

Nurturing Youth Character Education Through the “Sungkem Pertiwi” Cultural Performance

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to analyze the influence of cultural arts performances on the character education of the younger generation.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The research employs a qualitative approach, focusing on performances by various art groups, including *karawitan*, Javanese poetry (*gurit jawa*), Indonesian poetry, *wayang padat* (concise puppet shows), and dance. Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources through in-depth interviews, literature reviews, photographic documentation, and observations of digital content on platforms such as YouTube and TikTok.

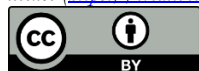
Findings – The results indicate that cultural arts performances have a positive and significant impact on character education. Through performance themes such as “Sungkem Pertiwi,” these artistic showcases serve as a platform for the nation's youth to contribute while instilling moral values, such as respect for parents and elders, and the philosophy of “humanizing human beings” (*memanusiakan manusia*). The sequence of artistic works cohesively provides character lessons encompassing aspects of tolerance, responsibility, and cooperation.

Originality/Value – This research offers a unique contribution by examining the intersection of cultural art performances and character education, focusing on specific art forms such as *karawitan*, Javanese poetry, *wayang padat*, and traditional dance, which are often overlooked in contemporary educational discourse.

Keywords: Cultural Art Performance, Character Education, Sungkem Pertiwi

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cultural arts performances serve as a powerful tool for shaping the character of the younger generation. Through art, young people can naturally absorb positive values like teamwork, tolerance, and responsibility in a way that is both engaging and profound. This study aims to analyze how various traditional performances, ranging from dance and *karawitan* (gamelan music) to *geguritan* (Javanese poetry), Indonesian poetry, *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), and *lesung* (rice mortar music), influence student character development. At their core, these performing arts carry philosophical goals and social functions designed to promote harmony within society (Setyawan et al., 2022). In the Indonesian aesthetic tradition, these arts function as *tontonan* (spectacle), *tatanan* (social order), and *tuntunan* (moral guidance), ensuring that entertainment always serves a higher educational purpose (Sedyawati, 2006).

Performing arts come in many forms and are incredibly diverse, as they can be categorized based on the type of staging and their core artistic elements—ranging from theater and visual arts to dance. According to Soedarsono (2002), these can be further classified into traditional, creative, modern, and contemporary forms based on their historical evolution and social functions.

Traditional performing arts are rooted in community culture and passed down through generations. They adhere to specific rules (“pakem”) that must be upheld and preserved to maintain their ritualistic and philosophical integrity (Sedyawati, 2006). Examples include *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppets), traditional dance, and *Kuda Lumping*.

In contrast, modern performances have been influenced by Western culture and primarily develop in major cities. They offer greater creative freedom, allowing choreographers and directors to express themselves according to their individual visions (Kayam, 1981). This category includes modern

drama, as well as contemporary and modern dance. Additionally, classical forms represent established arts that are considered highly refined and "mapan," such as opera and ballet.

Performing arts encompass a wide array of storytelling genres, including tragedy, comedy, tragi-comedy, melodrama, farce, and musical theater. Fundamentally, performing arts are works of art involving live actions by individuals or groups presented directly before an audience, spanning three primary branches: music, dance, and theater (Soedarsono, 2002). These forms are categorized into traditional (cultural heritage) and modern (contemporary) styles, often functioning as rituals, entertainment, or platforms for social criticism (Kayam, 1981).

The diversity of performing arts can be observed across several disciplines, encompassing dance, theater, music, and various specialized performances. In the realm of *Seni Tari* (Dance), traditional forms such as *Tari Saman* from Aceh, *Tari Kecak* and *Barong* from Bali, and *Tari Tor-Tor* from North Sumatra serve as "living documents" of ethnic identity (Sedyawati, 2006). These coexist with modern styles, including contemporary dance, ballet, and breakdance. Similarly, *Seni Teater* (Theater and Drama) is split between traditional folk theater—such as *Wayang* from Java, *Lenong* from Betawi, *Ketoprak* from Central Java, and *Ludruk* from East Java—and modern iterations like dramatic theater, musicals, opera, cabaret, and solo performances such as stand-up comedy (Soedarsono, 2002).

