



Transmedia Education: Masculinity in TikTok within Traditional Dance

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Abstrak

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Hadirnya internet dan media sosial mempengaruhi cara guru dan siswa mengonsumsi dan membuat konten pembelajaran. Pada pendidikan tari tradisional Jawa, baik di sektor sekolah maupun sanggar penari laki-laki kerap mendapatkan perundungan karena dianggap kurang maskulin hingga mendapat stigma laki-laki feminin. TikTok di era transmedia yang dikenal sebagai ruang hiburan, juga menjadi ruang ekspresi dan edukasi. Konten kreator TikTok seperti Abing, Fahrul, BM mengunggah konten edukasi tari tradisional sebagai upaya melestarikan budaya. Penelitian ini membahas TikTok sebagai media edukasi dan ekspresi tari tradisional yang menantang dikotomi gender dalam maskulinitas baru di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kasus, wawancara dengan penggiat-penggiat seni, dalam melihat penerimaan penonton terhadap maskulinitas, penelitian ini juga turut melihat komentar dan literatur yang relevan. Hasilnya menunjukkan penari tradisional laki-laki mulai memanfaatkan TikTok sebagai ruang mengekspresikan diri dan melestarikan budaya lokalnya. TikTok menggeser maskulinitas yang tidak hanya dimaknai sebagai wujud kejantanan, tetapi mengandung unsur kelembutan dan feminitas dalam tari adat.

Keywords:
Education, Masculinity,
Equity, Traditional Dance

Abstract

The advent of internet and the proliferation of social media change the way teachers and students consume and create educational learning content, such as Java traditional dance. Men traditional dancers get bullied because they are considered less masculine where it happens in the education sector, school or dance studio. TikTok in the transmedia era known as an entertainment, expression and education space. TikTok's content creators (Abing, Fahrul, BM) actively post to preserve culture. This research examines TikTok as an education and expression's medium, challenges the gender dichotomy in Indonesia's new masculinity. This research uses the case study, interview art activists, finding audience's reception from the comments, documents, relevant preliminary research. The results show male traditional dancers use TikTok to express themselves and preserve local culture. TikTok's existence also shifts masculinity where it is not only interpreted as a form of virility, but also contains tenderness and femininity in traditional dance.

INTRODUCTION

Education with the existence of the internet and the proliferation of social media has dramatically changed the way teachers and students consume and create learning content, in this case the context of the content is traditional Javanese dance on the TikTok platform. Dance educators or students in Indonesia are often exposed to the stigma that exists in society. Traditional male dancers still often get bullied in their surroundings due to being considered less manly. They often get stigma as a feminine boy or "*lekong*" also "*ngondek*". This happens in the realm of formal education (schools) and non-formal (dance studios). In the transmedia era, the medium for education is not only through schools and studios but also through social media such as TikTok which is known as an entertainment space, but it turns out to be a space for expression and education of traditional dance arts.

TikTok with vertical video presents entertainment content for its audience in the form of FYP (*for your page*) which has been adapted to the algorithm that TikTok has created. The social network TikTok is logically categorized as entertainment content that has a large amount of visual stimulation, is very dynamic, creative, and high production speed and consumption rate by the audience is largely determined by video playback features, funny stories and content that is easy on the mind (Xu et al., 2019). TikTok has been downloaded the most in 2020 and its popularity has increased dramatically due to the wide variety of broadcasters including media and journalists (Sidorenko-Bautista et al., 2021)

In another explanation, it can be said that Tiktok has a digital environment that continuously invites user action and participates in it, in which a community is then indirectly created and fulfilled by Gen Z (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). Despite the many prejudices against TikTok about how it exists as a platform with "shallow" entertainment content and has a bad effect on the audience because it is a waste of time, (Bremer A. J. M. van den & Siebelink R., 2020) give appreciation that TikTok users have mixed with many generations to become more critical and participatory, especially on the diversity of content.

