

IMPLEMENTATION OF A MOVEMENT SYMBOL LEARNING SYSTEM FOR DEAF CHILDREN IN THE HYANG LALA NUSANTARA DANCE AT GARUDA WISNU KENCANA, BALI

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the implementation of a sign-of-movement system as a dance learning medium for deaf children involved in the performance of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* at Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) Cultural Park, Jimbaran, Bali. *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* is a large-scale cultural tourism performance that integrates various Indonesian traditional dances and involves children with special needs, particularly deaf children, alongside non-disabled dancers within a shared performance setting. This study focuses on three main aspects: (1) the design and implementation of the sign-of-movement system in the dance learning process for deaf children; (2) the effectiveness of the system in supporting participants' engagement during live performances; and (3) the inclusive pedagogical values embedded in the learning and performance practices. This research employs a qualitative approach using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies as data collection techniques. The findings reveal that the sign-of-movement system developed by I Wayan Suatra Negara and I Ketut Alit Putra Wijaya represents an innovative pedagogical approach that bridges communication barriers in dance education. The implementation of this system has proven effective in assisting deaf children in understanding, memorizing, and performing choreographic sequences in a structured manner, thereby enabling their active participation in large-scale public performances. These findings indicate that the sign-of-movement system contributes significantly to the development of inclusive, adaptive, and empowering arts education models for learners with special needs in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Bali is widely recognized as one of Indonesia's foremost centers of arts and culture, possessing a rich tradition of performing arts, particularly dance, which constitutes an integral part of Balinese Hindu society. Dance functions not only as a medium of aesthetic expression but also as a vehicle for religious, social, and cultural practices embedded within community life. Since Bali emerged as an international tourism destination in the late 1960s, the rapid growth of the tourism industry has significantly influenced the development of performing arts. In addition to maintaining their traditional roles in ritual activities and cultural preservation, performing arts have increasingly evolved into

cultural commodities with substantial economic value and have become an essential component of the tourism sector (Ruastiti, 2005; Soedarsono, 1999a).



Figure 1. Barong Dance Scene in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*
(Source: Gunadi, 2010)

This transformation has stimulated the emergence of various creative performance forms designed to meet the expectations of tourists while maintaining their connections to traditional cultural foundations. Within this context, tourism-oriented performing arts should not be viewed solely as manifestations of cultural commodification; they also serve as spaces for negotiating identity, creativity, and social values within contemporary society. One particularly noteworthy phenomenon is the involvement of children with disabilities, especially deaf children, in performances produced for tourism audiences. This phenomenon demonstrates that performing arts can function as a medium that facilitates participation and inclusion for groups that have often experienced limited access to social and cultural activities.



Figure 2. Asmat Dance Costume in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*
(Source: Gunadi, 2010)

Such a phenomenon can be observed in the performance of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*, which is regularly staged at the Amphi Theater of Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) Cultural Park in Jimbaran, Bali. This contemporary dance work was choreographed by I Wayan Suatra Negara and I Ketut Alit Putra Wijaya, two artists with extensive experience in teaching dance to children with special needs. *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* presents diverse representations of Indonesian cultural traditions by integrating dance elements from various regions across the archipelago, including Bali, Kalimantan, Papua, and other areas, into a large-scale performance involving approximately thirty-five dancers. The distinctive feature of this performance lies in the participation of deaf children who perform alongside non-disabled dancers within a unified choreographic structure.

The participation of deaf children in dance performances presents unique challenges. In dance education and performance, musical accompaniment serves as a primary reference for rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and movement transitions. Because of their hearing limitations, deaf children are unable to access musical information in the same manner as hearing dancers. Santrock (2007) argues that hearing impairments can affect communication abilities and learning processes, particularly when instructional information is delivered through auditory channels. Within the context of dance education, such conditions necessitate adaptive teaching strategies capable of accommodating the specific characteristics and learning needs of students.

Figure 3. Mandau Dance Costume in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*



(Source: Gunadi, 2010)

Research in special education and arts education has demonstrated that deaf children possess the ability to respond effectively to visual stimuli and vibrations as alternatives to auditory information. Multisensory learning approaches that utilize visual, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities have been shown to support the acquisition of artistic skills among learners with disabilities (Bandem & DeBoer, 1981; Dibia, 2012; Putra & Haryati, 2019). Based on this understanding, I Wayan Suatra Negara and I Ketut Alit Putra Wijaya developed a visual communication system consisting of hand-motion symbols known as the *sign of movement*. This system functions both as a learning medium and as a communication tool during rehearsals and performances of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*. Through these symbolic movements, deaf children are able to understand movement sequences, floor-pattern transitions, tempo changes, and scene shifts without relying on auditory access to musical accompaniment.

