

# Local Wisdom, Aesthetic Transformations, and Creative Pedagogy: A Qualitative Synthesis of Indonesian Performing Arts as Cultural-Educational Ecosystems



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## ABSTRACT

This study synthesises interdisciplinary perspectives to examine how Indonesian performing arts function as dynamic cultural-educational ecosystems shaped by aesthetic expression, local wisdom, and creative pedagogical practices. Performing arts serve not only as artistic media but also as cultural spaces where identity, morality, symbolism, and social values are transmitted across generations. Local wisdom embedded in traditional arts strengthens their role in character formation and contextual learning, while contemporary forces such as modernisation, digitalisation, and global cultural flows increasingly influence how these traditions adapt and transform.

Using a qualitative thematic-synthesis approach, the study reviews concepts from aesthetics, ethnography, cultural pedagogy, creative studies, and ethnomathematics to map the interconnected functions of performing arts. Four major thematic patterns emerge: aesthetic systems that evolve through symbolic structures and hybrid forms; the presence of moral, spiritual, and communal values; creative processes that mediate innovation while maintaining cultural continuity; and pedagogical potentials that support character development, cultural literacy, and creative reasoning.

Overall, the study highlights Indonesian performing arts as an integrated ecosystem that bridges cultural transmission, creativity, and educational transformation. This synthesis provides a conceptual foundation for advancing future research and informing cultural and educational policy aimed at strengthening the sustainability and relevance of traditional performing-arts practices in contemporary contexts.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian performing arts have long served as a cultural arena in which aesthetic expression, socio-cultural identity, and collective values are continuously produced, negotiated, and transformed. Traditions such as Salawaik Dulang, wayang kulit, and various regional dance repertoires demonstrate how artistic practices encode local knowledge, spiritual cosmologies, and communal ethics in highly stylised forms (Anas et al., 2021; Yulianti & Marhaeni, 2021). These art forms are not merely creative outputs; they function as cultural texts that carry layers of meaning, from symbolic representations to ritual functions, shaping public understanding of heritage and reinforcing the shared identity of their respective communities. Bisri (2007) notes that ritual dances, for instance, have evolved while still retaining core symbolic

structures—an indication that the aesthetic dimension of Indonesian performing arts is dynamic yet rooted in long-standing cultural frameworks.

The educational significance of local wisdom embedded in these artistic traditions has gained scholarly attention in recent decades. A strong body of research argues that local wisdom must be positioned as a foundation of pedagogical practice, particularly within multicultural and character-oriented education (Amirin, 2013). Educational models that draw from communal traditions and indigenous modes of expression have proven effective in cultivating moral sensibility, empathy, and cultural awareness among learners (Endayani, 2023). Studies on the development of culturally responsive early-childhood materials, such as those based on Sasak traditions, illustrate how local cultural content can enrich children's social values and early character formation (Ardiyanti & Hanip, 2022). The intersection of pedagogy and culture is therefore essential, not only for preserving heritage but also for developing educational models aligned with Indonesia's cultural realities.

Amid these pedagogical considerations, Indonesian performing arts are simultaneously undergoing significant transformations as they confront the pressures and opportunities of globalisation and digitalisation. Sumarsono (2024) highlights how ethnic music has been reimagined within modern production systems, giving rise to hybrid forms that engage contemporary audiences while maintaining cultural authenticity. Likewise, the aesthetics of performance in the global era increasingly integrate digital media, new modes of staging, and cross-cultural influences (Suryadmaja & Saearani, 2025). In educational contexts, digital transformation also shapes how cultural values—especially those related to religious and moral character—are taught and mediated (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022). These shifts reveal that Indonesian art traditions are not static cultural relics; rather, they are adaptive ecosystems shaped by historical continuity and contemporary innovation.

Although various studies address performing arts, character education, aesthetic theory, and local wisdom, current scholarship remains fragmented. Most research focuses on singular traditions, individual communities, or separate theoretical standpoints. There is still limited synthesis between aesthetic studies, ethnopedagogy, and character-education frameworks. Consequently, the broader cultural-educational ecosystem forged through Indonesian performing arts has not been thoroughly mapped. Specifically, existing studies have not fully examined how aesthetic transformations, creative processes, and local-wisdom values collectively shape community identities and pedagogical practices. This gap underscores the need for an integrative synthesis capable of highlighting conceptual relations across disciplines—performing arts studies, education, cultural theory, and creative-industry development.