Tiktokers in Indonesia who are also male educators have an implied agenda besides teaching traditional dance, namely introducing art as a form of cultural preservation. Indonesia has a variety of traditional dance arts. Traditional dance is a culture of a certain ethnicity and identity to unite society. On the other hand, traditional dance arts have been bound by cultural norms and rules from the local area. There are two types of traditional dance, namely folk dance or regional dance which is a symbol of joy and happiness. For example, dances to celebrate an abundant harvest and will become a tradition in the following season. Apart from that, there are also palace dances or classical dances that developed among the nobility (Prakoso, 2022).

One form of male dancers who dress up like women is the dance from Banyumas, namely the *lengger lanang* dance. The male dancers chosen for the Lengger Lanang dance dress up like women (Widyanta, 2020). The Lengger Lanang dance itself is presented as a traditional art which is performed as a means of thanksgiving rituals when harvesting and cleaning the village. Even though men are the chosen ones in the *lengger* dance, men with that appearance are often considered taboo by society. This stigma also affects male teachers who preserve traditional dance.



Figure 1.. *Lengger Dance* (www.daylisia.com)

Dance education for men in Indonesian traditional dance often contradicts the lens of the dominant construction of traditional masculinity, and the effect of this hegemonic discourse occurs in dances adopted by

men more broadly. One reason is the large number of homophobia. Various types of persecution are often experienced, up to the disbandment of the "dance performance" activity "There are LGBT-LGBT, right?" Those were the words uttered by the civil service police unit (*Satpol PP*) when disbanding the commemoration of the world dance day which was being held by the KIP Faculty, Tanjungpura University, Pontianak (Kumparan Hi Pontianak, 2021). This incident even occurred in the educational environment, how a dancer was brought in for safekeeping, an Ismunandar educator who was also Tanjungpura University dance lecturer and those in charge even experienced violence. Dance education not only challenges inequality but also insecurities in the space of expression for men in the world of dance.

Male dance artists in Indonesia predominantly experience negative stigma and are considered deviant, apart from the stigma that male dancers are also often bullied in their environment. The male dancer is called *melambai*, *banci*, even *bencong*. The various bullying experienced by male dancers cannot be separated from the patriarchal beliefs and culture that have been passed down from generation to generation in Indonesia as well as the understanding of gender types which are compartmentalized. Masculinity is understood as a male construction towards men who uphold the values of superiority, strength, power, masculinity, toughness, and having an athletic physique (Chapman & Rutherford, 2014). Choosing a profession as a dancer seems to emphasize that the masculine nature of the dancers will change to become female. The minority of male dancers in Indonesia also maintains gender discrimination.

Sociologically, the understanding of social space is always in a dialectical process between individuals and socio-cultural. A man who is good at dancing is considered feminine and graceful (Sum & Talu, 2019). Even though not everyone who is good at dancing should be considered feminine, so that men who do dance movements are seen as not reflecting their masculinity. The social construction that takes place in this society then creates a stigma against men who work as dancers. This construction raises other problems, when gender differences become the basis for making restrictions or separation in social life. Separation based on gender threatens freedom of expression and inequality occurs, especially in dance education. Seeing these problems makes researchers interested in highlighting social questions about gender, differences, marginalization, and the larger effects of the construction of masculinity in the realm of traditional dance education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This paper examines social questions regarding gender, differences, marginalization, and the greater effect of the construction of masculinity in the realm of traditional dance education, and how TikTok is a new space in the world of education in the transmedia era. This research will use the case study method. Case studies are a form of social research with the scope of asking "how" or "why" in research. Case studies describe individuals, organizations, processes, programs, and other things as interesting, special, or unique. Case studies examine a contemporary phenomenon (a case) that occurs (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Hollweck, 2015; Tasci et al., 2020). In a case study, especially internet research, many problems are encountered, one of which is a case that extends to other domains, so that limitations are needed in conducting case studies in the internet realm (Gallagher, 2019).

