

# TRANSFORMATION OF FUNCTION, ADAPTATION, AND THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION ON CULTURAL VALUES IN THE KECAK DANCE PERFORMANCE AT MELASTI BEACH, BALI

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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the transformation of functions, adaptation, and the impact of modernization on cultural values in the Kecak dance performance at Melasti Beach, Bali. This research uses a phenomenological qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews with local artists, cultural figures, and audiences, performance documentation, and we also collect data through questionnaires. This research aims to understand the shift in the function of Kecak dance from a sacred religious ritual to a tourism performance, as well as how the local community adapts to cultural changes in the era of globalization. The research results show that although modernization and commercialization have introduced entertainment elements and technical changes in the performance, the core story, symbolic meaning, and sacred value of the Kecak dance have been maintained within the context of tradition and religious ceremonies. Modernization is also viewed positively by the local community because it provides economic benefits, opens job opportunities, and introduces Balinese cultural identity to the international stage. Local artists and cultural figures continue to maintain a balance between innovation and cultural preservation through education, sacred performances, and active collaboration with the government. This research provides a new perspective on cultural resilience in tourism areas and offers recommendations for the sustainable development of cultural tourism in Bali.

**Keywords:** Kecak dance, Modernization, Cultural transformation, Tourism, Melasti beach, Balinese cultural identity.

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## INTRODUCTION

Kecak dance is a local culture that originated in Bali. The Kecak dance has beautiful dance movements with the characteristic shouting of "cak-cak-cak" from the dancers. Kecak dance can be seen in several tourist areas in Bali, one of which is Melasti beach. Melasti Beach is a tourist destination on the island of Bali, where Bali itself is a contributor to local and foreign tourists, who are quite a lot on the list of tourists in Indonesia. Melasti Beach is one of the exotic white sand beaches hidden behind limestone hills. Before reaching the beach, visitors will pass through an awesome cliff wall. Having a stunning sea panorama, Melasti beach also has amazing tourist attractions, one of which is the Kecak dance. The Kecak dance on Melasti beach is performed in the afternoon before sunset at the Praharsacitta cultural stage (Hidajat *et al.*, 2023).

The popularity of Kecak dance has made it the face of Indonesia in the international arena. In the era of modernization, Kecak dance has become a tourist attraction that is used to move toward better conditions, especially in the economic aspect. The popularity of the Kecak dance does invite many tourists so as to increase the economy, but over time, the perception in the local community can change toward the Kecak dance. The local people who initially considered the Kecak dance as a sacred and religious traditional ceremony could be eroded in this modernization era because they considered the Kecak dance as a mere tourist attraction spectacle. It is important to know how the local community perceives the Kecak dance so that the true value of the Kecak dance is not degraded (Sumiati and Girsang, 2018).

The era of modernization is the era of the process of change toward more advanced conditions. Modernization is influenced by technological developments or scientific developments. In the context of the changing perception of the Balinese local people toward the Kecak dance, modernization is how the local Balinese people adapt to the changing times, which are influenced by the development of technology, science, and external influences. The change in the perception of the local

Balinese community does not suddenly occur; the development of the island of Bali as a very rapid tourist destination also plays a role in the cause of the change in perception. Whereas a place is visited by a lot of local and foreign tourists, so they often think to are required to have a modern mindset.

The Kecak dance, which was originally an integral part of religious rituals in Bali, has undergone a significant transformation as tourism and modernization develop. Originally, this dance originated from the Sanghyang ritual, a sacred ceremony that aims to communicate with ancestral spirits and gods, where the dancers are in a trance as a medium of communication. However, with the increase in the tourism industry, Kecak dance has experienced desacralization and commercialization. Kecak dance performances are now often presented as tourist attractions that attract domestic and foreign tourists. For example, at Melasti Beach, the Kecak dance performance can sell a minimum of 1,250 tickets per day, with performances once a day at 18.00 and 19.00 WITA (Suardana *et al.*, 2018).

This change has given rise to a debate about the meaning and function of the Kecak dance in contemporary Balinese society. For some Balinese indigenous peoples, the Kecak dance is still considered sacred and is lived as a religious ceremony. However, for organizers, foreign tourists, and most spectators, this dance is seen and enjoyed with a non-religious, profane attitude, and is considered an ordinary spectacle. In addition, the Kecak dance also has an economic impact on the local community. The majority of the dancers come from the villagers around the performance location, so this dance empowers the local community and becomes an additional source of income for them (Solehudin *et al.*, 2023).

Thus, the transformation of the Kecak dance reflects the dynamics between the preservation of traditional values and adaptation to the demands of the tourism industry, which affects the Balinese people's perception of this dance as a religious ritual or simply entertainment and a source of livelihood. Previous research on Kecak dance has

generally focused on its history, ritual meaning, and role in tourism, especially in famous locations such as Uluwatu and Ubud. Many studies highlight how commercialization affects the form of performance and its authenticity, but few specifically examine the change in local people's perception of the Kecak dance, especially in newer locations such as Melasti Beach. In addition, previous research has placed more emphasis on the impact of tourism on the format of staging, but has less explored how local communities understand and respond to these changes, whether they see it as a threat to cultural heritage or as a threat to their cultural heritage (Made Pira Erawati, 2019).

