



Utilization of Social Media Platforms in Preserving Pedalangan Arts

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Abstract: The advancement of digital technology is inevitable. One of the masterpieces of mankind is in the form of various social media platforms as a further effect of the presence of the internet. Its presence makes it easier for humans to solve problems and meet various needs, including the preservation of traditional Indonesian arts. This article attempts to examine how social media can become a learning medium for traditional Indonesian arts, namely pedalangan. The arts related closely related to the art of pewayangan (puppetry in general) which is more widely known by the Indonesian people. The art of pedalangan includes several fields, namely mendalang (playing shadow puppets) and mengrawit (playing musical instruments - gamelan). This article is the result of research on the Sanggar Monod Laras community in Semarang City. This community consists of children from generation Z and alpha who are students and young pamong. Data was obtained using a survey via Google Form and received 30 responses. An important finding of this study is that both respondents who are generation Z and alpha use various social media platforms to enrich their knowledge, as well as using it to share works, experiences, and knowledge about pedalangan art.

Keywords: Social Media Platforms, Pedalangan Art, Cultural Preservation.

1 Introduction

Pedalangan is one of Indonesia's traditional arts that must be preserved. The art that focuses on how to become a puppeteer, lost its popularity when entering the digital era. The puppeteer in a puppet show has the role of director and main actor who plays the entire storyline. In terms of inheritance, the art of pedalangan, especially in Central Java and Yogyakarta, mostly comes from the descendants of previous puppeteers. Jazuli (Jazuli, 2011) said that of the 300 puppeteers who have worked in Central Java, only less than 10 people are not puppeteer descendants.

Meanwhile, in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) only two puppeteers that are not descendants of puppeteers, but rather gamelan players which are still related to pedalangan. In fact, UNESCO has placed pedalangan as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2004. Therefore, the presence of studios that educate children about pedalangan to continue the tradition is very much appreciated. In Semarang City, there are Sanggar Monod Laras opens up opportunities for all levels of society to learn the art of pedalangan and karawitan.

The studio, which was established in 2017, opens pedalangan and karawitan classes for children and teenagers from various backgrounds. This is certainly a breath of fresh air for the preservation of pedalangan because the great enthusiasm of children has great potential to develop this traditional art so that it becomes known again to the public. Interestingly, almost all students who study at Sanggar Monod Laras are children of generation Z and Alpha who are very familiar with the digital world and social media.



Fig. 1. Pedalangan Class In Sanggar Monod Laras

Social media often gets a negative image because of the confusion of information that is often not filtered perfectly to be consumed by young users. The public is often presented with content that is not educational, prioritizes virality, contains bombastic sentences that deceive the audience, and not a few contain discussions that should not

be consumed by minors, but are still misdirected. In other words, more and more educational content needs to be emerging. Concerns about the large amount of low-quality content have attracted the interest of content creators to compete to provide meaningful materials. So it has potential not only in terms of general knowledge but also in preserving culture.

Preserving culture which was previously done conventionally, can now be done by utilizing social media platforms. Social media has now matched the capabilities of mass media in terms of conveying information (Triaputri & Muljono, 2022). This means that content uploaded on various platforms can be easily accessed by all levels of society. Including the art of pedalangan. This article explores how social media is used by Monod Laras members in preserving the art of pedalangan. The urgency is that, although currently there is a lot of content that focuses on preserving Nusantara culture, not many people understand and are interested in continuing the art of pedalangan.

2 Pedalangan Art

Pedalangan, derived from the root word *dalang*, is a form of art and skill to play and organize everything in a shadow puppet show. Kusbiyanto (Kusbiyanto, 2015) said that a puppeteer is a central figure, not only as a director but also as the main actor and coordinator of the entire puppet show. This means that the puppeteer's job is not only on stage but also managing all activities related to the puppet show as a whole including preparation, maintenance, and so on.

