

Research article

Traditional Arts in the Virtual Production Arena

Robby Hidajat

Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang

ORCID

 Robby Hidajat: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7413-0655>
Abstract.

This article reviews traditional arts in the 'virtual production arena'. Artists of art activities in a virtual production arena must maintain their life energy and belief in the importance of their art works. This situation has forced conservers of traditional arts to be sensitive and set limits on the intervention of other artists. Empathy and participation in traditional arts are seen as a fear of losing ownership and loyalty, and are also perceived as anxiety over the threat of impairment. This article reviews the evolution, function, transformation and structuring that synergize local and global spaces of virtual production. Globalization is a process that reduces the existence of people in local spaces. To cope with this process, traditional arts have emerged, leaving the local buffer zone and entering the realm of generation Z, which has struggled to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional arts have undergone mutation in virtual space and live again with new soul, new vision and new shape, synergizing with current trends. Most agencies that conserve traditional arts fail to understand this transformation. Traditional arts have become a capital source that supports the identity of individuals, institutions, organizations and bureaucracies. Clash among art conservers over virtual space represents a path toward structuring. Several activities constitute this structuring, including: constructing new networks, new relations, new identities, and new participation in a global production arena; developing art as a commodity; alleviating the free market impact by presenting art as a social spirituality to help individuals who suffer from loneliness and alienation; and activating individuals who already live alone who are crowded by less important information. A downstream part of traditional art in its struggle for claiming virtual space is its economic implication for art conservers.

Keywords: traditional arts, virtual space, art conservers

 Corresponding Author: Robby
 Hidajat; email:
robbi.hidajat.fs@um.ac.id
Published 11 August 2022

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

© Robby Hidajat. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICADECS Conference Committee.

1. Introduction

Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2010) takes a lot of benefits from digital technology. According to David Bell, Generation Z is called *internet-in-its-pocket* generation, or a generation that highly clings to social media technology [1]. The identity of Generation Z is a focus of discussion in the article. This generation will be used as the hint for explaining the development of traditional arts in the virtual production arena.

 **OPEN ACCESS**

Individuals who make up Generation Z can spend their time for 7-9 hours a day only to access the internet. As many as 92 % of these individuals stay awake all day to communicate online [2]. Therefore, it is not surprising if those individuals spend more money than other generations only for online communication [3]. Life period of Generation Z is in post social era in which people find it less necessary to meet each other physically [4]. Massive usage of social media technology has created social distance and covid-19 pandemic has validated the act of social distance, especially when everybody decides to enter virtual space. Such a way of life is called the *new normal* [5].

Not only being main customers of social media technology, Generation Z is also working with this technology [6]. At certain points, it is possible for Generation Z to build virtual cultural space that allows traditional arts to develop its own style and perception. The intention behind this arrangement is to produce the so-called *virtual culture*.

Traditional arts are the products of custom and culture of ethnic communities [7]. People in east hemisphere are known for their traditional arts. The term “traditional arts” is often associated with custom necessities because the emphasis of traditional arts is put on its legacy aspect [8].

However, the definition of traditional arts is problematic because the function of traditional arts in a custom environment has lost its power nowadays. This situation was directly encountered by Generation X (born between 1961 and 1980), who is not only the heir of traditional arts but also inheriting the duty of conservation. Generation X shows posture and awareness to understand that Generation Z may find difficulty to receive the relay stick of traditional arts 100%. Every generation has its own perception and this perception affects the way to conserve the arts [2]. The emergence of ethnic arts gives another problem to traditional arts. Generation X as the direct heir of traditional arts does not feel convenient to see their arts expressed in different format, technique and presentation. On the other hand, the necessity, facility and function of arts in the global era are very different from those in the days of Generation X. Different perspectives regarding traditional arts between Generation X and Generation Z have put both generations in conflict. It is regrettable to see this clash because traditional arts are basically flow and adaptive to the needs of art conservators in their social interaction [9].

In this article, traditional arts in the virtual production arena are reviewed by understanding this statement in a specific way. For starters, a virtual production arena must not be associated with physical storage or a museum. Traditional arts in this context are not

supposed to be frozen in a vacuum chamber, shown in a display window, or exhibited as a consolation object. In virtual space, the physical presence of the object is represented by narratives and even the object is arranged on the front stage. Meanwhile, traditional arts and its heir's conservation area are put in the background and even no longer perceived as reality [10].

