

Utilizing Youtube as A Digital Data Repository For The Development of Ethnochoreological Research Methods Through Archival Study and Netnography

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Abstract.

YouTube, as a digital media platform, offers significant potential as a source of non-field research data in ethnochoreology. Through access to audiovisual documentation, researchers can examine movement patterns, musical elements, costumes, and the performance contexts of dances across diverse ethnic traditions without geographical constraints. This study aims to explore the role of YouTube as a medium for ethnochoreological research through the integration of two methodological strategies: archival research and netnography. Within the archival research framework, YouTube is positioned as a cultural repository that preserves historical traces, aesthetic transformations, and evolving modes of dance presentation over time. In contrast, the netnographic approach views YouTube as a space of cultural interaction in which identity negotiation, meaning-making processes, and representational practices are enacted through the digital activities of virtual communities. This study employs a qualitative methodology, with ethnochoreology serving as the primary epistemological framework, thereby ensuring that dance analysis remains grounded in the relationship between textual and contextual dimensions. Data were collected from various YouTube features, including description boxes, comment sections, playlists, and community channels, and were supplemented by relevant scholarly literature. The findings indicate that YouTube functions not only as a medium for dance documentation but also as an epistemic arena that expands the research paradigm of ethnochoreology within the digital ecosystem. These findings underscore the importance of rigorous source criticism and stringent data selection procedures to ensure the scientific validity and reliability of research conducted through digital platforms.

Keywords: *YouTube; Ethnochoreology; Archival Research and Netnography.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Ethnochoreology is a discipline within dance studies that focuses on the study of dance as an integral part of a specific group or ethnic community. The term derives from *ethno*, referring to culture or ethnicity, and *choreology*, which denotes the study of dance. Thus, ethnochoreology integrates perspectives from cultural anthropology, performance studies, and dance scholarship to examine the interrelationship between dance and the cultural values, norms, and identities of a society [1]. As a branch of dance studies situated within cultural contexts, ethnochoreology regards dance as a cultural text that both reflects and shapes the collective identity of an ethnic group [2]. In practice, the discipline encompasses a wide range of dimensions, including shifts in values, transformations in aesthetics, philosophical foundations, symbolic meanings, and the evolution of form, structure, mode of presentation or performance, genre, artistic development, and the surrounding social dynamics [3].

Ethnochoreology, as an approach within dance studies, possesses its own methodological specifications in research practice. According to Soedarsono [4], the object of ethnochoreological inquiry—centered on ethnic or folk dances—can be examined through both field and non-field research. These two modes of inquiry expand the scope of dance studies beyond spatial and temporal limitations, particularly in relation to data collection techniques aligned with specific research objectives [1]. Field research is typically employed when the object of study still exists and can be directly observed, emphasizing the researcher's presence and interaction within the community in which the dance lives and develops. Its primary characteristic lies in the in-depth and detailed observation of the object in its original environment [5], [6]. Conversely, non-field research is used when direct access to the study site is either impossible or impractical. In such cases, data are obtained through indirect sources such as archives, documentation, and literature, which still allow for a rigorous and academically grounded analysis of dance [7], [8]. The non-field approach is widely applied across the humanities, including ethnochoreology, and is adapted according to the research objectives and the availability of relevant data [1].

YouTube, as a digital platform, offers substantial potential as a data source for non-field research in ethnochoreology. Its availability enables researchers to access a wide range of dance performance documentation from diverse ethnic groups—whether in the form of live recordings, archival materials, or curated content produced by individuals or communities. Through uploaded videos, researchers can examine visual elements such as movement, costume, music, and performance context, which are often difficult to access directly in the field. Moreover, interactive features such as comments and video descriptions provide additional insights into audience perceptions, interpretations, and the social dynamics surrounding the dance. Thus, YouTube functions both as a medium of documentation and as a digital research environment that offers extensive access to ethnochoreological data across spatial and temporal boundaries, facilitating new analytical developments concerning the construction and representation of culture within dance practices.