A comprehensive examination is particularly urgent because performing arts today are increasingly connected to socio-economic and creative-industry agendas. Communities that sustain performing arts traditions often rely on artistic practices as cultural capital, generating social cohesion, economic opportunities, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. Yet without a clear conceptual understanding of the connections between aesthetics, local wisdom, creativity, and pedagogy, policies and programs designed to support these communities risk becoming fragmented or ineffective. Therefore, synthesising insights from multiple fields is crucial for developing academic foundations that can inform policy, curriculum development, and community-based cultural initiatives.

This article aims to integrate findings from a wide range of studies on Indonesian performing arts, local-wisdom-based education, aesthetic theory, creativity, and ethnomathematics, in order to articulate a holistic understanding of how performing arts shape cultural-educational ecosystems in Indonesia. More specifically, the study seeks to (1) identify recurring aesthetic principles and cultural values embedded within diverse performance traditions; (2) examine the pedagogical roles of performing arts in character formation, cultural transmission, and

community empowerment; (3) explore how creative processes in traditional and modern performances support cultural sustainability; and (4) highlight interdisciplinary intersections such as the integration of dance and mathematical cognition through ethnomathematics. By synthesising research across these domains, the article provides a conceptual framework that situates Indonesian performing arts not merely as artistic expressions but as dynamic ecosystems that interconnect culture, education, creativity, and community development.

The study of aesthetics within Indonesian performing arts offers a lens through which symbolic structures, sensory experiences, and embodied expressions can be understood as culturally grounded forms of knowledge. Hardjana (1983) emphasises that musical and performative aesthetics emerge not merely from technical or sonic elements, but from the cultural logic that informs artistic creation. This perspective aligns with contemporary analyses of performance aesthetics in the global era, which highlight the significance of cultural interpretation, stylistic transformation, and contextual meaning-making (Suryadmaja & Saearani, 2025). These studies demonstrate that aesthetic appreciation in the Indonesian context involves an intricate negotiation between inherited tradition and contemporary reinterpretation.

The structural and textural elements of performance further enrich this aesthetic discourse. N. Sahrul (2015) underscores the importance of analysing structural aesthetics—such as rhythm, movement patterning, staging configurations—and textural aesthetics—such as symbolic layering, body expression, and semantic nuance—in understanding performative meaning. These components provide the foundation upon which Indonesian traditional arts develop their narrative and symbolic coherence.

Transformations of aesthetic values also play a critical role, especially in art forms that feature symbolic embodiments of gender, spirituality, and identity. For instance, Putrianti et al. (2022) reveal how the Sintren performance expresses cultural reinterpretations of female embodiment through shifting aesthetic codes. Similarly, studies on wayang kulit Cenk Blonk demonstrate how reinterpretation of form, humour, and body language can renew tradition while maintaining core symbolic functions (Yulianti & Marhaeni, 2021). Together, these works highlight that aesthetics in Indonesian performing arts is dynamic and responsive to societal change, even as it draws on long-standing cultural principles.

Local wisdom has increasingly been recognised as an essential foundation for educational practice in Indonesia. Amirin (2013) proposes that multicultural education rooted in indigenous knowledge offers a pedagogical framework that mirrors learners' cultural environments. Such an approach helps bridge formal schooling with community-based values, enabling students to internalise cultural identity while developing social and moral competencies.

Endayani (2023) supports this view by demonstrating how local-wisdom-based educational models strengthen students' understanding of ethical behaviour, communal responsibility, and cultural identity. These models position local customs and arts not only as cultural expressions but as pedagogical tools capable of shaping character and cognitive development.

In early childhood contexts, the use of culturally informed learning materials—such as those drawn from Sasak traditions—has proven effective in fostering children's value formation and social awareness (Ardiyanti & Hanip, 2022). These materials transmit communal norms through stories, symbols, and practices that are familiar to the children's lived experience. Robby et al. (2023) further highlight the family's role in reinforcing local-wisdom values, showing that cultural socialisation at home complements school-based learning and strengthens moral development. Altogether, these studies suggest that the integration of local wisdom in education offers a culturally congruent path for holistic character formation.