Junaidi (Junaidi, 2014) said that there are 7 (seven) basic skills that must be mastered by a puppeteer, namely: (1) *amardawagung*, expertise in traditional music; (2) *amardibasa*, mastering the art of speaking and language; (3) *awicarita*, expert in storytelling; (4) *paramakawi*, expert in Kawi language; (5) *paramasastra*, expert in literature; (6) *renggep*, having high spirits; and (7) *sabet*, skill in playing puppets. With such complex mastery material, it is common for a puppeteer to be an adult. Even so, it does not mean that children cannot become puppeteers, if their abilities are considered sufficient. Learning the art of pedalangan is usually done in various ways. Some of them are through formal and informal education.

Formal education can be done through subjects in schools such as those conducted by SMK 8 Surakarta and the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Surakarta (ISI Surakarta) (Jazuli, 2011). In these schools, students are faced with a curriculum structure and assessment standards that have been neatly arranged. Meanwhile, in non-formal studios, the curriculum taught focuses on developing abilities with a curriculum that is not too strict. In its development, learning the art of pedalangan is no longer exclusively obtained only through schools. With the massive development of social media, knowledge about the art of pedalangan can be spread widely among wider circles.

Sanggar Monod Laras is one of the pedalangan art studios that actively trains young puppeteers. Quoting from the official website of Sanggar Monod Laras, the mission of the tutors who train at this studio is to introduce and teach the art of pedalangan to the younger generation, especially children. The main goal is so that the children who become students will have the skills and willingness to preserve this art whatever their profession later when they are adults.

3 Preserving Traditional Arts through Social Media

Currently, social media plays an important role in preserving traditional arts. Society has made social media the main source for searching for information (Triaputri & Muljono, 2022). This means that social media has become part of the daily lives of all levels of society. Along with its development, social media can be used as a learning medium with a wider scope (Sukoco & Rahmadanik, 2022). For this reason, creators are also required to present quality, educational, and interesting content for their target audiences.

A survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) (2024) shows that internet penetration in Indonesia currently reaches 79.5% or around 221 million people out of a total population of 278 million Indonesians. This means that most Indonesians can feel the ease of accessing information via the internet. Of the 221 million, the majority of users are generation Z with a size of 34.4% followed by millennials with a number of 30.62%. Referring to the survey results, the potential for preserving traditional arts is very large to reach all levels of society.

The use of social media as a medium for preserving traditional arts has now been widely used. As conveyed by Romadhan et al. (2022) who discussed the use of social media for the preservation of Saronen Madura art, social media was chosen as a medium for preserving culture because of its popularity among the younger generation. In addition, social media can also stimulate awareness and new habits for artists to share their artistic experiences with the wider community, so that the general public can learn more about the art that is being promoted.

4 Research Methods

This study uses a survey method for students of Sanggar Monod Laras aged 6-18 years and has social media accounts on various platforms. Data collection using a questionnaire using Google Form with 30 respondents filling it out. The data was analyzed descriptively as discussion material.

5 Discussion

The questionnaire distributed using Google Form received responses from 29 people, revealing important data that can be used to dissect the use of social media in preserving pedalangan art.

Figure 2 shows who played a role in introducing pedalangan art to Monod Laras students. Seven (7) people (24.1%) said they were introduced by their parents, 6 people (20.7%) through electronic media TV or radio, 5 people (17.2%) got to know pedalangan art from social media, the rest got to know pedalangan art from other sources.

Dari mana pertama kali kenal seni pewayangan?

29 jawaban

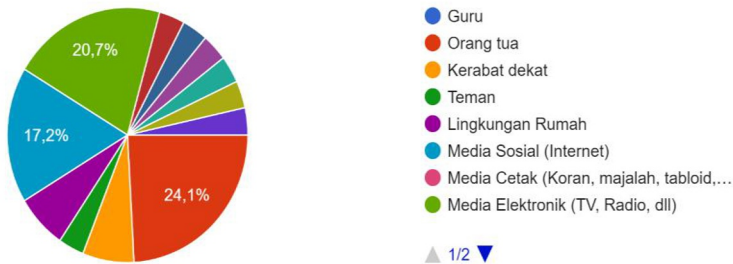


Fig.2. Introduction to Puppety Art

The data shows that parents still have an important role in introducing traditional arts, in this case, Pedalangan to children. Meanwhile, with the increasing openness of information in the media, especially electronic media and social media, children can automatically get information about traditional arts which then triggers interest in studying more about Pedalangan.

