

**COMPILATION OF PAPERS ON RESEARCH,  
GLOBAL SYNERGY  
FOR PROGRESS AND BENEFITS:  
UNITING SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**



اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَىٰ سَائِرِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ  
**UNIVERSITI  
TEKNOLOGI  
MARA**



**IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
THE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM 2024**

ORGANISED BY  
AKADEMI PENGAJIAN BAHASA  
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA (UiTM)  
CAWANGAN NEGERI SEMBILAN, KAMPUS SEREMBAN

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM DARUL ULUM LAMONGAN (UNISDA)  
& INDONESIAN STRATEGIC PARTNERS

## Chapter 7

# Exploring Local Wisdom: The Character Values Inherent in Cirebon Mask Dance

*Ai Sutini*

<sup>1</sup>*Indonesia University of Education*

*aisutini@upi.edu*

**Abstract:** *The city of Cirebon is known for its diverse local wisdom, including cultural practices passed down through generations. This highlights the urgency of instilling character values embedded within traditional cultural elements. Cirebon Mask Dance is one of the cultural heritages that continues to be preserved today. The significance of safeguarding and promoting Cirebon Mask Dance lies in understanding the character values expressed through its presentation. By comprehending its philosophical aspects, the unique characteristics of the Cirebon masks, and the dance costumes, the authenticity of Cirebon Mask Dance can be maintained without altering any foundational elements. Furthermore, Cirebon Mask Dance is an effective educational medium for instilling moral and spiritual values in younger generations. Individuals learn the importance of discipline, cooperation, and respect by engaging in the dance's character values.*

**Keywords:** *Local wisdom, Character values, Cirebon Mask Dance.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cirebon City is located at the border area between West Java and Central Java. Geographically, Cirebon City is situated at 108.33°E and 6.41°S on the north coast of Java Island, East West Java. The area of Cirebon City is 37.35 km<sup>2</sup> or 3,735.8 hectares. It is a city rich in cultural and historical heritage. One of Cirebon's cultural wealth lies in its unique traditional arts. Arts such as Cirebon mask dance showcase not only aesthetic beauty but also philosophical and historical meanings. This reflects the wisdom and values of the local community passed down from generation to generation. This uniqueness becomes a cultural attraction that strengthens Cirebon's identity amidst the development of the times.

Culture, in the scientific context, is understood as a system of ideas, actions, and human works that develop in society through a learning process. According to Koentjaraningrat (Faris, et al. 2017), culture includes ideas, values, norms, patterned activities, and physical works of humans that depict the close relationship between abstract and concrete aspects of human life. Therefore, culture encompasses all aspects of human life, including behaviour patterns, belief systems, attitudes, and all human activities that characterize a particular community group. Within culture, there are values and norms that help create a more meaningful life filled with positive values, regulating social interactions, and maintaining harmony in society.

Traditional arts play an important role in maintaining and strengthening the cultural identity of a community. Through various forms of expression such as dance, music, theater, visual arts, and literature, traditional arts function as a medium to transmit cultural values, history, and identity to the next generation. Traditional arts reflect cultural wealth and ancestral heritage, which form the foundation for the collective identity of the community (Sari, 2024). Traditional arts, such as performing

arts, often play a role in rituals, traditional ceremonies, as well as entertainment. Performing arts in Indonesia have evolved from social needs to become educational tools and media for conveying cultural values, also reflecting social transformation over time.

A concrete example is traditional dance. Each movement in traditional dance generally has deep meaning and symbolism, reflecting the philosophy and worldview of its supporting community. Cirebon City is distinguished by its traditional mask dance. Cirebon Mask Dance has five characters: Panji, Samba, Rummyang, Tumenggung, and Klana. Each of these masks has different characteristics and contains implicit character values. This dance is usually performed at government events, ceremonies, weddings, and other public events. It is performed by one to several dancers, accompanied by a *Sinden* (female singer) and ten musicians. Mask dance is one of the traditional arts potentials that can serve as an alternative medium for character value development within local wisdom.

