

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR CULTURAL IMAGE BUILDING THROUGH INSTAGRAM: A CASE STUDY OF @SANGGAR_SENISETIYANEGARA AND THE CIREBON MASK DANCE

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Abstract

The Cirebon Mask Dance (Tari Topeng Cirebon) is a traditional Indonesian art form with deep historical and philosophical values. This study examines how Instagram is utilized as a communication tool to build a positive public image of the dance, focusing on the account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, collecting data through interviews, documentation, and literature review. Data were validated using source triangulation and analyzed through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Guided by the strategic communication framework developed by Halland, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Vercic, and Sriramesh (2007), this study identifies three key dimensions of communication strategy: message planning, media selection, and delivery technique. The findings show that Instagram features such as Reels, Stories, and Carousel Posts are effective in fostering engagement and cultural appreciation. However, challenges persist in the form of inconsistent content production, low digital literacy among art practitioners, and limited audience reach. To address these issues, the study highlights the use of educational storytelling, audience interaction, and collaboration with cultural communities as crucial strategic responses. Overall, this research underscores the importance of culturally sensitive and visually compelling communication in promoting traditional arts in the digital era.

Keywords: *Strategic communication; Cultural heritage; Instagram marketing; Cirebon Mask Dance; Visual storytelling;*

INTRODUCTION

Tari Topeng (Mask Dance) is one of the traditional dances that originated in Cirebon, dating back to the Cirebon Sultanate era in the 16th century. Initially, it was performed within the royal court environment. Over time, however, this dance evolved and became a part of the community's cultural tradition and entertainment. The art of Tari Topeng has spread to various regions in West Java, so that today, not only the people of Cirebon but also others in the region recognize and appreciate this dance. It continues to be preserved and taught at Sanggar Seni Setyanegara, located in Suranenggala Lor Village, Suranenggala District, Cirebon Regency, West Java. This cultural institution, founded in 1968 and officially inaugurated by the Department of Culture in the 1970s, has also established an Instagram account (@sanggar_senisetiyanegara) in 2020. The account, which started with just 15 followers, now has 142 followers. Tari Topeng's sustainability today is not only dependent on traditional inheritance systems but also on how cultural institutions adapt to new forms of communication and outreach. Tari Topeng is not merely a form of artistic expression but is also a reflection of human emotions conveyed through graceful movements. The masks used in this dance represent different human traits and lives, with each mask symbolizing unique character traits. There are five primary masks in Cirebon's Tari Topeng, each reflecting different facets of human nature, such as the Panji, Pamindo, Rumiang, Tumenggung, and Klana masks (Rohmani & Nurasih, 2019). Each performance serves not only as entertainment, but also as a means of transmitting philosophical and moral values embedded in the characters portrayed. In the digital age, information technology has become a necessity, facilitating quick and accurate access to information, which is essential for informed decision-making. Globalization and technological advancements have made it easier for people to travel, creating significant opportunities for the growth of the tourism industry. This, in turn, ensures the continued relevance of tourism as a promising sector, despite its vulnerability to political and security issues. Furthermore, the tourism industry generates substantial income for both local and national

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governments (Rachman, 2018). These developments have also encouraged cultural institutions to digitize their activities in order to remain visible and relevant in the eyes of both local and international audiences. Social media has brought new dynamics to cultural education, especially in the context of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) preservation. Through engaging content and active learning mechanisms, platforms like Instagram can support both formal and informal education processes by making cultural material more accessible and attractive, especially to younger generations (Febrianto et al., 2025). Digital media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have significantly contributed to the preservation of traditional culture, such as Pakualaman's. These platforms allow cultural content to be shared globally, engaging younger audiences and enabling active participation in the creation, promotion, and dissemination of cultural heritage. This interactive model not only strengthens cultural identity but also creates a living digital archive that sustains cultural continuity in a rapidly changing modern society (Sekarningrum & Lokita, 2024). These digital platforms not only enhance cultural visibility but also democratize participation by allowing individuals and communities to co-create cultural narratives.