The *sign of movement* system is particularly significant because it represents a pedagogical innovation that emerged from practical needs in the field. On the one hand, the system demonstrates an adaptive approach to dance education grounded in the principles of inclusivity. On the other hand, its implementation within a large-scale tourism performance illustrates that physical limitations do not necessarily constitute barriers to active participation in artistic and cultural activities. This perspective aligns with the principles of inclusive education, which emphasize equal opportunities for all individuals to access learning, participate fully, and develop their potential without discrimination.

Furthermore, the involvement of deaf children in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* can be examined through the lens of social inclusion in the performing arts. Soedarsono (1999b) defines tourism performance as a form of cultural presentation that is condensed, communicative, varied, and accessible to tourist audiences. However, beyond its entertainment function, tourism-oriented performance can also serve as a platform for social representation, providing visibility and recognition to groups that have traditionally occupied marginal positions within society. When deaf children perform alongside non-disabled dancers before domestic and international audiences, the performance transcends its role as entertainment and becomes a medium for empowerment, social recognition, and public awareness regarding the importance of equal access to cultural participation.



Figure 4. Nretya Dance Costume in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*
(Source: Gunadi, 2010)

Although numerous studies have explored arts education for children with disabilities, research concerning the use of movement-symbol systems as a medium for dance learning within the context of tourism performing arts remains limited. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining an innovative and inclusive approach to dance education while expanding scholarly understanding of the relationship between arts education, cultural accessibility, and social inclusion. Specifically, this article aims to: (1) describe and analyze the *sign of movement* system employed as a dance learning medium for deaf children in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*; (2) examine the effectiveness of the system in facilitating the participation of deaf children in live performances; and (3) identify the inclusive pedagogical values embedded within this educational and artistic practice. The findings are expected to contribute both conceptually and practically to the development of inclusive arts education and the enhancement of accessibility within performing arts for learners with disabilities in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the *sign of movement* system as a dance-learning medium for deaf children involved in the performance of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*. A case study design was adopted to explore the uniqueness and complexity of this educational and artistic practice within its natural setting. The study was guided by an ethnocoreological perspective, which views dance not merely as an aesthetic form but also as a socio-cultural practice embedded in broader issues of identity, communication, participation, and social inclusion (Basuki, 2023; Rohidi, 2011). To examine the educational dimension of the practice, the analysis was further informed by the principles of inclusive pedagogy.

The research was conducted at Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) Cultural Park, Jimbaran, Bali, the sole venue where *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* is regularly performed. Data collection was carried out from May 2010 to February 2011 through participant observation, in-depth interviews, audiovisual recordings, and document analysis. Observations focused on the rehearsal process, the application of movement symbols, and the participation of deaf children during live performances. Informants were selected using purposive sampling and included the choreographers I Wayan Suatra Negara and I Ketut Alit Putra Wijaya, the music director, GWK management representatives, deaf and non-disabled dancers, as well as audience members who attended the performances.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, source and

methodological triangulation were employed. The interpretation of the data was supported by Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony, Djelantik's Aesthetic Theory, and Merton's Structural Functionalism, enabling a comprehensive examination of the educational, aesthetic, and socio-cultural dimensions of the *sign of movement* system and its role in fostering inclusive participation in performing arts (Djelantik, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Background of the Development of the Sign-of-Movement System

The sign-of-movement system employed in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* emerged from a process of pedagogical adaptation grounded in the choreographers' extensive experience teaching dance to deaf children. Rather than being conceived as a predetermined instructional model, the system evolved in response to practical challenges encountered during dance education activities at the Special School (SLB) in Jimbaran, Badung Regency. These experiences provided I Wayan Suatra Negara and I Ketut Alit Putra Wijaya with valuable insights into the learning characteristics of deaf students and encouraged the development of alternative teaching strategies capable of accommodating their specific needs.

