



World Dance Day: A Cultural Conservation in Maintaining Local Wisdom of Traditional Arts

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Received 20 November 2022; accepted 30 November 2022; published 1 December 2022

ABSTRACT

The research entitled " World Dance Day: A Cultural Conservation in Maintaining Local Wisdom of Traditional Arts" was conducted to explore the strengths in maintaining the existence of traditional arts, which began to shift with the introduction of Western culture. World Dance Day was a dance event with a duration of 24 hours. This event had been going on for several years. It had become a routine agenda at ISI Surakarta by involving the public, community, art activists, cultural observers, foreign participants, and others. World Dance Day could be used as branding in building ISI Surakarta amid competition among higher education institutions. Organized events could be media promotions both domestically and internationally. This event was held once a year in April, on the 29th. The problem in this research was how to maintain the existence of traditional arts through the activation of World Dance Day and brand World Dance Day activation as a medium for introducing art. The purpose of the research was to find ways to maintain the existence of traditional arts through the World Dance Day activation and to find ways to make World Dance Day branding activation a medium for introducing dance arts to the community. This type of research was qualitative descriptive research. The data source in this study was primarily data source in the form of World Dance Day activation. The monitoring method was carried out by identifying the types of activation included in World Dance Day. Data were obtained from the World Dance Day activation. Researchers directly observed the World Dance Day activation and saw Youtube and other social media. The result of this research was to find ways to maintain the existence of traditional arts through World Dance Day activation. Apart from that, they also carried out branding in the form of World Dance Day activation as a medium for introducing dance arts to the community.

KEYWORDS

Conservation
Local wisdom
Branding
World Dance Day
Activation
Existence

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1. Introduction

Indonesia Institute of the Arts Surakarta is a college that offers specialization in the arts. ISI Surakarta, located in Surakarta City, can develop its existence because it is supported by existing cultural heritage, such as the Palace and the cultural life around it. The campus is one of the colleges that offer specialization in the arts. ISI Surakarta can develop its existence because it is supported by existing cultural heritage, such as the Palace and its cultural life. The entrance in the form of an iconic boat gate marked ISI Surakarta. The boat gate located at the entrance to the ISI Surakarta campus is one of Rahayu Supanggah's works. He was a lecturer at ISI Surakarta. There are many questions about the philosophical meaning of the boat gate icon on the ISI campus. If explored in depth, the boat is interpreted as a vehicle for sailing. So, the implication is that when you want to study at ISI Surakarta, you must seek knowledge as vast as the ocean and not be limited to just one space.



ISI Surakarta conserves traditional dances through various cultural events. One of the internationally well-known cultural events is World Dance Day. ISI Surakarta has regularly held events to celebrate World Dance Day on April 29 for several years. This event is held once a year. The event was held at the ISI Surakarta campus and throughout the Surakarta area. Participants come either as participants or just spectators from various cities in Indonesia. In recent years, participants from several countries worldwide have attended the event. The celebration of World Dance Day can be a means of promoting the existence of ISI Surakarta to the public. In this way, ISI Surakarta is known at all levels, both from the local community and from abroad. The main event of World Dance Day is to hold dance performances for 24 hours non-stop, both at the ISI campus and around the Surakarta area. Participating dancers come from various regions in Indonesia and abroad.

Dance is a form of traditional art that must be conserved continuously; so that increasingly aggressive modern foreign cultures do not replace their existence. Moreover, it is easier for the current generation to accept Western culture than to learn their own culture. Educational circles, practitioners, culturalists, and art activists are trying to maintain traditional arts in various practical ways, starting from holding dance events, using dance in ritual processes, and performing it in various traditional ceremonies. ISI Surakarta also organizes seminars and workshops to maintain the existence of traditional dances. One of the efforts carried out and pioneered by ISI Surakarta is the activity on World Dance Day. This event is held annually by involving parties from outside the campus.

