

# THE WAYANG ORANG GRAHA MUSTIKA YUASTINA COMMUNITY IN SURABAYA IN THE PANDEMIC ERA: A STUDY OF VALUE, PROMOTION AND MANAGEMENT

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**Abstract.** Wayang orang is a wealth of the Javanese people' one of which is in the city of Surabaya. As a wayang community Graha Mustika Yuastina is a recognized community in the city of Surabaya. As evidenced by the frequent performances in the Cak Durasim building which is sponsored by the Surabaya Cultural Center. Covid 19 which prohibits crowds has a real impact on this community, especially in terms of staging. The inevitable impact is that the performance is postponed. This happened because of diversion of funds, the majority of which were used to overcome the pandemic. In an in-depth interview, it was stated that this wayang orang performance had to change the platform in this pandemic era, namely from classical style performance to youtube and Instagram. This will affect the media promotion. As for the values of wayang still trying to be maintained.

**Abstrak.** Wayang orang merupakan kekayaan masyarakat Jawa salah satunya ada di kota Surabaya. Sebagai komunitas wayang Graha Mustika Yuastina merupakan komunitas yang diakui di kota Surabaya. Terbukti dengan seringnya pementasan di gedung Cak Durasim yang disponsori oleh Pusat Kebudayaan Surabaya. Covid 19 yang melarang keramaian berdampak luas bagi komunitas ini, terutama dalam hal pementasan. Dampak yang tak terelakkan adalah pementasan tertunda. Hal ini terjadi karena adanya pengalihan dana kesenian yang mayoritas digunakan untuk mengatasi pandemi. Dalam wawancara mendalam, disebutkan bahwa pertunjukan wayang orang ini harus mengubah platform di era pandemi ini, yaitu dari pertunjukan gaya klasik menjadi pertunjukan wayang orang. youtube dan instagram. Hal ini akan mempengaruhi media promosi. Adapun nilai-nilai wayang masih berusaha dipertahankan.

**Key words:** *Wayang orang*, community, Surabaya, pandemic, promotion, management

## INTRODUCTION

Civilization, culture, and art are inseparable aspects due to their interrelation. The correlation is an inevitable fact, particularly in the community's development, both in the present and in the past. Culture is a living and active process, then it develops and is applied from the inside (Fiske 2011). Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984) conceives a practice as a reflective and reproductive activity, and the root

of all activities is the idea of a custom that establishes a culture. In everyday life, culture is defined as a long-established custom. As suggested by Raymond Williams (Sutrisno and Putranto 2005), art-related culture captures a number of intellectual and artistic activities. Art also contains a cognitive model, a system of symbols, or the giving of meaning interconnected altogether in a historically-transmitted symbol. Those systems and symbols are used selectively by the supporting

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society to communicate, preserve and connect knowledge (Budi 2003).

In this case, *wayang* remains to be one of the art forms that is still recognized in Indonesia. *Wayang* is attached to Javanese culture, and both have been long discussed, particularly regarding *wayang kulit* or shadow puppet. In *wayang kulit* (Becker 1971), the structure is divided into three parts, i.e., *pathet nem*, *pathet sanga*, and *pathet manyura*. The change of *pathet* is indicated by the music transition. *Pathet sanga*, or known as *goro-goro*, serves as the bridge between the past and present. For Javanese, *wayang* is considered a means to build characters and disseminate norms (Lombard 2005). An ideal illustration in *wayang* is constructed from the basic idea and the ideal illustration presented by *wayang kulit*. The overall story of *wayang* shows is sourced from the story of Mahabarata and Ramayana.