Within *Seni Musik* (Music), the traditional spectrum includes *Karawitan* concerts, *Gamelan* performances, and *Keroncong* orchestras, while the modern category features band concerts, symphonic orchestras, and vocal groups. Beyond these primary branches, other performing arts contribute to the cultural landscape, ranging from circus arts like acrobatics and magic shows (*sulap*) to language-based arts such as poetry readings, speeches, storytelling, and Javanese *Geguritan* (Kayam, 1981). This wide variety reflects the evolution of performance as both a preservation of heritage and a medium for contemporary creative expression.

The preservation of Javanese culture is a collective responsibility shared by all levels of society to safeguard identity, noble values, and traditions from the pressures of modernization (Kayam, 1981). This effort encompasses the daily use of the Javanese language, the preservation of performing arts, the wearing of traditional attire, and the practice of *unggah-ungguh* (Javanese etiquette). Active community involvement includes the use of Javanese, particularly the *Krama* (polite) register, within family and social interactions to maintain linguistic heritage. Furthermore, early childhood education plays a vital role by introducing children to local arts, traditional games, and Javanese moral values from a young age (Sedyawati, 2006).

Preserving traditional arts also means ensuring the continuity of active cultural practices, such as traditional ceremonies like Javanese weddings, *Sadranan*, circumcisions, and the *kubur ari-ari* (placenta burial) ritual. Communities contribute to this continuity by participating in activities such as *Gamelan*, traditional dance, theater, and wearing traditional attire like *Batik* or *Kebaya* during ceremonial events. Such active engagement is essential to ensure Javanese culture remains relevant and serves as a point of pride for the younger generation, who act as the "whip of leadership" and the future guardians of the nation's cultural legacy (Soedarsono, 2002).

Performing arts also extend to public spaces through street performances, such as busking and pantomime. These art forms often integrate various artistic elements—such as dance accompanied by music, or theater that blends acting, dialogue, and singing—to create a beautiful, unified collaboration. While the aforementioned categories cover a vast spectrum of creative works, the focus here is narrowed specifically to traditional performing arts aimed at cultural preservation.

Focusing on traditional performances serves to build the character of the nation, particularly for Gen-Z. By directing the younger generation toward artistic creation, we foster a positive and constructive environment that encourages them to continue developing high-quality, meaningful works (Soedarsono, 2002). This strategic focus ensures that traditional arts are not merely relics of the past but are active tools for character building and national identity in the modern era (Kayam, 1981).

Human character is shaped by various factors, ranging from innate traits present at birth to the influence of parental upbringing and the surrounding environment. Raising a child is a profound responsibility that falls primarily on the family, requiring total dedication as it is a challenging task. To support this growth, a positive environment or "vessel" is essential; this can be found in schools, the social community, organizations, and cultural associations (Zubaedi, 2015).

Guidance and nurturing are vital to help children reach their potential and uphold the dignity of their parents. This is especially crucial when addressing the many phenomena where teenagers lose their way, falling into harmful behaviors such as drug abuse, smoking, alcohol consumption, and other forms of juvenile delinquency, such as brawling (Soedarsono, 2002). By providing structured creative outlets and cultural education, society can steer these young individuals toward more positive and constructive paths.

Parental vigilance is absolutely essential in a society where conditions are becoming increasingly complex, necessitating cooperation among all parties. Life today requires focused attention to provide children with the protection they need to develop strong character. Consequently, parents must remain highly cautious; in this era of globalization, thought patterns evolve rapidly, and there is a danger in children adopting external influences without a proper filter.

This "filter" is necessary to screen out cultural behaviors that are inconsistent with Eastern values. There is a growing concern regarding adolescent behavior that sometimes crosses the line—where children no longer consider their actions disrespectful. Examples include a lack of deference toward elders, such as walking in front of parents while focusing on a mobile phone without the traditional gesture of bowing or showing courtesy (Wahab, 2020).

Generation Z (Gen Z) preserves local culture through creative and digital approaches, ensuring that traditions remain relevant in this sophisticated modern era. These young people leverage social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook to create cultural content, adapting traditional fashion like Batik and indigenous music to suit contemporary tastes while establishing culture as a core identity for Indonesia rooted in Eastern values. This collaboration represents a seamless blend of technology and ancestral heritage, where many act as content creators to promote traditional dances, culinary arts, and local traditions, effectively turning heritage into a viral trend.

