

## Digital Media Studies Perspectives on Japan Performing Arts on Instagram @performance.jpa

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### Abstract

The use of digital media to promote local culture has become a new breakthrough in exposing local culture to international countries. In addition to being able to be immediately recognized in other nations, digital media promotion is also less expensive and quicker to implement. This study aims to determine the perspective of *Digital Media Studies* in *Japan Performing Arts*. The method used in this research is Krippendorff content analysis on Instagram @performance.jpa by using Japanese dance indicators which include *Kabuki*, *Kasa Odori*, *Bon Odori*, *Noh Mai*, *Onikenbai*, *Nanazumai*, *Wadaiko*, *Arauma*, *Nihon Buyo*. The conclusion of this study shows that Japan Performing Arts introduces Japanese culture through the collaboration of western culture by promoting the *Nihon Buyo* dance.

**Keywords:** Digital Media Studies; Instagram; Japan Performing Arts.

### *Perspektif Kajian Media Digital pada Performa Seni Jepang di Instagram @performance.jpa*

#### Abstrak

Pemanfaatan media digital untuk mempromosikan budaya lokal menjadi terobosan baru dalam memperkenalkan budaya lokal ke mancanegara. Selain bisa langsung dikenal di negara lain, media promosi digital juga lebih murah dan lebih cepat pelaksanaannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui perspektif *Digital Media Studies* dalam *Japan Performing Arts*. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah analisis konten Krippendorff di Instagram @performance.jpa dengan menggunakan indikator tarian Jepang yang meliputi *Kabuki*, *Kasa Odori*, *Bon Odori*, *Noh Mai*, *Onikenbai*, *Nanazumai*, *Wadaiko*, *Arauma*, *Nihon Buyo*. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *Japan Performing Arts* memperkenalkan budaya Jepang melalui kolaborasi dengan budaya barat dengan mengangkat tari *Nihon Buyo*.

**Kata kunci:** *Digital Media Studies*; Instagram; Japan Performing Arts.

#### A. Introduction

The use of digital media to promote local culture has ushered in

a new era of exposing local culture to international audiences. Aside from being instantly recognizable in other

countries, digital media promotion is also less expensive and faster to deploy. One of the countries in the world that implements this is Japan, where Japan is a country that has a rich culture, one of which is performing arts which in this study were explored through Instagram as one of the new media.

Its rapid transformation has shaped Japan from a small island nation into a world power. Its customs and culture are a blend of traditional Japanese culture and modern traditions (Susilo et al., 2020). Western cultural influences can be found in Japanese society, from art to lifestyle to cuisine (Nugroho, 2020). Traditional Japanese culture has evolved over the centuries (Moran & Keane, 2003). Since ancient times, this country has built its own culture while assimilating the culture of neighbouring countries, as can be observed in Chinese Kanji characters and Buddhism (Kompas.com, 2019). Aspects of Japanese culture, such as *Zen* and Japanese thinking, are closely related to the qualities of Japanese people (Erwin &

Hadiwono, 2020). So that Japanese culture needs to be preserved and introduced, and one of the parties in charge is the Japan Foundation.

The Japan Foundation introduces international audiences to various Japan performing arts, from classical forms such as *Kabuki* and *Bunraku* to more modern forms such as pop and folk music, contemporary dance, and theatre. In addition, it focuses on collaborative projects around the world, provides scholarships and networking opportunities for artists and arts organizations, and runs the *Performing Arts Network Japan* website (Klien, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

The Japan Foundation supports Japanese artists and cultural experts who participate in cultural events (for example, performing arts, demonstrations, lectures, and workshops) outside of Japan to introduce Japanese arts and culture to a wider audience or contribute to the international community through arts and projects culture (Morgner & Ikeda, 2020). It also provides funding for performances or co-

productions throughout North America and Europe to introduce *Japan Performing Arts* to local audiences (Inaga, 2021), one of them is the classical performing arts genre.

In developing each classical *Japan Performing Arts* genre, there is a well-established heritage that adopts, influences, and draws on other classical performance genres. However, this crossover is not limited to classical performing arts - there are also traditional performing arts that belong to Japan.