This issue is interesting because it provides a new understanding of how local communities adapt to cultural changes due to modernization and globalization. Kecak dance is not only a performing art, but also part of the identity of the Balinese people. If there is a shift in perception, for example, from sacred value to just a tourist attraction, then there will be challenges in maintaining cultural authenticity in the midst of the tourism industry. By examining this phenomenon in Melasti Beach, which has not been studied much compared to Uluwatu or Ubud, this research can provide a new perspective on how local culture transforms and survives in the modern era (Suardana et al., 2018).

The novelty of this research offers a novelty in the study of changes in Balinese people's perception of the Kecak dance on Melasti Beach in the modernization era. One of the main aspects that makes this research unique is the selection of locations at Melasti Beach, which is still rarely studied compared to other Kecak dance performance venues such as Uluwatu or Ubud. As a relatively new tourist destination, Melasti Beach presents its own dynamics in the interaction between local culture and modernization. In contrast to previous research that highlighted the commercialization of Kecak dance in the tourism industry, this study focuses on how the Balinese people themselves view these changes. Do they see it as a threat, an opportunity, or a reasonable form of adaptation? In addition, this research also highlights the role of the younger generation in preserving or even transforming the Kecak Dance to be more relevant to creative industry trends, for example, through the integration of modern music or digital media.

In addition, this study discusses the conflict between sacred values and entertainment in the performance of Kecak dance. Along with the increasing popularity of this dance as a tourist spectacle, questions arise about whether its sacred meaning is still maintained or has actually shifted to become just a cultural commodity. The study also explores how local communities seek a balance between cultural preservation and economic benefits, including the possibility of specific rules that ensure the cultural spirit lives on in each performance. The methodology used in this study also provides novelty, because it does not only relies on academic theories, but also hears more about people's real experiences. For example, how a senior dancer sees a change in tradition, while the younger generation actually uses it as a creative opportunity. The results of this research are expected to make a practical contribution to realizing sustainable tourism by involving the community in decision-making and creating policies that respect local culture (Widya and Seriasih, 2019).

In addition, the impact of technology and social media on changes in the Kecak dance is also one of the important aspects of this study. How platforms like Instagram and TikTok are used to promote these dances, as well as whether the presence of technology changes the viewing experience, are questions that have rarely been addressed in previous research. Finally, this study also tries to understand the extent to which Kecak dance is still part of the identity of the Balinese people, or has actually turned into a cultural product that is more oriented to the global market. With these new features, this research not only enriches academic discourse but also provides space for the voices of local communities in discussions about tourism and Balinese culture. In addition, the findings of this study can be a reflection for other regions in Indonesia that face similar dilemmas in maintaining traditions in the midst of changing times (Ravalina et al., 2024).

The first purpose of this research is to understand the changes in the function and meaning of the Kecak dance on Melasti Beach due to modernization. The Kecak dance, which initially had sacred value and was closely related to religious rituals, has shifted its function to become a commercialized tourist attraction. This change does not happen suddenly, but is influenced by various factors such as the development of the tourism industry and the increasing number of tourists. In addition, modernization driven by technology and social media has also accelerated the transformation of the meaning of Kecak dance in society. Performances that used to be only performed in traditional ceremonies are now more often staged as entertainment for tourists. While retaining some of the traditional elements, many elements have been tweaked to make them more appealing to the audience. This research will explore how these changes took place and the extent to which sacred elements are still preserved in the modern context.

Second, this study aims to find out how the Balinese people view the commercialization of the Kecak dance on Melasti Beach. The public has diverse views on these changes, depending on their background, age, and involvement in the performing arts. Some people consider commercialization as a threat to the original cultural value of the Kecak dance, which should remain sacred. However, there are also those who see it as an opportunity to introduce Balinese culture to the world while improving the welfare of the local economy. The older generation tends to retain traditional meanings more, while the younger generation is more flexible in accepting innovation and adaptation. These changes reflect the social dynamics in the face of modernization and globalization that continue to develop. This research will explore how these differences of views shape people's attitudes toward the sustainability of Kecak dance at Melasti Beach.

Third, this study seeks to explore how the Balinese people try to maintain the cultural values of the Kecak dance in the midst of modernization and the development of the tourism industry. In the face of change, the local community implements various strategies so that the Kecak dance still has a strong cultural identity. One way is to educate the younger generation about the history and sacred meaning of Kecak dance so that traditional values are not lost. In addition, the art community and traditional figures also play a role in maintaining a balance between the cultural and commercial aspects of performance. Another effort made is to set certain rules in the performance, such as maintaining ritual elements in some special performances. The role of local governments and cultural institutions is also an important factor in supporting the preservation of Kecak dance in the modern era. This research will identify various forms of these efforts and their impact in maintaining cultural sustainability in the midst of the times.