Prior to the creation of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*, both choreographers conducted several experimental dance-learning programs involving deaf students. One of their earliest initiatives involved teaching *Sekar Jagat Dance* to seven deaf female students. Through this process, they observed that deaf learners demonstrated a strong capacity for visual observation and were able to memorize choreographic patterns effectively when movement instructions were communicated through visual rather than auditory means. These observations reinforced the importance of visual communication as a foundation for dance instruction among deaf learners. A significant development occurred following the establishment of the Way Art Community Foundation on February 14, 2008. The foundation became a platform for artistic development and inclusive arts education, enabling the choreographers to create performances involving both deaf and non-disabled children within the same training and performance environment. However, integrating these groups presented substantial pedagogical challenges. Dance training typically relies on musical accompaniment as the primary reference for rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and movement transitions. For deaf dancers, the inability to access auditory information created obstacles in synchronizing movements and responding to choreographic cues.

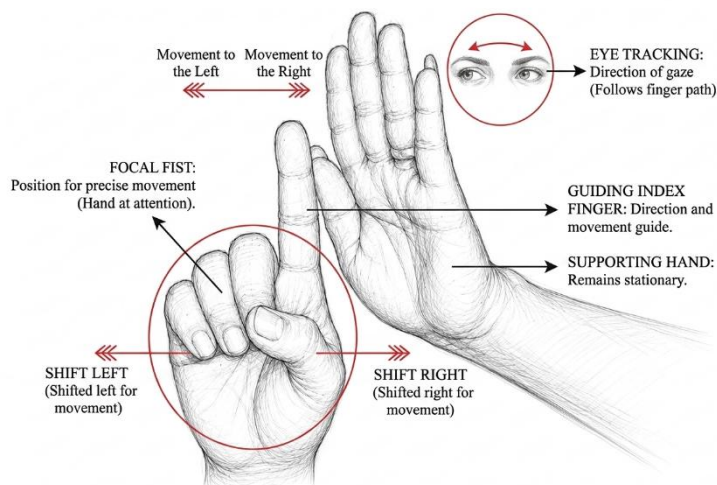
In response to these challenges, Suatra and Alit developed an innovative visual communication system known as the *sign of movement*. The system functions as an alternative language that can be employed during rehearsals and live performances to communicate choreographic instructions directly to deaf dancers. Although inspired by the principles of sign language, the system was specifically designed for dance education and performance. Rather than conveying linguistic meanings, the symbols communicate choreographic information related to movement direction, body actions, rhythmic patterns, spatial transitions, and stage formations. Consequently, the sign-of-movement system may be understood as a specialized form of nonverbal communication developed to facilitate dance learning and performance participation among deaf children. The development of this system demonstrates that effective arts education does not necessarily depend on auditory-based instructional methods. Instead, it highlights the potential of adaptive pedagogical approaches that utilize the visual strengths of learners with hearing impairments. From the perspective of inclusive education, the sign-of-movement system represents an innovative practice that expands access and participation opportunities for deaf children within the performing arts.

The Anatomy of the Sign-of-Movement System

Field observations and documentation reveal that the sign-of-movement system developed by Suatra and Alit possesses a structured and functional communication framework. Each symbol was designed to convey specific movement instructions and enable deaf dancers to respond rapidly during rehearsals and performances. Functionally, these symbols serve as visual cues that replace the role of auditory signals and verbal instructions commonly used in dance training.

Rotation Symbol

The rotation symbol is used to communicate body-turning movements. In its application, the left palm is positioned vertically to represent the dancer's body, while the right index finger functions as an indicator of rotational direction. A circular movement of the index finger toward the right instructs the dancer to turn right, whereas movement toward the left signals a leftward rotation.

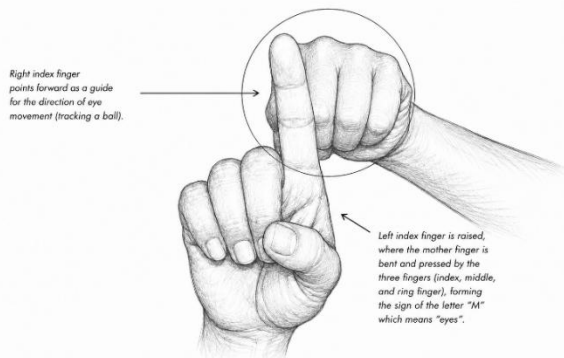


(Source: Gunadi, 2026)

From a visual communication perspective, this symbol exhibits a high degree of iconicity because the relationship between the sign and the intended action is direct and easily recognizable. Its simplicity enables deaf dancers to interpret and execute the instruction quickly without requiring complex cognitive processing. Such immediacy is particularly important in live performance situations where movement cues must be understood and acted upon instantaneously.