The role of performing arts in character education has been emphasised by numerous scholars. Hidayat et al. (2022) demonstrate that creative arts-based approaches are effective in shaping children's moral reasoning, discipline, empathy, and collaborative skills. This is supported by

Pahan and Prasetya (2023), whose work shows how the practice of traditional dance and music in schools fosters discipline, respect, and cultural attachment among students. Similarly, within religious and moral education, arts serve as meaningful mediating tools that help children understand abstract values through embodied practice (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022).

Beyond pedagogy, performing arts also function as vehicles for cultural transmission and social cohesion. Fujiastuti (2019) argues that performance traditions such as Ketoprak carry embedded moral messages and cultural wisdom that shape public behaviour. Bisri (2007) further highlights that transformations from ritual to pseudo-ritual forms still retain strong cultural symbolism, enabling communities to connect with their heritage while adapting to contemporary contexts.

Community empowerment presents another significant dimension. Cultural industries rooted in local artistic traditions, such as the songket weaving community in Sebauk Village, demonstrate how artistic practices support economic sustainability and community welfare (Ishak & Selamat, 2025). These cases illustrate how performing arts and cultural production operate at the nexus of education, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development. Performing arts thus function not merely as artistic expressions but as catalysts for comprehensive community empowerment.

Creative processes within Indonesian performing arts reflect a blend of tradition, innovation, intuition, and cultural negotiation. Afarizs and Abdillah (2019) show how the creative processes of artists in Ketoprak and Ludruk involve deep engagement with cultural narratives and improvisational techniques, resulting in performances that remain relevant despite societal transformations. Likewise, contemporary works such as *Kabayan The Musical* reflect structured creative processes that integrate dramaturgy, choreography, and modern theatrical technology (Mukti & Heriyawati, 2024).

At the same time, innovation in ethnic and traditional arts continues to flourish. Sumarsono (2024) observes that ethnic music in the modern era evolves through selective adaptation, digital experimentation, and collaborative production. This reaffirms that creativity in traditional arts is not an attempt to erase heritage but a strategy for cultural sustainability, enabling traditional expressions to remain vibrant in changing cultural landscapes. These studies collectively emphasise that Indonesian creative processes blend cultural preservation with artistic innovation, forming a fertile ground for both artistic growth and socio-cultural resilience.

The field of ethnomathematics offers a unique perspective on dance as a repository of mathematical concepts embedded within cultural practice. Juni et al. (2023) and Mukarromah and Darmawan (n.d.) demonstrate how floor patterns in traditional dances encode geometric reasoning, spatial logic, and symmetry. These analyses show that dance movements and formations embody cultural expressions of mathematical thinking that align with community worldviews and artistic conventions.

Moreover, the potential of ethnomathematics for educational innovation has been increasingly recognised. S et al. (2024) show that Dolalak dance contains structural patterns that can be integrated into mathematics education, enabling students to learn mathematical concepts through embodied and culturally relevant practices. Such integrative approaches exemplify how the arts can serve as interdisciplinary bridges that link creativity, cognition, and cultural understanding. By transforming dance into a pedagogical medium, ethnomathematics contributes not only to mathematics learning but also to cultural appreciation and identity formation.

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## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative design using a thematic literature-synthesis approach to integrate cross-study findings on Indonesian performing arts, local wisdom, and creative pedagogy. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to interpret meanings, patterns, and conceptual relationships across diverse scholarly works, in line with qualitative analytical principles that foreground interpretive processes, meaning construction, and contextual understanding (Creswell, 2010, 2018). Within this framework, the research design is not oriented toward statistical generalisation but toward deepening the structural, thematic, and theoretical dynamics emerging from studies in arts, culture, and education. Consistent with Maxwell's (2013) perspective, this qualitative synthesis allows room for reflective and flexible analysis when engaging with conceptual data generated by previous scholars.

