

CHALLENGES AND INTERCONNECTIONS INNOVATION OF LOCAL CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF TEATER BANGSAWAN IN SOUTH SUMATRA, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges and potential strategies for preserving and innovating Teater Bangsawan, a traditional Malay theater in South Sumatra, Indonesia, amidst the pressures of modernization and globalization. Employing a case study approach, this research combines data from focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews with cultural stakeholders, and document analysis to explore the cultural and artistic dimensions of Teater Bangsawan. The methodological framework follows Yin's guidelines for qualitative inquiry, focusing on why and how this cultural form has diminished in modern society, particularly among the younger generations. The findings reveal that Teater Bangsawan faces significant challenges, including declining audience interest, inadequate financial and institutional support, and the perception of traditional art as outdated. Despite these obstacles, this study identifies the potential for preservation by integrating innovative elements into its artistic and performative aspects. Suggestions include adopting modern stage technologies, expanding narrative flexibility to incorporate contemporary issues, and leveraging digital platforms for wider accessibility of the plays. The study concludes that the survival of Teater Bangsawan hinges on balancing cultural preservation and modern innovation. A strategic approach that combines traditional elements, artistic evolution, and technological integration is imperative. Furthermore, government policies and educational initiatives play crucial roles in fostering appreciation and sustainability in traditional performing arts. This study highlights that effective modernization, while retaining cultural authenticity, can reposition Teater Bangsawan within Indonesia's dynamic cultural landscape, ensuring its relevance and appeal for future generations.

Keywords: preservation, innovation challenges, local culture, Teater Bangsawan

INTRODUCTION

Research from diverse parts of the world regularly demonstrates that local culture, particularly traditional performing arts, is increasingly under threat. (Nurhayati et al., 2018; Ratnawati et al., 2019; Nurhayati et al., 2020; Addaney et al., 2022; Norton, 2022; Romrome & Ena, 2022; Shen & Chou, 2022; Abebe & Gatisso, 2023; Jabareen & Zlotnick, 2023; James-Williamson et al., 2023; Lawangen & Roberts, 2023; Steibl et al., 2023; Godfrey, 2024; Li et al., 2024 & Tien et al., 2024). The extinction of local culture is a growing global concern, with traditional performing arts being among the most vulnerable.

The following evidence from various studies highlights the decline and disappearance of these cultural practices in the region. In India, the popularity of Yakshagana and Kathakali is fading (Padmanabha & Sathish, 2019 & Menon, 2022), and the traditional Ngoma dance, which was once an integral part of social and cultural ceremonies, is gradually disappearing in East Africa (Gearhart, 1998). In Australia, Aboriginal cultural practices, including ceremonial dances and oral traditions, are threatened (Spry et al., 2023). Traditional Kabuki and Noh theatre in Japan also face the same risk. Younger audiences consider these forms of performing arts to be ancient, and the number of spectators continues to decline (Sujaya et al. 2024). In New Zealand, the Māori have witnessed the gradual disappearance of their traditional practices, such as the haka (Mazer, 2011). Similarly, Drama Gong, Balinese traditional performing art, faces challenges in the modern era, including competition from digital entertainment and changing audience preferences (Sugita et al., 2021). Increasing evidence points to a widespread trend: traditional cultural practices are increasingly marginalized in modern society. As times change, these traditional art forms struggle to survive in the ever-evolving cultural dynamics (Lindsay, 1995; Singh, 2012).

One of the cultural products that has experienced a long journey is Teater Bangsawan. The Teater Bangsawan originated from the Persian Puppet which originally told the classic story of India and these gods were finally adapted and adapted to the Malay tradition. This Teater Bangsawan is often played in the Malay Peninsula such as in the Sultanate of Deli, Sultanate of Serdang in the 1890s. Furthermore, Teater Bangsawan developed in Riau, Bengkulu, Palembang, and Kalimantan (San, 2018). The Teater Bangsawan or often also called the Bangsawan entered Palembang in the early 20th century. However, today, Teater Bangsawan is facing extinction.

