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THE PRESENTATION OF INDONESIA'S TRADITIONAL DANCES
A STUDY OF TARI SAMAN (ACEH) AND TARI KECAK (BALI)

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Abstract: *The objectives of this essay are twofold: firstly, to provide a critical evaluation of the usefulness of Indonesia's traditional dances in enriching its national profile; and secondly, to assess some practical implications associated with utilising traditional dances as a predictor for a nation's personification. It is a reflective study that relies on a structured review approach. The study suggests that traditional dances, revolving around the formation of religiosity as an expression of praise to God, are not only embedded with authentic shared values, but also attributed to collective cultural production. The multi-layered rhythmic vocal canting, not to praise God but more likely as dramatic actions. Cultural production in this setting enriches a nation's personification that is taken in other domain as a predictor attribute of a nation's brand image. Some directions for future research, limitations, and concluding remarks are provided.*

Keywords*: traditional dances, tari saman (aceh), tari kecak (bali), indonesia, cultural tourism, formation of religiosity.*

INTRODUCTION

Dancing, drinks and foods have historically been part of the rites of passages of societies, manifestations of welcome which is crystallised into the "sacred law of hospitality" (Danforth, 1979; Leiper, Hobson, & Lewis 2007; Korstanje & Olsen 2011). Widely studied by anthropology, hospitality and dancing are associated with expressions of thanks to the Gods for the harvest. Founding figures of social anthropology such as Bronislaw Malinowski (1929), and widely-read ethnologists such as Radcliffe-Brown (1968), envisaged in dancing and music an all-encompassing institution, one which comprised a fertile ground for expanding the understanding of society. Typically, with the

passing of time, music and dance were adopted by nation-states as valid forms of diplomacy oriented to preventing social conflict (Croft, 2015).

Over recent decades, traditional dances have been used by nations as expressions of shared ideologies, values, or even in consolidating heritage, to orchestrate an interplay between attraction and exclusion. This review essay centres on the communications scholarship which uses traditional dances as a unit of analysis. More specifically, it deals with traditional dances that revolve around the formation of religiosity as a collective expression of praise to God. Arguably, artistic creation and traditional dances, which are most likely embedded with attributes of tourism and hospitality, could influence a nation's personification (Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2006; Handayani & Rashid, 2013; Kotler & Gertner, 2002; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2000). In this vein traditional dances, which are normally part of the cultural attractions of a destination, may not only establish that destination's image (Kayat & Hai, 2014; McKercher, Ho, & du Cros, 2004) and play a role as social identity attributes (e.g. the study of Margolin & Riviere, 2015), but may also serve to shape a nation's personification (Handayani & Rashid, 2015).

Further, studies indicate that religious rituals mixed with performing arts (i.e. dance, music, and drama in Southeast Asia) date back to the pre-colonial era (e.g. Kartomi, 1995). Importantly, while studies indicate that dance, music, and religious rituals are inseparable from worship and serve as sacramental adjuncts (Kartomi, 1995), songs, bodily movement and percussive music associated with Islam throughout Southeast Asia have received very little attention. In this sense, even though Balinese cultural attributes have received enormous scholarly attention (e.g. study of Geertz, 1993; Groh, 2019; Zanten & Kunst, 1996; Picard, 1990, 1993, 1997, 2008), specific research into the presentation of Tari Kecak seems to be limited. Likewise, Tari Saman also seems to receive scant attention. In this vein, in order to make the link between the presentation of Indonesia's traditional dance and the nation's profile, we posit that the presentation of traditional dance could influence the values and attributes that international publics attribute to the nation. Therefore, this study aims to explore Indonesia's traditional dances which we suggest could contribute not only to image building, social identity and relationship building, but may also serve as attributes through which the nation's personification is formed. In particular, the objectives of this essay are twofold: (1) to provide a critical evaluation of the usefulness of Indonesia's traditional dances in enriching its national profile, and (2) to assess some practical implications associated with utilising traditional dances as a predictor for a nation's personification.