Previous studies have demonstrated the validity of YouTube as a reliable data source for dance research. Oh [9] used YouTube dance cover videos to analyze cross-national K-pop cover dance practices and the formation of diasporic identities, showing that online videos embody both performative and social dimensions. Suprihono [10] employed YouTube video archives to examine the preservation, aesthetic transformation, and circulation of knowledge in traditional dance. Meanwhile, Vega-Samame et al. [11] used YouTube as empirical evidence to explore issues of gender and body representation in cover dance practices. Another study by Gratsiouni et al. [12] emphasized YouTube's function as a medium for the documentation and community-based learning of traditional dance, while Aristidou et al. [13] proposed a methodological framework for managing online video corpora—including YouTube—in dance research, addressing concerns related to annotation and ethics. Collectively, these studies affirm that YouTube not only provides visual data but also serves as a dynamic and relevant cultural field for digital media-based dance research.

Based on the preceding discussion, ethnochoreology—as a culturally oriented field of dance studies—requires an expansion of methodological strategies in response to the evolving research landscape of the digital era. The transformation of cultural knowledge and documentation through internet technologies has introduced new and relevant data sources for non-field research, one of which is the digital archive. Within this context, YouTube holds epistemological significance because it provides access to dance documentation across ethnicities, regions, and temporal periods. Several previous studies have used YouTube in dance research to examine performativity, aesthetics, cultural transmission, and identity construction. However, its use within the ethnochoreological framework has not yet been systematically developed as a methodological foundation—particularly in the study of traditional dance forms that experience shifting meanings within digital spaces. Therefore, this study positions YouTube as an ethnochoreological data source that offers new possibilities for interpreting the interrelations among dance, culture, and society in the digital context.

Within this framework, the study examines the position of YouTube as a research medium that enables the use of two methodological strategies: archival study and netnography. Through an archival study approach, YouTube operates as a cultural repository that preserves the historical traces and aesthetic transformations of a dance tradition, thereby facilitating longitudinal analysis of shifts in form and performance context. Meanwhile, through a netnographic approach, YouTube is conceptualized as a site of cultural interaction in which practices of representation, identity negotiation, and meaning-making are enacted by virtual communities connected through dance performance practices. The integration of these two methodological perspectives offers an innovative contribution to strengthening ethnochoreological methodology, as it expands the scope of dance research beyond the geographical boundaries of its originating community while simultaneously opening new analytical horizons for understanding cultural dynamics within the digital ecosystem.

II. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach, using ethnochoreology as its primary analytical framework. Ethnochoreology enables the examination of dance as a cultural practice that emerges not only within conventional performance spaces but also within digital media environments. In contemporary scholarship, YouTube, as a digital database, presents new methodological opportunities for

ethnochoreological inquiry through the integration of archival research and netnography. Accordingly, a comprehensive understanding of ethnochoreology as a discipline serves as a critical foundation for ensuring that the exploration of digital data remains grounded in the epistemological framework of ethnic dance studies.

In line with the research objectives, YouTube is positioned as the primary data source. The platform provides extensive access to dance video content from a wide range of traditions, communities, and cultural contexts relevant to ethnochoreological inquiry. This study examines how YouTube functions not only as a medium of documentation, but also as a site of production, distribution, representation, and cultural interaction that offers valuable insights into dance practices, their broader social contexts, and the dynamics of their performativity within media culture.

Data exploration was conducted by utilizing various YouTube features, including the description box, comment section, playlists, and community channel, which were optimized for data collection through archival research and a netnographic approach. In addition, this study analyzes several YouTube channels selected purposively as concrete examples of how the platform can be employed in ethnocoreological research. A literature review of previous studies that have used YouTube as a data source was also undertaken to identify its methodological strengths, limitations, and challenges. Through this approach, the research seeks to formulate systematic and solution-oriented methodological strategies for advancing digital data-driven ethnocoreology.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

