



PATTERNS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE TRANSMISSION IN KUDUS: A CASE STUDY ON THE VALUES AND MEANINGS OF KRETEK DANCE

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Abstract

The research discusses the pattern of cultural inheritance in Kudus Regency with a focus on the values and meanings contained in the Kretek Dance. This dance not only represents the process of making kretek cigarettes as a typical cultural heritage of Kudus, but also contains aesthetic, social, and religious values that are passed down from generation to generation. Through a qualitative research method with a narrative approach, this study identifies factors that influence the inheritance of Kretek Dance, including the roles of family, community and educational institutions. The results show that despite various challenges due to modernization and globalization, preservation and innovation efforts continue to be made to maintain the relevance of Kretek Dance in the midst of modern society. This research emphasizes the importance of active involvement of the younger generation in understanding and preserving local cultural values through traditional dance.

Keywords: *Cultural Heritage, Kretek Dance, Cultural Value, Symbolic Meaning, Modernization.*

INTRODUCTION

Kudus is a city in Central Java with a wealth of cultural heritage and traditions that reflect the local identity. One of the most symbolic cultural heritages of Kudus is the Kretek tobacco industry. In addition to contributing to the economy, this is also an integral part of the community's culture. Over time, the traditional dance art of Kudus, including the kretek dance, has adapted to those social conditions. The works produced by the local community will become the hallmark of the region. Therefore, the works produced become traditional art recognized by the local community. Dance as an aesthetic

expression of humanity is an inseparable part of the meaningful life of society (Riyanti, Asih, Much. Arsyad Fardani, 2023).

Kretek dance was created to depict the process of making kretek cigarettes, from the selection of tobacco to the ready-to-use cigarettes. According to Endang Tonny, one of the artists involved in the creation of this dance, the idea for creating the Kretek Dance originated from the request of Central Java Governor Sutarjo Rustam to create a distinctive Kudus dance that could be performed at the inauguration of the Kretek Museum in 1986 (kemdikbudristek, 2020). In other words, the Kretek dance is the profile of Kudus Regency, representing the existence of Kudus Regency as the Kretek city (Mulanto, 2021).

Kretek Dance is performed by several dancers representing the workers and one dancer representing the foreman. Like other traditional Javanese dances, this dance recognizes various standards in its composition and roles. The form of the dance is realized through movements that are beautiful, dynamic, and captivating. This dance depicts the entire series of processes involved in the production of traditional kretek cigarettes (Setyaningrum, 2015).

Kretek Dance in Kudus is a symbol of rich cultural heritage, reflecting local values preserved through generations. Nowadays, children still lack the socio-cultural character in preserving local culture (Ninis Fivtia Sari, F. Shoufika Hilyana, 2016). Kretek Dance, besides having significant value as one of the performances at various events, also holds important value for Kudus Regency as a hallmark of Kudus Regency, which thrives and depends on tobacco. In addition, it characterizes the Islamic values and strong work ethic of the Kudus community. Function is a utility; within a dance, it contains function or utility. Dance can be classified into several functions, including ceremonial means, self-expression, entertainment, educational media, and therapeutic or healing vehicles (Norhayani & Iryanti, 2018). This aligns with the analysis of a dance work that has Islamic values, reflecting the lifestyle of the Kudus community, and most importantly, depicting the process of making cigarettes called Kretek Dance (Setyaningrum, 2015).

However, the challenges of modernization and globalization can threaten the continuity of these values. Preservation and development are two activities that cannot be separated or function independently, as preservation means maintaining existing traditional values in order to develop them to keep up with the times (Setyaningrum, 2015). The existence of the Kretek dance is appreciated by the people of Kudus Regency to be preserved and passed down to the next

generation. Efforts to preserve culture and traditional arts are demonstrated in order to maintain what a particular culture has, so that in the effort of cultural development, the goal is for the tradition not only to survive but also to continue to thrive within the community. Society. Therefore, it is important for the Kudus community to create space for dialogue and the involvement of the younger generation in the preservation of Tari Kretek, so that its values and meanings remain relevant in an ever-changing era. The result of the artistic creation process can be interpreted as an aesthetic object created from the appreciative observation of an aesthetic object. The foundation of the aesthetic subject and aesthetic object can give birth to aesthetic values that can develop a child's character in accordance with Ki Hajar Dewantara's concept of the three forces of human intellect. The quality of these three elements of human intellect can be beneficial for children's education in this era of globalization (Fajrie, 2023).