The main problem facing Teater Bangsawan was the inability to reconcile traditional performance elements with contemporary cultural expectations. Thus, there is an urgent need for a strategy that balances preservation and innovation. Without innovative intervention, Teater Bangsawan risks becoming obsolete, remembered only as part of a fading cultural heritage. The survival of Teater Bangsawan depends on the successful integration of innovative elements that appeal to contemporary audiences while retaining its traditional essence.

To date, no research has examined efforts to preserve Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra while providing innovative solutions to suit the changing times and maintain its cultural integrity. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question of why Teater Bangsawan has lost its place in modern society, especially among the younger generation, and how it can be preserved and innovated in its development efforts so that it can survive in the global era.

METHOD

This study uses a case study approach following the framework directed by Yin (2018). According to Yin, case studies allow for the collection of qualitative data to answer the questions of “why” and “how.” The case study was chosen to investigate the complex cultural phenomena of Teater Bangsawan and the challenges it faces in modern times, particularly regarding the potential for extinction and the need for degradation and innovation. The case study approach was considered suitable for the following reasons.

Teater Bangsawan is a traditional performing art with intricate sociocultural and historical layers. This research seeks to uncover why Teater Bangsawan is losing its place in modern society, especially among the younger generation. This research seeks to identify ways to preserve the authenticity of Teater Bangsawan while innovating it to remain relevant to the present. This identification aims to answer how Teater Bangsawan can be preserved and innovated in its development efforts so that it can survive in the face of globalization and modern entertainment trends.

Research Respondents

This research targets stakeholders, namely: (1) arts actors and cultural practitioners, namely individuals who have direct experience and involvement in the staging or preservation of Teater Bangsawan; (2) Government officials, namely the authorities responsible for cultural preservation and policy-making; (3) academics, namely experts in cultural studies or Teater Bangsawan; and (4) cultural organizations, namely representatives of institutions or non-governmental organizations that focus on cultural heritage and performing arts.

The method of selecting sample respondents was purposive sampling to select respondents who have a rich understanding of Teater Bangsawan and its challenges; respondents who are involved, know and/or determine the future of Teater Bangsawan.

Data Collection Methods

This study combined data from FGDs, in-depth interviews, and document analyses.

Focus Group Discussion

The focus of the FGD included the following themes: (1) the history and characteristics of the Teater Bangsawan; (2) the threat of extinction due to the decline in audience interest, especially among the younger generation; (3) the factors that caused the Teater Bangsawan to be abandoned by the local community; (4)

the need for the preservation and innovation of the Teater Bangsawan, including proposals to modernize its performance style; and (5) the role of local governments and the importance of institutional support for the survival of the Teater Bangsawan. FGDs involve structured discussions led by researchers using a predefined set of questions to guide the conversation while providing the flexibility to explore emerging issues. The total number of respondents to the FGD was 14.

In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted to gather insights from the participants. To complete the FGD data, in-depth interviews were conducted with key individuals, namely senior players, cultural historians, and policymakers, consisting of one person each. This interview is designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing the Teater Bangsawan, including detailed perspectives on: (1) the cultural significance of the Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra, (2) the obstacles to the sustainability of the Teater Bangsawan in the midst of the modern cultural landscape, (3) the preservation and innovation efforts of the Teater Bangsawan in its development efforts so that it can survive in the global era, and (4) suggestions for policy interventions and initiatives culture. The interview questions were semi-structured, allowing for open-ended responses that provided deeper insight into the individual's experiences and views.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was conducted on historical records, performance archives, and document sources in the form of books related to Teater Bangsawan. The document analysis aims to understand Teater Bangsawan and the shift in cultural and political support over time. This method also helped build the historical context for discussion in the FGDs and in-depth interviews.

