

## TRANSFORMATION OF AESTHETIC PREFERENCES: LEGITIMATE TASTE IN PERFORMING ARTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Arif Eko Suprihono**

Film and Television Study Program, Faculty of Recorded Media Arts,  
Indonesia Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta  
Jalan Parangtritis km 6,5 Yogyakarta  
No. Hp: 08562567879, E-mail: aesuprihono@gmail.com

### ***ABSTRACT***

This article is the result of research on the phenomenon of the transformation of aesthetic preferences among internet users toward stage performing arts. Digital citizens are a new form of entity, born from the development of social media technology. One of the effects of the interaction between social media and performing arts is the emergence of a new virtual stage format to meet the aesthetic needs of internet society. There has been a transformation where live stage performances have taken on digital form through the involvement and creativity of cinematography technology. The issue that arises concerns which factors can consistently be maintained in performing arts uploads as a form of media transformation and their models of appreciation. This research uses netnography and hermeneutics methods. The issue of the aesthetic transformation of the performing arts is reflected in internet data. By using digital responsive sentiment data, the researcher identifies and analyses netizen sentiment. As netizen appreciation differs in form and aesthetic enjoyment, this study reveals a significant shift in preferences. The research findings will be presented in the form of a narrative report and disseminated through the scientific journal community.

*Keywords:* performance transformation, aesthetic preferences, legitimate taste, social media uploads

### **INTRODUCTION**

The transformation of live stage performances into digital media represents a significant shift in the creative landscape, driven by the integration of cinematographic technology. This evolution is not merely a change in format but a response to the challenges of creative existence, where physical stage works are reimaged as virtual creations based on digital algorithmic data. This transition reflects the adaptability of the performing arts in the face of technological advancements and changing audience expectations. The use of cinematographic techniques allows for a more immersive and visually dynamic experience, potentially reaching wider audiences through digital platforms. Moreover, this shift opens up

new possibilities for artistic expression, blending traditional stage craft with the limitless potential of digital manipulation and distribution. As a result, artists and performers are exploring innovative ways to engage with their audience, pushing the boundaries of what constitutes a 'live' performance in the digital age.

Legitimate taste refers to a crucial concept in understanding audience preferences for digital performing arts content, as well as how social, economic, and cultural factors shape their tastes and preferences. This concept was developed by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (France) to show that an individual's taste or preference for art, culture, or aesthetics is influenced by social, economic, and cultural factors (Auslander, 2008). Bourdieu used the

category of taste to describe the differences in how high and low culture are created, understood, and believed. There is a correlation between society's aesthetic preferences for art on one hand and "taste" preferences for aesthetic works on the other. An ideological category was found that identifies taste as marking differences between various levels of socioeconomic status and degrees of cultural refinement.

The upload of performing arts as digital product instantiation, within the category of ideological legitimate taste, refers to the audience's taste or preference for performing arts content uploaded on digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Several determining factors of netizens' preferences were found, identified as cultural capital, social class, level of education, and personal experience. Social capital refers to knowledge of art, culture, and aesthetics as the foundation for determining public taste. In the context of social class, it is believed that there is a positive correlation between aesthetic taste and social classification (Jaakkola, 2021).

A study conducted by Cheng et al. (2021) on the typology and metrics of the impact of YouTube videos in responding to crises of self-confidence provides important insights into the role of digital platforms in addressing psychological issues (Cheng et al., 2021). This research reveals how video content can influence viewers' self-perception and their potential in facing issues of self-confidence. The analysis of video typologies and their impact metrics can offer a deeper understanding of the types of content that are effective in supporting the mental well-being of platform users.

The concept of legitimate taste (Пашкевич et al., 2020) has a significant influence on the quality of digital performing arts content. This indicates that audience preferences and aesthetic standards in society can influence the types and quality of content produced and accepted on the platform. This phenomenon is suspected to affect how artists and content creators adapt their works to meet audience expectations in the digital era. The interaction between public taste, quality standards, and creative innovation on digital platforms has become an essential aspect in the evolution of the performing arts in the digital era (Fussey & Roth, 2020).