RELEVANT LITERATURE: THE GLOBALISATION OF CULTURE

Although culture is a buzzword used by many scholars from different disciplines, it is no less true that the term has not always been correctly addressed or defined. The word Culture comes from Indo-Aryan *Kultur*, which in turn derives from cult (religion) and cultivate (economy). This suggests that the meaning of culture rests on two contrasting tenets, associated not only with economy but also religion. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Heinrich Rickert, a German philosopher who exerted influence over Max Weber, utilised "cultural values" to symbolize all those traits that comprise commonalities in a nation. From that moment on, the concept was romantically associated with nationalism, the nation-state and with the love for the fatherland, at least until the genocide perpetrated (in the name of extreme nationalisms) by the Nazis during WWII. Undoubtedly, the question of whether the evils perpetrated under Hitler were pre-

determined by their cultural core leads us to reconsider the negative effects of culture, something which took on a new connotation in the 1960s (Cloudsley, 2007). Against this backdrop, the societal role of culture during the Cold War was pretty different depending upon which side of the Iron Curtain one considers; however, in the West, culture was inextricably entwined with consumption. The rise and consolidation of capitalism, which shifted from a society of producers to a society of consumers (Donohue, 1995; 2003), commoditized culture to be sold as a form of cultural entertainment. Zygmunt Bauman (2013) offers a radical critique of the society of consumers, arguing that the power once enjoyed by nation-states to establish legitimacy and borders has given way to a liberal market in which such work is performed through media or sporting events such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games.

Following the previous line of argument, Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) explain that the concept of culture, as it was formulated by philosophers and studied by anthropologists, has been crystalized in a new term, that of "heritage", which derives from legal terminology and expresses the sets of values that define the evolution of different ethnicities. However, these ethnologists alert us to the fact that the problem of heritage is aggravated with the advance of globalization and tourism. Beyond the hopes and promises of globalization, heritage today offers a valuable resource for some historically marginalised communities to gain further autonomy and even empowerment. While anthropology from its inception envisaged that non-western culture would disappear since the advance of industrialism was irreversible, it ignored the fact that aboriginal cultures were not only far from disappearing, but are being recreated in response to an international demand from tourists. Defined as a tactic followed by locals to improve their conditions of labour and life, "empowerment" generated further commitments simply because locals use their tradition as a means to secure financial independence from the central state. Additionally, natives construct their sentiments of belonging in light of what tourists want to hear and see. The merit of this work consists in reminding us that this trend not only blurs the boundaries between past and present, but also generates new economies based on ethno-merchandise where the production never ends.

The classic rules of economy teach us that the rise of demand ultimately entails a decline in the production as supply is incrementally exhausted. Needless to say, this does not happen with ethno-merchandise. The greater the demand for cultural consumption, the better it is for production; that way, the resources required never decline. Comaroff & Comaroff (2009) explore not only the modern obsession with authenticity, but also the complexities and contradictions of ethnicity. Following a nuanced argument, this book does not demonize but accepts the promise of heritage tourism. The expanding market gives considerable autonomy to non-western subjects in terms of their purchasing power, and also their capacity to secure loans beyond the control and hegemony of the state's apparatuses. Unlike their ancestors, by embracing substitute identities modern aboriginal communities gained more prosperity and wealth. Their profits are based on their ability to manage businesses or take the lead in real estate speculations. Nonetheless, a more critical view has emphasized that these monetary benefits have serious costs for the community such as ecological pollution, problems of sustainability, the rise of crime rates, and so forth.