To determine the limitations of the research object, the steps taken in this study were to find TikTok accounts that had the context of traditional dance by male teachers, both formally at school and informally in dance studios. The researchers here chose the account @abing_santoso with 102.6k followers and 1.1M likes, another account is @gulajawaofficial with 842.0K followers and 14.7M likes and @pakgurutari with 50.0 followers k and the number of likes is 906.5k. Then look for literature that is relevant to the research being carried out. Furthermore, this research was conducted with focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with male tiktokers informants. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques and are presented as findings in this paper.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Male Teachers as Traditional Dance educators in Indonesia

Men and dancing are said to oppose masculine domination represented in Indonesia, during the New Order era, gender issues looked very patriarchal. Suharto was the father of development as the supreme patriarch, holding all power through oppression. So that gender equality in the New Order era had not been implemented properly, because men controlled the public sector while women only took care of the domestic area (citation needed). Meanwhile, with research conducted by Nugraha, (2021) the representation of masculinity is interpreted in Ebiet G. Ade's songs on the album 20 Most Popular Songs, namely men who are gentle, firm, not aggressive,

have a sense of shame, are breadwinners, and are close to God and nature. Meanwhile, the identity of women as a person who is loving, seductive, flirtatious, emotional, sweet, sensitive and weak (Tissier-Desbordes & Kimmel, 2002).

Men are considered not expressive, and affect men who choose to dance as a space for expression. Today's young people prefer to study modern dance rather than traditional dance. Millennial dancers like modern dance that is not too traditional and has the effectiveness of conveying messages through dance, a high level of creativity and more flexibility in dance makes it grow unrivaled so that millennials find many achievements in modern dance combined with contemporary music favored by millennials (DanceUs, 2018). Because they think traditional dance is out of date. Seeing this phenomenon, male teachers in traditional dance try to preserve it through formal and informal dance education. Even so, they often get a bad stigma.

Many Indonesian people think that dancing is only done by women. However, people's assumptions like that are not true, because art does not look at gender involvement. According to experts, no one has said that only women dance (Irvansyah, 2022). Even though understanding the 'feminization' in dance is very important for learning gender and dance for dance educators, because dancing activities are known as feminine activities and men who dance are always considered as effeminate (Thomas, 1996).

These stereotypes conflict with human rights of expression, Prof. Dr. R.M. Soedarsono believes that dance is an expression of the human soul through beautiful rhythmic movements, including the movements of men who are flexible and graceful. Dance can also be used as a medium to express emotions for humans (Irvansyah, 2022). So dance should not have gender boundaries, and should not differentiate between men and women, especially in traditional dance education. BM as a dance education scholar summarizes:

"The basis of dance is in movement, each movement does not have the specifications of a woman or a man, but because of the compartmentalization of the concept in Indonesia, it changes people's point of view. but in art school it is mandatory to study each other's movements. just learning not to absorb" (BM).

In the world of traditional dance education, teachers have difficulty negotiating gender norms in dance lessons. This is influenced by the culture in which a child has been directed to behave according to the system of sex and gender that applies in society. If boys have to be masculine with toy cars and ball games and girls have to be feminine with their dolls (Forestier & Larsson, 2023). This habit also influences the depiction of the profession according to gender norms in Indonesia, BM as a dance education scholar summarizes:

"At first my father didn't support me when I graduated in dance arts education because my father asked me to be an office worker and from a young age, I was given a computer to study because my father was an administrative staff, but my mother supported me. and all my teachers were also shocked at first because I chose and graduated in dance arts education" (BM).

Dance educators in Indonesia are not yet equal where the majority are women so that male dancers are considered different from that experienced by BM. He admitted that he had experienced this conflict with students and parents when he taught art at school.

"I once experienced a conflict, at an international school when I taught, there were students who were sensitive to art, then these students complained to their parents until I received ridicule from the student guardians after seeing me as a dance content creator on TikTok so they were considered a male dance teacher. a man who is not true and "kemayu" (BM).

The flow of social media, especially TikTok, with its digital culture and infrastructure support, influences men to express and perform dance to introduce traditional dance from Indonesia to the global in a new space, namely TikTok.

