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## **Traditional Dance Movement as an Inspiration for Students of SMP N 1 Kalasan Sleman Yogyakarta: Challenges and Innovation in Performance**

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### **Abstrack**

This study discusses the use of traditional dance movements as a source of inspiration and educational media for students at SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta. Traditional dance movements were chosen because they have strong cultural values and play an important role in shaping character and enriching artistic insights for the younger generation. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the challenges faced in the process of teaching and implementing traditional dance in schools, as well as to identify various innovations in the implementation of dance performances that can increase students' interest and participation. The research method used is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the main challenge faced is the lack of support resources and students' interest in traditional dance, but innovations in performance concepts such as the use of visual technology, incorporation with modern music, and collaboration between students are able to create an interesting and relevant experience. This study concludes that traditional dance movements can not only be used as a medium for cultural preservation, but also as a creative means to develop students' potential in dance.

**Keywords:** Dance Movement, Students, Challenges & Innovations, Performance.

## INTRODUCTION

Traditional dance movements are one of the cultural heritages that have high artistic, aesthetic, and philosophical values. In the midst of globalization and modernization, the preservation of traditional dances faces great challenges, especially among the younger generation. At the education level, especially in Junior High School (SMP), dance is one of the effective learning media to instill cultural values, creativity, and character (Swastiwi 2024). However, the application of traditional dance movements in learning cultural arts in schools still faces various obstacles. In practice, traditional dance learning is often limited to memorizing movements without involving a deep creative process. In addition, students' interest in traditional dance tends to be low because it is considered less relevant to the development of the times (Suhari et al. 2020). In fact, traditional dance has great potential to be a source of inspiration in the development of students' creativity, both as a form of artistic expression and as a medium of innovation in performances.

Previous research has focused heavily on the preservation of traditional dance through art communities or cultural institutions, but rarely discusses how traditional dance movements are creatively adapted as inspiration for learning in schools. This gap shows the need for research that integrates traditional dance values into school learning through innovative and practice-based approaches (Rizqi 2024). This research focuses on students of SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta, an area rich in artistic traditions, including dance. Initial observations show that students have great creative potential, but are not optimally explored in tradition-based art performances. Based on this, this study aims to identify the challenges faced in utilizing traditional dance movements as learning inspiration, as well as developing innovations in art performances based on students' creativity. Thus, it is hoped that this research will contribute to the development of relevant and contextual cultural arts learning.

In the midst of the rapid currents of globalization, local culture is often sidelined by popular culture that is more accessible and consumed by the younger generation (Sugiarto et al. 2025). This raises concerns about the erosion of the nation's cultural identity, including in terms of traditional dance arts. Traditional dance is not just a series of rhythmic movements, but is full of local wisdom values, history, and the philosophy of life of the local community. Therefore, the preservation of traditional dance is not only the task of art actors or cultural institutions, but also the responsibility of the world of education in forming a generation that is aware and proud of its own culture. However, in reality, the process of learning dance art in schools is still not able to answer these challenges comprehensively. The learning approach that is still conventional, tends to be theoretical and does not touch the creative and expressive aspects of students, making interest in dance art, especially traditional dance, decrease. Coupled with the dominance of digital content that presents instant entertainment, traditional dance is increasingly lagging behind in the competition to grab students' attention. It requires a learning approach that not only transmits knowledge, but also encourages active participation and creative exploration from students.

The great potential of traditional dance has actually not been fully utilized in the context of education. The movements in traditional dance have a high degree of flexibility to develop into new forms of expression that are closer to the current world of students, without having to lose their cultural roots. If packaged innovatively, traditional dance can be a powerful source of inspiration in creating art performances that are more contextual, communicative, and meaningful. This process not only enhances students' appreciation of traditional arts, but also shapes 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. The urgency of this research is further strengthened by seeing the lack of literature that explores in depth the integration of traditional dance values into cultural arts learning at the junior high school level through a practice-

based approach. This research tries to bridge this gap by exploring the possibility of innovation in school performance that comes from the exploration of traditional dance movements. The focus on SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan as a research location also provides added value, considering that this area has cultural richness that has not been explored optimally in the world of formal education.

Thus, this research is not only important in terms of cultural preservation, but also contributes to the development of a more contextual and fun cultural arts learning model. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide practical recommendations for cultural arts teachers, education policy makers, and parties who care about the sustainability of local culture in the modern era.

## METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method to describe and analyze how traditional dance movements are an inspiration for students at SMP N 1 Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to delve deeply into phenomena related to creative processes, challenges, and innovations in traditional dance learning (Creswell, 2014).

### a. Motion Observation:

Observing students' activities during traditional dance learning and art performances.

### b. Interview:

With students, teachers, and related parties to explore their perspectives on learning and innovation.