## Review of related literature

### *The transformation of Kecak dance in modernization*

Kecak dance was originally part of a religious ritual in Bali, derived from the Sanghyang ritual, which is a sacred ceremony to communicate with ancestral spirits and gods. In this ritual, the dancers enter a trance and become a medium of communication with the spiritual world. However, with the development of the tourism industry, the Kecak dance has experienced desacralization and commercialization. This show is now more often presented as a tourist attraction, attracting the attention of domestic and foreign tourists. For example, at Melasti Beach, the Kecak dance performance can sell a minimum of 1,250 tickets/day, with performances once a day at 18.00 and 19.00 WITA (Suardana et al., 2018).

### *Changes in Balinese people's perception of Kecak dance*

The change in the function of the Kecak dance gave rise to various views in Balinese society. Most indigenous peoples still consider it a sacred religious ritual, while for organizers and tourists, the Kecak dance is seen as more of an entertainment. This shift also has an impact on the surrounding community, where many villagers become Kecak dancers to earn additional income (Solehudin et al., 2023).

Previous research has shown that most studies on Kecak dance focus more on the impact of tourism on the form of performance and its authenticity. However, studies on how local communities understand and respond to these changes are still limited, especially in new locations such as Melasti Beach. Previous research has also highlighted the economic impact of the Kecak dance without exploring how Balinese people perceive this change – whether they perceive it as a threat or as an economic opportunity (Made Pira Erawati, 2019).

#### *The conflict between sacred values and entertainment in Kecak dance*

As the popularity of the Kecak dance as a tourist spectacle increases, there is a debate about whether its sacred meaning is still maintained or has actually shifted to become just a cultural commodity. Some art communities and indigenous figures try to maintain a balance between the cultural and commercial aspects of performance. One of the strategies implemented is to educate the younger generation about the history and sacred meaning of the Kecak dance so that traditional values are not lost (Widya and Seriasih, 2019).

In addition, the impact of technology and social media also influenced the transformation of the Kecak dance. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are widely used to promote this dance, which indirectly changes the viewing experience as well as accelerates the shift of function from ritual to entertainment (Ravalina et al., 2024).

#### *Significance of this study in the context of sustainable tourism*

This research seeks to understand how the Balinese people try to maintain the cultural values of the Kecak dance in the midst of modernization and tourism industry development. Preservation efforts are carried out through various strategies, including cultural education for the younger generation, the role of the arts community, and local government policies in supporting the balance between tourism and cultural preservation. Taking these aspects into account, this research is expected to make a practical contribution to the development of sustainable tourism that still respects local culture.

#### **Related studies**

A lot of research has been done on Kecak dance, especially in relation to tourism, cultural transformation, and economic impact on local communities. Various studies have revealed how the Kecak dance has changed from a sacred function to a commercialized tourist attraction, how local communities have responded to these changes, and how the role of technology in supporting the promotion and cultural transformation of the Kecak dance. However, research that specifically examines the change in Balinese people's perception of the Kecak dance at Melasti Beach is still limited, so this study aims to fill this gap.

A study conducted by Suardana et al. (2018) highlights how Kecak dance has been commercialized in the tourism industry, especially in famous locations such as Uluwatu and Ubud. This study shows that the transformation of Kecak Dance is not only limited to the frequency and format of performances but also includes adjusting the narrative, choreography, and duration of the performance to make it more attractive to tourists. This commercialization encouraged many art groups in Bali to perform the Kecak dance in a more dramatic form, for example, by adding theatrical elements such as the Ramayana story, which was more simplified to make it easier for foreign audiences to understand.

The economic impact of this commercialization is also very significant. With the high number of tourists who are interested in watching Kecak dance performances, local people have a new source of income, both as dancers, tour guides, and other support service providers, such as ticket sales and souvenirs. For example, in Uluwatu, a Kecak Dance performance can sell thousands of tickets in a single night, which has a direct economic impact on the local community.

However, this study also reveals the negative consequences of commercialization, namely, the reduction of the sacred meaning of the Kecak dance. Many Balinese people feel that the Kecak dance is now seen as a mere spectacle, no longer as part of a religious ritual. Over time, these changes have created a dilemma between cultural preservation and the demands of the tourism industry. This research is very important to understand how the commercialization of Kecak dance is developing, but this research still lacks to explore how local communities in new locations, such as Melasti Beach respond to these changes. Therefore, this study will focus on aspects of public perception of the Kecak dance on Melasti Beach, which is still rarely studied.

Research by Made Pira Erawati (2019) discusses how the meaning and function of the Kecak dance has shifted in the midst of globalization and modernization. This study reveals that generational differences have a great influence on seeing the cultural value and sacredness of the Kecak dance. The older generation in Bali generally still maintains the perspective that the Kecak dance is part of religious ceremonies, which plays an important role in the spiritual life of the Balinese people. They think that the Kecak dance should remain in a ritual context and not just entertainment for tourists.