Beyond digital promotion, Gen Z engages in creative packaging by modernizing cultural elements—such as designing modern Batik or blending traditional music with pop to create ethno-pop—to make it more appealing to their peers. By integrating culture into their digital persona, they transform it into a modern and attractive lifestyle, which is further supported by active participation in cultural organizations, art studios (*sanggar seni*), and festivals within schools and the wider community (Wahab, 2020). Furthermore, they foster linguistic preservation by maintaining the habit of using regional languages in daily conversations, on social media, and even within academic activities, ensuring that their ancestral tongue remains a living part of their identity (Zubaedi, 2015).

Generation Z stands at the forefront of the battle to protect cultural heritage from the threat of extinction caused by globalization. Despite the challenges of fast-paced modernization, this generation has shown a unique ability to balance global trends with a deep-seated pride in local cultural values. There is a strong expectation that Gen Z youth will ensure Javanese culture remains sustainable, evolving into individuals who are deeply concerned with cultural continuity. Given that young people possess extraordinary spirit, their energy—when combined with the guidance and mentorship of their seniors—can become a powerful force in preserving Javanese heritage for the future (Kayam, 1981; Soedarsono, 2002).

Character education is essential for providing guidance and nurturing the behavior of the nation's youth. Cultivating good character serves as a model of kindness, planting the seeds for continuous moral growth. As the backbone of the next generation, these young individuals play a decisive role in the future development of Indonesia. One effective method for delivering character education is through the performing arts (Ainissyifa, 2014). Art performances serve as a medium for development, instilling values such as "Sungkem" (devotion) to the motherland and respect for elders, symbolizing a deep reverence for our earth.

Such performances are considered vital because they embed character education within their very structure. Whether it is through traditional dance, Javanese *Gurit* (poetry), *Karawitan* (gamelan music), or *Lesung* (rice mortar) performances, every artistic element is themed around moral and ethical development. These art forms do not just entertain; they function as a living classroom where the younger generation learns the virtues of discipline, cooperation, and cultural integrity.

Character is built on a foundation of innate traits, parental upbringing, and environmental influence. While families carry the primary weight of raising a child, they shouldn't have to do it alone; a broader ecosystem is essential. Schools, local communities, organizations, and cultural groups provide the ideal spaces for this growth (Zubaedi, 2015). Proper guidance in these settings is vital for raising a generation that respects their elders, especially as we face rising issues like drug abuse, smoking, and student brawls. Furthermore, cultural arts offer a "communal sanctuary" that counters the isolation of modern life, fostering the *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) spirit necessary for social cohesion (Koentjaraningrat, 2004).

In today's globalized world, parents must stay vigilant. The rapid pace of modern life often leads teenagers to adopt foreign trends without filtering them first. This lack of a "cultural filter" can slowly wash away traditional Eastern values. We see this clearly in the decline of basic etiquette for instance, teenagers often ignore the presence of elders because they are too absorbed in their smartphones (Wahab, 2020). These shifts highlight why it is so important to strengthen a young person's identity through tradition and character building (Lestari & Sunarto, 2023).

Ultimately, character education provides a moral compass for the youth who will eventually lead Indonesia. One of the most effective ways to deliver this guidance is through the arts (Ainissyifa, 2014). Performances themed around devotion to "Mother Earth" (*Ibu Pertiwi*) and respect for parents and nature serve as excellent educational tools. Every element of the show from the rhythmic beats of the *lesung* to the spoken word of *geguritan* is intentionally crafted to share moral lessons and noble values with both the performers and the audience.

II. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing the Interactive Model of Analysis as proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. Unlike linear methods, this model allows for a continuous and cyclical process of data examination, ensuring that the findings remain deeply rooted in the observed reality of the "Sungkem Pertiwi" cultural performance. This performance serves as the primary object of research, representing a collaborative showcase that integrates *karawitan*, *gejog lesung*, traditional dance, and *seni gurit* in honor of Mother's Day. The research was physically centered at Yogyakarta, a site purposefully selected for its active role in preserving local heritage and its commitment to cultural education.

Data for this research is classified into primary and secondary sources to provide a comprehensive perspective. Primary data was gathered through immersive, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including the event chairperson, the performers, participating students, and members of the audience, offering a 360-degree view of how the performance was both delivered and perceived. This is complemented by secondary data sourced from extensive literature reviews, academic journals, and relevant cultural archives.

To ensure the findings are robust and credible, the data was processed through four integrated stages of analysis. It began with rigorous data collection through interviews and field observations, followed by data condensation, where information was sifted to highlight core themes of character education while discarding irrelevant details. The refined data was then organized into a structured data display, utilizing narrative descriptions to make patterns of character building clearly visible. The final stage involved conclusion drawing and verification, where meanings were identified and cross-checked against original field notes to ensure absolute accuracy.

