

# A Model Development to Revitalize The Dulmuluk Performing Art By Applying The Structural Theory and Response Theory

*by Nurhayati Nurhayati*

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## A MODEL DEVELOPMENT TO REVITALIZE THE DULMULUK PERFORMING ART BY APPLYING THE STRUCTURAL THEORY AND RESPONSE THEORY

\*Nurhayati, Subadiyono, Mulyadi Eko Purnomo & Didi Suhendi

Language Education and Indonesian Literature Study Program, Language and Art Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sriwijaya, Palembang, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: nurhayati@fkip.unsri.ac.id

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### Abstract

This research aimed at developing a model for revitalizing Dulmuluk performing art, a special art-show from Palembang Indonesia that is almost extinct. It was a research and development research design. The method used was a modification of theories from Dick, Carey, & Carey (2015) that was adjusted with the research needs. The instruments were the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and field test. The FGD was conducted by taking the data related to needs analysis and model of the revitalization of Dulmuluk performing art. Meanwhile, a field test was for gathering data on validation of the model of Dulmuluk performing art which was formulated on the focus group discussion stage. Through FGD, it was concluded that the revitalization of Dulmuluk performing art was needed to be done. The result of FGD suggested some elements that should be considered on the developed model of revitalization. Those elements are (1) team, (2) time allotment, (3) the script, (4) director, (5) the casts, (6) makeup (7) costumes, (8) stage setting, (9) lighting, (10) music, and (11) spectacles. All elements are integrated criteria in model of revitalization Dulmuluk performing art by using a combination of structural theory and response theory. The findings from the field test showed that the Dulmuluk performing art, by applying those eleven elements, was successful and gained positive appreciation from spectacles who are academicians, writers, university students, and school students. From the research findings, it is highly recommended that sustainable revitalization of Dulmuluk performing art can be carried out by providing a coaching session for Dulmuluk art-groups in Palembang.

**Keywords:** Traditional performing arts, Dulmuluk, structural theory, response theory.

## 1. Introduction

Palembang, a capital of South Sumatra Province, has many tremendous performing arts. One of them is Dulmuluk performing art (called *Dulmuluk*). The story of Dulmuluk was from a poem Abdul Muluk written by The King Ali Haji of Pulau Penyengat around 1845. In Palembang, the poem then was spoken (a first theatre) by Wan Bakar, an Arabic trader lived in Tangga Takat, 16 Ulu Palembang. After that, the first theatre grew up into traditional performing art. It reached its highest popularity in 1970s. Nowadays, Dulmuluk has been abandoned and almost extinct (Nurhayati, Subadiyono, & Suhendi, 2015 and Manalullaili, 2015). Regardless of its extinction, Dulmuluk provides usefulness. One of the advantages of Dulmuluk is that it brings some values in developing national character building that has become an essential national issue (in Indonesia). (Nurhayati, Purnomo, & Subadiyono, 2016). Those values can be inputted from the implicit messages on the performance. As in the poem Sultan Abdul Muluk verse no. 905, it is stated:

*Ke dalam hutan membawa diri/  
Sedikit tidak takut dalam negeri/  
Sangat tawakal hatinya puteri/  
Kepada Allah menyerah diri*

Translation:

Into the jungle we bring self/  
Little fear in the land/  
Much surrender the heart of princess/  
To the God only we surrender  
(Saleh & Dalyono, 1996).

Those verses contain the duty to surrender to God only in any difficult conditions.

Moreover, the research by Lelawati (2009) has concluded that Dulmuluk was abandoned by the society. People left it behind because of not only the rapid increasing of technology and pop culture but also the absence of organization management. The latter means planning, organizing, directing, and controlling/monitoring. The participant-groups on the research (5 groups from the 28 groups that was previously recorded) did not plan, schedule, distribute, and arrange. Not only that, the existing groups are less frequently giving directions, developing the casts/players, motivating them on the groups. At last, the aspects of control and monitoring are carried out by revisiting the results of what have been done and reviewing the casts' performance.

