

Expression of Culture Diversity Through Creation of Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang Dance

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This article elaborates on Nusantara diversity as a phenomenon that underlies the creation of the Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang dance. In many regions, the characteristic of Zapin dance has grown through evolution that involves the unity of various ethnicities, mainly ethnics living in the coastal area. *Such unity* is a strong pillar that supports the Republic of Indonesia. Although the political situation is fluctuating, there is still an effort to empower local potentials to maintain diversity in Indonesia. The exploration of the Nusantara theme in the creation of the Zapin dance is powerfully relevant to the objective of this research, which is to strengthen the unity of Indonesia through its pluralistic nature. The creation of Zapin dance with the Nusantara theme will be understood through the approach of creation process experience, which, thus, is the type of this research that is explorative qualitative descriptive. In other words, this research is developmental research that emphasizes exploring the creation process. The research data are collected through three procedures respectively: interviews with Zapin dance patrons in Palembang, Pekanbaru Riau, Gresik, and Malang; dance technique exploration conducted in Malang and Gresik; and a dance trial held at the Indonesia Art Institute of Denpasar. The focus of this research is on managing the technical and aesthetical experiences of the dancers to internalize the Nusantara theme into their minds. The research question, therefore, comprises (1) What is the function of Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang dance? Moreover, (2) How is the creation process of Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang dance?

Keywords: *Nusantara Theme, Creation Process, Zapin Dance*

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, dances have been created on various themes, such as history, myth, legend, and romance ([Hidajat, 2021a](#)). Traditional dances and their modern versions have promoted Indonesian expression since the 1950s, which later underlies the development of the Nusantara theme ([Minarti, 2019](#)). Indonesian artists persistently exploited their creative experiences to popularize the Nusantara theme ([Martono, Iswahyudi, and Handoko 2017](#)). While doing this, the artists also measure their fate as artists in the future ([Liem, 2012](#)).

Nusantara theme in the expression of dance and music arts was once popular in 1980 through the work of Guruh Soekarnoputra titled *Untukmu Indonesiaku*. Suwara Mahardika performed his work using a combination of Indonesian ethnic dances and cabaret style. This is what Putu Wijaya called as “Indonesia-nism” in the mind of Guruh Soekarnoputra ([Wijaya, n.d.](#)). As time went on, the works of Guruh Soekarnoputra inspired the youth generation to learn more about Indonesian ethnic dances, and many schools have even started to put his works into the teaching curriculum ([Nasional, 2007](#)).

Dance work that expresses the Nusantara spirit was revived in the 1990s through the work of Bagong Kussudiarja with the title of *Gema Nusantara*. This dance work was first presented in 1982 at the event of Indonesia Film Festival in Yogyakarta ([Saepudin, Yulaeliah, 2022](#)). Dance moves, music, and costumes were mixed in a way that represented diversity, which signified that all differences could be unified into an artistic presentation.

The creation of dance art creation was studied by Ni Luh Sustiawati and her team from 2019 to 2021 through a funding scheme called *Konsorsium Riset Unggulan Perguruan Tinggi* (KRU-PT). While working as a lecturer for the Indonesia Art Institute (ISI) of Denpasar, she created a drama-dance choreography titled *Merangkai Nusantara Melalui Seni Pertunjukan Wadantara*. This choreography is created with the Nusantara theme by emphasizing the character of Gajahmada, a prominent figure behind the unification of all regions of Nusantara. This choreography is an effort to exhibit the aesthetics of ethnic plurality that underlies the spirit of multiculturalism in Indonesia ([Sustiawati, Negara, 2021](#)). Nevertheless, this choreography also needs to corroborate the motivation for the unity of Indonesia. The title of this choreography is chosen for several reasons as follows:

(1) The choreography attempts to reinforce the unity of all regions under the frame of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Performing art that carries local content is the most possible way to teach audiences (people in great numbers) about the importance of collectivity underlied by social tolerance. Therefore, performing art can be used to deliver the expression of Nusantara cultures that contain the values of *Pancasila* (Five Principles), the fundamental guideline for the Republic of Indonesia; (2) As other forms of art works, dances grow through transmission and develop dynamically. The change is needed and that is why the dance with collaborative nature is produced; (3) The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has initiated the development of digital world that involves internet technology. Such development brings a logical consequence to Nusantara performing art. At least, this development gives a great effect on the characteristic of Nusantara performing art in which the art is always based on tradition and functioned as ritual, communication tool, and aesthetical representation. Actually, the Industrial Revolution 4.0 is not a problem because it may provide an opportunity to create a newly fresh model of performing art. In fact, the digital industry can be used to improve the tractive power of collaborative performing art that combines traditional values with contemporary values ([Sustiawati, et al. 2020](#)).

