

# Dolalak in Branding Activities of Purworejo Regency, Central Java

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**Abstract** Dolalak dance art in Purworejo Regency as one of manifestation of traditional art, its presence is the continuity of cultural life that has rooted from generation to generation which becomes one of culture manifestation. Along with its development, Dolalak is used in activity of city branding conducted by local government of Purworejo Regency. However, the use of Dolalak in branding activities of Purworejo Regency has risks considering that Dolalak which is developing in some rural areas of Purworejo shows dance movements characteristic which tends to be erotic with the costumes worn by the dancers look tighter, this can certainly raise negative perception for some people who watch it. Started from that problem then the questions of this research are why Dolalak is chosen to support branding activities of Purworejo Regency and how the manifestation of Dolalak is in branding activities of Purworejo Regency. It is to understand how Dolalak's position and role are in branding activities conducted by the local government of Pur-worejo Regency. This research used qualitative paradigm by using ethnographic approach, data collection was done through participant observation and in-depth interview, and data analysis was made by using matrix analysis model. The results of this study revealed that Dolalak as one of traditional arts that still exist and are popular in Purworejo society serves as art icon which was presented in the form of performances and was transformed into various visual communication media to meet the communication needs in branding activities of Purworejo Regency. The results of this study is useful to provide an overview for other regencies or cities that will conduct city branding by using their own traditional art.

**Keywords** Dolalak, Branding, Purworejo

## 1. Introduction

The existence of regional autonomy and decentralization of regional management in Indonesia triggers competition between regions in attracting tourists, investors, and migrants as part of regional development strategy. This competition is normal thing since the implementation of regional autonomy has given very wide authority for the region to manage and utilize its regional resources in a real and responsible manner. In carrying out its autonomy, many local governments in Indonesia, starting from provincial, municipal, and district level that carry out branding of their regions to optimize their resources for the development of their region. With strong regional positioning through branding activities undertaken, an area will be more quickly and easily recorded in people's minds, thus it is expected

that the economic growth and welfare of the society can be increased.

Purworejo is one of the regencies in Central Java Province. Based on the data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Purworejo Regency, geographically Purworejo Regency is located at 109° 47' 28" up to 110° 08' 20" East Longitude and 7° 32' up to 7° 54' South Latitude, with the total area of 1.034,81752 km<sup>2</sup>. The borders of Purworejo Regency in the north is adjacent to Magelang dan Wono-sobo Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta in the east side, Kebumen Regency in the west side, and Indian Ocean in the south side. The position of Purworejo Regency is very strategic because it is passed by national route and close to other well-known cities such as Magelang with tourism area of Borobudur Temple and Yogyakarta with its various tourism. But unfortunately, Purworejo only be-

comes a mere crossing road when tourists visit those cities. As the local government of Purworejo Regency do not want to just get the “vehicles smokes”, they then peddle the city to become tourist destination, or at least to become a transit city before tourists visit other places. In order to achieve that goal, the local government of Purworejo Regency conducts branding activities of its city by exploring its unique potentials, in which one of them is from the traditional art sector.

Kinds of traditional folk art such as: Slawatan, Kuntulan, Madyapitatur, Kuda Kepang, Samanan, Kobrasiswa, and Dolalak grow and develop in Purworejo Regency. From the many types of folk art existed, the local government of Purworejo Regency chose Dolalak to be used in supporting the city branding activities. Dolalak art in Purworejo Regency as one of the manifestations of traditional art, its presence is the continuity of cultural life which has rooted from generation to generation that becomes one of the culture manifestation. The form of Dolalak art is a fusion of dance, music and vocal song (choir) while the contents which are put into the dance contain the value of togetherness or cooperation life, describe firmness and joy attitude. The name of Dolalak dance comes from the words “do” dan “lala”, that is diatonic song notation sung Dutch soldiers in the barracks to accompany or to be sung while dancing. The utterance of do la la is song notation of 1 – 6 – 6, by Purworejo people close to the barracks was imitated into Ndolalak (Javanese tongue), as well as imitating the movements of the Dutch soldiers and the form/pattern of their clothes (Proyek Pembina Kesenian Jawa Tengah, 1992/1993:10). According to Prihatini (2000), the clothes of Dolalak dancers at a glance look similar to the clothes of Dutch soldiers. The upper part of the clothes is a long-sleeved shirt and the lower part is short with black-based color, using tassels on both sides of the shoulders. The head cover uses a black flat cap with black sun-glasses as eyes cover. Sampur is tied to the left side of the waist, and uses calf-socks as the footwear.

However, the use of Dolalak in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency has risks considering that Dolalak which developed in some rural areas of Purworejo in its performance shows dance movements characteristic which tends to be erotic with the costumes worn by the dancers look tighter, this can certainly raise negative perception for some people who watch it, thus carefulness is needed in its use.

