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The Role of Dance Studios in Maintaining the Existence of Tari Topeng Cirebon Culture Through the P5 Program for Students in Elementary Schools

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Abstract:
Culture is a gift for a nation that must be preserved. One of the popular cultures is the art of Tari Topeng in Cirebon. As a Cirebon community that has religious and cultural characteristics, every level of society should maintain the preservation of the art of Tari Topeng. However, as the times develop, with all its sophistication, foreign culture makes it easy to enter and erode local culture. The task of preserving the culture of Tari Topeng art should be the responsibility of all people, but only a few people do it. The dance studio is expected to be the last bull in preserving the art of Tari Topeng and begin to shift the target of its introduction to children as the next generation of the nation. The purpose of this study is to find out the Role of Dance Studios in Maintaining the Existence of Tari Topeng Cirebon Culture Through Introduction to Children. The research approach used is a quantitative approach with a case-by-case research method. The informants in this study were three dance studio managers from three different dance studios in the district and city of Cirebon. The data collection techniques used used are interview, documentation and documentation. The data analysis techniques used are data collection, data reduction, data presentation and data verification. The results of this study show that the younger generation, in this case, represented by children, has an important role in maintaining cultural preservation in the future. The dance studio as a center for the preservation of dance culture began to direct its attention to introduce the art of Tari Topeng to children. The efforts made are by collaborating with various government institutions, one of which is with school institutions. The art of Tari Topeng can be used as part of the implementation of P5 activities. The challenge faced is the extra effort given by dance instructors because in training children's motor skills is different from teenagers and adults. Cultivating a love for the culture of the archipelago can begin with loving the local culture. It is recommended that the government provide policy support and funding assistance to expand the reach of dance studios in schools nationwide to ensure sustainable cultural preservation for future generations.

Keyword : Dance Studio, Tari Topeng Cirebon, P5, Elementary School

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INTRODUCTION

Culture is the identity of a particular society. The loss of a culture is the same as the loss of the identity of the community in a region. Loss of identity will take away one's sense of belonging and pride in one's nation. As a result, people will not have an attitude and will be easily instigated and carried away by currents that can lead to negative things such as loss of sense of unity due to division. Many countries in the world are experiencing identity crises that result in the loss of indigenous groups due to the loss of unity due to the loss of national identity, such as the loss of Indian tribes in America or aboriginal tribes in Australia (Dippie, 1991; Rowley, 1970).

Indonesia is a country that has many tribes and cultures. As an eastern country that upholds culture, it is natural that the Indonesian nation is a nation with a strong identity and is not easily influenced by foreign cultures. The Indonesian nation, apart from being a rich nation of culture, is also a nation that adheres to a belief in obedience to God that can strengthen a sense of unity and unity.

One of the masterpieces of Indonesian culture that is popular among the public is the art of dance that has existed since ancient times and developed from generation to generation until now. One of the popular dances is the Tari Topeng Cirebon. This dance is a regional dance that originated from Cirebon. Tari Topeng is a source of pride and identity of the people of Cirebon (Sholihah, 2016; Wardani & Amin, 2021). As a people who live in a city that has a long history in Indonesia because it is known as a guardian city because it is the center of the spread of Islam, it is very important for the people of Cirebon to become a religious and cultured society, which means being religiously devout and also loving and proud of their own culture. This can be seen from palace-style buildings and fences that can be found throughout the Cirebon area.

However, the ideal conditions above are not directly proportional to the conditions on the field. It seems that this is an anomaly that causes the gap to appear. The geographical location of Cirebon, which is on the border of the provinces of West Java and Central Java and is on the northern coast route, which is often passed through and becomes a stopover for people outside Cirebon, is a challenge because it is vulnerable to the entry of foreign cultures. This condition is exacerbated by the massive flow of globalization so that it makes it easier for foreign cultures to enter (Nisrina et al., 2020). One of those affected is the culture of Tari Topeng which has begun to fade and be forgotten by the public. The art of Tari Topeng is only enjoyed by parents, while there are some teenagers and children who are not familiar with mask dancing (Lasmiyati, 2011; Widyatami Heningsetya, 2015). The spread of gadget culture among teenagers and even children is increasingly drowning the existence of Tari Topeng art in their respective regions.