## **2. METHODS**

This study employs the literature review method, a qualitative approach that systematically examines and synthesizes existing studies, theories, and findings relevant to Cirebon Mask Dance. Through this method, the researcher identifies gaps in the current body of knowledge regarding the dance's historical, cultural, and artistic significance, situates the study within the broader academic context of traditional Indonesian performing arts, and establishes a robust theoretical foundation. By critically analyzing scholarly articles, books, and other credible sources, this approach integrates diverse perspectives on the dance's symbolism, regional variations, and evolving practices. Furthermore, it aids in formulating research questions and objectives that address how Tari Topeng Cirebon reflects and preserves local identity, offering a comprehensive understanding of its cultural and artistic value.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **3.1 Local Wisdom**

Local wisdom can be understood as the utilization of human intellect to act and respond to events. Etymologically, local wisdom (local wisdom) or wisdom is defined as an individual's ability to use reason and thought to determine actions or attitudes toward an event, reflecting the designed relationship patterns between humans and their environment. (Rianto& Yuliananingsih 2021). Thus, local wisdom represents the values and cultural roots embodied in traditions, customs, experiences, and knowledge possessed by the community, forming an essential element in their culture. Local wisdom plays a significant role in regulating the social order of society. It has two dimensions: the dimension of peace and the dimension of welfare. The dimension of peace includes internal aspects within the social community, such as politeness, honesty, solidarity, harmony, deliberation, commitment, positive thinking, and gratitude. Meanwhile, the dimension of welfare encompasses aspects such as hard work, discipline, education, health, mutual cooperation, gender equality, environmental preservation, and cultural creativity (Kurnianto, 2020). According to Yuniati and Khotimah (2016), the characteristics of local wisdom include various abilities that allow it to remain relevant and resilient amidst external cultural influences:

- a. Able to withstand external influences, maintaining its essence despite pressures from foreign cultures.
- b. Has the capacity to accommodate elements of foreign culture, by adapting or accepting new elements without losing its fundamental identity.
- c. Shows the ability to integrate foreign cultural elements into the original culture, creating

harmonious synergy between local traditions and new influences.

- d. Able to control external influences, ensuring that cultural changes remain aligned with the values.
- e. Plays a role in providing direction for cultural development, guiding social and cultural transformations while adhering to principles passed down through generations.

Local wisdom plays an important role in society, particularly in creating and maintaining profound social values. According to Mazid & Farikah (2020), the primary functions of local wisdom include:

- a. **Preservation of Cultural Identity:** Local wisdom serves as a binder in preserving cultural heritage, which can strengthen the identity of a community and introduce and maintain the values of customs and traditions passed down through generations.
- b. **Strengthening Social Life:** Local wisdom helps regulate social behavior within the community through values and norms that function to control social interactions and maintain harmony among individuals in the community.
- c. **Guiding Community Development:** Local wisdom not only preserves traditions but also guides community progress by integrating local culture with external influences without losing the existing value essence.
- d. **Instilling Character Education Values:** In education, local wisdom can be a primary source for shaping individual character. Through arts, customs, and culture, the community can instill values such as discipline, responsibility, and patriotism in the younger generation.

