



Proceedings of the Asian Academic Collaboration Forum (AACF)

Theme: Academic Collaboration Activities of the Research and Community Service Institute of Makassar State University and FSSK-UKM

2024, Volume 1: 56-62 (page)

DOI: ...

E-ISSN:

Published by Academic Collaboration Institute

Preservation of Tradition in The Role of Maraga Dance as A Bugis-Makassar Cultural Identity

Jamilah, Nurachmy Sahnir, Bau Salawati

Faculty of Arts and Design, State University of Makassar

*Corresponding author: jamilah@unm.ac.id

Abstract

This study explores the role of the Maraga Dance in preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of the Bugis-Makassar community in South Sulawesi. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews with community leaders, dancers, and cultural experts, as well as direct observations. The findings indicate that the Maraga Dance functions as both a performance art and an educational tool, transmitting values such as courage and solidarity to the younger generation while reinforcing community cohesion. Challenges to its preservation include the influence of modernization and globalization and a lack of support. The study suggests integrating the Maraga Dance into educational curricula, holding regular cultural festivals, and conducting comprehensive documentation and research to ensure the dance's continuity as a symbol of Bugis-Makassar cultural identity in the modern era.

Keywords: Maraga dance, cultural identity, bugis-makassar, cultural preservation, modernization, globalization.

Introduction

Indonesia is renowned as a country rich in culture and tradition. One example of this diversity is the Bugis-Makassar culture originating from South Sulawesi. This culture showcases various forms of artistic expression, including visual arts, music, and dance. One traditional dance that epitomizes the uniqueness of Bugis-Makassar culture is Maraga Dance. This dance serves not only as a performing art but also as an essential medium for preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of the Bugis-Makassar community.

The term "Pa'raga" originated from "ma'raga," which means a shifting movement performed by several players. In this context, the ball used is referred to as "raga," symbolizing the opponent in play (Wahyuningsi, 2021). Meanwhile, Maraga Dance is a traditional dance from the Bugis-Makassar people of South Sulawesi. This dance is not merely a performance art but also a symbol of pride and cultural identity for the local community. In the context of rapid globalization and modernization, preserving Maraga Dance is crucial to maintaining the distinctiveness of Bugis-Makassar culture and heritage.

Maraga is not only a form of play; it also represents a significant part of the Bugis-Makassar people's culture and identity. The movements within Maraga display the players' skill and agility, reflecting values of bravery and resilience. Moreover, Maraga functions as a cultural educational tool, teaching younger generations the importance of upholding and respecting cultural traditions and heritage.

Maraga Dance has a long history closely intertwined with the traditions and rituals of the Bugis-Makassar community. Initially, this dance was performed during traditional events, such as weddings, circumcisions, and ceremonies for welcoming honored guests. Over time, Maraga Dance has also become a feature in cultural festivals and state events, further increasing its prominence.

Copyright © 2024 Authors.

OPEN ACCESS



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License

Each movement in Maraga Dance carries profound philosophical meaning. The dance embodies noble values such as bravery, honor, and unity. For instance, the dynamic hand and foot movements symbolize the spirit of struggle and physical strength, while the orderly dance formations highlight the importance of cooperation and harmony within the community. According to a cultural researcher, "Maraga Dance reflects the collective spirit and high level of cooperation among the Bugis-Makassar people. The harmonious and synchronized movements show that togetherness and solidarity are at the core of the local community's life" (Rahman, 2019).

Maraga Dance represents a valuable cultural heritage of the Bugis-Makassar community in South Sulawesi. Despite its rich historical and cultural value, the preservation of Maraga Dance faces numerous complex challenges. To understand Maraga Dance's role as a cultural identity of the Bugis-Makassar people, it is essential to examine in depth the issues that hinder its preservation.