By taking into consideration the explanations above, the article is intended to review traditional arts in the virtual production arena. Traditional arts are always in the contest arena where art workers must maintain their life energy and belief in the existence of their art works. This situation makes the conservers of traditional arts to become sensitive and set limits from the touch of others. Empathy and participation in traditional arts are considered as a fear of losing ownership and loyalty and also perceived as anxiety over impairment threat. It seems that in the digitalization era, direct usage of traditional arts becomes the source of production materials.

There is a huge gap between traditional arts in reality space and virtual space. Questions to be answered are whether there is a cultural evolution due to this gap and whether there is a conflict of interests in the pursuance of new world order.

2. Method

Method of review in the article is qualitative descriptive. This method is done by observing virtual production objects in social media. Reason behind observation on social media is that during covid-19 pandemic, actual physical characteristics of art activities have been transformed into audiovisual based. In a *social distancing* situation, connectivity across individuals is limited while local and global spaces are constricted. Activities related with traditional arts are constrained but social media are intensively used. The characteristic of traditional arts which needs direct contact with audiences is hampered making the arts less presented. Unpredictable length of *social distancing* has forced traditional arts conservators to redefine their existence. One way toward this redefinition is by going into virtual space. Audiences start to crowd virtual space and make responses to any *flyer* posted by the conservers. After arranging traditional arts in virtual space, the conservers successfully change ethical genetic ignorance among audiences into a new perspective. Although both actual and virtual audiences show the same spontaneity, the latter shows new spirit, new vision, and a new shape of art called *virtual production*. Surprisingly, the agencies that conserve traditional arts still find difficulty in understanding such virtual reality but at least, this new reality provides them new space for expression. It is a phenomenon of cultural transformation that involves

the use of information and communication technology to express the new world of the show. Methodologically, observation on traditional arts is done through several analyses, respectively paradigmatic and syntagmatic analysis, textual and contextual analyses, and interpretive analysis.

3. Data Description

Speaking of virtual production, it began from television technology that was introduced to Indonesia in the 1960s. Television was aired for the first time on August 17, 1962, which coincided with the 17th commemoration of Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia. The premier program was the broadcast of Asian Games [11].

This broadcast marked the awakening of awareness to develop Indonesia as a tourist destination. Prambanan Open Stage was built in the 1960s. This stage is specified for the presentation of Javanese traditional dances that play Ramayana Stories [12].

Social change was initiated by television. At the time, Indonesia was a third world country but beginning to realize that television is a promising electronic wave technology for supporting the advancement of information and communication. This technology is considered helpful to strengthen the standing of Indonesia as a sovereign country. However, traditional arts broadcast on television was discoursed as a problem in the 1980s because this broadcast was considered weakening traditional arts centers. The most persistent complaint was given to one television program that promoted traditional arts. This program was called “Kemasan” [13].

Television was used as one economic standard besides telephone. Gradually, every Indonesian citizen bought television for entertaining the family mainly after the emergence of private television stations that provide many family programs. Since then, every family enjoyed various consolation forms for more than 12 hours. However, television media still did not take side on traditional arts because the owners gave priority to entertainment and advertising.

Furthermore, television development in Indonesia has become quite a serious problem and even gave disaster to traditional arts [14]. Traditional arts conservers preferred on taking exclusive and defensive postures. The presence of information and communication technology has distorted the privacy space of traditional arts conservators to instability. Exclusivity subsides but the debate between modernity and traditionality still remains sharp [15]. Both modernity and traditionality adherents still often have a sensitive clash on several topics, including the dichotomy of village and city that was critically discussed by art workers in the 1990s.

Social space minimizes traditional space because society always attempts to modernize tradition. Television and the internet have urged Indonesians to understand the existence of a new world. Nowadays, every Indonesian is familiar with the fact that the country has become progressive and starts to enter the digitalization era [16].

In 2017, Indonesia's access to the internet has reached more than 50%. Various social necessities have been fulfilled using smartphone-based internet. There is a strong opinion saying that the millennial era is characterized by the change of generation and culture [17].