Social media, particularly Instagram, plays a vital role in shaping the positive image of organizations and art performances. According to Wijikasmirus (2004), communication strategies on Instagram have proven effective in promoting the positive image of government organizations, as seen in the efforts of the Public Relations Department of the West Kutai Regency Government. This approach can also be applied to promoting traditional arts, such as Tari Topeng, to increase public appreciation and visibility. Research has shown that a well-structured communication strategy via social media can maintain an organization's positive image, as exemplified by the strategic communication practices of the Public Relations Bureau of the Indonesian House of Representatives (Sidharta et al., 2021). Messages that seek two-way communication through entertainment and education achieve greater interaction and engagement from virtual visitors. Digital ecosystems are redefining the sphere of influence of museums, enabling them to reach beyond local audiences and establish long-term virtual relationships (Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024).

Moreover, social media has become an essential tool for building communication and establishing a public image. In the study titled "Model Identitas Diri Mahasiswa dalam Media Sosial Instagram," Instagram has been identified as a key platform where students express their personal identity (Nurfa'lah et al., 2021). According to Halland et al. (2007), strategic communication includes planning messages, choosing the media, and employing delivery techniques to achieve organizational goals and build positive relationships with the public. The use of Instagram by cultural institutions represents an adaptation of strategic communication efforts to preserve traditional arts in an era of rapid technological change (Waters, Tindall, & Morton, 2010). Additionally, research indicates that Instagram can effectively strengthen relationships with audiences and shape positive perceptions through engaging visuals and consistent narratives (Chaniago & Majid, 2023).

A well-designed digital communication approach can help preserve cultural values while reaching younger audiences who are familiar with technology (Riswan, 2025). In this context, Instagram serves not only as a visual gallery but also as a dialogic space that bridges cultural heritage with modern-day storytelling. This study aims to examine the communication strategies employed by Sanggar Seni Setyanegara in preserving Cirebon's Tari Topeng through the Instagram account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara, and how these strategies contribute to the creation of a positive image. The research will also explore the challenges faced in executing these communication strategies on Instagram, as well as the public's response in shaping a positive image through this platform. Instagram offers an opportunity to expand outreach and collaborate with various other art communities. Sanggar Seni Setyanegara, as one of the active cultural institutions in preserving Cirebon's Tari Topeng, uses Instagram to introduce its activities, share cultural values, and build a positive image of Tari Topeng to the public, particularly the younger generation. Through these communication strategies, the institution seeks to build an emotional connection with its audience and raise awareness about the importance of preserving local culture.

In comparison with previous studies, such as the one titled "Strategi Komunikasi Tepas Tandha Yekti dalam Mengelola Citra Positif Kraton Yogyakarta melalui Instagram," which focused on how the Yogyakarta Sultanate used Instagram to deliver informative, educational, and persuasive messages, this study specifically focuses on the communication strategies used to build a positive image of Tari Topeng through Instagram. While previous studies concentrated on institutions like the Kraton Yogyakarta, this research takes a unique approach by focusing on a traditional art form, Tari Topeng, which, despite its high artistic value, often lacks visibility on social media compared to other forms of art. Thus, this study aims to explore how Instagram can be leveraged to preserve and promote the image of Tari Topeng Cirebon through the efforts of Sanggar Seni Setyanegara.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study

This study focuses on the promotion of traditional Mask Dance (Tari Topeng) through Instagram, particularly the account @sanggar_seniseityanegara, which actively promotes this cultural art form. The primary objective is to understand the communication strategies implemented by the account's manager and assess the impact of these strategies on the public's perception of Tari Topeng as a traditional cultural asset.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive case study methodology. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how Instagram is leveraged to promote Tari Topeng and shape its positive image. The case study method provides a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between the content creators, the audience, and the platform. It enables an examination of how visual communication and user interactions contribute to shaping the cultural perception of traditional art.

Data Collection

Primary data collection involved the following steps:

1. Instagram Content Analysis: The study examines posts from the Instagram account @sanggar_seniseityanegara, including images, videos, and captions that feature Tari Topeng. The analysis includes content type, style, and engagement features used (e.g., hashtags, captions, interactive polls).
2. Direct Observation: Observing how the account is managed, including content creation, frequency of posts, interaction strategies, and engagement practices. This also includes noting the type of audience engagement and feedback from posts.
3. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Mas Wawan, the account manager, to gain insights into the communication strategies and objectives behind the posts. Additionally, interviews were conducted with followers of the account to understand their perceptions and interactions with the content.

