

# Sriwedari *Wayang Wong* Performance as Custodian of Javanese Culture

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**Abstract.** The rapid development of information and communication technology today greatly affects the mindset and behavior of adolescents. Concern and a sense of belonging to Javanese culture are diminishing, especially in the city of Surakarta. How to dress, to speak and manners, teenagers in the city of Surakarta imitating the western style. Though the city of Surakarta has a Sriwedari wayang performance whose contents are rich in messages about Javanese culture and the importance of courtesy. The problem is how to make Surakarta urban youth appreciate Javanese culture through the Sriwedari wayang performance. Through a phenomenological approach with interviews, observations, and literature studies and using interactive data analysis it was found that in puppet shows have 3 important aspects (spectacle, order, and guidance) that can be used as a medium of appreciation for Javanese culture for adolescents. The benefit of this research is the result, a model for building awareness of regional cultures throughout Indonesia, so as to build Indonesian society united with a variety of indigenous cultures.

**Keywords** Javanese culture, wayang performance, manners

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## 1. Introduction

Along with the development of the era, the pattern of modern teenage life today leads them to prefer new cultural values as shortcuts or instant learning, not care about the environment, even worse is drugs and violence, that come from the outside and this new culture entered through various media without any filtering first. Popular media are very close to teenagers, which can no longer be controlled by the authorities. The entry of these new cultural values leads to changes in adolescent behavior that occurs in various aspects of life, for example the way of language, attitude, beliefs and knowledge. This resulted in the existing Indonesian teenagers is less concerned with its own culture. Surakarta or Solo is still known as the city of Javanese culture, because in Solo the royal palace still stands, and the people still hold Javanese traditional ceremonies that take place regularly. As a cultural city on the island of Java, Solo people are known to have a friendly attitude, courtesy, and highly upholding cultural heritage. But along with the development of technology and the swift global information, the existing Javanese culture has begun to be abandoned by its young generation. As the results of interviews, observation and mass media news stating that teenagers in the

city of Solo already prefer foreign culture than Javanese culture. Western culture is considered a lifestyle orientation and the formation of behavioral patterns to gain recognition in social life. This attitude of preferring foreign culture makes teenagers in the city of Solo to be a young generation who is less concerned with the surrounding culture and the impact on daily behavior patterns that cause ethical and moral crisis, will greatly affect the life of the adolescent itself and the development of the nation. The original Javanese cultural heritage that is still preserved by the local government is the culture of *Pagelaran Wayang Wong* or human wayang performance. This show is a drama art that uses a snapshot of Javanese *wayang kulit* (leather puppet show) that is combined with theater, accompanied by Javanese music *gamelan*. In the show there are many scenes that reveal messages containing Javanese values and philosophy of life, teachings about life and character. Starting from how children behave to the elderly to the teachings of the conditions of human devotion to God. Every behavior that is in this show has a meaning that reminds us as human beings to behave. In the city of Solo there are performances of *wayang wong* who are still operating today, located in the Sriwedari park area. This show is actually has the potential to help its audience to care about the natural environment and living things. The moral message conveyed in

this *wayang* performance is about ethics and morals as courtesy, self-awareness which is now threatened to be abandoned by the younger generation. But this *Wayang Wong Sriwedari* performances are now fewer visitors, moreover with the phenomenon of decreasing the concern of the younger generation towards their own culture, Javanese culture.

## 2. Method

With a phenomenological approach, which concern with study of experience from the individual perspective, based in paradigm of personal knowledge. Data collected by doing observation to youth activities, *Wayang Wong Sriwedari* performance, car free day activities in main area of Surakarta, and information media used by teenagers. Interview is an excavation of thought, concept and experience (Soewardikoen 2013) has done to Head of Cultural Service office of Surakarta city, interview to person in charge of Wayang Orang Sriwedari, Mr. Agus Prasetyo, S.Sn., Interview to education institution Mr. Sri Mulyono, S.Pd as Deputy Principal Senior High School 1 Surakarta. Interview about values and culture to head of History and Tradition office, Mrs. Yatini Wahyuningsih, SE., M.Sc. Data analysis and conclusion using matrix method. Matrix analysis is compared by aligning objects that are judged to have the same benchmarks, to help the presentation of data in a balanced picture or writing.