There are several types of *wayang* other than *wayang kulit* that exist in Indonesia, namely *wayang suket* (grass shadow puppet), *wayang beber* (scroll theater), *wayang purwa*, and *wayang orang* (*wayang theater*). *Wayang orang* shows the unique character of its medium, which remains to be an exciting discussion. *Wayang orang* was first created in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Solo by KGPAA Manugkunegara I. The creation of the *wayang orang* was inspired by the musical theater in Europe. (Wahyuni 2020)

As big and small cities began to develop, *wayang orang* became the performing art for the urban community. In the beginning, *wayang orang* is a dance theater based on the story of Mahabarata and Ramayana. This dance theater was only performed in *keraton* (palace) or the nobles' residences (Idi 2010). As a cultural asset, *wayang orang* represents the characteristics of multiple regions. *Wayang* grows along with the civilization development as an art, which can be observed from the Javanese accompaniment. *Wayang* culture is one of the manifestations of local supremacy that is currently going international (Nurgiantoro, 1998).

In our daily lives, *wayang orang* still attracts some audiences, and society believes

that it plays a social harmonization role. In an urban community such as Surabaya, *wayang orang* is still recognized as a social instrument that can be used as a guide to controlling social life or simply as entertainment. Therefore, Surabaya people believe that *wayang* has values centering on the local wisdom, and they benefit from it to live an ideal life. Their perception of the performance is that *wayang*, particularly *wayang orang*, is an alternative discourse of low-budget entertainment. As stated by (Samovar, Porter and Daniel 2010), perception appears as a method that rationalizes physical and social lives. As a result, *wayang* becomes less valued as a luxurious art, contrasting from how it was valued in the beginning. Physically, *wayang* was the entertainment for royal families, but this entertainment experiences a social shift in value nowadays, particularly in Surabaya. Other issues arise as the pandemic hit the nation, causing all *wayang* shows to stop performing. In consequence, there are significant impacts on the conditions of the *wayang orang* in Surabaya.

Thus, this study focuses not only on the *wayang* in the context of perception but also on the study of promotion and management systems related to the urban community's condition, especially in the pandemic era. In this manner, this study reveals more about the state of the *wayang orang* in Surabaya in the pandemic era.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research method employed in this study was a qualitative method by conducting depth interviews with the *wayang* actors and the members of Komunitas Wayang Mustika Yuastina. The data were obtained in the form of interview results, recordings, documentation, and observation notes. The data collection techniques included interviews and literature reviews, whereas the data analysis techniques included data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions based on the analyzed data.

### **Wayang Orang Mustika Yuastina and the Urban Culture in Surabaya.**

In the history of *wayang orang* in Surabaya, Graha Seni Mustika Yuastina is not the first *wayang orang* group. There was Wayang Orang Langen Sedyo Rahayu which was first established in 1950 as an elite entertainment in Kapasari. There was also Wayang Orang Tobong Sri Katon in Pandegiling, or better known as Wayang Orang Sriwandono (Paneli 2017). These *wayang orang* groups gained a tremendous appreciation from the people in Surabaya up to the point they were granted a more decent stage by Marine Colonel Sumarsono at Taman Hiburan Rakyat (THR), a legendary theme park located at Jalan Kusuma Bangsa 110. At that time, the lives of the actors relied on the profit obtained from the show, which had them perform almost every day. After the G30S/PKI incident, when inflation hit Indonesia during the new order, the *wayang* artists were forced to look for other jobs during the day to meet their daily needs.

The decay of *wayang orang* in the entertainment industry was caused by the technological development in television around the 1970s. Later, in 1990s, Taman Hiburan Rakyat was managed by the Surabaya Tourism and Culture Office. However, the financial assistance provided for the production cost and the artists' welfare was inadequate. Thus, they could not perform regularly. Amid the hiatus of the *wayang orang* performances in Surabaya, Mustika Yuastina emerged to encourage other's passion for art, particularly in performing art. On August 17, 2010, Retno Puspitowati and Rono Puspito Judo, with their colleagues interested in *wayang orang*, established the association. The house of Retno and Judo, located on Jalan Mojoklangru Lor No. 62 Surabaya, was the basecamp or the secretariate office of Mustika Yuastina. During the first two years of the community, they performed two independent shows at THR (Taman Hiburan Rakyat). The plays were entitled "Ranjaban Abimanyu" and "Sang Kumbokarno" and were performed on March 4 and May 6, 2012.