Seledet Symbol

The seledet symbol is used to communicate *seledet*, a distinctive eye movement that constitutes a fundamental expressive element in Balinese dance. This movement involves a rapid shift of gaze from the center toward the upper right or upper left corner. Teaching *seledet* presents a particular challenge because it requires precise coordination between facial expression and bodily movement.



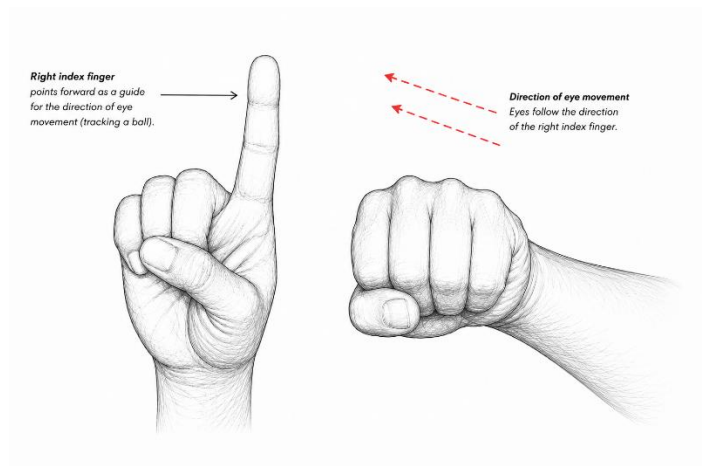


Figure 6. Seledet Symbol
(Source: Gunadi, 2026)

To represent this movement, the left hand forms the letter “M,” referring to the Indonesian word *mata* (eye). The right index finger is then directed toward the intended gaze direction. This symbol demonstrates the use of visual metaphor in communication, whereby a hand shape is associated with a specific body part. Such symbolic representation facilitates recognition and helps learners retain the intended movement more effectively.

Ngegol (Hip Sway) Symbol

The *ngegol* symbol is employed to communicate hip-swaying movements commonly found in various Indonesian dance traditions. In this symbol, the open left hand represents the upper body, while the clenched right hand symbolizes the hips. The movement of the right hand to one side instructs the dancer to move the hips in the corresponding choreographic direction.

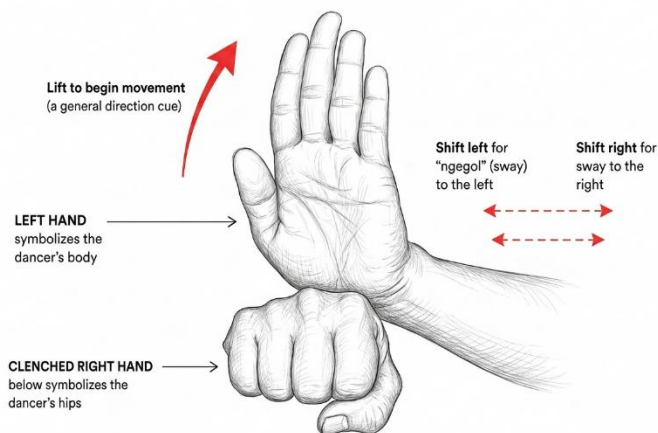


Figure 7. Ngegol (Hip Sway) Symbol
(Source: Gunadi, 2026)

A distinctive characteristic of this symbol is its reliance on the principle of mirror perspective. Since the choreographer and dancer face one another during communication, the dancer must interpret the cue inversely. Consequently, mastering this symbol requires a more intensive learning process compared to simpler movement cues. Nevertheless, once internalized, the symbol becomes an effective means of coordinating synchronized movement among multiple dancers.

Jump Symbol

The jump symbol represents one of the simplest forms within the sign-of-movement system. As with other symbols, the left hand serves as a representation of the dancer's body, while the right hand moves vertically upward and downward to indicate a jumping action. The direct relationship between the symbol and the movement it represents allows for immediate comprehension by the dancers.