The Millennial generation has its own culture and develops a lifestyle different from previous generations. Both generation shift and culture shift move together. New generation replaces the old generation more rapidly. Individuals who were born in 1960-1970 suddenly find difficulty catching up to Generation Z [1]. Issues about traditions become obsolete and less fascinating. Moreover, discussion on traditions is still affected by fear of losing ethical identity [18]. Taking the issues into consideration, the effort of cultural strengthening is then shifted to local culture that shades traditional arts. Discourses are conceptualized to prepare and educate the next generation regarding local culture. There is a presumption that the next generation is not capable enough to inherit local values or wisdom that constitute local culture. One prominent source of local wisdom is traditional arts.

Indeed, several arguments explained that local wisdom can shape the character of a nation. Reviews were conducted on these arguments and the results were generally showing that the past contributes guidelines for the global era. Globalization is a reality and marks a cultural change. In the global era, relationships between humans become more complex without clear boundaries. One individual can play in multiple arenas. Ethnic-based arena has no longer contributed to social growth. Information easily enters individuals' private space but the expression space of ethnic societies disappears. Individuals can play two roles (at the same time) in the same arena. Basically, the role is divided into three categories, respectively (1) target, (2) partner, and (3) independent [19] [20].

Globalization is a real phenomenon characterized by the absence of boundaries in physical and virtual communication modes. Globalization develops by facilitating interaction of many nations in two dimensions, respectively dimension of space and dimension of time. Each dimension is explained as follows.

1. Dimension of space. Globalization can also be defined as a capacity to touch every place in the world. Communicating with people in remote places is no longer

difficult. Nowadays, all regions are accessible by various transport modes and social media are used as communication spaces without fear of being affected by boundaries [21].

2. Dimension of time. Globalization helps individuals to finish any process instantly. High speed communication has given benefits to social life and every individual never makes second thought to use global communication technology [22].

All aspects of human life have been affected by globalization. These aspects include ideology, politics, economics, society and culture, and defense and security. Culture also changes due to globalization because individuals begin to be aware that the environment is no longer static and individuals consider it necessary to protect their convention and social relationship. As a consequence, the expression of aesthetics no longer relies on past references and even starts to take a distance from legitimacy of primordial power.

Social media are inseparable from information and communication technology. This technology is the main supporter of globalization [23]. There are many providers of information and communication technology, such as Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, and Tik Tok, which each compete with one another to draw the attention of subscribers. Thought, action and creativity are easily broadcasted to the world [24]. Slowly but surely, information and communication technology starts to be used for many functions including to be an instrument of war, a structure to cripple domination, a tool to build monopoly, and even to be a panel of power centers.

People become hesitant to be a leader because social media technology has facilitated others to debilitate, humiliate and disclaim any truth given by leadership. Everything becomes dichotomous and unstable. The worst is that anything real can be refused as temporary.

Traditional arts are no longer based on philosophical or transcendental values. Social media presents traditional arts to be a temporary entertainment rather than to be an educational device. Building awareness on traditional arts is often difficult if the arts are presented only for several minutes. Social media technology facilitates the users to skip out on many presentations to be focusing on their favorite presentation. Users can search their targeted file as quickly as possible and replace it with a new file immediately. Time is going fast leaving individuals to be incapable to show empathy and to carry out reflection and contemplation.

4. Result and Discussion

Traditional arts have separated from its prime and this separation marks the occurrence of change. This change refers to social change that affects attitude, action, material and mentality [25]. Besides, social change has implications for the identity of individuals, institutions, organizations and bureaucracy. Traditional arts are no longer considered as a pillar that supports customs and culture of traditional communities.

Clash among art conservators over virtual space represents a path toward structuration [26]. The structuration itself comprises several activities such as: constructing new network, new relation, new identity, and new game in global arena; developing art as commodity; alleviating free market impact by presenting art as social spirituality to help individuals from suffering inner void; and activating individuals who already live alone for so long crowded by less important information. Downstream part of traditional arts in its struggle for claiming virtual space is on its economical implication to art conservers.