*Traditional Japan Performing Arts* are divided into classical (*koten gein*) and folk (*minzoku gein*). Both have been passed down through the centuries, retaining the original framework of their respective genres while also adapting to different eras (Maehara, 2018). The Japan performing arts, dance and theatre arts are varied and technically complex. Famous theatres include *Noh*, *Kabuki*, and *Bunraku* (Brandon, 2014). The definition of the three primary forms of traditional theatre are (Carol, 2021):

## 1. *Noh*

*Noh* began as an elaborate theatre-style including music, dance, and drama in the 14th century. *Noh* dramas run throughout the day, with *kyogen* (comedy interludes) in between. They have the same five-act framework as *kabuki* (Carol, 2021).



Figure1. *Noh*.

*Noh* actors started their training at the age of three. Their education is an endless process for them. There are four different types of roles:

- a. *shi-te*: main role,
- b. *waki*: antagonist,
- c. *kyogen*: comic relief during the interlude,
- d. *hayashi*: instrumental, playing the flute, hip-drum, shoulder-drum, and stick-drum.

## 2. *Kabuki*

Typical theatrical art show with all male performers and bold makeup, expensive clothes and

rhythmic words. To represent the atmosphere, this traditional *kabuki* art also uses additional equipment and effects. Makeup is applied to emphasize the nature and mood of the figures on display. The plot is based on a narrative from the *middle ages*. This *kabuki* performance takes place in a unique theatre called *Kabukiza*, which is the pinnacle of Japanese architecture (Ambardini, 2015).



Figure 2. *Kabuki*.

*Kabuki*, or “singing and dancing” is the most popular Japanese theatre type, dating back to the Edo Period (17th century). Watching the show requires dynamic outfits, masks, and exaggerated performances by actors (all male): all done to excite the audience (Carol, 2021).

As noted earlier, *kabuki* performances are very dynamic: trapdoors allow for quick scene

changes, allowing actors to disappear, while the live orchestra plays traditional instruments to accompany the action. Historical events, love, conspiracies, moral dilemmas and so on are all featured in the plot. What you have to remember is that what is revealed is only part of the whole story.

There are usually five acts: the first, *jo*, is a gradual introduction of the characters and the story. The main action is represented by the following three actions, *ha*, conflict and tragedy occur. The third act, *kyu*, was short and to the point, giving a satisfying ending.

### 3. *Bunraku*

In Indonesia, this is a type of puppet show. This is a three-person puppet theatre with *shamisen* singing and music that has been popular since the 16th century (traditional Japanese three-stringed musical instrument) (Ambardini, 2015).



Figure 3. *Bunraku*.

This type of puppet theatre originated in Osaka in the 17th century and today is considered a high-level art form. Three puppeteers control a giant puppet, while one player tells a story. Artist's detailed narration and gestures accompanied by music (Carol, 2021).

The puppets used are usually around 150 cm high and carefully crafted by experts. The most essential part is that the head is controlled by the main puppeteer, the *omozukai*, while the hands are controlled by two additional puppeteers.

People and social groupings make up digital media, which is shaped not only by technology and networks, but also by individuals alone (Fuchs, 2014). Japan, like Indonesia, is a country that understands traditional dance. Each Japanese dance also has its own history and meaning. Some of the

Japanese dances include (Warsito, 2020).

#### 4. *Kasa Odori*

The use of umbrellas by each dancer is the hallmark of this dance. Small objects like gold adorn the tip of the umbrella, giving it a majestic look. This dance is thought to have existed since the Edo Period (1603-1867 AD).



Figure 4. *Kasa Odori*.

The dance is now performed during the *Shan-Shan Ang*, an annual summer festival in East Tottori Prefecture. Both men and women perform this dance.

#### 5. *Bon Odori*

In Japan, this dance is often performed at summer festivals. The use of *kimono* clothing by each dancer is the hallmark of this dance.



Figure 5. *Bon Odori*.

This dance is performed by people of various genders and social groups. This dance is estimated to have existed for more than 600 years. Each of these dance moves is considered as a representation of the dance moves of these spirits. In the past, this dance was often performed as a form of self-defence to avoid the torments of hell. This dance is now performed as a derivative of its ancestors.

## 6. *Noh Mai*

The masks and *kimonos* worn by the dancers characterize this style.



Figure 6. *Noh Mai*.

Another distinguishing aspect is the use of drums, harps, and singers

as background music. In addition, there are various types of *noh mai* dance, including:

- a. *chu no mai*: this is a quick variation of the *noh mai* dance that women mostly perform,
- b. *mai jo no*: this is a *noh mai* dance performed by a relatively slow female dancer. Dancers often dress up as princesses or goddesses for these performances,
- c. *otoko mai*: a *noh mai* dance performed mainly by male dancers in which the dancers wear masks and act,
- d. *kagura*: a *noh mai* dance style performed by female dancers and is one of the fastest.
- e. *kami mai*: this dance is similar to *kagura*, but the dancers are all male,
- f. *gaku*: a type of *noh mai* dance in which the dancer's movements are matched to the rhythm of the music.