Data Analysis

This study used a qualitative data analysis approach. Data from FGDs and in-depth interviews related to the history and characteristics of the Teater Bangsawan, the existence and frequency of the performance of the Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra today, the threat of extinction due to the declining interest of the audience, especially among the younger generation, the factors that cause the Teater Bangsawan to be abandoned by the local community, the need for preservation and innovation of the Teater Bangsawan, including proposals to modernize its performance style, and the role of local governments and the importance of institutional support for the survival of the Teater Bangsawan were categorized by topic and analyzed and interpreted. Next, the Nvivo software was used. Nvivo is useful for managing and analyzing large amounts of qualitative data from FGDs and in-depth interviews. The steps for data analysis were as follows: (1) Data transcription: All data from the FGD and in-depth interviews were transcribed for accuracy. (2) Coding: Transcripts were encoded into thematic categories based on key issues, namely cultural roots, artistic elements (music, costumes, dance, and storyline), and modernization. (3) Pattern identification: Themes emerging from the data are analyzed to identify recurring patterns or challenges faced by Teater Bangsawan. (4) Interpretation: The identified patterns and themes were interpreted based on the research questions, providing insights into how Teater Bangsawan can be revitalized and innovated.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, triangulation was applied by cross-verifying information obtained from various sources.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards, including: (1) informational consent: all participants were informed of the purpose of the study and their consent was obtained prior to data collection; (2) confidentiality the participants identities were anonymized; and (3) voluntary participation the participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Historical data and characteristics of the Teater Bangsawan; (2) the threat of extinction due to declining audience interest, especially among the younger generation, (3) the factors that cause the Teater Bangsawan to be abandoned by the local community, (4) the need for the Teater Bangsawan's innovation and innovation, including proposals to modernize its performance style, and (5) the role of local governments and the importance of institutional support for the survival of the Teater Bangsawan. The data obtained from the FGD and in-depth interviews are as follows.

History of the Emergence of Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra

The history of Teater Bangsawan from various literatures shows different versions. The Teater Bangsawan is an acculturation of various cultures, namely India and Malay. The Teater Bangsawan is inseparable from the history of trade in the Malay Peninsula (Malaysia-Sumatra) and Temasik (Singapore) in the 19th century. The Indians who explored the Malay Peninsula and Thematic Land, in addition to peddling their wares, also brought folk entertainment in the form of acting art, which they named Indra Sabor. Indra Sabor is believed to be the forerunner of Teater Bangsawan (Afriadi, 2019). Teater Bangsawan, a traditional form of theatre in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, has its origins in the influence of Persian, Arabic, and Indian theatre traditions that were brought through the Vast Malay world trade routes during the 19th century (Deneerwan & Kahn, 2018; Suboh, 2023). Rooted in royal courts, Teater Bangsawan traditionally depicts stories of nobility by incorporating elements of music, dance, and costumes that reflect the cultural mix of its diverse origins (Foley, 2022). These performances were originally intended for the Malay aristocracy, featuring magnificent representations of heroic figures, kings, and romantic legends. However, as time went by, and with the influence of colonialism and modernization that spread throughout the region, Teater Bangsawan began to fade, especially with the increasing prominence of Westernized forms of entertainment.

Furthermore, when will Teater Bangsawan enter South Sumatra? Respondents provided various opinions on the history of the emergence of Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra. This is natural because there is no written record of when Teater Bangsawan appeared, especially in South Sumatra. In South Sumatra, including Palembang (as the provincial capital) and its surroundings (for example, in Pemulutan District, 11 km away from Palembang), it is known as the Dulmuluk Theater, which has become an icon of Palembang and the surrounding area. Dulmuluk Theater has its own characteristics, so the statements of respondents in this study are often compared to Dulmuluk Theater when talking about Teater Bangsawan.