Most art workers are born, growing and developing in a traditional environment. Tradition greatly affects them although the art workers graduate from higher education. Primordial emotion of traditional arts workers remains strong, possibly because these art workers get huge energy and social support from their traditional environment. After making a presentation in primordial space, the art workers usually receive recognition from audiences who are convinced that the presentation belongs to the art workers. Indeed, this arrangement represents a theory of ownership but such ownership is considered permanent or even legitimate. Therefore, it is not surprising to see traditional arts conservators as defensive people who restrains outsiders from entering their ownership area. However, foreign learners sometimes have access to traditional arts to study these arts and even master it deeply. This access is provided by social media technology by converting physical space into virtual space.

After entering virtual space, the culture system conditionally removes two aspects, respectively (1) removing awareness of space and (2) removing awareness of time. Each aspect will be explained as follows.

1. Removing Awareness of Space

Old (traditional) culture is often conceptually perceived as a pillar that supports the cultural frame. The pillar contains the ideas of origin because everything always comes from something, which refers to a place that must be seen as the point of sacred orientation. However, such a fundamental understanding of existence has suffered deformation recently. The importance of place is no longer significant. The concept of

place vanishes through reformation of information and communication. Now, individuals can be everywhere without going anywhere.

1. Removing Awareness of Time

Understanding the time is the same as understanding the cycle of life. All rituals to appreciate time have their own cycle. In other words, every activity has its own age (duration) which makes the conservers to always be ready for replacement. Symbolically, awareness of time positions individuals to be able to carry out contemplation. To contemplate is like a pilgrimage that involves walking to right or left directions and reaching out from one point to another. The process is done in a system and therefore it is not surprising if the process needs duration. As one element that constitutes a culture, time has been long ago conditioned to keep humans aware of the existence of reality.

The production of traditional arts in virtual space represents a distortion of two elements that constitute culture, respectively space and time. During covid-19 pandemic, the distortion seems quite obvious. New perspective is needed to understand space and time because both space and time are no longer in reality. Two reasons are behind this. First, space is strictly restrained. Individuals are prohibited from gathering in one place. This situation compels individuals to communicate with one another through virtual connection. In other words, individuals collect their energy and power and then use it to communicate with other individuals without making physical encounters. Second, time becomes more tolerant for conducting various activities. Individuals can do anything in virtual space, including producing virtual culture, and manage the time for culture activities as proper as possible.

5. Conclusion

In this article, the competition of traditional arts in virtual space is the representation of an effort toward structuration. The structuration consists of several activities such as developing new network, new relation, new identity, and new game in global arena; producing art as commodity; minimizing free market impact by presenting art as a social spirituality that relieves individuals from inner void; and inspiring individuals who have been living alone for so long crowded by trivial information.

Traditional arts produced in the virtual arena is a proof of revolution over reality culture. This revolution destroys an awareness that reality should be visible. Indeed, observable reality needs much energy in the form of space and time. The power of reality

is found in togetherness when individuals gather in certain rites or events to establish empathy, kinship and social bond. This power is suddenly broken and becoming the early sign of the death of tradition.

Economical implication is the downstream of traditional arts' struggle in the virtual space arena. This implication is a reasonable consequence from the separation of reality and virtual reality. Previous awareness about society has gone mutation. In other words, individuals are forced to think about how to mobilize commodities, either goods or services, in higher speed, more quantity and more freedom. Virtual space is a new kind of place that provides autonomy for self expression which is free from any binding rules, such as agreement between producer and consumer, convention or legal norms derived from community elders, primordial bond, and spiritual convention.