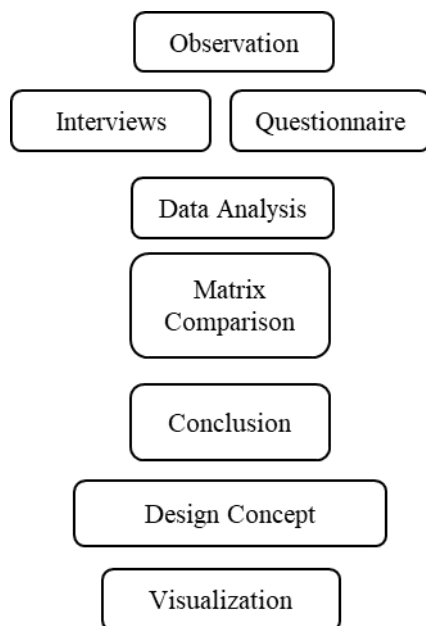


Figure 1. Research and Design Stages

## 3. Theoretical Review

Campaign as mentioned by Rogers and Storey (1987) in Venus (2004: 7) is a series of planned communication actions with the aim of creating a certain effect on a large

number of audiences that are sustained over a period of time. There are three campaign goals namely, Awareness, Attitude, Action (Ostergaard, 2002 in Venus, 2018: 14). Event is an activity that is held to commemorate a history in human life, either individually or group based on custom, culture, tradition, and religion that is held with a specific purpose and involve the community held at a certain time. (Noor, 2013: 8). Design plays an important role in creating and building a brand, expressing emotions, something that our senses can feel, that is the most important thing for the target audience (Soewardikoen 2014 in Septiningtyas 2018). Campaign with the event as the main medium through wayang orang as a vehicle for cultural appreciation. *Wayang orang* is a Javanese traditional art that combines western art in the form of Javanese dramas and arts in the form of *wayang*. The story of this performance is taken from Ramayana and Mahabharata stories. Formerly this *wayang orang* show can only be enjoyed by the king and his family, who live in the Mangkunegaran royal court house area. This performance was created by Kangjeng Pangeran Adipati I, and at that time the player may only be played by the court royal palace male players, and none of the female players. In the *wayang orang* show there are 3T elements of spectacle, *Tontonan* or spectacle, *Tatanan* or order and *Tuntunan* or guidance, conveyed implicitly through every scene performed by *wayang orang* players. In addition through the play, delivery of moral and ethical messages are also delivered through dance movements, the makeup, and clothing models of the play. In addition, moral and ethical messages are also in the form of songs that are submitted either by singers or *sinden* or by the actor itself. According to interviews conducted to the Cultural Office of the city of Surakarta, until the end of the reign of Mangkunegaran VII (1916-1944), came a Chinese trader named Gan Kam, who initiated *wayang orang* outside the palace and attracted fees for every visitor, with a colossal stage-oriented stage in Western performances is enough to make this show popular with the upper class society at that time. The Javanese culture is not only famous for its uniqueness and well manners, but also because it still holds strongly the philosophical values of life in it. In everyday life, the Javanese always apply the philosophical, ethical, and well manners. Philosophical in Javanese culture is the teachings of *Kejawen*, this belief is the handle of life of Javanese society in behave. Character, ethics, and well manners are three interrelated things, all of which are contained in Javanese culture that should be manifested in everyday behavior.

Virtuosity is the ultimate guideline for the Javanese people to always behave wisely in his life. Javanese culture is created from various competitions and tribes that exist in the world, created by the acculturation of the culture brought by the traders and immigrants who had stopped in Indonesia in the past. Javanese people are influenced by Hinduism which is the majority religion in India and Buddhism which is the belief of Chinese society, namely in the field of performing arts, dance, temple reliefs and statues. Art performances that show the influence of Indian and Chinese cultures are *wayang orang*, *wayang golek* and

*wayang kulit*. The performance of wayang art is the influence of the entry of Hindu and Buddhist culture reflected from every dance movement that is inspired from the reliefs of Prambanan and Borobudur temples, in addition to traditional musical instrument dance which is developed until now is also the adoption of temple reliefs such as flute and *gong*. The traditional Javanese society can not be separated by the beliefs of *kejawen* which are the guides of life in Javanese culture, that in *kejawen* thought has its own spiritual value. this belief provides understanding and directs man to worship his Lord (*Manunggaling Kawula lan Gusti*), that every people must act in accordance with the teachings of the Creator. According to Budiono Herusatoto, to achieve these goals the Javanese used to take action to form a personality that is closer to God. Examples are the behavior of reducing consuming food and reducing sleep, to be wiser and more alert, this is the process of believable *kejawen* as a spiritual form of the Javanese. The ideological view of *kejawen* about the meaning of human life in the world is presented realistically. In addition to devotion to God, humans must also behave well among each other and the environment. To assess one's behavior, the Javanese community has several marks used to assess the minds of others. The first human being is judged from a *patrap susila* that is a behavioral pattern, how he behaves when treating his parents or his neighbor. Then the second, the *ukara* or how to speaks, becomes a person who speaks honestly and clearly or otherwise. Then the third, *sastra* is the attitude and intelligence in working and completing its obligations. Fourth, how morally and ethically towards fellow human beings and their environment. Many humans are taught politeness and morality but as time goes by it becomes lost that will hurt themselves.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

From the results of interviews with adolescent teachers, it was found that adolescent behavior is currently worrying. From the results of interviews with teenage teachers, obtained data that the behavior of adolescents today became worrying. Teenagers have started to do things beyond the boundaries that are negative impact on the surrounding environment as consuming drugs and violence that is not in accordance with the norms and behavior patterns in accordance with the teachings of Javanese culture.