Literature Review

a. Challenges in the Preservation of Maraga Dance

a) Impact of Modernization and Globalization

Modernization and globalization have brought significant changes to lifestyle and cultural preferences. Western-dominated popular culture often appears more appealing to younger generations than local traditions like Maraga Dance. Consequently, interest in Maraga Dance has declined, and many young people are either unfamiliar with or uninterested in learning it. According to Suryadi (2020), globalization has altered cultural consumption patterns, often leading to the neglect of local traditions.

b) Lack of Support and Recognition

The preservation of Maraga Dance requires support from various parties, including the government, cultural institutions, and the general public. Unfortunately, this support is often inadequate. Government policies that do not prioritize the preservation of local culture, coupled with limited funding and facilities, make it difficult to undertake efforts to preserve Maraga Dance optimally. Aswar (2018) states that insufficient government support is one of the primary obstacles to preserving traditional culture.

c) Limited Education and Training

Formal education in Indonesia often lacks sufficient focus on local arts and culture. As a result, knowledge and skills related to Maraga Dance are rarely taught in schools. Moreover, the lack of non-formal education and training in Maraga Dance hinders the regeneration of skilled dancers. Rachman (2019) notes that the absence of cultural education programs in schools is a key reason for the low interest among younger generations in local culture.

d) Urbanization and Social Change

Urbanization and migration have led many young people to move to large cities in search of work and education. This shift has weakened community ties to local traditions, including Maraga Dance. Many young people living in big cities lack opportunities to learn about and participate in cultural activities from their hometowns. Nugraha (2021) found that urbanization causes significant social changes that threaten the preservation of local culture.

e) Commercialization and Cultural Distortion

In some cases, efforts to promote Maraga Dance have led to commercialization that alters the dance's essence and meaning. Performances adapted for commercial purposes often strip away essential elements of the original tradition, reducing it to mere entertainment without cultural depth. Wibisono (2020) argues that cultural commercialization can lead to the loss of authentic values in traditional culture.

f) Lack of Documentation and Research

Without comprehensive and systematic documentation, knowledge of Maraga Dance could be lost. The lack of research and publications on the history, movements, costumes, and meanings of Maraga Dance complicates preservation efforts. Proper documentation is necessary to ensure that knowledge of this dance can be passed on to future generations. Basri (2017) emphasizes the importance of documentation in efforts to preserve traditional culture.

b. The Role of Maraga Dance as a Cultural Identity of the Bugis-Makassar

Addressing these issues is essential to ensure that Maraga Dance can continue to serve as a cultural identity for the Bugis-Makassar people. The following steps can be taken to strengthen the role of Maraga Dance:

a) Revitalization through Education and Training

Formal and non-formal education should allocate more space for local arts and culture. Training programs involving senior dancers and traditional dance instructors should be supported to ensure effective knowledge transfer. School curricula should integrate local cultural education to raise awareness and appreciation for Maraga Dance.

b) Increased Support and Policy

The government and cultural institutions should provide greater support in the form of funding, facilities, and promotion for the preservation of Maraga Dance. Policies supporting the preservation of local culture need to be implemented to ensure the sustainability of this tradition. Aswar (2018) notes that increased government support is crucial for cultural preservation.

c) Cultural Awareness Campaigns

Cultural awareness campaigns through social media, community events, and cultural festivals can help raise public awareness about the importance of preserving Maraga Dance. Engaging community leaders, artists, and influencers in these campaigns can reach a wider audience and foster pride in local culture.

d) Documentation and Research

Enhanced documentation and research efforts on Maraga Dance are essential. Publishing research findings in books, articles, and digital media can serve as valuable references for educators and dance practitioners. Good documentation will ensure that knowledge about Maraga Dance can be passed down to future generations. Basri (2017) emphasizes the importance of documentation in cultural preservation efforts.

e) Collaboration and Cultural Exchange

Collaborating with communities and artists from other regions can enrich and strengthen efforts to preserve Maraga Dance. Cultural exchanges allow dancers and the community to learn from the experiences and practices of other cultures and introduce Maraga Dance to a broader audience.

f) Innovation Without Losing Essence

While it is important to maintain the authenticity of Maraga Dance, innovation in the presentation of the dance is also necessary to keep it relevant in today's context. Incorporating modern elements into Maraga Dance performances can attract the interest of younger generations without compromising its traditional essence and meaning.