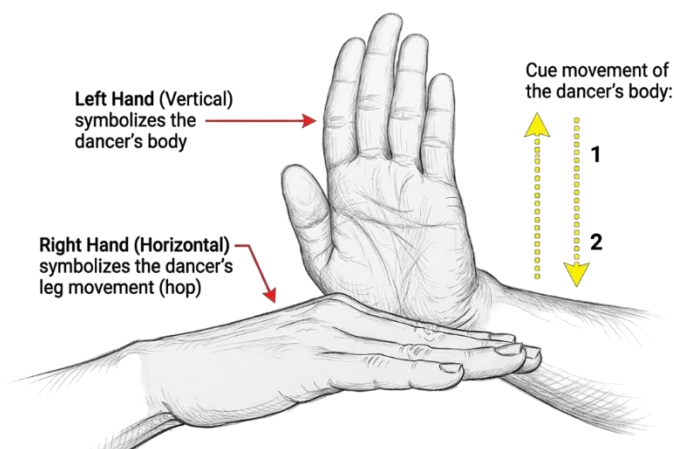


Figure 8. Jump Symbol in the Sign-of-Movement System
(Source: Gunadi, 2026)

The simplicity of the jump symbol reflects a fundamental principle in designing communication systems for learners with special needs: symbols should be concrete, iconic, and easy to remember. In performance contexts that require rapid responses, straightforward visual cues are generally more effective than instructions demanding extensive interpretation. Therefore, the jump symbol exemplifies how simple yet purposeful visual communication can support successful dance learning and performance participation among deaf children.

The Implementation of the Sign-of-Movement System in the Training Process

The dance training process for deaf children participating in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* was conducted at the residence of I Wayan Suatra Negara in Jimbaran, Bali. Training sessions involved both deaf and non-disabled children within a shared learning environment, creating opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and mutual learning. Such an approach reflects the principles of inclusive education, which emphasize equal participation and access to learning experiences regardless of individual differences or disabilities. Rather than separating participants according to their abilities, the training model encouraged social integration while simultaneously accommodating diverse learning needs through differentiated instructional strategies.

The instructional process relied predominantly on visual observation and movement imitation, which correspond closely to the learning characteristics of deaf children. Previous studies have shown that deaf learners tend to depend more heavily on visual processing and observational learning than on auditory information (Putra et al., 2022; Widnyana, 2009). Consequently, Suatra and Alit employed a teaching strategy based on repeated demonstrations, visual modeling, and guided practice. During rehearsals, choreographic sequences were demonstrated

slowly and repeatedly while being accompanied by specific movement symbols. Through continuous repetition, participants gradually established associations between the visual symbols and corresponding dance movements. This process facilitated the development of visual memory and procedural memory, enabling dancers to internalize complex movement patterns and execute them with increasing independence. In dance education, repetition and imitation are widely recognized as effective mechanisms for developing motor skills and embodied knowledge (Putra et al., 2023; Ruastiti, 2010).

One of the principal challenges in the training process involved the development of rhythmic accuracy. Dance performance is traditionally dependent upon musical accompaniment as a guide for tempo, rhythm, and movement transitions. For deaf dancers, however, the inability to access auditory information necessitated alternative strategies for temporal coordination. To address this challenge, the choreographers developed supplementary visual rhythm cues through systematic hand gestures that functioned as visual indicators of timing and movement changes. This approach aligns with multisensory learning theory, which argues that information can be effectively processed through multiple sensory channels when one modality is limited or unavailable.

In addition to visual cues, several deaf dancers demonstrated sensitivity to vibrational stimuli generated by musical instruments, particularly the *kendang*. Research in deaf studies has indicated that individuals with hearing impairments are often capable of perceiving rhythm through tactile and vibrational sensations, allowing them to engage meaningfully with music and movement despite limited auditory perception (Levänen & Hamdorf, 2001). The physical characteristics of the Amphi Theater stage at GWK Cultural Park, which incorporates hard wooden and concrete surfaces, facilitated the transmission of vibrations and provided an additional sensory reference for dancers during rehearsals and performances. This finding suggests that effective dance instruction for deaf learners may benefit from integrating visual, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities within a multisensory pedagogical framework.

Beyond the acquisition of technical dance skills, the training process also emphasized the development of self-confidence, stage presence, and social participation. Performing before large audiences can be psychologically demanding, particularly for children with limited performance experience. To address this issue, Suatra and Alit implemented a gradual performance-based learning strategy in which participants first performed in smaller and more familiar settings before progressing to large-scale public performances. This instructional approach corresponds with Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding, whereby learners receive structured guidance and support that are gradually reduced as their competence increases (Vygotsky, 1978). Through repeated exposure to performance situations and continuous pedagogical support, participants developed confidence in their abilities and became increasingly comfortable performing in public spaces.