On the other hand, the younger generation sees Kecak dance as a growing cultural phenomenon, which can be adapted to the trends of the creative industry. They tend to be more open to innovation, such as combining Kecak dance with digital technology, modern music, or more attractive visual elements. This research shows that the younger generation is more flexible in accepting change because they see greater economic opportunities from the commercialization of the Kecak dance.

Although this study provides valuable insights into the changes in the function of the Kecak dance, this study discusses more cases in Uluwatu and Ubud, while Melasti Beach is still not widely researched. Therefore, this study will delve deeper into how the Balinese people around Melasti Beach understand these changes, whether they still retain the sacred meaning of the Kecak dance, or whether they are more open to modern adaptations as they do in other areas.

The research of Ravalina et al. (2024) discusses how technological developments and social media play an important role in promoting Kecak dance in the modern era. This study shows that digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become the main tools in disseminating the Kecak dance to a global audience. With the video of the show that often goes viral, many tourists from various countries are interested in coming directly to Bali and watching the show live.

One of the key findings of the study is that social media not only increases the number of tourists but also changes the way local communities interact with their own culture. With the increasing global exposure to the Kecak dance, Balinese people are starting to see this dance as part of the entertainment industry that must be adapted to digital trends to remain relevant in the modern era.

However, the study also highlights the negative impact of cultural digitalization. For example, many Kecak dance performances have been modified to be more visually appealing for social media, but instead omit some important elements that have sacred meaning. This study focuses on how social media is used to promote the Kecak dance, but has not discussed much about how the Balinese people themselves respond to the impact of technology on the changing meaning of the Kecak dance. Therefore, this study will explore further how the local community in Melasti Beach understands the role of social media in the transformation of the Kecak dance.

Widya and Seriasih's research (2019) highlights how the Balinese people face a dilemma between preserving traditional cultural values and following the increasingly strong flow of commercialization. The study shows that although the Kecak dance provides great economic



benefits, there are still tensions between groups that want to maintain the spiritual meaning of this dance and groups that focus more on entertainment and economic aspects.

One of the strategies applied by the Balinese people to maintain this balance is to hold special performances that maintain the ritualistic elements of the Kecak dance. For example, some art groups hold performances that are not open to tourists, but are only performed in the context of certain religious ceremonies. In addition, cultural education to the younger generation is also an important step in maintaining the essence of the Kecak dance, so that it does not completely turn into just a tourist attraction.

The study provides in-depth insights into the conflict between cultural preservation and the demands of the tourism industry, but it is more general in nature and does not specifically examine the impact of these changes on Melasti Beach. Therefore, this research will explore how the community around Melasti Beach seeks a balance between the commercial aspect and the sacred value of the Kecak dance.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How has the function of Kecak dance changed at Melasti Beach?
2. How has the Kecak dance adapted to the times?
3. How does modernization impact the values contained in the Kecak dance at Melasti Beach?

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods, which aims to understand the subjective experiences of the Balinese people related to changes in perception of Kecak dance, as well as how they interpret and feel the phenomenon in the context of culture and tourism. This research was conducted at Melasti Beach, Bali, which was chosen because it is one of the main locations for Kecak dance performances and is the center of attention of tourists. Data were collected through several techniques, namely, in-depth interviews with informants to explore their experiences and perceptions of the Kecak dance; participatory observation, in which researchers engage directly in on-site activities to understand the social and cultural context; as well as documentation in the form of data collection from written and visual sources related to Kecak dance and tourism activities at Melasti Beach.

### Participants

The research subjects consisted of local people living around Melasti Beach, including artists, dancers, and visitors who had first-hand experience with the Kecak dance. The sample selection technique used is purposive sampling, where informants are selected based on certain criteria, such as involvement in Kecak dance performances or experience as an audience, so that the information obtained is relevant and in-depth.

### Materials and instruments

The main instruments used in this study were structured and semi-structured interview guidelines with open-ended questions to facilitate in-depth discussions. In addition, recording devices are used to document interviews to ensure data accuracy. Field observation notes were also made to document the social situation and expressions of the participants during the Kecak dance performance. Additional documentation was collected from written and visual sources related to the Kecak dance and tourism activities at Melasti Beach.

### Procedure

This research was carried out through several stages. The first stage is data collection, which is carried out by conducting in-depth interviews with the selected informants, conducting direct observations of the Kecak dance performance at Melasti Beach, and collecting documentation from various written and visual sources. Furthermore, data analysis techniques were carried out using phenomenological

methods. The first step in data analysis is data reduction, which is transcribing the results of interviews from video recordings into written text, rereading all data to understand the essence of the speakers' experiences, and identifying significant statements that reflect the experience, perception, and meaning given by the community to changes in the Kecak dance. After that, a process of coding and data grouping is carried out, where statements that have similarities are grouped into several main themes, such as esthetic and emotional experiences, cultural meanings and traditions, social interaction and community participation, commercialization and the influence of tourism, and changes in religious and philosophical values.

