



## **Preserving Cultural Heritage through LIS Curriculum: A Case Study of LIS Program of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

Indonesia is a multicultural country. It has lots of local culture (mostly the oral ones) from their ancestors. These local cultures, however, will possibly fade out if they are not preserved properly. One of the roles of a library, as IFLA says, is to preserve local cultures. For this reason, the Program of LIS of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta includes “Documenting Local Culture” in its curriculum. This paper tries to elaborate the teaching-learning material, the method, and the cultural exhibition that functions as the final project of the teaching-learning process. This paper also describes how the teaching-learning activities during the pandemic time were carried out. Data were gathered through interviews, observation, and documentation. This paper concludes that the idea of preserving a local culture through teaching-learning activities can be done by starting a discussion of theories of culture and issues in cultural preservation, followed with building the students’ awareness of the importance of preserving local cultures, then with doing researches on local cultures, and finally with repackaging information for a cultural exhibition. While enjoying the teaching-learning process of “Documenting Local Culture,” the students have to some degree preserved the local culture.

**Keywords:** *LIS Program, Local Culture, Preserving Cultural Heritage, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Library and Local Culture*



## 1. Background

Indonesia is an archipelago state with 270,200,000 citizens (Citizen Census, 2020) residing on a territory as wide as 1,900,000 km square (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021), which consists of 17,000 islands with 1331 different ethnics (sp2010.bps.go.id, 2010) and 718 local languages (labbineka.kemdikbud.go.id, 2022). Each of the Indonesian ethnics has its own specific culture. The common, principle slogan “Unity in Diversity,” under which they live their social and political lives, reflects that in spite of their different cultures, languages, and ethnicities, they are united in a Unitary State of Indonesian Republic. Each of the existing local cultures has the right to grow and develop in Indonesia, as they are protected by the Government of Indonesia. Most of these cultures are oral in nature and in the form of social behavior inherited from generation to generation. They include fairytales (legends), rites, dances, folksongs, herbs (medicines), weapons, clothes (costumes), traditional houses, foods, drinks (beverages), and games. In a situation when no cultural preservation, either through writings or other media, is done, these cultural expressions (forms) will, in one way or another, perish. A library, as an institution to manage information, can perform multiple functions such as educative function, informative function, recreation function, and preservative function. Its preservative function, however, has not been optimally performed so far. There is a tendency to interpret the preservative function of a library as the task of preserving its collection only. As stated by the Preservation and Conservation Division of International Federation Library Association (IFLA) (ifla.org, 2019), the preservative function of a library includes such things as:

- *To ensure all library materials, published or unpublished, in all formats will be preserved in accessible forms for as long as possible*
- *The centers host events, trainings, workshops, and supports librarians and others on preservation of documentary cultural heritages*
- *Cultural heritages both tangible and intangible, natural and cultural, consisting of both movable and immovable assets inherited from the past is of extremely high value for the present of the future of community*
- *Access, preservation, and education around cultural heritage are essential for the evolution of the people and their cultures*
- *The preservation and restoration of cultural heritage has always been a priority for IFLA contribution of libraries to humanity*



From these points, we can see that a library, for its maximum preservation function, should become an institution capable of preserving and disseminating both published collection and unpublished collection, including cultural heritages, tangible and intangible. Knowledge Management tells us that a tacit knowledge will not leave a significant impact unless it is expressed in an explicit way, so won't a cultural heritage. It is, therefore, important for a library to have a program of preserving local cultures for the purpose of enabling local wisdoms to be inherited from generation to generation. In its book "Kebijakan Pelestarian dan Pengembangan Kebudayaan" ("Policies on Culture Preservation and Development"), (Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata, 2004) says that preserving a culture, tangible and intangible, is needed to protect it from possible destruction. It is important, however, to always remember that preserving an intangible culture is a dynamic process. In time, a transformation of an intangible culture is something possible to happen. The effort to preserve an intangible culture is the effort to restore its values. The case is different for a tangible culture preservation. It is a static process as the only thing to do is to make the tangible culture stay in its original form as much as possible. Sandjadja says that preserving a local culture can be done through Cultural Experience and Cultural Knowledge (Sendjaja et.al., 2019). Cultural Experience here refers to the efforts to preserve a culture by going into the community to learn more about the target culture and then bring it to a festival, and Cultural Knowledge refers to an effort to preserve a culture by building cultural information centers for the purpose of giving a cultural education to the people.