From a broader educational perspective, the implementation of the sign-of-movement system demonstrates how adaptive pedagogical practices can expand access to arts education for learners with disabilities. The system functions not merely as a technical communication tool but also as a mechanism for fostering artistic development, self-efficacy, and social inclusion. As Ainscow (2020) argues, inclusive educational practices should focus not only on accommodating differences but also on creating meaningful opportunities for participation and achievement. In this regard, the sign-of-movement system enabled deaf children to engage actively in a professional performing arts environment, thereby challenging conventional assumptions regarding the limitations of disability in artistic practice and contributing to a more inclusive model of arts education.

The Implementation of the Sign-of-Movement System in Performance

The implementation of the sign-of-movement system reached its most critical stage during the live performance of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* at the Amphi Theater of Garuda Wisnu Kencana (GWK) Cultural Park. While the system functioned as a pedagogical tool during rehearsals, its role during performance extended beyond instruction, serving as a real-time communication mechanism that enabled deaf dancers to participate actively in a large-scale public performance. This stage of implementation illustrates how adaptive communication strategies can facilitate artistic participation among individuals with hearing impairments while maintaining the aesthetic integrity of a performance.

During the second segment of the performance, which specifically featured dance sequences involving deaf children, one of the choreographers or dance instructors positioned himself at the front of the stage facing the dancers and with his back toward the audience. This arrangement was deliberately designed to ensure continuous visual communication between the instructor and the performers. Visual accessibility is widely recognized as a fundamental requirement in educational and artistic practices involving deaf participants, as visual cues often replace auditory signals as the primary mode of information transmission (Marschark & Spencer, 2010). By maintaining direct eye contact with the dancers, the instructor was able to provide movement cues efficiently and respond immediately to any potential difficulties encountered during the performance. From an aesthetic perspective, the instructor's presence on stage did not diminish the artistic quality of the performance. Instead, it became integrated into the overall visual composition of the production. Dressed in traditional white Balinese attire, the instructor appeared as a guiding figure whose presence complemented the ceremonial atmosphere of the performance. This phenomenon demonstrates how functional adaptations within inclusive performing arts can be incorporated into the aesthetic structure of a performance rather than being perceived as disruptive elements. As Kuppers (2014) argues, disability-inclusive performances often challenge conventional assumptions regarding stage conventions by transforming accessibility measures into integral components of artistic expression.

Throughout the performance, movement symbols were delivered in real time and synchronized with the rhythm and structure of the accompanying gamelan music. The instructor typically provided visual cues several beats before the intended movement was to be executed, thereby allowing sufficient processing and reaction time for the dancers. This anticipatory communication strategy reflects principles of motor learning, which emphasize the importance of advance cueing in supporting movement preparation and execution (Schmidt et al., 2018). The delivery of symbols was also adapted to the tempo of the music. During slower musical passages, symbols were presented in a more explicit and detailed manner, whereas faster sections required abbreviated yet recognizable visual codes. Such flexibility highlights the dynamic nature of the sign-of-movement system and its responsiveness to changing performance conditions.

The effectiveness of the sign-of-movement system during live performance can be evaluated through several observable indicators. The first indicator is movement continuity. Field observations revealed that deaf dancers were able to perform choreographic sequences smoothly and with minimal interruption despite the absence of direct auditory access to musical accompaniment. Although slight variations in synchronization occasionally occurred, the overall flow of movement remained coherent and consistent with the intended choreography. This finding supports previous research suggesting that visual and kinesthetic cues can effectively compensate for auditory limitations in dance performance contexts (Nelson, 2013; Shapiro, 2005). A second indicator is expressive performance quality. Beyond executing movement sequences accurately, deaf dancers demonstrated facial expressions and bodily dynamics that corresponded appropriately to the emotional and narrative dimensions of the dances being performed. In Balinese dance traditions, expressive elements such as facial gestures, eye movements, and bodily articulation are essential components of performance aesthetics (Bandem & DeBoer, 1981; Soedarsono, 2002; Utamia & Indrawan, 2024). The ability of deaf dancers to embody these expressive qualities suggests that the sign-of-movement system facilitated not only technical movement execution but also a deeper understanding of choreographic meaning and performative intent.

