# The Impact of Digital Technology on Various Traditional Theaters: An Examination of the Sociology of Arts

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## Abstract

The advancement of digital technology has engendered substantial transformations across various dimensions of life, particularly within the realm of traditional performing arts. In Indonesia, traditional art forms such as *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa* are currently undergoing significant changes in terms of production, presentation, and consumption in the digital age. This article explores the effects of digitization on these three art forms through the lens of Janet Wolff's sociology of art framework. According to Wolff's perspective, artworks are perceived as the outcome of the interplay among diverse social, economic, and cultural factors, with digital technology playing a crucial role in redefining the modern landscape of performing arts. The research findings indicate that digitalization facilitates the expansion of engagement with global audiences while simultaneously preserving local cultural values. Nevertheless, challenges manifest in the form of cultural gentrification, which threatens the erosion of indigenous aspects of tradition. Furthermore, this article offers recommendations for artists to harness technology in order to produce relevant artworks in the context of globalization, without compromising their cultural identity.

**Keywords:** traditional theater; digital technology; sociology of art; Janet Wolff; cultural transformation

## INTRODUCTION

Various facts show that Indonesia's traditional performing arts are now in the midst of a rapid digital technology development. Bai & Wong, (2022) indicate that these performing arts serve as vehicles for conveying moral and cultural values to the community. Nonetheless, all traditional arts face considerable challenges stemming from modernization, necessitating that artists adapt to maintain the relevance of their works amidst rapid societal developments. *Ketoprak*, *drama gong*, and *wayang purwa* are significant elements of Indonesian culture. Ideally, in order to stay alive, it must be able to adapt to technological advancements. However, there are a few that are ready to adapt to digital technology. Therefore, a number of traditional arts end up only with names such as *srandul*,

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*wayang thengul*, etc. Some of the arts that can still exist in the digital era, especially traditional theater types, include *ketoprak*, gong drama, and *wayang purwa.*

The advancement of digital technology has significantly impacted various aspects of human life, including traditional performing arts. In Indonesia, the traditional theater forms of *ketoprak,* drama gong, and *wayang purwa* are undergoing transformations alongside technological advancements, which influence their production, presentation, and consumption within society. Art sociologist Janet Wolff, (1982) asserts that art is influenced not only by individual factors but also by a multitude of social, economic, and technological factors. Therefore, changes occurring in traditional performing arts can be understood in the context of the interaction among these factors.

The capacity for change is a fundamental characteristic of human culture. Without such adaptability, culture would struggle to respond to evolving circumstances (Sahid, 2000). The changes occurring today are remarkably swift. According to Haviland (1988, p. 253), many traditional nations are attempting to implement cultural change within a single generation, whereas in developed countries such transformations typically extend over several generations. Change is a characteristic of all cultures; however, the degree and direction of change differ across cultural contexts and temporal constraints.

Since the end of the 20th century, the global community has entered into an era of information globalization. The developments marking the information age in the third millennium are unequivocally irreversible. Sources of information and entertainment (culture) from print media, radio, television, the internet, and similar platforms proliferate in abundance (Sahid, 2000). The era of information globalization continues to unfold, propelled by the rapid advancement of digital technologies, including the Android platform. With smartphones, individuals are virtually holding the world in their hands. Everything necessary is accessible via mobile devices, ranging from social media, business, information, to entertainment.

In the 21st century, cultural change is further exacerbated by the prevalence of digital technology. The increasing presence of digital technologies profoundly influences cultural life, necessitating that we safeguard ourselves against the threats of an unpredictable world. Protection is offered through wired vehicles, cell phones, the internet, and CCTV in public spaces (Rutten, 2018). Rutten, (2018) also states that contemporary images convey not only the politics of meaning and place but also a more tangible "agency aspect", whereby remote control of images (through telematics or telepresence) can effectuate rapid and potentially lethal changes in society and the real world.

In this regard, the factors influencing the manner in which change is processed within a specific culture include the extent to which that culture endorses flexibility, as well as its immediate needs. Of paramount importance is the degree of compatibility between new elements and the existing cultural matrix (Sahid, 2017). Ketoprak, drama gong, and wayang purwa are just a few of the traditional theaters that are attempting to survive in the digital age. They offer a variety of new formulas that integrate elements of digital technology to enrich the performance's form and aesthetics. In this way, it is expected to be accepted by today's audience. The rapid development of digital technology has resulted in humans residing in a global village (Safdar, 2022). Digital technology can enhance individuals' lives, fulfill socioeconomic needs, and promote advancements in science and technology (Tulaev et al., 2020), including artistic and cultural expressions. The emergence of digital technology plays a crucial role in the process of cultural change. It has become

a formidable means of cultural diffusion and presents a more diverse array of entertainment options for the broader community. With a cell phone, individuals can effortlessly access movies, music, games, and lifestyles from various countries, including Korea, Europe, America, India, and Japan, among others.