"The Teater Bangsawan appeared in 1870. At that time, Teater Bangsawan was also called the Persian Puppet because the stories shown came from the Middle East. Its home countries are Singapore and Malaysia, respectively. It then spread to the South to Indonesia, starting in Riau, Medan, then to Palembang, and even to other Malay regions. Apart from Riau and Medan, which still use the name Bangsawan, in other areas they are named by other terms, such as Makyong, Mendu, and Mamanda. In the 60s to 70s, this Teater Bangsawan was still seen staging." The same resource person continued that the Bangsawan Theater first appeared and was used as a pattern by the Dulmuluk Theater and as patrons for performing arts in various regions in Indonesia.

Another information from cultural practitioner said, "According to historical information, the Teater Bangsawan in Palembang around 1943 was founded by the Bintang Berlian Theater Group led by Tina and Haji Gung."

From the statements of Tina and Haji Gung, it can be stated that Teater Bangsawan appeared first in South Sumatra and became a patron of the Dulmuluk Theater. This is in accordance with the metamorphosis that occurred in the Dulmuluk Theater from the reading of the Abdul Muluk Verse by Wan Bakar to the current form of the Dulmuluk Theater. Teater Bangsawan is located on the East Coast Peninsula of Sumatra, which stretches from the Strait of Malacca to the Riau Islands, Medan, and all the way to Palembang, thus giving color to the metamorphosis off the Dulmuluk Theater at that time. The Dulmuluk Theater was clearly influenced by Teater Bangsawan, led by Mamak Pushi, who made his journey to Java. However, in the later development, the Dulmuluk Theater, which was always tied to the story originating from the Abdul

Muluk Verse, began to bore the people of Palembang. Then, Teater Bangsawan was developed, which gave a new color with a varied and varied story also in terms of music, songs, and dance. This was stated by one of the speakers, namely "The impression is interesting, the Teater Bangsawan has music and what is more interesting is the story according to the people of Palembang."

Characteristics of Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra

The characteristics of Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra include various components, namely stories, music, costumes, and settings. The following data are from the Academician by Latifah. "The stories shown in Teater Bangsawan are more diverse. In addition to showing stories from Persia and India such as the story of 1001 Nights, the story of Romeo and Juliet, after developing in the Malay land in the archipelago, local folk tales are also displayed."

Furthermore, it compares the stories in Teater Bangsawan and Dulmuluk Theater. "The story of Teater Bangsawan is not the same as the story of Dulmuluk, which is binding in the sense that the story is only the *syair* of Sultan Abdul Muluk. Dulmuluk is always the Sultan Abdul Muluk *syair* and Siti Zubaidah *syair*, whose stories are the same about an oppressed woman who desperately tries to maintain her honor. One more story of Jauhari that I do not know yet, so three stories of Dulmuluk. Meanwhile, the stories of the Teater Bangsawan are popular stories such as Romeo and Juliet, so in terms of stories it is more flexible." "Even so, the story is not tied to the Teater Bangsawan can tell the Election of Regional Heads." "The group performs Teater Bangsawan if someone orders it, if someone wants to pay, a story will be made. On August 17, the story raised the condition of facing the regional elections."

According to the respondents, the order of the performance of Teater Bangsawan resembles that of a modern theater. "Starting with a kind of prologue, then entering the story presented. The storyline is also the same as modern theater, without any actors like Kadam in Dulmuluk." According to other speakers, the order of the performance consists of an introduction, namely *kisoh*, usually in the form of a reading of verses delivered in the Malay style "selendang delima" and the introduction of the actors' names by the actors themselves, followed by the opening of the story, conflicts and problem-solving (usually a happy ending)."

Music is an important part of performance. The resource person provided a statement related to the music of Teater Bangsawan. "In general, it is commonly found in Malay music, he said. In terms of music, Teater Bangsawan is also more flexible; it can be any music, but the musical instrument is a traditional instrument so that the Malayness is still visible. There are violins, accordions, drums, *jidurs*, and small gongs (*tetawak*)." Another speaker added that the music is Malay and live. Contrary to that opinion, other speakers stated that the music at Teater Bangsawan was free. "In the Teater Bangsawan, the music is free, even the music of *dangdut* today can be performed." Meanwhile, the songs played on the Teater Bangsawan stage are always updated according to the story, especially if the payment exceeds the standard.