**Figure 1.** Poster of the first Mustika Yuastina wayang orang performance

Noting the audience's little enthusiasm, they struggled with the first performance, which was mainly because of financial problems. The organizers then took the initiative to look for a sponsor by submitting a proposal to the East Java Tourism and Culture Office. The Head of Technical Implementation Unit of Taman Budaya, Soekarno, had also watched the performance video directed by Judo and the team. Seven months later, on December 21, 2012, Mustika Yuastina was allowed to perform in the Cak Durasim Building for the first time. They were fully supported by the East Java Provincial Government and listed in the annual performance schedule of East Java Cultural Park.



**Figure 2.** The Show Poster with the Surabaya City Government

In an urban community such as Surabaya, *wayang orang* is still recognized as a social instrument that can be used as a guide to controlling social life and, at the same time, entertainment. Therefore, people in Surabaya believe that *wayang* has values of local wisdom that can be used to live an ideal life. In the context of Javanese *wayang*, *wayang orang* is one of the cultural assets recognized by society, both in Central Java and East Java. The significant difference between *wayang* in Central and East Java can be identified from the music.

In the past, *wayang orang* was deemed remarkably traditional; then the cities development affects its style to be more relevant to the surrounding urban culture and society. Other people started creating a group and performed, caused *wayang orang* to shift into folk performing arts. When the Chinese and Javanese entrepreneurs transform the *wayang* show into a potential culture for the current folks, then the *wayang orang* will be a popular show (Idi 2010). The popularity of *wayang orang* shows remains to persist in East Java, precisely in Surabaya. One of the groups that still survives until recently is Mustika Yuastina, which prefers to be referred to as a community. During its establishment, it was decided to be a community instead of an art group. That was where the artists gathered and organized the performing arts, precisely *wayang orang*. A community can be interpreted as a part of a concrete manifestation of a society, where the members are bound in one emotion and system. Emotion means a combination of fellowship and united society to promote one territory, one custom, one identity, and loyalty (Jamaludin 2015). Community growth not only leads to integration between groups but also brings impact on increasing population density and growing solidarity between the people (Lauer 2003). In other words, a society may develop along with the communication between each other that raises solidarity, even in creating certain groups with a similar vision and mission.

Society, as a social being, consists of various cultures that are still embraced and preserved. According to Ikhromi in Basundoro

(2016), culture is a way of behaving learned and does not genetically depend on heredity or inheritance. Culture can be formulated as a set of ways of behaving (or habits), beliefs, and values learned and possessed by a population. Culture occurs because of the habits, beliefs, and values that are learned and possessed. Therefore, Surabaya also has its own cultural pattern as it calls itself an urban community by defining culture as urban culture. Dick (2002) claims that there were no significant differences between the villages in Surabaya, which are considered urban and the ones controlling in the past, or known as urban villages, as a characteristic of a port city. Surabaya possesses a port with its diverse communities.

As a society living in urban culture, it can be emphasized that society is not part of a stable sociological category; it cannot be identified, and it even subjects to empirical studies due to the position of the society that does not exist in objective reality. Society, popular culture, and social groups are a set of loyalties that move across all social categories in a very flexible manner (Fiske 2011). It becomes similar to the conditions of urban communities. In this case, Emile Durkheim defines society as the objective reality of the involved individuals. Marx also sees society as a structure through tensions originating from conflicts between social classes due to the unequal distribution of economic values in it (Setiadi and Kolip 2011).

People living in urban areas have different values and perspectives from those living in rural areas. Wirth in Damsar and Indriyani (2017) explains that cities are characterized by three elements, namely the permanent population's density, the population's socio-cultural heterogeneity, and the idea development of urbanism as a way of life. The character in the urban community is marked by anonymity, temporary, and emotionless. The urban community loses the expression of spontaneity, morals, and a sense of participation (Damsar and Indriyani 2017). The heterogeneity of society leads people to interact with each other, with various cultures and personalities. The lifestyle of urban communities is controlled by the market, starting from what they eat, what