The World Dance Day activation can be ISI Surakarta's branding tool to improve its performance as a professional art college. In addition, through this event, the existence of ISI Surakarta can be widely known by the public. So to maintain this existence, it must be accompanied by a positive image that all parties in the academic community support at ISI Surakarta. Alums can become informants who the public can trust to promote the existence of ISI Surakarta outside. Researchers are interested in researching World Dance Day as a cultural preserver in maintaining the local wisdom of traditional arts to maintain traditional arts amidst the rapid influx of Western culture. In addition, this research also seeks to find efforts to maintain the sustainability of this dance art amidst the acculturation process, which is increasingly eroding local culture. In this regard, World Dance Day activation is a medium for introducing the art of dance to society. The problem in this research is how to maintain the existence of traditional arts through the World Dance Day activation and how to make the branding of World Dance Day activation a medium for introducing dance arts to society. The purpose of the research is to find ways to maintain the existence of traditional arts through the World Dance Day activation and as an effort to make World Dance Day branding activation a medium for introducing dance art in society.

Several previous studies are relevant to this research, one of which is conducted by Susanti and Koswara (2018), which explains that culture as one of the national identities should be maintained so that it does not disappear. Even though times are changing, the original identity of the nation must not be lost and replaced by cultures from abroad which enter slowly through the development of information and communication technology. The generation living in this era is different from its predecessors, especially with the presence of digital media, which has become an integral part of their lives. This article describes the efforts made by traditional Sundanese dance artists to introduce Indonesian culture through dance to people at home and abroad. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach, the research results.

In this regard, Yana et al. (2020) examine traditional culture as an identity and basis for developing Sitiwinangun ceramics in Cirebon Regency. This research is motivated by the condition of the Sitiwinangun ceramic craft center in Jamblang District, Cirebon Regency, whose products are currently decreasing both in quality and quantity. This situation is ironic considering that the center has strong natural, human and cultural resource potential. This research aims to develop Sitiwinangun ceramic handicraft products through local traditional culture to strengthen identity and the basis for product development. This study uses a cultural and aesthetic approach through the theory of aesthetic morphology and the ATUMICS method with the stages of identification, analysis, design development, design application, and evaluation. The results of this study are ceramic products that



are more modern in the form of works of art, ornaments, and functions with an identity in the form of local Cirebonese traditional culture in the context of conservation and revitalization.

Maryono (2012) states that dance is a combination of several of the essential elements of arts, including gestures as a medium for creating dance, sound and language as a medium for creating accompaniment music, as well as fine arts, which are actualized through the creation of make-up and dance costumes. All of these elements are manifested in a complementary manner. Interpretation of the various communication media contained in dance is captured rationally, and the sharpness of feelings, thoughts, and institutions is also the primary tool in capturing the true meaning. In this regard, Widyastutieningrum (2011, 62) explains that the presentation of dance compositions also pays close attention to the virtuosity of technical skills, which are still the mainstay and main ingredient. Of course, in this case, body posture is also highly considered a necessary natural provision to produce a unique characteristic.

Two factors need to be prepared to present a choreography: physical and non-physical. Physical factors include physical preparation that determines the presence of an expression. The preparation of the body can be achieved by careful and continuous practice. Haryono (2013, 5) states that dance is an embodiment of the creative work of an artist who explores dance moves or searches for a dance move to find a form of movement that follows the idea. Finding a form of dance moves requires a long time to get satisfactory results so that the goals desired by the artist can be achieved and inner satisfaction is obtained. Artists creating dance means processing values to give meaning to the works of art that are made. Dance is an expression of the human soul expressed by rhythmic movements, feelings, and emotions. Concerning dance, taste is an aspect that plays a significant role. This fact can be observed from the reality that dances in the world consist of dance forms that are expressions of the soul which are dominated by: a) a will, for example, the hunting dance, the dance asking for rain performed by primitive tribes; b) reason or thought, for example, classical dances which are expressions of palace culture; and c) feelings/emotions such as modern dance. Dance is an expression of the human spirit transformed by imagination and given as the expression of the creator (Hawkins 1991, 2).

From the communication aspect, Murtono (2010, 58) explains that the development of advertising and advertisement in today's consumer society has raised social and cultural issues, particularly regarding the signs used, the images displayed, the information conveyed, the meanings obtained, and how everything influences perceptions, understanding, and behavior of society. Does an ad display the reality of a product being offered, or vice versa, masks reality? A controversy develops around the advertisement's existence related to the fact that there is a gap between the product description and the actual reality of the product.

