

# PRESERVATION OF SUNDAHESE TRADITIONAL DANCE IN MODERN DAY

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## ABSTRACT

It is not easy to maintain traditional dance art nowadays. Influences came easily by technology and contribute to driving the passion of younger generation from traditional art to contemporary art. However, modernity should not be avoided. Traditional art could make an adaptation of the present situation. Indrawati Lukman, a Sundanese classical dance maestro and founder of Studio Indra Dance (STI) adaptive to the situation. A number of innovations were developed in traditional Sundanese dance she learned from her teacher as well as the dance she created as a choreographer, to preserve the art in the midst of globalization. Phenomenology interpretive thinking used and in-depth interviews chosen as the main method of data collection. The results obtained that classical and modernity can be united without eliminating the inherent identity as a dance of Sundanese tradition. Changes in motion, music, costumes and duration of the dance performed to maintain the continuity of Sundanese classical dance. Good communication with internal and external circles helped strengthen the effort. A strong mentality is needed to deal with the worst possibility that will be faced with the continuity of traditional dance art preservation.

Keywords: Preservation of traditional dance, innovation, communication

## ABSTRACT

Mempertahankan seni tari tradisi pada masa sekarang bukanlah hal mudah. Beragam pengaruh yang berdatangan dengan mudah melalui teknologi turut andil dalam mengubah rasa suka generasi muda dari seni tradisi ke seni kekinian, dengan berbagai alasannya. Meski demikian, modernitas tidak harus dihindari, karena perubahan merupakan ciri khas dari suatu budaya. Cara yang dapat dilakukan oleh seni tradisi adalah berdamai dengan kekinian. Cara tersebut ditempuh Indrawati Lukman, seorang maestro tari klasik Sunda sekaligus pendiri Studio Tari Indra (STI). Melalui STI, sejumlah inovasi pun dikembangkan agar tarian klasik Sunda dapat bertahan di tengah arus globalisasi. Melalui metode fenomenologi yang digunakan serta wawancara mendalam yang dipilih sebagai metode utama pengumpulan data, diperoleh hasil bahwa klasik dan modernitas dapat disatukan tanpa menghilangkan identitas yang melekat sebagai tarian tradisi Sunda.

Perubahan pada gerak, musik, kostum dan durasi tarian dilakukan untuk menjaga keberlangsungan tarian klasik Sunda. Komunikasi yang baik dengan kalangan internal dan kalangan luar, turut menguatkan upaya tersebut. Mental yang kuat diperlukan untuk menghadapi kemungkinan terburuk yang akan dihadapi dari keberlangsungan pemertahanan seni tarian tradisional.

Kata kunci: Pelestarian seni tari tradisional, inovasi, komunikasi.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the cultural results that survive until now is a traditional dance which is the result of a region's culture obtained by hereditary. Traditional dance has high historical value and broad guidelines. Traditional dance itself is divided into 3 types, namely:

1. Tari rakyat (People's dance); or folkasik dance, the dance that was born and developed from the culture of the local community and passed down from generation to generation. This type of traditional dance has a characteristic that has a social nuance, has a movement, dressing and costumes are simple and refers to the culture of local communities. Some examples of folk dance include the Tari Tayub, Orek-Orek, Tari Piring, Sintren and others. Even known that the folk dance is still loaded with magical elements.
2. Tari klasik (Classical dance); dance that was born and developed in the palace environment and passed down from generation to generation among the nobles. Generally classical dance has a characteristic, one of which is based on standardization. Another feature that has a high aesthetic value with a very deep meaning. Classical dance also features a luxurious appearance, ranging from motion, costume to makeup worn by the dancers. Examples of classical dance namely Tari Bedaya, Serimpi and so forth.
3. Tari Kreasi Baru (New creations dance); is a development of the classical dance that has been arranged according to the times. Understanding of the new dance creations that are classical dance that has been arranged, this dance develops according to the changing times. Although already arranged in accordance with the times, but this dance still has values in it. New dance creations are generally created or created by dance experts. Examples of new dance creations include Tari Kupu-kupu, Tari Merak, Tari Roro Ngingel, Tari Manipuri, and so forth.