On reflection of the reasons stated by Ni Luh Sustiawati and her team, the researchers of this article believe that the Nusantara theme is significant. After the Reformation Order in 1998, politics fluctuated. Freedom of speech and self-expression were strongly demanded, and identity politics were used to empower local potential ([Wahyuningroem, 2021](#)). Such a situation is expected in modern countries or modern communities ([Habibi, 2017](#)). However, identity politics may cause a conflict of interest and social unrest ([I Putu Sastra Wingarta, Berlian Helmy, Dwi Hartono, I Wayan Mertadana, 2022](#)).

The current research indeed promotes the Nusantara theme, but it does not emphasize certain personages and/or ethnic styles of artworks like those created by Guruh Soekarnoputra and Bagong Kussudiarja. The emphasis is given to the model of Zapin dance

development, which has been proven capable of strengthening the kinship relationship in coastal communities ([Hidajat et al., 2021](#)).

In the past, the Zapin dance only grew and developed in the Malay community in Indonesia ([Triyani, Masunah, and Nugraheni, 2021](#)). The acculturation process since the 17th century gave birth to the ethnic identity of the coastal Malay community in Indonesia ([Hidajat, 2021b](#)). Zapin dance was not yet popular during the period of Indonesia's independence, possibly because the colony identity was still strong and the sense of unification was not growing yet. On the other hand, Nusantara insight has already grown and developed through the Malay community. Therefore, the Malay community from the Malacca Peninsula to the Philippines is quite similar in their cultural expression ([Hidajat et al., 2022](#)).

During the reformation period, the Zapin dance did not yet use the Nusantara theme. The reason is that the scope of this theme is pervasive, which may make it difficult for dance composers to connect the theme with the orientation to grow pluralism ([Abdul Syukur & Pranata, 2022](#)). Besides, during the reformation period, Indonesia was still susceptible to ethnic and class conflicts. Apart from this difficulty, the creation of dance art with the spirit of Nusantara may strengthen the social bonding of various ethnicities in Indonesia.

So far, the Zapin dance has been successful in establishing Malay identity and strengthening social equality among the Malay community in the coastal area. However, this success is only related to social equality and not to social coherence ([Hidajat, 2021b](#)).

The objective of this research is to review Zapin dance. The fundamental question concerns the function of the Zapin dance in a modern community. In the past, Zapin dance was able to strengthen the social relationships of the coastal community, mainly when the community functioned Zapin dance in wedding or circumcision ceremonies ([Suprihatin & Pratamawati, 2019](#)). Eventually, the creative endeavour of the coastal community was able to construct Zapin dance with the Nusantara theme, at least because it can be used as an instrument to tighten social and kinship relationships ([Rahmiatil, 2019](#)).

Working from this fact, the researchers answer the question of Zapin dance function by undertaking the process of creating Zapin dance. The reference is the Nusantara theme. The target of the process is the

moves of the Zapin dance that seem to be quite similar in every region in the coastal area. It is expected that the Nusantara theme can increase the spirit of unity through its potential to absorb local identities. Zapin dance with a Nusantara theme should not remove the local identity and local colours ([Habibi, 2017](#)).

METHOD

The nature of this research is explorative qualitative descriptive. The data are collected through interviews and exploration of the creation process of the Zapin dance. The base concept of this research is to explore the Nusantara theme applied in the development of the Zapin dance. In this case, the current research attempts to prove that the acculturation process contributes not only to the establishment of Indonesia's unity but also to the strengthening of its pluralistic character ([Adha, Perdana, and Supriyono 2021](#)).