Devito (1997, 23) suggests that communication refers to actions by one or more people who send and receive messages that are distorted by noise, occur in a particular context, and have a specific effect. There is an opportunity to provide feedback. In this regard, it Devito also stated that the communication environment has at least three dimensions: physical, social-psychological, and temporal. The space or ward or garden where the communication takes place is called the context, the real or tangible environment. This physical environment influences the message content (what is conveyed) and the shape of the message (how it is meant). The socio-psychological dimension includes, for example, the status relationships among those involved, the roles and games people play, and the cultural rules of the society in which they communicate. This environment or context also includes feelings of friendship or hostility, formality or informality, and casual or official situations. The temporal (time) dimension consists of the time of day and the historical time in which communication occurs.

2. Method

This research was qualitative descriptive research. The data source in this study was primary data source in the form of World Dance Day activation. The observation method was carried out by identifying the types of activation included in World Dance Day. Data was obtained from the World



Dance Day activation. Researchers directly observed the World Dance Day activation and watched Youtube and other social media.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. How to Keep The Existence of Traditional Arts through The World Dance Day Activation

The development of art was a sign that people's lives developed dynamically. Art life continued to move along with life in society. Likewise, artistic life at a college specializing in arts continued to innovate in line with science, technology, and art developments. Various reforms had been made to promote art without abandoning local wisdom, one of which was the celebration of World Dance Day every April 29. Numerous art colleges and the community participated in this activity, dancing 24 hours non-stop in various areas.

The Department of Dance, Faculty of Performing Arts, Indonesia Institute of the Arts Surakarta celebrated World Dance Day every year by holding dance performances with a duration of 24 hours. The 24-hour dance activation was held at the ISI Surakarta campus and various places in the Surakarta area. Surakarta residents and people from outside the region were enthusiastic about participating and enlivening the World Dance Day activation. In addition to dance performances on campus and its surroundings, supporting activities were also held, including seminars, workshops, and alum meetings. The activations were held to increase knowledge and build networks with outside communities. Efforts to introduce and maintain the existence of dance had a good impact, one of the impacts proven by several dances in Indonesia that are well-known worldwide. Some of the Indonesian dances are already worldwide, among others.

3.1.1. *Kecak* Dance

Kecak dance was a dance originating from Bali. *Kecak* dance was a collaborative dance created by a Balinese artist named Wayan Limbak and a painter from Germany. *Kecak* dance was performed in religious ritual activities and when welcoming guests. Wayan Limbak was the creator of the *Kecak* dance. In 1930, he introduced this dance to various countries, assisted by a painter from Germany named Walter Spies. *Kecak* dance was famous both domestically and abroad. The word "*cak cak*" made it easy to remember the name of this dance.

The history of the name *Kecak* dance came from the word "*cak cak*" which was shouted by the dancers throughout the dance. *Kecak* dance was also commonly called the Fire Dance or *Cak* Dance. *Kecak* dance was performed by a group of youths wearing black and white checkered cloth costumes similar to a chessboard. *Kecak* dance was accompanied by *gamelan* in a circular formation, and hand movements raised while making the sound of "*cak cak cak*". This dance was sacred in religious ceremonies. Some dancers were burned by fire but did not feel the heat. Part of *Kecak* dance performance took the episode from the *Ramayana* story when Rama saved Sinta from Ravana's hands. In this *Kecak* dance performance, dancers sometimes experienced a trance. Trance was a part of a culture that was believed by the people of Bali and Indonesia in general as a form of contact with ancestral spirits.

The properties of *Kecak* dance included burning coals, frangipani flowers, white shawls, rattle bracelets, places for offerings, masks, and make-up. Embers were the primary medium for applying combat moves. Fire embers were never left behind from *Kecak* dance performance. Frangipani flowers were also used in *Kecak* dance. Dances in Bali, on average, used frangipani flowers as a headdress. The white shawl was adapted to the concept of *Rwa Bhineda*, which was the belief of the Balinese people. Male dancers wore a unique white shawl to cover their bodies. Rattle bracelets were used as props to produce sound with a grandeur effect in dance. Places for offerings were used in this *Kecak* dance because, initially, this dance was intended to expel evil spirits, so offerings must be presented. The offerings are a sacred part of the *Kecak* dance performance. Local and foreign tourists favor *Kecak* dance in Bali. *Kecak* dance was a tourist attraction that many tourists chose when visiting Bali.