The impact of social media in shaping the audience's aesthetic preferences has become increasingly significant today. Social media not only functions as a platform for sharing information. It has transformed into a virtual space, influencing public perception and tastes regarding the performing arts. This is evident through various features, including photo uploads, videos, and reviews. Social media has the power to create trends and alter the legitimate aesthetic standards of the performing arts stage. However, on the other hand, this phenomenon also gives rise to aspects of public anxiety. There is a psychological fact that, through social media posts, audiences are compelled to follow popular tastes that are widely accepted. It is essential to recognise that the transformation of legitimate aesthetic preferences in the performing arts is associated with efforts to maintain the artistic integrity of the performing arts within the environment of netizens.

This can simultaneously be a complex and dynamic process. Based on this fact,

this research aims to analyse how social media plays a role in shifting and reshaping the concept of legitimate taste within the context of social media. The researcher acknowledges the importance of considering various factors, including social media platform algorithms, cultural influencers, and the interactions between art producers and netizens. By understanding the mechanism of this transformation, the research is believed to provide valuable insights. The study of this transformation reveals how social media impacts the contemporary performing arts landscape. Furthermore, social media has implications for future creative practices and the consumption of art, fostering a creative dialectic.

Currently, major platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn are experiencing rapid growth in terms of user numbers, content uploads, and monetisation potential. Because these platforms are inherently interactive, the emergence of new social norms and values around connectivity is not an outcome. There is another, more important fact: the main wager lies in the race to conquer new territories within the vast domain of connective media and to cultivate its fertile ground. This layer of platforms influences social interactions at both the individual and group levels, as well as within communities. On a broader societal scale, the online and offline worlds are increasingly intersecting (van Dijck, 2013). Since then, social media has developed active applications that integrate services from one platform with those of another. Contextually, the notions of “connectedness” and “sharing” have also shifted—from interactions within social networking sites to interactions

encompassing all aspects of virtual life outside the realm of interactive media.

Social media has become a platform where individuals have the freedom to engage in social communication. Through these platforms, netizens are encouraged to be more open in expressing opinions, reacting, and appreciating their environment. By sharing similar perceptions and an awareness of their right to free speech, internet users form new communities. Engaging in the dynamics of social media communication, netizens feel connected to the reality of social interaction. Furthermore, by utilising the online world as a tool to obtain information, netizens become a new society with similar intentions (Skeiker, 2015).

The transformation of stage performances into virtual spectacles demonstrates a creative and adaptive process. In the process of changing the medium, the narrative—encompassing signs, symbols, and meanings, as well as the co-creative relationship between writer, actor, and audience—must also shift to remain focused on creating meaning. The adoption of social media changes the way performing artists inform, educate, entertain, or invite audiences to an aesthetic presentation on stage. This creative work alters the way audiences view and interpret what is presented on stage (Hadley, 2017).

The essence of this medium shift lies in the adoption of technology. The essence of creativity often requires thorough research and analysis how the adoption of social media in the domains of aesthetics, criticism, and audience development in performing arts practice can influence the efforts of creative agents to engage fellow artists, audiences, and society. Can this work process facilitate a

shift toward new forms of performing arts—active, interactive, and co-creative? Changes in creative work practices, the implementation of aesthetic forms, reactive behaviour to criticism, the publicity of stage events, and audience development are all made possible by social media. There is a vast and diverse potential for advancement. However, it is still not fully understood, making social media algorithms important subjects for further research.

A viewer who spends only one or two minutes with a digital artwork may see only one configuration of a fundamentally non-linear project. The context and logic of a particular sequence may remain unclear. Every art project is embedded within a context. Still, the digital art audience may require an additional layer of contextual information, whether related to the materiality of the work or the logic behind its process, and extending beyond the work itself. The characteristics of digital art demand an understanding of computational processes, which cannot be assumed to be already possessed by the general art audience (Paul, 2016).