Paradoxically, nation-states have heavily taxed aborigines to enhance their fiscal discipline, which creates a state of conflict that, unless regulated, may lead towards genocides and ethnic cleansing. In this vein, Dean MacCannell (1973, 1976, 1984, 1988, 1992, 2001, 2011, 2012) wrote extensively about such matters throughout his academic

career. Born in Washington, but educated in Berkeley-California, MacCannell is attuned to the cultural revolution of the 1960s. Influenced by goffmanian dramaturgy, he considers that culture is a key factor in the configuration of society, politics, and even economy, but in urban contexts, it is commoditized as a mechanism of pacification and control. In this respect, MacCannell recognizes (following Marxism) that the need for hoarding is essentially present in almost all human cultures. Motivated by the fetish, the hoarder (cannibal) shows an insatiable nature, which is crystallised in the capitalist ethos. The material asymmetries in capitalist societies are exacerbated through the levels of exploitation that rank-and-file workers suffer in daily life. As a result of this, conflict which threatens to undermine the authority of the status quo, not only should be regulated but also reduced to a sum-zero game. The power of alienation consists in managing the daily frustrations of lay people in order for elites to retain control over society. In this respect, tourism would serve as a mediator between the productive system and leisure. The need to consume fictional landscapes, adjoined to the formation of staged authenticity, corresponds with an urgency to forge "consciousness" in the citizenry. While touring the Other, tourists not only are not in contact with natives, but the latter are silenced. In fact, if people feel a need to consume authenticity, this happens because they live in unauthentic climes (Handayani, 2018).

While they travel thousands of miles from home to experience greater authenticity, they really reach a pseudo-state of authenticity, which is dubbed "staged-authenticity". For MacCannell this represents a serious ethical dilemma enrooted in the grounds of tourism (MacCannell, 1973; 1976; 1984; 1988; 1992; 2001; 2012). Last but not least, R. Tzanelli discusses the question of authenticity as the result of host-guest interaction, where negotiations rest on a much deeper cultural matrix. What both sides feel, or the ways they behave, are associated with a political discourse which turns on ethnocentric assumptions with respect to the others´ voices. The current western materiality is reified in the forms of market and consumption practices that subordinate non-European cultures in order to produce what international tourists need. To some extent, heritage often replicates not only old stereotypes, prejudices, and beliefs already existent in the western social imaginary, but deepens the periphery-centre dependence (Tzanelli, 2004; 2006; 2015a; 2015b; Korstanje & Clayton, 2014). This seems to be the reason why some voices emphasize the intersection of tourism and heritage as a platform that has emerged through the advance of globalization (Timothy 1997; Timothy & Boyd, 2006).

Historically, Europe developed political discourse to subordinate the other to its interests. The need to recover the past through a European lens was conducive to confirming the so-called inferiority of aboriginals as a "primitive society". Evolution was conceived as a natural force that transcended all cultures and human groups. Those who were prone to trade and use technology monopolized progress in a way that marked their superiority in comparison to others who advanced at a snail´s pace. This was the touchstone of the ideology of western nationalism that proclaimed the cultural evolution of Europeans above-and-beyond that of others. From the viewpoint of these "imperial eyes", novels, literature, discoveries, and even scientific advances were predetermined by the fact that aboriginals will disappear. To avoid their extinction, some altruistic companies focused on the role of heritage as a shelter to protect the "noble savage".

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY CONTEXT

Doubtless, historians accept the premise that imperialism and arts are inextricably intertwined (Said, 1993). M. Meskimmon (2011) acknowledges that modern forms of imperialism do not exploit the periphery through the introduction of extractive industries. Nowadays, imperialism turns to aesthetics in order to legitimate negotiated and nuanced forms of exploitation. In her book, *Contemporary Art,* she argues convincingly that scholars should delve into the paradoxical situation where art lies. Transnational borders have been opened by the rise of globalization altering not only behaviours, but also the ways of expressing emotions. Contemporary art coalesces with other global forces that help citizens to understand the real beyond the hegemony of ethnocentrism. Unlike other writers, who see in arts a mechanism of alienation, Meskimmon argues that:

> *Imagining ourselves at home in the world, where our homes are not fixed objects but processed of material and conceptual engagement with other people and different places, is the first step toward becoming cosmopolitan. Art is specially able to convey the intimate relation between the material and the conceptual that this requires, invoking the contingency of home by positioning us at the nexus of the real and the imaginary, while using the sensory force of object, image, and spaces to engage memory, desire, and cognition* (Meskimmon 2011: p. 8).

