



Tedhak Siten: Its Existence and Cultural Values During the Fast Pacing World

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ABSTRACT

Culture has a close relationship with tradition, it is binding and is believed by the community. Preserving one tradition means maintaining one culture to still exist and be beneficial to society. Based on those claims, this study identified and described Tedhak Siten in Javanese Tradition based on Performance studies. The study used a qualitative descriptive method with the application of Performance Theory. The results showed that there are seven stages of Tedhak Siten tradition, which is; (1) Sungkeman, (2) Menitih Jadah/Tetel, (3) Climbing and Descending the Stairs from Wulung Sugarcane, (4) Splash Water, (5) Choosing toys in the chicken cage, (6) Udhik-Udhik, and (7) Pray. Furthermore, all the processes in Tedhak Siten are truly categorized in performance theory, which is; (1) it has a certain time, (2) it has a certain object, (3) it is a non-productivity work, (4) it has certain rules, and (5) it has a performance space. In addition, based on its cultural values, Tedhak Siten consists of; Harmony, Egalitarianism, Embeddedness, Hierarchy, Mastery, Affective Autonomy, and Intellectual Autonomy Values.

Keywords: tedhak siten; performance study; cultural values; java culture

ABSTRAK

Kebudayaan erat hubungannya dengan tradisi, mengikat dan diyakini oleh masyarakat. Melestarikan satu tradisi berarti menjaga satu budaya agar tetap eksis dan bermanfaat bagi masyarakat. Berdasarkan klaim tersebut, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dan menggambarkan Tedhak Siten dalam Tradisi Jawa berdasarkan studi Performansi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan penerapan Performance Theory. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada tujuh tahapan tradisi Tedhak Siten, yaitu; (1) Sungkeman, (2) Menitih Jadah/Tetel, (3) Menaiki dan Menuruni Tangga Tebu Wulung, (4) Percikan Air, (5) Memilih mainan di kandang ayam, (6) Udhik-Udhik, dan (7) Berdoa. Selanjutnya, semua proses di Tedhak Siten benar-benar dikategorikan dalam teori kinerja, yaitu; (1) memiliki waktu tertentu, (2) memiliki objek tertentu, (3) merupakan karya yang tidak produktif, (4) memiliki aturan tertentu, dan (5) memiliki ruang pertunjukan. Selain itu, berdasarkan nilai budayanya, Tedhak Siten terdiri dari; Nilai Harmoni, Egalitarianisme, Embeddedness, Hirarki, Penguasaan, Otonomi Afektif, dan Otonomi Intelektual.

Kata Kunci: tedhak siten; studi performansi; nilai budaya; budaya jawa



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1. Introduction

Culture is a lifestyle that develops in a group or society and is passed down from generation to generation. Culture affects many aspects of human life (Syahputra and Sinar 2018). Culture is made up of many complex things, including religious systems, politics, customs, tools, languages, buildings, clothing, and works of art. According to Koentjaraningrat (2004), the word culture comes from the Sanskrit *budhayah*, is the plural form of *buddhi* which means mind or reason. Thus, culture can be said to be "things related to mind and reason".

In Indonesia, there is a lot of cultural diversity due to the many ethnic groups in the territory of Indonesia, from Acehnese, Malay, Javanese, and many more, with each tribe having its own language and culture (Syahputra & Rudiansyah, 2023). Javanese culture is one of the traditional cultures in Indonesia that is quite old, adopted from generation to generation by residents throughout Java. Javanese culture is a culture that originates from Java and is embraced by the Javanese people, especially in Central Java, Yogyakarta and East Java. Javanese culture can be broadly divided into 3, namely *Banyumasan* culture, Central Java-DIY culture, and East Javanese culture. Javanese culture prioritizes balance and harmony in everyday life. Javanese culture upholds decency and simplicity.