YouTube and the Performing Arts: A New Space for Ethnic Dance

YouTube, as a global digital platform, provides a cultural circulation space that transcends geographical and temporal boundaries, thereby expanding access to the presentation and consumption of dance performances in virtual contexts. Wettstein [14] emphasizes that YouTube serves as an effective channel for introducing and publicizing dance works to international audiences because its content is openly accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Similarly, Fraser et al. [15] state that through uploaded performance videos, artists utilize YouTube as a medium of cultural expression that enables the presentation of traditional aesthetics to a global public. From the perspective of global media development, Kim et al. [16] demonstrate that YouTube, as part of the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, has accelerated the growth of cross-border streaming services, allowing content distribution instantaneously and without spatial or temporal limitations. They also note that the rising demand for over-the-top (OTT) services reflects a shift in consumption patterns in which audiences increasingly prioritize flexibility and individual preferences in engaging with performance content. Thus, YouTube plays a crucial role in transforming the mechanisms of production, distribution, and appreciation of the performing arts, including dance, in the era of digital culture.

The emergence of YouTube has transformed the mechanisms of presenting performing arts, which were previously accessible only through live, in-person attendance and were bound to the spatial, temporal, and locational contexts of performance. Through its transgression of geographical and temporal boundaries, the platform enables performing arts to be produced, distributed, and appreciated globally by heterogeneous audiences. Verzywvelt [17], through a case study on ballet performances, demonstrates that mediatization processes facilitated by video platforms such as YouTube have reconstructed dance performance practices by shifting them from conventional stage spaces into digital environments, thereby expanding audience reach and reshaping the relationship among performers, works, and spectators. This aligns with Wettstein's [14] findings, which show that Rai dance—a ritual dance of Eastern Nepal—has experienced a widening of its circulation through YouTube uploads, allowing this ethnic dance to circulate beyond its original cultural context. In a different context, Maryam et al. [18] explain that Samrah dance, as part of the cultural heritage of the Wandan community, has gained new exposure and popularity through digital mediation practices on YouTube, contributing to the revitalization and increased visibility of local culture within global spaces. Thus, YouTube functions not only as a medium of distribution but also as an agent of transformation in

performing arts practices, enabling the repositioning of dance works from local orientations to the global performance landscape.

Through this transformation, YouTube introduces new dynamics into dance performance practices, particularly in the ways aesthetic experiences are produced, disseminated, and received by audiences. In conventional performance contexts, aesthetic experience depends on physical presence, spatial relations, and direct interaction between performers and spectators; however, in digital spaces, such experiences are mediated through virtual visual and audio technologies. This digital mediation not only alters patterns of performing arts consumption but also influences the construction of artistic meaning and the ways viewers perceive and engage with the aesthetic qualities of a dance [19]. The flexible access offered by YouTube enables audiences to construct aesthetic engagement individually, repetitively, and reflectively through features such as pausing, replaying, commenting, and sharing—possibilities that are absent in live performance contexts. Thus, the experience of appreciating dance in digital environments is not merely a reproduction of stage performance but evolves into a new form of appreciation that integrates media interactivity, aesthetic perception, and cultural participation within virtual spaces.

The [Kraton Jogja](#) YouTube channel represents a strategic example of managing ethnic dance in digital spaces by utilizing new media as a means of documentation, publication, and cultural diplomacy. The channel is directly administered by the Kraton Yogyakarta as the cultural authority, thereby ensuring the legitimacy and authenticity of the performance materials uploaded. Through video uploads featuring a wide range of traditional dance repertoires, YouTube functions as a mediating platform that transcends spatial and temporal boundaries, enabling the stylistic expressions of the kraton's ethnic dances to circulate globally and be accessed by audiences across nations. Interactive features such as the comment section create space for dialogue between viewers and channel administrators, while the description box serves as a curatorial medium that provides contextual information about the dance works presented. Thus, the channel demonstrates how YouTube operates as an effective cultural infrastructure for expanding the reach of ethnic dance performances into a global and temporally continuous virtual environment.