### c. Documentation:

Recording the learning process and performing arts in the form of photos, videos, and field notes.

## Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (2014) model which includes three stages:

### a. Data Condensation:

Filter data from observations, interviews, and documentation to find relevant patterns or themes.

### b. Data Presentation:

Organize data in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, or diagrams for easy interpretation.

### Drawing conclusions:

Identify key findings related to the challenges, potential, and effectiveness of traditional dance learning innovations.

## 2. Data Validity

The validity of the data is guaranteed through source triangulation (data from students, teachers, and documentation) and method triangulation (a combination of interviews, observations, and documentation).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Traditional dance as a learning content for students of SMP N 1 Kalasan Sleman Yogyakarta.**

Traditional dance is one of the cultural expressions that contains high aesthetic, ethical, and philosophical values. In the context of education, especially at the junior high school (SMP) level, traditional dance can be used as a strategic learning medium to develop students' art appreciation, creativity, and character. At SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan, this potential is very relevant considering that the school is located in a strong cultural environment, namely Sleman, Yogyakarta, an area rich in dance traditions such as the Golek Dance, Beksan Dance, and Gambyong Dance. However, the results of observations

show that traditional dance learning in schools still faces various challenges. Learning is often focused on memorizing movements and does not provide room for creative exploration for students. In addition, there is a tendency to assume that traditional dance is something "old-fashioned" and not in accordance with the times, so that it does not attract the interest of students. In this study, the researcher tries to strengthen the content of cultural arts learning by integrating elements of traditional dance aesthetics as a source of inspiration for students in creating new dance

works. This effort is carried out by adapting the basic movement forms of traditional dance into the dance compositions explored by students, which are more contextual and in accordance with their social dynamics.

#### Aesthetic Studies of Traditional Dance Forms

Based on a field study conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan, the dance form used as the main reference is the Golek Menak Dance and the Beksan Wanagara Dance. The dance forms are analyzed from three main aesthetic aspects: movement, accompaniment, and costume.

##### a. Motion

Traditional dance moves are generally symbolic, with a variety of movements that express values such as sincerity, courage, and elegance. Hand, head, and foot movements have certain meanings that are understood for generations in Javanese culture. In learning, these movements are introduced to students as a basic element, but are later developed into new forms that represent their own experiences and ideas.

##### b. Accompaniment

The accompaniment of traditional gamelan music that supports dances such as Gendhing Pangkur or Gendhing Ladrang provides a distinctive atmosphere that strengthens the meaning of dance. In the learning process, students are given the freedom to choose whether they want to use original accompaniment or replace it with a creative musical arrangement that still maintains the traditional feel.

##### c. Costumes and Makeup

Traditional dance clothing gives a strong visual impression and strengthens the character of the characters in the dance. However, in the context of learning innovation, costumes can be adjusted to be more practical and in accordance with the comfort of students, without eliminating symbolic elements.

2. Dance Presentation: Learners' Process and Innovation One of the important results of this research is the emergence of new dance works that are the result of student collaboration based on the inspiration of traditional dance movements. In the learning process

designed on a project-based basis, students are invited to:

- a. Observe and Understand the basic forms of traditional dance learned.
- b. Explore motion based on themes they choose (e.g.: friendship, struggle, environment).
- c. Compose a dance with a structure consisting of the beginning (open), middle (fill), and end (close), according to the structure of classical dance.
- d. Performing their work in a school forum (e.g. an art performance or an end-of-semester project).



**Figure 1.** Results of the Final Exam of the Creative Dance Performance Semester.

#### A. The Process of Learning Dance at SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan, Sleman, Yogyakarta

##### 1. School Environment

SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan is located in Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, an area that has extraordinary cultural richness, especially in traditional Javanese dance arts. The community environment that still upholds traditional values is a potential as well as a challenge in the learning process of cultural arts at this school. The school has a cultural arts learning program that includes fine arts, music, and dance. Dance is one of the important content because it is considered able to instill aesthetic values, discipline, and character through bodily activities and expressions.

2. Curriculum and Learning Structure Dance learning at SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan refers to the Independent Curriculum, which

emphasizes project-based learning and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. In the subject of Cultural Arts, dance learning is designed to:

- a. Introducing the types of traditional dances,
- b. Teaching basic movement techniques,
- c. Developing a simple dance work,
- d. Showcase the work in the form of a mini show or end-of-semester project.

The materials taught include:

- a. Introduction to dance theory,
- b. Practice basic dance movement techniques (such as pangs, ulap-ulap, encot, srisig),
- c. Simple dance compositions (open, fill, close),
- d. Understanding of accompaniment and makeup/dance costumes,
- e. Staging as a form of appreciation and evaluation.