As a developmental research that uses a qualitative model, the current research adopts a model usually used in developmental research. This model is *ADDIE* (*analyze, design, development, implementation, evaluation*) ([Tegeh & Kirna, 2013](#)) but the researchers made modifications to this model. Each abbreviation in the model is elaborated as follows: (1) *Analyze*. This stage comprises the exploration of the dance theme and the optimization of the Nusantara theme in the dance through interview and observation. The interview was carried out with Sri Duni (60 years old), a Zapin dancer from Pekanbaru, Riau, and with Ahmad Muzani (52 years old), a performer of traditional Zapin dance from Gresik, East Java. Meanwhile, the observation was done on the materials of Zapin dance at the Dance Studio of Al-Kawakib in Singosari, Malang; (2) *Design*. This stage is when the choreography model is created. It requires the researchers not only to produce a good mixture of moves and music but also to make sure that the mixture has absorbed local identity ([Kariasa & Putra, 2021](#)). The understandings obtained from those activities will be used as the departure point before proceeding to the design activity. The engineering of the choreography model was done at the Studio of Choreography Processing in the Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang. In addition, the researchers also conducted a field exploration individually or in a group to understand the feelings and experiences of the coastal community with the Zapin dance ([Tri Sulistiyono, 2015](#)). Two paths were taken for this exploration, respectively: (a) an exploration on musical aspect by visiting the Gambus Music Orchestra of Al Kawakib

in Singosari Malang in order to ensure that the music can impart excitement, which is indeed the auditive requirement for Zapin dance ([Hidajat, 2021a](#)), and (b) an exploration on Zapin dance through participative observation and study approaches ([Jacqueline Smith, 1985](#)); (3) *Development*. This stage is when the researchers must take into consideration the acculturation pattern before entering the creation process, which involves exploration with observation and improvisation approaches. The exploration was conducted by preparing the practice group to dance in two places. The first place is at the Studio of the Study Program of Dance and Music Arts Education in the Department of Art and Design, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, where the researchers worked together with Tri Wahyuningtyas (55 years old), the chair of Dance Laboratory and also the resource person. The second place is at the GZZ Studio Production in Malang, with Bagus Brahmananto (70 years old) as the resource person.

Moreover, the researchers also feel it necessary to know the aesthetical norm of the dance, which then compels the researchers to ensure that the dance is beautiful and usable. The researchers conducted this activity at the Studio of Bina Tari in Malang with Tri Broto Wibisono (77 years old) as the resource person; (4) *Evaluation*. This stage is intended to appraise the dance product. The evaluation process involves a Discussion Group Forum and a performance test at two places. The first place is at the Art High School of Wilwatikta Surabaya, which has two resource persons, Wahyudianto (60 years old) and Rahmat Joko Prakoso (58 years old). The second place is at the Study Program of Dance Art Education, Faculty of Performing Art, the Indonesia Art Institute (ISI) of Denpasar, with I Wayan Budiarsa (54 years old) as the resource person; and finally (5) *Implementation*. This stage is when the dance product must be tested to know about its usability. The test was done through the workshop at the Study Program of Dance Art Education, Faculty of Performing Art, the Indonesia Art Institute (ISI) of Denpasar, Bali. The final usability test was held at the International Symposium Indonesia Malaysia Research Consortium on 9 September 2022 at the State University of Malang.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The function of Zapin Dance

The characteristics of the coastal communities in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Java and Sulawesi are multicultural in nature. For many centuries, the coastal community has been experiencing international encounters with many other countries

([Meteray, 2022](#)). Therefore, the coastal community is undoubtedly affected by the acculturation process, but this process enables them to find their Malay identity.

Malay community is not only found in Malaysia and Sumatra. As a tribe with a pluralistic background, the Malay community uses the term “Malay” (*Melayu*) when introducing themselves to the other tribes. Visitors and foreigners also use the term Malay to refer to the Malay community. Nusantara, the prime region where the Malay community lives, was a part of the Majapahit Kingdom that overshadowed many regions that possibly had many international relationships. That is why the Malay community is so experienced with international relationships ([Wahyudi, 2013](#)).

There is a belief that Nusantara is an archipelagic country, and the Malay language is used for international communication ([Andayana, 2019](#)). The coastal community is strongly affected by the acculturation process, and the product of this process is quite visible in their Zapin performing art. For instance, Zapin Melayu is one of the Malay identities conserved by this coastal community ([Hidajat, 2021b](#)). This identity remains strong, although the coastal area becomes the colony of the Majapahit Kingdom. The acculturation process in the Malay community represents a multiculturalism model as described by Meutia F. Hatta as follows:

Acculturation process in Malay community is like other multiculturalism model but with strong emphasis on nationality. In this case, nationality is a new term created collectively without discriminating tribe, religion and language. Nationality works as a glue for social integration. In this model, multiculturalism sees every person (not the collective) as an entity with the right of citizenship that the country needs to protect. However, this multiculturalism may degrade the roots of ethnic cultures that constitute the country and make the ethnic cultures merely as the past. Also, this multiculturalism has been accused as the destroyer of ethnic cultures ([Hatta, 2015](#)).