The [RRI Surakarta](#) YouTube channel also represents a model of virtual performance that illustrates new dynamics in the circulation of traditional performing arts in the digital era, aligning with the transformations observed in other cultural channels such as the Kraton Jogja YouTube platform. Through its regular *wayang wong* performance agenda, RRI Surakarta implements a hybrid performance model, namely a combination of conventional live performances on the studio stage and simultaneous live-streamed broadcasts via YouTube. This hybrid mode of presentation allows the performance to retain the dimensions of liveness and contextual interaction with physically present audiences, while simultaneously expanding its reach to global viewers through digital distribution. Thus, YouTube functions not only as a medium of documentation but also as a platform for performance dissemination that is capable of overcoming spatial and temporal limitations, while ensuring the sustained continuity of traditional performing arts within an increasingly interconnected contemporary cultural landscape.

The [Laskar Indonesia Pusaka](#) YouTube channel demonstrates how digital platforms function as effective cultural distribution media that extend the reach of traditional performing arts into a global sphere unbounded by spatial and temporal limitations. One significant representation of this practice can be seen in the [Festival Bedhayan 2023](#) upload, which features various creative interpretations of *bedhaya* dance—a repertoire that developed within the royal court and holds an important position in the cultural structure of Javanese court life. The festival is presented through a hybrid performance model, combining live stage performances with simultaneous live streaming on YouTube. This hybrid format allows the performance to maintain its dimension of liveness while expanding its accessibility to global audiences through digital mediation. Thus, this practice illustrates how traditional performing arts adapt to the logic of digital media, enabling cultural circulation to move from local settings into a globally oriented performance ecosystem. YouTube introduces a fundamental shift in the ecology of the performing arts by providing a new circulation space for ethnic dance within the landscape of global digital culture. Through its transgression of geographical and temporal boundaries, the platform enables dances that once existed within local, communal, and traditionally embedded cultural contexts to move beyond their places of origin and enter

global cultural circulation. In this regard, YouTube functions as a cultural infrastructure that not only broadens access to ethnic dance performances but also reshapes the relations of production, distribution, and consumption of dance works. This transformation influences how ethnic dance is positioned within the sphere of public representation, where performance practices are no longer fully dependent on conventional modes of presentation but instead become integrated into a networked digital media ecosystem. Thus, YouTube does not merely offer an alternative medium for the publication of dance works; it also constructs new ways of interpreting, accessing, and appreciating traditional performance heritage within the increasingly interconnected dynamics of contemporary culture.

YouTube as a Digital Archive: Potentials for Ethnic Dance Studies

Dance, as an art form manifested through performative events, possesses an inherent ephemerality that leaves no material trace and depends entirely on the spatial and temporal conditions in which it is performed. This presents epistemological challenges in dance research, particularly when dealing with traditional repertoires that are no longer practiced or have undergone significant transformations. Sedyawati [20] notes that the scarcity of primary sources in dance studies—especially those concerning the classical Hindu–Buddhist cultural period in the Indonesian archipelago—stems from the absence of performance evidence that can be directly observed, unlike visual art artifacts. Similarly, Soedarsono [4], in his study of *wayang wong* at the Yogyakarta courts, emphasizes that reconstructing past performance practices cannot rely on ethnographic approaches. This is due to the nature of *wayang wong* as a performing art bound to a specific spatial and temporal context, such that observations of contemporary performances cannot serve as authentic representations of earlier stylistic forms. Thus, the temporal nature of dance and its dependence on the conditions of space and moment render it a vulnerable object of study—difficult to trace, susceptible to loss, and challenging to analyze both historically and empirically.

YouTube, as a network-based audiovisual distribution platform, introduces a new paradigm in the production, presentation, and accessibility of dance. Unlike conventional performances that rely on physical presence and temporal continuity, the platform enables the virtual presentation of dance in documented, replayable forms that can be accessed globally without geographical limitations [15], [21]. With these characteristics, YouTube not only facilitates the expansion of dance dissemination but also shifts its orientation from physical performance spaces to digital environments that offer greater spatial and temporal flexibility. The implications of this shift extend to academic domains, particularly dance research, as performance videos uploaded to the platform can serve as data sources that may be revisited retrospectively. Through the replay feature, researchers are afforded opportunities to conduct repeated observations of their objects of study without being bound by the temporal constraints of live performance. Thus, YouTube provides a relatively sustainable source of empirical data, offering an alternative solution to documentation limitations in dance studies, especially concerning traditional and ethnic repertoires that are infrequently performed.