Judging from the data in Figure 1, social media has a significant role as a source of information about Pedalangan by generations Z and Alpha. A significant role is also shown in terms of how children learn more about Pedalangan as shown in Figure 3.

Media apa yang sering digunakan untuk mendalami seni pedalangan?

29 jawaban

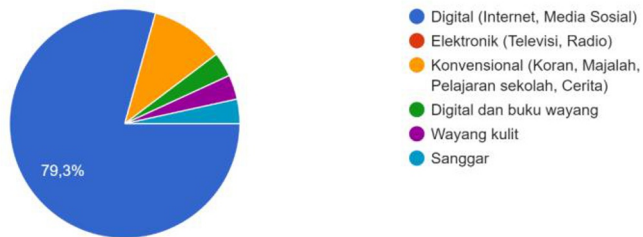


Fig.3. Source of Information about Pedalangan Art

Social media plays a very important role in completing children's knowledge when learning the ins and outs of Pedalangan. The popular platform used by students at Sanggar Monod Laras is the Youtube platform, at 82.8%, as shown in Figure 4, with the most popular media form being long videos lasting more than 10 minutes (Figure 5).

Bila menggunakan media sosial, platform mana yang utama digunakan untuk menonton atau mencari informasi tentang seni pedalangan?

29 jawaban

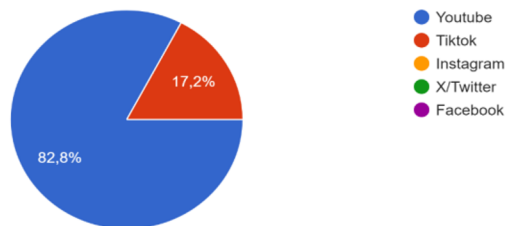


Fig.4. Popular Social Media Platform about Pedalangan

Apa bentuk konten seni pedalangan yang paling Anda sukai?
29 jawaban

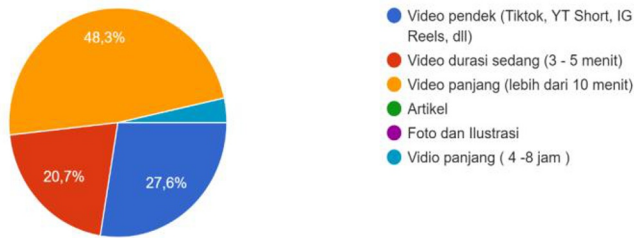


Fig.5. The Form of Content about Pedalangan

The data shows that audio-visual media in the form of Youtube videos is the most preferred media for finding information about pedalangan. Although for engagement and marketing purposes, short videos such as Youtube Short, Tiktok, or Instagram Reels are more popular because the tempo of information delivery is fast so that it does not take up much of the audience's time (Dodds, 2024), in terms of informative and educational content such as used for learning Pedalangan, the long-form video format still shows its advantages. Some of them are, the information contained in long-form videos will be more complete and comprehensive than short videos. So that children who want to seriously study Pedalangan do not need to open many videos for related material.

In addition to getting information from audio-visual media, students of Sanggar Monod Laras also actively search for Pedalangan through search engines. As many as 23 people or 79.3% admitted to looking for further information about materials related to pedalangan. This shows that Monod Laras students really have a great interest in the Art of Pedalangan and are able to find the knowledge they need on their own. Even though they study pedalangan once a week at the Monod Laras Studio, 27 respondents or 96% still take the time to browse social media related to Pedalangan.