Since art paves the ways for the articulation of more cosmopolitan discourses, moving forward to meet with others constantly, a better and more finely-grained understanding of the world is thereby achieved. Paradoxically, while art plays a vital role in articulating the interests of others, it closes the doors to understanding these others within my own cultural matrix, which leads to an anesthetizing of the self. To put it bluntly, host-guest encounters take place in a one-sided direction, where conflict is undermined. The point of departure in this argument highlights that art represents an opportunity to mobilize trauma, body and memory, thereby reconfiguring the fields of ethics, nationhood and politics into a coherent model that stimulates "engagement". The introduction of arts in this modern mobile world captivates the suffering of others, so as to recreate a new type of ethics embedded within old European imperialism. Unless otherwise resolved, Meskimmon adds, the problem of "passage" is vital for understanding the interests of European Imperialism. To cut a long story short, she explains that empires do not create objects, but the meanings through which objects and experiences can be duly interpreted. Therefore, the empire's success is based on its ability to discipline subjects and their bodies. To the concept of "real economy", she insists, which facilitates the circulation of persons and goods, it is important to add a new concept, that of "corporeal economy" given by the production of objects to make bodies meaningful. The concept of corporeal economy is vital for understanding Meskimmon´s development as well as her hopes for cosmopolitanism. As MacCannell (1976) puts it, if we start from the thesis that modern societies are united by their possibilities of escape as well as the obsession with authenticity, or the needs of "being there", as modern tourism emulates, it is no accident that aboriginal organizations deposit their trust in the figure of the Totem. As the precondition of religion, totems not only centralize the authority of officialdom but also grant legitimacy to its decisions. The totem is for "primitive minds" what tourism is to modern holiday-makers.

The traditional dances in this study share a similarity in that they have dimensions of social meaning and entail an expression of religiosity and communal behaviour which involves the intersection of form and function, symbol and meaning, dance and cultural roots (Cross 2001; Vila 2014). Both Tari Saman and Tari Kecak describe cooperation and synchronicity among the dancers, along with the movements of the song which contains religious tones, recitative prayers from the Islamic belief system (in the case of Tari Saman) and Hinduism (in the case of Tari Kecak). Kecak is a pre-Hindu religious dance that originated in trance dance known as Sanghyang. In this sense, Kecak a religious dance not to be confused with the trance Sanghyang dance in which Kecak was a musical accompaniment. The recitative prayers invoke goodness that spreads to their performers and the audience.

Tari Saman is performed by 10 people, in which one of them plays the role of the singer who recites the prayers and also acts as a leader who directs the dancers' movements in synchronicity with the musical performance. On the other hand, the dancers, comprising 8 or 9 people, are dancing along with the preacher's symbolic recitative prayers and they also respond to the preacher's lines. Historically, Tari Saman indicates a form of religious preaching that is used in a certain village named Gayo, located in central Aceh. It is a captivating dance due to the speed and synchronicity of movements that balance the religious preachers' recitative prayers and dyadic communication and interaction among the performers i.e. the dancers and the preacher. Evolutionarily, Tari Saman emerges as a market offering and it is performed for public consumption.