The Program of Library and Information Science is concerned with preparing (producing) future librarians. To reach this goal, it should direct its teaching-learning activities to providing the students with competencies needed in the work places. There are 58 Programs of Library and Information Science in Indonesia (Suharyanto et.al., 2020), and one of them is the Program of Library and Information Science of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. It carries out the program in 3 educational levels; they are S-1, S-2, and S-3. This article will only focus on the S-1 level, for it is the program that will produce librarians to work in the vanguard of library services, while the program of S-2 level will normally produce librarians to work at managerial level or even as lecturers at the Program of Library and Information Science, and the program of S-3 level will usually produce researchers or consultants.



In its curriculum, the Program of Library and Information Science of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta offers 6 competencies for the students to acquire; they are librarianship, management, information technology, Islamicity, research, and language (LLDIKTI WILAYAH XII, 2013). This program also offers its characteristic subjects on inclusive library and Javanese culture documentation. For the purpose of supporting its subject on local culture, it also offers some other courses such as Javanese Language, Javanese Script, Local Culture Documentation, and Information in Social Context. In this case, this article will focus on the activities of preserving local culture through teaching-learning process of Information in Social Context.

The subject of Information in Social Context covers the contemporary issues on information in the social context, knowledge management, media literacy, copy right and open access, information for all, privacy and censorship, library, information and society, and documenting oral culture. It is in the teaching-learning activities of documenting oral culture that the learning process of culture preservation goes on. In the end of the semester, the students are given an assignment to hold a cultural exhibition, which functions as the final exam. This paper tries to describe (elaborate) the culture preservation as practiced by the Program of Library and Information Science of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Indonesia.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Researches on the role of a library in preserving local cultures have been done in various approaches. In Indonesia, for example, Bayan Bonang and Any Tsalatsatul Fitriyah have conducted a research on how the Bayan library tries to preserve local cultures through various activities (Bonang & Fitriyah, 2022). Proceeding of International Conference of Asian Special Libraries (Laugu, Zain, Jain, Kar, & Barbar, 2017) contains some articles on how public libraries and university libraries in Indonesia make their contribution to the local cultures preservation. The role of the Indonesian National Library in preserving local cultures is also discussed by Deka Anggawira and Luki Wijayanti Waluyo (Anggawira & Waluyo, 2017). They make an analysis on how the Indonesian National Library contributes in preserving local cultures through a cooperation project in the field of bibliographic control and legal deposit, the use of information technology for transcript digitalization, the making of Indonesian portal, and scientific studies on cultures. On international level, this issue is also discussed by academicians



such as Maria Bonn, Lori Kendall and Jerome Mcdonough, who writes about the problems of and recommendation for dealing with intangible assets in North America, and Cherry-Ann Smart (Cherry-Ann Smart, 2017) conducts a research on culture preservation through library in Caribbean. Moustafa also conducted research relating to the role of Middle Eastern Librarians in preserving culture (Moustafa, 2017). Nevertheless, there is no research on how local cultures preservation can be done through teaching-learning activities of library and information science as showed by the writer in this paper.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative research in which a best practice approach is used to describe the teaching-learning activities related to a culture preservation. Data collecting techniques used in this research are observation and documentation. Observation is done by observing the teaching-learning activities of Information in Social Context, while documentation is done by looking for relevant documents to enrich the finding, and data analysis is done through data reduction, display, and evaluation.

#### Results And Discussion

##### A. Research Results

###### 1. *The Cultural Exhibition, Year by Year*

The cultural exhibition, held as the final project (assignment) of the subject of Information in Social Context, has been an annual event since 2012. It is normally held by the students, who are taking this subject, with some help from the LIS Students Organization and some lecturers. The themes of this annual cultural exhibition are as follows:

Table 1: Cultural Exhibition Themes

Year	Exhibition Theme	Form
2012	All about Literacy	Onsite
2013	Oral Tradition	Onsite
2014	Folklore	Onsite
2015	Traditional Rite	Onsite
2016	Nusantara Culinary	Onsite
2017	Traditional Games	Onsite - 5 <sup>th</sup> ICoASL Conference Venue
2018	Traditional Healing	Onsite
2019	No Exhibition - research Paper	Onsite



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2020	All about Indonesian Culture	Online
2021	All about Indonesian Culture	Online
2022	Rare Indonesian food and Beverages	Hybrid

In 2017, this annual cultural exhibition was held as a complementary event of International Conference of Asian Special Libraries, Asian Chapter, with the theme “Preserving Cultural Heritage through Libraries.” Delegates from 14 countries attended this international conference, and all of them were interested to visit the cultural exhibition. They asked questions to the students and tried to play (for fun) some of the Indonesian traditional games for children showed in the exhibition. They felt impressed with the exhibition and said that they learned much of the Indonesian cultures from it.