After the grouping stage, interpretation and description of the meaning are carried out, namely, by analyzing the relationship between the themes that emerge and understanding how modernization affects the cultural meaning of Kecak dance for the community. The researcher then compiled a phenomenological description based on the results of interviews and observations to describe how people experience and understand changes in the Kecak dance in their lives. These results are also associated with previous theories or research to strengthen the analysis. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation and validation are implemented, which include triangulation of sources by comparing the results of interviews with data from observations and documents, confirmation to the source (member checking) to ensure that the researcher's interpretation does not deviate from their original experience, and discussion with fellow researchers or cultural experts to avoid subjective bias. The last step in this analysis is the presentation of results and conclusions, which is carried out by compiling the findings in the form of a descriptive narrative that describes changes in public perception of Kecak dance in depth. From the findings, the main conclusions were drawn about the experience and meaning given by the community to this phenomenon, and recommendations were given related to cultural preservation and the balance between modernization and tradition in the performance of the Kecak dance.

## RESULTS

The average score obtained from this statement is 2.875, which is above 2.5, indicating that the majority of respondents agree that there has been a shift in the function of the Kecak dance at Melasti Beach, from its original function as a ritual dance to an entertainment or tourist performance. Interviews conducted with artists and local communities revealed that although the spiritual aspects and core narratives are still maintained, many visual elements and presentations have been modified to attract tourists' interest. For example, the addition of formations, movements, or comedic elements as visual entertainment, as well as scheduling performances to coincide with sunset to create a stronger esthetic experience. These changes are not considered deviations but rather as forms of adaptation to the needs of the times, as well as efforts to preserve cultural existence amidst the dynamics of tourism. The community's agreement on this functional change also indicates a collective acceptance of the dynamic nature of cultural transformation. The Kecak dance no longer only exists in sacred spaces, but also in public spaces as an attraction that can be enjoyed by both local and international tourists, without losing the philosophical values and cultural narratives contained within it.

The average score obtained from this statement is 3.125, which is above 2.5, indicating that the majority of respondents agree that the change in the function of the Kecak dance has a positive impact on the local community. This is because the local community directly feels the positive impact of the change in the function of the Kecak dance toward tourism performances. The positive impacts felt encompass several aspects. First, from an economic perspective, the Kecak dance performance becomes a source of income for the community, both for those directly involved as dancers and for those who play a role in supporting the performance activities. Second, from a sociocultural aspect, the local community gains space to express its cultural identity more broadly. Regular performances strengthen pride in local culture

and raise awareness among the younger generation to preserve ancestral traditions.

In addition, the international screening of the Kecak dance also has a positive impact on the global image of Balinese culture. Tourists who watch the Kecak dance at Melasti Beach bring that experience back to their home countries, which indirectly expand the promotion of Balinese culture abroad. Although commercialization has occurred, the community continues to uphold fundamental values by separating the tourist performance version from the sacred version, which is only staged during religious ceremonies. Therefore, this change not only has an economic impact but also strengthens the role of culture as the identity and main attraction of Bali amidst the currents of globalization.

The adaptation of the Kecak dance to the times is an unavoidable phenomenon, especially amidst the currents of modernization and the increasing tourism in Bali. However, the results of this study indicate that these changes do not automatically diminish the sacred value and cultural significance inherent in this dance. Quantitative results show that the majority of respondents do not agree with the statement that “the passage of time has diminished the sacred meaning of the Kecak dance” (average 1.875). On the contrary, they agree that “the development of the times helps introduce the Kecak Dance to tourists without losing its original meaning” (average 3.375). These findings indicate that the community views modernization as a way to expand the global reach of Kecak dance, while still being cautious in preserving its cultural essence.

This is reinforced by primary data from interviews, where informants stated that the addition of elements in commercially performed Kecak dance, such as collaboration or artistic improvisation, is only intended to beautify the appearance, not to change its meaning, function, or purpose. The traditional version of the Kecak dance is preserved and only performed at certain religious or customary ceremonies, while the modified version is more aimed at tourism interests. The difference between the original version and the commercial version is also strictly maintained by the local community. For example, the use of costumes and ritual equipment in the traditional version is not displayed in the commercial version. The modified version only uses replicas as a form of respect without tarnishing its sacred value. From an economic perspective, the local community acknowledges the positive impact, such as increased income from Kecak dance performances and the growing recognition of Balinese culture worldwide. However, they also recognize the negative impact, particularly the external perception that sacred dances like the Kecak dance can be freely displayed, which has the potential to cause misunderstandings.

To maintain authenticity, the community collaborates with the government, particularly the department of culture, which actively provides support through preservation funds and cultural programs. One tangible form of this preservation effort is the Bali Art Festival, which is regularly held every year in June-July. This festival showcases various traditional Balinese arts and culture, including the original version of the Kecak dance, which is performed in special locations such as the Taman Budaya Park Center Denpasar and starts from Lapangan Bubutan. Thus, it can be concluded that the Balinese community, particularly in the Melasti Beach area, has successfully adapted the Kecak dance into a modern context without losing the sacred values contained within it. Modernization is not understood as a form of cultural degradation, but rather as an opportunity to introduce Balinese culture to the world more broadly, while still maintaining the boundaries set by customs and local values.