A concrete example demonstrating YouTube's function as a performative archival medium can be found in the [Kraton Jogja](#) YouTube channel, which systematically uploads documentation of *wayang wong* performances and other court dance repertoires. The channel features various *wayang wong* narratives such as [Jaya Pusaka](#), [Parta Krama](#), [Sembadra Larung](#), and [Gandawerdaya](#)—repertoires whose performances do not occur regularly and are not always accessible on an annual basis. In addition to *wayang wong*, the channel presents a number of court dances that are rarely staged, resulting in limited accessibility through field-based research. This condition provides significant advantages for dance scholarship, particularly for studies of ethnic and traditional dance that face constraints in accessing live performances. The video recordings on this channel offer stable, accessible data sources that can be stored as personal archives for further analysis. Thus, the existence of the Kraton Jogja YouTube channel highlights the potential of this digital platform as an alternative documentation space capable of supporting the tracing of performative histories and sustaining academic inquiry into traditional dances that are temporal and infrequently performed.

Another source demonstrating YouTube's relevance to dance scholarship can be found in the uploads of the [Rockefeller Archive Center](#), which publish filmed documentation of Tassilo Adam's work

from the 1930s. These documentary videos capture several dance performances from the Surakarta and Yogyakarta courts which, although incomplete and lacking musical accompaniment, retain significant scholarly value because they present visual traces of early twentieth-century performance styles. The recordings open possibilities for comparative research, enabling scholars to trace changes in form, stylistic features, bodily dynamics, and aesthetic configurations of dance from the past to the present. Through this documentation, shifts in presentational characteristics, choreographic interpretation, and value orientations within court dance traditions can be analyzed more empirically. The presence of such archives on YouTube demonstrates that digital platforms function not only as channels for distributing entertainment content but also as repositories of performance history that enrich visual-data-based research in dance studies.

The [Siswo Among Bekso](#) YouTube channel also constitutes an important source for dance studies, particularly for tracing traditional dance repertoires that are increasingly rarely practiced. The channel contains documentation of dance performances such as [Golek Gambhyong](#) and [langendriya](#), two forms of classical Javanese dance that are now difficult to encounter in contemporary performance contexts. The availability of such documentation opens opportunities for textual analysis from an ethnochoreological perspective, especially for examining choreographic elements such as movement structure, costume design, and the accompanying music. In addition, the videos on this channel enable comparative research that observes stylistic changes and aesthetic transformations occurring over time. Thus, the Siswo Among Bekso channel reinforces YouTube's function as a performative archive that remains highly relevant to the study of traditional dance.

These findings affirm that YouTube holds significant relevance as a source of visual data for archival studies grounded in ethnochoreology. Papakostas [22] states that YouTube functions as a digital archive that stores dance documentation through publicly uploaded materials, thereby providing empirical data for choreographic analysis, performative context, and meaning construction within the realm of cultural representation. Similarly, McGee [23] positions YouTube as a global archive that facilitates the recirculation of cultural values through remake or dance cover practices, while also demonstrating how mediatization processes influence identity construction and cultural articulation across space and time. Hudson [24] further notes that digital archives such as YouTube—despite being based on user-generated content—play a significant role in shaping collective memory and the continuity of cultural memory due to their high accessibility and participatory nature. Thus, YouTube should be regarded as an important archival data source in ethnic dance research, particularly for tracing performance traces that are rarely staged or have been displaced from their original cultural contexts.

YouTube, which hosts dance performance documentation in the form of live streams as well as uploaded videos, plays a significant role in ethnochoreological research, particularly in archive-based studies. The platform provides audiovisual data that can be analyzed to uncover choreographic structures. This aligns with the views of Soedarsono [25] and Pramutomo et al. [3], who assert that video documentation constitutes an essential element in the textual dimension of ethnochoreological inquiry. Textual analysis is crucial because ethnochoreology regards dance as a cultural text that must be interpreted. This approach distinguishes ethnochoreology from dance anthropology or dance ethnology, which tend to focus primarily on socio-cultural contexts; in ethnochoreology, textual and contextual analyses are considered interrelated and inseparable. Therefore, studies concerning performance style, movement characteristics, aesthetic values, and shifts in aesthetic orientation require adequate support from visual archives. Within this framework, YouTube functions as a digital archive that provides access to dance repertoires, including works that are rarely performed or have fallen into periods of dormancy.