Social media is not only used to get information about Pedalangan. Monod Laras students also use it as a means of expressing themselves and socializing with the community related to Pedalangan. As many as 18 students or 64% have personal accounts or channels that specifically contain content related to the Art of Pedalangan.

Ten (10) of them create content via Tiktok. Nine (9) students use Youtube, eight (8) people upload content via Instagram. while five (5) people via Facebook. This data shows the reciprocal ecosystem carried out by Monod Laras students by actualizing the Art of Pedalangan. The results of their learning and experiences are shared with the wider community who follow their social media. The content forms are diverse, with 44% or 12 people uploading short videos via Tiktok, Youtube

Shorts, or Instagram Reels, with the majority of content being puppet shows at 59.3% or 16 students. Some of them also upload behind-the-scenes content or their learning process while at Sanggar Monod Laras.

Utilization of social media for the preservation of Pedalangan Art in the next generation does not mean without worries. Some of the main concerns felt by parents of students are that there is content that uses coarse language that is actually not suitable for children to consume. This is influenced by the freedom of content creators to choose the style of content delivery, although many of them do not comply with the norms of politeness. Another concern is how children have the potential to depend on their activities with gadgets. Children's dependence on gadgets can cause a lack of social interaction that should be done a lot at their age.

Based on the data that has been presented above, there are several things that deserve attention. First, judging from the information obtained about the Art of Pedalangan, children can take the positive side of social media and absorb useful knowledge from it. The presence of social media is very helpful for students of Sanggar Monod Laras to deepen their knowledge of the Art of Pedalangan. Through various social media platforms, especially the Youtube platform, children can get puppet content in the form of puppet shows and behind-the-scenes activities. Children can also easily access various learning resources using search engines with the aim of enriching their experience in learning to become a puppeteer.

Second, when viewed from the form of media and type of content, videos longer than 10 minutes are considered very effective in introducing the Art of Pedalangan to young people. This is because the content of the social media content they get can be made complete and comprehensive, but without being long-winded so that children will not get bored quickly. The use of short videos in pedalangan art content will be less effective because the discussion of pewayangan and pedalangan is complex so that it will require many video clips so that it can make it difficult for children to gain knowledge easily. The use of photo illustration or article content types seems less popular because children need real demonstrations such as puppet movements, how to make them, or other materials so that they can easily imagine and imitate directly through the content they watch.

Furthermore, in addition to being used to receive knowledge, Monod Laras students use social media to share the pedalangan art knowledge they have gained. Some re-share the puppet shows they have watched, others share behind-the-scenes activities such as the learning atmosphere at the studio they attend. This ensures that the cycle of spreading pedalangan knowledge can continue to roll, so that preservation efforts can continue to be carried out.

Because if the knowledge gained through social media content is not disseminated and stops at students, then the opportunity for children their age who are still laymen to understand the art of pedalangan will be increasingly closed. In other words,

through social media, the art of pedalangan is no longer an exclusive art that can only be learned by certain groups, but can be inclusive by inviting many ordinary people.

6 Conclusion

Social media has enormous potential in preserving the art of pedalangan, especially for generations Z and alpha. Easy access to knowledge through content on various platforms can generate interest for children to learn more about this art. Armed with the references they get through these contents, children can develop their interests and skills to become puppeteers while also sharing what they have learned with the wider community, especially children their age. Thus, the cycle of preserving the art of pedalangan can continue to roll and is no longer an exclusive art.

Creativity in creating content on the topic of pedalangan will be greatly needed. There are several things that should be considered, especially for people who want to create pedalangan content. First, the language used. The use of polite and courteous language is highly recommended so that children can get great benefits and are not contaminated with harsh words as obtained through previous content. Second, pedalangan art content creators need to pay attention to the form and duration of the uploaded content. Due to the complexity of the discussion about pedalangan and pedalangan, the duration needed is better not too short as is usually used in short videos. This aims to make it easier for children to follow the material presented without having to be busy looking for the next video clips

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