Beside the aspect of organization management, management of performance gave contribution to the extinction of Dulmuluk. The performing arts were not optimal and did not fit on the principles of art performance. The aspect of directing was not fully and optimally conducted. The story lines were less varied; the casts were quite old to perform, the costumes did not fully support the characters; the cast makeups did not strongly present the characters that were played; then, the lighting was poor with less variety; the stage was almost no touch

of art, and the sound and music background did not use a good sound system utility (Nurhayati, Subadiyono, & Suhendi, 2013).

It can be stated that those two aspects, the management of organization and performance, are the root problem caused Dulmuluk was abandoned by its spectacles. For that reason, Igama cited by Nurhayati, Subadiyono & Suhendi (2015) suggested that improvement and revitalization of Dulmuluk cover the following items: the variety of stories, the cast characters, the stage art, the costumes, and the sound/music. The attempts of the improvement of this present research are then called revitalization. Therefore, the model of the revitalization of Dulmuluk is done through the revitalization of management of organization and performance. This attempt involved young people (in this case, the university-students as the members of Dulmuluk Campus Club). At the time, they gave the performance of Dulmuluk in the classroom. With this strategy, Dulmuluk will become more alive and get its part as a cultural art in the creative industry as well as has a competitive value among other foreign cultures from "outside".

The formulation of this present research is model development for the revitalization of Dulmuluk using structural theory and response theory. This research is addressed to develop a revitalization model concerning with its maintenance.

## **2. Literature Review**

In this current research, the structural theory was used to breakdown the elements of Dulmuluk. Endraswara (2011) stated that the elements of performance are: (1) the script, (2) director, (3) makeups, (4) casts, (5) costumes, (6) stage, (7) lighting, (8) sound/music, and (9) spectacles. These elements are integrated into one art performance. The similar points are also said by Kosasih (2012); the elements on art performance are the scripts, casts, director, spectacles, and other artistic elements such as makeup, costumes, lighting, and music.

Concerning the performance, all elements are intertwined to make the performance successful, special, and unforgettable. Consequently, in one art performance, an integrated and solid team is highly necessary. According to Riantiarno (2011), teamwork is needed in theatre production, they are artistic group and non-artistic group. The artistic group consists of the script, director, casts, costumes, lighting, music, stage, and makeups; on the other hand, the non-artistic group is the head of the production, secretary, and other sections, such as public relation, publication, catering, and documentation.

From this point of view, it can be said that management of performance leads to the structural theory of drama performance that Riantiarno called it an artistic group. On the other hand, the non-artistic group (using Riantiarno's term) is then named as management of the organization.

Even though the first time on response theory, the readers were to analyze the artwork (see Rudy, 2005 dan Kellem, 2009), on this research it is referenced to the theory proposed by Beach & Marshall (1991) (see Inderawati, 2009) particularly on the aspects of connecting and judging. Beach & Marshall said that the response given by the readers after reading an artwork; on this research, the response refers to the spectacles' responses. They connect the experiences they have with what they watch (Dulmuluk) then give judgment related to the

time/duration, script, director, casts, makeups, costumes, stage, lighting, and music of the performance. It means that, in this research, responses are concerning to the spectacles' comprehension and understanding toward those elements.

### **3. Research Method**

The current research carried out a research and development research method by modifying the theory of Dick, Carey, and Carey (2015). The data were firstly collected through FGD. A number of questions had been set and given to 36 participants who consisted of 15 theatre artists from traditional Dulmuluk club, 15 theatre artists from modern Dulmuluk club, and 3 academicians, and 3 university students. It was conducted to analyze the need analysis upon whether it was necessary to develop a revitalization model of Dulmuluk. Besides, FGD was done to figure out the appropriate development model that fitted on the desire and want of the participants who come from various backgrounds.