YouTube offers an enormous volume of data through user uploads; however, the heterogeneous and non-standardized nature of this data introduces methodological complexities in archival research. The absence of scientific curation mechanisms on the platform requires researchers to critically assess the quality and credibility of the available materials. Soukup [26] notes that YouTube has fundamental weaknesses as an archival data source due to its lack of verification and validation processes, poor metadata quality, and the high potential for misinformation resulting from the absence of responsible archival authority. In addition, YouTube archives are inherently unstable; videos may be removed at any time due to copyright violations,

account deletion, or platform policies, thereby undermining long-term accessibility. In line with this, Aasman [27] asserts that YouTube is better understood as an informal participatory archive rather than an institutional one, since archival practices rely largely on individual initiatives through user-generated curation and personal collections. Mattock et al. [28] further emphasize that video content and metadata on YouTube can change without academic oversight, resulting in data instability for research purposes. Thus, the use of YouTube as an archival source in ethnochoreological studies demands methodological caution.

Methodological caution in using YouTube as an archival data source for dance research necessitates the systematic application of source criticism to ensure the validity and reliability of research findings. Source criticism involves cross-verification, the evaluation of upload credibility, and the rigorous selection of video materials to be analyzed. At this stage, upload authority becomes a primary consideration in data selection, making channels managed by cultural custodians or official institutions in the arts and cultural sectors priority sources due to their higher credibility. Individual channels may also serve as data sources, but their use requires methodological precision through the verification of performative context, metadata, and visual consistency with other comparative sources. In addition, given the vulnerability of YouTube's digital archives to loss or alteration—whether due to content removal or platform policy—researchers must download and store relevant videos to prevent data loss. Strategies such as duplication, categorization, and cross-video comparison are likewise necessary to achieve higher data accuracy. Thus, source criticism serves as an essential procedure in managing YouTube-based data to ensure that archival research in ethnochoreology rests on a sound and accountable methodological foundation.

The use of YouTube in dance studies demonstrates an important shift in how performative traces can be retraced through digital media. Performance recordings preserved across various channels—whether official cultural institutions or personal archives—expand the possibilities for academic exploration of traditional dance repertoires that are vulnerable to disappearance due to spatial, temporal, and practical discontinuities. Through these recordings, choreographic analysis, performance style examination, musical structure assessment, and investigations of presentational dynamics within specific contexts can be conducted more systematically. Nevertheless, YouTube's character as a participatory digital archive requires careful data selection, particularly because not all uploads possess sufficient academic credibility and their archival stability depends on platform policies and user actions. The application of source criticism, verification of contextual information, and strategies for safeguarding visual materials become indispensable operational steps in research grounded in online documentation. Through such methodological practices, dance recordings dispersed across YouTube can be managed as valuable research materials within ethnochoreological inquiry.

YouTube and Netnographic Methods in Ethnochoreological Research

YouTube not only presents audiovisual documentation of dance performances—whether through live-streamed broadcasts or subsequently published recordings—but also enables the incorporation of verbal elements that often play an essential role in the interpretation of a performance. Through the description box, uploaders may provide relevant curatorial information such as historical background, socio-cultural context, symbolic values, themes, and the functions of the performance. In addition, the presence of subtitles or embedded text within the video clarifies spoken narratives, explanations of local terminology, and other textual components accompanying the performance, such as accompanying songs, ritual chants, or dramatic dialogue. For ethnic dance studies, this verbal dimension is significant because it reinforces cultural expression and elucidates the relationship between dance as a kinesthetic aesthetic form and the knowledge systems of the communities that sustain it. Thus, YouTube offers a robust documentation space capable of capturing the integration of movement, sound, and language as interconnected units of meaning within dance performance.