Discussing the process of digital transformation is essentially intended to reconsider the reality with a deep, integrative, and flexible perspective on digital content creation. This is certainly not just about the process of converting into a digital medium. It is not merely a matter of digitising, but rather about re-examining the processes of creation, solution-oriented thinking for problems, artistic methodologies, questions, and answers at the intersection of the internet and performing arts. The integration of the humanities in social media research should be approached from the perspective of digital

humanities, leveraging the full potential of cinematography technology while also contributing to the enhancement of the quality of virtual art uploads (Pawlicka-Deger & Thomson, 2023).

Cinematography (A. E. A. N. P. Suprihono, 2014) refers to the applied technology used in the process of producing moving images. Motion photography is screen-based and grounded in virtual norms, and at a later stage, incorporates advanced post-production technologies to enhance the perfection of creative works. The editing process, utilising various technological innovations in image processing—whether in the evolution from analogue to digital culture—represents a significant achievement in producing audiovisual products as a means of documenting and disseminating traditional products (A. E. Suprihono et al., 2022). Research based on digital humanities methods and cinematography for transforming stage culture into the virtual domain is likely to be highly productive.

Even so, it is fully understood that communication is crucial for creating a public impact, fostering community cohesion, and effectively segmenting messages across various channels. All aesthetic works presented through social media should develop their own style of interaction to multiply their impact (Euron, 2019).

Performing arts in the digital world are a product of transmedia. Media transforms the factuality of stage performances into a virtual form mediated by motion photography technology. This transformation of performing arts is mediated and uploaded to the internet, becoming content for social media posts. In the case of dance performing arts, this

is evident in the example of recordings of traditional arts from the Yogyakarta Royal Palace. The globalisation of Yogyakarta dance is the subject of research, highlighting the uniqueness of cinematographic products on YouTube. The aesthetic form of journalistic works from various palace activities reflects the transformation of ideas, social behaviour, and the paradigm of creativity in the effort to recognise new digital cultural entities (A. E. Suprihono, 2021).

The discovery of performing arts uploading content on the internet actually leans more towards the soft news genre. Although it is packaged as a documentary program in its transmedia realisation, for netizens, it is essentially understood as cultural magazine information. As a form of electronic magazine content, performing arts uploads serve as a factual representation of media, used to convey various types of information to different target audiences (Patrio, 2020).

The shift in society's aesthetic tastes regarding traditional stage performing arts has been quite drastic. This is evident from the emergence of fuzzy logic concerning digital products in the performing arts. How have netizens' aesthetic preferences shifted along with the advancement of digital technology and social media?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs the netnography method (Kozinets, 2021), a qualitative research approach that examines the behaviour and online interactions of communities within a digital context. Robert Kozinets developed this method in the 1990s (Kozinets V, 2020). Its application in virtual performing arts is still relatively new,

although it has been widely used in research practice across various fields, including marketing, communications, and sociology. The characteristics of the netnography method are fundamentally understood in that, through online observation, community behaviour and interactions—especially audience interactions and uploaded performance content—have broad implementation (Patriache, Geoffroy, 2014).

The content database for performances is extensive, spanning various forms of Indonesian traditional arts. Through documentation of the data, researchers classify them into themed groups, online interactions, netizen reactions, and also the models or formats of uploads. Qualitative data analysis in netnography is used to understand the meaning and context behind community online behaviour and interactions. The hermeneutic method (Baracco, 2017) is applied in the analysis process of upload cases. Additionally, the researcher employs a participatory approach to interact with and engage the community (Patriache & Geoffroy, 2014).