Based on the aforementioned discussions, this research aims to address the influence of digital technology on changes in form, aesthetics, distribution, and accessibility of the performing arts of *ketoprak,* drama gong, and *wayang purwa*. The objective of this research is to analyze the influence of digital technology on these specific aspects of the performing arts.

This research uses a sociology of art approach. In general, the theory of the sociology of art is developed from the materialist theory proposed by Karl Marx. The primary objective of materialism theory is to comprehend the intricate relationship between language, literature, and art, on one hand, and society, history, and the material world, on the other (Fortier, 1997, p. 103). Janet Wolff, (1982, p. 60) posits that economic and other material factors determine the ideological character of artworks and cultural products. The actual historical social conditions under which the artwork was created must be considered when explaining the work (Wolff, 1982, p. 61). More specifically, artists and cultural producers encounter certain circumstances that influence the process of creating works.

According to Janet Wolff, (1982), artworks cannot be understood solely as individual expressions; rather, they are products of the interaction of various social, economic, and political structures. Wolff contends that art production is invariably connected to the surrounding social conditions, including the technology that facilitates its distribution. In this context, digital technology provides new avenues for artists to disseminate their work globally, establish new relationships with audiences, and redefine the role of art in contemporary society.

Wolff (1982, p. 63) asserts that Marxist aesthetics diverges from other sociological studies because it situates cultural production and artists more precisely within the overarching social structure and historical context. The Marxist art sociology theory perceives artworks as a superstructure, with the economic system serving as its foundation (Junus, 1981, p. 21). A pivotal condition for the production of artworks is that the artwork itself be an integral part of and connected to the economic system within society. Fortier (1997, p. 103) states that from the perspective of traditional Marxist materialism theory, culture as a superstructure is always contingent on the socio-economic base.

Althusser (Fortier, 1997, p. 104) refuses traditional Marxist theory. He posits that the relationship between economy and culture is dictated by a variety of historical forces rather than solely by economic considerations. For Althusser, art is not only ideological; it also offers a form of distance and insight that is obscured by ideology. Art does not yield scientific comprehension; rather, it unveils the tensions and complexities that ideology (Goldmann, 1981, p. 112) endeavors to conceal. It appears that Althusser has enhanced the traditional Marxist theory of art production, positing that the creation of art is not strictly determined by the economic base, but rather by the historical context of the society in which the work is produced.

Digital media has engendered opportunities for public engagement in the production and consumption of art via digital platforms. With the advent of social media, audiences have transitioned from mere passive consumers to active participants in the processes of art creation and distribution. The advancement of digital technology facilitates broader access to art. Platforms such as YouTube and Instagram have emerged as pivotal channels through which traditional art

can connect with a global audience. Furthermore, digitalization has transformed the manner in which audiences appreciate art. Technology not only extends the reach of art but also alters the ways in which it is produced and received by society.

Janet Wolff's (1982, pp. 9–26) theory addresses three primary dimensions within the art sphere: production, distribution, and consumption. Wolff asserts that art cannot be fully comprehended without addressing the social and cultural contexts in which it is produced and consumed. This perspective highlights that art does not exist in isolation; rather, it reflects the social structure and cultural values that evolve within society. According to Wolff, any changes in society, whether they are technological, political, or economic in nature, will impact the ways in which art is produced, distributed, and experienced by audiences.

**METHOD**

This study uses a conceptual analysis method integrated with Janet Wolff's sociology of art framework. Muhadjir, (2009, p. 75) states that conceptual analysis serves to make explicit the meaning contained in terms or visible phenomena. Conceptual analysis focuses on the study, solution, and understanding of a concept in depth and systematically, because each element understood as a concept is not merely an empirical fact. Its relevance to this study, the discussion includes determining the context (cultural transformation, media adaptation, tradition vs. modernity), the objects analyzed in the form of performances, visual and audio, socio-cultural functions, relationships between concepts (how the concept of tradition interacts with technology, how local values are negotiated in new media, and how changes in media affect meaning).

In this context, "digital technology" is not simply a tool, but rather a new conceptual framework that transforms the way artists and the public interpret art itself. This approach was chosen to go beyond technical descriptions and examine how fundamental elements of performing arts experience a redefinition of meaning when they intersect with digital technology. The analysis is conducted systematically through four main dimensions according to Wolff:

First, production dimension: Dissecting the shift in the attributes of creation, from an organic-communal creative process to a hybrid process mediated by software and cinematic logic.

Second, distribution dimension: Analyzing the transformation of the concept of performance space, from being tied to a physical location and sacred time to a virtual public space that is asynchronous and global.

Third, dimension of enjoyment (Consumption): Identifying the changing nature of the audience's aesthetic experience, from direct social interaction (*srawung*/collective) to private consumption mediated by gadget screens.