The 2019 to 2021 pandemic caused tourism in various parts of the world to experience a drastic decline. Hotels, flights, and tour guide services had become sluggish due to social distancing regulations to break the chain of Covid-19. Only at the beginning of 2022 would the wheels of the



economy slowly begin to revive in various sectors such as tourism, lodging services, travel agencies, trade, and culinary. Although slow, these sectors were starting to show an increase.

3.1.2. *Saman Dance*

Saman dance originated in Aceh and was well-known abroad. *Saman* Dance from the Gayo Highlands. This dance was performed in religious events, especially when commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, by carrying an implied message in the form of religious preaching, politeness, education, heroism, togetherness, and solidarity. *Saman* dance was performed by male and female young dancers wearing Acehnese traditional clothing. *Saman* dance requires total concentration and cohesiveness because of its dynamic and fast movements. Messages conveyed to the community include religious preaching, politeness, education, heroism, togetherness, and cohesiveness. In Aceh, it had become a tradition that religious leaders gave advice to the dancers and the audience before *Saman* dance was performed. The advice given was advice in everyday life. *Saman* dance is usually performed at official events or for banquets. *Saman* dance is unique because this dance only uses clapping of the hands, chest, and thighs.

3.1.3. *Jaipong Dance*

Jaipong dance originated in West Java, created by Gugum Gumbira in 1961. This dance was a compilation of *Ketuk Tilu*, *Mask Benjet* dance, and *Pencak Silat* dance, so the movements were energetic and dynamic and amazed the audience. *Jaipong* dance initially developed in the Bandung and Karawang areas. This dance could move the audience's enthusiasm and make the atmosphere festive. The public eventually recognized *Jaipong* dance in areas outside West Java, even in foreign countries. *Jaipong* dance was a timeless cultural heritage, even though it had to compete with the influx of Western culture, which offered modern dances that were no less interesting. Many tourists were fond of this *Jaipong* dance.

3.1.4. *Pendet Dance*

Pendet was a dance with beautiful movements from Bali and was composed by I Wayan Rindi in 1950. At first, the Balinese only performed this dance during religious activities. Over time, this dance then changed its function to a performance dance or welcome dance. *Pendet* dance was interpreted as a welcome greeting for the descent of the gods to earth. *Pendet* dance was a sacred dance. *Pendet* dancers in every performance wore ceremonial clothing with formal religious make-up. Each dancer brought props as an offering to the gods—equipment such as holy water or *sangkau*, chalice, jugs, and other equipment. *Pendet* dancers had a specialty in dancing, which was charming eye movements. The meaning of the *Pendet* dance was as a thanksgiving for the gods' goodness.

3.1.5. *Reog Ponorogo Dance*

Reog was a dance that came from the Ponorogo area. This dance had a story structure throughout the performance. *Reog Ponorogo* dance was initially performed on the night of 1 Sura or every full moon. The function of the *Reog Ponorogo* dance had begun to shift; now, this dance was being performed to welcome guests. *Reog Ponorogo* dancers had compositions including *Warok*, *Jathil*, *Bujang Ganong*, *Klono Sendowo*, and *Singa Barong*. This dance was known by Indonesian people, especially in Java. Even though this dance originated in East Java and Central Java, the public knew this dance well. This dance performance was accompanied by unique music. *Warok*, *singo barong*, and other figures also become each show's attractiveness. *Reog Ponorogo* dance was also one of the well-known dances in foreign countries. This fact proved that Indonesia had a lot of artistic wealth, both from performing and visual arts. Local wisdom, one of the strongholds of this dance, still existed among foreign cultures that continued to enter Indonesia.