The last bastion that preserves the art of masked dance is the dance studio. Even so, the number is limited to certain areas because not every sub-district or village

has a dance studio. Now the mission of dance studios must start to see children as their promotional targets. This is because children are the younger generation who will one day pass on the baton of leadership in the country. If today's children don't know the art of mask dancing, this art will be lost.

Several previous studies have conducted research related to the art of Tari Topeng Cirebon, such as the one conducted by Alfarisi, (2022) who said that the role of women in preserving the Cirebon Slangit-style Tari Topeng needs to be appreciated by residents through the collective awareness that women are part of the structure of society that is no less important than men, so that it becomes a social construct that makes women second-class creatures after men disappear. in the mindset of the community in general. Then the results of research conducted by Nurasih (2014) show that the preservation of dance art is held by the puppeteer behind the mask. A Mask Puppeteer not only acts as a leader in traditional rituals, but also as a guardian of the continuity of this art to keep it sustainable. Furthermore, the results of research conducted by Rizqi & Putra, (2020) show that efforts to preserve the Klana Tari Topeng include three aspects, namely protection, utilization, and development. Based on the results of the three studies above, it can be concluded that conservation efforts are carried out by various elements of society ranging from women, dance masterminds and also carried out by the dancers' own families.

However, the researchers argue that there is an element of society that also plays an important role in preserving the art of masked dance that has not yet been revealed, namely the role of the Dance Studio itself as the last line of defense for the preservation of this art. In addition, the researchers also highlight that the people who need to instill a love for this art are the younger generation, in this case children. Thus, the researchers are interested in examining the role of dance studios in efforts to preserve the art of Tari Topeng Cirebon and focus on the target of introducing this art form to children.

The struggle of traditional arts is not easy to introduce to the younger generation. It is the task of the founders of the studio who recognize that the ups and downs of an artistic movement remain inevitable. Realizing these difficulties, the studio's founders aggressively held performances from school to school and even went international. The goal, of course, is that mask dancing will attract people to learn, especially children. This is done through collaboration between studios and other studios in the city of Cirebon. And each studio has the same mission, which is to foster a love for Indonesian culture and create various art activities in their own environment which can later be advanced to the international level so that they can make the nation proud.

This research is urgently needed to be conducted considering the rapid erosion of local cultural identity among the younger generation due to globalization and digital technology penetration. The critical condition of Tari Topeng Cirebon,

which is only appreciated by older generations while being increasingly unfamiliar to children and teenagers, requires immediate intervention to prevent cultural extinction. With limited time remaining before this traditional art completely loses its audience and practitioners, documenting and analyzing the strategic role of dance studios as the last fortress of cultural preservation becomes crucial for developing effective strategies to save Indonesia's cultural heritage. The current momentum, where some dance studios are beginning to target elementary school children through educational collaboration, presents a unique opportunity that must be studied and replicated before this window of opportunity closes.

The purpose of this research is to comprehensively examine and analyze the pivotal role of dance studios in maintaining the existence of Tari Topeng Cirebon culture through targeted introduction to elementary school children. Specifically, this study aims to identify the strategies employed by dance studios in collaborating with educational institutions, particularly through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5), to cultivate cultural appreciation among young learners. Additionally, this research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these preservation efforts, document the challenges faced in teaching traditional dance to children, and assess the level of enthusiasm and response from the younger generation towards Tari Topeng Cirebon. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for developing sustainable cultural preservation models that can be implemented by other traditional art forms and regions facing similar cultural erosion challenges.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a case study research type. The case study method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of the specific phenomenon of dance studios' role in cultural preservation within their natural context, providing comprehensive insights into the complex interactions between studios, schools, and children in the Cirebon cultural setting. The informants in this study are three people, namely Adi Kardila from Sanggar Akar Randu Alas, Erlang Heri from Sanggar Sekar Pandan and Saeful Firdaus from Sanggar Kresna Kencana. This research was conducted in three Tari Topeng studios in Cirebon Regency and City.