The phenomenon of traditional cultural inheritance, especially in the art of dance, often reveals a gap between the older and younger generations. In the context of Kretek Dance in Kudus, there is a challenge in ensuring that the values and meanings contained in this dance remain relevant and understood by the younger generation. This heritage is often passed down from one generation to the next (Sianturi, 2019), becoming a strong reflection of the identity and cultural values upheld by a nation or community. In the diversity of types, styles, and forms, traditional dances reflect the geographical background, history, and cultural beliefs of the communities that produce them. Each movement, costume, and music involved often carries deep symbolic meanings, depicting stories, myths, rituals, or social values that are important to the community.

In addition to being a form of artistic and cultural expression, traditional dances also play a significant role in strengthening social bonds, celebrating important events, and preserving cultural heritage. Through traditional dances, communities can feel united, honor their ancestors, and strengthen their collective identity. Although often considered a part of the past, efforts continue to preserve and revive traditional

dance in the modern era. This is done through various activities, such as education, public performances, workshops, and research, to ensure that this cultural heritage remains relevant and appreciated by the current and future generations (Nirmalasari Simbolon, 2024). This condition creates a phenomenon where traditional arts begin to lose their footing amidst the onslaught of modernization.

Furthermore, the role of families and local communities in preserving Kretek Dance has diminished, along with the decrease in direct interaction between older and younger generations in the socio-cultural context. Kretek Dance, which was once taught through generations within families and the kretek worker community, now struggles to attract the interest of the younger generation due to limited access to direct cultural experiences. Research on cultural transmission patterns in Kudus, particularly related to the values and meanings of the kretek dance, still has several gaps that need to be further explored. With the passage of time, there has been growing concern about the community's diminishing enthusiasm to pay attention to and preserve the sustainability of the kretek dance. This matter has also caught the attention of artists and the government of Kudus City, particularly the Cultural Office, to involve the people of Kudus in jointly participating in preserving the art that has become the identity of Kudus City, especially the younger generation who should be aware of this (Habib, 2021). These findings indicate a gap in the process of transmitting cultural meanings and values between generations, but do not yet explain in detail the factors influencing this phenomenon.

Kretek Dance is a form of art that depicts the process of making kretek cigarettes, which is a hallmark of Kudus Regency. The existence of the Kretek dance is appreciated by the people of Kudus Regency to be preserved and passed down to the next generation. Efforts to preserve

culture and traditional arts are shown in order to maintain what a particular culture has, so that in the effort of cultural development, the goal is for the tradition not only to survive but also to continue to thrive within the community. Community (Asiva Noor Rachmayani, 2015). These findings indicate innovative efforts in cultural inheritance, but they still raise questions about how these contemporary inheritance methods can maintain the essence and original meaning of the kretek dance. This gap requires further study to understand the dynamics of cultural inheritance in the context of modernity, as well as to identify effective approaches in bridging tradition with the new generation.

The author's goal in the research on the cultural inheritance patterns of Kudus through the case study of the values and meanings of the Kretek Dance is to identify, analyze, and understand how the cultural values and symbolic meanings contained in the Kretek Dance are passed down from generation to generation. This research also aims to explore the factors that influence the sustainability of cultural inheritance amidst the changing times, as well as to examine the roles of the community, cultural institutions, and families in preserving the local cultural identity of Kudus through this dance art.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research titled "Patterns of Cultural Heritage in Kudus: A Case Study on the Values and Meanings of Kretek Dance" employs a qualitative research method with a narrative approach to understand the patterns of cultural heritage in Kudus related to the values and meanings of Kretek dance. According to (Juliet Corbin & Anselm Strauss, 1998), qualitative research is research that produces findings that cannot be achieved or obtained using statistical procedures or other qualification methods (measurement). Therefore, the aim of this research is to gain a general understanding of social reality from the perspective of the participants. Qualitative research is based on constructivist and interpretivist philosophies that view social reality as a social construct with diverse contexts and can be understood through subjective interpretation (Creswell, John W, 2018).