Netnography enables researchers to understand the online behaviour of digital communities, particularly in terms of gaining deeper insights into the aesthetic preferences of netizens (Aronczyk, 2021). This method also allows researchers to access data that are difficult to obtain through other research methods, such as surveys or interviews. It is used to increase the validity of data by monitoring the online behaviour of digital communities (Mossberger & Tolbert, 2021) within the model of streaming performances. The streaming performance model can be defined as a conceptual, technical, and



artistic framework that governs how an art performance is presented, recorded, transmitted, and received by the audience through digital platforms in real-time or near-real-time (Zhang et al., 2020).

## **RESULTS**

The transformation of aesthetic preferences (Paul, 2018) in the digital era is marked by a significant shift in how netizens interact with and appreciate performing arts. Key findings indicate a growing trend toward more interactive and immersive experiences, as audiences increasingly seek performances that blend traditional elements with innovative technology. This evolution has led to a reimagining of classical art forms, as creators adapt to meet the ever-changing tastes of online audiences. Trend analysis reveals a preference for shorter and more dynamic performances, catering to the short attention spans prevalent in the digital realm. Traditional performing arts are reinterpreted from a contemporary perspective (Thelwall, 2018).

Creative agents often incorporate multimedia elements to enhance audience engagement. Comparisons between conventional and modern approaches highlight a widening gap, where younger audiences tend to prefer fusion styles that combine classical techniques with contemporary sensibilities. This shift presents a challenge for artists and cultural institutions to balance the preservation of artistic heritage with the need to remain relevant in the digital landscape.

The impact of social media on the performing arts is evident in its influence on aesthetic judgment. An analysis of the quality of uploaded content for netizens shapes

popular aesthetic preferences. Examining the interaction between online and offline aesthetic experiences, social media has had a profound impact on the performing arts by altering how audiences engage with artworks and artists. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have created new spaces for the presentation and appreciation of art, allowing artists to reach global audiences more easily. This shift has altered aesthetic judgment, where visually appealing and easily consumable content is often valued more highly than traditional artistic complexity. As a result, many performing artists are now adapting their works for digital formats, taking into account “shareability” and visual appeal in their creative processes. Content created by creative agents also plays a vital role in shaping contemporary aesthetic preferences. Through uploads, comments, and content sharing, audiences are no longer passive consumers but actively participate in the discussion and interpretation of art. This phenomenon has created a new dynamic between online and offline aesthetic experiences. While live experiences are still valued for the authenticity and intimacy they offer, online experiences through social media have broadened access and participation in the performing arts. The interaction between these two realms has given rise to new forms of art appreciation, where physical experiences are often enriched, or even preceded, by digital engagement.

## **DISCUSSION**

Internet citizens (netizens) have broader access to various types of performing arts content through digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram (Aronczyk, 2021). With this wide access, the audience’s

reactions to performances have become more indirect and subjective. This is mostly due to the availability of interactive technology on social media platforms. However, on the other hand, there is a notable positive impact. The widespread use of the internet has opened doors for artists and audiences to connect globally. Social media platforms enable performances from diverse genres and cultures to be showcased, enjoyed, and easily shared with a broader and more varied audience, without being limited by demographic or geographical factors.

The presence of this digital platform not only expands the reach of performing arts but also transforms the way performing arts content is produced and consumed. Artists can now experiment with new formats, such as live performances broadcast online, and can also mediate their work through short video series specifically designed for social media. Meanwhile, audiences can enjoy performances from around the world without geographical limitations, discover new talents, and interact directly with artists through comments and other interactive features. This creates a more dynamic and inclusive performing arts ecosystem, where creativity and innovation continue to thrive.

