joget Sonde dance, an indigenous dance of the Akit tribe from Sonde Village, which has existed for a long time. Joget Sonde was originally created by Cik Minah around 1960. Cik Minah was a member of the indigenous Akit community from Sonde Village. Because this dance originated in Sonde, it was named Joget Sonde. Joget Sonde

has also been introduced on various social media platforms, including TikTok. Based on an interview with Jang Farizal (33 years old), who uses the TikTok account Budak Merba, he stated:

“Through the social media platform TikTok, we have the opportunity to highlight and document a rich and diverse array of traditional cultures, which are among the most valuable assets of our region. I feel that TikTok serves as an effective medium for promoting and educating about various cultural aspects, including dance, traditional songs, local cuisine, handicrafts, and more. With rapid technological advancements, preservation efforts can be widely accessed, enabling anyone to learn about local culture anytime and anywhere.”

The Joget Sonde dance video on the Budak Merba TikTok account received 102 likes, 27 comments, and 2,232 views, Fig. 6. Jang Farizal's TikTok profile, Budak Merba, carries the motto “preserve tradition,” reflecting his love for tradition and calling for collective efforts to preserve Riau's cultural heritage. His videos often include the phrase “*kalau tak kite siapa lagi*,” meaning “If not us, then who?” This phrase expresses his sense of responsibility and commitment to preserving local culture. Cultural preservation is not a task that can be entirely delegated to others; the current generation, especially TikTok users, plays a vital role in maintaining and introducing existing traditions. Jang Farizal contributes to preserving the Joget Sonde dance from Meranti Regency through TikTok by using the platform to showcase the beauty and uniqueness of Joget Sonde, while also attracting the interest of younger generations. In other words, this expression encourages individuals to take action and be part of the solution in promoting culture, motivating people to contribute creatively in the digital era without waiting for assistance from others.



Fig. 6. Joget Sonde Dance video on the TikTok account Budak Merba

3.4. The Involvement of the Younger Generation

The use of video as a visual medium is highly appealing to younger generations, who tend to be more active on social media platforms, particularly TikTok [37]. Interviews with young dancers, including students and university students actively promoting the Riau Malay dance, reveal that they are deeply engaged in using TikTok to explore and promote this traditional dance. Most users demonstrate a strong interest in creating dance content and participating in dance-related challenges. The involvement of young people in using TikTok has created a new wave in cultural preservation. By actively participating in the promotion of the Riau Malay dance, they not only educate themselves but also their peers about the importance of local culture. The content creation process helps them gain a deeper understanding of the dance and its accompanying traditions, while also building communities that appreciate and encourage cultural preservation. By leveraging TikTok, young people are not merely passive users but also active content creators who contribute to the dissemination of local culture. Their engagement in cultural promotion through TikTok demonstrates significant potential for cultural preservation.

A video featuring the Persembahan dance on the TikTok account of Sanggar Bertuah Pekanbaru received 31,600 likes, 198 comments, and 730,700 views, Fig. 7. In this video, young people directly contribute as Persembahan dancers, ranging in age from 19 to 25 years. The owner of Sanggar Bertuah Pekanbaru, Nanda Kurniawan (32 years old), is one of those committed to promoting the Persembahan dance through the TikTok application. The Persembahan dance is performed in various events, including welcoming important guests such as inauguration ceremonies attended by the President, Ministers, and other dignitaries. Currently, the Persembahan dance is also frequently performed during wedding receptions [43]. The popularity of the Persembahan dance video uploaded by Sanggar Bertuah Pekanbaru indicates that the educational and promotional efforts have successfully reached a wide audience. In addition to the Persembahan dance, there is the Inai dance originating from Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau Province. Inai dance is a traditional Riau Malay dance associated with wedding customs in Panipahan Village. Typically, the Inai dance is performed only at the bride's home. The Inai dance performance serves as a form of respect to the bride and groom and also functions as entertainment.