Fourth. sociocultural context: Exploring how the reconstruction of these concepts is rooted in changes in societal structures and artistic ideologies in the digital era.

By examining the three objects of study (cinematic *ketoprak*, animated *wayang,* and gong drama), this research can uncover a new ontology of these traditional arts—namely, how the 'essence' and 'spirit' of traditional arts remain constructed or are reduced in the contemporary digital ecosystem.

According to Rusyada & Sutiyono, (2021), art is perceived not merely as an artistic product, but also as a social process that transpires within the framework of media and technology. Consequently, researchers concentrate on traditional art forms that have integrated digital elements into their presentations, such as the utilization of social media and digital platforms for the distribution of artworks. This research also references the perspectives of Sukma et al. (2025), who elaborate on how digital media

transforms the processes of art production, dissemination, and consumption. Therefore, digital technology serves not only as a new tool in the creative process but also as a significant factor that alters the art experience itself.

The research data were obtained from YouTube. The sample selection in this research uses purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique, namely where researchers deliberately select subjects based on specific criteria or considerations that are relevant to the research objectives, often used in qualitative research to obtain in-depth data from the most suitable cases (Etikan, 2016).

Data analysis was conducted following the procedures articulated by Miles & Huberman, (1992). The data were subjected to thematic analysis to identify themes and patterns, including transformations in art forms, production techniques, and the social implications of digital technology for traditional art. Thematic analysis emphasizes how technology modifies the processes through which art is produced, consumed, and understood by society. Discourse analysis is employed to scrutinize the narratives that arise in traditional art performances disseminated on digital platforms.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In this context, *ketoprak,* drama gong, and *wayang purwa* constitute vital components of our rich cultural heritage. These three art forms not only embody tradition but also convey profound social and cultural significances for the community. Nevertheless, considerable changes have occurred in tandem with the progress of digital technology, which has significantly impacted the creation, presentation, and consumption of these arts. This transformation not only poses challenges but also unveils new opportunities for artists to explore more innovative forms and methodologies of per-formance.

### *Ketoprak* **in the Context of Art Digitalization**

*Ketoprak* represents one of the most renowned forms of traditional theater in Java, incorporating elements of music, dance, and drama. Typically, *ketoprak* performances are conducted in open fields or other public venues, facilitating direct interaction between performers and audiences. Although *ketoprak* has long been an integral aspect of Indonesian culture, the integration of digital technology into these performances is currently expanding (Waluyo & Rosmawati, 2021). In today's internet era, it is noteworthy that *Ketoprak* continues to thrive through the YouTube channel. A number of Ketoprak artists in Yogyakarta, led by the maestro Bondan Nusantara during the COVID-19 pandemic, have produced numerous *Ketoprak* performances recorded to television production standards. The results of these *ketoprak* productions were subsequently broadcast on YouTube. Bondan Nusantara is recognized as one of the reformers of *Ketoprak* in Yogyakarta (Hatley, 2008). The presentation of ketoprak on YouTube has garnered a substantial audience, as evidenced by the numerous likes, subscriptions, and advertisements. The Yogyakarta *ketoprak* creators refer to the YouTube *ketoprak* as "sineprak", the abbreviation for "*sinetron ketoprak*". An array of *sineprak* from various groups is already available on YouTube.

It is interesting to observe that young artists support the majority of the *sineprak*, indicating a promising regeneration of Ketoprak art in Yogyakarta (Sahid et al., 2023). Numerous sineprak have been posted on YouTube, including titles such "Korban", "Megatruh", "Ngandut Wohing Katresnan", "Gelo", "Uger-uger Lawang", "Emprit Buntut Bedhug", "Satru Ing Ngepal", and "Pangeran Samber Nyowo", among others. Young artists produce and perform

most of these *sineprak* and have received funding from the Department of Culture of Yogyakarta for the years 2021–2022. The *sineprak* entitled "Satru Ing Ngepal" (Dyah, 2021), which translates as "Enemies at the Border", deserves attention. Satru Ing Ngepal represents one version of the Mangir Wonoboyo narrative set during the reign of Panembahan Senopati.

The cinematography "Nekad" by Tim Pengembangan Ketoprak Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta is 8 minutes and 7 seconds long. "Nekad" was produced using film production techniques, namely, employing dual cameras to enhance the viewing experience on YouTube (as shown in Figure 1). "Nekad" is not a stage *ketoprak* recorded and then broadcast on YouTube. Therefore, for YouTube broadcasts, which are usually viewed on smartphones and laptops, the cinematography in each scene is more often a close-up. The goal is to ensure that each scene and the actors are clearly depicted. The cinematography story is not only sourced from classic *babad* stories but also from the problems of everyday life in today's society.