### 3. Learning Strategies and Methods

Cultural arts teachers at SMP N 1 Kalasan apply a combinatorial approach between short lectures, demonstrations, hands-on practice, group discussions, and creative exploration. In each meeting, students are invited to not only imitate dance movements, but also understand their meaning and create new movements based on inspiration from local culture and personal experiences.

The learning method consists of several stages:

- a. Observation and introduction stage  
Students watch videos or traditional dance performances, then discuss their aesthetic elements.
- b. Stages of imitation  
The teacher demonstrates basic dance movements, then students follow.
- c. Exploration and improvisation stage  
Students are given a theme (e.g. environment, tolerance, or enthusiasm for learning), then make dance movements with the guidance of the teacher.
- d. Composition stage

Students compose movements into a whole form of dance individually or in groups.

### e. Serving stage

Students' works are performed in class, in school art performances, or during end-of-semester projects.

### 4. The Role of Teachers and Students

Cultural arts teachers play the role of facilitators, motivators, as well as cultural resource persons. Teachers not only transfer movement knowledge, but also instill values such as cooperation, discipline, and cultural appreciation. Students, on the other hand, are encouraged to be active and creative. They are not just imitators of motion, but also creators. They are involved in the process of choosing music, creating a storyline in dance, and designing costumes and makeup in a simple way.

### 5. Media and Supporting Facilities

Learning is carried out in open spaces such as halls or school fields. Teachers utilize audiovisual media such as dance documentary videos, gamelan recordings, and simple applications for music editing. On several occasions, the school also invited resource persons from the local dance community.

### 6. Learning Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out holistically, including:

- a. Cognitive assessment through repetition of dance theory and the history of traditional dance.
- b. Psychomotor assessment of students' ability to imitate and create dance movements.
- c. Affective assessment of students' attitudes towards the learning process, cooperation in groups, and appreciation of the work of friends.

The final evaluation is in the form of a dance project staging, where students perform their exploratory dance works in front of friends and teachers.

### B. Challenges faced by SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan students in learning traditional dance

#### Challenges faced

##### 1. Low Student Interest

Some students tend to be less interested in traditional dance arts because they are considered less relevant to the popular culture they consume, such as social media and modern entertainment. This

makes students less motivated to actively participate in traditional dance activities.

## 2. Lack of Confidence and Expression Ability

Traditional dance requires learners to not only imitate movements, but also express ideas through their bodies. The challenge that arises is that most students feel embarrassed, stiff, or not confident to appear in public, especially if they have to improvise or create their own movements. This psychological factor is reinforced by the pressure of the social environment. Students are worried about being ridiculed by their peers if they make movements that are considered funny or inappropriate. As a result, their creativity is hampered and dance exploration becomes less than optimal.

## 3. Limitation of Training Time

A busy academic schedule at school is often an obstacle in providing adequate time for dance practice. This affects the preparation of the performance, including the quality of movement, group coordination, and the confidence of the learners.

## 4. Lack of Understanding of Dance Philosophy

Students are often only taught dance movements without delving into the philosophy and cultural values contained in them. As a result, their understanding of the importance of preserving traditional arts became limited.

## 5. Competition with Modern Art

Modern arts such as contemporary dance, hip-hop, or K-pop are often more appealing to learners because they are considered more dynamic and in line with global trends.

## C. Innovations carried out by students of SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan in the creation of traditional dances

### 1. Integration of Technology in Traditional Dance Learning

The use of social media platforms such as TikTok can increase students' creativity in learning traditional dance. In a case study of traditional dance, learners were invited to

create and share their dance videos on TikTok, which encouraged them to explore traditional dance movements in a more modern and engaging context. As a result, students become more enthusiastic and creative in creating innovative dance movements while maintaining traditional elements.

### 2. Exploration of Traditional Dance Movements

Students of SMP Negeri 1 Kalasan with a focus on increasing dance creativity through the creation of a variety of creative dance movements. Students explore traditional dance movements and combine them into new dance forms. This process not only increases the creativity of students but also their confidence in displaying the dance works that have been created.



**Figure 1.** Results of the Final Exam of the Creative Dance Performance Semester.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional dance movements have an important role in shaping the character, creativity, and artistic appreciation of students at SMP N 1 Kalasan. The traditional dance learning process is not only a means of cultural preservation, but also motivates students to create new innovations in art

performances. However, there are challenges faced, such as the lack of interest of some students in traditional arts, limited facilities, and the influence of popular culture. To overcome this challenge, a creative approach is needed through collaboration between teachers, students, and the art community. Innovations in performances, such

as combining traditional elements with modern concepts, have proven effective in increasing attraction and strengthening educational and aesthetic values.

This research shows that the use of traditional elements in dance is able to increase cultural appreciation while encouraging students' creativity in creating works that are relevant to the times. As a result, this approach not only strengthens the local cultural identity among the younger generation, but also motivates them to continue to develop innovative and sustainable performing arts.

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