Secondary data sources include:

- Review of Related Literature: This includes previous research articles and studies on communication strategies in social media, particularly in the context of traditional art promotion.
- Instagram Insights Data: Engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and follower demographics were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the strategies in building a positive image of Tari Topeng.

Data Analysis

A triangulation method was used to ensure the validity of the findings by cross-referencing data from multiple sources (content analysis, interviews, and Instagram insights).

1. Thematic Analysis: The data from interviews and Instagram posts were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in communication strategies. Key themes such as storytelling in video posts and the use of interactive features (e.g., polling) were highlighted to understand their effectiveness in building a positive image of Tari Topeng.
2. Content Engagement Analysis: Instagram insights were used to measure audience interactions and assess the overall impact of the content. Metrics like comment frequency, likes, and shares were compared to gauge audience engagement.

The triangulation of interview data, observational insights, and Instagram content analysis ensures a robust and comprehensive understanding of the communication strategies used. The analysis of these strategies and their effect on public perception will contribute valuable insights into the role of social media in promoting traditional cultural arts.

Methodology Summary

This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology with a case study approach to analyze the promotion of Tari Topeng via Instagram. Triangulation techniques were used for data validation, while thematic analysis allowed for the identification of key strategies in communication and audience engagement. This methodology provides a solid framework for future research into the use of social media for cultural promotion and offers detailed steps for replicability in similar studies.

RESULTS

Communication Strategy in Building Positive Image through Instagram @sanggar_senisetiyanegara

a. Message Planning

Message planning is a crucial step in ensuring that the communication is clear and effective. In the promotion of Tari Topeng on Instagram, the primary goal is to educate, engage the audience, promote the art, and encourage participation. The messages are crafted in a manner that resonates with the target audience, using clear, simple language that communicates the cultural, philosophical, and historical values of Tari Topeng. The Sanggar employs powerful visual elements, such as photos and videos with educational narratives, to strengthen the cultural message.

The communication style used is friendly, light, and approachable, creating an emotional connection with the audience. This approach has successfully established Sanggar Seni Setyanegara's image as a promoter of local culture, adaptable to social media trends. Such personalized and human-centered storytelling helps make traditional narratives feel more relevant to today's audiences, especially those accustomed to fast-paced digital content. However, the frequency of posts and engagement with followers could be improved to increase outreach and strengthen audience involvement more effectively. Additionally, message planning is not just about what is communicated, but also when and how often. Timeliness in posting during culturally significant events such as local festivals or national holidays can increase relevance and resonance with followers.

b. Media Selection

The selection of appropriate media plays a pivotal role in building the positive image of Tari Topeng on Instagram. The choice of language and visuals must align with the target audience. Lighter, more interactive language is more effective for younger audiences, while formal language works better for educational purposes. Short, persuasive phrases along with strategic hashtags such as #TariTopeng help expand the reach of the message. High-quality visuals, including photos and videos with good lighting and aesthetic composition, play a significant role in attracting attention. The consistency in aesthetic style such as the use of traditional color palettes, background elements, and attire also reinforces brand identity and cultural authenticity. This visual consistency builds recognition and trust in the digital space. Infographics and visual texts also help convey information quickly and clearly. Instagram's features, such as Reels to showcase dance movements dynamically, IG Stories for direct interaction, and IGTV/Live for longer educational content, are used effectively to promote the art. Carousel posts are also effective for presenting information in a gradual manner. Each format is chosen based on the depth and immediacy of the message to be conveyed, showing a thoughtful segmentation of content delivery strategies.

Moreover, the timing of content distribution is another important consideration. Posting during culturally relevant moments, such as local festivals or commemorative days, enhances audience resonance and relevance. These strategies help make Tari Topeng more widely recognized and appreciated, promoting its conservation in the digital age. Additionally, collaborations with cultural influencers and art communities are seen as a way to broaden the reach of Tari Topeng promotions. Such collaborations not only expand the audience but also enhance engagement by embedding the dance into wider, more relatable cultural narratives shared by the influencers' followers. With the right strategy, social media, particularly Instagram, becomes more than a documentation tool but also a means of preserving cultural heritage amid modern influences.



