

Cultural Values and Preservation Efforts of the Karo Ethnic Ndikkar Dance in Lingga Village, Simpang Empat District

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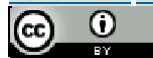
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ABSTRACT

The Ndikkar dance is a rich and valuable cultural heritage of the Karo tribe in Lingga Village, Simpang Empat District. This dance reflects deep cultural values and is an important part of the Karo ethnic identity. Social changes and the influence of modernization can threaten this dance's sustainability. This research aims to identify and analyze the cultural values of the Ndikkar dance and develop effective preservation strategies to maintain cultural continuity. The research method used is a qualitative method with an interactive model. Data collection using participant observation, interviews, and literature study to holistically understand the Ndikkar dance and its cultural context. The research results show that the Ndikkar dance contains various cultural values, including religious, social, and aesthetic values. There are various challenges, such as the changing values of the younger generation and a lack of institutional support, that could threaten the survival of this dance. Holistic conservation efforts involving community participation, strengthening cultural values in education, and collaboration between the government and the community are important keys to preserving the Ndikkar dance and Karo tribal culture as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

Karo Regency is part of North Sumatra Province, this district has an area of 2,127.25 km² with the capital city being Kabanjahe. The Karo tribe is an indigenous tribe that lives in the Karo Highlands, Deli Serdang Regency, Binjai City, Langkat Regency, Dairi Regency, Medan City, and Southeast Aceh Regency. The name of this tribe was used as one of the district names in one of the areas they inhabit (Karo Highlands), namely Karo Regency. The expression "Tanah Karo Simalem", Karo is comfortable and pleasant.

The Karo people have a variety of cultures that have been passed down from generation to generation and also have various ceremonial and traditional activities that have existed for a long time. Traditional ceremonies consist of the edermu bayu traditional ceremony (traditional marriage ceremony), simate-mate traditional ceremony (traditional death ceremony). In contrast, ritual ceremonies consist of Ndilo Wari Udan (rain calling ceremony), Erpangir Ku Lau (self-cleaning ceremony), and many more.

Ndikkar is a martial art from the Karo area, which is often referred to as silat. Even though the word Ndikkar is a translation of silat or martial arts into the Karo language, nowadays Karo people use the word silat more often than the word Ndikkar, fact the word Ndikkar tends to be heard or spoken less often so that for some Karo youth the word Ndikkar is a word that foreign spoken. Lack of attention to the preservation of traditional culture and minimal financial support for dance training and performances can result in a decline in the quality and frequency of Ndikkar Dance performances. To maintain the continuity of the Ndikkar Dance and preserve the cultural values of the Karo tribe, ongoing conservation efforts are needed. Therefore, this research aims to identify and analyze the cultural values contained in the Ndikkar Dance and develop effective conservation strategies.

By conducting this research, it is hoped that it can provide a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of the Ndikkar Dance and how to face the challenges of preserving it in this modern era. Through collaboration between the Karo tribe community, local government, and other stakeholders, it is hoped that the Ndikkar Dance can continue to live and become a source of pride for the Karo tribe and continue to radiate the charm of Indonesia's diverse and rich culture.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Ndikkar Dance

Ndikkar is better known as martial arts or pencak silat typical of Tanah Karo, North Sumatra. Ndikkar is a form of traditional Karo self-defense or Pencak Silat that grows and develops together with the culture of the Karo people. Ndikkar has the characteristics: of very slow and soft movements, but at certain moments this dance movement will look hard and fast. Especially the Karo people, they learn Pencak Silat only for self-defense. Currently, Ndikkar functions more as a means of entertainment for the people of Karo itself. Ndikkar is a form of traditional Karo self-defense or Pencak Silat that grows and develops together with the culture of the Karo people. Ndikkar has the characteristics: of very slow and soft movements, but at certain moments this dance movement will

look hard and fast. Especially the Karo people, they learn Pencak Silat only for self-defense, but now the Ndikkar dance has largely become a cultural dance.