In addition, YouTube provides a comment section that serves as a medium of interaction between uploaders and viewers as well as among viewers themselves. This discursive space can be used as a data source in dance studies, particularly for analyzing aesthetic reception, evaluative articulation, and the construction of public discourse surrounding the presented performance [29]. Through comments, it becomes possible to trace how a community—whether cultural practitioners or global audiences—constructs meaning,

offers appreciation, formulates critique, or even negotiates the cultural identities being represented. The absence of geographical boundaries on this platform expands the reach of reception, enabling researchers to examine intercultural dynamics of audience response, including how a work is perceived across ethnic, generational, and social backgrounds [30]. Thus, the YouTube comment section functions not merely as an interaction feature but also as a discursive archive that reflects societal perceptions, ideologies, and cultural sensitivities toward dance performances.

YouTube not only hosts documentation of dance performances but also provides various forms of documentary videos that are highly relevant to ethnic dance studies. These documentary materials often contain interviews with cultural informants or practitioners who possess authoritative knowledge of specific dance traditions, as seen in videos such as "[*Keraton Yogyakarta: Mengulas Sejarah Tari Bedhaya Sapto*](#)," "[*Bedhaya Sapta Documentary*](#)," and "[*Jelang Uyon-uyon Hadiluhung 8 Maret 2021: Serba-serbi Beksan Golek Jangkung Kuning*](#)." Such videos offer information on historical background, symbolic meanings, philosophical values, and perspectives from communities that sustain the dance tradition. In addition, documentary content on YouTube may present choreographic creative processes or performance preparations, serving as important sources for understanding the construction of aesthetic concepts and ideological frameworks behind a work. For instance, "[*Bedhaya Mintaraga: Mangayubagya 80 Tahun Sri Sultan Hamengku Bawono Ka 10*](#)" showcases the dynamics of choreographic creation, while the *Jelang Uyon-uyon Hadiluhung* series—such as "[*Beksan Kuda Gadhingan*](#)" or "[*Penjelasan Gending dan Makna Srimpi Muncar*](#)"—provides performative context leading up to a presentation. Even documentation of key figures, such as in "[*R.M. Dinusatomo: Tokoh Seni Tari Klasik Gaya Yogyakarta*](#)" functions as a biographical archive that records the transmission of dance knowledge. Through such documentation, YouTube offers ethnographically valuable data that enable researchers to explore dimensions of meaning, function, local knowledge, and technical aspects of dance that are not always accessible through observation of the performance alone.

The perspectives and ideas conveyed verbally through various YouTube features—whether in the description box, subtitles, comment sections, or narrative components of documentary videos—extend beyond spatial and temporal boundaries. Information provided by uploaders circulates within a digital sphere that transcends geographic and temporal limitations, allowing knowledge about ethnic dance to be accessed globally without being tied to the location of the originating cultural community. Through the description box, for instance, channel owners may elaborate on the historical context, symbolic meanings, or philosophical foundations of a dance, while the comment section creates a dialogic space among users that can enrich interpretations of a given repertoire. Meanwhile, documentary videos enable direct narration by cultural practitioners who articulate traditional knowledge, value systems, and aesthetic ideas through verbal expression that is recorded and continually accessible. Thus, the dissemination of verbal discourse on dance through YouTube expands the field of cultural transmission and strengthens the participatory and open nature of digital archives that accommodate diverse perspectives.

YouTube's existence as a user-participatory platform renders it not merely an audio-visual distribution medium but also a space for knowledge production that is highly relevant to performing arts research, particularly dance studies. Its open structure enables the accumulation of multi-dimensional data through videos, upload descriptions, and comment sections. The description feature facilitates the delivery of verbal information about performance contexts—such as historical background, symbolic values, cultural functions, and aesthetic orientations—which complements the visual data of movement. Meanwhile, the comment section constitutes a discursive arena that reveals public responses, constructions of aesthetic reception, and negotiations of meaning among users across geographical and cultural backgrounds. These interactive dynamics demonstrate how knowledge practices, cultural interpretations, and meaning-making authority are negotiated within digital spaces. Thus, YouTube's interactive and dialogic character opens up substantial possibilities for its use as a data source in netnographic research, particularly for examining discursive dynamics, public opinion, and the representation of cultural identities articulated through dance performances in digital environments.