### **3.2 Philosophy of Cirebon Mask Dance**

Cirebon Mask Dance is estimated to have existed since the 14th to 15th century. This art form continued to develop and gained significant roles during the reign of the Demak Sultanate, where Cirebon Mask Dance was used as a medium for Islamic preaching and spreading Islamic teachings (Dwaji, & Falah, 2023). Cirebon City was one of the centers for spreading Islam, where religious leaders used cultural arts, such as mask dance, as a medium to invite people to embrace Islam. As a result of this dissemination process, mask dance has endured to this day and continues to play an important role in various religious activities and traditional ceremonies, such as mapag sri, nadran, and other cultural rituals (Pramadanti & Hartono, 2024). This mask dance is presented as a performance containing philosophical values and implicit character values. Each element of the mask dance contains unique philosophical values. These values are reflected in the distinctive characteristics of each mask, showcased through color variations. These colours symbolically represent the journey of human life, reflecting the life cycle with all its aspects and changes. The mask dance shares similarities with other styles, featuring five characters: Panji, Samba, Rummyang, Tumenggung, and Klana. It is said that these five masks represent different characteristics and depict human nature from birth to adulthood. The Panji mask represents the stage of human life at birth, characterized by calmness and purity. The Pamindo or Samba mask symbolizes childhood, when humans begin to explore their surroundings. The Rummyang mask illustrates the stage of self-discovery, where individuals begin to understand their identity and existence. The Tumenggung mask reflects the stage of adulthood, marked by discipline, responsibility, and stability. Meanwhile, the Klana mask depicts the stage where humans have reached physical and mental maturity but are accompanied by tendencies toward arrogance and greed (Pramadanti & Hartono, 2024). Cirebon Mask Dance has great potential as a source of character education learning, as it contains various elements that can evoke positive attitudes and behaviors, both for the dancers and the audience. These elements include dance movements, costumes, accessories, props, makeup, accompanying music, and the historical or story background associated with it. Each of these elements reflects important values such as courage, discipline, cooperation, loyalty, obedience, honesty, and creativity, which can be internalized and applied in daily life. This mask dance also reflects the value of discipline through its neat and orderly movements, while cooperation is demonstrated

through the unity of the dancers in the performance. Additionally, Cirebon mask dance is inseparable from its graceful and elegant movements. The dance's hallmark lies in its delicate hand movements, accompanied by drum and rebab music that dominates throughout the performance

### 3.3 Mask Dance Performances

The Mask Dance performance involves five characters, each with distinct roles and characteristics. Each mask embodies unique character values and representations.

#### a. Panji Mask



Figure 1. Panji

Mask The Panji mask, characterized by a clean white face, symbolizes purity akin to a newborn baby. Representing purity and innocence, Panji is a gentle and harmonious character. The Panji dance is usually depicted with delicate movements. Its body language suggests that the dance is gentle, not overly active, and quite intricate. The moral message conveyed by the Panji Mask Dance of Cirebon emphasizes that humans should behave well, be polite, gentle in speech, and possess noble character (Yuhanda, 2019).

#### b. Samba Mask



Figure 2.

Samba Mask This character is more cheerful and lively, symbolizing childhood or a joyful life. Representing children, the movements of this mask are very agile and playful, like children's behaviour.

#### c. Rumyang Mask



*Figure 3*

Rumyang Mask The Rumyang mask symbolizes the transition period, the shift from childhood to adulthood, filled with curiosity and exploration. This mask represents a person entering adolescence. The dancer using this mask performs movements that convey the message that all humans should do good.

d. Tumenggung Mask



Figure 4.

Tumenggung Mask, It describes the life cycle of a person who has reached full maturity and stability. It depicts an adult who is gallant, assertive, and responsible, with movements resembling a noble or a chief. This mask symbolizes a person with firmness and noble character, providing a message about high loyalty characteristics and personality.

e. Klana Mask



Figure 5.

Klana Mask, The Klana character symbolizes uncontrolled desire and anger. This dance is full of strong expressions and aggressive movements, reflecting internal human conflict. Despite depicting an evil role, this mask delivers an important lesson that humans should strive for life and happiness through good means. The Klana Sewandana mask is red, similar to the wayang kulit character Klana Sewandana. It portrays King Prabu Klana Sewandana with an antagonist character, depicted with a red mask, bulging eyes, thick mustache, and protruding teeth, indicating a harsh, brave, and arrogant king (Hanif, 2019).

In addition to the characteristics of the masks, there are values in the elements and colors of the dancers' costumes. The dancers' costumes are absolute as they are the dancers' identity, ensuring that through movement, accompanying music, attire, and expression, the performance is perfectly conveyed.

According to Dyah (2007), the explanation of Cirebon Mask Dance costumes is as follows:

f. Panji Mask Dance Costume



Figure 6.