By addressing these challenges and implementing strategic measures, Maraga Dance can continue to serve as a powerful cultural identity for the Bugis-Makassar people. These preservation efforts not only protect cultural heritage but also enrich the cultural life of the Bugis-Makassar community and strengthen their pride in their cultural identity.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach to examine the role of Maraga Dance in preserving and reinforcing Bugis-Makassar cultural identity. A qualitative methodology is suitable for exploring cultural phenomena, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of social meanings, values, and practices associated with traditional art forms (Creswell, 2014). The methods utilized in this research include literature review, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, each providing unique insights into the cultural significance and preservation efforts surrounding Maraga Dance. Below is a detailed description of each method:

a. Literature Review

The literature review focuses on gathering information from existing studies, books, journals, and other written sources that discuss the historical and cultural context of Maraga Dance, its role in Bugis-Makassar identity, and preservation challenges. This method helps establish a foundation for understanding the traditional values embedded within Maraga Dance and its significance to the Bugis-Makassar community. Reviewing related literature provides the theoretical background necessary to support and contextualize the findings (Neuman, 2011).

b. Participatory Observation

Participatory observation involves direct involvement in community events, ceremonies, and cultural practices where Maraga Dance is performed. This method allows the researcher to observe the interactions, behaviors, and expressions of individuals participating in or watching the dance, thus capturing how Maraga Dance serves as a cultural unifier and symbol of pride. The insights gained from participatory observation help reveal how the community perceives and values Maraga Dance, making it a critical method for understanding its role in cultural preservation (Spradley, 1980).

c. In-depth Interviews

The study includes in-depth interviews with key informants such as cultural experts, community leaders, dancers, and instructors involved in Maraga Dance. This method enables the collection of personal narratives, perspectives, and interpretations of Maraga Dance's importance within the Bugis-Makassar identity. Open-ended questions are employed to encourage comprehensive responses, and the flexibility of the interview format allows participants to share their experiences and thoughts in a detailed and nuanced way (Kvale, 1996). For example, community leaders or dance instructors can provide insights on how Maraga Dance has evolved, its role in contemporary Bugis-Makassar culture, and the impact of globalization on traditional practices.

d. Document Analysis

Document analysis is conducted on materials such as event programs, photographs, videos of performances, and other media depicting Maraga Dance. This method helps in understanding the symbolic representations and visual elements of Maraga Dance, which contribute to the dance's role in Bugis-Makassar identity. By analyzing these documents, the researcher can assess how Maraga Dance is presented, performed, and perceived over time, thus providing additional context for the cultural and social dimensions of the dance (Bowen, 2009).

e. Data Analysis

The collected data from literature review, observations, interviews, and document analysis are analyzed using thematic analysis, a process that identifies key themes, patterns, and meanings related to Maraga Dance's role in cultural preservation. Thematic coding is employed to categorize data based on recurring

topics such as cultural significance, identity reinforcement, and community involvement. This process aids in drawing connections between Maraga Dance and Bugis-Makassar identity, and in identifying effective strategies for preservation (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results and Discussion

a. The Role of Maraga Dance in Cultural Identity

Maraga Dance serves as a symbol of pride for the Bugis-Makassar community. Through this dance, they express their unique and rich cultural identity. Maraga Dance is also a medium for introducing Bugis-Makassar culture to younger generations and to the outside world, ensuring that this cultural identity is continuously preserved and appreciated.

Maraga Dance also plays an educational role. In the process of learning the dance, young dancers not only master its movements but also come to understand the cultural values and history embedded within it. This makes Maraga Dance an effective tool for transmitting cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. The dance is often performed at various community events, which indirectly strengthens the sense of togetherness and solidarity among community members. It provides a space for people to gather, share stories, and deepen their social bonds.