they wear, what they use, and whatever they spent, which are the product of capitalization. Nevertheless, there is opposition against market forces in urban culture, although the market intervention, in this case, is inevitable (Damsar and Indrayani 2017). Urban communities are offered the opportunity to merge work and entertainment. As a result, people from various backgrounds are integrated, not to mention the culture (Barker 2005). Thus, everything related to the city has been assembled without a clear barrier; everything becomes flexible. In this case, Mustika Yuastina dared to promote traditional arts with heavy burdens. However, the existing diversity makes any culture and arts acceptable in Surabaya. *Wayang orang* is also anticipated as entertainment for the residents because of the hustle and bustle of the city and the harsh world of work faced by the urban community. Mustika Yuastina serves as a kind of oasis and enjoyment at the same time for workers and people living in Surabaya.

### **The Value System of *Wayang Orang* Shows.**

*Wayang* has a kind of magical power that shapes reasonable perceptions to embrace and preserve as 'the way of thinking in society. Fischer stated (Jenks 2013) that art is essential to help humans understand and change the world because of the magical power it possesses. Values allow society to behave appropriately in contrast to norms that define control over behavior (Liliweri 2002). In a *wayang* show, especially a *wayang orang*, some values can be used as a reflection of everything related to life. The values contained in the play presented have many meanings that are inseparable from social reality. Lukas et al. (Jenks 2013) stated that all noble arts aim to describe the contradiction between the outward appearance and the actual and conceptual reality that can unite while forming spontaneous integrity.

Based on the data regarding play titles performed by the Mustika Yuastina Community, almost all of their performances are based on the Ramayana and Mahabharata stories. The first value raised is honesty. In the play *Ranjaban Abhimanyu Gugur* or Abhimanyu's Death, it was

told that Abhimanyu died on the battlefield because of the false oath he conveyed to Dewi Utari before marrying her. It is said that Abhimanyu would die like a porcupine if he lied. In the end, Abhimanyu was confronted with karma against his oath and finally killed in the Bharatayudha war in bad condition because he was punctured by so many weapons that he looked like a porcupine (Wahyuni 2020). The second value is heroism. Persistence and determination in defending the country are reflected in the play *Sang Kumbakarno*. In the Ramayana story, it was told that Kumbakarna finally went to war not to fight Dasamuka's greed but to defend the country Alengka. Many warlords died in the battle against Gowa Kiskenda's troops led by Anoman and Rama. The third value is knowledge.

In the play *Ngawruh: Bratasena Mencari Jati Diri*, or Bratasena Seeking His True Self, Ngawruh is defined as learning or seeking new knowledge. Bratasena, also called Bima, is the second son in Pandhawa who is relatively superior in strength. His teacher instructed Bima to look for Tirta Prawitasari or the water of life by passing through many obstacles until he met Dewa Ruci. Bima began to understand the true meaning of life: "*manunggaling kawula gusti*" or the union of human's true selves with their God. For his success, Bima received the new name Werkudara from Bathara Guru (Publikasi 2020). The fifth value is to be continence. In the play *Sang Brahmacharya*, Dewabrata, or the character known as Bhishma in the Mahabharata story, is described as being so firm and sincere in holding his Brahmacharya vow. Thus, when Bhishma stepped down in inheriting the throne of the kingdom, he chose not to marry Dewi Amba even though he won the competition and had the opportunity to do so. The sixth value is being adamant and determined. The heroic integrity is perceived in *Ngabar Sawung Suralaya* or the War of the Knights in Heaven. In this play, there was a war between two great knights from two countries, specifically Raden Gatutkaca and Prabu Boma, fighting over the Tunggorono as a vassal kingdom. Both of them insisted not to give in, even though they had been given several

options to solve it by negotiation. However, in the end, Raden Gatutkaca won the war and the Tungggoro Kingdom as a part of the Pringgondani Kingdom. The seventh value is love, obedience, patience, and fortitude. *Pedhut Ing Pringgondani* play depicts some sad, dramatic scenes. The scene begins with Gatutkaca grieving over the death of his beloved cousin, Abhimanyu. Then, a scene illustrates Gatutkaca's obedience to Prabu Kresna's orders to become a Pandhawa Senapati or commander. This painful story ends with the death of Gatutkaca on the battlefield because of the karma he got after accidentally killing Kala Bendana. Meanwhile, the values of patience and fortitude can be portrayed when Bhima looks for his son's body (Paneli 2017).