Figure 1.1 Instagram Account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara
Source: Instagram Account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara, March 10, 2025

The Instagram account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara was created by the founder of the Sanggar, established in 1968 in Suranenggala Lor Village, Cirebon. This art space is known for its Tari Topeng performances, a traditional dance form that blends dance and theater. At its peak in the 1970s, the Sanggar was actively preserving and promoting traditional Cirebonese arts. For the latest updates on their activities and performances, it is recommended to directly contact the Sanggar or check their community pages through Instagram @sanggar_senisetiyanegara.

c. Message Delivery Techniques

To make Tari Topeng more recognized and appreciated on social media, engaging delivery techniques are needed. One effective method is through emotional storytelling, such as sharing the journey of a dancer in preserving the art or explaining the philosophical meanings behind each dance movement. These stories help establish an emotional bond with the audience. This storytelling transforms the traditional art from a static performance into a living narrative that audiences can emotionally invest in.

Visual and audiovisual techniques are equally important. High-quality videos with excellent lighting, captivating camera angles, and traditional music can significantly enhance the appeal of the message. The Instagram account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara employs a variety of effective and diverse techniques in delivering messages to preserve Tari Topeng Cirebon through the platform. By combining strong visuals, engaging narratives, friendly language, and emotional persuasion, the Sanggar successfully communicates in a way that is both informative and inspiring, encouraging audiences to learn more and appreciate local culture. This integrated delivery reinforces the perception that traditional arts are not only heritage assets but also contemporary sources of inspiration. These techniques contribute to strengthening the positive image of the Sanggar as a pioneer in preserving local heritage through modern social media platforms.

Challenges in Communication Strategy for Building Positive Image of Tari Topeng through Instagram @sanggar_senisetiyanegara

Building a positive image of Tari Topeng through Instagram encounters two main challenges: consistency and content quality, as well as public and audience perception. Consistency in posting is often hindered by limited human resources, lack of digital content expertise, and constraints in time management among members of the Sanggar who prioritize performance over promotion. Additionally, there is a limited availability of high-quality documentation tools, such as professional cameras or editing software, which impacts the visual standard expected by Instagram users. Instagram demands visually appealing content, yet documenting Tari Topeng which often takes place in traditional or low-light venues can sometimes fall short in terms of lighting, framing, or sound clarity in videos. In terms of public perception, especially among younger generations, Tari Topeng is often seen as less relevant compared to pop culture or viral trends. Many young audiences are more familiar with contemporary dance or entertainment content that is fast-paced and informal, making traditional art forms like Tari Topeng seem outdated or rigid. Additionally, there is a cultural and generational divide in understanding, where some view the art form as sacred and spiritual, while others see it simply as a form of performance. This tension can lead to hesitation in adapting or modifying content for social media, fearing cultural misrepresentation.

Furthermore, algorithmic challenges on Instagram such as visibility limitations due to low engagement, infrequent posting, or lack of interaction can significantly reduce the account's reach and discoverability. Without a paid promotional strategy, proper use of trending hashtags, or an understanding of Instagram's algorithmic behavior, it becomes increasingly difficult to compete with fast-moving, visually optimized mainstream content in users' feeds. As a result, even culturally rich content like Tari Topeng may be buried under entertainment-driven or influencer-based content that dominates the platform. This presents a serious barrier for cultural institutions like Sanggar Seni Setyanegara in their efforts to gain visibility and engage a broader audience. Therefore, integrating basic digital marketing training and consistent content planning becomes essential to improve algorithmic performance and sustain public attention. To address these challenges, innovative and adaptive communication strategies are required. These may include presenting modern visual formats (such as Reels and transitions) that still uphold cultural values, collaborating with cultural influencers or local creators to bridge traditional and contemporary styles, and utilizing strong storytelling techniques that highlight the human and emotional elements of Tari Topeng. Capacity building for Sanggar members in digital literacy and content creation is also necessary to improve production quality and sustain long-term communication efforts. By combining cultural authenticity with digital creativity, Tari Topeng can be positioned as both meaningful and relevant in the modern media landscape.