Fig. 7. Persembahan Dance video on the TikTok account Sanggar Bertuah Pekanbaru

On the TikTok account Layla Devi Nst, there is content featuring the Inai dance, which is one of the traditional dances originating from Rokan Hilir Regency, Riau Province. This Inai dance video received 21 likes and 1,380 views, Fig. 8. By promoting Riau Malay dance on social media, TikTok users not only learn the dance but also understand the importance of preserving local culture. This can be a crucial step in raising awareness of lesser-known cultural traditions among younger generations. Through TikTok, education about the Riau Malay dance can reach a broader youth audience by utilizing a platform they use daily to attract their interest in local culture.

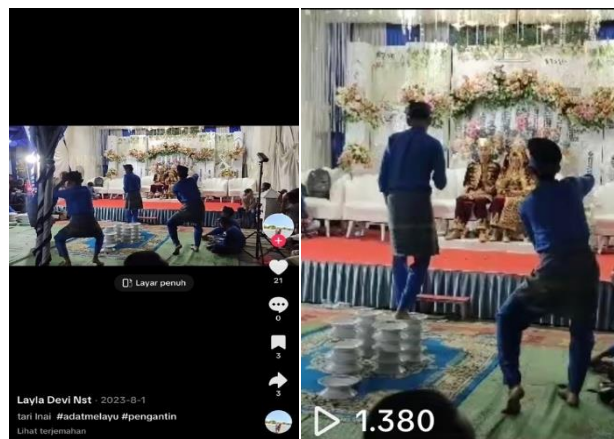


Fig. 8. Inai Dance video on the TikTok account Layla Devi Nst

3.5. Challenges in the Utilizing the Social Media

Although many opportunities are offered, there are also challenges that must be addressed. It is possible that TikTok users are more accustomed to light and entertaining content, making it challenging to balance entertainment and education in capturing their attention. Although young people are the primary users of TikTok, reaching and maintaining their interest in content related to local culture can be difficult. One such challenge is the risk of simplification or distortion of cultural elements that may occur when content is condensed to become appealing or viral. This necessitates deeper education and understanding of how to present culture authentically without losing its original meaning. While utilizing TikTok as a promotional medium for Riau Malay dance holds great potential, the aforementioned challenges must be overcome to achieve optimal results in local cultural education. Innovative and adaptive strategies are required to bridge the gap between traditional arts and modern approaches in delivering information on social media. Zapin Bagan has developed considerably within the community, especially among the people of Bagansiapi-api. In the 1960s, Zapin Bagan was performed only by adults. By the 2000s, it began to be taught to children [44]. Videos of Zapin Bagan dance content have not been widely viewed, receiving only 5 likes and 456 views, Fig. 9. This is likely due to the scarcity of Zapin Bagan dance videos on current technological media platforms. One possible cause is the lack of documentation and promotion on social media, such as TikTok.



Fig. 9. Zapin Bagan Dance video on the TikTok account Sutyani1395

Olang-olang dance holds special significance for the indigenous Sakai people of Siak Indrapura in Riau. This dance is believed by the community to serve as a healing ritual conducted by shamans (bomo). The Sakai people believe that movements resembling those of an eagle, performed by the bomo while chanting special incantations, can cure illnesses [45]. Similar to Zapin Bagan, Olang-olang dance videos have not been widely viewed on TikTok, receiving only 20 likes and 667 views, Fig. 10. Therefore, increased documentation and promotion on popular social media platforms, including TikTok, are necessary.