The method employed falls within descriptive qualitative analysis, emphasising systematic and objective exposition of key themes without reducing the cultural depth embedded in the material. This approach aligns with the recommendations of Oranga and Matere (2023) and Ugwu and Eze (2023), who highlight the importance of analytical clarity, interpretive depth, and logical consistency in qualitative synthesis studies. Accordingly, the present research positions the literature as its primary data source and analyses it through a structured thematic process.

The data set comprises all scholarly articles compiled during the preliminary review, including studies on Indonesian performing arts, culture-based pedagogy, aesthetics, artistic ethnography, and ethnomathematics. These articles represent a broad range of artistic contexts—dance, music, theatre, and ritual—alongside research on character education, creative processes, and culture-based creative industries. This diversity enables the researcher to construct a comprehensive understanding of the interconnections between aesthetics, local wisdom, and educational ecosystems.

The analysis proceeded through three main stages. First, all articles were coded using open coding to identify key concepts relating to aesthetics, cultural values, creativity, and education. This process was followed by axial coding to establish relational linkages among themes across the studies. The final stage consisted of thematic synthesis through pattern analysis and cross-study comparison, producing an integrated conceptual structure that maps the role of performing arts within the culture–education–creativity ecosystem.

Interpretive reliability was strengthened through theoretical triangulation as recommended by Creswell (2018) and Maxwell (2013), ensuring that findings were examined across multiple perspectives—namely aesthetics, ethnopedagogy, and creativity studies. In addition, cross-cultural comparison was conducted to prevent the synthesis from settling into overly generalised conclusions while maintaining sensitivity to the local diversity that characterises Indonesian performing arts.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Aesthetic Systems in Indonesian Performing Arts**

The aesthetic systems embedded in Indonesian performing arts exhibit a rich diversity of forms, structures, and symbolisms that reflect cultural identity constructions and the living social functions within various communities. These arts do not merely operate as artistic expressions but serve as multilayered sites of meaning production. In many traditions, the body, movement, sound, and visual artefacts form an aesthetic syntax that simultaneously functions as a medium of cultural communication (Yulianti & Marhaeni, 2021). These elements create performative structures that integrate ritual values, historical narratives, and social

dynamics, as demonstrated by Anas et al. (2021) in their analysis of the interrelations between movement patterns, symbols, and collective expression in local performing arts.

Across traditional dance and theatre forms, aesthetics are constructed through the symbolic interpretation of bodily gestures, spatial configurations, costume usage, and musical composition. The structures that emerge in each performance reflect community value systems—ranging from ancestral reverence to the reinforcement of social solidarity. This is consistent with Bisri's (2007) findings, which show that traditional performing arts across Indonesia embody socio-ritual functions inseparable from the underlying aesthetic framework. Repetitive movement patterns, rhythmic musicality, and the use of dramatic figures generate aesthetic experiences that strengthen cultural identity and cohesion.

Aesthetic transformation also plays a significant role in the development of contemporary Indonesian performance practices. Interactions between tradition and modernity give rise to hybrid aesthetic forms, both in performance structure and symbolic meaning. Putrianti et al. (2022) illustrate how the dancer's body and visual symbols undergo reinterpretation to respond to contemporary expressive needs. This phenomenon highlights that traditional aesthetics are not static; instead, they evolve through creative adaptations that allow the continuity of cultural values while enabling innovation.

The concept of pseudo-ritual, as elaborated by Bisri (2007), further indicates that many contemporary performances adopt ritual aesthetic formats without retaining their former sacred functions. This can be observed in performances adapted for tourism or modern stage contexts. Nevertheless, aesthetic elements such as costumes, music, and movement patterns are preserved as markers of cultural identity.

Thus, the aesthetic systems of Indonesian performing arts may be understood as dynamic relational assemblages of symbols, forms, structures, and social functions. These relationships demonstrate the capacity of performing arts to preserve cultural values while responding to contemporary demands through ongoing creativity and innovation.