Modernization has had a significant impact on the Kecak dance performance, both in terms of form, function, and meaning. Based on an interview with Mbok Agung, a tour guide in Bali, modernization is reflected in the addition of entertainment elements such as jokes or humor inserted into the performance. This entertainment element is not intended to diminish the sacred value of the dance, but rather to

enhance its appearance and adapt it to the tastes of modern audiences, especially foreign tourists. This reflects the process of cultural adaptation to the demands of the times, while also showing how the local community maintains the essence and symbols of tradition in the performances, such as the use of black-and-white checkered sarongs that symbolize the Rwa Binedha philosophy or the balance between good and evil.

The transformation in the Kecak dance performance also occurs in the aesthetic and technical aspects of the presentation. According to the leader of the Kecak dance performance, since its creation in 1930 in Ubud, the early form of this dance was very simple, both in terms of costumes, makeup, and stage structure. Over time, changes have been made in the form of stage settings, accessories, and dance formations, in response to the tastes of contemporary audiences. Nevertheless, the core meaning and main story in each performance remain anchored in the Ramayana, which is a framework that must not be altered. The same was conveyed by the Head of Ungasan Village, Mr. I Made Kari, who explained that visual changes such as movement, costumes, and artistic collaborations in the performance at Melasti Beach are made to enhance the appearance and do not alter the function or sacred essence of the dance.

In addition to changes in form, the meaning of Kecak dance has also expanded in a modern context. Mbok Agung revealed that besides being a performance of wayang stories, Kecak dance has another origin rooted in the agrarian life of the Balinese community. In this version, Kecak dance is understood as a form of prayer for fertility inspired by the sounds of nature and the spirituality of Balinese farmers. This change in interpretation enriches the understanding of the dance, while also reflecting the social dynamics and evolving knowledge of the community. This view is also in line with the performance leader who stated that Balinese society tends to be flexible toward changes, as long as they do not violate the framework related to the story and philosophical values.

The impact of commercialization as part of modernization has also become an important aspect in the development of the Kecak Dance. This performance has now become a premier tourist attraction in Bali, especially when staged at sunset to create a dramatic atmosphere. According to Mbok Agung, the intense interaction between dancers and the audience has become a strategy to attract tourists and is considered acceptable as long as cultural values are maintained. The show leader added that various additional attractive elements in the performance are a form of adjustment to the needs of the tourism and entertainment industry. On the other hand, Mr. I Made Kari emphasized that this commercialization brings positive impacts, especially in the fields of economy and cultural promotion. The Kecak Dance performance has become a source of income for the local community and further strengthens Bali's cultural identity on the international stage.

However, it cannot be denied that commercialization also poses challenges to the preservation of sacred values. I Made Kari expressed concern that the open and paid presentation of the Kecak dance could create a misunderstanding about its spiritual elements. To address this, the Balinese community continues to preserve the original version of the Kecak dance, which is only performed in religious ceremonies, using props, costumes, and movements that adhere to traditional standards. The commercial version, on the other hand, is merely an imitation that resembles the original form. The local government also plays an active role through cultural preservation programs such as the Bali Arts Festival (Pesta Kesenian Bali [PKBJ]) held annually from June to July in Denpasar. This festival serves as a space to showcase sacred arts in their traditional forms and to preserve the existence of Balinese culture amidst the currents of globalization.

Overall, modernization has a complex impact on the Kecak dance, ranging from adjustments in performance forms, expansion of meanings, to commercialization. However, thanks to the collective awareness of the

community, artists, and government, the cultural values underlying the Kecak dance have remained preserved. Through various preservation strategies and creative adaptations, this performance remains alive and relevant amidst changing times, without losing its identity as a sacred cultural heritage of the Balinese community.

The modernization that has developed through the tourism sector in Bali has had a significant impact on the cultural values in the Kecak dance performance. This dance was originally part of the Sanghyang ritual ceremony, used as a means of warding off evil and a medium for spiritual communication with ancestral spirits. In the traditional context, Kecak Dance has a strong religious dimension, full of symbolism, and contains noble values such as mutual cooperation and spiritual devotion (Made Pira Erawati, 2019). However, the collaboration between Balinese artist Wayan Limbak and German artist Walter Spies in the late 1920s marked the beginning of significant changes in the form and function of the Kecak dance. Since then, the Kecak Dance has undergone a transformation into a profane performance tailored to the tastes of foreign tourists and detached from its sacred context (Suardana et al., 2018).

This transformation has intensified with the growth of the tourism industry in Bali, which has shifted the Kecak dance from a spiritual expression to a cultural product packaged as visual entertainment. In an effort to adapt to the global market, Kecak dance performances have undergone changes in terms of timing, location, and presentation format. Now, this performance is more often held at tourist spots like GWK and Uluwatu Temple, with the addition of modern elements such as lighting and visual effects to enrich the tourist experience (Novanda et al., 2023). This process of commodification can lead to a shift in meaning and value, from a spiritual medium to an economic instrument, which in turn fosters a tendency toward individualism and erodes the social values that have long been the foundation of Balinese culture if there are no efforts from the community or government to preserve its authenticity (Made Pira Erawati, 2019).