Netnography is an internet-based qualitative research method that emerged as an adaptation of traditional ethnography to digital cultural contexts. Kozinets [31] defines it as an online ethnographic practice that requires the researcher's engagement in understanding the meanings, values, practices, and social interactions that develop within virtual communities. In line with this, Costello et al. [32] emphasize that netnography is not merely a process of collecting data from the internet but demands authentic social interaction and reflexively built relationships between the researcher and participants in online environments. The validity of netnographic research therefore depends not only on the technical procedures of data collection but also on the depth of researcher involvement (prolonged engagement), cultural sensitivity (cultural immersion), and interpretive capacity in reading the discursive dynamics of digital communities. The relational, interpretive, and context-responsive nature of netnography makes it highly relevant for adaptation in ethnochoreological research, particularly for analyzing the representation, reception, and transformation of meaning in ethnic dance, which now circulates widely through digital platforms such as YouTube.

In netnography, data are obtained through systematically constructed interactions between the researcher and the cultural community under study within digital spaces. This process parallels conventional ethnography, yet all observation and participation activities occur through traces of online communication. Data collection in netnography is not understood as a purely technical activity of gathering digital content, but rather as a naturalistic, participatory, and reflexive ethnographic process oriented toward understanding socio-cultural contexts [31]. Data are collected from various forms of digital artifacts such as posts, comments, discussion threads, private messages, visual symbols (images, memes, emojis), videos, and even the use of hashtags as markers of community discourse. In addition, researchers maintain digital fieldnotes that record interactional dynamics, the researcher's positionality, and the cultural contexts accompanying the research process. Data-collection techniques include conversation archiving (copy-paste archiving), visual documentation (screen capturing), ethically constrained data gathering (ethical scraping), direct interaction within digital communities (live interaction), and online interviews for deepening the understanding of cultural meanings. Thus, data collection in netnography requires both methodological rigor and interpretive sensitivity to the social relations that develop within virtual communities.

In the context of ethnochoreology-based dance research, netnography can be applied through the use of YouTube as both a space for performative observation and an arena of socio-cultural interaction. Uploaded dance performance videos—whether in the form of staged documentation, rehearsals, or reconstructions of traditional repertoires—may be analyzed as audiovisual data that capture choreographic structures, movement stylistics, musical arrangements, costuming, and performative contexts, much like in ethnographic observation. At the same time, interactive features such as the comment section create opportunities for dialogic engagement between the researcher, channel owners, cultural practitioners, and audiences involved in the discourse surrounding the performance. Through interactions within the comment section, researchers can trace aesthetic reception, critical evaluation, cultural meaning negotiation, and interpretive dynamics that emerge among viewer communities. Thus, YouTube provides a combination of visual and verbal data that enables netnographic ethnochoreological research to be conducted comprehensively, encompassing both textual analysis of dance and the study of cultural communication practices within the digital ecosystem.

IV. CONCLUSION

YouTube can ultimately be understood as a digital cultural infrastructure that not only reshapes the circulation, documentation, and consumption of ethnic dance but also offers a new paradigm for performing arts research. Its transformative role encompasses two primary dimensions: first, as a virtual performance space that expands the reach of dance aesthetics beyond geographical, temporal, and institutional boundaries through practices of mediatization and cross-network distribution; and second, as a performative archive that houses visual, verbal, and discursive traces of dance in the form of audiovisual documentation that can be analyzed retrospectively and comparatively. Moreover, the platform's interactivity enables the application of netnographic methods within ethnochoreological inquiry, as YouTube not only presents performance

recordings but also contains dynamics of reception, cultural discourse, and meaning-making through features such as comments, descriptions, and narrative documentation. Thus, YouTube does not merely function as a supplementary medium in dance studies; it has become an epistemic arena that facilitates textual–contextual analysis and enriches methodological approaches in ethnochoreological research. Nonetheless, this academic potential requires the application of source criticism, rigorous data selection, and methodological precision to ensure that research based on digital platforms maintains scientifically accountable validity.

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