### **Local-Wisdom Values Embedded in Performances**

Indonesian performing arts serve a strategic function as a medium for internalising moral, spiritual, and social values rooted in local wisdom. These values manifest through movement configurations, narrative structures, cultural artefacts, and musical compositions that collectively represent the worldview of local communities. Ardiyanti and Hanip (2022) emphasise that arts and culture are effective channels for socialising values due to the emotional engagement and participatory experience inherent in aesthetic encounters. Through performance, values such as ancestral reverence, communal cooperation, wisdom, and cosmic harmony are communicated both symbolically and narratively.

Local wisdom embedded in performing arts also acts as an ethical framework that strengthens cultural identity. Sumarsono (2024) highlights that traditional arts contain philosophical dimensions that teach order, discipline, and balance between humans and nature. These values are present not only in ritual performances but also in more secular art forms such as regional drama and communal dance. In many communities, performing arts function as spaces where moral and spiritual values are revitalised and transmitted across generations.

In pedagogical contexts, Amirin (2013) demonstrates that local wisdom plays an essential role in character formation and the development of multicultural education. Performing arts provide a representational platform for these values through cultural symbolism, local language use, and interaction patterns among performers and audiences. Traditional performances—including dance, music, theatre, and religious rituals—convey moral messages through narrative and visual structures grounded in collective cultural experience.

Value representation is also evident in theatrical and dance works that incorporate character-education principles. Pahan and Prasetya (2023) find that dramatic structures and role

portrayals in traditional theatre can serve as effective instruments for instilling responsibility, courage, and social competence. Similarly, Anas et al. (2021) show how local artistic practices articulate social values through interaction patterns, symbolic gestures, and the processes of performance-making.

Accordingly, performing arts not only present cultural values but also internalise local wisdom through holistic aesthetic experience. Moral, spiritual, and social values are not merely displayed but are enacted through the relationships among performers, audiences, performance spaces, and the traditions that underpin them. Indonesian performing arts, therefore, constitute a living pedagogical arena—teaching values through aesthetics, reinforcing identity through symbolism, and sustaining cultural continuity through performative practice.

### **Creative Processes and Innovation**

The creative processes within Indonesian performing arts demonstrate a diversity of approaches shaped by cultural contexts, aesthetic traditions, and the social purposes of each performance genre. In folk theatre traditions such as *Ketoprak* and *Ludruk*, creativity is expressed through improvised dialogues, the incorporation of contemporary themes, and flexible dramatic structures. Afarizs and Abdillah (2019) highlight that performances like *Ketoprak* rely heavily on the collective creativity of the actors, who combine humour, social critique, and historical narratives to generate performances that remain relevant to community life.

Meanwhile, Mukti and Heriyawati (2024) show that creative processes in musical performances such as the *Kabayan Musical* involve integrating traditional elements with modern aesthetics through the use of professional staging, contemporary musical arrangements, and more conceptual narrative structures. This reflects a significant development in the creative dynamics of Indonesian performing arts, which no longer depend solely on oral traditions but incorporate technological tools and modern theatrical methodologies.

Innovation has become an integral component in the evolution of performing arts, particularly in responding to globalisation and contemporary audience expectations. Sumarsono (2024) asserts that creativity in modern ethnic arts is manifested through symbolic reinterpretation, movement modification, and the creation of hybrid compositions that preserve traditional roots while presenting renewed aesthetic expressions. Such transformations not only expand artistic appeal but also ensure cultural sustainability within modern contexts.

Accordingly, creative processes in Indonesian performing arts can be understood as ongoing dialogues between tradition and innovation. Creative practices do not merely produce new forms but also construct social relevance by linking local values with contemporary artistic expression. This illustrates that innovation in the performing arts does not imply abandoning tradition; rather, it involves reworking it to remain alive, meaningful, and resonant with the dynamics of present-day society.

### **Performing Arts as Character-Education Platforms**

Performing arts play an important role as a platform for character education because they engage cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions simultaneously. Hidayat et al. (2022) find that through artistic activities, learners engage in the internalisation of values such as discipline, responsibility, empathy, and cooperation. Training and performance processes require orderliness, perseverance, and the ability to coordinate with other group members, thus creating a learning environment that simultaneously serves as a space for character formation.

Further empirical evidence is presented by Pahan and Prasetya (2023), who show how traditional theatre conveys moral values through narrative structures and the roles enacted by performers. Interactions among cast members, dramatic textures, and narrative conflicts create social simulations that help participants understand ethics, wisdom, and social responsibility. Artistic processes therefore become tools for reflecting on everyday life, rendering character education through the arts contextual and meaningful.