This research method involves primary data

collection techniques through structured interviews. Structured interviews are used to obtain perceptions, attitudes, and mindsets from subjects relevant to the issues being studied. Secondary data is also used to enrich information and conduct observations related to the cultural phenomena of Kudus and the values associated with the Kretek dance. According to Moloeng (2007: 6), understanding the type of qualitative research is research aimed at comprehensively understanding the phenomena experienced by the research subjects through description (Fiantika, Wasil M, Jumiyati, Honesti, Wahyuni, Jonata, 2022). The data analysis technique used in this research includes the qualitative descriptive method, which involves describing or depicting phenomena with words or sentences, and then analyzing the data to draw conclusions as shown in Figure 1:

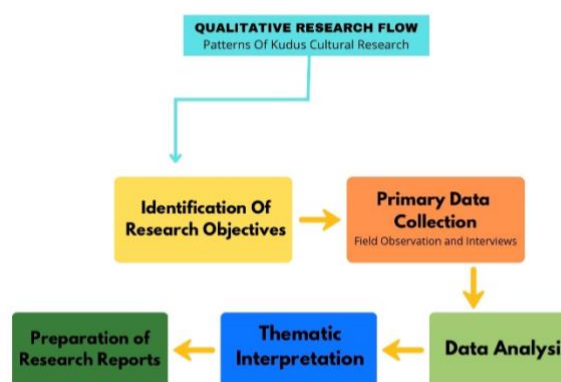


Figure 1. Research Flow

In this qualitative research method, it includes: (1) Identification of the research objective aimed at understanding the patterns of cultural inheritance, particularly related to the values and meanings of the kretek dance in Kudus, (2) Primary data collection gathered through several techniques of field observation and structured interviews, (3) Data analysis, the collected data will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. The analysis process includes data reduction, data display, and

confirmation. Data reduction is carried out to break down raw data into main themes, while data display is used to illustrate the analysis results. Thematic interpretation focuses on identifying main themes related to the values and meanings of the kretek dance. These themes will be further explored to understand the effective and efficient patterns of cultural transmission in the Kudus community. (5) The preparation of the research report aims to convey information systematically, objectively, and scientifically about the research results.

The research method used in this study employs a qualitative approach consisting of several main techniques: 1). In-Depth Interviews: The researcher conducted interviews with community leaders, artists, and the younger generation involved in the kretek dance. These interviews aim to explore their understanding of the values and meanings of the kretek dance within the culture of Kudus. According to Kompas, in-depth interviews allow researchers to delve into the experiences and perspectives of respondents in greater detail (Arfianti wijaya, 2023), 2) Observation: The researcher also conducted field observations to obtain a direct picture of the implementation of the kretek dance. These observations help the researcher understand the social and cultural context surrounding the dance practice, as explained by Detik, which states that observation provides information based on direct observation of the phenomena occurring (Laraswati, 2022), 3) Documentation: Data collection was also carried out through document review, including historical records, articles, and literature related to the kretek dance. This documentation technique is important to complement the information from interviews and observations, as well as to provide a richer historical context (Awlia, 2020). documentation serves as a crucial source of secondary data that can validate and enrich the findings obtained from primary sources. Through the collection of relevant documents such as photographs, official reports, learning materials, and archival records, researchers can cross-check information and identify patterns or inconsistencies that may not emerge solely from interviews or observations. This

triangulation process not only strengthens the credibility and reliability of the research but also enables a deeper understanding of the studied phenomenon by situating it as shown in Figure 2:

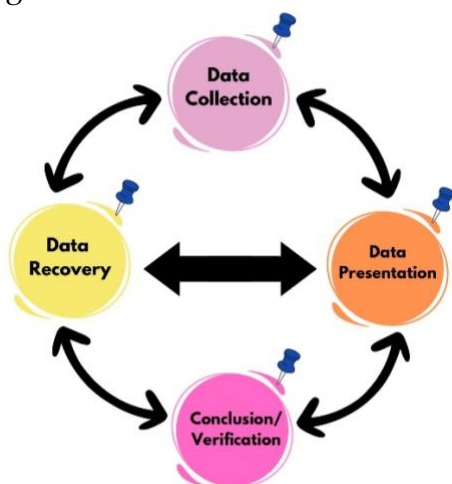


Figure 2: Stages of Analysis

To clarify, Miles and Huberman mapped the qualitative analysis process. (Miles, Matthew B. dan A. Michael Huberman.1992). The stages of analysis include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Considering the importance of understanding qualitative data processing and analysis techniques, the author elaborates on this writing using the library research method, an effort to systematically search and organize observation notes, interviews, and others to enhance the researcher's understanding of the studied case and present it as findings for others. The issues are how to understand qualitative data analysis, how to analyze and process data, as well as how to reduce data, and how to present qualitative data (Ahmad & Muslimah, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dance is a form of performing art that involves a sequence of body movements chosen deliberately, possessing aesthetic and symbolic value, and recognized in certain cultures. Dance

is not merely entertainment, but also serves as a means of cultural expression and communication of emotions without words. Each type of dance has different characteristics and meanings, reflecting the cultural richness of its respective region. In addition, dance is also often used in religious ceremonies and rituals, demonstrating its important role in the social life of the community. As for the definition of dance according to (Kusumastuti, 2014), it is stated that dance is a tangible form of human soul expression expressed through beautiful rhythmic movements.