Coastal areas dominate Nusantara. One coastal area is Sumatra, where the coastal community, mainly the Malay, relies on the economy and culture for their livelihood. In the case of Zapin dance, the elements of culture and religiosity in the dance derive from the encounter of the Malay community with the Arab. As stated by Leonard Y. Andayana in

his book titled *Selat Malaka: Sejarah Perdagangan dan Etnisitas*, the coastal community maintains a harmonious relationship between Malay and Arab (Andayana, 2019). Therefore, Zapin has an essential position in the relationship between Malay and Arabs. Surprisingly, there is a presumption that Malay identity can be free from the domination of Java-based political effects (Hanafiah, 1995).

Furthermore, the acculturation process that shapes Malay identity has been perceived as genetic. The same perception also prevails for the acculturation process in East Java, which involves Madura, Java, and Arab cultures (Asfiyah, 2022). Such an acculturation process successfully underlies the socio-cultural unity that comprises individuals, communities, languages and arts, as well as their distinctive existences. Simply put, Malay's characteristics are supported by other cultures. Referring to the statements above, the researchers have drawn the principal theme, which is that multiculturalism is manifested through the expression of moves that contain the aesthetical values of Nusantara. Based on this position, the underlying ideas of the dance product in this research can be formulated as follows:

The choreography of *Zapin Nusantara Berlelgang* attempts to reveal Nusantara culture properties in the moves of Zapin dance. The original word of Zapin is "Zafn", which refers to the moves of the legs. Zapin dance is a dance genre performed by Arab ethnic in Hadramaut region, Southern Yaman. This dance is quite popular in the coastal area from Malacca Peninsula to Philippine. Later, Zapin dance is widely acculturated by the coastal community in Nusantara.

For the costume, the decoration is using *batik printing* with a pattern is called "*Setangkai Puspa Melayu*". This pattern represents the assimilation of Malay culture between Indonesia and Malaysia. The ornaments of the costume are inspired by the ethnic community of Indonesia such as those in Sumatra, Java, Madura, Sulawesi and Bali.

In addition, the choreography of *Zapin Nusantara Berlelgang* is a proof that an acculturation has occurred in Nusantara. This dance is the blend of Zapin Arab and local cultures from various ethnics in Indonesia. Moreover, this choreography is functioned as the greeting dance, which is expressed

through moves, musics, and formation that reveal excitement. Analogically, this choreography symbolizes the collective effort to reach the glory.

All the ideas above are elements that usually constitute the creation process of the dance. The materials related to the dance moves have been prepared for the presentation at the workshop where the dance is to be performed. The invited resource persons were Anggraini Nurul Laili (72 years old), a traditional dancer and choreographer from Palembang; Sarif (44 years old), an artist for the Zapin Arab dance that the Family of Al-Munawwar usually performs in Palembang; Muslim (65 years old), a fosterer of Malay dances from Pekanbaru, Riau; Effi Raja (55 years old), a dancer and a choreographer from Pekanbaru, Riau; and Ahmad Muzani (52 years old), a dancer and a musician for the Gambus Music Orchestra of Elfina in Gresik and also for the Gambus Music Orchestra of Al-Kawakib in Singosari, Malang, which all are in East Java.



Figure 1. Workshop on the basic moves of Zapin Arab dance in Gresik

(Photograph by Robby)

As shown in Figure 1, the vocabularies of Zapin Arab dance were explored by the researchers with Ahmad Muzani, a resource person from Gresik, East Java. Concerning the technique, the essence of Zapin Arab dance involves the moves of circling and intercrossing. Each dancer exchanges their position with each other and then moves in an *Alif* pattern. The exchange of positions begins with *Alif Sembah I* move and continues with *Alif Sembah II*, *Bunga Alif Pusing I*, and *Bunga Alif Pusing II* (Muzani, interview in 2022).

In origin, the word *Alif* comes from the Arab language and is also the first letter in the Arab alphabet. The form of *Alif* makes the body of the dancers somewhat bent down because it compels the

dancers to lean forward (Melinda, 2013). Otherwise, the formation of *Alif* requires the dancers to stand in a formation of a straight line and then turn backwards and again turn the body 360 degrees. Hand moves are possibly inevitable because the dancer must keep their body in balance (Muslim, interview in 2022). As notified by Effi Raja, the Zapin dance in East Java still conserved the movement pattern of the Zapin Arab dance (Effi, interview in 2022).