Fig. 10. Olang-Olang Dance video on the TikTok account Desa Wisata Dayun

4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the TikTok application can effectively support the education and promotion of the Riau Malay dance. By integrating elements of local culture with digital technology, cultural identity can be strengthened and introduced to a broad audience, particularly younger generations, in an engaging manner. The study reveals that social media platforms such as TikTok hold significant potential for preserving and reinforcing cultural values in the modern era. Collaboration among artists, educators, and content creators on TikTok enriches the material presented, creating a more engaging and educational learning experience. Additionally, marketing strategies such as the use of hashtags and viral trends play a crucial role in expanding the reach and impact of the content. Overall, the utilization of TikTok as a medium for education and promotion of the Riau Malay dance represents an effort to transcend traditional boundaries in local cultural preservation. Through the convenience, benefits, and productivity enhancements offered by TikTok, as well as its effectiveness in information dissemination and skill development, this study highlights the considerable potential of TikTok as a social media platform for sustaining and popularizing local culture, specifically the Riau Malay dance. The discussion above clearly indicates that TikTok plays a significant role in cultural preservation, strengthening cultural identity, effective promotion, and engaging younger generations in promoting the Riau Malay dance. By leveraging the interactive and visual nature of the platform, younger generations are expected to develop greater awareness and contribute to the preservation of local culture in the digital era. The role of youth is central to this process, as they are the primary TikTok users with creativity and digital skills. However, challenges exist in using TikTok as a medium for cultural preservation, including the risk of oversimplifying authentic cultural values due to the platform's short-form content format, and the potential dominance of entertainment content overshadowing educational aspects. Furthermore, careful content management is necessary to ensure that the authentic values of Malay Riau culture are maintained and not degraded into mere spectacle or fleeting trends.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris Malaysia for providing the facilities and academic environment that supported this research. Special appreciation is also extended to colleagues and peers who contributed valuable insights during the study.

Declarations

- Author contribution** : S: research idea, analyzed the data, and wrote the article;
MFTS: analyzed the data and wrote the article.
- Funding statement** : This research received no external funding.
- Conflict of interest** : The authors declare no conflict of interest.
- Additional information** : No additional information is available for this paper.

References

- [1] I. Bagus Brata, "Kearifan budaya lokal perekat identitas bangsa," *Jurnal Bakti Saraswati*, vol. 05, no. 01, 2016.
- [2] A. Toffler, "Knowledge Wealth and Violence at The Edge of The 21 st Century (Alih bahasa Hermawan Sulisty),"
Jakarta: Pantja Simpati, 1991.
- [3] G. Davidson, "C. McConville. 1991. A Heritage Handbook. St. Leonard," *NSW: Allen & Unwin*.
- [4] A. Galla, *Guidebook for the participation of young people in heritage conservation*. Unesco, 2001.
- [5] J. Sulisty, "Mari lestarikan Budaya Melayu," Antara kantor berita indonesia.
- [6] N. N. Selasih and I. K. Sudarsana, "Education based on ethnopedagogy in maintaining and conserving the local wisdom: A literature study," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 293–306, 2018. doi: [10.26811/peuradeun.v6i2.219](https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v6i2.219)