Public Response to Communication Strategy for Building Positive Image through Instagram @sanggar_senisetiyanegara

Public response to the promotion of Tari Topeng on social media reflects the extent to which the communication strategy has succeeded in capturing audience attention, encouraging interaction, and influencing perceptions. In this context, responses can be identified through three major indicators: attention, participation, and attitudinal change each of which plays a vital role in determining the success of digital cultural preservation efforts

1. Audience Attention

The first sign of an effective communication strategy is the level of attention the audience gives to the content. This is often indicated through quantitative metrics such as views, likes, follower growth, story reach, and impressions on Instagram. For instance, a single video post of a Tari Topeng performance accompanied by a short caption and music was able to reach over 1,000 accounts, with 300+ views and 70+ likes within a week an impressive figure for a traditional dance institution with limited digital exposure.

Attention is further reinforced by the quality of content presentation. Audiences are more drawn to well-composed visuals, especially photos and videos that highlight the elegance of Tari Topeng movements, vibrant costumes, and expressive masks. Viewers have also been observed to spend more time on carousel posts and Reels that include behind-the-scenes footage, dancer interviews, or short explanations about the meaning of each character in the dance. These types of content are perceived as more “humanizing” and emotionally engaging.

2. Active Engagement and Participation

Beyond attention, engagement is crucial. The audience is no longer merely a passive recipient of information but becomes an active participant in cultural dissemination. Users engage by commenting positively, tagging friends, reposting content to their stories, or even reaching out via direct message to inquire about joining dance classes or attending cultural events.

Some responses are spontaneous expressions of admiration or cultural pride, such as:

- “Keren banget, semoga Tari Topeng makin dikenal anak muda!”
- “Ini budaya warisan nenek moyang, harus kita jaga bareng-bareng!”

Others are more action-oriented, where users share the post in WhatsApp groups, invite followers to attend local festivals, or use Sanggar's content for school assignments. The rise in user-generated content (UGC) also indicates higher levels of community involvement, such as when former students or audience members create personal posts about their experiences with Tari Topeng and tag the sanggar. Instagram's built-in features like polls, quizzes, and interactive question boxes in Stories have also helped measure audience interest and build rapport. When followers are asked, “Mask favoritmu dalam Tari Topeng Cirebon apa?” or “Apakah kamu pernah menonton Tari Topeng secara langsung?” the responses not only show engagement but also act as informal data for gauging public knowledge and sentiment.

3. Shifts in Perception and Attitudes

One of the most important impacts of digital communication is its ability to shape public attitudes. Initially, many young users saw Tari Topeng as old-fashioned or irrelevant. However, exposure to dynamic, relatable content such as young dancers practicing, humorous behind-the-scenes moments, or storytelling captions helps transform this perception. The @sanggar_senisetiyanegara account often frames Tari Topeng as not only a legacy but a living art that remains compatible with modern values like discipline, identity, and creativity.

Feedback from followers now includes comments such as:

- “Aku jadi tertarik belajar Tari Topeng karena lihat akun ini!”
- “Bangga banget lihat budaya daerah bisa eksis di Instagram.”

Some users even express their transformation from indifference to involvement, marking a clear shift in cultural attitudes. Parents have commented about registering their children to learn the dance, while teachers have used content from the account in their classroom materials. These changes indicate that the digital strategy is not only expanding reach but also altering mindsets.

4. Emotional and Cultural Resonance

Public response is also emotional. Tari Topeng performances shared on Instagram elicit not just admiration, but nostalgia, pride, and even spiritual reflection. When a post includes a quote from a traditional philosophy or a reflective caption about the meaning behind a mask character, users often respond with heartfelt reactions. This suggests that the platform is not merely a space for branding but also a site for cultural dialogue and emotional connection.

5. Expanding Cultural Networks

Another notable response is the increased collaboration between @sanggar_senisetiyanegara and other cultural communities. Other sanggar accounts, local government pages, and even regional tourism offices have begun reposting and commenting on content. This inter-account interaction builds legitimacy and opens opportunities for cross-promotion, strengthening the broader cultural ecosystem online.