This allows aesthetic creators and enthusiasts to explore and discover a broader and more diverse range of aesthetic preferences. Exploring broad and diverse aesthetic preferences enables individuals to broaden their perspectives and deepen their appreciation for various forms of art and beauty. This process involves openness to styles, movements, and artistic expressions that differ from what is typically known or preferred. By exploring various forms

of aesthetics, one can develop a deeper understanding of the complexity and diversity of human creative expression. This experience can enrich an individual's perspective, enhance the ability to appreciate nuances in artworks, and even influence personal tastes over time. Moreover, broad aesthetic exploration can encourage creativity and innovation, as individuals are inspired by the different artistic approaches they encounter. It can also increase cross-cultural understanding, since aesthetics often reflect the values and traditions of other societies.

Social media has transformed the way artists and audiences interact with performing arts. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are not only used for sharing content, but also create virtual spaces for collaboration and real-time appreciation of the arts. Artists can upload performance clips, behind-the-scenes glimpses of their creative process, or even hold live performances through live streaming features. This opens up opportunities for artists to reach a vast audience without geographical limitations. Interactions that occur on social media have also altered the dynamics between artists and art enthusiasts.

The audience can provide direct feedback, share their interpretations, and even participate in the creative process through virtual collaboration. This phenomenon has fostered an active and diverse online art community, where discussions and appreciation of art can occur continuously. Additionally, social media has become an effective marketing tool for artists to promote their work and establish a loyal fan base. The digital transformation in performing arts not only presents challenges but also opens up significant new opportunities. The

loss of direct and authentic experiences is indeed a primary concern, as face-to-face interactions between artists and audiences, as well as the unique atmosphere created in live performances, are difficult to fully replicate digitally. However, digital platforms enable artists to explore new forms of expression, creating diverse and immersive experiences. Artists experimenting with technologies such as virtual reality or augmented reality can enrich the audience's experience.

The opportunity to reach a broad and diverse audience has become one of the greatest advantages of this digital transformation. Artists can now transcend geographical and temporal boundaries, enabling their works to be enjoyed by audiences worldwide, free from the limitations of time and place. This not only expands the reach of art but also opens up opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and a more dynamic exchange of ideas. Furthermore, digitalisation (Weber, 2020) can also lower barriers to access, enabling individuals with physical or economic limitations to enjoy the performing arts that might have been previously inaccessible. Thus, digital transformation has the potential to democratise the arts, making the performing arts more inclusive and accessible to various segments of society.

The implications of social media for the performing arts industry require further exploration. Discussions about how social media influences the future of performing arts have at least become an important element of the interaction between audiences and artists. The potential, challenges, and opportunities for artists and producers are issues of production management (Strandgaard Pedersen et al., 2020). Utilising methods to analyse public

interaction, such as applying the concept of fuzzy logic to netizens' responses to traditional performing arts on social media, becomes essential to consider. The fuzzy logic method is employed to identify netizens' aesthetic preferences for the performing arts (K. Tam, 2023). Recommendations to adapt to changes in audience preferences are a further step in developing the economic dimension of the arts. It is worth considering that the increasing use of social media has had a significant impact on the performing arts industry, changing the way artists connect with audiences and promote their work. Social platforms provide unparalleled opportunities for direct engagement, enabling performers to build a loyal fan base and share behind-the-scenes content (KhosraviNik, 2023). This digital shift has democratised access to audiences, allowing new artists to gain visibility without needing to navigate traditional gatekeepers. However, it has also increased competition for attention in the online space. This situation challenges artists to produce engaging content beyond their main artistic works continuously.

The performing arts must navigate a landscape where a digital presence is essential (Levin & Mamlok, 2021). Artists and producers face challenges in striking a balance between online engagement and the essence of live performance. Opportunities arise in leveraging social media for innovative storytelling (Hintz, 2019), virtual performances, and hybrid events that combine physical and digital experiences. To adapt, performing arts need to become more closely acquainted with stage cinematography technologies. The presence of recording technology is a key factor in



determining the feasibility of uploading performance material to social media. Artists should consider investing in digital skills training, exploring new monetisation models for online content (Elango, 2019), and developing strategies to convert social media engagement into attendance at live events. For performing artists, embracing these changes while preserving the unique value of in-person experiences will be crucial for the sustainability of the performing arts in the future.