Panji Mask Dance Costume The upper part of the Panji Mask Dance costume includes head decorations consisting of a mask and Sobrah or Tekes, made from human hair shaped into a half circle on the crown, with two thin circular pendants in the middle. The middle part represents a delicate and silent king's costume, characterized by a bright-colored dodot cloth. Accessories include a necklace, shoulder belts, belt, bracelets, and a shirt. The lower part uses dodot cloth as a cover.

g. Samba Mask Dance Costume



Figure 7.

Samba Mask Dance Costume The upper part or crown of this costume consists of a mask and Sobrah or Tekes made from human or synthetic hair braided into a half-circle. Just like the upper part of the Panji Sobrah, it has beads and circular decorations on the left and right sides, hanging down. The middle part, representing a delicate and agile king, consists of several accessories such as a necklace, shoulder belts, a belt made of striped velvet, a shirt, and bracelets. The Samba Mask costume dominates in bright colours, with gold-colored fabric attached to the front of the shirt. The lower part uses dodot cloth with the lancar cangcut pattern, usually with mega mendung batik.

h. Rumyang Mask Dance Costume



Figure 8.

Rumyang Mask Dance Costume The upper part uses Sobrah or Tekes with a human hair arrangement, shaped into a half-circle, decorated with a leather jamang, and two thin circular pendants in the middle, adorned with beads. The middle part represents a queen character, using bright-colored dodot cloth. Accessories include a necklace, shoulder belts, a belt, bracelets, and a shirt. The lower part uses dodot cloth with the lancar cangcut pattern, usually with mega mendung or paksi bird motif batik.

i. Tumenggung Mask Dance Costume



Figure 9.

Tumenggung Mask Dance Costume The upper part uses a peci-bendo, a modification and replacement for Sobrah. The middle part represents a dignified royal official character, with a dark-colored shirt for the evil character. The sleeves have gold thread biku-biku details. The belt is made of striped velvet and lotus motifs. The lower part uses sontog pants, related to open field activities, requiring freedom of movement and cleanliness aspects for the dancer.

j. Klana Mask Dance Costume



Figure 10.

Klana Mask Dance Costume The Klana Mask Dance costume includes a kutung shirt, sontog pants, injang, krodong, kace, tie, ampok, hand and foot bracelets, keris, Sobrah/Tekes, and a shawl. The kutung shirt is a short-sleeved top adorned with colored lace. The sontog pants are knee-length shorts with lace, made of velvet or red satin, designed for dancer flexibility. After wearing the shirt and pants, the dancer wears a batik/tapih cotton cloth with mega mendung motifs. Then, a stagen is used for firmness, with the dodot lancar wingkis as a cover, followed by an ampok with a red base color adorned with bead-shaped flowers. The dance movements are aggressive, energetic, with high leg lifts and wide hand stretches.

### 3.4 Exploring Character Values

Traditional Indonesian mask dances, like the Cirebon Mask Dance, depict stories rich in cultural and spiritual meanings. Each mask in this dance represents a character conveying specific moral messages. For instance, in Cirebon tradition, the Panji Mask symbolizes purity and innocence at the beginning of life, while the Klana Mask reflects desires, ambitions, and greed emerging when humans are dominated