Although many Javanese people think that Javanese culture is only one and not divided, in reality there are differences in people's attitudes and behavior in understanding Javanese culture (Sedyawati, 2010). This difference is partly due to geographical conditions that make Javanese culture divided into several cultural areas, where each cultural area has its own characteristics in implementing Javanese cultural philosophy into daily life (Sujanto, 1997 in Sedyawati, 2010). One of the elements of the cultural system that is maintained and taught from generation to generation by the Javanese people is the philosophy of life. Philosophy of life is the most common assumptions, ideas, and inner attitudes possessed by a person or group. The philosophy of life becomes the basis and gives meaning to the attitude of life of a society which is usually reflected in various expressions known in society (Sedyawati, 2003). Furthermore, Endraswara (2008) stated that the essential nature of the Javanese is an attitude of acceptance.

Javanese culture is reflected in the systematic thinking of the Javanese (Raselly Elfa Putri & Fikry Prastya Syahputra, 2023). In living their lives, Javanese people always apply the philosophy of nobility, character, and ethics as three interrelated things. Javanese culture also produces a mindset for the Javanese community itself. *Tedhak Siten* is a Javanese cultural heritage for babies who are around seven or eight months old. *Tedhak Siten* is also known as the descent ceremony. Derived from the word '*tedhak*' which means down and '*siten*' comes from the word '*siti*' which means land. The *Tedhak Siten* ceremony is carried out as a series of events aimed at making children grow up to be independent children. This tradition is carried out when the child is a count of seven months from the day of his birth in a matter of Javanese market. It should also be noted that the count of one month in the Javanese market is 36 days. Hence, the seventh month of the Javanese calendar for the birth of the baby is equivalent to eight months of the Gregorian calendar.

Based on the description above, a desire arises from the author with the intention and purpose to describe *Tedhak Siten* in Javanese tradition and identified the cultural values within it. Due the modernization, many tradition, slowly but sure vanished or lost its original value and purposed. Therefore, this research expected to be a refence to preserve one of Indonesia's valuable tradition.

Performance Study

Schechner has shown in fan drawings that performance covers five areas. The five fields have similarities in several respects, namely: 1) a certain time, 2) a certain value that given to objects, 3) non-productive, 4) certain rules, and 5) sometimes added with place restrictions (Schechner 2004).

a. Time

Set time, where an arbitrary time pattern is imposed on events – they begin and end at certain moments whether or not they have been completed. Here there is an agonistic contest between the activity and the clock. Symbolic time is when the span of the activity represents another span of clock time. Symbolic time, seemingly absent from happenings and the like, is most difficult to banish.

b. Objects

In everyday life are valued for their practical use, scarcity, beauty, bartering power, or age. In the performance activities all objects – except certain ritual implements and relics – have a market value much less than the value assigned to the objects within the context of the activity.

c. Non-productivity

The separation of performance activities from productive work is a most interesting, and unifying, factor of play, games, sports, theater, and ritual.

d. Rules

Special rules exist, are formulated, and persist because these activities are something apart from everyday life. A special world is created where people can make the rules, rearrange time, assign value to things, and work for pleasure. This “special world” is not gratuitous but a vital part of human life. No society, no individual, can do without it. It is special only when compared to the “ordinary” activities of productive work. In psychoanalytic terms, the world of these approaches’ performance activities is the pleasure principle institutionalized.

e. Performance Spaces

Perhaps this will be clearer if we consider for a moment where sports, theater, and ritual are performed. Great arenas, stadiums, churches, and theaters are structures often economically non-self-supporting. Situated in population centers where real estate comes high, these large spaces lie fallow during great hunks of time.

Cultural Values

Cultural values develop when societies face fundamental questions and problems in the regulation of human activity (Schwartz, 2009). People need to be aware of these issues, plan responses to them, and motivate each other to deal with them. The way societies respond to these fundamental questions and issues can be used to identify aspects in which cultures may differ from one another. There are the seven cultural values orientation based on Schwartz (2009) model;

a. Intellectual autonomy

Intellectual autonomy encourages individuals to pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions independently. Examples of important values in such cultures include broadmindedness, curiosity, and creativity.

b. Affective autonomy

Affective autonomy encourages individuals to pursue affectively positive experience for themselves. Important values include pleasure, exciting life, and varied life.

c. Embeddedness

People are viewed as entities embedded in the collectively. Meaning in life comes largely through social relationships, through identifying with the group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving toward its shared goals. Embedded cultures emphasize maintaining the status quo and restraining actions that might disrupt in-group solidarity or the traditional order. Important values in such cultures are social order, respect for tradition, security, obedience, and wisdom.

d. Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism seeks to induce people to recognize one another as moral equals who share basic interests as human beings. People are socialized to internalize a commitment to cooperate and to feel concern for everyone’s welfare. They are expected to act for the benefit of others as a matter of choice. Important values in such cultures include equality, social justice, responsibility, help, and honesty.

e. Hierarchy

Hierarchy relies on hierarchical systems of ascribed roles to insure responsible, productive behaviour. It defines the unequal distribution of power, roles, and resources as legitimate. People are socialized to take the hierarchical distribution of roles for granted and to comply with the obligations and rules attached to their roles. Values like social power, authority, humility, and wealth are highly important in hierarchical cultures. The third societal problem is to regulate how people manage their relations to the natural and social world.

f. Harmony

Harmony emphasizes fitting into the world as it is, trying to understand and appreciate rather than to change, direct, or to

g. Mastery

Mastery is the polar cultural response to this problem. It encourages active self-assertion in order to master, direct, and change the natural and social environment to attain group or personal goals. Values such as ambition, success, daring, and competence are especially important in mastery cultures.

2. Research Methods

The research used descriptive qualitative method and document observation techniques in doing this paper. Cresswell (2015) stated that qualitative research is ‘interpretive’ research, in which you make a personal assessment as to a description that fits the situation or themes that capture the major categories of information. The interpretation that you make for example, differs from the interpretation that someone else makes, this does not mean that your interpretation is better or more accurate; it simply means that you bring your own perspective to your interpretation.

The stages of research started from; the writer reads and understand the story of Javanese tradition wisely, and then understanding *Tedhak Siten* in Javanese tradition. Next, the writer chooses the events to make in as the sample by watching the *Tedhak Siten* tradition performance. After that, the data is interpreted and described. The last, the writer make conclusion.

The source of data derived from the *Tedhak Siten* tradition both from original performance and from documentation. The data is the text dan co-text from the *tedhak siten* tradition.

3. Results and Discussion

1. The Process of *Tedhak Siten* in Javanese Tradition

For the Javanese, the tradition to commemorate the first baby to walk is called *Tedhak Siten*. The *Tedhak Siten* ceremony is a hereditary tradition of Javanese tradition that has been carried out from generation to generation until now. In a series of events, the ceremony is believed to predict the baby's future. The *Tedhak Siten* tradition is a Javanese ancestral culture that is intended for babies aged around 7-8 months in a matter of Javanese market. Usually at this age children have started to learn to walk and set foot on the ground. The Javanese market count generally amounts to 36 days. That is, the seventh month in the Javanese calendar is the same as the eighth month in the Gregorian calendar.

The term *Tedhak Siten* is taken from the word *tedhak* which means down and *siten* which comes from the word *siti* which means land. This ceremony is intended so that later the child can grow up to be independent. In addition, it is also a tribute to the earth where your little one begins to learn to set his feet. In the *Tedhak Siten* ceremony, parents and elders will offer good prayers as a hope for the child's success in life. It should be noted, in the implementation of the *Tedhak Siten* ceremony, it is necessary to prepare some mandatory equipment that is used as a series in the event.



Figure 1. The equipments of *Tedhak Siten*

Here's the list.

Soil in a container

- a) *Jadah* is in seven colors, namely black, purple, blue, green, red, yellow, white, and placed in separate containers
- b) *Wulung* sugarcane, which is sugarcane with purple wood stems
- c) Market snacks, such as cakes
- d) *Tumpeng Robyong*, which is a decorated cone with 7 kinds of side dishes
- e) *Setaman* flowers in a container filled with water to bathe the baby
- f) Chicks that have been colored and are still alive
- g) A large chicken cage that is decorated and filled with various kinds of toys, such as toy cars, musical instruments, doctors, and so on.

Sungkeman

The child is carried by the mother to *sungkem* to grandparents from the mother's side and daughter from the mother's side first, followed by *sungkem* to grandparents from the father's side.