6. Opportunities for Future Development

From analyzing public responses, several strategic implications emerge. There is a clear demand for more regular content updates, educational explanations in simple language, and collaborative campaigns (e.g., “Cirebon Culture Week”, “Virtual Mask Dance Challenge”). Such feedback loops where the audience becomes co-creator or advisor can help refine digital strategies for even better engagement and impact.



Figure 1.2 Instagram Account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara

Source: Instagram Account @sanggar_senisetiyanegara, March 10, 2025

In a vibrant stage, a Cirebon Tari Topeng dancer from Suranenggala Village performs gracefully. The dancer's movements, both firm and delicate, align with the beautiful sound of the gamelan, creating a magical atmosphere during the competency test event. Each step and body sway exudes profound stories, captivating the audience with awe. Applause echoes at the end, signifying high appreciation. Some spectators can even be heard whispering, praising the beauty of the dance and the dancer's precision in performing a tradition full of meaning.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the use of Instagram as a communication tool for promoting traditional arts, specifically Cirebon's Tari Topeng, was explored. The findings of this study align with the broader literature on the effectiveness of social media as a tool for cultural preservation and promotion. Previous research has shown that strategic communication on social media can significantly influence public perception and promote the positive image of traditional arts (Nurcahyati et al., 2024). This study supports those findings by demonstrating that Instagram, when

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used strategically, can effectively introduce traditional cultural practices to a wider, global audience. Sobokartti is one of the traditional art studios in Indonesia that has successfully embraced this phenomenon. Using various social media platforms, Sobokartti is evidently able to maintain its existence and at the same time preserve the Javanese traditional performing art (Yuliaty et al., 2023). This reflects how traditional arts institutions can utilize digital platforms not only for visibility but also for the continuity of cultural heritage through active engagement with modern communication tools.

One of the key findings in this study was the importance of planning the message in a way that resonates with the target audience. As noted in the literature, well-crafted communication strategies that include interactive features and engaging content are crucial for sustaining the audience's interest and building a positive public image (Indriani et al., 2025). The findings from this research suggest that Instagram's features such as Reels, Stories, and Carousel Posts are particularly effective in engaging audiences and fostering a deeper connection with cultural content. By utilizing these features, Tari Topeng has managed to gain visibility and create engagement among younger generations, who are the key demographic for cultural preservation efforts in the digital age.

The success of the communication strategy is also rooted in careful message planning, as demonstrated by @sanggar_senisetiyanegara. The messages are not only educational and promotional but also emotionally resonant, using approachable language and compelling visuals to communicate the cultural, historical, and philosophical values of Tari Topeng in ways that connect with the digital habits of younger audiences. Messages that seek two-way communication through entertainment and education achieve greater interaction and engagement from virtual visitors. Digital ecosystems are redefining the sphere of influence of museums. Today's post-pandemic museum is a museum without borders, capable of imagining new ways of relating to the public (Rodríguez-Vera et al., 2024). This perspective underscores the need for cultural institutions, including traditional performing arts groups, to move beyond static content by fostering meaningful dialogue and digital interaction through multi-format storytelling on platforms like Instagram.

Furthermore, the study revealed that visual storytelling plays a critical role in building a positive image of traditional arts. As highlighted in previous studies, Instagram's visual-centric platform allows for the effective delivery of cultural messages that are emotionally resonant (Aripradono, 2020). The integration of high-quality images and videos showcasing the beauty and significance of Tari Topeng has proven to be a key factor in attracting attention and fostering appreciation. This reinforces the notion that visual communication is particularly potent in conveying cultural narratives, thereby contributing to the formation of a positive cultural image (Setyo, 2025). The case of @sanggar_senisetiyanegara also shows that consistent use of traditional visual aesthetics such as costume elements, color schemes, and symbolic backdrops helps reinforce cultural identity. Visual composition is treated not merely as ornamentation but as part of a semiotic system that frames how cultural meaning is transmitted through Instagram.

