



The Diffusion of Jaranan Cultural Innovation among Generation Z through Art Studio Activities

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educational communication strategies play a significant role in enhancing generation Z's involvement and supporting the sustainability of jaranan cultural preservation amid the rapid development of the modern era.

Abstract: The development of globalization and digital technology has led to a decline in generation Z's interest in traditional culture, including the traditional jaranan performance art. This condition highlights the need for effective communication strategies to encourage young people to remain interested in and actively participate in cultural preservation. This study aims to identify and analyze the communication strategies employed by the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio in preserving jaranan culture among generation Z. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. This research informants consisted of the head of the art studio, instructor, and generation Z members. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the communication strategy was implemented through identifying generation Z as the primary target audience, developing educational and persuasive messages, utilizing face to face communication as the primary communication medium, and optimizing the role of communicators who possess credibility and emotional closeness with the members. In addition, the art studio introduced innovations in the presentation of jaranan performances without diminishing their cultural values. Intensive community communication also fostered a sense of kinship, solidarity, and active participation among generation Z members in the studio's activities. This study concludes that adaptive, participatory, and educational communication strategies that adaptive, participatory, and

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Cultural Preservation, Jaranan, Generation Z

Introduction

Globalization and the rapid advancement of digital technology have transformed the way Generation Z perceives traditional culture. Easy access to popular culture through digital media has contributed to a declining interest in traditional arts, including jaranan. Nevertheless, jaranan remains one of Indonesia's cultural heritages with significant historical, social, and philosophical value that should be preserved as part of the nation's cultural identity ([Widayati et al., 2023](#)). Similar patterns have been documented in other traditional Javanese performance forms ([Karo et al., 2024](#)) note that the sustainability of kuda lumping as a marker of Javanese cultural identity depends heavily on intergenerational transmission through intensive training and mentoring, while ([Rahmawati & Prayogi, 2021](#)) emphasize that the cultural values embedded in such

performances risk erosion when younger generations are not actively involved in their practice.

The preservation of culture depends not only on the continuity of performances but also on the ability to transmit cultural values to younger generations. In this context, art studios (*sanggar*) play an essential role as spaces for learning, cultural education, and heritage preservation. Through regular training sessions, cultural performances, and interactions among members, art studios serve as effective platforms for introducing jaranan culture to Generation Z. This role is consistent with findings from other cultural communities in Indonesia, where *sanggar seni* have been shown to strengthen young people's sense of ownership toward local culture through educative and creative programs ([Hidayat et al., 2025](#)) and to build participatory engagement through combined training, workshops, and digital promotion ([Anisah, 2023](#)).

This process can be explained through ([Roger, 2003](#)) Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which describes how an innovation is communicated through specific channels within a social system until it is eventually adopted by its members. The theory, originally developed to explain the spread of agricultural and technological innovations, has since been widely applied across disciplines—including communication, education, and cultural studies—to explain how new ideas or practices gain acceptance within a community ([Sahin, 2006](#)). In the context of cultural preservation, innovation does not imply altering cultural values; rather, it involves presenting culture in ways that are more engaging and relevant to the characteristics of younger generations, thereby ensuring its sustainability in the modern era. This is in line with the international framework for safeguarding living heritage, which emphasizes that intangible cultural heritage must be continuously recreated by communities in response to their environment and history in order to remain viable ([UNESCO, 2003](#)).

Previous studies have primarily examined communication strategies employed by art studios and the use of social media in cultural preservation (([Astagini & Parulian, 2024](#)). ([Tedjakumala et al., 2024](#)) Comparable findings from studies on Gen Z engagement with cultural heritage abroad show that digital storytelling and social media can strengthen young people's emotional bonds with tradition (([R. Jeljeli et al., 2025](#)) yet such approaches remain insufficiently explored within the specific context of traditional performing arts such as jaranan. Research focusing on the diffusion of cultural innovation through the activities of art studios in fostering Generation Z's engagement with jaranan also remains limited ([Wikandini et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, participatory communication approaches—which position community members as active participants rather than passive recipients of information—have been argued to be central to sustainable development and cultural empowerment ([Srinivas & H, 2001](#)) yet have rarely been examined specifically within the diffusion of traditional performing-arts innovation among Indonesian youth.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the diffusion of jaranan cultural innovation among Generation Z through the activities of the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of communication studies, particularly the application of Diffusion of Innovations Theory in cultural

preservation, while also providing practical insights for cultural communities in designing more adaptive preservation strategies for younger generations.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach to examine the diffusion of jaranan cultural innovation among Generation Z through the activities of the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to understand social phenomena comprehensively by exploring participants' experiences, perspectives, and interactions within their natural setting ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)). A qualitative case study design was considered appropriate because it allows an in-depth, contextual examination of a contemporary phenomenon within a bounded real-life setting, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident ([Robert, 2018](#)).