Figure 2. Sungkeman

The first *Tedhak Siten* arrangement is *Sungkeman*. *Sungkeman* has a philosophy as a request for blessings and goodness for the life of the child. In this session, the mother carried the little one to *sungkem* to her maternal grandmother and grandfather and continued to her paternal grandmother and grandfather.

a. Menitih *Jadah*/Tetel

The children along with their father and mother were invited to climb a ladder made of *Wulung* sugar cane.



Figure 3. The procession of walking on the 7 colors *Jadah*

Children are led up the stairs one by one. Philosophy, symbolizes hopes that the child will someday have the soul of a warrior and warrior like Arjuna. When he reached the top of the stairs, the child sat for a moment. Philosophy, symbolizes prayer so that in the future children will succeed in achieving and getting what they aspire to. Then the child is led back down the stairs to the bottom one by one, and ends by stepping on the ground in the container provided. Philosophy, even though the child will achieve success in his life, his personality remains humble. This ladder made of *Wulung* sugar cane has 7 steps (in Javanese it is called PITU) which symbolizes PITULUNG or help from the Almighty. Philosophy: every way of life and what is being sought is expected to always get help from God. The arrangement of the *Tedhak Siten* program is usually carried out in the morning with a series of events that begin with stepping on the ground and then climbing the *Jadah* in seven colors which are symbols of a child's life. While the colors depict the life path

that children must go through when they grow up. Keep in mind, the array of these baddies must start from black to white. This is because every problem faced by children will end with a bright spot or find a way out.

b. Climbing and Descending the Stairs from Wulung Sugarcane

The child is bathed in *Setaman* flower water and then dressed in nice clothes. Philosophy, so that children keep their hearts clean and their bodies clean. Likewise, his clothes are pleasing to the eye.



Figure 4. Climbing and Descending the Stairs from Wulung Sugarcane

The third event of the *Tedhak Siten* tradition is climbing and descending stairs made of *Wulung* cane stalks. The ladder has 7 steps which in Javanese are called *pitu*. This number was chosen because it symbolizes *pitulung* or help from God Almighty. Children are led up the stairs one by one by their parents. This illustrates the hope that one day your little one will have a warrior and knight spirit like Arjuna (a tough and responsible *wayang* character). When they reached the highest ladder, the child sat down for a moment. The following section has a philosophy of prayer so that children can achieve success and get what they want. After sitting down, the child is led back down the stairs one by one, and ends by setting foot on the ground in the container provided. This illustrates that children remain humble even though they have achieved life success.

c. Splash of Water

The child is bathed in *Setaman* flower water and then replaced with good clothes. *Siraman* aims to keep the soul and body of the child clean. In addition, it is also intended that children have names that must and make the name of their family, nation, and religion proud.



Figure 5. Splash of Water Ritual

d. Choosing toys in a chicken cage

After climbing the ladder of sugarcane *Wulung*, the next sequence is then the child is put in a chicken cage which contains various toys. Let the children choose their own toys that they like. After the child climbs and descends the cane *Wulung* ladder, then he chooses a toy in the chicken cage to predict his future. Let the little one chooses for themselves what he likes.



Figure 6. Tedhak Siten procession put the baby in the cage

In this session, the philosophy is that parents give their children the freedom to determine their own path in life without any intervention. Parents are only tasked with directing and providing guidance, not forcing. Philosophy, parents give freedom to the child to determine the path of his life without intervention. The task of parents is to guide and direct, not impose their will on children.

e. Udhik-Udhik

Udhik-Udhikan is a tradition of throwing or throwing coins which aims to distribute to guests who are present at a celebration in Javanese society. The guests at the celebration and/or the surrounding community are welcome to take the money that has been spread by the giver of intent. After guests claim the money that has been scattered, they can either have the money earned or take it home.