Many students dare to play truant during class time and prefer to hang out and smoking outside school that does not reflect polite and polite attitude at all. Many students are expelled from school because of morality and inappropriate attitudes by school-aged students, such as having dared to steal, dared to ditch school for inappropriate things and thus have an effect on student achievement. Many students who do not understand the meaning of politeness in the community that causes the mindset and behavior fall apart. If it is happened in outside the school environment, it should be the parents who should play an active role, but many teenagers today are no longer concerned with the advise of parents, they prefer to follow their ego that the

results are harm for themselves. The mindset of this teenagers has to be changed, so they will more care and understand the meaning of a character. From some of these descriptions, many students have started to leave the Javanese culture, as in behaving to people who are older. The influence of western culture is very deep to the students. More information is easily obtained via internet without any filtering first.

The purpose of campaign is to inform the teenagers, especially teenagers of Solo about the importance of having a sense of love for Javanese culture. Because having sense a love of noble culture is one way to advance the nation development. In addition, a sense of care for this culture will also help create a young generation who can appreciate the environment and be able to appreciate the culture. This approach can use events that can be held in Solo by creating events that can attract teenagers, such as creating a Javanese musical and dance competition. Invite teenagers to join the contest with Solo Events Search Event Talent, combining traditional elements and youth talent in the city of Solo. Media is a tool that helps to convey message and information that will be submitted to the target audience. Media that will be used is the main media and some supporting media that will complement the main media to convey information to be understood by the target of this Javanese love culture planting campaign. Based on data and analysis, the main media used is event. This media is taken based on the passion of Solo's teenagers who are more interested in coming to the event, because it is considered more interesting, and the challenge to appear to be watched by many people, this is a characteristic of the young generation today.

To convey the importance of caring and nurturing and loving Javanese culture to teenagers through Sriwedari performances, using the approach by exploiting the desire of teenagers to get and achieve a thing with the ability possessed, and the desire to perform in public stage. This approach is accompanied by holding a Javanese music and dance competition with *Wayang Orang Sriwedari* as endorser. The campaign concept is to invite teenagers to join the competition event "Solo Looking for Talent", combining traditional elements with the appearance of youth talent in the city of Solo. This event is held in places that are considered to be frequent and much passed by teenagers like Fort Vastenburg which became a place for teenage gathering in the afternoon because of its the green open places. Supporting media used to assist the main media in delivering the message to the target audience so that more understand the information that has been submitted, then perform the action as expected and in accordance with the purpose of this campaign. The supporting media used are posters distributed through social media and websites. In addition to the mainstream media and supporting media, the event logo is designed as a visual identity for this campaign. A visual identity that can reflect the culture and call to care about Javanese Culture.

*Gunungan*, which is played in every wayang kulit performance has the meaning of *sangkan paraning dumadi*

(our purpose after our lives will lead to the creator). In the gunungan there are various visual codes, such as trees, animals, giants, fire and gates which are symbols of the ultimate goal of human life. Serimpi, a dance originating from the Surakarta and Yogyakarta palaces, smooth dances with gentle movements symbolize Javanese culture how to behave. These two visual codes, gunungan and tari serimpi are combined into the logo of the campaign.

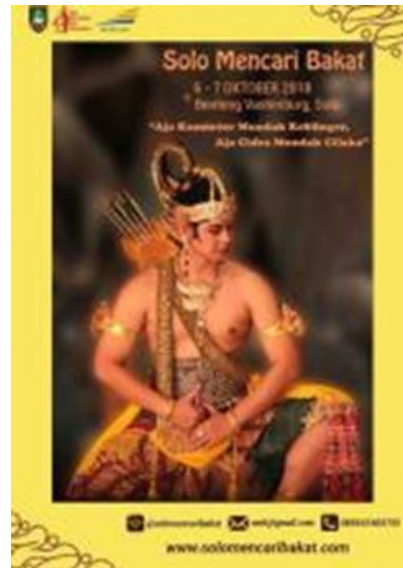


**Figure 2.** Gunungan and Serimpi dance

Source : <https://wayangku.id/> ; <https://www.indonesiakaya.com/>



**Figure 3.** Campaign Logo (Dewanggi, D., 2018)



**Figure 4.** Poster (Dewanggi,D., 2018)

## 5. Conclusion

Javanese culture is one of Indonesian cultures that has definite rules when behaving, both towards God, the universe, as well as to human beings. Love for ancestral culture must continue to be perpetuated to shape national identity. Campaigns using Javanese dance and performances as a spectacle art can be used as a way to guide teenagers to love Javanese culture because through this media teenagers can appear in front of the public stage and make themselves into existence.

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