Started from that problem, then the questions of this research are why Dolalak is chosen to support city branding activities of Purworejo Regency and how the manifestation of Dolalak is in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency. It aims to understand how the position and role of Dolalak are in city branding activities conducted by the local government of Purworejo Regency.

Based on the researcher’s investigation, it is known that there are other researchers who made Dolalak as the object of the study, such as a research conducted by: Nanik Sri Prihartini in 1977, as a requirement to achieve Bachelor degree in ASKI Surakarta (now ISI Surakarta), entitled ‘*Dolalak di Kabupaten Purworejo*’ the results reveal the origin of Dolalak art in Purworejo and present the form of

presentation, as well as the functions in the supporting society; Sulistyorini’s research, thesis to achieve S1 degree at *Sebelas Maret University* Surakarta in 1997, entitled ‘*Perkembangan Dolalak di Purworejo studi tentang seni pertunjukan tahun 1970-1995*’. This study provides information about the development of Dolalak in the meaning of life of its supporters from 1970-1995; Nanik Sri Prihatini’s research, a thesis to achieve Master’s degree at the Post-graduate Program of Udayana University, Denpasar in 2000 entitled ‘*Perkembangan Kesenian Dolalak di Kabupaten Purworejo Jawa Tengah Tahun 1968-1999 (Sebuah Kajian Bentuk, Fungsi, dan Makna)*’. This study describes the form of the presentation, the function, and the meaning of Dolalak art from 1968 – 1999 which is seen from development of one period to another period. In addition, this study also shows the factors that lead to the development of form, function, and meaning and how the impacts from the development are; A research conducted by Widya Ayu Lestari dan Nora Nailul Amal entitled ‘*Strategi Komunikasi City Brand (Studi Diskriptif Kualitatif Tentang Strategi Komunikasi Pemerintah Kabupaten Purworejo dalam Mengkomunikasikan Brand Purworejo Go Agriculture)*’. This research reveals the communication activities conducted by the local government of Purworejo Regency in disseminating Purworejo brand descriptively but does not discuss how its visual communication is. From the studies that have been done it can be seen that there is not any study yet that examines Dolalak from the aspect of needs for city branding of Purworejo Regency. The results of this study are useful to provide an overview or reference for other regencies or cities that will carry out city branding by using their own traditional arts.

## 2. Theoretical Review and Method

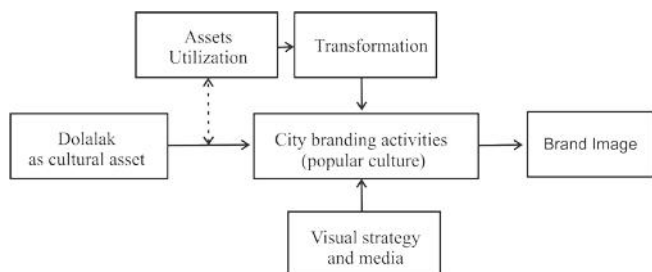
### 2.1 Theoretical Review

This study used cultural study approach with popular culture theory. Popular culture is folk art, as regional culture is from the people for the people (Ibrahim, 2011). The term popular has meaning of favoured by people, the type of low work, made to please people and made for himself (Storey dalam Adi, 2011:10). Popular culture is produced through mass production industry techniques and marketed to gain benefit to the public (Strinati, 2016:13). Popular culture which is supported by the culture industry has constructed a society that is not only based on consumption, but also makes cultural artifacts into industrial products and commodities (Ibrahim, 2011). Dolalak as traditional culture which is known and loved by many people becomes an icon of art and cultural asset of Purworejo which then is used to support city branding activities conducted by the local government of Purworejo Regency.

Theory of transformation (*alih wahana*) is used to reveal how the manifestation of the use of Dolalak is in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency. Transformation (*alih wahana*) is a process of transferring from one type of ‘vehicle’ to another type of ‘vehicle’. *Wahana* is defined as a medium used to express, attain, or exhibit ideas or feelings. Medium is a channel for mediation of information and

entertainment (Damono, 2016:13). Dolalak visualization has important role in the city branding activities of Purworejo. Visual is not only concerned with how the images appear, but how the images are viewed. What is important about the images is not the images themselves, but how those images are viewed by particular audience who sees them in a certain way (Rose in Ida, 2014:128).

The picture of the theoretical framework diagram in this study is as follows:



**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework in the research.  
Source: author

From the theoretical framework above, it can be assumed that the existence of Dolalak art as a cultural asset is used for city branding activities by transforming it into various media with a variety of forms and presentation to support brand establishment of Purworejo Regency.