The research was conducted at the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio, Tuban Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The research subjects consisted of the head of the art studio, instructors, and Generation Z members who actively participated in the studio's cultural preservation activities. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and active involvement in the diffusion of jaranan culture ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)).

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out during routine training sessions and cultural performances to understand the implementation of cultural innovation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information regarding the participants' experiences, perceptions, and roles in the diffusion process. Documentation, including photographs, archives, and activity records, was used to complement and verify the collected data ([Sugiyono, 2019](#)).

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by ([Matthew et al., 2014](#)), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and technique triangulation were employed by comparing information obtained from different informants and multiple data collection methods ([Matthew et al., 2014](#)). This research involved human participants who voluntarily agreed to participate after receiving an explanation of the research objectives. The identities of all participants were kept confidential, and the data were used solely for academic purposes. Since this study did not involve clinical intervention or experimental procedures, formal ethical approval was not required. Research ethics were maintained through informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect for participants throughout the research process.

Result and Discussion

The findings indicate that the diffusion of jaranan cultural innovation among Generation Z at the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio followed the five stages of the innovation-decision process proposed by ([Roger, 2003](#)) : knowledge, persuasion,

decision, implementation, and confirmation. The innovation introduced by the studio was the revitalization of jaranan sodoran through the addition of musical instruments, including the saron, demung, and serompét, while preserving the traditional values of the performance. This innovation was designed to make jaranan more appealing to younger generations without changing its cultural identity.

At the knowledge stage, Generation Z members became familiar with the innovation through routine training sessions, direct communication, and regular discussions organized by the studio. These activities enabled members to understand the purpose and characteristics of the innovation before participating in its implementation. The study found that interpersonal communication between the studio leader and members played an essential role in introducing the innovation effectively, a pattern consistent with practices found among other Indonesian art studios that rely on close mentoring relationships to build trust before introducing change ([Rochmat et al., 2024](#))

During the persuasion and decision stages, members gradually developed positive attitudes toward the innovation. Rather than imposing changes, the studio encouraged discussion and collective deliberation, allowing members to express their opinions before deciding to adopt the innovation ([Maharani, 2024](#)). This participatory communication approach increased members' acceptance of cultural innovation and strengthened their commitment to preserving jaranan. These findings support ([Roger, 2003](#)) argument that innovation adoption is influenced by communication processes and social interaction within a community. They are also consistent with the findings of ([Salam et al., 2025](#)), who reported that participatory innovation is more effective than top-down approaches in cultural preservation, as well as with ([Sukma et al., 2024](#)), who found that instilling character values through local wisdom in traditional performances strengthens young people's sense of ownership toward the art form.

The implementation stage showed that the innovation was immediately incorporated into the studio's routine activities and public performances. While creative elements, such as contemporary costumes and additional musical arrangements, were introduced in the creative version of jaranan sodoran, the traditional (pakem) version remained unchanged to preserve its authenticity. Members reported that these innovations increased their enthusiasm and motivation to participate in training and performances because the performances became more attractive and relevant to Generation Z ([Sari, 2017](#)). This balance between innovation and authenticity echoes findings from studies of other traditional performing arts, in which the symbolic meaning embedded in costumes, music, and properties is deliberately maintained even as presentation formats are updated ([Sobur, 2004](#))

The final stage, confirmation, demonstrated that members reinforced their decision to adopt the innovation through continued participation in the studio. Many participants expressed a strong sense of belonging, describing the studio as a "second home." This emotional attachment strengthened their commitment to preserving jaranan and participating in cultural activities. Overall, the findings indicate that the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio successfully facilitated the diffusion of jaranan cultural innovation

through participatory communication, interpersonal relationships, and continuous member involvement, resulting in a high level of innovation adoption among Generation Z.