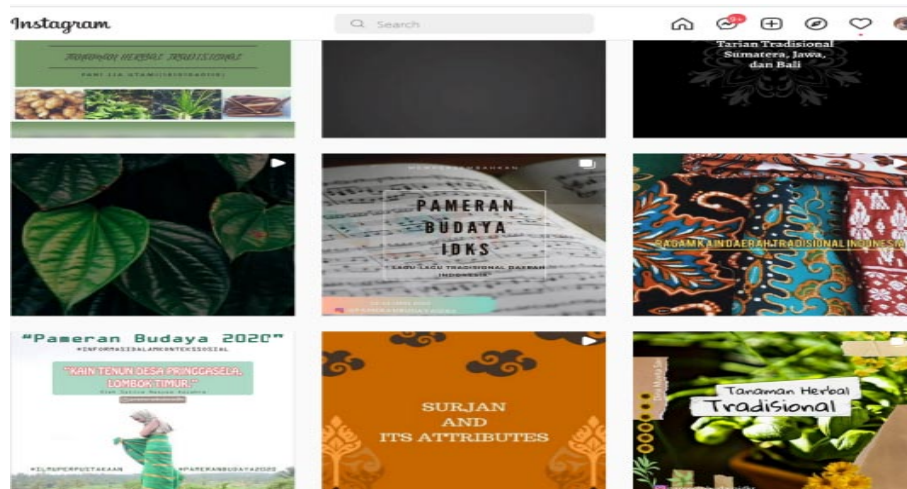
As the pandemic time came, the academic activities, particularly the teaching-learning activities, were held online, and the students followed them from different places. Because of this situation, the annual cultural exhibition was, too, held online. Both the lecturers and the students agreed to take “culture” in its general meaning as the theme of the exhibition, on the assumption that the students will have lots of option in term of theme and how to work on it. This time, the students were also allowed to decide whether they will work in group or individually. This was why the number of booth in the pandemic time exhibition increased, from 12 booths (in normal time, onsite exhibition) to 32 booths (in pandemic time, online exhibition), and as many as 20 booths (out of 32 booths) were individual works.

For this online cultural exhibition, the committee used the social media platform, Instagram. Since it was held online, it has characteristics as follows:

- a. *The contents last forever.* Unlike onsite exhibitions, of which the booths are broken down as soon as the exhibition ends, online exhibitions enable their contents to stay forever in the social media, which is also good for documentation purpose, and they can be retrieved anytime. The cultural exhibition series can be accessed at Instagram @pameranbudayaidks.