3.2. Efforts in Maintaining Traditional Arts Through the World Dance Day Activation

Various parties from academic circles, artists, and other groups have contributed to preserving traditional dances. Dance conservation was carried out in colleges by opening the Department of Dance. The hope was that students and academics were still willing to explore Indonesian dances from history, dance movements, equipment used, and other dance-related matters. Students learned the art of dance while creating dance innovations.



The infiltration of foreign cultures into Indonesia certainly affected various aspects of life. Foreign culture would shift elements such as patterns of life that exist in society. However, this must be accepted and requires wisdom in responding to it. Foreign culture certainly brought both good and bad impacts when it entered society; it all depended on how the community could respond. The influx of foreign cultures had a lot to do with life in society; this brought worries because the younger generation might not be able to filter properly. Western civilization had eroded local cultures so much that it was feared that in the future, it would affect the character and pattern of life in society. So it was good for the younger generation to be introduced to local culture, so they loved their own culture. Local wisdom would help fortify local culture from foreign cultural influences that might not follow our society's character. In this regard, the younger generation must have a solid foundation to maintain culture and traditions, such as dance, puppetry, *karawitan*, and fine arts.

Indonesia's rich culture gave our country cultural diversity, hence our vast traditional arts. Traditional art developed in a society mixed with modern culture and Western culture. Traditional arts such as dance, *karawitan*, puppetry, and others were capital for defending traditional arts from the influx of Western civilization.

The originality of the people must be maintained to maintain the dignity of Indonesian culture. If cultural identity was not kept, the younger generation would not understand local cultural traditions, resulting in extinction. The younger generation got exposure to modern culture almost daily, which was easily accessible from the media. They did not know about dance, *wayang*, and *gamelan* in Indonesia. The younger generation, especially Gen Z, was more familiar with Western culture. Most of the younger generation did not know about traditional Indonesian artists who were famous abroad. For this reason, it would be nice if they were introduced to *wayang* stories starting from the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, etc., types of dance in Indonesia, and *gamelans* in Indonesia.

Various types of *gamelan* in Indonesia could be introduced to the younger generation. UNESCO now recognizes *gamelan* as a world heritage from Indonesia. The love of culture in the younger generation needed to be instilled as early as possible because childhood was the right time to build a foundation for a strong character. Traditional art became a stronghold to maintain local wisdom, which would likely be eroded over time. Modern foreign cultures easily penetrated the Indonesian state, so action was needed to filter out influences that did not follow the Indonesian nation's character.

Art festivals were held at the local, national, and international levels to introduce Indonesian culture to the public. These cultural events were vital in optimizing the treasures of Indonesian culture because to maintain the consistency of Indonesia's cultural wealth; it was necessary to keep cultural assets. One of them is by holding art festivals.

Indonesia's various and beautiful traditional arts also needed to be neatly documented. Documentation could be in archives, documentaries, etc. Traditional art conservation could be done by making documentary films.

Documentary films were films that told actual events. Documentaries were usually of short duration, featuring real characters, not actors. Learning about history could be done by browsing the literature, viewing related documentaries, looking at locations, talking directly with historical witnesses, etc. The origins of cultural history could be traced through various sources who had competence as historical actors.

Art promotion was one way to maintain local culture and was crucial in maintaining the existence of a country. The cultural promotion was one way to attract tourists to come to Indonesia. Tour packages could be encouraged to attract tourists to Indonesia.



3.3. Efforts in Branding World Dance Day Activation as a Medium to Introduce Traditional Dance among The Community

World Day Dance activation was held at ISI Surakarta every year on April 29. This event was held simultaneously at ISI, all over the city of Surakarta, and even in almost the whole world, involving the ISI Surakarta academic community, alums, stakeholders, culturalists, art activists, and the outside community to participate. World Dance Day activation was also a moment for ISI Surakarta to introduce and promote the campus to the public. World Dance Day activation was not only in the form of dance performances but also included seminars, alum meetings, and focus group discussions.