Overall, in this *wayang orang* performance in Surabaya, many values can be implemented as references, especially in real life, by teaching tolerance. Tolerance contains the word tolerant, which means having a feeling of empathy/consideration for the surrounding. Tolerance relates to attitudes or actions that are revealed more openly when facing different circumstances or situations. The *wayang orang* performed by Mustika Yuastina is also associated with the social reality in Surabaya. The city is a world of symbols, symbolizing everything about the town physically and sociologically. Thus, the existence of love, hate, longing, pain, affection, or hurt results from social construction or a symbol of the city. This reality is constructed through the process of dialectical and externalization, objectification, and internalization (Damsar and Indrayani 2017). It establishes a link between the values that appear in the *wayang* performances and the city's social values.

Value is an essential element in culture. It guides humans to determine what to do and constitutes an abstract form of artistic goals, symbols, verbal and nonverbal messages (Liliweri 2002). The values taught in the *wayang orang* story are life lessons that can be perceived as life's role models. Suppose various values, such as love, tolerance, honesty, strong determination, patience, obedience, and never giving up, and being continence, are applied in

life's reality. In that case, it can present individuals with a socially superior value system in society. Value-oriented rational action is an action that indicates the goal, which is related to the absolute and final value for individuals who consciously consider achieving life goals (Damsar and Indrayani 2017). A better life goal is also taught in the stories in *wayang orang* performances. These stories are always associated with values in social life, especially in urban communities.

### **Promotion Strategy and Professional Management of *Wayang orang* by Mustika Yuastina during the pandemic**

A promotion strategy is a method for marketing goods, services, or culture to captivate consumers and society, and it is also related to marketing management. In the promotion strategy, marketing methods have been prepared based on detailed plans in achieving the marketing goals. For instance, in art and culture, a promotional strategy is required to attract the audience's interest since a show will not animate without the audience's presence. Therefore, a promotion strategy is considered an essential method in marketing the show. Promotion is part of the marketing strategy as a way to communicate with the market and the public. A performing arts strategy is required to survive and exist because performing arts is the "*Sri Panggung*" or one of Indonesia's best art performances (Idi 2010).

Besides, performing art also requires management. Management means utilizing resources process effectively that are right on target and always related to the system. In performing art, management starts from the planning process until the performance takes place. Every aspect related to the art performance, starting from planning, member organizing, decision-making, begins with careful management for the show's success. According to Taslan (Sujarno, Budi and Nurwanti 2016), actions to achieve predetermined goals such as managing, regulating, managing, and controlling are series of integrated activities to create art products.

In performing art, management is required after there is a relationship between art and the economic system. A dynamic society that began to maintain performing arts, especially traditional performances, was pressured by the modernization competition outside the arts. Margianto (Sujarno, Budi and Nurwanti 2016) stated that there are three weaknesses in traditional arts management, i.e., weak performance organization system, improper social security and wages, and the absence of a professional organization that protects its artists. The function of performing arts that can be recognized, both through past data and present ethnographic data, is an art that involves religious processes, affirming social integration, education, and entertainment (Edi, 2006). Performing arts and society are interrelated aspects since there are people who think that art is a means of fulfilling human life. Representing the individual totality is one of the art principles, which refers to the unity aspect of an artwork (Widyanta 2002).

In preserving the arts, marketing strategies such as segmenting and targeting can determine customer groups and help establish successful activities (Situmorang 2015). Segmentation aims to generate marketing power against grouping specific arts to obtain a competitive advantage. The customer or audience is the end-user referred to as the target market. The target market includes supporters and sponsors, and not all performing arts rely on ticket sales.

The promotion strategy implemented by Mustika Yuastina *wayang orang* community in perceiving its existence is by conducting various activities. Initially, Mustika Yuastina utilized independent performances to attract broader community interest. In reality, the planned performances are ineffective due to the lack of public interest in watching paid shows. Surabaya society tends to be a free-rider. The lack of public response in performing arts, especially traditional arts, has become an obstacle for Mustika Yuastina. However, this promotion strategy fails to erase the

free-riding behavior in the process of preserving performing arts.