Revitalization

Revitalization according to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5 of 2017 concerning Cultural Advancement is reviving Objects of Cultural Advancement that have been or are almost destroyed. Revitalization carried out includes:

- a) Excavate or re-study various data on Objects for the Advancement of Culture or Objects for the Advancement of Culture that have been or are nearly destroyed, both within and outside the country. An example is the traditional Karo ethnic game object
- b) Re-creating objects of cultural advancement that have been or are almost destroyed, such as creating traditional Karo ethnic game objects
- c) Encouraging the use of Cultural Advancement Objects that have been or are almost extinct, namely encouraging and increasing the number of traditional Karo ethnic game players, and socialization.non-physical interventions to accommodate new needs and challenges. Revitalization is a method of preservation. In the field of traditional game preservation, "revitalization" is an effort to revive a toy, game, function, and meaning that has experienced degradation through physical and non-physical interventions. Revitalization must be carried out in a planned and synchronous manner.

Regarding cultural revitalization, Prof. A. Chaedar Alwasilah said there are three steps, namely: (1) understanding to create awareness, (2) collective planning, and (3) generating cultural creativity. Conservation is an effort that is based, and this basis is also called the factors that support it, both from within and from outside the thing being preserved. Therefore, a conservation process or action recognizes strategies or techniques that are based on individual needs and conditions.

Cultural Values

Cultural Values Values are normative standards that influence humans in making choices between alternative modes of action. Kluckhohn states that values are conceptions (express or implied, which differentiate the characteristics of individuals or groups) of what is desired which influences the choice of action towards a point of view. Values are realized in the form of norms as a reference for human action. Values also function as motivators and humans are supporters of their values. Because humans act driven by the values they believe in. Cultural values are values that exist and develop in society. Because cultural values are the first level of ideal or customary culture. Cultural values are the layer that is least realized and the space is wide. So cultural values are something that is very influential and is used as a guide or reference for a certain group of people.

Cultural values can be viewed in terms of:

- a) Cultural values relating to human relations with other humans. The values of human relations with other humans are one of the cultural

values recommended in Javanese society. Because it will create shared prosperity, apart from that, peace and tranquility will be realized. However, all of this is based on sincerity, both physically and mentally. One does not need to expect similar rewards or kindness from others.

- b) Cultural values related to human relations with nature. Environmental utilization is defined as empowering natural resources by managing the natural resources around us. Natural resources are something that can be utilized for various human interests and needs to live a more prosperous life.
- c) Cultural values related to humans' relationship with themselves. Values related to humans' love for themselves are natural, such as humans bathing, which means doing good to their physical bodies so that they are always clean and healthy.
- d) Those related to human relationships with God. The values of human relationships with other humans are one of the cultural values recommended in Javanese society. Because it will create shared prosperity, apart from that, peace and tranquility will be realized. However, all of this is based on sincerity, both physically and mentally. One does not need to expect similar rewards or kindness from others.

METHODOLOGY

The analytical method used in this research is qualitative analysis with an interactive analysis model. This analysis process is carried out during the research process. The qualitative approach is very different from the quantitative approach, especially in presenting data. According to Matthew B. Miles and Michael Huberman, in qualitative analysis, the data that appears is in the form of words and not a series of numbers. Analysis according to Matthew and Michael is divided into three streams of activities that occur simultaneously.

This research was conducted in Lingga Village, Simpang Empat District, Karo Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research location is very important because it is a data source for exploring information related to the research title regarding cultural values and conservation efforts in the Karo ethnic Ndikkar dance in Lingga village, Simpang Empat subdistrict.

Documents are a method of collecting data which is done by taking an inventory of the documents that have been collected and then analyzing them. The data analysis used in this research is an interactive analysis model that consists of three activity flows that occur simultaneously, namely through data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and concluding/verification (Miles and Huberman).

RESULTS

Existence and Cultural Values of the Karo Ethnic Ndikkar Dance in Lingga Village, Simpang Empat District



Gambar 1. Karo Ethnic Ndikkar Dance

In the Karo people, *Ndikkar* is defined as a self-defense movement. A surprised person, for example, by hearing or seeing something, then makes reflex movements to avoid, parry, or jump can be said to be *erNdikkar* even though the movements he did were not *Ndikkar* (martial arts) movements in general.