To maintain high academic standards, the research adheres to the methodological framework outlined by Sugiyono (2020). Data validity is reinforced through source triangulation, cross-referencing accounts from different interviewees and backed by extensive documentation. This includes high-resolution photography, video recordings, and digital footprints from platforms such as TikTok and YouTube, providing a contemporary lens on how traditional values are communicated and preserved in the digital age.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural arts performances serve as a diverse tapestry of expression, blending traditional and modern elements, ranging from dance and music to theater and poetry into a unified experience. Far from being mere entertainment, these performances act as a vital sanctuary for local wisdom, where the philosophical depths of the gamelan, shadow puppetry, and regional dance are brought to life. Theoretically, the benefits of the performing arts extend across multiple dimensions: personal growth through creativity and emotional intelligence, social development through teamwork and empathy, and the broader promotion of cultural preservation and the creative economy (Setyawan et al., 2022).

The success of a performing arts production is built upon several foundational pillars, ranging from rigorous preparation to strategic management. The primary key to success lies in fundamental preparation and practice. Routine and intensive training enhance technical skills and self-confidence, though it is important to avoid overtraining. Within this phase, a dress rehearsal (*gladi bersih*) is crucial as it provides a realistic preview of the show, minimizes errors, and strengthens the performers' mental readiness for the event. Furthermore, mastery of the material—choosing scripts or songs that align with one's vocal ability or character—is essential to delivering a resonant performance (Soedarsono, 2002).

Beyond the stage, solid production management serves as the organizational backbone. This requires a clear division of roles among the producer, production manager, stage manager, and technical team. Effective time management through structured schedules and rundowns ensures the team is prepared well ahead of time, while professional proposals and budgeting are necessary to secure sponsorships and manage financial resources. Complementing this is the technical and artistic

execution, where stage design, properties, costumes, and makeup bring the theme to life. High-quality sound and lighting systems significantly influence the overall production value, and a well-chosen theme ensures the audience connects deeply with the intended message.

The mental and physical state of the performers also plays a decisive role. Confidence, which is the best defense against stage fright, is born from hard work and sufficient practice. Performers must prioritize health management—especially vocal care for singers—as the body is the primary instrument of the craft. Techniques such as positive visualization and a constructive mindset are effective tools for reducing nerves and ensuring a peak performance. Finally, the process concludes with effective publication and post-performance evaluation. Utilizing social media, press releases, and posters is vital for audience engagement, while a post-production review allows the team to assess whether the execution aligned with the original plan. Ultimately, a successful performance is the result of a synergy between hard practice, strategic management, and solid technical coordination (Kayam, 1981; Ainissyifa, 2014).

Nurturing character in the younger generation requires a multifaceted approach to moral and value education. This process involves instilling core virtues such as religiousness, honesty, discipline, tolerance, hard work, independence, and responsibility. For this to be effective, parents and teachers must serve as primary role models, demonstrating positive behaviors and fostering habits of courtesy, integrity, and accountability in daily life (Wahab, 2020).

Character building is further integrated through the formal curriculum, extracurricular activities like the Scouts (*Pramuka*), and social initiatives that hone teamwork and leadership skills. Specifically, cultural extracurriculars are essential for cultivating a deep-seated love for heritage within the youth. In practice, students engage in real-world programs that promote environmental and social awareness, teaching them respect, empathy, and a profound understanding of others' feelings and behaviors. Ultimately, strong character education yields long-term results, producing individuals who are socially and professionally responsible, capable of contributing positively to society, and dedicated to preserving their cultural identity (Zubaedi, 2015; Ainissyifa, 2014).

Research results indicate that cultural art performances have a positive and significant influence on the character education of the nation's youth. The development of character is a shared responsibility, requiring the active participation of parents, the government, and the wider community. Fostering a soulful character requires both the intention and the determination of the individual to become a person of integrity.

Educational initiatives can be effectively delivered through various traditional performing arts, including dance (*tari*), gamelan music (*karawitan*), rice mortar music (*lesung*), Javanese poetry (*gurit*), and traditional dialogue/drama (*pacelaton*). A prime example of this is the *Sungkem Pertiwi* performance, which was staged specifically to commemorate Mother's Day, serving as both a cultural tribute and a medium for moral instruction (Ainissyifa, 2014; Soedarsono, 2002).