As expressed by a community leader, "Maraga Dance is a bridge connecting the younger generation with their cultural heritage. This dance reminds us of the importance of upholding noble values and strengthening social ties within the community" (Said, 2021).

One of the biggest challenges in preserving Maraga Dance is the influence of modernization and globalization. Young people tend to be more attracted to popular culture from outside, which reduces their interest in traditional arts like Maraga Dance. Thus, innovative efforts are needed to keep Maraga Dance relevant and appealing to younger generations.

The preservation of Maraga Dance requires support from various stakeholders, including the government, cultural institutions, and the community. Without adequate support, both in terms of funding and preservation programs, Maraga Dance risks being marginalized and losing its significance over time.

b. Efforts to Preserve Maraga Dance

Integrating Maraga Dance into school curricula and providing dance training programs for children and teenagers are crucial steps in preserving this dance. This way, younger generations will become more familiar with and appreciative of their cultural heritage.

Organizing regular cultural festivals featuring Maraga Dance can increase public appreciation of the dance. Such festivals can also serve as a platform for promoting Bugis-Makassar culture at national and international levels.

Documenting and researching Maraga Dance, including its history, significance, and dance techniques, will help safeguard essential information about this dance so that it is not lost. Research findings can also serve as a reference for future preservation efforts.



Image 01. Maraga Dance Performance (Doc. Nurachmy 2024)

Maraga Dance plays a significant role in preserving and strengthening the cultural identity of the Bugis-Makassar people. Through this dance, noble values and ancestral cultural heritage can be continuously passed down to the next generation. Therefore, a collective effort is needed from all parties to preserve Maraga Dance so that it can thrive amid modernization and globalization.

As stated by a cultural expert, “The preservation of Maraga Dance is not merely about maintaining an art form but also about preserving the identity and cultural character of a community. This is our shared responsibility” (Halim, 2022).

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that Maraga Dance plays a vital role as a cultural identity of the Bugis-Makassar community. This dance is not only a symbol of pride but also a medium for introducing cultural values to younger generations and the wider public. Maraga Dance serves as an effective tool for cultural education, where dancers not only learn the movements but also gain an understanding of the history and values embedded within the tradition. Additionally, Maraga Dance contributes to strengthening social bonds and community solidarity through its performances at various community events.

However, the challenges of modernization and globalization threaten the sustainability of Maraga Dance, especially among the younger generation, who tend to be more drawn to popular culture. Thus, the preservation of Maraga Dance requires support from various parties, including the government, cultural institutions, and the community. Initiatives such as integrating Maraga Dance into the educational curriculum, organizing cultural festivals, and conducting documentation and research are strategic steps that must be continuously reinforced.

With structured preservation efforts, Maraga Dance can continue to fulfill its role as a symbol of cultural identity and a source of pride for the Bugis-Makassar people, while also contributing to Indonesia’s cultural heritage amidst the pressures of modernization.

References

- Aswar, A. (2018). *Government Support in the Preservation of Traditional Culture*. Makassar: Lembaga Kebudayaan Sulawesi Selatan.
- Basri, M. (2017). *Cultural Documentation: The Key to Tradition Preservation*. Makassar: Penerbit Daerah.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). *Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method*. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology*. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Neuman, W. L. (2011). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Nugraha, M. (2021). *The Impact of Urbanization on Local Culture Preservation*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Rakyat.
- Rachman, I. (2019). *Cultural Education in Schools: A Case Study of Traditional Dance*. Bandung: Penerbit Pendidikan.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Suryadi, A. (2020). *The Influence of Globalization on Local Culture*. Jakarta: Pustaka Ilmu.
- Wahyuningsi, W. (2021). *Paraga Performances in Pa'benteng Village, Marusu District, Maros Regency: Meaning and Function of Paraga*. Universitas Hasanuddin.
- Wibisono, B. (2020). *Cultural Commercialization: An Analysis of Its Impact on Tradition*. Surabaya: Penerbit Budaya.