**Figure 1**. The sineprak entitled "Nekad"scene 4, minute 1:46 by the Ketoprak Development Team Daerah Isteimewa Yogyakarta

It can be clarified that at this stage, *ketoprak,* along with its various genres, remains vibrant, encompassing both professional and amateur performances. The professional stage *ketoprak* that continues to thrive is particularly prominent in the Pati, Central Java (Purnomo, 2013). Conversely, amateur *ketoprak*, which may perform   occasionally within the context of specific activities, is quite pre-

valent in Yogyakarta. It is not uncommon for officials to participate in this form of *ketoprak*. Moreover, numerous Yogyakarta *ketoprak* artists have innovated by creating performances tailored for YouTube audiences. In their endeavors, these artists do not merely transfer the stage *ketoprak* to the YouTube format; rather, they employ digital technology to convey their creative processes. In this regard, YouTube *ketoprak* is produced with a modern theatrical dramaturgy approach, often incorporating filmic elements.

A significant transformation that has occurred involves the utilization of digital media, including video projection, visual effects, and contemporary lighting techniques, which contribute to a deeper dimension in performances. Historically, *ketoprak* heavily relied on natural lighting or basic illumination; however, the advent of new technologies has allowed these visual effects to substantially enhance the audience's experience. Additionally, digital audio technology is employed to produce more sophisticated and clearer sound effects, thereby enriching the overall sound quality of the performances.

According to the research conducted by Yuliati et al., (2023) the digitization of traditional Javanese performing arts presents advantages regarding audience accessibility. Technology has facilitated the opportunity to engage with a broader audience, including individuals beyond the geographical confines of live performances. Digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok  have become effective mediums for introducing  *ketoprak* to a global audience.

However, despite the considerable benefits of technology, these advancements also present challenges, such as the decline of live interaction, a significant strength of *ketoprak* performances. Furthermore, excessive reliance on technology risks diminishing improvisation, a distinctive feature of this traditio-

nal performing art.

## Drama Gong and Digital Innovation in Presentation

The drama gong performance represents one of the most esteemed traditional arts among the Balinese people. It is a Balinese performing art form that integrates elements of traditional Balinese theater, specifically sendratari and arja, with contemporary drama, as evidenced by its setting, acting, fashion, and other aspects (Bandem & Murgianto, 1996, p. 164). Through drama gong, the audience is provided with entertainment, insights into the community's daily behaviors, an appreciation for the language, and a deeper understanding of Balinese culture (Sugita, 2021). Comparable to ketoprak, the peak of drama gong's popularity occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, a period during which it became a favored performance among the Balinese populace. The onset of cultural globalization, accompanied by rapid advancements in information technology during the 1990s, led to a decline in the audience's interest in various traditional Indonesian arts, including drama gong (Sahid, 2000). In this contemporary era, alternative forms of entertainment such as television, VCDs, movies, and mobile applications have become readily accessible at minimal costs (As shown in Figure 2). The globalization of information, which facilitates cultural globalization, has consequently contributed to the diminishing presence of *drama gong* in modern artistic expressions.



**Figure 2**. Gong Drama by the Taksu Agung Duta Art Studio from Gianyar, Bali, with the story "Sukreni, the Balinese Girl", Scene 2, minute 24, second 59.

Based on Sugita's research (2021), it has become increasingly uncommon to find drama gong performances in Bali as of 2020. Nevertheless, as an art form, it encompasses both entertainment and educational values. Drama gong is typically performed in the evening to entertain at parties, night markets, and organizational birthdays (Bandem & Murgianto, 1996, p. 165). Consequently, it is understandable that local government occasionally employs drama gong as a medium to convey developmental messages to the community. Furthermore, drama gong has served as a platform for communication and information regarding various social issues, including education, economics, health, the environment, and tourism(Sugita, 2021).

Although the frequency of drama gong performances has declined, broadcasts on TVRI Denpasar and TV Bali continue to be available. This ongoing presence indicates that there remains a dedicated audience. Several innovations have been implemented by artists to enhance performance management during offline presentations, on television, and through YouTube channels, which include the following measures: First, the plays are no longer exclusively based on classical narratives such as "Jayaprana-Layonsari", but have transitioned to new plays that align with market demands; second, efforts for player regeneration have involved the inclusion of the millennial generation; third, the dialogue in performances incorporates Indonesian, English, and Balinese languages, tailored to the audience's context; fourth, performances have adopted LCD settings and advanced lighting techniques to enhance visual appeal; fifth, collaborations between drama gong and other art forms, such as dangdut and comedy, have emerged; and sixth, performances are available in various formats, including CD, DVD, MP4, and YouTube (Sugita, 2021).