The concept of *Sungkem Pertiwi* carries a profound meaning rooted in prostration and devotion toward elders, mothers, and the land of one's birth, serving as a fundamental pillar of Javanese character. In Javanese philosophy, an individual possessing *adab* (refined manners) is viewed as inherently ethical; therefore, a child who speaks with *kata-kata halus* (gentle words) and maintains a respectful attitude toward others exemplifies the true essence of character education. The *Sungkem Pertiwi* performance acts as a holistic medium for this education by integrating various traditional art forms that each carry specific moral weight. These include *Tari* (dance) for disciplined movement, *Pacelaton* (traditional dialogue) for social etiquette, *Gurit Jawa* (poetry) for philosophical depth, *Karawitan* (Gamelan music) for harmony, and *Gejok Lesung Srikandi* (rice mortar performance) as a symbol of communal work and rural heritage.

Furthermore, the monumental significance of Mother's Day (*Hari Ibu*) is treated not merely as a fleeting moment, but as a celebratory pillar honoring the central figure in human life, which is a prerequisite for a well-ordered existence. By rooting character education in culture, society creates a successor generation that functions not only as a spectator of art but as its primary guardian. Professional choreographers and creators work meticulously to ensure that every performance provides a clear vision and "provisions" (*bekal*) for the future lives of the youth, bridging ancestral values with the challenges of modern development (Soedarsono, 2002; Wahab, 2020).

The deep connection between a love for culture and the development of strong character is undeniable, serving as essential "provisions" (*bekal*) for the younger generation to navigate an increasingly volatile era. This need is underscored by the distressing rise in juvenile delinquency—ranging from brawls, drug abuse, and bullying to severe crimes like theft and violence—phenomena that have moved artists and choreographers to utilize creative works as a vital tool for character education. Using art to provide guidance is an elegant and highly effective strategy because, unlike

traditional disciplinary methods that may rely on harshness, art touches the heart directly, allowing moral lessons to resonate on an emotional level. In the modern landscape, teaching kindness requires these specific, heart-centered strategies that bypass resistance and deliver values through beauty and expression.

By fostering character through arts and culture, society establishes a "preventive shield" where a strong sense of cultural identity acts as a barrier against negative external influences. This approach ensures the nation's future is built on a foundation of integrity, empathy, and cultural pride, providing a structured path for a generation that might otherwise feel directionless. Ultimately, a thriving nation is one that meticulously prepares its youth through this type of holistic, art-based education, ensuring they are equipped to lead with both professional competence and social responsibility (Ainissyifa, 2014; Sedyawati, 2006).

Shaping the nation's trajectory requires a collective agreement and concerted effort supported by all parties, including the government, the public, and policymakers. There must be a shared commitment to preserving Javanese culture as a primary vehicle for growth and heritage conservation. A key example of this is the Sungkem Pertiwi event, a cultural performance held to commemorate Mother's Day. This showcase features a diverse array of arts, including dances performed by children and adults, *karawitan*, *gurit* (poetry), and the *Gejok Lesung Srikandi* ensemble, all tied together with a narrative prolog. These Javanese art forms carry profound implicit messages that serve as a fertile ground for nurturing the character education of the nation's youth, providing them with a clear and directed sense of purpose in life.

The development of strong character is essential for the nation's progress, and artistic performances serve as an ideal medium for this educational process (Rifa'i, 2016). Cultivating a positive character is not an instantaneous feat; it requires a sincere intention and a firm resolve to transform into a better individual. Achieving such personal growth necessitates clear goals and a supportive environment. For the younger generation, the performing arts are particularly fitting because they offer "living examples" of virtuous conduct, allowing them to visualize and internalize the values of integrity and kindness in a way that is both engaging and impactful.

Indonesia is a nation that deeply values the reflection of virtuous conduct. A country truly becomes "cultured" when its people actively appreciate their own artistic heritage; however, this love for culture can only flourish if it is consistently introduced and nurtured within society. Mere exposure is not enough; one must profoundly understand the underlying principles of a culture and how they relate to the formation of character. For teenagers—who are the nation's youth transitioning into adulthood—cultivating a soulful character provides hope and a "vessel" (*wadah*) to ensure they remain deeply connected to their national identity (Damanik, 2014).