-
- [7] E. Rofiyanti, D. Agustina, and M. Firzah, "Analisis Peran Media Sosial sebagai Platform Komunikasi dan Penyebaran Informasi Kebencanaan di DKI Jakarta," *Transparansi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Administrasi*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 192–201, 2023. doi: [10.31334/transparansi.v6i2.3366](https://doi.org/10.31334/transparansi.v6i2.3366)
- [8] T. Widiyanarti, A. D. Rullah, D. Fitriyani, F. R. Silfa, I. Nurfajri, and W. D. Ayuningtyas, "Teknologi dan Komunikasi Antar Budaya: Peluang dan Tantangan di Dunia Digital," *Interaction Communication Studies Journal*, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 11, 2024. doi: [10.47134/interaction.v1i3.3372](https://doi.org/10.47134/interaction.v1i3.3372)
- [9] E. Yuhandra, S. Akhmaddhian, A. Fathanudien, and T. Tendiyanto, "Penyuluhan hukum tentang dampak positif dan negatif penggunaan gadget dan media sosial," *Empowerment: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, vol. 4, no. 01, pp. 78–84, 2021. doi: [10.25134/empowerment.v4i01.4028](https://doi.org/10.25134/empowerment.v4i01.4028)
- [10] I. Putu *et al.*, "Pemanfaatan media sosial dalam upaya promosi serta konservasi budaya lokal nusantara."
- [11] W. W. Chin and P. A. Todd, "On the use, usefulness, and ease of use of structural equation modeling in MIS research: A note of caution," *MIS quarterly*, pp. 237–246, 1995. doi: [10.2307/249690](https://doi.org/10.2307/249690)
- [12] R. Nasrullah, "Media sosial: Perspektif komunikasi, budaya, dan sosioteknologi," *Bandung: Simbiosis Rekatama Media*, vol. 2016, p. 2017, 2015.
- [13] T. P. Hasiholan, R. Pratami, and U. Wahid, "Pemanfaatan media sosial tik tok sebagai media kampanye gerakan cuci tangan di indonesia untuk mencegah covid-19," *Commiverse: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 70–80, Aug. 2020, doi: [10.36341/cmv.v5i2.1278](https://doi.org/10.36341/cmv.v5i2.1278).
- [14] H. T. G. Samosir, "Aplikasi Tiktok: Media Pengumpulan Tugas Pembelajaran Seni Musik Mahasiswa PGSD," 2023.
- [15] K. Sorrells and S. Sekimoto, *Globalizing intercultural communication: A reader*. Sage Publications, 2015. doi: [10.4135/9781483399164](https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483399164)
- [16] C. B. Burnette, M. A. Kwitowski, and S. E. Mazzeo, "'I don't need people to tell me I'm pretty on social media: A qualitative study of social media and body image in early adolescent girls," *Body Image*, vol. 23, pp. 114–125, 2017. doi: [10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.09.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.09.001)
- [17] A. L. Panayitsa and P. Al Falah, "Dampak Aplikasi Tiktok Terhadap Kebudayaan Indonesia," *Filosofi: Publikasi Ilmu Komunikasi, Desain, Seni Budaya*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 75–88, 2025. doi: [10.62383/filosofi.v2i1.468](https://doi.org/10.62383/filosofi.v2i1.468)
- [18] D. Oktariani, "Pemanfaatan Aplikasi Tiktok Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Seni Tari Tradisi Nusantara Pada Remaja," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi dan Humaniora*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 907–915, 2023. doi: [10.26418/j-psh.v13i2.64172](https://doi.org/10.26418/j-psh.v13i2.64172)
- [19] R. M. Soedarsono, "Pengantar Pengetahuan dan Komposisi Tari," *Yogyakarta: ASTI*, 1978.
- [20] S. Syefriani, "Tari kreasi baru zapin seribu suluk pada masyarakat pasir pengaraian kabupaten rokan hulu," *KOBA*, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 13, 2016.
- [21] R. Hidajat *et al.*, "Tafsir Tari Zapin Arab dan Melayu dalam Masyarakat Melayu," *Journal of Education, Humaniora and Social Sciences (JEHSS)*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 1266–1273, 2021. doi: [10.34007/jehss.v4i2.935](https://doi.org/10.34007/jehss.v4i2.935)
- [22] A. Wiwik, "Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat Melayu Kepulauan Riau Terhadap Kesenianya," *Jurnal Sosiologi Andalas (Andalas Journal of Sociology)*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2015.
- [23] R. Widarto and Y. Yulinis, "Estetika Budaya Melayu dalam Tari Zapin Riau," *JPKS (Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kajian Seni)*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 40–52, 2023. doi: [10.30870/jpks.v8i1.19203](https://doi.org/10.30870/jpks.v8i1.19203)
- [24] H. Jubba, M. Rafi, and Z. Qodir, "Politik identitas Melayu Islam sebagai upaya mewujudkan budaya berintegritas," *Politicon: Jurnal Ilmu Politik*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 88–110, 2021. doi: [10.15575/politicon.v3i1.11481](https://doi.org/10.15575/politicon.v3i1.11481)
- [25] A. C. Effendi and L. M. F. Purwanto, "Kajian Literatur: Etnografi Digital Sebagai Cara Baru Dalam Pencarian Data Dalam Proses Perencanaan Arsitektur," *Aksen: Journal of Design and Creative Industry*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 19–31, 2021. doi: [10.37715/aksen.v6i1.2103](https://doi.org/10.37715/aksen.v6i1.2103)
-