Against code "ngondek" and "melambai" on hegemonic masculinity through the new traditional dance space

Professions for men and women in Indonesia are influenced by differences in masculine and feminine attitudes, one of which is the dance profession which is attached to feminine women. Where women are depicted with soft, graceful characters, faces full of make-up, beautiful long hair, not agile, showing body curves (Rendra Widyatama, 2006). This is in the dancers which is the cause of the taboo on men as dancers. Our three sources, namely Abing, Fahrul and Muharam, had to go through isolation from their immediate environment before they started their careers as traditional dancers. Abing and Fahrul as a dance education scholar summarizes:

"One of the reasons for the disapproval of men as dancers is gender stereotypes, and few who understand dance education are due to the lack of an environment where this profession exists (Abing). "So there are a lot of

stereotypes out there (men are considered as melambai, etc.), the number of dancers in the studio is also dominated by girls" because the boys are still afraid of society's stereotypes. from me personally. "Even though the movement is a girl, we are still boys. can be seen from the comments on social media "oh, flexible but still gentle". So I try to break it with the behaviour that I show in real life (Fahrul)"

This phenomenon shows that gender and social construction play an important role in students' participation and attitudes towards dance learning. In the study of sociology on gender by Connel, he shows two forms of masculinity, namely masculinity that is formed culturally, namely hegemonic masculinity and subordinated masculinity. Masculinity is influenced by social conditions that fulfill cultural processes (Wajcman, 2001). When this situation is seen seriously as a mask of dominant masculinity that society imposes on men, it is also impactful to see more clearly not only the troubling cultural resistance, but also the courage required for male students to choose dance studies and consider careers in dance. dance. This tension has now changed a little after the emergence of alternative media such as TikTok.

TikTok as an entertainment medium opposes the tension of space for expression in the field of traditional dance. Tiktok is here to be used by male teachers in introducing traditional dance. Prior to the existence of TikTok, there was already mass media as a space to be able to show creativity, unfortunately the mass media tended to represent masculinity attached to men, Ramadhana et al. conducted research on advertising in the mass media which showed that the element of masculinity in the Gudang Garam International cigarette advertisement Monaco Drift 2016 tends to be represented by a male figure who is glamorous, lives full of freedom and adventure. In addition, the element of masculinity is also represented by men who are fond of extreme sports. (Ramadhana et al., 2020). Along with the emergence of new digital trans media, one of which is TikTok as an entertainment medium, which then opposes the tension of one-way expression space in the mass media.

I used to be rejected and challenged by my family, not only my parents, my brothers and sisters, when I decided to learn dance, when I went home during school holidays I was not appreciated, until 1 semester or 6 months. and shunned by my parents because that's not my gender in general. Male dance teachers are mostly considered "kemayu". I once experienced a conflict, at an international school when I taught, there were students who were sensitive to art, and finally I got ridiculed by the student guardians after seeing me as a content creator on TikTok and being considered a teacher who was not right.

Sociologist Kimmel (2005) notes the importance of examining contemporary masculinity in order to meet the needs of boys constructively. The way to prove it is through the mass media "by showing the space that gives me an environment, namely platforms on Indonesian TV, namely TVRI and JTV. I showed my parents with the TV show, finally they just can accept. Several studies have shown that dance teachers can emphasize the need to make boys and young men dance 'feel more comfortable' by inviting them to actively contribute ideas for movement, music, costumes and choreographic themes (Risner, 2004).

To create a dance learning atmosphere that is fun and acceptable to male and female students, dance teachers and trainers use one of the most popular applications, Tiktok. Using the Tiktok application can spur creativity and attract students' attention and interest when learning dance. Mr. Abing explained:

"I have just entered the education area for 1.5 years and can find fun educational methods with fun classrooms. can generate rewards for children"

Added with an explanation from Fahrul in the form:

"Initially, I used the Tiktok platform because I had a lot of free time during the pandemic, I was confused about what to do and was unemployed. In the end, I made a video on Tiktok so I could express myself there using dance moves. As time progressed, I often got DMs from people who requested it and some of my content was used as teaching material by art teachers, so from there I thought that the videos I made had a useful impact on my followers"

Gender performativity and resistance of traditional male dancers

Gender, as ethnomethodologists and feminist theorists argue is a matter of doing and not passive being (Butler, 1990). Gender performativity, according to Butler, has recently been applied to organizations with the aim of coordinating gender bodies and practices. Along with ethnomethodological work on 'doing gender', Butler has been influential in an explosion of literature on gender and the body. This work claims that gender has no ontological reality, it is the effect of an endlessly and compulsively repeated code within the hegemonic framework of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich, 1980). Thus, gendered bodies are not natural units in which gender is socially imposed, gender is 'performative' and repeated performances of gender serve to produce 'difference' appearances (Butler, 1994).