Figure 7. Udhik-Udhik Ritual

The type of money thrown in the loot is usually coins or coins. The nominal money distributed starts from IDR. 100 – 1,000 and the amount depends on the donor. In the 90s, coins with a nominal value of IDR. 25 and IDR. 50 were still used, but now they are no longer used. In addition to coins or coins are usually interspersed with candy or *jenang* that has been wrapped in small pieces. This tradition is usually held during *muludan*, circumcision, baby births, and birthdays or if you get a fortune such as building a house or when someone gets a blessing. Children and mothers usually really like to take part in the outings. Homecoming events are usually announced through loudspeakers or known by word of mouth. The arrival of uninvited guests or the surrounding community is not a problem, because the more crowded the village is, the merrier the event will be and those who have an intention will be happier. When people are busy with activities to make money, Gresik residents actually have a tradition of wasting money or what is known as *Udhik-Udhikan*. Usually *Udhik-Udhikan* is carried out when someone has just finished building a house, is holding a celebration, circumcision or has just bought luxury items such as motorbikes and cars. In *Udhik-Udhikan*, money with various amounts ranging from small change to ten thousand will be thrown or scattered on the street and fought over by all residents who have already gathered and are preparing to take it. If the person carrying out the *Udhik-Udhikan* is a person who has just bought a motorbike, then before the coins are wasted, the motorbike must be doused with flower water that has been enchanted. The goal is that motorcycle drivers are given safety while driving. While some of the water is used to soak the coins that will be scattered. Usually, the money is also mixed with yellow rice first. The news about the holding of the Homecoming was obtained by word of mouth. Usually, one hour before the *Udhik-Udhikan* is held, people will gather at a predetermined location such as the owner's home page. Children aged 5-12 years are most often in the front row when the *Udhik-Udhik* is held. They will run screaming at each other, in order to

collect as much money as possible. Parents also sometimes fight. This is what makes *Udhik-Udhikan* a place for people to gather in a village. If the executor of the *Udhik-Udhikan* is a person who is having the intention of marriage. Hence, the homecoming began to be spread when the word amen was heard from the loudspeaker after praying. The more visitors who come, the happier the owner of the celebration.

f. Pray

The series of *Tedhak Siten* ceremonies ended with a prayer and a group photo. Then there is a session of cutting the cone and eating together. Tumpeng describes the expectations of parents for their children to become useful people. Inside the cone, there are long beans which are a symbol of longevity, kale as a symbol of prosperity, sprouts as a sign of fertility, and chickens which signify independence. The *Tedhak Siten* ceremony is generally performed by the Javanese when the baby is 7 or 8 months old. Many have abandoned this tradition because the series is long and quite complicated. However, there is nothing wrong if parents want to continue the ancestral culture and celebrate the development of children who have started learning to walk. Tradition or custom, in the simplest sense, is something that has been done for a long time and is part of the life of a group of people from a society, culture, religion, time, and country. Local traditions in our society today, especially rural communities in all corners of the country, are still being maintained and are still often practiced. Local traditions in rural communities, which are still carried out in Javanese society, need to be maintained in our society today, because these local traditions serve as social capital to foster social solidarity among fellow citizens. Society has beliefs about animism and dynamism. One of the characteristics of Javanese society is belief in God, which is a belief in the existence of a spirit or soul in objects, plants, animals and also humans themselves, they make monuments from large stones as a place to remember the spirits of their ancestors so that their families are protected from harm. Evil spirits, they prepare offerings and burn incense enhanced by sounds and dances. The dynamism of the Javanese people assumes that everything that moves is alive and has supernatural powers, has good and bad characters and to avoid that they engineer it by holding ceremonies accompanied by offerings, besides that they believe that what they have built is the result of a struggle with nature. , the force of nature is realized is the determination of the whole life. In the face of old beliefs, Islamic broadcasters select which beliefs to accept, and which to reject and eliminate. The ceremonies in Hinduism seem to have magical powers, which are manifested in the form of offerings. Offerings are a Hindu cultural heritage, while prayer is the essence of worship in Islam, both of which have become a tradition among many Javanese people.