While, Tari Saman is largely influenced by the Islamic belief system in Aceh, Tari Kecak is related to the Hindu belief system in Bali province. Tari Kecak denotes a religious dance that is performed by male dancers, in praise of God. It is a mix of religious cultural activity, arts, and folklore. The term "Kecak" indicates the sound derived from the dance, which is exclusively performed by more than 100 male dancers wearing a checked cloth around their waists, seated in a circle, swaying to the rhythmic echoes of their own voices, chanting "cak" and raising up their arms. The ritual, which involves a raising of the hands and lowering of the head while performing the prayers, symbolises expressive movement and religious devotion. It is a sacred prayer that has evolved into a performance commodified for public consumption, and has becomes part of a cultural ritual that mixes arts with heritage. Originally only performed in the temple, it was not until the inventor Wayan Limbak worked with a German artist named Walter Spies that Tari Kecak was developed for mass-consumption and came to serve as a tourist attraction (Hobart, 2007).

METHODS OF THE STUDY

Applying a structured review approach as a method of study, we employ relevant interdisciplinary scholarly articles that are appropriate for critical appraisal and for probing the research question. In this vein, we do not depend on a specific database of articles that is alluded to by the systematic review approach. While Cooper (1988) points out that the literature review is an investigation of certain issue(s) that relies on these types scholarship for integrating, summarising, evaluating, and/or clarifying the issue(s) in the past, present, and predicting the future, literature review as a method is considered research in its own rights (Handayani, 2018; Handayani, 2017; Evans & Kowanko, 2000). Therefore, it is deemed appropriate to employ a structured literature review for this study.

DISCUSSION: CULTURE AND DANCE

The relationships between culture, dance, and people lie profoundly upon symbolic and expressive behaviours that are collectively projected as a communal identity that connects a group of people, and at the same time conveys distinctiveness (World Culture Encyclopedia, 2015). Groh, (2019) defined culture as the heritage of learned symbolic behaviour that makes humans human, and indicates viable patterns-of-life in an ecosystem. Dance is not arbitrary; rather, studies indicate that dance is a patterned activity that people can learn, can be modified, and can be used as a symbolic expression and behaviour for embracing faith, love, and prayer (Staub, 1985). Further, Staub suggest that exploring the levels of symbolic meaning of dances would enact a social identity, which in this case would contribute to the nation's personification and formation of its national identity.

Dance, which requires multi-tasking skills to truly hear the bold proclamations and the beauty of sounds (e.g. music and/or instrumentation), involves not only disciplines such as somatic learning (Bresler, 2013; Cancienne, 2008; Cancienne & Megibow, 2001; Richmond & Snowber, 2009) but also involves arts education and also indicates other disciplines i.e. spiritual theology, sociology (Snowber, 2012). Studies claim that dance is not only a way for people to connect themselves with their bodies, minds, hearts, and imagination, but also to more deeply understand the world around them e.g. in terms of dance as a form of embodied prayer (Snowber, 2019; Kobayashi& Knecht 1981; Sklar, 1999; Snowber, 2004, 2007, 2011). Further, Snowber (2012) explicates how dance is a way of knowing which can be grouped into: (1) the “Play of Dance-the Dance of Play”, through which dance has capacity to be the muscle of the imagination, a magical invitation to a creative process for reimagining new worlds; (2) “Dance and Literacy”, through which she claims that people can dance their stories and which serves as an invitation to think with our entire beings; and (3) “Dance as a Way of Inquiry”, with which she suggests that dance accesses many kinds of knowledge beyond kinaesthetic intelligence, including visual, tactical, mental, cognitive, and emotional intelligence; and which indicates the pivotal value of dance that brings the learners (people who are not familiar with it) into a different relationship with their bodies.

Kecak Dance, Performed at Uluwatu, Bali (2018)

In terms of the relationship between religion and a nation, culture and dance have been considered as a classic interplay through which a nation's people indicate their form of religious expression and behaviour. Another form of the dynamic around religiosity concerns expression and behaviour, which demands a more specific conversation. This kind of conversation seems to be accommodated by traditional dances e.g. those examined in the context of this study.