Digital citizenship and aesthetic experiences represent a new frontier for the future of performing arts. Artists should conduct thorough studies on social media to understand its impact on artistic expression and audience engagement. Analysing how digital citizenship (Mossberger & Tolbert, 2021) influences aesthetic choices is crucial for the future of the arts, as it provides insights into evolving audience preferences and the changing landscape of cultural consumption. This analysis can help artists refine their creative processes and presentation methods to better resonate with digitally connected audiences. Furthermore, artists and creative agents must explore the role of social media in shaping artistic preferences and consider its implications for understanding cultural consumption in the digital age (K.-K. Tam, n.d.). This exploration involves examining how social media platforms influence artistic trends, audience expectations, and the dissemination of cultural content. By understanding these dynamics, artists can develop strategies to engage with their audience effectively, create more impactful works, and navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital realm.

This approach will enable them to remain relevant and innovative in an increasingly interconnected and technology-driven cultural landscape (Yamaner, 2021).

The phenomenon of uploading performing arts as digital products reflects a process of taste formation in the digital public sphere, where audience preferences become a central mechanism in determining which cultural expressions gain visibility and legitimacy (Gardiner & Gere, 2016). On platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, performing arts are not only presented as artistic works but also as media commodities subject to algorithmic circulation, social endorsement, and cultural interpretation. Netizens' preferences are shaped by a complex interplay of cultural capital, education, exposure to various art forms, and embodied personal experiences (Miller, 2020). Individuals with higher cultural capital—those who possess richer knowledge of artistic conventions, historical context, and aesthetic values—tend to appreciate more complex or traditional forms of performing arts. Conversely, individuals with lower levels of cultural exposure may gravitate toward mainstream, simplified, or popularised versions of performance. Thus, the digital instantiation of performing arts reproduces, rather than eliminates, pre-existing cultural inequalities in taste (Nousiainen et al., 2017).

In addition to cultural capital, social class and educational background play significant roles in shaping digital aesthetic preferences (Harlig, 2018). As suggested by Jaakkola (2021), taste operates as a form of symbolic boundary that differentiates social groups, while also reinforcing

hierarchical distinctions within society. In the context of digital performing arts, individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may prefer performances that convey sophistication, heritage value, or artistic complexity. In contrast, other groups may prefer performances associated with entertainment value, viral trends, or commercial appeal. Personal experiences—such as family environment, exposure to cultural practices, and participation in artistic activities—further refine these preferences, influencing how individuals interpret and engage with digital performances. Therefore, the circulation of performing arts online is not merely a neutral process of sharing cultural products; it is a site where ideological legitimacy, class identity, and cultural hierarchy are continuously re-negotiated and reproduced through patterns of audience taste on digital platforms (Burnham, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Research indicates that there has been a shift in how stage performance activities engage with audiences. Audiences now have the option to appreciate performances either by being physically present at the venue or by watching through social media platforms. Nevertheless, audiences still have opportunities to react to the quality and process of the performance. In fact, through social media, network-based audiences have an open platform to provide criticism. The subjectivity of netizens in sending out sentiment reactions is a tangible manifestation of how platforms engage online communities. By observing netizen reactions, one can discover and identify the sentiment statements of networked viewers. The fuzzy logic of netizens' reactive aspects can be

measured in terms of scale and the number of participants. The aesthetic preferences for stage performances become a benchmark for netizen engagement. While digital products can be seen as expressions of artists, they become objects of appreciation for netizens. The presence of netizens in response to performing arts uploads represents a tangible form of instant cultural appreciation, facilitated by social discourse mediated through technology that records stage activities. Stage cinematography serves as a transformative bridge, both for performing arts workers and as an intermediary for networked audiences. In this context, uploads of performing arts on social media are rightly referred to as presentations of stage performance aesthetics.

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