Family environments and cultural communities also play a crucial role as facilitators in character-education ecosystems. Robby et al. (2023) demonstrate that cultural education within families—including participation in artistic activities—strengthens social bonds and fosters awareness of collective values. Meanwhile, Sudarwo et al. (2023) emphasise that cultural communities provide informal learning spaces that transmit values such as mutual cooperation, perseverance, and intergenerational respect.

Thus, performing arts function as a holistic pedagogical platform. They do not merely convey values verbally but embody them through aesthetic experience, social practice, and collaborative dynamics. Performing arts create an integrative educational space where aesthetics, creativity, and character are interconnected within a living and continuous learning process.

### **Ethnomathematical Structures in Dance**

Ethnomathematical structures in Indonesian dance demonstrate that floor patterns, movement configurations, and spatial relations within performances contribute to the development of intuitive and contextual mathematical concepts. Juni et al. (2023) emphasise that dance floor patterns—such as straight lines, diagonals, circles, and symmetrical formations—may serve as tools for understanding basic geometric concepts. Through kinesthetic experience, learners can concretely interpret spatial relationships, making mathematical learning more accessible.

Mukarromah and Darmawan (n.d.) further explain that the relationship between dance movement and space not only expresses aesthetic design but also contains mathematical logic that can be explored pedagogically. For example, the repetition of movement sequences introduces concepts of iteration and order, while changes in group formations present geometric transformations such as rotation, translation, and reflection.

In the context of art-mathematics integration, S et al. (2024) argue that arts-based pedagogical approaches—particularly dance—can help overcome abstraction barriers in mathematics learning. Such approaches enable students to understand relationships among objects through embodied experience, making mathematical concepts more applicable and intertwined with cultural practice.

Accordingly, ethnomathematics in dance not only enriches the understanding of movement aesthetics but also opens pathways for transdisciplinary learning that connects the arts with scientific reasoning. This approach is relevant not only for fostering creativity but also for strengthening mathematical understanding through cultural practices embedded in community life.

### **Local Wisdom and Creative Industry Development**

The integration of local wisdom into the development of the creative industries has gained increasing attention in contemporary cultural studies. Ishak and Selamat (2025) demonstrate how *songket* weaving—rooted in symbolic meaning, intergenerational production techniques, and social values—has transformed into a foundation for strengthening community economies without severing its cultural origins. Their findings indicate that local wisdom is not merely an aesthetic artefact but constitutes social and economic capital that can be strategically mobilised within creative-industry frameworks.



Within the landscape of performing arts, similar development patterns can be applied by utilising traditional values, narratives, and aesthetics as sources of innovation. Performing arts hold significant potential to be developed into economic assets—whether through cultural tourism packages, arts festivals, community-based arts education, or digital productions supported by emerging technologies. Thus, integrating performing arts into the creative-industry ecosystem not only enhances cultural sustainability but also creates inclusive economic opportunities grounded in local values.

Accordingly, the development of creative industries rooted in local wisdom requires cross-sectoral support, ranging from governmental policy and the capacities of artists to collaborative innovations with academic and digital sectors. This approach enables the formation of an ecosystem that balances cultural preservation with contemporary economic demands (Ishak & Selamat, 2025).

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal a strong interconnection between aesthetic systems in performing arts, local-wisdom values, and pedagogical practices. Aesthetics functions not only as artistic expression but also as a medium for the internalisation of cultural and moral values embedded in symbols, structures, and performative gestures (Yulianti & Marhaeni, 2021; Anas et al., 2021; Bisri, 2007). Local wisdom serves as the epistemological basis guiding how these values are communicated, interpreted, and transmitted through artistic practice. In educational contexts, this underscores the importance of culturally grounded pedagogical models that utilise symbolism, local narratives, and aesthetic experiences as learning strategies (Amirin, 2013; Endayani, 2023). Performing arts, consequently, function as pedagogical spaces that reproduce identity, ethics, and social solidarity.