Saman Dance, Performed at Indonesian Night Ohio University, Ohio, USA (2008)

Tari Saman and Tari Kecak present cultural rituals which are embraced by a belief system, or a belief system runs in tandem with cultural rituals. The mixed elements among cultural attributes, religious expression, and the behaviours of the believers that are embedded within the dances, serve both the particularity of a nation's profile on the one hand, while on the other hand they could indicate the distinctiveness of specific national heritage as a result of the mix between belief systems and cultural rituals. This line of argument is not intended to contradict the distinctiveness of the two entities involved, namely culture and the essence of the dances. This intertwining relationship between religion and a nation can in general be summarised as threefold: (1) traditional dance patterns and communication; (2) traditional dances as a new form of religiosity; (3) traditional dances as symbolic commodities. Reviews of these issues are presented below.

TRADITIONAL DANCES AND ITS COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

As mentioned, the traditional dances discussed in this essay are those that concern forms of religious expression and behaviour, hence our understanding of the link between the presentation of a nation and traditional dances would be revolve around the experience of consumption in terms of signifiers and signified in the semiotic tradition, which indicates the process of sharing meaning through signs (Griffin, 2006). Further, the semiotic tradition suggests that words are arbitrary symbols that have no inherent meaning, which normally designate coloration of the environment and take on the

meaning of the context where they are used (Ogden & Richards, 1946). This is in line with the proposition that a semantic triangle describes an indirect relationship between symbols and their supposed referents, which concerns the production of meaning based on how signs mediate meaning. In this sense, communication patterns can be drawn based on how the dancers perform their movements along with the sounds (i.e. music) and the religious recitation that articulates the production of meaning. Moreover, attributes such as the attires worn and the types of sound produced by the movements also indicate how the signs mediate meaning.

These traditional dances can also be viewed through the interpersonal communication tradition, which explicates the effects of communication. In this vein, the signifier (i.e. the object itself), performed through the dance, designates the effect of communication which in Hovland's terms comprises "who says what to whom and with what effect". Interestingly, this would lead us to how the traditional dances articulate the presentation of a nation. In this sense, it turns on the communication theory which suggests that there is a "sleeper effect". This theory serves to explicate how people forgot the experience which forms their cognitions, builds their framework of experience and frame of reference. In this respect, the growth of traditional dance establishes the presentation of a nation when the framework of experience is meaningful, and it indicates the degree of authenticity. As Ludwig Wittgenstein says "if we spoke a different language, we would perceive a somewhat different world". The inference that can be drawn is that the framework of experience is more meaningful when the production of meaning is performed by inherent symbols that are supported by a highly credible source e.g. expertise and character (Griffin, 2006). This would have to be interconnected with a nation's belief systems and its shared cultural values.

What raises a nation's belief systems and its shared cultural values to a pivotal position are the prayers that indicate the interpersonal communication of the dancers with their God, and which is mixed with tradition and heritage. The form of authenticity would be profoundly shaped according to this contextual environment. That is why the shared values and belief systems that are embraced by any nation in the world would still signify distinctiveness, while at the same time they may share identical forms of religious expression and behaviour. From the foregoing, it is clear that the dances performed not only serve as a medium to fulfil the need for interaction with God, but also indicate the existence of communication as an interpersonal influence (Griffin, 2006), as Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) have suggested about the effects of communication. In this sense, communication as interpersonal influence revolves around the extent to which the communicative action is seen as influencing cognitive and affective dispositions. Further, while the traditional dances studied in this context are performed in groups, indicating a collective communication of tradition, the prayer that is performed is individual, signifying an intrapersonal communication which relates an individual with his/her God. Intrapersonal communication revolves around a communicative action "within the self", indicating the extent of one's self-awareness, and involving motivation and/or goals, beliefs, and emotions. In this sense, the religious expression and behaviour of individuals in this group serves as a form of self-actualisation and gratification in a communal context. In addition, the context of this study also indicates that performances of traditional dances as commodities emerge as market offerings for mass-consumption, and it denotes that traditional dances serve as a medium for the self-expression of the dancers and their beliefs (i.e. messages/symbols) towards their audiences. To a degree, this pattern would lead to the discourses of the experience-based industry i.e. tourism and hospitality

configured as market offerings, a mass-communication of tradition in the post-modern era – see, for example, the study of Gilovich, Kumar, & Jampol (2014).