In re-evaluation, Butler, (1994) is critical of the view that 'if gender is performative, it must be radically free, and critical of the view that if we were all more dragged out, gender life would be more expansive, less restrictive. It needs to be located or contextualized before claims about it can be critically analyzed. Butler's argument suggests new gender possibilities but has little empirical applicability. Research has shown that gender regime discourse can change, for example among families in developing China (Powell & Cook, 2006). Other

analyses suggest that the body is embodied in organizationally specific gendered discourse images (Borgerson, 2005), as classified and gendered bodies in Bettie (2003) study of high school girl culture, and as nationally based sexual bodies in the world. Dance, which Nash (2000) sees as a series of traveling discourses performed by the body. In the case of traditional dance artists, gender performativity enters a lot into how one becomes a certain gender when performing dances. Apart from dances that use a lot of masculine or feminine traits, there are also dances that are specifically for cross gender dancers. Cross gender dancers are usually men who perform women's dances complete with their appearances.

In the environment of traditional male dancers, not a few get ridiculed and stigmatized about how they are considered less masculine and are called "ngondek". This negativity did not only stop at the stage of stigma and ridicule but also reached the rejections and threats from his family. As told by Abing and BM how the rejection to enter the world of dance actually started from a family that did not give their blessing and looked down on the job of being a dancer. BM added that from her experience as a Sumatran who migrated to Java, society's acceptance of male dancers is better in Java because according to BM, Sumatra is still too strong with religious norms and traditions that prohibit men from acting feminine. In fact, according to history dancing is also part of culture which is also part of social, political and ritual (Leib & Bulman, 2009). What is interesting, the rejection of male dancers does not only occur in Indonesia, but also in America. Leib & Bulman (2009) explain that there, male dancers in ballroom also experience stigma and ridicule because they are considered not in accordance with the standards of masculinity that most people understand.

To overcome this problem, the male dancers we interviewed shared their strategy for remaining resilient in the midst of the challenges of being a traditional dancer and a cross-gender dancer by differentiating the world of the stage and the world outside the stage, when on stage the dancer plays a female dancer with all her female attributes, for example wearing a bun, kebaya, and make up but off stage the male dancers are still men. BM explained:

"I just live up to what I will show to the audience when dancing, be it as a boy or a girl, without using too much feeling. That would make it easier for me to stick to their original male identity when not dancing. Appreciation of the characters that will be played without using excessive sense is also a form of professionalism of the dancers that can separate my identity as a dancer and as myself" (BM).

Abing explained that his success in the world of dance was also a form of resistance in which he could prove to the people around him that he could also live off dancing money and make his family and circle believe that men in the world of dance were a common thing, not something trivial work, and there is no problem when the masculinity applied in the dance does not conform to the format of majority masculinity. By achieving and gaining popularity, as well as income prosperity, Abing wants to be an example that men can survive and be resistant in the world of traditional dance.

The challenge of TikTok as a space for educating the masculinity of traditional dance and shifting new masculinity.

TikTok has become a new space for men to be free to express themselves in traditional dance, and to be able to resist because it separates the professional world as dancers from the real world as men who are categorized in Indonesian society. A form of resistance in the future can be used as a step to tell the people around him that men in the world of dance are as common as women in the same field. In the future, it is also hoped that TikTok can accommodate a lot of creativity from the golden generation in creating, achieving, working, or just for hobbies and entertainment.