In 1986, the then Governor of Central Java, Mr. Suparjo, came to Kudus to lay the foundation stone for the construction of the Kretek Museum. At that time, he expressed his desire that during the inauguration of the Kretek Museum, it should not be accompanied by other dances, but rather a dance typical of Kudus that is related to the Kretek Museum. Mr. Suparjo conveyed this request to the then Regent of Kudus, Mr. Saubari. Subsequently, Mr. Saubari informed Mr. DJ Soemono, who was then the Head of the Cultural Office. Mr. DJ Soemono then assigned Sanggar Puring Sari to create the Kretek Dance, which was first performed during the opening of the Kretek Museum in 1986. In the first performance during the inauguration of the Kretek Museum on October 3, 1986, this dance was still called Mbathil and was performed by 500 female dancers. Mbathil itself means cutting the ends of cigarettes. The reason for changing the name from Mbathil to Kretek is that only people around Kudus were familiar with the term Mbathil. After participating in a regional dance festival around 1988, the term Mbathil was changed to Kretek. (Sindara, 2013).

The Meaning of Kreteek Dance

According to Endang Tonny (interview on November 20, 2024), Kretek dance is a traditional dance that has developed in the distinctive movement style of Surakarta. Currently, the Kretek dance has evolved into a new creative dance form that still refers to traditional movements, depicting the process of making cigarettes, from selecting tobacco, rolling cigarettes, cutting, putting cigarettes

into boxes, to the marketing process.

Movement

The movements of the female dancer in the Kretek dance beautifully and intricately depict the process of making cigarettes, starting with the selection of quality tobacco. In the first movement, the dancer demonstrates the meticulous selection of tobacco leaves, which are the main ingredient in making cigarettes. After that, the movement continues with the mixing of tobacco with cloves, which produces the distinctive aroma of Kretek cigarettes. This movement is full of grace, emphasizing the precision in blending the ingredients. Next, the dancers continue with the movement of rolling cigarettes, depicting the skill of weaving tobacco and cloves into dense and neat cigarettes. The movements of cutting and tidying the cigarettes then illustrate the crucial final touch to ensure the cigarettes are ready for the market. Finally, the dancers demonstrate movements that depict the distribution and marketing of cigarettes, which involve the journey of cigarettes from the production site to the hands of consumers. The entire sequence of movements reflects a process full of precision and expertise in producing high-quality cigarettes.

Nampeni

The nampeni movement in the Kretek dance depicts the process of selecting tobacco by female workers before the cigarette-making begins. In this movement, the dancers swing the trays up and down nimbly, as if discarding bad or low-quality tobacco. This movement not only demonstrates meticulousness in selecting raw materials but also illustrates the patience and dexterity of the workers who must ensure that only the best tobacco is chosen for the next process. This tamping technique has become an important

symbol in maintaining the quality of the cigarettes to be produced. The quality of the production results is considered good if the production results meet the standards (Santoso, 2018) as shown in Figure 3:



Figure 3: Nampeni
Source: Researcher (2024)

Ngayak

After the nampeni movement, the next process is the ngayak movement, where female workers select tobacco by spinning the tobacco in the tampah. This movement is performed to separate bad or damaged tobacco, ensuring that only quality tobacco is chosen for further processing. This ngayak technique demonstrates precision and expertise in selecting the raw materials to be used, which is crucial for maintaining the quality of the produced cigarettes. The selection of quality raw materials greatly influences taste, aroma, and overall product success in a competitive market (Lestari & Suryadinata, 2024), as shown in Figure 4:



Figure 4: Ngayak

Milahi

After the nampeni and ngayak

movements, the next step is to separate the good tobacco to be used as cigarette material, while the unused tobacco is discarded. This separation process is crucial because the quality of the tobacco used will directly affect the taste and quality of the produced cigarettes. The workers must have the expertise to identify high-quality tobacco, so that only the best materials will be selected for production. Research shows that meticulous separation can enhance consumer satisfaction and strengthen brand reputation in a competitive market (Audrine, 2020). This movement is known as *milahi*, where dancers carefully separate usable tobacco from damaged or low-quality tobacco. This *milahi* movement reflects meticulousness and caution in maintaining the quality of raw materials, ensuring that only the best tobacco is used in the cigarette manufacturing process as shown in Figure 5:



Figure 5: *Milahi*
Source: Researcher (2024)

Ngiteri

After the *milahi* movement, the tobacco is then re-selected through the *ngiteri* movement to ensure that only the highest quality tobacco is used. In this movement, the dancers meticulously inspect each tobacco leaf, discarding those that do not meet the standards, so that only the perfect materials remain for

the next process. The *ngitêri* movement illustrates the extra meticulousness in selecting the tobacco to be used in cigarette production, demonstrating dedication and attention to the quality of the final product. At this stage, the workers conduct a thorough inspection of each tobacco leaf, ensuring that only materials that meet quality standards are selected. This process not only reflects the skills and experience of the workers but also contributes to the product's success in the market. Research shows that attention to detail in the selection of raw materials can significantly enhance product competitiveness and customer satisfaction (Pawitan, 2010) as shown in Figure 6:



Figure 6: *Ngiteri*
Source: Researcher (2024)

Melembat

Melembat is an activity performed to arrange several sheets of prepared paper, which will later be used as wrappers in the making of cigarettes. In this movement, the dancers carefully arrange the paper, ensuring that it is tight and orderly, ready to wrap the selected tobacco. The process of *melembat* illustrates an important stage in cigarette production, where neatness and precision are essential to produce high-quality cigarettes. The quality of the produced cigarettes does not only depend on the raw materials but also on the skills and attention to detail during the manufacturing process, which reflect the local traditions and culture in the tobacco industry (Barber, 2008) as shown in Figure 7:



Figure 7: Melembar
Source: Researcher (2024)

Characteristics of Kretek Dance That Distinguish it from Other Dances

Kretek dance created by Sanggar Puring Sari has a meaning and representation that is closely related to the kretek cigarette industry typical of Kudus. This dance describes the process of making kretek cigarettes, starting from the stage of selecting raw materials, namely tobacco and cloves, to the process of packaging cigarettes ready for market. According to (Pradewi & Lestari, 2012) Differences in the form and type of dance lead to differences in the characteristics of dance from each region and encourage the Regional Government to raise and develop dances that are already owned by each region. Regency Through dance movements, the dancers seem to act out the activities of workers in the clove cigarette industry. This can be seen from the hand movements that symbolize the selection of tobacco leaves, processing cloves, and packaging cigarettes. Thus, Kretek Dance becomes a medium to describe and preserve the production process of kretek cigarettes, which has become a cultural icon of Kudus. The representation of the process of making kretek cigarettes in this dance not only functions as entertainment, but also as an effort to introduce and maintain the cultural heritage of Kudus which is closely related to the kretek cigarette industry.

Efforts to Introduce Kretek Dance to the Public

To preserve and promote Kretek Dance, related parties in Kudus make various efforts. One of them is by holding regular exercises involving representatives from various schools, ranging from kindergarten to university students, as well as representatives from art studios in Kudus. In addition, Kretek Dance is also included in national and even international competitions, such as the ASEAN competition. This aims to introduce Kudus culture, especially Kretek Dance, on a wider scale, both at the national and international levels. Through these efforts, it is hoped that Kretek Dance can be increasingly recognized and appreciated, and can become one of the cultural icons of Kudus which can strengthen regional identity and strengthen relations with the wider community. The lack of public knowledge about the culture that is owned can potentially become the forgotten culture of Kudus even though the culture of a region is the foundation for the formation of a nation's identity (AAjeng Auliya Marta, Ofita Purwani, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Kretek Dance is one of the typical dances born from Kudus Regency. Kretek dance was created based on the process of making kretek cigarettes. The production of kretek cigarettes is one of the main forms of livelihood for the people of Kudus Regency, so it has an important meaning for the life and culture of the people of Kudus Regency. The inheritance system in Kretek dance is carried out through a learning process that contains the processes of imitation, identification, and socialization. There are several stages regarding the process of inheriting Kretek dance, namely the process of introduction, the process of seeing, imitating, and the process of training and coaching. Learning method with pecantrikan system as an effort to inherit Kretek dance. In the learning method with the pancantrikan system there are sorogan (individual) and bandongan (together) learning systems. In addition to these two methods, two other learning methods are also known which are independent learning activities, namely halaqah (learning together with discussion) and lalaran (learning alone by memorizing).

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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