TRADITIONAL DANCES AND THE PRESENTATION OF RELIGIOSITY

Traditional dances as presentations of a nation can be analogically described based on studies that explore new forms of religiosity which are intertwined with processes of commodification, commercialisation, and branding. For instance, the study by Gil Soldevilla, Palao Errando, & Marzal Felici (2014) suggests that new form of religiosity could be derived from a transcendental semiotics which takes attributes of religious language and transforms them with audio-visual techniques which are embedded with secularisation. In this vein, the imbrication of religiosity in the presentation of a nation not only occurs among the dancers who in this sense are believers, but also impacts audiences' perceived values, which in an extreme extrapolation would influence his/her cognitive, affective, and conative dispositions. This can be traced from the fact that the traditional dances examined in this study have emerged and evolved from what were once performed exclusively as religious rituals, although their sacred attributes are not diminished through their contemporary staging. Rather, they now captivate not only the dancers but also the audiences. Consequently, such performances serve to establish those values that outsiders (i.e. international publics) perceive in the personification of a nation's image, as the presentation of traditional dances offers a framework through which a wider public comes to view authenticity and cultural distinctiveness.

CONCLUSION: TRADITIONAL DANCES AS SYMBOLIC COMMODITIES AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

This essay has sought to explicate the potential significance and role of traditional dances in the context of the presentation of a nation. It is claimed that the traditional dances which involve a nation's people, combining a form of religiosity with cultural heritage, emerge as forms of commodification that have a direct or indirect effect on the perceived values of the audiences. In this vein, traditional dances are not only performed as self-actualisation, expression and behaviour, or prayers, but also emerge as elements that are attributed to a nation's profile. The study also suggests that traditional dances play a role as image building, which could fabricate Tari Saman and Tari Kecak as a process of relationship building among the dancers, between the dancers and their community, and between the dancers and their God.

Further, the fabrication of traditional dances communicates shared values. In this sense, through systematic spiritual movements, alongside attending to the values of religiosity mixed with creativity for proselytization ("dakwah"), it serves as a conservation of cultural heritage and symbolises it through prayers, faith, love, and communal interaction and communication. From this perspective, it is appropriate to say that traditional dances which are embedded with religious expression and behaviour may serve the presentation of a nation. For this reason, the attributes that have been discussed are useful for not only mapping and planning the marketing of traditional dances as a cultural preservation of a nation (Acciaioli, 1985), which is in line with nation building, but more importantly it would also be useful for branding the national programme which relies on the essence of distinctiveness and authenticity. To sum up, the presentation of

artistic creation in the form of traditional dances may contribute to a nation's personification.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

We have examined the presentation of traditional dances through the lens of communication scholarship which intertwines with other relevant domains of study. It is concluded that traditional dances may be symbolic commodities which may also serve as forms of cultural preservation, and which could contribute to the personification of a nation. In this sense, attributes of traditional dances could serve as predictors for a nation's personification, as studies from other domains indicates that traditional dances function as elements of tourism and hospitality (e.g. the study of Handayani and Rashid, 2013). Therefore, future study could take up this issue to be explored further. In addition, the effect of religious expression and behaviour can also be examined through the lens of shared values as commodification, which has been alluded to by other studies e.g. Kaneva (2011). As for the study's limitations, it is acknowledged that this method of study has its merits, while at the same time carrying some flaws. In particular, the study only covers two instances, out of a great number of such traditional dances in Indonesia. As Indonesia is multi-faith society which is embedded within a multi-cultural nation, it is worth re-testing the study in relation to other such forms of traditional dance. It is thus recommended that future studies explore other instances of traditional dance as predictors for the presentation of a nation, and utilise other methods of study such as ethnography or phenomenology.

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