At the same time, this failed strategy succeeded in making Mustika Yuastina invited to present an art performance not only within the scope of Surabaya but East Java. Mustika Yuastina is now a regular performer at Cak Durasim Building in a traditional performing arts event. Not all art performances require tickets since Mustika Yuastina relies more on invitations and policies from the Surabaya government and the East Java provincial government. Regular sponsors and supporters do not fully assist the art of *wayang orang* performance in Surabaya. It is in line with what Versfeld stated in Situmorang (2015) that efforts to secure finance through funding and sponsorship are encouraged through marketing efforts. Customers are the business foundation to keep the business alive. In traditional arts, a marketing strategy is a program that has been prepared based on a careful plan. Innovation and socialization are parts of the system required to attract the people or the audience's attention.

In the end, to survive as a community, marketing strategies are performed in various ways. First, it is implemented through performances by selling tickets. In fact, holding an art performance is not easy since the tickets do not sell a lot, but Mustika Yuastina should have the performance immediately. With a strong determination and the assumption that the audience would recommend the show to others, known as "*gethuk tular*" in Surabaya, they still carry out the performance with the remaining audience. By holding this stage, Mustika Yuastina and its artists hope that parties or the government interested in their performance style will invite them someday to a particular event.

When performing *wayang orang* independently, Mustika Yuastina

accidentally succeeded in forming their brand. Through the second marketing strategy, the performance created an excellent branding for Mustika Yuastina. The Surabaya Government and the East Java Provincial Government invited them to be regular performers at Surabaya City Hall and Cak Durasim Building. Branding is an excellent way to influence the public to label Mustika Yuastina as one of the best *wayang orang* communities in Surabaya. Through branding, the commercialization of Mustika Yuastina and *wayang orang* has become more accessible. Market segmentation can be mapped to respond to traditional performing arts. Kotler and Keller claimed that a successful marketing strategy should have the skills required to manage a strategic marketing process based on detailed planning (Situmorang 2015).

The primary strategy employed in designing the promotion implemented by Mustika Yuastina is a communication strategy that maximizes the promotional media and minimizes the costs. The communication strategy used is below the line (BTL), a communication using promotional media that does not cost a lot but is effective and works optimally. This promotional media is expected to impact society (Liman, Riyanto and Christine 2013).

According to Parson and MacLaren in Situmorang (2015), the marketing manager is required to be a situation expert, considering a wide range of segmenting, targeting, and positioning factors when formulating the art marketing strategies. Mustika Yuastina's management strategy operates with some thoughtful planning, especially by utilizing supporters dan sponsors from official government agencies. It is intended to demonstrate the quality of *wayang orang* performances to attract supporters and local governments to always

work together for a long time. Mustika Yuastina is more resigned in accepting requests from local governments. When a big Covid-19 pandemic initially appeared in Wuhan-China, occurred, and hit the entire world in 2020, the world economy began to fall apart. Corona Virus or Covid-19 is a contagious disease caused by a new virus discovered at the end of 2019. Most of the symptoms experienced by infected individuals are mild to severe respiratory illnesses. This virus's transmission and growth process tend to occur more rapidly in elderly individuals and those with other disease histories (Sampurno 2020). The health crisis expansion, which impacts the world economy, has made all countries retreat with strategic plans dominated and focused on alternatives to overcome the Covid-19 outbreak (Muhyiddin 2020).

Covid-19 pandemic is a devastating blow to all countries, especially Indonesia, which is experiencing mental shock because of the sudden lockdown provisions and circumstances that change very quickly. Social distancing forces society to face a new culture that limits human interaction with one another. Through this limitation, new problems arise regarding adjustment to these problematic situations.