2. *Tedhak Siten in Performance Studies*

a. Time

Set time, where an arbitrary time pattern is imposed on events, it begins and end at certain moments whether or not they have been completed. Here there is an agonistic contest between the activity and the clock. Symbolic time is when the span of the activity represents another span of clock time. Symbolic time, seemingly absent from happenings and the like, is most difficult to banish. Based on the time qualification, *Tedhak Siten* performed when a baby is seven months old and begins to learn to sit and walk on the ground.

b. Objects

In everyday life are valued for their practical use, scarcity, beauty, bartering power, or age. In the performance activities all objects, except certain ritual implements and relics, have a market value much less than the value assigned to the objects within the context of the activity. The object identify in *Tedhak Siten* are several equipment needed in this tradition, including:

1. *Jadah* or *uli* represent a symbol of the life that your little one will go through. Meanwhile, the seven colors are a picture of a life that has obstacles and many choices. In this case, the child is expected to be able to make decisions and overcome these obstacles.
2. Snack Market; Not just food, market snacks also have an implied meaning. Snacks symbolize the condition of children who will later interact with various human characters. Children are expected to be able to socialize well.
3. Chicken Cage; Chicken cages reflect the world or social life. A child who goes into confinement describes his entry into the wider community. Children are expected to be able to adapt and obey all the rules of society.

4. Ladder; The *Tedhak Siten* tradition requires a ladder made of *Wulung* or purple arjuna cane. Sugar cane reflects the heart or determination of the child's determination in pursuing his goals so that they can be achieved quickly.
5. Tumpeng; Tumpeng symbolizes the request of parents to God Almighty so that their son or daughter becomes a useful child in the future. The long bean vegetables in it are the hope that the child will live long, the sprouts symbolize fertility, and kale represents a child who is able to grow and develop.
6. *Pala pendem*; the *pala pendem* or tubers in *Tedhak Siten* symbolize the parents' hope that their children will have and hap asor or not be arrogant.

c. Non-productivity

The separation of performance activities from productive work is a most interesting, and unifying, factor of play, games, sports, theater, and ritual. The *Tedhak Siten* activity is a tradition that focuses more on performance activities than an activity that has economic value.

d. Rules

Special rules exist, are formulated, and persist because these activities are something apart from everyday life. A special world is created where people can make the rules, rearrange time, assign value to things, and work for pleasure. This “special world” is not gratuitous but a vital part of human life. No society, no individual, can do without it. It is special only when compared to the “ordinary” activities of productive work. In psychoanalytic terms, the world of these approaches’ performance activities is the pleasure principle institutionalized. If the child was born in *weton* on Saturday *legi* usually the ceremony will be held on Saturday *legi*. If according to the calculation of the day is not good, then the implementation can be postponed or submitted. In addition to the two parents of the baby, this ceremony was also attended by grandparents, and elders as distinguished guests. In addition, also invited close relatives.

e. Performance Spaces

Perhaps this will be clearer if we consider for a moment where sports, theater, and ritual are performed. Great arenas, stadiums, churches, and theaters are structures often economically non-self-supporting. Situated in population centers where real estate comes high, these large spaces lie fallow during great hunks of time. The *Tedhak Siten* ceremony is usually seen as something sacred so that it cannot be carried out anywhere. In general, the place of implementation is in the yard, while the time is usually adjusted to the *weton* (birthday) of the child

3. *Tedhak Siten* Cultural Values

Tedhak Siten has the seven cultural values. It has harmony values because this tradition preserves and used the natural element such as earth and tree. It has embeddedness values because it purposes to the safety of child. It has hierarchy and mastery values because the parent hope that their children to be wealthy and successful. It has affective and intellectual autonomy values because the parent hope that their children will enjoy their life and useful to others. Finally, it has egalitarianism values because, the tradition is equal between son dan daughter. There are no different stages because of gender.

4. Conclusion

The *Tedhak Siten* event is a tradition in the life cycle of Javanese people. In the ceremony, various offerings and *wilujengan* are usually used. There is a connection between the *Tedhak Siten* process and the performance theory, because there is a certain time that applies to *Tedhak Siten* events, objects used that have meaning in the *Tedhak Siten* tradition, it is non-productivity act, it has certain rules, and it has a usual place to carry out. Furthermore, *Tedhak Siten* is a Javanese tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation with the aim of being a form of gratitude because the child is starting to learn to walk. In addition, *Tedhak Siten* has Harmony, Egalitarianism, Embeddedness, Hierarchy, Mastery, Affective Autonomy, and Intellectual Autonomy Values.

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