However, TikTok as a space for educating the masculinity of traditional dance and a means of shifting new masculinity is also faced with a challenge. One of them is regarding content restrictions that bind TikTok users who are also content creators, namely the existence of types of TikTok Ban, for example shadow ban, temporary ban, underage ban, until permanent ban (Rodela, 2023). This warning is included in the Community Guidelines provided by TikTok regarding a guide about what is allowed and what is not allowed on TikTok to help create comfort in surfing. TikTok also develops tools and technology to identify and remove harmful content and behavior that contradicts the Community Guidelines with the aim of assisting in maintaining the security of the community and the integrity of the platform. TikTok makes claims when using evaluations through automatic and manual team staff trust & safety to detect and take action on Community Guidelines violations meaning if they find a violation then the content will be removed and the account owner will be notified.

The Community Guidelines apply to everyone and everything on TikTok. Enforcement of these guidelines is done proactively using the combined results of technology and human moderation, with the aim of doing so before people report potentially infringing content. TikTok in this case supports its users to report any content or account that they believe violates the Community Guidelines. The following is a list that can be used as a report by the Community Guidelines, namely: 1) safety of minors, 2) dangerous acts and challenges, 3) suicide, 4) self-harm, and eating disorders, 5) adult nudity and sexual activity, 6) bullying and harassment, 7) hateful behavior, 8) violent extremism, 9) integrity and authenticity, 10) illegal activity and regulated goods, 11) violent and horrific

content. Tiktok users can report content that they consider to have direct violations and Tiktok will follow up (TikTok, 2023).

Likewise, in the journey of creator content by the TikTok Abing account from @abing_santoso with 102.6k followers and 1.1M likes, another account is Fahrul from @gulajawaofficial with 842.0k followers and 14.7M likes, and Muharam from @pakgurutari account with 50.0k followers and 906.5k likes. One of the three interviewees who were interviewed had received a warning from Tiktok and even had their account exposed banned for violating the Community Guidelines. However, some content creators received warnings, some also did not receive warnings for their accounts which Tiktok considered violating guidelines-her.

Abing for example, he gets temporary ban from Tiktok, which previously also received a warning that its content was considered sensitive. He explains:

"Tiktok is a fun space for students. A year ago when I was trending on tiktok a lot of my content was the 3rd banned by tiktok so my tiktok is not growing. Tiktok's security is very tight, especially in terms of clothing or uniforms which is a problem. However, the school uniform is the hallmark of the children I educate and it is impossible for me to get rid of it. This has caused me to lack respect for Tik Tok until now. Why did you get banned even though the children didn't display any vulgarity at all but danced politely, the management and space and floor patterns, even in terms of body shape and gravitational motion, as well as music and song lyrics were also polite. Meanwhile, content from other content creators who have millions of subscribers displays things that are more vulgar and even naked" (Abing).

Even though Tiktok says the same time there is some content that would normally be removed in accordance with those Community Guidelines but has significant value to the public, Tiktok may still consider allowing exceptions in certain circumstances. This is for example content that has value such as educational, documentary, scientific, artistic, satirical content, content in fictional or professional settings, counter-speech, or content that allows individuals to express themselves within the scope of topics that have high social value. To minimize the potential negative impact of horrible content, Tiktok, therefore, includes security measures in advance, such as providing a warning screen or an option to "opt in". This becomes a question whether Tiktok can become a new space for new masculinity in exercising freedom of expression after the challenges faced, both from the platform.

CONCLUSIONS

Male traditional dance artists are starting to use TikTok as a space to express themselves as well as a place to learn about the culture or preserve their local culture. This indirectly makes TikTok an educational space for them to invite and provide information to ordinary people about traditional dance arts. As well as being a tool for educating local culture, TikTok also seems to be a space for educating the public about gender equality and how masculinity in traditional dances, which was initially often ridiculed by the public, can be accepted and considered normal. The existence of TikTok also makes masculinity experience several shifts to become more recent where masculinity is not only interpreted as a form of virility but also contains elements of tenderness and femininity that are attached to elements of traditional dance. This has slowly begun to be accepted and appreciated by the public as a result of the popularity of TikTok as a space for traditional dance education.

The weakness in this study is that the traditional dances studied are still limited to traditional dances in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan, while Indonesia has a variety of traditional dance cultures. So that further research can be expanded to other areas that can represent Indonesian culture as a whole.

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