As a country with a friendly and harmonious society that constantly interacts with one another, Indonesia has been seriously affected. This pandemic affects the arts and culture, especially the performing arts. The characteristics of a show always pertain to a large number of audiences. In fact, it contradicts the existence of restrictions on social interaction, especially by involving a large number of people. When the pandemic had just started, all sectors of culture in Indonesia, especially the performing arts such as *wayang*, theatre, musical instrument performance, and others, were not operating. All activities related to



the crowd have been postponed or even canceled, including cultural and arts festivals that have been scheduled. The cancellation of both sacred and profane art activities has affected the economic level of the artists, especially those related to the arts. The artists' income decreases immoderately due to the low demand of the show (Ni 2020).

Being in a completely confined situation hitting Indonesia has caused the art show activists to be way more creative. They held virtual shows broadcast on digital platforms such as Instagram and YouTube live streaming. The audience was asked to perform a charity. However, the online shows' effectiveness was simply to show the performing arts performance and existence; thus, they remain exist and will not die. The pandemic situation has indeed made it difficult for all parties. Wayang Mustika Yuastina Community had made several innovations to perform *wayang orang* show. Before the pandemic, Mustika Yuastina already had a fixed performance schedule at the Cak Durasim Building. However, after the pandemic hit the nation, Mustika Yuastina kept waiting for certainty and a resolution of the East Java Provincial Government as the organizer. Because the scheduled time limit exceeded the performance schedule, Mustika Yuastina attempted to create a new agenda to keep the existence in *wayang orang* shows.

The first agenda held in the pandemic situation was organizing a collaboration performance with several other *wayang orang* communities. Shows in the pandemic situation restrain the audience physically since they could only utilize digital means such as YouTube streaming to watch the Wayang Yuastina Community's show. Nevertheless, many people could watch the show live, but it was limited to the relatives or families of the *wayang orang* artists only.

Together with cultural activists, Mustika Yuastina performed a show due to their concern about the performing arts hiatus in Surabaya. Virtual performances have become a breath of fresh air for performing arts artists to rise in the pandemic era.



**Figure 3.** Poster of a virtual collaborative *wayang orang* show

The collaborative *wayang orang* performing arts' show was also supported by the Cultural Conservation Agency of Yogyakarta and relied on the audience's "sincerely" donation. The performing arts connoisseurs' enthusiasm has increased in the pandemic era due to the lack of traditional performing arts; this phenomenon was confirmed by one of the *wayang orang* crew, Mustika Yuastina, who never thought that the donations obtained exceeded expectations. Initially, a collaborative *wayang orang* show was organized to release the players longing to perform a play. The performers of Mustika Yuastina *wayang orang* in the collaborative *wayang orang* shows are generally live in the Surabaya area. They all are young performers. In the Mustika Yuastina *wayang* community structure, two performers: young performers and old performers, synergize. The young performers who come and join the community have diverse backgrounds. The performers assumed that entertaining others was satisfaction for those having an artistic soul. (Edi, 2006) states that

such a community believes that art is an independent institution to fulfill human needs recognized as a separate life. The objective of performing art activities as a direct means and a target that can present beauty. In addition, according to the essence of beauty concept, art can be different from one culture to another (Edi, 2006). Before this pandemic era attacked Indonesia, arts have a place in society's heart. Although, in fact, Surabayans and their enthusiasm should be triggered by the local government through offering free-riding since this matter has been stigmatized to them.



**Picture 4.** Poster of *Wayang orang* Show in the Surabaya Arts and Culture Parade

Mustika Yuastina *wayang orang* community had organized the virtual show not only once. Along with the Surabaya Government in the "Surabaya Arts and Cultural Parade" agenda, Mustika Yuastina performed a virtual show that could be watched virtually via the Surabaya Government youtube channel. However, a lot of audiences also took their time to attend the Surabaya City Hall since their longing for the performing arts of the *wayang orang* performance. The restricted situation due to pandemic brings boredom to the community. They are highly enthusiastic about watching the *wayang orang* show at the city hall, although the organizers restrict the number of audiences.