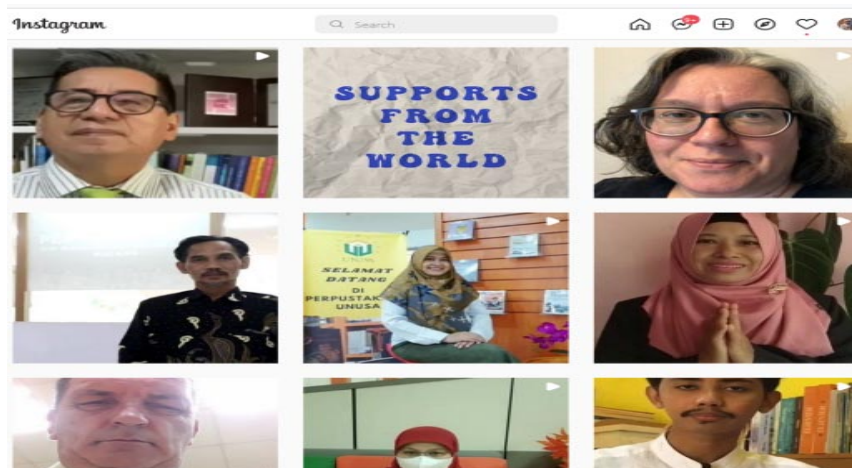


Figure 2: Exhibition Display in Instagram



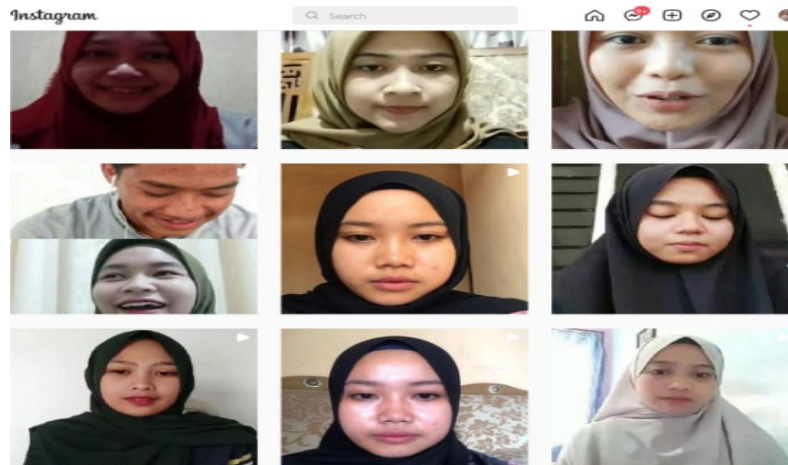
- b. *The exhibition can be accessed from all over the world.* While onsite exhibitions can only be visited by local people, online exhibitions can be accessed by people from all over the world. Thank to these two features, the committees of the online cultural exhibitions in 2020 and in 2021 were proud to have virtual congratulation speeches from the President of IFLA, Christine Mckanzi, the President of SLA-Asian Chapter, Dr. Nabi Hasan, the Head of Indonesian National Library (represented), and some principals of library associations. The Covid-19 pandemic has made the annual cultural exhibition, which is actually local in scale, go national and international.

Figure 3: A Video Display, National and International Library Figures Supporting the Exhibition, source: IG @pameranbudayaidks.



- c. *Digital Competency*. The online exhibitions have encouraged the students to try their best to make easy-to-understand exhibition displays, with their digital competences such as info-graphic design skill, ability to present texts, photos, and videos in interesting ways without breaking the ethical codes, ability to host and speak in an Instagram Live, and ability to manage online events and social media.

Figure 4: Students Presenting Their Materials in an Instagram Live.



## 2. Documenting Local Cultures through Teaching-learning Activities

For the purpose of initiating local cultures documentation, the lecturer takes the following steps:

- a. *Discussing about Culture and Its Aspects with the Students*. On this step, the students will be brought into a discussion of culture, with which they will get some basic knowledge of culture, and of the library's role in local cultures preservation. Normally the lecturer starts the discussion by talking about Kluckhohn's theory of the cultural aspects which include rite and religious system, social system, knowledge system, livelihood system, tool and technology system, language, and art (Kluckhohn, 1953). In term of form of culture, the lecturer refers to Koentjoroningrat to explain that there are at least 3 forms of culture, they are ideas (in the form of rules and norms), activities, and things. The lecturer then discuss about the role of a library in local cultures preservation by referring to what IFLA recommends on cultural preservation and conservation.
- b. *Brainstorming*. Considering the aspects of culture as showed by Kluckhon's theory and Koentjoroningrat, the lecturer ask the students to start thinking of Indonesian local





cultures, particularly those that are about to perish (the endangered ones), and how to preserve them. The lecturer then goes to Knowledge Management to explain the importance of transforming a tacit knowledge into an explicit knowledge for the purpose of preserving local cultures. The students are also asked to design a research on local cultures.

- c. *Doing a Research.* On this step, the students are asked to go into a community for a research, which will enable them to do tangible/intangible cultural assets documentation. For documenting an intangible cultural asset, they need to do an observation on cultural values, social activities, and artefacts, to do an interview with the local people about the cultural object they want to show in the exhibition, to confirm their research results with the scientific studies on the same subject, and to discuss them with their colleagues and lecturers.
- d. *Repackaging the research results.* On this step, the students have to decide which of the research results will be presented in the exhibition, and to think of the best way to repackage and present it in the exhibition. Normally they will repackage the research result in the form of videos, posters, and flyer. They will also make a promotion concept of it and create a copy of the artefact.
- e. *Promoting the Exhibition.* In order to attract visitors, the students promote their exhibition booths through social media and the library's website. This promotion makes some newspaper and TV journalists interested to visit and report the exhibition.
- f. *Executing the Exhibition.* On this step, the students prepare the exhibition booths in group or individually. They use bamboos, clothes, terracotta, and iconic miniatures functioning as cultural symbols. On the day of the exhibition, they wear traditional costumes, stand at the booths and are ready to answer questions from visitors. Normally the exhibition will be opened by an official from UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, who, together with his companies, will then visit all of the booths of the exhibition. The visitors will see different videos, posters, flyers, and even an example of how the cultural subject of the exhibition is practiced at each booth. When the cultural subject of the exhibition was "Dolanan Anak" (traditional kid games), for instance, the students made the tool for the game and asked the visitors to play it together with them. When the subject of the exhibition was traditional food, the students cooked the kind of traditional food being the subject of the exhibition and asked the visitors to taste it. The case is the same when the cultural subject of the



exhibition was traditional dances; they asked the visitors to dance. They set the exhibition to be interactive.