The modernization of tourism not only affects the presentation of the Kecak dance but can also change the public's perception of its spiritual values. The younger generation, especially those who do not live in Bali, experiences a disconnection from the philosophical values contained in this dance. They are more familiar with the Kecak dance as an exotic spectacle rather than as a form of homage to ancestors and a medium for collective worship. The values of Pancasila, such as divinity, love for the homeland, and unity, which were once reflected in the rhythm and movement of the Kecak dance, are slowly losing their context (Ravalina et al., 2024). This change also raises concerns about the loss of cultural substance, especially when sacred values begin to be considered irrelevant by the younger generation (Averil Asha Bertha, 2022).

On the other hand, modernization also brings significant economic benefits to the Balinese community. The Kecak dance has become a source of income for local art groups (*sekaa*), created job opportunities, and stimulated regional economic growth. In fact, Kecak dance has now become a global icon of Balinese culture, strengthening Indonesia's cultural position on the international stage (Solehudin et al., 2023). In this context, the Kecak dance has evolved into a hybrid performance art that combines local traditions with global innovations. Although communal in nature and lacking exclusive copyright, its existence as an adaptive cultural product demonstrates that modernization can serve as a means of preservation through value negotiation (Suardana et al., 2018).

To address this challenge of ambivalence, the Balinese community developed a dualistic approach, namely, by separating tourist performances from sacred performances. This effort aims to preserve the authenticity of spiritual values while still responding to the needs of the global economy (Averil Asha Bertha, 2022). The government and artists are also striving to balance commercialization and cultural preservation through strategies such as training for artist regeneration, strengthening cultural institutions, and involving local communities in

decision-making related to art performances (Solehudin et al., 2023). In addition, preservation innovations such as the creation of documentary films, digital books, cultural workshops, and the integration of Kecak dance material into school curricula are important for keeping its philosophical values alive in the memories of future generations (Ravalina et al., 2024).

Thus, the impact of modernization on cultural values in the Kecak dance performance is complex and ambivalent. On one hand, it allows for the preservation and promotion of Balinese culture globally, but on the other hand, it poses the risk of cultural banality when sacred values are sacrificed for visual aesthetics and market interests. This transformation reflects the dynamics of Balinese culture in facing the currents of globalization, where traditions are not abandoned but re-examined and adjusted to the needs of the times (Antari, 2018).

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that there has been a transformation in the function of the Kecak Dance from a sacred ritual to a tourist attraction, particularly in the Melasti Beach area, Ungasan Village. This finding is supported by Averil Asha Bertha (2022), who states that the development of the tourism industry in Bali has driven the intensive commodification of the Kecak dance, causing its spiritual values to confront the expectations of global tourists.

This statement is in line with an interview with the Head of the Ungasan Village, I Made Kari, who stated that modernization indeed causes the addition of new elements in the performance of the Kecak dance. However, according to him, "these additions are merely to beautify the appearance of the Kecak Dance" and do not change its meaning or sacred value. This is in line with the findings of Suardana et al. (2018), that commercialization does occur, but the Balinese community has developed a dualistic approach to preserve cultural authenticity, with one side still presenting the traditional version for ceremonies, and the other side the more adaptive commercial version.

Furthermore, the Head of Kecak Dance at Melasti Beach also mentioned that the performance has undergone changes in visual aspects due to the need to attract the audience. He explained that "the story is the same, most of the Kecak dance performances are all based on the Ramayana." This perspective shows that the local community and artists maintain the framework as an unwritten boundary to preserve meaning. According to Antari (2018), this reflects that the transformation of Balinese culture occurs through re-examination and adaptation to the needs of the times, rather than abandoning tradition.

The findings of this study also indicate that the majority of the local community does not oppose the commercialization of the Kecak dance. The average perception value of the respondents, which is 3.125, indicates a collective acceptance of the new function of the Kecak dance as a source of income and cultural promotion. In line with that, Solehudin et al. (2023) emphasize that the Kecak dance performances create job opportunities and strengthen the position of Balinese culture on the international stage. However, there are also concerns that the open presentation of the Kecak dance may diminish its sacred value. I Made Kari stated that "what is commercialized is a replica of the original costume," and the original version is only shown during traditional ceremonies. This proves that the community continues to maintain the boundaries between sacred and profane values. Averil Asha Bertha (2022) explains that such an approach is important to prevent cultural banality due to market pressures.

The government also supports cultural preservation through annual programs such as the Bali Arts Festival (PKB), which is regularly held in June-July. This festival provides a space for the community to showcase the original versions of Balinese arts, including the Kecak dance. According to Ravalina et al. (2024), this program has become an important strategy in preserving cultural memory and philosophical values for future generations.