A third indicator of effectiveness is audience response. Observations conducted during performances revealed positive reactions from both domestic and international tourists, including sustained applause, visible expressions of admiration, and heightened audience engagement. Audience appreciation of performances involving deaf dancers reflects the capacity of inclusive performing arts to generate emotional resonance and challenge prevailing perceptions of disability. According to Kuppers (2017), disability performance possesses the potential to reshape public understandings of bodily difference by emphasizing artistic capability rather than limitation. In the context of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*, the presence of deaf children on stage not only enhanced the uniqueness of the performance but also communicated broader messages of inclusion, equality, and cultural participation. From a broader perspective, the implementation of the sign-of-movement system demonstrates that accessibility and artistic excellence are not mutually exclusive objectives. Rather, the performance illustrates how adaptive communication strategies can support

meaningful participation while preserving aesthetic quality. The system enabled deaf children to engage actively in a professional tourism performance, transforming the stage into a space where artistic achievement, cultural expression, and social inclusion intersect. Consequently, the sign-of-movement system should be understood not merely as a technical aid for performance coordination but as an innovative model of inclusive arts practice that expands opportunities for participation and representation within the performing arts.

Analysis of Inclusive Pedagogical Values

From a pedagogical perspective, the sign-of-movement system developed by Suatra and Alit embodies several fundamental principles of inclusive education that merit closer examination. Beyond its practical function as a communication tool, the system represents an adaptive pedagogical strategy designed to accommodate the learning characteristics of deaf children while ensuring their meaningful participation in artistic activities. The implementation of this system demonstrates how educational practices can be reconfigured to address diverse learner needs without compromising learning objectives or artistic standards.

The first principle reflected in the sign-of-movement system is accessibility. Inclusive education emphasizes the removal of barriers that limit participation and learning opportunities for students with disabilities (Ainscow, 2020). Rather than expecting deaf learners to adapt to conventional dance instruction based primarily on auditory input, the choreographers modified the learning process by utilizing visual and kinesthetic modes of communication. This adaptation acknowledges the sensory strengths of deaf children and aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocate the provision of multiple means of representation and engagement to accommodate diverse learners (Meyer et al., 2014). In this context, the sign-of-movement system functions as an accessible educational medium that enables deaf children to acquire choreographic knowledge through sensory channels that are most meaningful to them.

A second pedagogical principle evident in the practice is meaningful participation. Inclusive education extends beyond physical presence in educational settings; it requires active engagement and genuine involvement in learning processes (Ainscow, 2020; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). Within *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance*, deaf children were not positioned merely as symbolic participants or supporting figures. Instead, they assumed active roles as performers whose contributions were integral to the overall structure and success of the performance. Their participation was therefore substantive rather than representational, demonstrating that artistic excellence and inclusivity can coexist within the same performance framework. The third principle concerns authentic learning contexts. Unlike many educational programs for children with disabilities that take place in segregated environments, the training and performance process of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* occurred within a real-world artistic setting involving non-disabled dancers, professional choreographers, and public audiences. Educational theorists argue that authentic learning environments provide learners with opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in meaningful social contexts, thereby enhancing motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes (Herrington, Reeves, & Oliver, 2014). Through direct involvement in a professional tourism performance, deaf children experienced artistic practice not as a simulated educational exercise but as a genuine cultural and social activity. This authenticity contributed significantly to their artistic development and sense of belonging within the performing arts community.

A fourth pedagogical value is the provision of immediate feedback. Throughout rehearsals and performances, deaf dancers received continuous feedback from instructors through visual cues, corrective guidance, and nonverbal communication. During public performances, audience responses such as applause, enthusiasm, and visible appreciation provided additional forms of positive reinforcement. Educational psychology recognizes feedback as a critical factor in the development of competence, motivation, and self-efficacy (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Positive audience responses therefore functioned not merely as indicators of performance success but also as important sources of emotional affirmation that strengthened the dancers' confidence and motivation. Suatra himself described the performance process as a form of "spiritual learning" and a medium for strengthening the children's mental readiness when facing large audiences (Gunadi, 2011; Utamia, 2024). Beyond its pedagogical significance at the individual level, the sign-of-movement system also generates broader social and cultural implications. The active participation of deaf children in a large-scale tourism performance challenges dominant social assumptions that often position

individuals with disabilities as passive recipients of assistance rather than active cultural contributors. From the perspective of critical disability studies, such participation can be understood as a process of empowerment that redefines disability not as a deficit but as a form of human diversity (Goodley, 2024). By occupying a visible and respected position on stage, deaf performers disrupt conventional narratives of limitation and demonstrate their capacity for artistic achievement.