- g. *Writing the Report.* Writing the report is to be done after the exhibition. The report consists of the research result, work distribution in the group, the exhibition execution, the marking (evaluation) on how peers work, their impressions and suggestions for the following year exhibition. This report functions as a way of self-reflection and building the students' awareness to learn the nation's cultures.

## B. Discussion

In Sandjaya's term, preserving a local culture through teaching-learning activities, as done by the Program of Library and Information Science of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, is categorized as preserving a local culture by using cultural experiences, in which the students experience the culture by learning to do (practicing) what the local people do in the community. In the world of education, this type of learning is called "learning by doing," which was, according to Ord (Ord, 2007), initiated by John Dewey. This method requires that the learners be brought to a real situation to experience what they are learning. The students' cultural experience becomes an added value to what they get from the class of Information in Social Context, which then enable them to transform a tacit knowledge (living only in the heads of elder people in a community) into an explicit one, to practice the culture, and to repackaging it in the form of writing, and to explain it to the exhibition visitors by which a knowledge transfer from one individual to another is made possible. For the students, this type of learning is good, because they can learn something with fun. Commenting on what he gets from this type of learning, Amafa, a LIS student, says that learning through a cultural exhibition enable him and his friends to acquire such skills (abilities) as research skill, documentation skill, information repackaging skill, as well as skills of working in group and problem solving.

The experiences in the whole process of learning to preserve local cultures through cultural exhibition can be described as follows:

Figure 5: Documenting Cultural Heritage through Teaching-learning Process



The first thing to do in preserving local cultures through teaching-learning activities is to introduce the students to theories of culture. When the students have acquired the basic knowledge of culture, they are asked to observe the forms of culture around them either by reading printed scientific works or online trusted sources in order that they get informed of the perish of some cultures. This will result in the rise of the students' awareness of the importance of cultural preservation. This is then continued with a brainstorming to figure out the rare (endangered) cultural heritages. After this all, the students are divided into 4 groups. Each group chooses a cultural object to observe. Then they will go to a community for a cultural research. They will collect data through observation, interview, and documentation. During their field researches, the students participate in the local traditional rites and become part of the community in order to see how the local traditional rites are carried out, to record and take a note on what happens, to do interview with the elder people of the community, and to search for relevant documents. Then, they will write a report, present it to the class, and design an exhibition display based on their research results. Each group will get feedbacks from the lecturer and other groups. The next step will be repackaging the information they get from their researches. In the exhibition, an explicit knowledge of a culture (which used to be oral or intangible) is presented. According to Nonaka & Takeuchi (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2022), a tacit



knowledge is subjective, a knowledge of experience (body), a simultaneous knowledge and practice. It is, therefore, a type of knowledge that needs to be made explicit as otherwise it is going to perish.

These teaching-learning activities benefit the students in that they can build awareness of the importance of cultural preservation, acquire the skills needed in preserving local cultures, promote the cultures, acquire interpersonal skill for working in group and ability to communicate with people in the society. The LIS students need to acquire all of these skills in order that when they graduate and work in a library, they can manage the library they work in to perform a cultural preservation function. On the other hand, the cultural exhibition held by the students may make the people (visitors) understand more of the existing local cultures in Indonesia.

#### **4. Conclusion**

One of the functions of a library is to manage both tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. A local culture contains a tacit knowledge and it is easy to perish. It is an obligation for a library to preserve a local culture and the tacit knowledge it contains. The Program of Library and Information Science of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta prepares its students to become future librarians, who will be able to participate in preserving local cultures, through the subject Information in Social Context. This subject is offered in the fourth semester. It covers issues of information, digital literacy, and information repackaging. The final project (product) in the end of the semester is an exhibition of local cultures. The teaching-learning process of this subject starts with discussions of theories of culture and issues in local cultures preservation, continued with building the students' awareness of the importance of local cultures preservation, then with local culture researches, information repackaging, and a cultural exhibition. This teaching-learning process enable the students to acquire the skills needed in preserving local cultures, such as information repackaging skill, culture promotion skill, communication skill, and interpersonal skill for working in group.



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