The data collection instrument techniques used are interview, observation and documentation instruments. The interview and observation indicators include studio management strategies, teaching methods for children, collaboration with educational institutions, children's enthusiasm and response, challenges faced in cultural preservation, and the effectiveness of P5 program implementation in introducing Tari Topeng Cirebon to elementary students. The data analysis techniques used are data collection, data reduction, data presentation and data verification

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tari Topeng Studio in Cirebon

Dance studios are organizations created to accommodate the artistic creativity of the community, especially when it comes to dance. This is a place for those who want to know more about the traditional dances typical of their respective regions. Cirebon City is a city rich in culture from typical traditions such as Cirebon dance which is a source of cultural pride. One of them is that the dance studio is also a gathering place for dancers in the surrounding area who want to promote and preserve regional culture. There are several studios that are active in the Cirebon area, one of the studios that preserve the traditional regional dance is Studio Krena Kencana, Studio Sekar Pandan, and Studio Akar Randu Alas.

Krena Kencana Studio

One of the dance studios in Cirebon is Krena Kencana Studio a, founded on July 23, 2023. This studio is located on Jl. Cideng Jaya Gg. Sutajaya, RT.10/RW.03, Kertawinangun, Kedawung District, Cirebon Regency, West Java. This place is a new studio because it has only been established for a year, but the enthusiasm of the people is very good. Many children have signed up one week before the studio's official opening. Krena Kencana Studio has participated in several competitions, one of which is a competition held in Cirebon City, Kedawung and has also appeared at the anniversary events of Sekar Pandan Studio, and Karang Taruna Cirebon Regency (Firdaus, 2023).



Figure 1. Krena Kencana Studio

Sekar Pandan Studio

Sekar Pandan Studio was established in 1992 and is one of the oldest dance studios in Cirebon. This studio is located on Jl.Kanoman Utara No.70 RT 05 RW 10 KEL/KEC. Pekalipan, Pekalipan, District. Pekalipan, Cirebon City, West Java. This studio began with the desire to accommodate school children in dance activities and preserve traditional Javanese arts, especially Cirebon dance. Since its establishment,

Sekar Pandan Studio has actively participated in dance competitions outside the city and even hit internationally, such as to South Korea, Greece, and Australia (Heri, 2023).



Figure 2. Sekar Pandan Studio

Akar Randu Alas Studio

Sanggar Akar Randu Alas was established on September 5, 2009. The address of this studio is on Jl. Syech Achmad Pangeran Panji No.88, Kalikoa, Kedawung District, Cirebon Regency. As a place used to channel talents, desires and habits in dancing, both traditional and modern dances, Studio Root Randu Alas focuses on mask dancing because of the large number of enthusiasts and is a characteristic of Cirebon dance. Sanggar Akar Randu Alas has experience performing in various major cities in Java such as Bandung, Solo, Karanganyar, and has also participated in activities at the Dinas (Dance Exchange) event (Kardila, 2023)



Figure 3. Akar Randu Alas Studio

Those are some of the dance studios that are active in Cirebon in preserving traditional dances, especially Tari Topeng Cirebon's. As the name suggests, mask dancing is performed using masks as a mandatory property when dancing. In dance, the mask acts as a representation of the phase of human life that is never separated from the mask itself. Therefore, the dancers in this dance are known as "puppeteers" because each dancer must be able to convey the mask character they will perform.

The Advantages and Attractiveness of the Tari Topeng Cirebon that Distinguish it from Other Dances

The advantage of mask dancing compared to other dances is that it has its own appeal because it has its own character value (based on the character of the Tari Topeng) (Firdaus, 2023; Heri 2023). First, the character of Panji depicts a subtle character, and second, the character of Samba depicts an agile warrior character. The three characters of Rumiang describe a lively and graceful character. The fourth figure of Tumenggung depicts a dashing character and the fifth, namely the figure of Klana, symbolizes an angry, greedy and angry character. These five figures provide a meaningful portrayal of human nature that develops in society (Sahilla, 2023).