The art of dance has related elements, namely the range of motion, the form of accompaniment and the dance costume. Variety of motion is one of the important elements of dance and aesthetic elements of dance. The dance movement comes from the body, which includes the top, the middle and the bottom.

The form of dance accompaniment can be a kind of internal dance accompaniment music and a kind of external dance accompaniment music. This type of internal dance accompaniment music comes from the dancer's body such as chest and

palm tapping on the Saman Dance from Aceh and the voice of "Cak" in the kecak dance from Bali. While the type of music accompaniment in the external dance comes from tetabuhan musical instruments, such as gamelan, pelog and salendro.

The dance costume is an aesthetic that can not be separated from the form of dance. The costumes on the dance for the ceremony are simpler and unimportant aesthetic. In contrast to the dance costumes used in performance dances or dance spectacle. The costumes in the dance spectacle or the show's form are designed in such a way that it gives an impression of beauty and depth from the audience.

As one of the cultural heritages, the existence of traditional dance needs to be preserved, because the development of information technology has brought changes in many ways, one of them in the field of art and culture. Many worries arise from the artists, because the luntarnya love of the younger generation to the art of traditional culture. They are more pleased with the look of modern art that looks more stylish to look at.

Nevertheless, the struggle to maintain the traditional arts in the form of traditional Sundanese dance is still done. One of them by Indrawati Lukman, a traditional Sundanese dance artist who is consistent to maintain the preservation of his beloved art since the 1960s.

The purpose of this study is to illustrate the struggle made by Indrawati Lukman in maintaining the existence of traditional Sundanese dance through Indra Tari Studio (STI), as well as various innovations made by Indrawati to create dance creations can be enjoyed by the younger generation nowadays.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To express Indrawati's experience in maintaining traditional dances and managing STI, qualitative research methods with phenomenology approach are used. Phenomenology theory is used as a guide for data analysis collected through interviews, observation and use of documents. The data analysis used is based on Miles-Huberman interactive analysis model which is done through three continuous processes between data reduction, analysis and conclusion.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Being a dancer may never have occurred in Indrawati's mind until at one time she learned dance to the dance teacher R. Tjetje Somantri when she was 10 years old. The praise she received from the teacher opened Indrawati's mind that she was talented in dancing to finally setting herself up to the traditional dance and establishing herself as a dancer.

### *Innovation is a Must*

The stock of knowledge that Indrawati acquired in the United States has opened her insight of the importance of dance elements based on scholarship. Based on that, Indrawati also undergoes the profession as a choreographer by starting to create various traditional dance based on the knowledge she learned. In 1968, two years after he came

home from studying, he founded a dance learning place called Studio Tari Indra (STI) located at the Graha Karya Wanita on Jl. R.E. Martadinata.

Making changes to a number of Princess dances that he learned from Tjetje Somantri, for Indrawati is a must. This is done so that the dances shown can be liked by the current young generation. Before studying in the United States on scholarship from Burrell International Scholarship, Indrawati performed classical dance by referring to the gestures of movement and music she learned from Tjetje Somantri, whereas after school, Indrawati began to reform in motion and music, although still referring to the grip of Sundanese. The movement is not much repetition and music is made more dynamic with a maximum duration of seven minutes.

It is changed, but still in the grip of Sundanese. But the music is more melodic, more dynamic. Then Pak Tjetje Somantri's dance was not changed but shortened in duration, no repetition. Just like that. So there is a change, but, just like Tjetje said, the classic is still classic.

Changes made by Indrawati aims to embrace young children to love the classical dance and want to learn it. I make a dynamic dance to make younger generation like the dance.

#### *Communication through various media*

Sarah Trenholm and Arthur Jensen interpret communication as a process of channeling messages from sources to recipients through various channels (Wiryanto, 2004: 6). Meanwhile, Berelson and Steiner interpret communication as the delivery of information, ideas, feelings, skills and others through the use of symbols, words, pictures, numbers and so on (Wiryanto, 2004: 7).