Despite their differences, all of the above dance forms have one thing in common: they all reflect classic Japanese tales. This dance is thought to have existed since the

14th century.

### 7. *Onikenbai*

This dance, like *Noh Mai*, requires the performer to wear a mask. This dance is known as the devil sword dance in English. This title is given to dancers who dress up as demons and wear masks and costumes.



Figure 7. *Onikenbai*.

Farmers can cultivate crops on the outskirts of the city after expelling the ghosts. This dance is often followed by the *nanazumai* dance, which is a traditional Japanese dance.

### 8. *Nanazumai*

*Nanazumai* is a dance based on the Japanese agricultural cycle, from the challenging phase to the harvest phase.



Figure 8. *Nanazumai*.

This dance is performed by seven dancers, each of whom is equipped with a different instrument. Each tool brought represents a different phase of the process. The origin of this dance, like the *onikenbai*, is unknown. What is clear is that this dance must be done.

### 9. *Wadaiko*

*Taiko*, a traditional musical instrument shaped like a drum, is used to accompany this traditional dance.



Figure 9. *Wadaiko*.

*Wadaiko* will be played along with various other traditional musical instruments in this dance. This dance

is popular in Japan and can be seen at various festivals. Therefore, the presence of *taiko* musical instruments cannot be separated from the presence of this dance. *Taiko* has been around since 1917.

#### 10. *Arauma*

Okawadai residents who live in Aomori often perform this dance. This dance is performed to express gratitude to God for the abundance of agricultural products. This dance is also performed as a form of gratitude to the horses who have helped them in farming. A man and a woman usually perform this dance together.



Figure 10. *Arauma*.

Men will appear as horses, while women will appear as women in this dance. The two then performed dance steps that resembled Okawadai's farming actions.

In almost every move, the two of them would shout the word

*rassera*. The dancers will be accompanied by musical accompaniment consisting of *taiko*, *cappa*, and *fue* in every movement. The horses in this dance are sometimes replaced by horses made of wood and cloth, not by male dancers.

#### 11. *Nihon Buyo*

It is a traditional Japanese dance that dates back to the seventeenth century. The dancers in this dance, like certain other Japanese dances, wear *kimonos* as their main attire.



Figure 11. *Nihon buyo*.

*Nihon buyo* is a form of entertainment. Dancers often perform on stage. Each step in this dance is slow and gentle, leaving the audience touched and carried away into the night.

In Japan, *nihon buyo* refers to a philosophy of life or a legendary legend. This dance is currently taught in more than 200 schools across



Japan. Hanayagi-ryu, Wakayanagi-ryu, Bando-ryu, Nishikawa-ryu, and Fujima-ryu are the top five schools.

This research focuses on Japan performing arts or Japanese performing arts in the form of Japanese dances which are reviewed from the perspective of digital media studies.

### ***Digital Media Studies***

Any form of material that is distributed using electronic devices is referred to as digital media. Electronic devices may be used to create, view, modify, and distribute this type of material. Software, video games, videos, websites, social media, and online advertising are examples of digital media (Preston, 2020).

Media that is encoded in machine-readable formats is referred to as digital media. Software, digital films, photos, web pages, databases, digital music, and E books are examples of digital media that may be created, viewed, edited, communicated, and saved on digital electronics devices. Print and other traditional or analog media are in

opposition to digital media (Das, 2020).

### **B. Research Method**

The method used in this research is the content analysis which is chosen to describe the aspects and characteristics of the post content. Content analysis is a systematic method for evaluating message content and message transmission or an analytical tool for monitoring and analysing the communication activities of selected communicators (Krippendorff, 2018).

The researcher has used two coders to ensure objectivity in coding and data collection. Reliability tests were used to check the validity of the collected data and determine the data's accuracy, and two encoders were used. Reliability tests were used to check the validity of the collected data and determine the data's accuracy, and two encoders were used.

In addition, researchers also used Krippendorff content analysis to analyse Instagram posts. Researchers used content analysis to see *Japan Performing Arts* on Instagram

@performance.jp during the 2019 period, as many as 11 posts were studied.