The other component is related to fashion design. The resource person stated that the clothes used are Malay in origin. The clothes are adjusted according to the role of the characters in the story. The material is satin, and there are also European clothes that are adapted to the demands of the story or depending on the character being played.

Another important component is the stage layout. The stage layout is usually set against a royal throne. The setting of the Kingdom is marked by the King's throne. However, according to the source, "The setting uses makeshift chairs, sometimes plastic chairs, and the stage background uses painted fabric. The change in the round is marked by a change in the settings. But due to limitations, usually the setting does not change."

The Decline of Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra

The resource person stated that in general, the condition of Teater Bangsawan experienced sluggish development compared to the social development of the supporting community and technology. "The challenge is the image of the Teater Bangsawan which is considered traditional, outdated, poor and not

prestigious compared to other performing arts that even though they come from abroad.”

The resource person added that many young people do not know about Teater Bangsawan. If they had only watched it on TV or YouTube. “In addition to other more interesting spectacles that are in the house, the performance itself is very rare.” The statement of the source emphasized that the performance of Teater Bangsawan was less interesting than other spectacles. The resource person also compared it with Teater Bangsawan in other countries. “The Teater Bangsawan from Singapore, is more beautiful and neater because it has been touched by the concept of modern theater, only the story shows the identity of the nobility, the actors are like a remote controlled from the blocking, unlike the Palembang actors.” One of the factors why the Teater Bangsawan is less in demand is the poor performance. Lack of slickness due to insufficient training. One of the factors that make a show less slick is the actor’s acting ability. “Judging from this Teater Bangsawan, the main point of the strength of the actors is that the strength of the actors is very important.” Teater Bangsawan usually does not have a director, so the performance is more professional. Only the Group Chairman gives directions to the actors globally. Furthermore, the actor interprets each role he plays.

The slow-paced, formal narrative structure of Teater Bangsawan, which relies on intricate dialogue and minimal physical action, often does not fit the dynamic, fast-paced storytelling style that modern audiences love. This inconsistency is one of the reasons why Teater Bangsawan is considered archaic by contemporary audiences, especially the younger generation. In addition, strict adherence to traditional performance techniques without incorporating modern innovations has limited the appeal of Teater Bangsawan.

However, financial support is needed to make a show optimal. This financial problem is a crucial factor for traditional theater everywhere. This is supported by the statement of the resource person, “The problem of minimal funding makes it difficult for the Teater Bangsawan to show its performance optimally.” The Teater Bangsawan is in a precarious position, with fewer opportunities due to economic factors. With the rise of the commercial entertainment industry, funding and institutional support for traditional art are diminishing. Cultural policies in Indonesia have been criticized for not prioritizing the preservation of traditional art forms, leaving Teater Bangsawan vulnerable to further erosion. The absence of government programs to support and modernize the infrastructure for these performances further weakens their survival (Saputra 2024).