**2.2 Method**

This study used qualitative paradigm by revealing events or facts, phenomena, variables, and circumstances that occur in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency that use Dolalak as an icon of art. This study used ethnographic approach that referred to James P. Spradley (1997) which states that the core of ethnography is the effort of paying attention to the meaning of actions and events that need to be understood. Data collection was done through participant observation and in-depth interview.

The research data related to the basis of selection of Dolalak in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency was obtained through in-depth interview to the Regional Development Planning Board (Bappeda) of Purworejo Regency as the planner and conceptor of city branding of Purworejo; the Department of Tourism and Culture through cultural caretaker as supervisor of art in Purworejo Regency region; as well as cultural figures in Purworejo. Data related to the activities of city branding that have been done by Purworejo Regency was obtained through interviews to the Regional Development Planning Board (Bappeda) of Purworejo Regency as the planner of city branding activities and the Department of Tourism and Culture of Purworejo Regency as the executor of the branding activities. Data related to the documentation of city branding activities of Purworejo Regency was obtained from Public Relations and Documentation Bureau of Purworejo Regional Secretary. The research data related to how Dolalak manifestation is in the branding activities of Purworejo was obtained through participant observation in the field by taking notes, documenting, and coding. The collected research data was then analyzed using matrix analysis model.

**3. Result and Discussion**

**3.1 Dolalak and Branding of Purworejo**

Dolalak is the original art from Purworej Regency. According to R. Tjipto Siswoyo (79 years old) the origin of Dolalak art is the acculturation of European culture (Dutch) with Java that occurred in Purworejo Regency, Central Java. In the Dutch East Indies era, Purworejo area was used as a training ground for Dutch military soldiers. During the training they lived in barracks, then to get rid of boredom they danced and sang. The interesting movements and the song then become inspiration for the development of exist-ing art that is *rebana (kemprang)* from three young men from Sejiwan, Trirejo Village, Loano Sub-district namely: Rejotaruno, Duliyat dan Ronodimejo. Around 1915, those three young men together with the citizens who had become Dutch soldiers formed art group. Initially the art performance was not accompanied by instrument, but with vocal songs sung by alternately by the dancers or choir. The next development after being known and loved by the people, this art performance was provided with instruments/accompaniment. According to Jono (54 years old), Dolalak has uniqueness in its dance movements and the costumes worn by the dancers. Dolalak dance movements are combination between Javanese dance movements, martial arts (*pencak silat*), march, and dance. While the dancers’ costumes looks like Dutch soldier’s uniform equipped with tussels such as ranks, flat cap, and sunglasses.

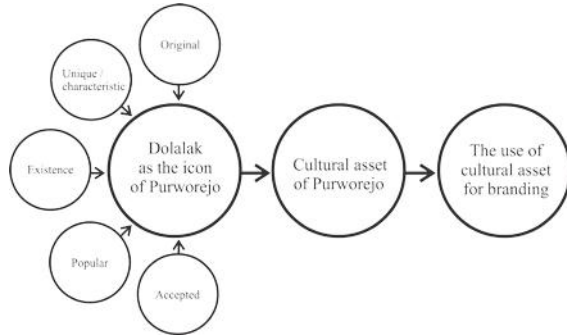
According to Untari Ningsih (56 years old), from many types of folk art that exist in Purworejo, Dolalak is one that has the most fans and still survive to this day. Dolalak art thrives in rural areas in Purworejo Regency. The dancers of Dolalak art on the average are teenage girls who are still students. Those who join the group of Dolalak art generally want to express their talents and interests in the art field and as the form of expression of kinship. The existence of Dolalak art in Purworejo until now cannot be separated from the love and the sense of belonging from the society, especially the younger generation to Dolalak which is almost even in Purworejo Regency. Dolalak art is often performed at various events, such as the celebration of national days, wedding ceremonies and so forth. Every performance of Dolalak is always crowded and filled with audience who are mostly young, especially if the performing group is Dolalak group that they idolize. The crowded audience then are taken advantage of by the traditional merchants to sell their goods. Based on the facts of art developed in the society, Dolalak then is designated as the icon of art of Purworejo Regency and serve as an art ambassador to represent Purworejo Regency through the art show performed inside and outside Purworejo Regency.

According to Bambang Jati (55 years old), the existence of Dolalak as the icon of art of Purworejo becomes a cultural asset which then is used to support the city branding activities if Purworejo Regency that is embodied into a variety of forms and manifestations on various visual communication media.

Based on the explanation from the interviewees above, the basis for the selection of Dolalak to support the activi-



ties in city branding of Purworejo Regency can be seen in the following diagram:



**Figure 2.** Diagram of the basis for the selection of Dolalac as support in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency. Source: author.