References

- [1] Putra YS. Theoretical review: Teori perbedaan generasi. *Jurnal Among Makarti*. 2016;9(18):129-132.
- [2] H. Debbie C, Keys Y. Generation Z students: Will they change our nursing classrooms? *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*. 2016;7(4): 12-18
- [3] Youarti, Elok I, Hidayah N. Perilaku phubbing sebagai karakter remaja generasi Z. *Jurnal Fokus Konseling*. 2018;4(1):143-150.
- [4] N., Par, Le Dévédec. De l'humanisme au post-humanisme: Les mutations de la perfectibilité humaine. 2008;4(2):1–11.
- [5] A. Tri F, Wibowo H, Humaedi S, Irfan M. Model keberfungsian sosial masyarakat pada kehidupan normal baru. *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik*. 2020;2(2):133-140
- [6] Q. Sari R, Nurohman YA. Ewom pada generasi Z di sosial media. *Jurnal Manajemen Daya Saing*. 2018;20(2):70–80.
- [7] Putra HSA. Seni tradisi, jatidiri, dan strategi kebudayaan. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Mamangan*. 2015;2(1):1-10.
- [8] Banda MM. Teori modal dalam pewarisan tradisi lisan. *Seminar Nasional Himpunan Sarjana-Kesusastraan Indonesia Komisariat Surabaya Sastra, Budaya, dan Perubahan Sosial Suraaya*. 2016.
- [9] Alam B. Globalisasi dan perubahan budaya: Widyakarya nasional. *Antropologi Dan Pembangunan*. 1998;5(4):1–11.
- [10] Nasrullah R. Internet dan ruang publik virtual, sebuah refleksi atas teori ruang publik habermas. *Komunikator*. 2015;4(1): 23-30

- [11] Sutanto VW, Alatas S. Menyoal regulasi penyiaran digital (Studi terhadap kepentingan publik dalam regulasi televisi digital di Indonesia). *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*. 2015;3(2):237–49.
- [12] Hidajat R. The relevance of batik fashion worn by characters in the Yogyakarta-style Ramayana ballet. *KnE Social Sciences / International Conference on Art, Design, Education and Cultural Studies (ICADECS) 2020*;8(1):1–8.
- [13] E., Misda, Murniati M, Darmansyah D. Pengemasan seni pertunjukan tradisional sebagai daya tarik wisata di istana basa pagaruyung. *Panggung*. 2018;28(3):46–52.
- [14] Suprihono AE. Sinematografi wayang: Persoalan transmedia seni pertunjukan tradisional dalam program tayangan televisi. *Rekam*. 2019;15(2):137–52.
- [15] Chalid I. Peran seni tradisional dalam memelihara perdamaian (peace building) perspektif antropologis. *Workshop kebudayaan, seni, multikulturalisme, pluralitas dan perdamaian dalam perspektif pemuda dan mahasiswa*. Publisir Unimal 2014;5(Sep):1–8.
- [16] A. NI. Digitalisasi pasar tradisional: Perspektif teori perubahan sosial. *Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi*. 2014;3(Apr):1–12.
- [17] A., Aceng, Puspitasari L. Media televisi di era internet. *ProTVF*. 2018;2(1):101.
- [18] Batubara AM. Menjadi modern tanpa kehilangan identitas: Problematika pelestarian cagar budaya di wilayah Sulawesi Tenggara. *Repositori Institusi: Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi* 2004;9(1):4–16.
- [19] Rosala D. Pembelajaran seni budaya berbasis kearifan lokal dalam upaya membangun pendidikan karakter siswa di sekolah dasar. *Ritme*. 2016;2(1):16–25.
- [20] Harini S. Pemahaman terhadap budaya melayu sebagai upaya preventif dalam mengurangi konflik Indonesia-Malaysia. *Eksplorasi*. 2016;29(1):55–63.
- [21] Soliha SF. Tingkat ketergantungan pengguna media sosial dan kecemasan sosial. *INTERAKSI: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*. 2015;4(1):1–10.
- [22] Cahyono AS. Pengaruh media sosial terhadap perubahan sosial masyarakat di Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Ilmu Politik Diterbitkan Oleh Fakultas Ilmu Sosial & Politik, Universitas Tulungagung*. 2016;9(1):140–57.
- [23] Ameliola S, Nugraha HD. Perkembangan media informasi dan teknologi terhadap perkembangan anak. *Prosiding The 5 International*. 2015;2(1):400–408
- [24] Suneki S. Dampak globalisasi terhadap eksistensi budaya daerah. *Jurnal Ilmiah CIVIS*. 2012;2(1):307–21.
- [25] Yusof SFM, Sa'at NORH. Antara tradisi dan pembangunan dalam konteks perubahan sosiobudaya komuniti muara. *Akademika*. 2019;89(3):27–39.

- [26] Achmad ZA. Anatomi teori strukturasi dan ideologi jalan ketiga anthony giddens. *Translitera: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi Dan Studi Media*. 2020;9(2):45–62.