The second instrument in collecting data was a field test. The field test was applied to acknowledge whether the performance of Dulmuluk acted by the students was in accordance with the revitalization model which was formulated by the FGD related to the length of time, storyline, actor's character, makeups, costume, stage setting, lighting, music, and overall response to the performance. Then, the questionnaire was used to gather the data. The questionnaire used was closed and opened questionnaires. The closed questionnaire was used to know how many respondents agreed that the performance done by the students in the field test was based on the elements of revitalization model. The opened questionnaire was used to know the reasons for respondents related to the questions of the closed questionnaire. The closed questionnaire data were percentage while the opened questionnaire data were analyzed based on queries categorization.

The 52 participant-spectacles were chosen to give their responses on field test among 520 of them. They were theatre artists both traditional and modern, academicians, university students (under-and post-graduates) and common spectacles.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

#### **4.1 The Results of FGD and Discussion**

The following are the results of FGD related to the need analysis.

The participants on FGD, particularly group of modern theatre artists thought that Dulmuluk had become "sink" among the people in the community. They believed that some factor contributed to the situation. Firstly, Dulmuluk clubs did not have so many members; they lacked human resources. The traditional Dulmuluk casts/players were all males and quite old; most of them were above 55 years old. From the existing Dulmuluk Clubs, they found very difficult to recruit new young members. Therefore, regenerating members was one of their biggest problems. As a result, when doing a performance, it was hard to find the proper casts/players. The certain cast, as the cast of Abdul Muluk, was played by an old cast (though in the original poem Abdul Muluk, The Sultan Abdul Muluk was depicted as a strong manly dashing king).

The next cause was related to the time allotment or duration of the performance. In many performances, Dulmuluk spent hours in performing, even it can be all night long (around 7 hours). Besides, the story of Dulmuluk was only about the kingdom. It didn't give present and nowadays- issues that were more relevant to the people.

From the FGD, it was also found that the traditional Dulmuluk theatre artists felt so concerned and sorry on the condition of Dulmuluk at this time. They realized it was a limitation on several aspects of Dulmuluk that they had played for a long time. They had already known that the elements of makeups, costumes, stage, and lighting on their performance were not fully well-performed and not fit the story required. The casts of Dulmuluk usually made their face up by themselves to meet the cast character. The makeups were based on their own interpretation. As an example, the cast of Siti Rahmah should apply powder, mascara, lipstick, and blush on. Because of the absence of female casts, the male cast played this character by sometimes showed his mustache. The costumes worn by the traditional Dulmuluk casts were pretty simple and plain. The empress wore *Kurung* (traditional female dress from Malay) mixed with a necklace, bracelets, and artificial hair bun. In their performance, they did not recognize on stage setting and lighting. The stage was just simply set. They also mostly never practiced their sound-vocal, body, and soul.

Moreover, traditional theatre artists truly realized their weaknesses on the aspect of organization management. For example, the performance was rarely well-planned. When they had a call for performance, the head of the group usually distributed the jobs to the members to do the casts. Mostly they did not do a routine rehearsal or practice for performance. Besides, the casting was not carried out to cast of the players. What they did usually by giving a direct assignment to the candidate players.

Furthermore, the Dulmuluk Club also found that there was an imbalance between the organizational vision and personal intention. For example, Dulmuluk organization tried to only get profits. In fact, to get it, the quality of the group primarily needed to be improved. Ideally, the developed management in the club can connect the vision of the organization as an art-place and personal intention to earn money for the members as well. Therefore, both the vision of the organization and personal intention can run together in balance.

The participants on FGD agreed that Dulmuluk should be preserved and maintained. It could be extinct in the community. To do that, all participants said their agreement on the attempt of revitalization by providing innovation on the Dulmuluk itself. They felt anxious that if Dulmuluk stayed with its conventional way, it would be abandoned by the people in the community. Consequently, all participants on FGD had a desire that Dulmuluk was learned and practiced by young people. Not only that, but it was also expected that people from middle and high classes gave more respect and appreciation on Dulmuluk. It is quite reasonable because Dulmuluk is identical to art from low-class people. At last, all participants on FGD said their agreement that the support and attempts were needed to revitalize Dulmuluk from many parties, such as government, community, and young people.