Japan Performing Arts, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded by Yuko Hamada to promote the *Japanese art* form in New York. Based in New York City, Japan Performing Arts activities focus on the educational experience of discovering and reinventing Japanese culture through *Japan Performing Arts* (Japanperformingarts.org, 2020). So that the Japan Foundation and Japan Performing Arts, Inc. have the same vision in introducing *Japanese performing arts* as part of *Japanese culture*.

Japan Performing Arts, Inc. aims to achieve its mission by providing learning opportunities for both children and adults through lectures and performances. Lectures and demonstrations can accompany performances, or Japan Performing Arts can host cultural workshops.

Japan Performing Arts hopes to demonstrate the historical and cultural context in the performance (including some ethno-psychological context); Learning experiences can be very entertaining and memorable for people of all ages.

Japan Performing Arts activities are primarily aimed at: 1) Schools, 2) Local Communities — offering opportunities to understand Japanese culture intellectually. Japan Performing Arts activities cater to the needs of the local Japanese community and any community who wants to experience various traditional Japanese art forms.

Various indicators of Japanese dance and one of them are known as *Japan performing arts* were used as selected indicators, including *Noh*, *Bunraku*, *Kabuki*, *Kasa Odori*, *Bon Odori*, *Noh Mai*, *Onikenbai*, *Nanazumai Wadaiko*, *Arauma*, *Nihon Buyo*.



Figure 12. Instagram Profile *Japan Performing Arts*.  
Source: (Performance.jpa, 2019)

This study uses the Holsti formula to calculate data from two coders (Samiei & Mehrabi, 2019). The content analysis method was chosen because the researchers tried quantitatively to see the contents of Instagram posts, then the researchers tried to interpret the post content, read the symbols, and interpret the symbolic interaction content of Instagram @performance.jpa posts.

The steps taken by the researchers in this content analysis method were as follows: first, the researchers looked at Instagram @performance.jpa posts limited to May to July 2019. Second, the researchers chose Instagram @performance.jpa to see posts that highlight the dances featured in

Japan Performing Arts. On Instagram. Third, after the posts were collected, the encoder sorted the posts. Fourth, the collected data were then processed and analysed.

$$PAo = 2A / (N1+N2)$$

Where PAo is the percentage agreement between the two coders, A is the number of decisions made by the two coders, N1 and N2 are the number of decisions taken by the coders (Susilo et al., 2021; Susilo & Putranto, 2021).

### C. Results and Discussion

The researcher collected 11 posts from Instagram Japan Performing Arts @performance.jpa and used the Holsti formula to check the reliability of the data.

Table 1. Post analysis by coder 1.

Date	Indicator								
	K	KO	BO	NM	O	N	W	A	NB
May 29, 2019				.					
June 1, 2019				.					
June 10, 2019									.
June 10, 2019									.
June 13, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 27, 2019				.					
July 3, 2019									.

\***K**: Kabuki, **KO**:Kasa Odori, **BO**:Bon Odori, **NM**:Noh Mai, **O**:Onikenbai, **N**:Nanazumai, **W**:Wadaiko, **A**:Arauma, **NB**:Nihon Buyo.

In Table 1, it can be seen that the coding carried out by coder 1 resulted in the NM code representing *Noh Mai* appearing in early posts between late May 2019 and early June 2019. While the Instagram

@performance.jpa post entered mid-June 2019 towards the end. June 2019 was dominated by posts containing NB or *Nihon Buyo*, and several posts related to NM or *Noh Mai*.

Table 2. Post analysis by coder 2.

Date	Indicator								
	K	KO	BO	NM	O	N	W	A	NB
May 29, 2019				.					
June 1, 2019				.					
June 10, 2019									.
June 10, 2019									.
June 13, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 18, 2019									.
June 27, 2019				.					
July 3, 2019									.

\***K**: Kabuki, **KO**:Kasa Odori, **BO**:Bon Odori, **NM**:Noh Mai, **O**:Onikenbai, **N**:Nanazumai, **W**:Wadaiko, **A**:Arauma, **NB**:Nihon Buyo.

In Table 2, it can be seen that the coding carried out by coder 2 resulted in the NM code representing *Noh Mai* appearing in early posts

between late May 2019 and early June 2019. While the Instagram @performance.jpa post entered mid-June 2019 towards the end. June

2019 was dominated by posts containing NB or *Nihon Buyo*, and several posts related to NM or *Noh Mai*.