The Gong Drama by the Taksu Agung Duta Art Studio from Gianyar annually performs at the Bali Arts Week (PKB). The performance "Sukreni

Gadis Bali" (Balinese Girl) was staged during the 2023 PKB in Denpasar, Bali. The stage setting remained unchanged throughout the performance. The dialogue was in Balinese and Indonesian. Unlike cinematographic films, which are primarily produced for YouTube, this Gong Drama was produced for live performances during the PKB event. A recording of the performance was subsequently streamed on YouTube. The footage on YouTube shows that the video uses a single camera. This is evident when the blocking and movement of the actors are far apart, causing the camera to chase them. By broadcasting on YouTube, the performance was viewed by a wider audience, not just those who watched it live at the PKB.

The drama gong, which integrates gamelan music with Balinese folklore, has experienced significant transformations in the digital age. In drama gong performances, narratives imbued with local cultural values are presented alongside immersive musical accompaniment. The introduction of technology, including digital sound recording and technology-based lighting, into these performances marks a new era. The process of digitalization in drama gong encompasses the use of visual effects and digital animation, offering the opportunity to portray characters in a more vivid and engaging manner. The digital platform enables live streaming of performances, allowing audiences from around the globe to enjoy drama gong without the constraints of physical distance. Consequently, the audience can interact directly with the artists via social media platforms, providing feedback that can shape the performance's direction.

A study conducted by Sugita et al., (2023) demonstrates that the incorporation of digital media into drama gong adds significant value by introducing traditional arts to a broader audience. By employing technology, the art form can be further developed and recognized by the younger generation, while also extending its reach to a previously inaccessible global market. However, despite the conveniences that digital technology offers in terms of distribution and performance creation, it is imperative to maintain the authenticity and cultural identity intrinsic to drama gong. Audiences must be afforded an authentic experience that relies not solely on technology but also on the cultural values embedded in each narrative and musical composition.

## *Wayang Purwa* **and Technological Innovation in Performance**

*Wayang purwa*, particularly *wayang kulit*, represents a performing art that is profoundly enriched with cultural symbolism, spiritual values, educational content, and humanistic elements. (Riyanto, 2012). Traditional values are embedded within *wayang purwa, a wayang kulit* performance utilizing leather puppets operated by a puppeteer, and accompanied by the gamelan orchestra to narrate epic tales such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. However, the realm is now witnessing the advent of digital technology, with the incorporation of digital projections and computer animations enabling the creation of more dramatic visual effects.

*Wayang purwa* encapsulates the community's ideas and philosophies, which are rich in the intricacies concerning the Javanese conception of human existence (Subiyantoro et al., 2020). Furthermore, *wayang purwa* is a manifestation of the social structure within Javanese society, characterized by order, regularity, and harmony (Subiyantoro et al., 2020). Over the past two decades, *wayang kulit* performances have evolved to become increasingly glamorous and spectacular, with an abundance of puppeteers and *pesinden* [the female vocalist(s) at a gamelan orchestra], often resulting in higher honorariums for the puppeteers. Notably, renowned comedians are frequently featured as guest stars, and the gamelan ensemble is augmented with modern musical instruments

such as keyboards, drums, electric guitars, and additionally enhanced by celebrated *keroncong* or *campur sari* singers (Kayam, 2001). These phenomena exemplify one of the reasons why *wayang c*ontinues to thrive amid the complexities of cultural globalization in the current digital age. The progress of digitalization concurrently fosters the integration of technology within social media, permeating various facets of human life and activities. One artistic form that has undergone transformation in the digital sphere is wayang purwa (Sapphira, 2023). Recently, Cak Rye, an animator from Jombang of East Java, has developed an animated wayang inspired by Ki Seno Nugroho's wayang purwa performances. Audio-visual recordings of Ki Seno's wayang have been mixed with animations created by Cak Rye of East Java. As a result, this work has been showcased on YouTube, yielding captivating outcomes as the animated wayang appear notably more vibrant than traditional wayang purwa (As shown Figure 3).
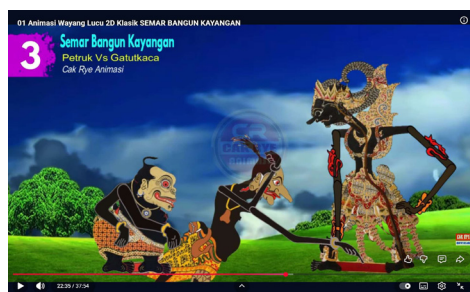


**Figure 3**. Animation of the puppet show of the story "Semar Bangun Kayangan" scene 3 minute 22 second 35 by Cak Rye from Sidoharo, East Java.

This modern shadow puppet animation was created by Cak Rye from Sidoharjo, East Java. The running time of "Semar Bangun Kayangan" is 37 minutes and 54 seconds. In this play, Cak Rye combines puppets or wayang purwa characters with natural scenery, including green meadows and trees. This is understandable, considering that most of the events take place outside the palace. The puppets' movements and gestures seem to match the expressive dialogue spoken

by Ki Seno Nugroho.