The result from FGD suggested that the attempt of revitalization covered several elements. The revitalization referred to some aspects of Dulmuluk performance, such as: 1) team-management: organization management and performance management, 2) time/duration of performance need to be reduced into 1 hour only, 3) the script for

documentary purpose, 4) the director for giving interpretation and touch on the characters and performance, 5) the casting process in selecting casts, 6) makeups for the characters, 7) costumes that fit to the characters, 8) stage setting, 9) lighting to support the story, 10) music to support the story, 11) the spectacles. Those all elements are the parameter of the result of Dulmuluk revitalization as one organized-unit.

The following is the eleven elements of performance by comparing old and new paradigms. The old paradigm refers to the traditional Dulmuluk; meanwhile, the new one is from the result of revitalization on this present research.

**Table 1.** Dulmuluk's differences in the old and new paradigms.

<b>The Elements of Performance</b>	<b>Old Paradigm</b>	<b>New Paradigm</b>
Job distribution on team management	No job distribution, only the leader and vice leader	Job distribution: organization management and performance management
Time/duration of the performance	7 hours, usually at night	1 hour at any time
The script	No script, just an outline and leaning on memorization.	The scripts are made and refer to the poem Abdul Muluk by Raja Ali Haji, keep using the original poem, the character names and the setting originally.
The director	No director	A director had the ability to comprehend and interpret the script; to select casts based on the characters, the casts; to understand the elements in building up theatre performance
The cast	No casting process, no rehearsal/practices, all male casts	The cast is selected based on their ability, led by the director, doing practices, male casts are played by male players and female casts are played by female players; and they are all young people.
Makeups	Makeups are applied by the casts themselves based on their own interpretation. Because all the players are males, they are made up to be a female cast to play a female character	Makeups are adjusted to fit the characters, special makeup-artists are needed; if they make it by themselves by the directions from the director
Costumes	Simple plain costumes do not fit to the characters	The costumes are suitable to the characters, traditional Malay and Hindustan dresses, the costume/fashion stylist
Stage setting		

	A canvass with a picture of the kingdom as a backdrop	The stage fitted to the time and setting of the story, such as a setting of kingdom completed with the throne with the golden painting, setting of jungle, and setting of market
Lighting	No lighting	Lighting fitted to the events, such as for the event of happiness, the light will be on, for the death, it will be dimmed
Music	Malayan music with accordion, drum and violin	Music fitted to the original Dulmuluk music; Malayan Music with accordion, drum and violin completed with modern musical instrument, keyboard/piano
The spectacles	The spectacles are not asked as evaluators	The spectacles are asked to be evaluators for the next improvement

#### 4.2 The Results of Field Test and Discussions

Before the performance began, the students wrote the script. It was written through the hermeneutic and heuristic readings upon the poem Sultan Abdul Muluk by Raja Ali Haji. After that, they did reading and casting. They made 2 teams: the organization management team and performance team. The first team consisted of production staff, secretary, finance staff, documentation, publication, and marketing. The second team that had responsibility for the performance, that involved the director, the casts/players, makeup artists, costumes/fashion stylists, stage setters, lighting staff, and music players. They did practices and rehearsals for about 3 months. The practices and rehearsals covered basic practice such as vocals, expression and gesture, and mental/soul rejuvenation. The practices were scheduled regularly for scene per scene including practice with music, practice all scenes on performance, and practice on a real stage.

The field test was conducted on 4 November 2017 in Graha Budaya Jakabaring Palembang. The students performed Dulmuluk entitled "Sultan Abdul Muluk". The following is the data from the questionnaire on the field test.

Of 87% participant-respondents stated that one-hour performance is the most suitable duration for performance. It is not too long or too short. Compare to the traditional Dulmuluk performance which lasts all night long, this one-hour Dulmuluk performance will not lead the spectacles into boredom.