This phenomenon may also be interpreted through Gramsci (2020) concept of cultural hegemony. Historically, individuals with disabilities have frequently occupied marginalized positions within social and cultural institutions. The inclusion of deaf children in *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* represents a symbolic negotiation of these power relations by granting visibility, recognition, and legitimacy to a group that is often excluded from public cultural spaces. Through performance, deaf children become active cultural agents whose presence challenges dominant assumptions regarding ability, participation, and artistic competence. From an aesthetic perspective, the inclusion of deaf children contributes an additional layer of meaning to the performance. Djelantik (2008) argues that artistic value is not determined solely by form and visual beauty but also by the content and messages conveyed through a work of art. In this regard, the participation of deaf dancers enriches the content dimension of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* by communicating values of equality, resilience, courage, and human potential. The performance therefore transcends its function as a tourism attraction and becomes a medium for social communication and cultural education. Unlike many tourism-oriented performances that emphasize visual spectacle alone, *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* integrates aesthetic expression with social meaning, thereby producing a performance that is both artistically engaging and pedagogically transformative.

Overall, the sign-of-movement system demonstrates that inclusive arts education can function simultaneously as a pedagogical practice, an artistic innovation, and a mechanism for social transformation. By enabling deaf children to participate meaningfully in a professional performance environment, the system expands access to cultural participation while challenging exclusionary structures that continue to shape perceptions of disability. Consequently, the pedagogical significance of the sign-of-movement system extends beyond dance education, offering a valuable model for the development of inclusive cultural practices in contemporary society.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the sign-of-movement system developed by I Wayan Suatra Negara and I Ketut Alit Putra Wijaya within the context of *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* at GWK Cultural Park constitutes a significant innovation in inclusive arts education in Indonesia. The system effectively bridges the sensory limitations experienced by deaf children and the technical as well as expressive demands of dance performance, enabling their active participation in large-scale public performances attended by domestic and international audiences. The findings highlight the potential of adaptive communication strategies to create equitable opportunities for artistic participation while fostering social inclusion and cultural engagement.

The study reveals that the sign-of-movement system is characterized by a structured and learnable framework composed of visual symbols designed to communicate specific choreographic instructions, including rotational movements, *seledet* (eye movements), *ngegol* (hip movements), and jumping actions. The effectiveness of the system derives from its reliance on iconicity, simplicity, and consistency, principles that correspond closely with the design foundations of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems in special education (Beukelman & Light, 2020). Through these characteristics, the system enables deaf dancers to interpret and respond to choreographic cues efficiently during both rehearsals and live performances. The implementation of the system also demonstrates that inclusive practice extends beyond instructional adaptation and influences the broader architecture of performance. The presence of a movement cue provider at the front of the stage functions not merely as a technical support mechanism but as an integral component of the performance's visual and aesthetic composition. This finding suggests that accessibility and artistic quality are not mutually exclusive objectives. Rather, inclusive performance practices encourage the development of new artistic conventions that accommodate diverse participants while enriching the overall performance experience.

Beyond its technical function, the sign-of-movement system embodies important pedagogical values associated with accessibility, meaningful participation, authentic learning experiences, self-confidence, and social inclusion. The participation of deaf children in a professional tourism performance provides opportunities for artistic achievement while simultaneously strengthening their sense of agency and social recognition. Interpreted through Merton's Structural Functionalist Theory, *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* fulfills a manifest function as a tourism-oriented cultural attraction while also generating latent functions related to empowerment, confidence building, social participation, and economic opportunities for children with disabilities (Merton, 1968). The broader significance of this practice lies in its capacity to challenge dominant perceptions of disability within public cultural spaces. By positioning deaf children as active performers rather than passive recipients of assistance, the performance promotes a more inclusive understanding of artistic competence and cultural participation. The stage thus becomes a site where issues of accessibility, representation, and cultural citizenship are negotiated and redefined. In this respect, *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* demonstrates how performing arts can operate simultaneously as artistic expression, educational practice, and social advocacy.

In light of these findings, formal documentation of the sign-of-movement system is necessary to support its preservation, dissemination, and further development within arts education contexts. Future research may explore the long-term cognitive, social, emotional, and artistic impacts of participation in performing arts among deaf children and other learners with disabilities. The inclusive model developed through *Hyang Lala Nusantara Dance* also offers valuable insights for the development of arts education curricula in Special Schools (*Sekolah Luar Biasa-SLB*) and other inclusive educational settings. Greater institutional support from governmental agencies, educational institutions, and cultural organizations would further strengthen the sustainability and expansion of inclusive arts initiatives.

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