In addition to cultural grounding, character education for the nation's youth must be rooted in Pancasila education. The moral development of the younger generation should be perfectly aligned with Pancasila as the foundation of the state, ensuring a harmonious and continuous direction for life within the nation. This synergy between ancestral culture and state ideology provides a robust framework for youth to become responsible citizens who contribute to a thriving, ethical society.

In the context of this study, the "vessel" of the performance refers to both the physical and non-physical elements that carry the story forward. The stage, scenery, costumes, and the venue itself function as a space where character values are articulated. The "Sungkem Pertiwi" performance stands as a tangible example of a character-driven show rooted in Javanese culture. Involving over a hundred participants, it integrates various artistic disciplines into a single, cohesive, and educational cultural atmosphere.

The research findings indicate that the "Sungkem Pertiwi" performance, staged in honor of Mother's Day, has a positive and significant impact on student character. Etymologically, *Sungkem Pertiwi* signifies a gesture of profound respect and devotion toward one's mother and the land of one's birth. In Javanese culture, respect for elders is the bedrock of ethics and etiquette. Through dance, *karawitan*, *geguritan*, and the *gejog lesung srikandi*, students learn that a truly civilized person is one who treats others with dignity through refined speech and polite conduct. As one student performer shared during an interview:

"At first, I just focused on memorizing the movements. But during the 'Sungkem' scene, I actually felt a deep sense of guilt and love for my parents. It made me realize that being a good student isn't just about grades, but about how I treat my mother at home."

Using Mother's Day as the backdrop for this performance creates a monumental opportunity to instill a love for the arts and culture in the next generation. The choreographers and artists involved

played a professional role in embedding moral messages meant to serve as life lessons for the future. This form of character education is increasingly crucial as society grapples with alarming trends in youth delinquency, ranging from violence and substance abuse to a general moral decline (Rifa'i, 2016). One of the event coordinators emphasized this mission, stating:

"We aren't just teaching them how to play an instrument or dance; we are teaching them discipline and 'unggah-ungguh' (etiquette). If they can harmonize with a gamelan troupe, they can harmonize with society."

Educating the youth in this globalized era requires an elegant, non-repressive approach. Artistic works are perhaps the most suitable method because they gently touch a child's emotional side. However, this effort requires a unified front, support from the government, the community, and artists alike to establish Javanese culture as a primary vehicle for character development.

Ultimately, young people who love their culture tend to possess stronger mental resilience against negative environmental influences. This aligns with the cultivation of the *Pancasila* character, where culture-based education builds individuals who are culturally sovereign and ideologically grounded (Damanik, 2014). A great nation is defined by its ability to respect its cultural heritage and use it as a compass for guiding the behavior of its future generations (Lestari & Sunarto, 2023).

IV. CONCLUSION

The "Sungkem Pertiwi" cultural art performance exerts a positive and significant influence on the character education of the nation's youth. By incorporating the fundamental elements and intrinsic values of Javanese culture, this initiative provides a profound life philosophy that students can practically apply in their daily lives. Through this performance, cultural heritage serves as a living example of virtuous conduct, shaping the personal integrity necessary to build a strong national character. Commemorating Mother's Day through the "Sungkem Pertiwi" showcase transforms a ceremonial event into a powerful educational platform. Ultimately, nurturing the character of the younger generation is a shared responsibility of all parties—families, the government, and the community—essential for ensuring a future where the nation remains culturally dignified and remains grounded in the meaningful traditions that define its identity.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the "Sungkem Pertiwi" cultural performance has a profound and positive impact on strengthening character education for the younger generation. By weaving together the core elements and noble values of Javanese heritage, this performance successfully translates abstract life philosophies into tangible, everyday behaviors. "Sungkem Pertiwi" is far more than a simple ceremony for Mother's Day; it is a strategic educational tool that instills discipline, moral integrity, and a deep-seated respect for one's cultural roots.

Ultimately, shaping the character of a nation's youth is a collective responsibility that rests on the shoulders of families, the government, and the community at large. The future of a civilized society depends heavily on whether the next generation can uphold their cultural values amidst the pressures of a changing world. As noted by Suwardi (2015), local wisdom within traditional arts acts as a "spiritual filter" that protects students from moral erosion, ensuring they remain grounded in their identity while moving forward. Consequently, cultural performances rooted in local wisdom serve as an essential bridge, creating a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also culturally sovereign and deeply respectful of the Indonesian identity (Lestari & Sunarto, 2023).

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