Several of the plays that have been produced encompass "Semar Bangun Kayangan", "Gegojegan Punokawan", "Punokawan Sekolah", and "Bagong Gugat Kayangan" (Rye, 2022). Although this animation is brief, focusing solely on select episodes that resonate with the audience, Cak Rye's contributions warrant recognition. The objective of modern wayang kulit animation is to familiarize the younger generation with traditional wayang kulit culture in a condensed format, fostering an appreciation for local culture and ensuring cultural sustainability. Cak Rye's initiatives not only aim to introduce youth *to* wayang but also to safeguard this art form. In the realm of digitalization, adaptation frequently occurs; this involves harnessing technological advancements to facilitate a transformative process that encompasses technological, organizational, and ideological changes (Sapphira, 2023).

The incorporation of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) in *wayang kulit* performances represents a cutting-edge innovation. AR enables audiences to experience *wayang* characters in three dimensions, thus creating a more immersive and interactive encounter. Additionally, holographic projections can introduce a visual aspect unattainable with physical puppets. The digitalization of *wayang kuli*t allows this art form to gain global recognition, presenting Indonesian cultural heritage to a broader audience via digital media (Putra et al., 2025). By amalgamating animation and virtual reality, *wayang kulit* performances become increasingly appealing to the younger generation, who are more conversant with digital technology.

**The Social and Cultural Impacts of the Digitalization of Traditional Arts**

With the advancement of digital technology, traditional arts such as *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa* have undergone transformations not only in technical aspects but also in social relations and cultural identity. Social media

serves as a platform for artists to engage directly with audiences, fostering closer relationships and facilitating feedback that may influence their creative processes.

The digitalization of traditional arts enhances accessibility for global audiences, thereby altering the manner in which performing arts are experienced (Chollet & Scherer, 2017). The international community now has the ability to access and appreciate traditional Indonesian art performances that were formerly restricted to local audiences. Furthermore, social media opens avenues for artists to engage in global collaborations, enabling them to produce more innovative artworks and to present local cultural values to the international arena.

**The Application of Janet Wolff's Theory in Elucidating Changes in Art**

The application of Janet Wolff's theory in the analysis of changes in digital performing arts reveals that digital technology serves not only as a tool for distribution but also significantly influences the methods by which art is produced and received. As articulated by Coleman, (2020), digital media has now become an integral aspect of daily life, including within the realm of art production. Technology facilitates a broader distribution of artists' work and provides them with opportunities to experiment with novel forms of artistic expression.

Janet Wolff's theories are extensively employed to examine the relationship between art and society, underscoring the interaction among art, society, and culture. Wolff posits that art should not merely be perceived as an aesthetic object but rather as a social product substantially influenced by prevailing social and cultural conditions. In this context, traditional Indonesian arts, such as *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa*, have experienced substantial transformations due to advancements in digital technology. The implementation of Wolff's theory concerning these three art forms yields valuable insights into un-

derstanding the alterations that have transpired concerning the production, distribution, and consumption of art.

When applied to these three traditional performing arts, this theory assists researchers in understanding the manner in which these traditional art forms respond to the advancements in digital technology and how such developments influence the fundamental dimensions of art: production, distribution, and consumption.

**Transformations in the Art Production**

In the realm of art production, Wolff's theory posits that alterations in social structures will substantially influence the manner in which artworks are created. Historically, traditional Indonesian art has heavily depended on established techniques and methodologies, which have been transmitted across generations, where the creation of art necessitated the direct collaboration of artists, musicians, and puppeteers. For instance, in *ketopra*k and drama gong, the form is significantly shaped by the direct interaction between performers and audiences, wherein improvisation plays a vital role in the overall performance.

**Nevertheless, concurrent with the advancement**

of digital technology, the production of traditional performing arts is currently undergoing a profound transformation. The implementation of digital technologies, such as advanced lighting, visual projection, digital audio recording, and computer animation, has supplanted traditional methods in art creation. This development offers artists the opportunity to explore their creativity with greater freedom, as exemplified by performances that now incorporate video projection and computer animation. Digital technology facilitates the production of richer and more immersive visual effects, which were previously challenging to achieve with conventional tools. Furthermore, audiences experience a more personal, intimate,

or familiar viewing experience within virtual spaces as opposed to traditional performances (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). The integration of digital technology into the production of *wayang kulit* enriches the visual aspect and interactivity of the performance, affording the audience a more immersive and distinct experience.

**Transformations in Art Distribution and Consumption**

The second aspect of Wolff's theory pertains to the distribution and consumption of art. Prior to digitalization, the three traditional theaters exhibited performances that were accessible solely to audiences located in proximity to the performance venue. *Ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa* were often available exclusively to viewers residing within the vicinity of television broadcasts and designated performance halls. The consumption of these art forms was significantly shaped by geographical constraints and the traditional media prevalent during that period.