Later, after the workshop on Zapin Arab and Zapin Melayu dances, the researchers will have the necessary materials to conduct a study on moves. Such a choreographic approach is inspired by Jacqueline Smith's approach, which requires the researchers to prepare dance materials but only focus on the moves (Jacqueline Smith, 1985), precisely the targeted moves of Zapin dance. The researchers invite composers to work together to find the expected movement pattern based on the historical Zapin dance and also to ensure that the resultant pattern has elements of sensitivity such as power, space and rhythm (Howkins, 2003).

Specifically, the aesthetic aspect of Zapin dance comprises two factors: beauty and usability. Beauty refers to the nature of excitement because the dance is expressed through rhythm. Usability is related to the harmonic play of moves and rhythm.

Creation Process of Zapin Dance

More or less, the production process of *Zapin Nusantara Berleumpang* involves three stages, beginning with exploring relevant concepts, continuing with deciding ideas, and ending with collecting materials regarding moves, music and visual aspects such as costume and make-up. Discussion Group Forum (FGD) was created to systemize these stages. The most challenging task of FGD is to discuss the issues concerning multiculturalism and pluralism because both issues are crucial to the unity of Indonesia. The decision on the issues will give an insight into the spirit of the dance. A preliminary performance test on the structure of the Zapin dance was done through FGD with Tri Broto Wibisono from Surabaya as the resource person. The location of the preliminary test was the building owned by the Art Board of Malang in Malang City. A further test was held at the Art High School of Wilwatikta Surabaya with two resource persons, respectively Wahyudianto, an academician who has expertise in reviewing traditional dance performing art, and Rohmat Djoko Prakosa, a verbal historian and an expert in performing art sociology.



Figure 2. Tri Broto Wibisono in evaluating production performance of Zapin dance

(Photograph by Robby)

As illustrated in Figure 2, Tri Broto Wibisono evaluated the dancers by concentrating on the expression of the theme. The reason is that the cultural background of Zapin dance is Arab, which makes Zapin dance different from Java dance. The dancers, therefore, need to understand the theme, and understanding seems possible only by discussing the theme more deeply (Wibisono, interview in 2022).

The evaluation through FGD on the production performance of the Zapin dance gave more emphasis on the Nusantara theme. At the time when the Zapin dance was spread to various regions in Southeast Asia, the political linkage across the regions was still strong. Therefore, Tri Broto Wibisono and Bagus Brahmananto decided to substantiate the thematic aspect of the Zapin dance. Both of them believed that the old version of the Zapin dance was primordial because the dance was performed exclusively by the community of Arab descendants. Now, Zapin dance is made to be more accommodating and open to various local issues (Brahmananto, interview in 2022).

In the interest of this research, the Zapin dance is constructed and created by assembling dancers who have already mastered various movement techniques in ethnic dances. These dancers are then introduced to the leg rhythm patterns in Zapin Arab dance. The initial move of the Zapin Arab dance is called *mukadimah* or *Tahto*, which is a move of homage indicated by the gesture of adoration (*sembah*). Some dancers call this move *Alif's* move. The final move of the Zapin Arab dance is called *Tahtim*, which is a closing gesture, also indicated by the gesture of adoration. According to Anggraini Nurul Laili, the Zapin dance does not have too many variations, as in the case of Zapin Melayu (Laili, interview in 2022).

However, it is not easy to organize dancers with different backgrounds in their movement techniques, especially those who usually perform Java dance. On the other hand, the researchers intend to preserve their original movement technique. They attempt to get an image of acculturation that underlies the creation of Zapin Melayu.



Figure 3. FGD evaluation on Zapin dance at the Art High School of Wilwatikta Surabaya

(Photograph by Robby)

The production performance of the Zapin dance had been evaluated at the Art High School of Wilwatikta (STKW) Surabaya, as exhibited in Figure 3. Zapin dance was performed by third-semester students who take choreography classes and have mastered the basic movement technique of East Java dance.

At the moment when the students performed Zapin Arab dance, their East Java style are still dominant. The moves are primarily firm, with the most power concentrated on the legs. The body is seemingly pulled upward, which makes the torso of the dances upright. As said by Rohmat Djoko Prakosa, a content observant, Zapin dance presented by STKW students still reflects a fervent local style called *emblemic style*, which is a style strongly affected by the ethnic characteristics of the dancers (Sumaryono, 2011). Moreover, as stated by Wahyudianto, a choreographer and also observant, Zapin dance brought by STKW students has a positive impact on the dancers because the students have never presented Zapin dance before. At the very least, the presentation of Zapin dance can enrich their experience in dancing and validate Zapin dance as one of the local dances in East Java.