Various cultural events at ISI Surakarta were one way to maintain traditional arts. Each study program annually organized activation to keep the existence of traditional culture so that it remained resilient amid an increasingly strong influx of foreign cultures. Foreign cultural infiltration was difficult to stop in a country. The interaction and communication that occurred naturally made these foreign cultures readily accepted in our country. However, filtering efforts would always be made to maintain local culture. Local culture became an identity in maintaining local wisdom. The younger generation was generally prone to accepting foreign cultures that were not following our cultural personalities, so it took a lot of effort to filter foreign cultures with various activities.

It was time for the younger generation to get to know various traditional cultures that were the pride of Indonesia, such as culinary, traditional clothing, traditional ceremonies, music, dance, tourist attractions, etc. Some things were often unknown to the younger generation regarding their own country's customs because they were less involved in the activities around them and lacked access to information about cultural events in Indonesia. Therefore, various groups, including art and culture observers, humanists, practitioners, and education actors, held events to attract the younger generation's interest in learning about their culture.

World Dance Day was an event that had been packaged into various events that could be used to maintain traditional arts. Dance performances introduced different types of Indonesian dances so that people finally knew the kinds of dance that exist in Indonesia. Dance performances presented dance movements and equipment, from costumes to jewelry. Make-up on regional dances is also a concern of the community. Many things could be learned by introducing just one dance to the public. In addition, it could also explain the meaning and function of each dance. So far, dances had been used to accompany traditional ceremonies in each region. The following was the documentation of World Dance Day activation in the ISI Surakarta Rectorate courtyard.



Fig. 1. Documentation: Anton Rosanto, PR Department, ISI Surakarta

The World Dance Day activation at ISI Surakarta took place in the courtyard of the ISI Surakarta Rectorate for one day and a night in the form of a dance performance 24 hours non-stop. The ISI Surakarta academic community was enthusiastic about watching this activity.



The following is the documentation data for the World Dance Day activation which was held at Pendhapa ISI Surakarta. This activity involved the Dance Study Program from lecturers, students, and the ISI Surakarta academic community. The ISI Surakarta academic community enthusiastically welcomed the World Dance Day activation by holding dance performances 24 hours non-stop.



Fig. 2. Documentation: Anton Rosanto, PR Department, ISI Surakarta

The following was the documentation of the World Dance Day Pre-Event activation held outside the ISI Surakarta campus, to be precise, at Bale Ndeso Karanganyar. The community enthusiastically participated in the event by dancing together. This activity was a form of effort to maintain a traditional culture in the form of dance. Traditional art is a form of promotional potential that must be pursued to maintain the sustainability of Indonesia's cultural wealth.



Fig. 3. Documentation: Anton Rosanto, PR Department, ISI Surakarta

Through World Dance Day, efforts to preserve traditional arts were also carried out by inviting the public to participate and contribute to celebrating World Dance Day. The event creates public enthusiasm. They observe the event, as seen in the event documentation at the Open Theater at ISI Surakarta below.



Fig. 4. Documentation: Anton Rosanto, PR Department, ISI Surakarta

The Surakarta Sunanate Palace, interested in preserving traditional arts, also held the World Dance Day activation. The following is the documentation of World Dance Day at Pendhapa ISI Surakarta.



Fig. 5. Documentation: Anton Rosanto, PR Department, ISI Surakarta

4. Conclusion

Efforts to preserve cultural arts through the World Dance Day activation at ISI Surakarta had been carried out in the last few years. The event was held to maintain traditional arts' existence, which was beginning to be eroded by foreign cultures' penetration. World Dance Day involved various components of society, from educators, practitioners, cultural observers, academics, etc., in holding events annually in ISI Surakarta and numerous country locations. This fact showed that traditional dance stood firm amid competition with foreign cultures. Various other events accompany the celebration of World Dance Day, such as seminars, focus group discussions, and alum meetings to discuss cultural progress and conservation. In addition, World Dance Day was one of the promotional efforts to the public regarding the existence of ISI Surakarta as an art college in Surakarta City. Many positive benefits could be drawn from this World Dance Day activation as an effort to preserve cultural assets and traditions in Indonesia. The positive use was that traditional dances still existed amidst foreign cultures' penetration. World Dance Day also helped promote the existence of ISI Surakarta among the people of Indonesia and abroad so that it was widely recognized as an art college.



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