Another advantage is that Tari Topeng, both in terms of movement, expression, dance ornaments and so on, from the past to the present is still original and unchanged (Kardila, 2023). The reason for maintaining its originality is that each Tari Topeng movement has a meaning and moral message that is closely related to everyday human life. Moral meaning and messages are conveyed through nonverbal communication through gestures and expressions (Adita & Koapaha, 2014; Scott, 2021). Tari Topeng performances with their characteristics are able to provide their own charm and style because until now Tari Topeng can still maintain its exposition. The Tari Topeng is also known internationally as one of Indonesia's cultural heritage and is a cultural characteristic of the Cirebon people

The Condition of Tari Topeng Cirebon Art in the Era of Globalization

The condition of Tari Topeng Cirebon's in several studios is currently experiencing anxiety because gaps are starting to emerge (Firdaus, 2023). This gap arises because currently the younger generation, the generation that is expected to preserve and maintain the culture of its ancestors, is slowly abandoning it. The impact of globalization has had a great impact on the shift in local culture. Children tend to be more interested in getting to know modern dances that come from abroad rather than local or traditional dances of their own. The rapid pace of technological development and the entry of foreign cultures into Indonesia are the reasons for the estimated decline in the existence of domestic culture (Adita & Koapaha, 2014).

In addition to the gap that has arisen, an optimistic attitude is also shown by several dance studios in Cirebon that currently the public's perception of this Tari Topeng is still good because there are still enthusiastic enthusiasts (Kardila, 2023).

Efforts Made by the Studio to Introduce the Tari Topeng Cirebon to the public

Efforts made by studios in Cirebon to promote Tari Topeng include visiting formal educational institutions such as kindergartens, early childhood education, elementary schools and other school levels. This is done because in dance schools it is still included in the curriculum which is realized through the content of SBdP subjects and Arts and Crafts subjects. By adding competency indicators that must be mastered by students, namely prioritizing the introduction of local culture (Tari Topeng Cirebon), it can instill a love for local culture to protect from the entry of foreign cultures (Firdaus, 2023).

In addition to visiting formal institutions, of course other efforts are made through their own Tari Topeng performances. Apart from being a means to provide entertainment, it is also a means to introduce the community to the community. This activity is carried out regularly and on schedule, both monthly and annually in collaboration with agencies such as tourism and government agencies (Heri, 2023). Non-performance promotions can also be done through personal or organized communication with the public (Firdaus, 2023).

Another effort is to utilize social media. This effort was carried out by Sanggar Sekar Pandan by first participating in training activities related to the use of social media. The goal is to provide understanding and improve branding skills to the management and managers of the Sekar Pandan Art Studio. This branding can be maximized by promotions carried out through social media to reach young people (Pradhana et al., 2023).

The efforts made by studios in Cirebon aim to provide awareness to the public to be aware and start to be aware of their own culture, that as the people of Cirebon they should be proud because of the synchronization of being a city that has a long history and will definitely leave an abundance of culture, one of which is a masterpiece of dance. A traditional dance that is famous in the archipelago is the Tari Topeng Cirebon.

The Enthusiasm of Tari Topeng Cirebon Children

Early childhood and elementary school age are the right ages to instill character and also practice children's motor skills, including introducing Tari Topeng. Affectively, it can instill the character of love for the country's culture, psychomotorically, it can train children's motor movements.

Several dance studios in Cirebon are targeting to promote in early childhood and elementary school institutions. The goal is to introduce the Tari Topeng Cirebon

culture from an early age. The results can be felt, namely with the increase in public interest, especially among children whose parents have started to enroll them in the studio to learn Tari Topeng in person. For example, we can see the enthusiasm of children who registered for Studio Krena Kencana, where just one week after the official opening of this studio, approximately 50 children have registered from various regions in Cirebon, such as from Talun, Pilang, Sumber, and Plered. The age of children who register ranges from 5 to 12 years old and some have started actively participating in competitions (Firdaus, 2023). Then enthusiasm was also seen from Cirebon residents who were registered at the Sekar Pandan Studio. It was recorded that the registrants were dominated by children and adults. Heri (Sekar Pandan Studio Manager) stated that many professional Tari Topengrs who have emerged from this studio have performed at various events, both national and international, and they have been practicing since elementary school age (Heri, 2023). Meanwhile, Sanggar Akar Randu Alas has its own way to increase the enthusiasm of residents, especially children, to register for the studio, namely by not charging a fee (Kardila, 2023).