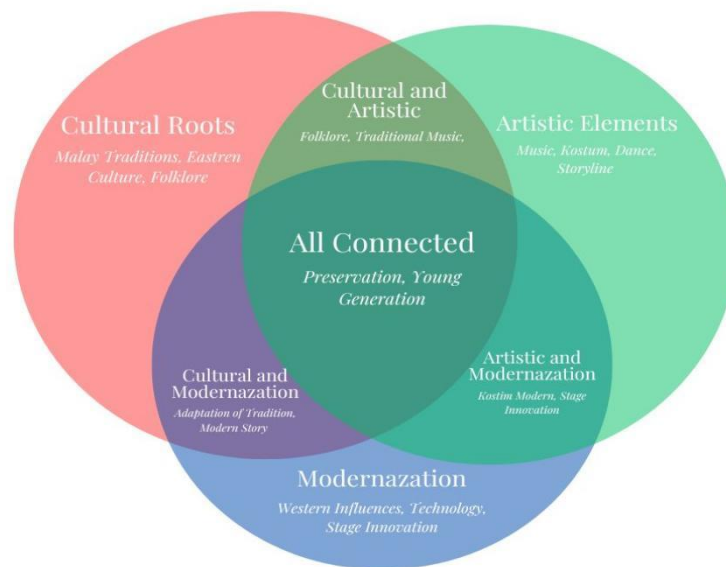
According to the respondents, “Development orientation that only develops physical and economic development causes the thinking orientation to be more pragmatic and matriarchal. The arts are not considered important in encouraging the progress of economic development.” In addition, the resource person stated “There is no serious policy from the government in caring about traditional arts, including Teater Bangsawan.” On the other hand, respondents from the government stated that “The role of the government is to re-elevate Teater Bangsawan by carrying out cultural festivals and providing facilities to maintain this Teater Bangsawan. In the coming years we will support, maybe it can be implemented in 2025.” The importance of the government’s role was also raised by Kusmayati and Prasetya (2018) in the preservation of performing arts in Indonesia. Without the government’s support, the performing arts will certainly sink.

The decline of Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra is increasingly evident due to various factors, including the increasing power of modernization, globalization, and commercialization. Over the past few decades, this traditional performing art form has struggled to maintain its existence due to a significant decline in both performance and audience interest (Nofriani 2012). The main problem facing Teater Bangsawan is its inability to adapt to the rapidly changing cultural landscape, which has been dominated by digital and global entertainment (Zulhidayati et al., 2024). One of the main reasons for this decline is the overwhelming influence of global media and entertainment, which has shifted the focus of the younger generation toward more contemporary forms of entertainment and away from traditional performances such as Teater Bangsawan.

The Need for Preservation and Innovation of Teater Bangsawan

Efforts to defend it were carried out mainly by maintaining the characteristics of Teater Bangsawan, which is its hallmark. Meanwhile, innovation efforts are carried out by exploring the needs of the audience, who are always moving according to the times. The data show that it is still possible for Teater Bangsawan to be developed. Of course, there are several requirements, namely, adjusting it to the times and developing technology. Concerns arise from the following statements. "If it is not reserialized from now on, it is possible that this theater is only a treasure." Thus, preservation and innovation go hand in hand so that Teater Bangsawan continues to exist in South Sumatra. If so, what components are maintained in the tradition of Teater Bangsawan, and what innovation efforts are being made to ensure its survival in the face of globalization and modern entertainment trends?

Here Is a Venn diagram of the FGD data and in-depth interviews.



The Venn diagram above explains the concept map of Teater Bangsawan, which focuses on preservation and innovation in its development based on cultural roots, artistic elements, and modernization, as shown in Figure 1.

1. Cultural Roots (Red)

This section emphasizes the main influences of Malay tradition, Eastern culture, and folklore as the main foundation of Traditional Malay Theatre. This aspect is crucial for preserving original identities and traditional values.

2. Artistic Element (Green)

Artistic elements refer to aesthetic schemes, including music, costumes, dance, and storylines. These artistic elements are important components of the visual aspects and performance of the theater.

3. Modernization (Blue)

This section discusses the effects of technological advancement, stage innovation, and the entry of Western influence (westernization). This section discusses the challenges and threats posed by modernization while striving to preserve the culture and traditions of Traditional Malay Theatre in contemporary times.

If the three elements intersect two by two, it can be explained as follows.

1. Culture and Artistic Elements (Red-Green Overlap)

This section explains the intersection of traditional culture with artistic elements that display folklore and traditional musical accompaniment. This refers to the essence of preserving traditional culture through the representation of traditional musical art as an artistic element.