After passing through the production process, the researchers conducted a usability test on the Zapin dance. The consideration behind this usability test is to validate and also appreciate the learning of the Zapin dance. Based on this consideration, a workshop was chosen as the environment of the test, and the location is at the Study Program of Dance

Art Education, Faculty of Performing Art, the Indonesia Art Institute (ISI) in Denpasar, Bali.

The researchers trained the dancers to present the Zapin dance in front of audiences comprising students and lecturers. ISI Denpasar was chosen as the workshop location because this institute is neutral, and Zapin dance is rarely studied in this institute. Therefore, the audiences can give objective appraisals. The result was satisfying because most of the dancing students felt great joy after presenting the Zapin dance with their Bali dance technique.



Figure 4. Workshop on Zapin dance for the students of the Study Program of Dance Art Education,

Faculty of Performing Art, the Indonesia Art Institute (ISI) of Denpasar

(Photograph by Robby)

A usability test was applied to the students from the Study Program of Dance Art Education, Faculty of Performing Art at the Indonesia Art Institute (ISI) of Denpasar Bali, as displayed in Figure 4. The test is focused on the learning materials. The final product measures the validity of the materials, whereas the delivery of those materials measures their effectiveness. As explained by I Wayan Mudiasih, the appraiser for dance technique in the test, the move technique of Zapin dance is suitable to be learned by junior high school students because the technique is simple and easily understood. Meanwhile, I Wayan Budiarsa, the appraiser for the presentation, confirmed that the delivery of materials and the presentation were excellent and usable to the students.

Another usability test was implemented at the *International Symposium Indonesia Malaysia Research Consortium*, held on 9 September 2022 at Malang State University. The Zapin dance presented is massively produced because it involves 30 performers. Functioning to greet the guests, this Zapin dance is composed and presented by groups of dancers in various formations.



Figure 5. The presentation of Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang in Malang State University

(Photograph by Robby)

As indicated in Figure 5, the dancers' costumes were arranged in a way that asserted Nusantara's characteristics. In the costume, this characteristic is represented by Madura, Java and Sumatra ornaments. The colour has been organized in such a manner that emphasizes the complement of red, yellow and green, in combination with the Malay-patterned *batik printing* creation. So far, *Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang* has successfully reached the aesthetical aspect of Nusantara. This dance is not only a mixture of ethnicities in Nusantara but also a mixture of the spirits of these various ethnicities to accommodate the old characteristics and the new characteristics of ethnic-based choreographic styles of Zapin dance.

The symposium's guests expressed positive appreciation. This Zapin choreography can help Indonesia and Malaysia build closer relationships because both countries are quite similar in the arts. Most importantly, *Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang* touches on the past and asserts Nusantara's characteristics as a strong maritime community through the reflection of its multiculturalism.

CONCLUSION

Zapin dance was a cultural heritage conserved by the coastal community. The original Zapin dance was introduced by Arab merchants from Hadramaut, South Yaman. Later, Zapin dance acculturated with local culture and developed into the so-called Zapin Melayu. In the past, the Zapin dance was not yet an integral part of Indonesia culture. Therefore, the current research has positioned Zapin dance as the material source and applied the Nusantara theme to the dance. This activity leads to a creative experience that may have a significant meaning for Indonesian culture. The creation of *Zapin Nusantara Berlenggang* with the Nusantara theme was using a developmental research approach with a theoretical model of *ADDIE* (*analyze, design, development, implementation, evaluation*) in which the model was

modified through a qualitative research paradigm. The researchers found that each stage in the *ADDIE* model can be understood more profoundly and controlled more intensively. It is because the researchers are the main instrument of research which the researchers feel it is necessary to perform the Zapin dance by themselves and to explore any regions that potentially conserve Zapin dance. In addition, each stage of the model can be clarified by the researchers through direct observation of the technique of the dance. The researchers play the role of the appraiser and extend the result of the appraisal to the dancers for further evaluation. In fact, the presentation of the Zapin dance at *the International Symposium Indonesia Malaysia Research Consortium* has gained a positive response from the seminar participants. This provides excellent momentum to strengthen the function of *Zapin Nusantara Melenggang* and improve the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia due to their similarity in the essential characteristics of Zapin Melayu.

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