As a self-defense mechanism, *Ndikkar* has repeatedly changed functions from self-defense against nature, self-defense from attacks by wild animals, and self-protection against invaders, to its current status as a tourism commodity displayed at certain events. Currently, *Ndikkar* is standing on an uncertain identity. Some people know it as a dance and others know it as the original martial art of the Karo people.

In a real fight, *Ndikkar* functions as a martial art whose aim is to escape from threats and at the same time achieve victory over the opponent. A person who is skilled in *Ndikkar* is called a *Pandikar*. A *Pandikar* is believed to have a strong and wild physique (agile, nimble), because he is expected to be able to dodge (dodge), parry, and even attack in a real fight. At a certain level, when a *Pandikar* has become a teacher (trainer), he is believed to have other magical knowledge, such as: the science of invulnerability, the science of thunder (making people afraid), or the science of *simalang ate* (making people pity). So a *Pandikar* is very well-known and respected among the Karo people.

If the *Ndikkar* is performed as an arts and culture attraction, the performance is always accompanied by a set of traditional Karo musical instruments called the *Sarune Gendang*, whose musical instruments consist of the *sarune* as the melody carrier, the *singindungi* drum as the carrier of the varied rhythmic patterns, the *singanaki* drum as the rhythm carrier. which is fixed (constant), *gung* as the determinant of the largest cycle, and *penganak* as the determinant of the smallest cycle.

In this decade, *Ndikkar* is more often called a dance than silat because the Karo Regency Government on its website also states that *Ndikkar* is a cultural dance. As a form of performing art, *Ndikkar* has been patterned with 4 main plots, namely: (1) Worship the four villages, (2) Tare-tare Bintang, (3) Ermayan, (4) War. The four village prayers are a tribute given to the four cardinal directions where the first prayer is addressed to the spirit of the *Ndikkar* teacher or *Ndikkar*

ancestor, the second prayer is given to the founder of the village, the third prayer is to the musicians and the final prayer is to the opponents. In the star dance section, *Pandikar* will display beautiful movements while introducing and measuring the opponent's abilities, star dance movements in the form of hand movements and star gazing. In Ermayan, *Pandikar* will show off many of the moves he has mastered. The war scene is the closing plot where no *Pandikar* can lose so the war will end in a draw.

One of the crucial factors in maintaining the existence of the *Ndikkar* Dance in Lingga Village is community awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage. Lingga Village, as part of the Karo ethnic community, has a strong attachment to traditional values. Cooperation, a spirit of togetherness, and respect for ancestors are the main drivers in preserving the *Ndikkar* Dance as an invaluable heritage. The importance of the role of traditional stakeholders and community leaders cannot be ignored. They have a big responsibility in supporting, promoting, and guiding the younger generation in maintaining the authenticity of the *Ndikkar* Dance. The continuity of this tradition can be strengthened through guidance and education that focuses on transferring cultural knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation.

Efforts to revitalize Ndikkar Karo in Lingga Village, Simpang Empat District



Gambar 2. Revitalize Ndikkar Karo in Lingga Village

Currently, *Ndikkar* is very rarely studied or introduced to the general public, so its existence is at the stage where it will become extinct or forgotten by the Karo people and outside the Karo tribe. This is very unfortunate because *Ndikkar* itself is a Karo culture that should be passed on and preserved to future generations.

Efforts that we can make so that *Ndikkar* continues to be preserved are by carrying out revitalization. This revitalization itself involves a lot of community participation and related parties who can help carry out this effort. The role of government and communities is also an important key in preserving *Ndikkar* and Karo tribal culture as a whole. Revitalization can be done in various ways, such as: Finding out about and studying *Ndikkar* with Karo people who are experts and still clearly remember the *Ndikkar* culture, Showing *Ndikkar* again to the Karo people and people outside the Karo tribe, Creating a community to preserve *Ndikkar* by teaching it to the current generation, Invite the public to learn about *Ndikkar* culture, create performances that showcase *Ndikkar* culture, and encourage the introduction of *Ndikkar* culture so that it is better known and

preserved by the general public. Other efforts that can be made to revitalize *Ndikkar* include:

1. Provide an understanding of *Ndikkar* and develop it
The Karo people developed their ancient intuition through *Ndikkar*, a self-defense mechanism against attacks by wild animals as well as a way to adapt to the surrounding environment.
2. Providing education and training
To preserve and promote this dance, education and training about this dance is provided to the younger generation. This helps them understand and appreciate their cultural heritage.
3. Create performances and festivals that focus on *Ndikkar*
This dance is often performed at various cultural events and festivals. This not only helps in preserving this dance but also helps in promoting it to tourists and outsiders.
4. Documentation and Research
Documentation and research about this dance is carried out to understand the history and meaning behind these dance movements. This helps in preserving knowledge about this dance for future generations.