2. Traditional Culture and Modernization (Red-Blue Overlap)

This section explains the intersection of traditional culture with modernization, which seeks to present traditional culture, especially Malay culture, in modern packaging. This highlights the importance of presenting folklore in a modern context, ensuring the relevance and acceptance of Traditional Malay Theatre by modern audiences.

3. Artistic and Modernization Elements (Green-Blue Overlap)

This section explains the intersection of artistic elements with modernization, which seeks to use artistic elements in modern packaging to display traditional culture, in this case, traditional Malay theater. This means that Malay theater as the root of culture is displayed using artistic elements in modern packaging (using innovative technology and staging).

By paying attention to the aspects and intersections between aspects in the Venn diagram, we can explain how the preservation of Teater Bangsawan as a Traditional Malay theater is attractive to the younger generation. Malay traditions, Eastern culture, and folklore as cultural roots are maintained. In terms of the story, an element of humor can be added that raises trending issues to dilute the atmosphere without eliminating the aristocratic story.

The innovations are in artistic elements that are supporting elements of performing arts that appeal to the younger generation. To strengthen this innovation, a modern stage layout and technology are used. With this process, the performing art of Teater Bangsawan will be obtained, which is based on dramaturgy and theatre, artistically supported by a stage arrangement that utilizes modern technology.

The survival of Teater Bangsawan in Palembang and elsewhere in Southeast Asia depends on its ability to strike a balance between cultural preservation and innovation. Incorporating modern elements without sacrificing cultural integrity is essential for reconnecting with contemporary audiences (Nasir et al., 2016). Experts argue that the failure to innovate while maintaining authenticity has been one of the key factors in the decline of traditional arts (Indrayuda & Amirul, 2020), such as Teater Bangsawan. While cultural preservation is essential, Teater Bangsawan must evolve in response to shifts in the sociocultural landscape, dominated by globalization and digital media.

Several successful examples highlight the benefits of modernizing traditional performing arts. For example, in Japan, Kabuki theater has incorporated modern lighting and special effects to appeal to younger audiences without changing its core narrative techniques (Sujaya et al., 2024). These efforts demonstrate that traditional arts must engage with modern technology and media trends while retaining the essence of the cultural practices they represent (Gray, 2023).

In Indonesia, efforts to revitalize Teater Bangsawan can involve digitizing performances so that they can be accessed by a global audience while using social media and digital platforms to increase awareness among the younger generation (Jati, 2019). Collaborations between traditional theater practitioners and modern artists can also produce innovative forms of folklore that maintain the cultural significance of Teater Bangsawan while appealing to contemporary sensibilities. Educational institutions also play an important role in fostering cultural appreciation among young people. Integrating Teater Bangsawan into the school curriculum as part of a broader cultural preservation initiative can ensure that future generations understand the importance of preserving local culture.

CONCLUSIONS

Although Teater Bangsawan plays an important role in cultural representation, its persistence has been tested over time by the modernization that characterized the postcolonial period in Indonesia. This art form has struggled to maintain its place in contemporary cultural practices, especially as the younger generation shifts toward more globalized forms of entertainment, such as television, cinema, and digital media.

The Teater Bangsawan with its various characteristics in the regions of the archipelago can be developed in accordance with the progress of the times as a form of national identity richness. The decline of Teater Bangsawan was influenced by a variety of factors, including shifts in local culture, globalization,

and government policies. Likewise, Teater Bangsawan in South Sumatra, which represents a significant cultural tradition, is endangered by modernization and globalization. Its survival depends on the successful integration of innovative elements that appeal to contemporary audiences while retaining the traditional essence.

Historical examples from elsewhere show that modernization, if done wisely, can rejuvenate traditional performing arts and maintain their relevance in a rapidly evolving world. To achieve this, a comprehensive strategy that includes technology integration, educational outreach, and institutional support is essential. Only through such efforts can Teater Bangsawan reclaim its place in the Indonesian cultural landscape. In addition, the most effective effort to preserve traditional arts, including making innovations that are suitable for the times, is to include them in education, especially in formal education.

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