by worldly desires (Prameswari & Rifanjani, 2019). The colours on the masks are not merely for aesthetics but also carry symbolic meanings. White indicates purity, red represents passion or anger, and black signifies mystical strength. Additionally, design elements like thick eyebrows or bulging eyes emphasize the emotional or spiritual aspects of the character. Dance movements are also full of symbolism: smooth and gentle movements reflect peace, while firm and energetic movements indicate authority or conflict. This symbolism is not only part of the performance art but also serves to highlight the human connection with greater spiritual forces. This dance plays a role in maintaining social and ecological balance, linking the community to their tradition rich in spiritual meanings. One effort to preserve and develop this dance is to explore the character education values contained in the dance and its inheritance process. According to Utamia & Indrawan (2024), character education is a system designed to instill certain personality values in students, including aspects of knowledge, awareness, motivation, and behavior encouraging the application of these values in life. The importance of character education for the nation's generation lies in its ability to shape resilient, competitive, moral, and tolerant individuals. Gotong royong, as a form of local wisdom closely tied to Indonesian culture, holds important values in strengthening the social character of society. In the field of education, gotong royong is applied to develop a sense of solidarity, cooperation, and concern among individuals. Traditional cultural arts, such as dance, can be a primary source in instilling character education values.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The Cirebon Mask Dance, rich in symbolism and philosophical values, not only functions as a form of artistic expression but also as an effective educational tool to instil moral values such as discipline, cooperation, respect, and responsibility. Each mask worn by the dancers symbolizes various aspects of human life's journey, such as purity, enthusiasm, introspection, responsibility, and a warning against the dangers of greed. The dance movements, ranging from gentle and graceful to strong and energetic, reflect the emotional spectrum of humans. The costumes and use of colours in the masks add depth to the symbolism, with each colour conveying specific moral messages, such as white for purity and red for courage or passion. Through the learning process and internalization of these characters, it maintains a balance between spiritual and social aspects in community life.

#### REFERENCES

- Dwaji, C. N., & Falah, A. M. (2023). Kajian Kritik Seni: Makna Artistik Topeng Cirebon pada Pertunjukan Tari Topeng Cirebon. *ATRAT: Jurnal Seni Rupa*, 11(2), 153-165.
- Dyah, A. (2007). Makna Simbolis pada Unsur Visual Kostum Tari Topeng Babakan Cirebon Keni Arja di Desa Slangit. *ITB Jurnal Visual Art*, 1(2), 224-245.
- Faris, A., Khooyum, A., Thoriqoh, I. U., & Nisak, L. (2017). Seni Tradisional Bantengan Di Dusun Boro Panggungrejo Gondanglegi Malang: Sebuah Kajian Etnografi. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah INTAJ*, 1(1), 49-76.
- Hanif, M. W. (2019). Karakteristik Topeng Klana Sewandanagaya Yogyakarta.
- Kurnianto, E. A. (2020). Kearifan Lokal dalam Parikan Tari Topeng Lengger Wonosobo. *UNDAS: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Bahasa dan Sastra*, 16(1), 47-64.
- Mazid, S., Prasetyo, D., & Farikah, F. (2020). Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Sebagai Pembentuk Karakter Masyarakat. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 10(2), 249-262.
- Pramadanti, T., Malarsih, M., & Hartono, H. (2024). Penyajian Tari Topeng Klana Cirebon Gaya Gegesik dalam Konteks Budaya Pesisir sebagai Sumber Kearifan Lokal. *Joged*, 23(1), 92-113.
- Prameswari, S. I., Iskandar, A. M., & Rifanjani, S. (2019). Kearifan lokal masyarakat adat dayak hibun dalam melestarikan hutan teringkang di dusun beruak desa gunam kecamatan parindu kabupaten sanggau. *Jurnal Hutan Lestari*, 7(4).

- Rianto, H., & Yuliananingsih, Y. (2021). Menggali nilai-nilai karakter dalam permainan tradisional. *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 19(1), 120-134.
- Sari, R. (2024). Peran Kesenian Tradisional dalam Meningkatkan Identitas Budaya Masyarakat di Era Globalisasi. *Journal of Cilpa*, 1(1).
- Utamia, D. G. S. A. M., & Indrawan, I. K. (2024). Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Pewarisan Tari Baris Jojor Lutung Jenuk Di Desa Selulung Kintamani. *Jurnal Ilmiah Research Student*, 1(5), 01-07.
- Yuhanda, G. P. (2019). Pesan Dalam Tarian Topeng Panji Cirebon. *Komversal*, 1(1), 1-21.
- Yuniati, D., & Khotimah, H. (2016). Kearifan lokal dan praktik pengelolaan hutan bambu pada masyarakat Bali. *Jurnal Penelitian Sosial dan Ekonomi Kehutanan*, 13(1), 63-72.