-
- [26] B. Johnstone and W. Marcellino, "Dell Hymes and the ethnography of communication," *Sage handbook of sociolinguistics*, pp. 57–66, 2010. doi: [10.4135/9781446200957.n5](https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446200957.n5)
- [27] D. J. Clandinin, *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Sage publications, 2006. doi: [10.4135/9781452226552](https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452226552)
- [28] E. Caturwati, *Tari di tatar Sunda*. Sunan Ambu Press, 2007.
- [29] S. Syefriani, Y. Erawati, and D. Defriansyah, "Nilai-Nilai Tradisi Bukoba di Pasir Pengaraian Rokan Hulu Provinsi Riau," *Jurnal Kajian Seni*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 84–95. doi: [10.22146/jksks.63932](https://doi.org/10.22146/jksks.63932)
- [30] Q. Zhang, E. S. T. Cheung, and C. S. T. Cheung, "The Impact of Flipped Classroom on College Students' Academic Performance: A Meta-Analysis Based on 20 Experimental Studies," *Science Insights Education Frontiers*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 1059–1080, Apr. 2021, doi: [10.15354/sief.21.re019](https://doi.org/10.15354/sief.21.re019).
- [31] Syefriani, "Eksistensi tari cegak pada masyarakat suku bonai desa ulak patian kecamatan kepenuhan rokan hulu riau," *Jurnal Koba*, 2017, [Online]. Available: <https://journal2.uir.ac.id/index.php/koba/article/view/1368/861>
- [32] W. K. Surya and N. Nerosti, "Eksistensi Tari Andun Dalam Upacara Adat Perkawinan Di Kecamatan Seluma Kabupaten Seluma Provinsi Bengkulu," *Jurnal Sendratasik*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 51–60, 2021. doi: [10.24036/js.v10i4.114175](https://doi.org/10.24036/js.v10i4.114175)
- [33] A. P. Wardhanie, "Peranan Media Digital dalam Mempertahankan Budaya Lokal Indonesia di Era Globalisasi," *Prosiding Strengthening Local Communities Facing The Global Era*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2017.
- [34] T. Hu, U. Rasool, L. Wang, H. Chen, and H. Shi, "The effectiveness of the TikTok flipped classroom method on students' academic performance in folk art course," *Acta Psychol (Amst)*, vol. 257, Jul. 2025, doi: [10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105094](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105094).
- [35] M. A. M. Nor, "Zapin: folk dance of the Malay world," 1993, *Oxford University Press*.
- [36] M. Takari and H. Dewi, *Budaya Musik dan Tari Melayu Sumatera Utara*. Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU) Press, 2008.
- [37] I. K. Idris and A. M. Gismar, "TikTok: ruang baru ekspresi dan negosiasi identitas lokal Gen Z Indonesia," Paramadina Public Policy Institute.
- [38] O. Oktarina, S. Sarmiati, and A. Asrinaldi, "Globalisasi dan identitas budaya Indonesia melalui aplikasi tiktok," *JRTI (Jurnal Riset Tindakan Indonesia)*, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 277, Jun. 2022, doi: [10.29210/30031775000](https://doi.org/10.29210/30031775000).
- [39] I. M. S. Amerta, *Pengembangan pariwisata alternatif*. Scopindo Media Pustaka, 2019.
- [40] M. Fransiska, H. Simanjuntak, D. Hardianti, Y. Andriani, and W. Afriani, "Pemertahanan Bahasa Hibun melalui Konten Tiktok@ Decky Russelio," *J-CEKI: Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 245–258, 2024.
- [41] S. V. Astuti, "Tari Zapin Bengkalis : Bentuk, Karakteristik, dan Perkembangan," 2016.
- [42] A. F. Albarzand, S. Choiriyati, and M. Azizah, "Peran Tiktok Sebagai Media Komunikasi Politik Bagi Generasi Milenial (Studi Kasus Pada Karyawan Duta Lampung Tahun 2024)," *Professional: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Administrasi Publik*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 511–516, 2024.
- [43] Syefriani and F. Kurniati, "Eksistensi tari persembahan di kumpulan seni seri melayu pada masa pandemi covid-19," vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 37–51, 2022. doi: [10.25299/koba.2022.12561](https://doi.org/10.25299/koba.2022.12561)
- [44] Syefriani, Y. Erawati, and F. Kurniati, "Upaya Pelestarian Tari Zapin Bagan Di Desa Bagan Punak Bagan Siapi-api Kabupaten Rokan Hilir Provinsi riau," vol. 10, no. 1, 2023.
- [45] H. Habieb, B. Himahety, Y. Yuana, and R. Rusmiah, "Seri cinta budaya negeri: gedubang dan tari tradisi Riau," 2003, *Proyek Pembinaan Kesenian Riau*.
-