**3.2 The Manifestation of Dolalac in City Branding Activities of Purworejo Regency**








The use of Dolalac in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency is manifested into the form of performance and visual communication media.



Dolalac in the form of performance in city branding activities of Purworejo Regency is recognized from Dolalac performance in guest receptions of Purworejo Regency; program inauguration of local government of Purworejo Regency; involvement of Dolalac in the art events held in the regency or other city as art ambassador that represents Purworejo Regency; national days celebrations such as on national education day, the independence day of the Republic of Indonesia, and religious holidays such as Eid al-fitr; regular performance of Dolalac that is held every night of the second and fourth weeks every month in Sarwo Edhie Wibowo art building, Purworejo; as well as the performances at tourism object sites to entertain the tourists who visit the place. Dolalac performed in the city branding activities of Purworejo Regency is a dance creation performance which is different with Dolalac that is often performed in the rural areas of Purworejo. This can be seen from the compact performance so that the duration of Dolalac performance becomes shorter, the composition of the dance movements are modified by excluding the element of *jogetan dangdut* (dangdut dance), and the costumes of the dancers which are made looser. Look figure 3.



**Figure 3 .** Dolalac performance as a part of city branding activity of Purworejo Regency held at *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah*, Central Java Pavilion. Source: personal documentation, 9 April 2017.

Dolalac which is transformed into the form of visual communication media in the city branding activities of Purworejo Regency can be seen in the following matrix:

Its manifestation, position & role Type of media	Visualization	Position & Role
 Branding logo	Dolalac attribute in the form of the hat of the dancer is visualized by using stylization technique	Dolalac is positioned as a visual element in forming branding logo. Its role is as an identity
 Welcoming billboard	Dolalac is presented in the form of image made with photography technique. It depicts the expression and pose of Dolalac dancers	Dolalac is positioned as illustration of visual communication media. Its role is as visual attraction in welcoming people who come to Purworejo Regency.
 Dolalac statue	Dolalac is presented in the form of statue made with chisel technique. It portrays a Dolalac dancer in dancing pose.	Dolalac is positioned as a monument. Its role is to the existence of Dolalac art in Purworejo Regency.
 Billboard of art performance	Dolalac is presented in the form of image made with photography technique. It depicts the Dolalac dancers in a trance.	Dolalac is positioned as illustration in visual communication media. Its role is to support the information of art performance.
 Name board	Dolalac is presented in the form of image made with photography technique. It depicts Dolalac mass dance.	Dolalac is positioned as illustration in visual communication media. Its role is to support the information of the existence of Dolalac art and cultural tourism village.
 Banner of website	Dolalac is presented in the form of image made with photography technique. It shows the composition of the attraction in Dolalac dance.	Dolalac is positioned as illustration in visual communication media. Its role is to support the information of the advantages and the potentials owned by Purworejo Regency.
 Batik	Dolalac is presented in the form of batik patterns which show the dance moves of Dolalac dancer.	Dolalac is positioned as batik patterns. It has a role as ornament that characterizes Purworejo

Its manifestation, position & role	Visualization	Position & Role
<p><b>Type of media</b></p>  <p>Shirt</p>	Dolalak is presented in the form of illustration on shirt design which is portrayed with stylization technique and printed with silk screen printing technique.	Dolalak is positioned as illustration on shirt design. Its role is as traded merchandise.
 <p>Kitiran</p>	Dolalak is presented in the form of pinwheel which is made by shaping, cutting and painting it.	Dolalak is positioned as child's toy figure. Its role is as traded merchandise.

**Figure 4.** Matrix of Dolalak form, position, and role in branding activities of Purworejo Regency. (Source: author)

It can be seen from the matrix that the transformation of Dolalak from its original form of art performance into various visual communication media therefore makes Dolalak holds important position and role in the branding activities of Purworejo Regency.

**Conclusion**

Through this research, it is identifies that Dolalak is chosen to support branding activities of Purworejo Regency with the consideration that Dolalak is an original art tradition from Purworejo Regency, has unique dance movement and costumes, its existence still lasts, has many fans, is popular and accepted by Purworejo people, those things make Dolalak become an icon of art and cultural asset in which its existence then is used to support the branding activities of Purworejo Regency. As a performing art, Dolalak has flexibility when it is presented in the activities of city branding of Purworejo Regency. With the performance that is presented neatly, the original dance movement and the costumes of the dancer which are made looser keep Dolalak away from negative impression. In order to meet the visual communication need of branding of Purworejo Regency, Dolalak is transformed into various forms of both print and electronic media. The visualization of Dolalak in visual communication media is made with photography and stylization techniques by showing the composition, the dance movement, and expression of the dancers which are used as visual elements to support the information conveyed. The transformation of Dolalak's form into merchandise provides added value for the people economically and becomes pride for the people who support it.

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