Mustika Yuastina's stage power was channeled to the audience successfully. The audiences were delighted with the show. Since the show could attract the attention of an

enthusiastic audience, this case also impacted the interest of the local and provincial governments. The atmosphere in the Mustika Yuastina show made the audience felt enjoyed watching the show. Not only for the audience's convenience, but every organization or community also needs funding to execute every planned event through profit and non-profit organizations. The art organizations could obtain the funds through the government or the private sector, tickets or souvenirs selling, etc. Managing an organization's finances is not easy. It needs a lot of support from both the public and the government. Baumol and Bown (Situmorang 2015) conveyed that, when dealing with the performing arts' funding issue, it will always be associated with the Baumol cost disease, in which a performing art has a severe problem due to the possibility of the limitations in increasing the income and reducing the production costs. In the art world, especially *wayang*, the fund issue is a susceptible matter since it is rarely disclosed to the public.



**Figure 5.** Stage Situation at the Surabaya City Hall with audience restrictions

It can be ascertained that financial problems are one of the main problems, especially in this pandemic era. The arts sector has been devastated by the global pandemic. Moreover, in Indonesia, there is no social safety network for the artists, and the arts activities only depend on private funding and market mechanisms. The Ministry of Education and Culture holds the government support, but it only plays as a facilitator, which, on average, is unable to support the artists. The global pandemic impact has been particularly pronounced at the time of many closings of arts

events around the world and the emergence of various online performance initiatives. However, when an economic recession occurs, the biggest threat will automatically directly impact art workers' lives.



**Figure 6.** The 2020 Surabaya Cultural Arts Parade Performance

In the future, there may be a thinking stagnation and the artists' limited movement resulting in the initiatives emergence from the art workers and the developments in society. Public awareness, especially the artists, emerged just after the pandemic attacked, principally regarding the digital platform's importance for the art community. All these times, the classical way has become the basis in which the shows are performed in a building with a lot of audiences, but no one has been organizing digital shows. Digital shows that are currently booming will be beneficial for the future. One of the concrete efforts that this nation can make, especially in supporting the performing arts, is using digital methods. It means digitalizing the performing arts in collaboration with providers can be a solution for the future by transforming old styles and presenting new styles to organize an online show. In line with the technology development and the 4.0 era, which have now dominated all systems globally and even in Indonesia, a digital show has emerged as a model for the embodiment of a new culture. A new culture is a global culture that affects the local culture, that space and time dimensions in the cultural process are a form of human existence that is

inseparable from the social life in the future (Tilaar 2002).

In fact, the private sector and the government's role is required in the preservation of art in Indonesia. At present, it is inevitable that culture politicization, or cultural politics, may still be the aspect influencing the sustainability of traditional culture in terms of government participation. Often, cultural-related positions are not filled with people understanding and loving traditional culture. In the end, the traditional culture preservation has shifted and even often leads to cultural extinction. Currently, the issue being faced lies in such a good and dominant symbolic representation mechanism. The world containing a broad meaning and is closed to borrowing and reproduction by powerful groups and those having power legitimizing its position in society (Jenks 2013). In this challenging pandemic era, the stakeholders can legitimize their place in society properly and provide benefits by establishing more pro-artists policies, especially the performing arts artist.

## CONCLUSION

Mustika Yuastina Wayang Orang Community is one of the wayang orang communities surviving in the present day. This community has established promotional strategies ranging from performing independently to submitting proposals to the Surabaya City Government and the East Java Provincial Government to keep their existence and perform periodically. Although, in the end, Mustika Yuastina Community was unable to erase the "free-riding mentality" in Surabaya, its effort on its existence preservation and conservation is worth appreciation. Furthermore, in the pandemic era, shifting the classical show into a digital show using digital platforms such as YouTube and Instagram emerges to be a win-win solution. The government's policy regarding large-scale social restrictions is indeed a severe obstacle. Still, in the future, digital shows should be pioneered as a new movement to preserve the culture and arts in Indonesia; thus, these will not get to a hiatus. Also, by collaborating with

companies to establish an appeal to preserve the local arts, for example, by combining modern and traditional arts performance in a company anniversary celebration. This way will help the *wayang orang* performing arts keep existing in any hindering restrictions, especially in this pandemic era.

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