Based on the statements from the three studios above, it can be concluded that the enthusiasm of the children to practice the Tari Topeng Cirebon is very good. It is hoped that the massive promotion carried out by the Studio by holding performances carried out with the invitation of residents and government agencies can instill a love for the Tari Topeng culture, especially among children.

Special Training for Elementary School Children to Practice Tari Topeng

Every dance studio in Cirebon has special training for children. As carried out by Sanggar Krena Kencana, it provides special training in collaboration with certain schools to prepare for the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5) (Firdaus, 2023). The relevance is to instill character in students in elementary school because the Tari Topeng Cirebon has a strong character value. Each character in the Tari Topeng Cirebon depicts various characters that are relevant to the characteristics of human characters in daily life. The Tari Topeng Cirebon can be used as an alternative way to instill character in the P5 program while introducing local culture to children. The Tari Topeng Cirebon as part of the P5 activity has been attended by several schools, such as what Padliah (2021) mentioned that the Tari Topeng Cirebon can be applied to P5 activities at SDN Cimacan 3, Cimacan Village, Cipanas District, Cianjur Regency. Tari Topeng has character traits, namely religious, disciplined, courageous, polite, passionate, humble, loyal and responsible, which are applied to art learning in schools through learning activities and the process of carrying out tasks. In addition, the results of research conducted by Wahyudi & Ummah (2022) show that the learning of the Tari Topeng Cirebon is able to contribute to strengthening the character of students of MI Al-Washliyah Perbutulan Sumber

Cirebon which is proven through the process of giving various movements accompanied by dance character processing.

Is there a special coach provided by Sanggar Akar Randu Alas that gives special time for children so that they can focus on training? The studio management divides the season of Tari Topeng and creative dance rehearsals to practice on Saturdays and Sundays from 07.00 am until the end (Kardila, 2023). This particular time is given according to the children's school holidays. With this special time, it is hoped that children's training will be optimized.

Based on the statements given by some of the studios above regarding the special dance training of the Cirebon Mask for children, it can be concluded that special training can be provided in cooperation between the studio and the school as part of the P5 program or special training from the studio itself by providing a schedule. exercises that adapt to children's school holidays.

Challenges When Practicing Tari Topeng at a Child's Age

Training Tari Topeng Cirebon to children is certainly different from practicing Tari Topeng to teenagers and adults because they have different abilities. According to Firdaus (2023) from Sanggar Krena Kencana, the challenge faced when teaching dance to children is a lack of focus and gives the impression of playing around even though children easily memorize movements, but to make children focus on movements requires not easy effort. Focus is needed to adjust to the rhythm of movement, cohesiveness and also appreciation. Meanwhile, according to Heri (2023) from Sanggar Sekar Pandan, the challenge is to be more patient and make a bigger effort. This is because teaching dance to children requires a lot of process and time and also has to be consistent. In addition, there are several different challenges posed by Kardila (2023) from Sanggar Akar Randu Alas, namely the phenomenon of using gadgets by children can reduce their enthusiasm for practice, make them comfortable lying down and give the impression of being lazy to move, especially dance practice related to movement. As for the challenges faced by other researchers, such as those carried out by Hapsoh et al., (2023) that in the direction of teachers in teaching Tari Topeng Cirebon to students at SDN 1 Ujungsemi, there were obstacles, almost all students were not calm, sat well and paid attention to instructions, students tended to move and did not want to sit and watch. Thus, it can be concluded that teaching the art of masked dance to students requires extra effort because it pays attention to the age stage of children who cannot focus and still enjoy playing.