The findings demonstrate that the diffusion of jaranan cultural innovation at the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio occurred through the five stages of the innovation-decision process proposed by (Roger, 2003). These stages were reflected in the studio's efforts to introduce innovations while preserving the traditional values of jaranan. Rather than replacing the original performance, the studio revitalized jaranan sodoran by incorporating additional musical instruments and more engaging performance elements, making the art form more attractive to Generation Z without compromising its cultural identity. This finding supports (Roger, 2003) argument that innovations are more readily adopted when they are perceived as compatible with existing values and practices, a principle that has also been observed in the diffusion of technological innovations across cultural and educational settings (Sahin, 2006).

The study also highlights the importance of interpersonal communication in facilitating the diffusion process. The studio leader and instructors acted as change agents by introducing innovations through routine training sessions, discussions, and direct mentoring. These communication channels enabled Generation Z members to understand the objectives of the innovation, express their opinions, and gradually develop positive attitudes toward its adoption. This finding is consistent with (Roger, 2003), who emphasizes that interpersonal communication is one of the most effective channels for reducing uncertainty and encouraging innovation adoption within a social system, and with (Roger, 2003), who further argue that the credibility and social proximity of change agents strongly influence the pace and extent of innovation adoption within a community.

Another significant finding is that the adoption of cultural innovation was influenced by the participatory approach implemented by the studio. Members were actively involved in discussions before innovations were introduced, allowing them to participate in decision-making rather than merely receiving instructions. This participatory process strengthened members' sense of ownership and increased their commitment to preserving jaranan. The findings are in line with (Caesarany et al., 2019), who argue that the success of innovation diffusion depends not only on the innovation itself but also on effective communication within the social system, and with the broader argument that participatory communication empowers community members as co-creators of change rather than passive audiences (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

Furthermore, the implementation stage demonstrates that cultural preservation does not necessarily require maintaining traditions in a static form. The Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio successfully balanced innovation and authenticity by maintaining the traditional (pakem) version of jaranan while developing creative performance variations that appealed to younger audiences. This supports the view that cultural preservation should be adaptive to social change without eliminating the essential cultural values inherited from previous generations (Citra, 2020), and is consistent with comparable case studies of sanggar seni that combine heritage festivals, workshops, and digital promotion to reach younger audiences without diluting cultural authenticity (Tedjakumala et al., 2024).

The confirmation stage indicates that Generation Z members continued to participate actively in the studio's activities after adopting the innovation. Their sustained involvement was not only driven by interest in the performances but also by emotional attachment and a shared commitment to preserving local culture. This finding confirms Rogers' (2003) proposition that innovation adoption is reinforced when individuals experience positive outcomes and receive continuous social support within their community, a dynamic also observed among Generation Z audiences whose engagement with cultural heritage abroad is sustained through emotionally resonant, community-oriented communication ([R. Jeljeli et al., 2025](#)).

Theoretically, this study extends the application of Diffusion of Innovations Theory by demonstrating that the theory is relevant not only in technological contexts but also in the preservation of traditional culture. Practically, the findings suggest that art studios and cultural organizations should prioritize participatory communication, continuous mentoring, and adaptive cultural innovations to increase Generation Z's engagement in cultural preservation. These strategies may contribute to sustaining traditional arts while ensuring their relevance in the contemporary digital era.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the diffusion of jaranan cultural innovation among Generation Z at the Wahyu Kawedhar Art and Cultural Studio was successfully implemented through the stages of the innovation-decision process proposed by (Roger, 2003). The studio introduced innovations in the presentation of jaranan while preserving its traditional cultural values, enabling the art form to remain relevant and attractive to younger generations. The findings indicate that interpersonal communication, participatory activities, and continuous mentoring played significant roles in encouraging Generation Z to adopt and actively participate in cultural preservation.

This study is limited to a single art studio and focuses exclusively on Generation Z members within one local cultural community, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts. In addition, the study primarily examines face-to-face communication strategies, with limited exploration of digital communication platforms in supporting cultural innovation diffusion. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct comparative studies involving different cultural communities or traditional art organizations across various regions. Further studies should also investigate the role of digital communication, including social media and other digital platforms, in facilitating the diffusion of cultural innovation and strengthening youth engagement in cultural preservation across broader cultural communities.

The combination of innovation and cultural authenticity strengthened members' sense of belonging and increased their commitment to sustaining jaranan culture. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that Diffusion of Innovations Theory is applicable to the context of traditional cultural preservation, particularly in explaining how cultural innovations are accepted within a community. Practically, the findings suggest that art studios and cultural organizations should continue to develop adaptive and participatory

approaches to encourage greater youth engagement while maintaining the authenticity of local cultural heritage.

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