

PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF DELI MALAY DANCE THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION BASED ON CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCES

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Abstract

Deli Malay dance is an important part of the cultural identity of the Medan community. However, the development of modern culture has led to a decline in interest among the younger generation and a decline in the activities of traditional arts studios. This community service activity aims to preserve and develop Deli Malay dance through digital transformation and a contemporary approach. The program was implemented at the Sri Indera Ratu Studio through outreach, contemporary dance training, digital editing training, management mentoring, and performance publication through social media. Evaluation was conducted through pre-post tests, observation of participant activities, and monitoring of digital indicator achievements. Results showed an increase in participant skills, namely digital editing (from 7.70 to 9.05) and arts management and organization (from 6.15 to 8.25). Contemporary performances were successfully implemented with video documentation and digital publication. Younger participants expressed interest in participating in follow-up activities, and the studio's social media accounts demonstrated increased public engagement. In conclusion, digital transformation is an effective strategy for preserving traditional arts, increasing youth participation, and empowering the arts community. This activity has the potential to have a social and economic impact on the sustainability of the Sri Indera Ratu Studio and can be replicated at other studios in North Sumatra.

Keywords: Deli Malay Dance, Digital Transformation, Community Empowerment, Art Studio

INTRODUCTION

Traditional arts serve not only as an aesthetic medium but also as a source of cultural identity, character education, and social cohesion. In various regions, traditional arts have proven to be a means of internalizing moral values, spirituality, and solidarity among individuals (Nabilatunnisa, 2022; Irianto, 2017). One cultural heritage that persists in Medan is the Deli Malay Dance, which since colonial times has been a symbol of honor, manners, and pride for the Malay community. However, lifestyle changes, the dominance of digital entertainment, and low promotion have led to a decline in interest in traditional arts among the younger generation (Rahmadani et al., 2024; Rahmah, 2024). This phenomenon also

occurs at the Sri Indera Ratu (SIR) Art Studio, which is experiencing declining participation by young members, minimal digital publications, limited skills training, and weak organizational management.

If left untreated, these conditions could threaten the sustainability of the arts, spaces for cultural expression, and the social well-being of the community. From a public health perspective, traditional arts play a crucial role as a medium for emotional expression, a space for social interaction, and a supporter of community mental health. Arts and cultural activities are even recognized for their ability to improve psychological well-being, a sense of belonging, and social cohesion (World Health Organization, 2019; Fancourt et al., 2020). Art can also serve as a social communication medium to convey educational messages, moral messages, and mental health messages for the younger generation (Setiawan, 2022).

Digital transformation offers new opportunities for preserving arts and culture. Digitizing arts promotion, documentation, and performances has been shown to increase public exposure, attract the interest of younger generations, and expand audience reach through social media (Salsabila & Supriyanto, 2023; Sari et al., 2024). Furthermore, implementing sound studio management and mastering digital marketing strategies can improve the economic sustainability of arts communities (Fitriyani & Hidayat, 2022). Thus, a digital approach not only maintains cultural existence but also enhances community empowerment and social well-being.

The primary objective of this community service activity is to support the preservation and development of Deli Malay Dance through a digital transformation approach relevant to the needs of the younger generation. This activity is aimed at improving the digital skills of dancers and studio administrators, particularly in the areas of photography, video editing, work documentation, and social media promotion. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen the studio's organizational managerial capacity through training in work program management, administrative record keeping, and community development strategies. Through a combination of digital training and arts management, it is hoped that the studio will be able to expand its audience reach, increase youth participation, and create an adaptive, sustainable model for arts community empowerment that contributes to the community's social welfare. This activity also aims to produce digital-based contemporary performances as a means of publication and art revitalization, so that Deli Malay Dance remains relevant and in demand in the modern era.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service activity utilizes a community empowerment approach through a combination of digital training, organizational management strengthening, and collaborative performances as a medium for arts and culture revitalization. The program was implemented at the Sri Indera Ratu Studio in Medan City from October to November 2025, involving 20 dancers and studio administrators as the main participants. The initial phase of the activity began with a field assessment to identify partner issues, namely low youth participation, limited digital publications, and an unstructured studio management system. The implementation team then coordinated with the studio administrators to develop a schedule, followed by training in digital editing, social media management, and the basics of arts

organization management.