Instilling the Love of Cirebon Culture, Especially Tari Topeng in Children

Instilling a love for Tari Topeng Cirebon culture in children in each family varies according to their respective family backgrounds. If parents do not have a background related to the world of dance, they can invite their children directly to see

Tari Topeng Cirebon performances or watch the performances on social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and others (Firdaus, 2023; Heri , 2023). However, if parents have a background related to the world of dance, they can give direct examples to their children, such as taking children to watch their parents while they are practicing or taking them to watch live performances. Fostering a sense of love for Indonesian culture can start from loving local culture first. Because local culture is the identity of the people in the area itself (Kardila, 2023). Loving culture means contributing to preserving that culture so that it does not disappear and be replaced by a new culture that does not necessarily have a positive impact on the survival of the community itself.

Implications of Research Findings

The findings of this study have significant implications for cultural preservation policy and educational practice in Indonesia. The successful integration of Tari Topeng Cirebon into the P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening) program demonstrates that traditional arts can be effectively incorporated into formal education curricula, suggesting that government should develop systematic policies to support similar collaborations between cultural institutions and schools nationwide. The identification of specific challenges in teaching traditional dance to children—such as focus difficulties and technological distractions—provides valuable insights for developing age-appropriate pedagogical approaches that can be applied to other traditional art forms facing similar preservation challenges. Furthermore, the demonstrated enthusiasm of children when properly introduced to their local culture through structured programs indicates that cultural erosion is not irreversible, and that strategic interventions at the elementary education level can successfully cultivate cultural appreciation among younger generations. These findings collectively suggest the need for a comprehensive national framework that combines government policy support, funding allocation for cultural education, teacher training in traditional arts pedagogy, and systematic integration of local cultural content into school curricula to ensure sustainable preservation of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

The Tari Topeng Cirebon is one of the cultural heritage of the archipelago which has a very high moral value and is also the identity of the local community. So it is important to make efforts to preserve this culture. Those who play an important role in keeping this culture sustainable are the young generation or the nation's children who in the future will take the baton to manage this country. Thus, Tari Topeng Cirebon culture needs to be introduced to children from an early age. The advantage of the mask is that it is a regional dance that is rich in meaning and moral messages that are closely related to human character because each character in this Tari Topeng

depicts the character of human water in general. The current condition of the Tari Topeng Cirebon itself cannot be said to be evenly distributed because in some areas in Cirebon there are gaps, but in some other areas it still shows its existence. The dance studio as a center for the preservation of masked dance plays an important role in maintaining its existence. Efforts made by dance studios to introduce mask dancing include holding performances at festivals and collaborating with schools in an effort to target the younger generation in schools. The enthusiasm of children as part of the younger generation shows good enthusiasm because many parents are seen registering their children in dance studios in Cirebon. In training children, each dance studio has a specific way to optimize training, such as collaborating with schools as part of P5 activities. The challenge faced is in training Tari Topeng Cirebon to children, of course it is different from training Tari Topeng to teenagers and adults because they have different abilities. Instilling a sense of love for Indonesian culture in children can start from loving the local culture first.

This study acknowledges several limitations including its geographical restriction to only three dance studios in Cirebon, focus exclusively on elementary school children, small sample size of three studio managers, absence of longitudinal data to assess long-term effectiveness, and lack of quantitative measurement tools for cultural appreciation assessment. To expand the scope and deepen understanding of cultural preservation through educational collaboration, future research should consider conducting comparative studies across multiple regions and traditional art forms in Indonesia, implementing longitudinal tracking of children's cultural engagement over 5-10 years, developing quantitative assessment tools for measuring cultural knowledge retention and attitudinal changes, expanding demographic scope to include teenagers, parents, teachers and community leaders, investigating the role of digital technology and social media in cultural transmission, performing cost-benefit analyses of different preservation models, and conducting cross-cultural comparative studies with other Southeast Asian countries to identify best practices and innovative approaches that can contribute to more effective and sustainable cultural preservation strategies nationwide.

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