Table 1: Changes in the function of Kecak dance

Statement	Average	Interpretation of results
Kecak dance at Melasti Beach experiencing functional change from ritual to performance tourism	2.875	The average score of 2.875 is above the number (2.5) indicates that the majority of respondents agree with the shift in the function of the Kecak dance at Melasti Beach from its original of a ritual nature has changed to entertainment. this change is considered as adaptation to the demands of the times and the needs of tourism, where the performance continues to maintain traditional elements such as narration Ramayana and sacred elements, but wrapped in an approach that more visual and attractive
Change in function Kecak dance provides positive impact for the community local	3.125	This score indicates that the majority of respondents believe the change in function has a positive impact, particularly in economic and social aspects. The Kecak dance has now become a new source of livelihood for the local residents as dancers, crew, or tourism actors, as well as strengthening local cultural identity. In addition, the existence of the Kecak dance on the international stage also promotes Balinese culture abroad, without completely abandoning ancestral values.

Table 2: The success of adapting Kecak dance in the era of modernization

Statement	Average	Interpretation of results
Development time causes the sacred meaning of the Kecak dance Kecak is diminishing.	1.875	This average shows that the majority of respondents do not agree that the sacred meaning of the Kecak dance has diminished due to modernization. This indicates that the community still preserves spiritual values in the context of performances, with a separation between commercial and sacred performances, while also incorporating traditional values in certain shows
Development era help introducing Kecak Dance to tourists without removing the original meaning.	3.375	This value indicates a high level of agreement among respondents that the passage of time has actually become a means to introduce Kecak dance to a wider audience, without sacrificing its original meaning. The community views modernization is not a threat, but an opportunity accompanied by the preservation of cultural values, such as through educating the younger generation and collaborating with the government in cultural programs.

Table 3: The impact of modernization on cultural values in Kecak dance performances

Statement	Average	Interpretation of results
I feel the Kecak dance Kecak right now more highlight entertainment aspect compared to cultural values.	2.675	The average score of 2.675 indicates that the majority of respondents tend to agree that the Kecak Dance currently emphasizes entertainment aspects more. This is in line with the results of interviews and observations that show entertainment elements such as stage settings, comedic acts, and visual effects have been added to attract tourists' attention. However, the cultural values and the structure of the Ramayana story are still preserved. This adaptation is seen by the community as an effort to enhance the appearance, not as a form of cultural meaning removal.
The Kecak dance aimed at the economy at Melasti Beach threatens Balinese cultural values	1.75	An average score of 1.75 indicates respondents' disagreement that the economic purpose of the Kecak dance performance at Melasti Beach threatens Balinese cultural values. On the contrary, the community views this performance as an adaptive cultural preservation strategy. They maintain the sacred version for religious rituals, while the commercial version is only intended for tourists. The separation between the sacred and the profane is considered a solution to preserving cultural values amidst the tide of modernization.

Modernization has had a dual impact on the Kecak dance. On one hand, it opens up economic opportunities and promotes Balinese culture to a global level. On the other hand, it poses a challenge to the preservation of spiritual values. The Balinese community, as explained by Suardana *et al.* (2018), has successfully maintained cultural existence through creative adaptation without sacrificing spiritual identity. Thus, the results of this study affirm that preservation and innovation can go hand in hand, as long as the community has a strong collective awareness and institutional support.

## CONCLUSION

The Kecak dance at Melasti Beach has undergone a significant change in function over time. Originally part of a sacred religious ritual, it is now more often presented as an entertainment show for tourists. Although its function has shifted, traditional elements such as the storyline of the Ramayana, dancer costumes, and the characteristic Kecak choir pattern are still preserved, reflecting the community's efforts to maintain their ancestral cultural heritage amidst the demands of the tourism industry.

In its development process, Kecak dance shows the ability to adapt to the changing times. The adaptation is evident through the simplification of the story to make it easier for international audiences to understand, the use of foreign languages by the narrator, and the addition of modern elements such as attractive lighting and sound design. These changes

make the performance more attractive without losing the distinctive Balinese culture that is strongly embedded in every movement and accompanying sound.

Modernization has a complex impact on the sustainability of the Kecak dance. On one hand, this opens up economic opportunities and strengthens the existence of Balinese culture on the international stage. However, on the other hand, there is a risk of excessive commercialization that could diminish the spiritual value and original meaning of the performance. Therefore, it is important for cultural practitioners and the community to maintain a balance between innovation and preservation so that the cultural essence contained in the Kecak dance remains alive and meaningful for future generations.

## Limitations

This research has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the scope of the research is limited to the area of the Kecak dance performance at Melasti Beach, so the findings obtained cannot be generalized to other regions or contexts of performances in Bali. The relatively limited research time also affects the depth of the data collected, so it has not yet been able to capture historical changes or long-term developments comprehensively.

Second, qualitative research methods that rely on interviews and



observations face their own challenges. Some key informants were less cooperative, either due to time constraints or personal reasons, making it difficult to maximize the data collection process. This caused some important information to not be fully revealed. In addition, differences in perception among participants and the use of local languages in some interviews also pose interpretative challenges in fully understanding cultural meanings.

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