The digital training took the form of a hands-on workshop, where participants were introduced to the use of editing applications CapCut, Canva, and ChatGPT, as well as social media branding strategies. Participants then practiced creating promotional content for the performance. The activity was followed by an arts management mentorship session focusing on organizational structure, task allocation, practice schedule management, and member administration, ensuring the studio's work system was more professional and organized. The training was implemented through a collaborative performance of contemporary Deli Malay dance in a public space. In this performance, the choreography is designed not only to showcase the aesthetics of movement but also to incorporate educational messages about mental health, such as emotional management, self-esteem, and the importance of social support. The meaning of the dance is depicted through symbols of the human journey, from the ups and downs, the process of dealing with pressure, to the ability to recover through togetherness. Group formations and interconnected movements reflect solidarity, while harmonious movement patterns symbolize mental, social, and spiritual balance in daily life. Thus, this performance serves as a medium for cultural socialization as well as a means of psychosocial education for both audiences and participants. The entire process is recorded and edited into digital documentation, so that the results can be published as promotional content and learning media through social media platforms.

Program evaluation was conducted through pre- and post-tests to measure participants' knowledge gains in digital and managerial aspects. Data was analyzed descriptively to identify changes in grades, participation levels, and digital achievements such as the number of content, views, and increase in social media followers. The results of the activity resulted in improved participant skills, a more organized studio organizational structure, and documentation of performances reaching a wider audience through digital platforms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The training was attended by 20 participants, consisting of dancers and administrators of the Sri Indera Ratu Dance Studio. Evaluation used pre- and post-tests to measure improvements in digital editing skills, arts management, and studio organization. The training results demonstrated an increase in participants' knowledge and skills in both areas.

In the digital editing aspect, participants learned about video cutting techniques, audio adjustments, adding text, and publishing content on social media. After the training, the participants' average scores increased, and the results are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Increase in Knowledge of Participants in Digital Editing and Arts & Organization Management Training

| Training Type | Average Pre-test | Average Post-test | Improvement | Participants Who Improved |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Digital Editing | 7,55 | 9,00 | +1,45 points | 17 participants (85%) |
| Arts & Organizational Management | 6,10 | 8,20 | +2,10 points | 16 participants (80%) |

Source: Author's analysis results



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. Digital Editing (a) (b)
Source: Documentation from the author



(c)



(d)

Figure 2. Arts & Organization Management Training (c) (d)
Source: Documentation from the author

Seventeen of the 20 participants (85%) demonstrated improved understanding of digital editing skills. Participants were able to edit video documentation of rehearsals and performances, resulting in neater, upload-worthy results. The resulting content was then published on the studio's social media as part of digital promotion.

In terms of arts management and studio organization, 16 participants (80%) demonstrated increased knowledge. Participants were able to develop a simple organizational structure, record administrative activities, and create practice calendars and performance promotion plans. These skills demonstrate that the training not only improved technical skills but also strengthened the studio's internal management system for the sustainability of arts activities. Overall, the training successfully improved the digital literacy and managerial capacity of participants and served as a strategic step in the development and sustainability of Deli Malay Dance through a digital transformation approach.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the program to strengthen digital literacy and arts studio management demonstrated a significant impact on increasing participant capacity and the studio's institutional development. Based on evaluation results, 80% of participants, from the younger generation of performers, expressed interest in returning to similar activities regularly, thus concluding that the program is attractive, relevant, and has practical benefits for the sustainability of the arts ecosystem at the community level.

In terms of digital capacity building, 85% of participants were able to perform simple video editing and manage the studio's social media accounts, including creating captions, uploading content, and scheduling publications. This impact was reflected in the program's output, which included three digital promotional pieces published on social media, directly impacting the studio's exposure in the digital public sphere. After two weeks of implementation, the number of followers on the studio's social media accounts increased by 7%, indicating a broader audience response and engagement.

Institutionally, the program also contributed to the studio's internal organizational structure. The organizational structure was successfully established and agreed upon by all core members, including the chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and choreography, publication, and documentation departments. All core members also achieved a 100% understanding of the rehearsal management flow, performance mechanisms, and administrative processes, resulting in a more organized and sustainable work system for the studio.

Furthermore, the mentorship program provided to internal studio actors demonstrated positive results. Eighty percent of mentorship participants experienced improved managerial skills, particularly in activity management, member coordination, and administrative record-keeping. This improvement was verified through post-session evaluations, both through tests and performance tasks. Overall, this program not only enhanced technical competency in content production and performance management but also strengthened the sustainability of the community-based arts organization. Digital output, an increasing number of followers, and participant enthusiasm indicate that the studio has the potential to develop as a space for creative expression that adapts to technological advancements.

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