Tables 1 and 2 show the results of the coding process carried out by

coder 1 and coder 2 on 11 posts that have been separated by date and their respective indicators. In addition, an overview of these indicators is described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. *Coding output.*

Variable	Coding Output		
	Coder 1	Coder 2	Agreement between two coders
<i>Kabuki</i>	-	-	0
<i>Kasa Odori</i>	-	-	0
<i>Bon Odori</i>	-	-	0
<i>Noh Mai</i>	3	3	3
<i>Onikenbai</i>	-	-	0
<i>Nanazumai</i>	-	-	0
<i>Wadaiko</i>	-	-	0
<i>Arauma</i>	-	-	0
<i>Nihon Buyo</i>	8	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Pao} &= 2A / (N1+N2) \\
 &= 2(11)/11+11 \\
 &= 11/22 \\
 &= 1 (100\%)
 \end{aligned}$$

Data is said to be reliable if it can have a tolerance value of at least 70% or more than 0.7% (Holsti, 1969). The reliability element is 1 or 100% based on data calculations obtained using the Holsti coder reliability formula. Therefore, the data obtained is declared reliable because it exceeds the minimum limit (70%).

From the results of the coding that the two coders have done, it is

found that *Nihon Buyo* dominates the Instagram @performance.jpa post.

### 1. Japanese Dance in Japan Performing Arts

Japan is well-known for its diverse culture. As a result, traditional Japanese dancing serves as a symbol of Japan's rich culture. Japan has a variety of unique traditional dances as a country with a rich culture. In fact, these ancient dances are frequently used as tourist attractions, attracting a large number of visitors interested in cultural tours

to Japan. Some of these things are considered as the potential that Japan has in introducing Japan as a country with a strong culture, one of which is represented by the role of the *Japan Performing Arts*.

Through posts from Instagram @performance.jpa it can be seen that Japan Performing Arts collaboration with western culture. The collaboration is by showing the show on a new stage dance project with the theme "Expansion of Inward Spiral" to introduce *Nichibu* dance in detail through a drama. The show featured traditional Japanese dances and modern dances that resembled ballet, which could also be seen from the costumes worn by the dancers.

Japan Performing Arts provides an overview of Japanese culture, generally defined as group-oriented culture rather than western individualism. Western cultural images emphasize verbal description, while Japanese culture places a strong focus on visual representation.

*Nihon Buyo* was chosen because it also introduced Japan through the pattern of kimonos, folding fans, and other supporting equipment that

defined Japan through dance and performing arts.

Besides that, *Nihon Buyo* which is one of the *Japan Performing Arts* that is identical with elements of traditional Japanese culture, such as beauty and simplicity is shown through Japan Performing Arts to describe and show Japanese culture with beauty and simplicity through traditional dance. So that Japanese dance is displayed in Japan performing arts not only as a form of performance, but also to display the identity of Japan.

## **2. Japan Performing Arts and New Media**

Society and new media have intertwined and can no longer be separated. New media and audiences, two interconnected elements, must have an impact on society. New media that have emerged as a result of the confluence of computerized digital communication technology and networks in various fields have entered various realms of mass communication or have an impact on traditional mass media, either directly or indirectly.

The new media in this study, namely Instagram, especially the @performance.jpa Instagram account is used as a new media that brings traditional culture to be popularized in digital society. Instagram's post @performance.jpa as a digital media used to show how Japanese and Western Cultures do not always stand on opposite ends of the spectrum; however, such comparisons are valuable for cultural education.

The mission of Japan Performing Arts, Inc. conveys Japanese culture through visual cultural representation events and performances, as well as background information and cultural comparison methodologies. So that in realizing the mission of Japan Performing Arts, Inc., new media is used as a bridge so that people, not limited to only in Japan, get a message about the mission that Japan Performing Arts, Inc. want to realize in introducing Japanese culture through performing arts, one of which is the *Nihon Buyo* dance.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Instagram @performance.jpa as a new medium in the digital era has become a forum used by Japan Performing Arts in promoting Japanese culture to the world. The Japan Performing Arts' posts on Instagram @performance.jpa are limited to May to July 2019 and further highlight posts related to *Nihon Buyo* dance as part of *Japan Performing Arts* to introduce Japanese culture through collaboration with western culture.

The implication of this research is that it can be used as a reference in utilizing new media, especially those related to culture and conducting collaboration and cooperation between countries based on culture.

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