The creative processes in traditional arts—such as *Ketoprak*, *Ludruk*, and contemporary theatre inspired by tradition—illustrate that cultural continuity is sustained not only through conservation but also through processes of adaptation and innovation (Afarizs & Abdillah, 2019; Mukti & Heriyawati, 2024). Creativity enables artists to renew forms, narratives, and techniques without severing their cultural roots, thereby achieving a balance between continuity and change. Innovations—including the integration of local aesthetics with modern technologies or stylistic forms—constitute key mechanisms for maintaining the relevance of traditional arts amid rapidly shifting social dynamics (Sumarsono, 2024). Thus, creative processes operate not merely as artistic expression but as long-term strategies for cultural sustainability.

The synthesis of literature indicates that Indonesian performing arts can be understood as a culturally bound educational ecosystem whose components are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Within this ecosystem, artistic practices function as media for value transmission, character formation, and social interaction. Studies by Hidayat et al. (2022) and Pahan and Prasetya (2023) confirm the role of performing arts in cultivating discipline, empathy, cooperation, and responsibility. Simultaneously, cultural communities and families act as mediating agents that strengthen educational processes, especially through direct involvement in rehearsals, rituals, and performances (Robby et al., 2023; Sudarwo et al., 2023).

From an ecosystem perspective, performing arts are understood not merely as aesthetic objects but as social spaces that integrate cognitive, affective, moral, and creative dimensions. As such, artistic ecosystems foster character development, reinforce social cohesion, and sustain cultural continuity.

The findings of this study hold strategic implications for the development of educational, cultural, and creative-industry policies. First, educational curricula may adopt integrative approaches that utilise performing arts as a medium for cross-disciplinary learning, including

character and creativity education. Second, the findings of Ishak and Selamat (2025) emphasise that local wisdom can serve as a pillar of cultural economies, suggesting that performing arts possess similar potential to evolve into competitive creative sectors. Integrating the arts into the creative-industry ecosystem may be implemented through cultural festivals, digital production spaces, community arts incubators, and collaborations with the tourism sector. In the global-digital era, new opportunities emerge to position traditional arts as relevant and economically valuable creative content. Therefore, cultural policy must encourage innovation while upholding principles of local-value preservation. In doing so, performing arts can function as interrelated cultural, pedagogical, and economic resources that reinforce one another.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Indonesian performing arts function as a dynamic cultural-educational ecosystem in which artistic practices, pedagogical processes, and local-wisdom values operate in an integrated and mutually reinforcing manner. Rather than existing merely as aesthetic objects, performing arts constitute embodied cultural knowledge shaped by symbolic structures, inherited traditions, social interactions, and creative transformations. Within this ecosystem, artistic expression simultaneously serves as a medium for cultural transmission, character formation, and community cohesion. The interdependence among artists, cultural communities, families, educators, and audience networks demonstrates that performing arts sustain a living system that continually adapts to social change while safeguarding cultural continuity.

The findings further emphasise the need for a transdisciplinary approach to understanding and developing performing arts. Aesthetic analysis alone is insufficient to explain the complexity of meaning embedded in performance practices. Instead, ethnographic inquiry, pedagogical frameworks, and creativity studies must be integrated to understand how values, identities, and learning processes are negotiated and reproduced through artistic activities. Such an approach allows scholars and practitioners to examine performing arts not only as cultural heritage but also as an educational resource and a site of innovation. This transdisciplinary orientation is essential for strengthening the relevance of traditional arts in contemporary contexts, particularly within the expanding landscape of creative industries and digital cultural production.

Future research should deepen the examination of performing-arts ecosystems through comparative, technological, and community-based perspectives. Comparative studies could explore similarities and differences across regional traditions to map broader cultural patterns. Research integrating digital media and creative-technology innovations is needed to understand how virtual performances, digitisation, and AI-supported creativity reshape artistic transmission and participation. Additionally, participatory research with local communities, artists, and cultural organisations may generate more grounded models of sustainability that align cultural preservation, creative innovation, and socio-economic empowerment. By advancing these research directions, scholars can contribute to more comprehensive theoretical frameworks and more inclusive cultural policies for Indonesia’s evolving performing-arts landscape.

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