Then, 92% of the participant-respondents said that the storyline covers all the entire poem of Sultan Abdul Muluk. The story keeps the original script of the poem. The names of the characters such as Raja Abdul Hamid Syah, Sultan Abdul Muluk, Siti Rahmah, and Siti Rafeah, Raja Hindustan, Raja Ban, and Baharuddin are still used and applied. In addition, the name of places such as Berbari Kingdom (Kerajaan Berbari), Hindustani Kingdom (Kerajaan Hindustan), and Ban Kingdom (Kerajaan Ban) are kept sounded on the story during the



performance. At last, the performance still performs and sings *Beremas*, an opening dance, and song on performance.

From 77% of the participants-respondents, they expressed that the casts played the characters based on what the characters require. The respondents felt so close to the characters. They could imagine, think, and felt just like what the casts played on the stage at Dulmuluk performance. They also said that all casts can take the stage. They could improvise upon the characters they played. The casts gave all they have. The casts could seemingly handle the spectacles on the stage; they were good at stage control.

Related to makeup artist, 75% of the respondents stated that it was suitable for the characters and the cast the players played. The makeup for King Abdul Hamid, Sultan Abdul Muluk depicted bravery and courage. Meanwhile, the makeup for the wife of Sultan Abdul Muluk, Siti Rahmah, and Siti Rafeah, represented the queen's beauty and elegance.

From 88% of respondents, they also agreed that the costumes had been designed based on the characters. The material of the costumes/clothing for king was made of velvet. It was two-piece clothing. While the king's sandals were made of velvet with beads. The dresses for the king's wives were also made of velvet. The top cloth was a Kurung with beads completed by songket Palembang. On the other hand, the maid-ladies as the assistances of the palace wore Kurung and cloth skirt. It was made of plain satin.

Concerning to the stage setting, 71% of the respondents stated that the stage performance met the story. The setting of a kingdom was completed with throne and kingdom furniture and properties from woods depicting luxury. Meanwhile, the red curtains represented the luxury of a kingdom. On the jail setting scene, it was accurately depicted by the trails of jail. Moreover, the scene of the jungle was carefully depicted on the stage.

Furthermore, 73% of the respondents expressed that the lighting was fitted to the story. The light worked very well to depict and describe the characters and the story. The bright light represented the bright atmosphere. And the casts stand on the highlighted point on the stage. Therefore, the faces of the player can clearly be seen. Overall, it made the stage clear and bright.

On the aspect of music, 67% of the respondents stated that music during the performance was pretty supportive for the entire story. They agreed to the performance of acoustic guitar, beside the violin playing. Even though, there was a scene that did not perform appropriate musical background. For example, on the scene when waiting for the death of the king, it was not supported by proper mournful, sad musical background. Moreover, when the maid-ladies and maid-man came to the stage from the backstage, music was too monotonous and less various. Music background repeatedly played at the different scenes.

All in all, 96% of the respondents provide positive responses to the Dulmuluk performing art. They said that the performance was a successful one. The rest of them brings negative comments on the musical aspect.

Respondents stated that the director was able to comprehend and interpret the dialogues on the script. He was successful in getting the spectacles' conditions. The director's interpretation upon the characters is seemingly good in which it will affect to the totality of the players. Finally, the director has a good understanding on the elements of the theatre performance.

## 5. Conclusions

The participants on FGD have recommended that the revitalization of Dulmuluk is necessary. To let Dulmuluk live and is interesting among people in the community, the model of revitalization is needed to be developed related to the elements of the Dulmuluk. The revitalization refers to the elements of Dulmuluk performing art, such as teamwork, script, director, casts, makeup art, costumes, stage setting, lighting, music, and spectacles. Field test shows that Dulmuluk that has applied the elements of modern drama performance can be categorized as successful. The spectacles stand with positive appreciation on it.

The recommendations are given in several aspects. At first, it is suggested that there will be a sustainable and continuous revitalization of Dulmuluk with providing coaching to the Dulmuluk clubs in Palembang. The second recommendation is that sustainable training and coaching are particularly addressed to the young people in the community. With this attempt, Dulmuluk will become alive, popular and appreciated by all people from all classes and ages.

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