However, with the advent of digital media, there have been profound transformations in the distribution and consumption of art. Digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok now enable these performances to be appreciated by a global audience, unrestricted by geographical distance. This expansion allows artists to broaden their reach and present traditional art to an international audience. Furthermore, social media facilitates opportunities for audiences to engage with artists and provide feedback that can influence the trajectory of the performances. Consequently, there has been a notable shift in the venues for art performances, driven by the impact of digital platforms. The integration of digital platforms in traditional art enhances accessibility and distribution, thereby introducing Indonesian artworks to a wider and more diverse audience, including the younger generation, who tend to be more immersed in technology (Razak & Abdullah, 2021).

**Socio-Cultural Context in the Digitalization of Traditional Arts**

According to Janet Wolff, art is consistently influenced by the socio-cultural context in which it operates. In this instance, traditional Indonesian art is currently confronted with cultural globalization, which is a consequence of advancements in digital technology. Historically, *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa* were profoundly shaped by local values and traditions inherent in Indonesian culture. However, with the expanded reach of the internet and social media platforms, these art forms now engage with global culture.

This situation engenders transformations in cultural identity and societal lifestyle. Traditional art, which was once exclusively appreciated within a local context, can now be experienced by a global audience. On one hand, this development presents an opportunity for Indonesian artists to introduce their local culture to the international arena; on the other hand, it entails the risk of commodifying art. The digitalization of traditional art may lead to the perception of these artistic expressions as commercial products, thereby diminishing their intrinsic cultural significance, similar to the trends towards secularism observable in Western culture (Tsepkova, 2021).

**Social and Cultural Implications**

The application of Wolff's theory within the context of the digitalization of traditional arts provides a profound understanding of how art is transformed amidst social changes influenced by technology. The acceptance of art by global audiences via digital platforms creates opportunities for the preservation and development of traditional arts, while simultaneously presenting challenges regarding authenticity and the preservation of cultural values. Artists now confront a dilemma: the need to adapt technology to remain relevant versus the imperative to uphold the original cultural values of traditional arts.

As Wolff theorizes, the changes in the production, distribution, and consumption

of art are inextricably linked to broader social structures and cultural conditions. The digitalization of art presents numerous opportunities, but it also imposes challenges on artists to maintain a balance between tradition and innovation. The capacity to adapt to a continuously evolving civilization will determine the sustainability of performing arts. Artists engaged in *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa* have demonstrated their ability to thrive in the face of advancing digital technology.

## The Impact of Digitalization of Performing Arts

The digitalization of the performing arts has significantly impacted the art world. This phenomenon arises from the influence of technology on the production of performing arts (Webb & Layton, 2023). Digital technology provides opportunities for artists to innovate and enhance their creativity, as well as to introduce traditional arts to a broader audience. Conversely, digitalization also presents challenges regarding the commodification of art and the preservation of cultural values. As an increasing number of works of art become accessible through digital platforms, there is a tangible risk that the art may lose the cultural significance inherent in distinct live performances.

Therefore, it is essential for artists to strive for a balance between adapting technological advancements to preserve the relevance of their art within the digital landscape, and upholding the traditional and cultural values that are foundational to their performing arts. While digitalization presents numerous opportunities, it simultaneously necessitates a conscientious effort to maintain authenticity and cultural identity.

## Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Era

Based on the aforementioned study, it can be conclusively stated that with regard to the forms of performance or presentation, *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa* are traditional arts that have demonstrably adapted to the changing times. The managers of *ketoprak* (albeit not all *ketoprak* groups), drama gong, and *wayang purwa* do not lament the encroachment of digital technology; rather, they confront and surmount it. When stage *ketoprak* and drama gong were overlooked by audiences due to the availability of numerous inexpensive entertainment alternatives such as radio, television, video, film, and smartphones, these traditional forms instead utilized digital media as a novel means to revive and preserve the arts. Audio-visual and digital technology are not disregarded by the three performances but are rather integrated into their presentations. During the 1980s, *ketoprak* and *wayang purwa* were presented in the format of cassette recordings, emphasizing auditory power, or auditory symbols capable of evoking the listener's imagination. Although the experience was limited to audio, it was anticipated that the audience would derive satisfaction comparable to that of viewing a visual stage performance. To achieve this objective, groups of *ketoprak,* drama gong, and puppeteers must be supported by audio recording technology, including the utilization of sound mixers, sound effects, and related tools.