However, there are several challenges in this revitalization effort. One of them is the young generation's lack of interest in *Ndikkar* which is slowly fading its existence. Apart from that, the rise of imported martial arts has made the younger generation more interested in martial arts which have an organized curriculum rather than diving into *Ndikkar* which is born from the identity of their nation. Therefore, further efforts need to be made to overcome these challenges and ensure that the *Ndikkar* Karo Dance remains sustainable and continues to grow.

DISCUSSION

The *Ndikkar* dance, as a symbol of the rich culture of the Karo ethnic group, brings with it several deep and empowering values in Lingga Village, Simpang Empat District. The existence of this dance is not only an artistic performance but also an expression of values that are pillars of community life, strengthening identity and building strong togetherness. Some of the cultural values contained in the *Ndikkar* dance are as follows:

1) Value of Togetherness

Togetherness can be the main foundation in the *Ndikkar* Dance because every movement and harmony in this dance reflects the spirit of cooperation, where each individual plays an important role in creating the beauty of the whole. This togetherness is not only in the context of dance but also reflects the daily life of the people of Lingga Village.

2) The Value of Respect for Ancestors and Traditions

Respect for ancestors is a strong value in the *Ndikkar* Dance. Every movement and element of this dance contains deep meaning, embracing the cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation. This dance, thus, functions as a

medium to honor and maintain connections with ancestors, creating continuity of these values.

3) Spirituality and Belief Values

The subtle movements and symbols used in this dance often have religious significance, rooted in deep beliefs and connections with nature and ancestral spirits. Thus, the Ndikkar Dance becomes a means to celebrate and strengthen the spiritual values of the Lingga Village community.

4) Beauty and creativity

Every aspect of the Ndikkar Dance reflects aesthetic values. Beautiful and colorful costumes not only enrich the visuals of the dance but also illustrate the creativity of the people in maintaining the uniqueness of their culture. This beauty is not just a form of art, but also a statement of identity and pride in their culture.

Community empowerment through the Ndikkar Dance can be seen in the active participation of the community, especially the younger generation. In the learning and performance process, the Lingga Village community provides an understanding of their cultural identity to the next generation, providing a sense of ownership and pride in their cultural heritage. In conservation efforts, the promotion of cultural tourism is an effective tool. Lingga Village can exploit the potential of the Ndikkar Dance as a tourist attraction, creating economic opportunities while maintaining cultural sustainability. This encourages local communities to involve themselves in efforts to preserve and develop their cultural heritage.

By exploring and understanding the values of togetherness, respect for ancestors, spirituality, beauty, creativity, and community empowerment in the Ndikkar Dance, Lingga Village has made its mark as a guardian of a living and vibrant cultural heritage. This dance is a reflection of the values that underlie people's daily lives, creating a rich fabric of meaning between the past, present, and radiant future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ndikkar is a cultural heritage that reflects the important values of the Karo ethnic identity. This dance contains various cultural values, including religious values, social values, and aesthetic values. Social changes and the influence of modernization can pose threats to the sustainability of this dance. In practice, Ndikkar is often considered an ordinary dance because, in every performance at certain events, Ndikkar performances are often accompanied by traditional Karo music. Lack of attention to the preservation of traditional culture and minimal financial support for dance training and performances can result in a decline in the quality and frequency of Ndikkar Dance performances. To maintain the continuity of the Ndikkar Dance and preserve the cultural values of the Karo tribe, ongoing conservation efforts are needed. Through collaboration between the Karo tribe community, local government, and other stakeholders, it is hoped that the Ndikkar Dance can continue to live and become a source of pride for the Karo tribe and continue to radiate the charm of Indonesia's diverse and rich culture.

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