The message construction relies on two key elements: visual codes rich in symbolic and evaluative meanings, and short, simple, yet explicit language that clearly conveys the intended message (Avlonitou & Papadaki, 2024). This reinforces the idea that effective cultural communication on Instagram depends not only on imagery but also on the clarity and consistency of the accompanying textual or auditory content, ensuring that traditional messages are not lost in translation. From a practical standpoint, this research highlights the potential benefits of the use of social networks in municipalities with touristic and heritage appeal to improve and expand the dissemination of cultural resources. This paper proposes a new approach for the academic community to consider the viability of using social networks in the cultural context, which can significantly benefit the management of local governments (Vidaurre-Rojas et al., 2024). The integration of this perspective further emphasizes the need for cultural actors including local institutions and sanggar seni to actively design social media strategies not only for visibility, but also as a tool for broader cultural empowerment and governance.

Moreover, the selection of media formats such as Carousel Posts for gradual storytelling, Reels for dynamic demonstrations of dance movements, and Live sessions for interactive learning reflects a deliberate adaptation to Instagram's strengths. This segmentation of content, combined with timely postings during cultural events, demonstrates how traditional performance can be repackaged for sustained visibility in fast-moving digital ecosystems. With the help of the wings of digitalization, traditional culture can cross the boundary of time and space, fly into the homes of ordinary people and move to the world stage, continue to inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional culture (Lingying Qu, 2025). This vision affirms the potential of digital media in bridging generational and geographical gaps, enabling traditional arts such as Tari Topeng to transcend local boundaries and gain international relevance.

In the case of @sanggar_senisetiyanegara, the ability to blend cultural authenticity with contemporary digital formats such as emotional storytelling, behind-the-scenes footage, and audience polls further validates the role of Instagram not just as a promotional tool but as a space of cultural negotiation, where tradition and modernity co-exist. Tourism promotion is not characterized by a homogeneous culture. While removing physical distance, cultural orientations still shape how destinations represent themselves on Instagram, reflecting enduring differences in communication styles and value emphasis (Mele et al., 2021). This implies that cultural digital communication must remain sensitive to context-specific codes, values, and visual strategies if it aims to be both globally accessible and locally authentic. However, despite the successful use of Instagram, the study also identified challenges that hindered the full potential of this communication strategy. One of the main barriers was the inconsistency in content posting and the challenge of maintaining high-quality visuals. These issues reflect a broader concern discussed in the literature, where maintaining a consistent presence and quality content is often difficult due to resource limitations (Indriani et al., 2025). Moreover, the study found that while Instagram was an effective platform for engagement, there remained a gap in reaching all segments of the audience, particularly those who view traditional arts like Tari Topeng as irrelevant to modern culture. This perception is an obstacle that needs to be addressed through more innovative and inclusive communication strategies, perhaps by emphasizing the contemporary relevance of these cultural practices.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the pivotal role of Instagram as a digital communication tool in preserving and promoting traditional arts, particularly Tari Topeng Cirebon. The findings demonstrate that an effective communication strategy centered on message planning, media selection, and delivery techniques can significantly shape public perception and increase engagement with cultural heritage in the digital age. Strategic message planning, which emphasizes cultural values, emotional narratives, and visual aesthetics, is essential in capturing the audience's interest. The use of strong visual storytelling through high-quality photos, videos, and informative captions has been particularly effective in conveying the philosophical and historical richness of Tari Topeng. Moreover, Instagram's interactive features such as Stories, Reels, and Live broadcasts provide valuable opportunities for direct audience engagement and real-time cultural exchange.

The success of this communication strategy is also evident in the positive public responses, including increased interaction, expressions of cultural pride, and renewed interest among younger audiences. These outcomes underscore the transformative potential of culturally sensitive digital communication when aligned with the habits and preferences of modern users. However, several challenges remain. Limited digital literacy among traditional art practitioners, constrained budgets for content production, and the overwhelming presence of entertainment-driven content on Instagram pose significant barriers. Addressing these challenges requires capacity-building efforts, collaborative initiatives with influencers or art communities, and the development of more creative and adaptive content formats to sustain audience interest.

The insights from this study contribute to the growing body of literature on digital cultural promotion and offer practical implications for cultural institutions, local governments, and creative practitioners. Future research could further explore cross-platform strategies, the impact of influencer collaborations, and long-term engagement models to ensure the sustainability of digital heritage communication. In conclusion, with a well-designed communication approach, traditional arts such as Tari Topeng can not only survive but thrive in today's media landscape bridging the generational gap, fostering cultural appreciation, and affirming their place in contemporary society.

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