Referring to the explanation above, communication can be done through various forms and various channels, importantly, there is a message value of what is communicated from the communicator to the communicant. As a creator, Indrawati also placed communication as an important part in the development of dance creation and preservation of traditional Sundanese dance. He also builds his own communication strategy that is communicated to the internal environment and external environment verbally and symbolically. Internal communication aims to synchronized the works with the designed concept in order to make sure the message is properly delivered. External communication is defined as communication aimed at the audience. The communicative forms conveyed are symbolic displayed in overall staging package.

The communication strategy undertaken by Indrawati into her team is strengthening through a familial approach. Indrawati realized that in order to get the message and the impression she wanted to convey well, the dancers have a very important role. Therefore, Indrawati always prepare the performance very well in order to impress the audience. The first thing done by Indrawati is socialization the dance concept that will be performed. For Indrawati, the concept of the story plays an important role, especially when performing dance. For the story concept, Indrawati asked Arthur S. Nalan for help as her literature manager. To communicate the story concept, the dancers are gathered

and briefed. The purpose of the socialization is to finalize the concept that has been made.

Indrawati sees that communication between audiences and dancers is a partnership, so when performing a dance, it is important to think about how to enjoy the dance from the dancer viewpoint and the viewer's perspective, so the same understanding is developed.

With her students, Indrawati's communication is focused on the concept of kinship. That is, in fostering the young dancers, Indrawati regarded them as her children. When their performances are good, Indrawati feels obliged to show them in good forums, honorable, abroad. In this relationship, there is a cooperation system lived, because between Indrawati and the dancers have mutual relations, mutual need and all done together. There is interpersonal and group communication in the relationship.

In practice, to encourage her students to master the dance, Indrawati does not demand them to perform smooth, graceful, and expressive dance moves such as the established dancers, but are done according to the stage of their ability. Indrawati also supports the dancers in order to master the dance well and correctly. The dancers were free to inspire themselves with Indrawati's guidance.

When the internal communication is well established, then the next stage is the staging of works as a part of the external communication done in introducing the Sundanese dance to the audience, especially the younger generation.

For Indrawati, the performed dance is a form of communication. For that, in every stage, she wants the audience not just to come, but get something from what they watch.

I have a motto, communicative. So when making a work, I want to convey that my work is very different from others. There is a sense of happiness in people watching. There is a sense of pride watching. That means there is a correlation between performing and people watching.

Staging communication is applied by Indrawati in communicating classical Sundanese dance with a short duration and meaningful efficient movement. Indrawati is very concerned about the packaging of her dance performances. In addition to musical accompaniment and movement, the costumes worn by the dancers were greatly noticed. Symbolic communication is used by Indrawati in the staging of Sundanese dance through costume worn by his dancers to illustrate that Sundanese is good and not shabby. Indrawati applies the concept of glamor in the costumes worn by the dancers.

Indrawati's communication ties with her dancers, not only when they were on the STI team, as well as when they were out and able to be independent. Communication is no longer discuss the dance, but limited to extend the relationship. Communication is done through facebook and BBM, as well as a reunion with former members of the STI dance team. Facebook is also used as a communication channel to communicate her works and her thoughts about kasundaan.

Communication with senior dancers also done by Indrawati. The partnership communication was established by Indrawati along with senior dancers to communicate classical dance to the community through a performance. Indrawati embraces some of

the senior dancers she knows, to perform on stage, performing classical dances they master in a well-packed stage in a continuous series of stories. The costumes worn remain packed glamorously.

More broadly, communication to the public is done by Indrawati with the help of mass media, especially local newspapers. For Indrawati, mass media played a big role in raising her name as a dancer and choreographer of Sundanese dance. Since high school, Indrawati has been exposed by the local mass media in her role as a dancer and as a choreographer who brought her dancers out of the country.

## CONCLUSION

Sundanese traditional dance is part of Indrawati's life. She doesn't want the classical Sunda dance gone. Money is not the main goal in maintaining the art she loves. She just wants to keep working until the end of her life will result in outstanding dancers. Therefore, regardless of her condition, Indrawati persisted with the Studio Tari Indra she founded.

As a future recommendation, for the sustainability of traditional Sundanese art, it takes dedicated people like Indrawati Lukman. In addition, government support to the sustainability of Sundanese art needs to be reinforced, especially by making it a part of the school's local curriculum, not as an extracurricular activity.

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