In addition, the production of *ketoprak* and drama gong for television and YouTube involves not only the necessity for adequate audio-visual recording equipment but also the critical role of cameras that render both types of art on television and YouTube vibrant and engaging. None of this can be separated from advanced audio-visual technology facilitated by video cameras used for recording, facilitating the presentation of visual tricks that are intriguing and aesthetically pleasing. Such effects cannot be replicated in traditional stage performances. The transformation of *wayang purwa* into animation represents not merely a transference of staging practices but a genuine transition from conventional performances to an animated format. This transformation

is intricate, as it demands filmic (animation) production techniques that necessitate sophisticated equipment at considerable costs. Following this, the results are disseminated via YouTube. Long before such adaptations, numerous treasured folk tales such as "Si Kancil", "Batu Menangis", and "Malin Kundang", among others, had already been adapted into animation formats, thereby garnering popularity with contemporary generations.

In fact, all three performances have undergone cultural syncretism, characterized by the amalgamation of old and new elements to generate a novel system. Thus, one may assert that there has been a synthesis of traditional components inherent in *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa* with electronic audio-visual and digital media, giving rise to these performances manifesting in new forms of presentation. The three art forms demonstrate their ability to adapt to digital technology, which has become intertwined with the fabric of people's lives. Over recent decades, digital technology has significantly influenced the dissemination of cultural heritage, resulting in the emergence of new fields of research (Palombini, 2017).

The rapid advancement of digital technology has propelled humanity into a global village (Safdar, 2022)digital media presumed vital role in cultural imperialism. The basic aim of current research study was to know the effects of digital media on Pakistani culture. Youth acts as symbolic representation of any society and to assess any cultural elements, university is best place where freedom of gender brings significant changes. Methodology: In the perspective of "Uses & Gratification Theory" and "Social Learning Theory", current study was conducted in public sector universities of Punjab Pakistan. It was survey-based study and data was collected from (N=2237. Digital technology can significantly contribute to the enhancement of citizens' standard of living, addressing socio-economic needs, and fostering scientific and technological

development (Tulaev et al., 2020), including the expression of cultural arts. The rise of digital technology plays a critical role in the process of cultural change. It has evolved into a potent mechanism for cultural diffusion, while also offering an alternative choice for a more varied entertainment landscape for the broader community. With a cellphone at our disposal, we can effortlessly access films, music, games, and lifestyle content from various nations, including Korea, Europe, America, India, Japan, and others.

While digitalization presents numerous opportunities for the continued development of traditional Indonesian performing arts, it brings forth challenges, particularly in striking a balance between tradition and innovation. Technology permits traditional theater to capture a wider audience; however, artists must exercise caution to preserve the cultural significance embedded within their traditions. Overall, digitalization affords countless opportunities for both art forms to thrive and persist within an increasingly digitally interconnected environment (Horst, 2025). Nonetheless, it remains imperative to safeguard the authenticity and cultural identity of each performance, ensuring that these cultural values endure even within a progressively digital context. Nevertheless, as emphasized by many puppeteers, the authenticity of this traditional art form must be preserved. Although technology affords greater creative possibilities in performances, numerous artists express concern that an overreliance on technology could undermine the spirituality and cultural importance intrinsic to *wayang kulit*.

Furthermore, the integration of technology presents challenges pertinent to the commodification of traditional art, wherein art is perceived more as an entertainment product for market consumption. Therefore, it is crucial for artists to maintain a delicate balance between commercialization and the preservation of cultural heritage throughout

the process of digitizing this traditional art.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research concludes that the evolution of digital technology has significantly influenced the form, aesthetics, and operational practices of traditional Indonesian performing arts, including *ketoprak*, drama gong, and *wayang purwa*. Traditional elements such as costumes, staging, and narratives have experienced considerable adaptations to accommodate the more versatile and audiovisual-centric digital media format. These transformations, as articulated in Janet Wolff's theory, illustrate that art is not merely the product of individual expression, but rather the outcome of intricate interrelations among technology, society, and the economy.

The internet and information technology have substantially enhanced the accessibility and dissemination of traditional arts to a broader audience, both at the national and international levels. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and other streaming media enable traditional performances to transcend geographical limitations, thereby fostering new avenues for cross-cultural appreciation. Nevertheless, these alterations also pose challenges, including threats to the authenticity and commercialization of local culture.

Employing the sociology of art framework as proposed by Janet Wolff assists in comprehending those traditional arts, within this context, evolve through dynamic social networks and are shaped by the principles of the digital economy. Transformations in the production and consumption of art reveal a dialectical relationship between the preservation of traditional values and technology-driven creative innovation.

Consequently, in order to ensure the sustainability of traditional performing arts in the digital era, creators of artistic works must adopt an innovative approach: integrating digital technology into the production and promotion of art while remaining steadfast to the cultural values that constitute the core identity of the performance. This adaptation is not merely an option, but a strategic imperative to ensure that traditional arts continue to thrive and maintain relevance amid the accelerating tide of cultural globalization.

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