

Mak Yong's Performing Art: A Collection Analysis of Malaysia Institutional Memory

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Abstract

Background of the study: Documentation is an imperative initiative in safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) to consolidate and nurture appreciation that is intact to culture and heritage within a society. However, many countries in the world still give less attention to documenting heritage systematically.

Purpose: This study aims to achieve a greater exposure of Institutional Memory's in Malaysia play a role in preserving and conserving heritage information on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) through the documentation strategy of Mak Yong's performing art collection.

Method: This study adopted a case study approach by pertaining qualitative research method. Qualitative data were gathered through content analyses towards 521 of Mak Yong's performing art collection were carried out in three (3) Malaysia Institutional Memory.

Findings: The study found that the lack of Mak Yong's collection in institutional memories is contributed to some elements that require detailed documentation such as characters, spectacle, diction, and sound.

Conclusion: safeguarding of ICH through preservation and conservation of Mak Yong's information collection that still needs to be improved by considering the consolidation of integrated institutional memory's roles and ongoing implementation of documentation strategy program of heritage information.

Keywords: Mak Yong's Performing Arts Collection, Documentation Strategy, Archives, Library, Museum

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Introduction

Mak Yong's is a dance performing art in the form of ancient theater that combines elements of ritual, acting, dance, vocals and instrumental music, songs, and spontaneous storytelling (Yusof, 1979). Mak Yong is known in a village in the Kelantan state district and is performed for entertainment and rituals to cure diseases. However, local government authorities prohibit this cultural capital because it contradicts Islamic ideology which prohibits the involvement of different genders in a single performance (Tang, 1991). As a result of this ban, Mak Yong's cultural heritage is beginning to erode with the lack of exposure to this art and even worse with the concentration of social modernity among the local community today. Even Shuaib & Halid (2011) also view that the actions of the Kelantan government have affected the art culture of the ancient Malay race which affects the art community.

On 25 November 2005 for the first time, Malaysia received recognition by UNESCO for elevating Mak Yong's performing arts as a world heritage for the category of Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Oral Humanity (UNESCO, 2005). Through this recognition, it raises the dignity of this cultural art to a higher level and respect should be given to the activists and fighters who fight for Mak Yong's performing arts. Although once a time this cultural art was set aside, but with the new announcement of the government which has allowed the performance of traditional Mak Yong dance if it complies with the prescribed sharia (Abdullah, 2019). Therefore, attention should be given to cultural protection programs so that this heritage moves in line with the circulation of the mainstream which has been excluded before.

This study recognizes Institution Memory as Institut Warisan Negara (IWN) which consists coalition of agencies responsible for managing, protecting, preserving, conserving, and promoting ICH collection documentation efforts in their respective agencies. IWN consists of three (3) departments/agencies, namely), National Museum Department (JMM), National Archives of Malaysia (ANM), and the National Library of Malaysia. This institutional memory's that are mandated through the legislation of their respective acts in safeguarding and preserving national heritage information. This study was conducted to identify the extent to which information on Mak Yong performing arts is documented, managed, and stored by IWN repositories in elevating this performing art through research facilities, reference, and access to the community for the protection of national cultural heritage information.

Method


This study practices a case study methodology in qualitative research methodology where researchers decide to implement content analysis for data collection as implemented by (Bowen, 2009). A total of 521 national collections, records, and archives that related to Mak Yong's performing art stored in each IWN repository were analyzed using specific protocols that have been developed by the researcher to obtaining systematic, efficient, and accurate data. The protocol was developed by referring to the six (6) elements of Aristotle's Performance Art Analysis which include story, character, thought, dialogue, music, and spectacle. Husin (2007), also using Aristotle's Performance Analysis in her study on the form and structures of the dramatic text of Malay Experimental Theater (TEM).

However, during the data analysis activities of this study, the researcher found that some of the information on Mak Yong's collection does not cover by using this principle such as Mak Yong's administration affairs, Mak Yong's group information, and Mak Yong's figure. Successively discussion with the study supervisors decided to make additional elements in the data collection protocols and analysis. As such, the researcher defines (6) Aristotle's elements

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in studying a theatrical performance and another three (3) additional elements identified are as follows:

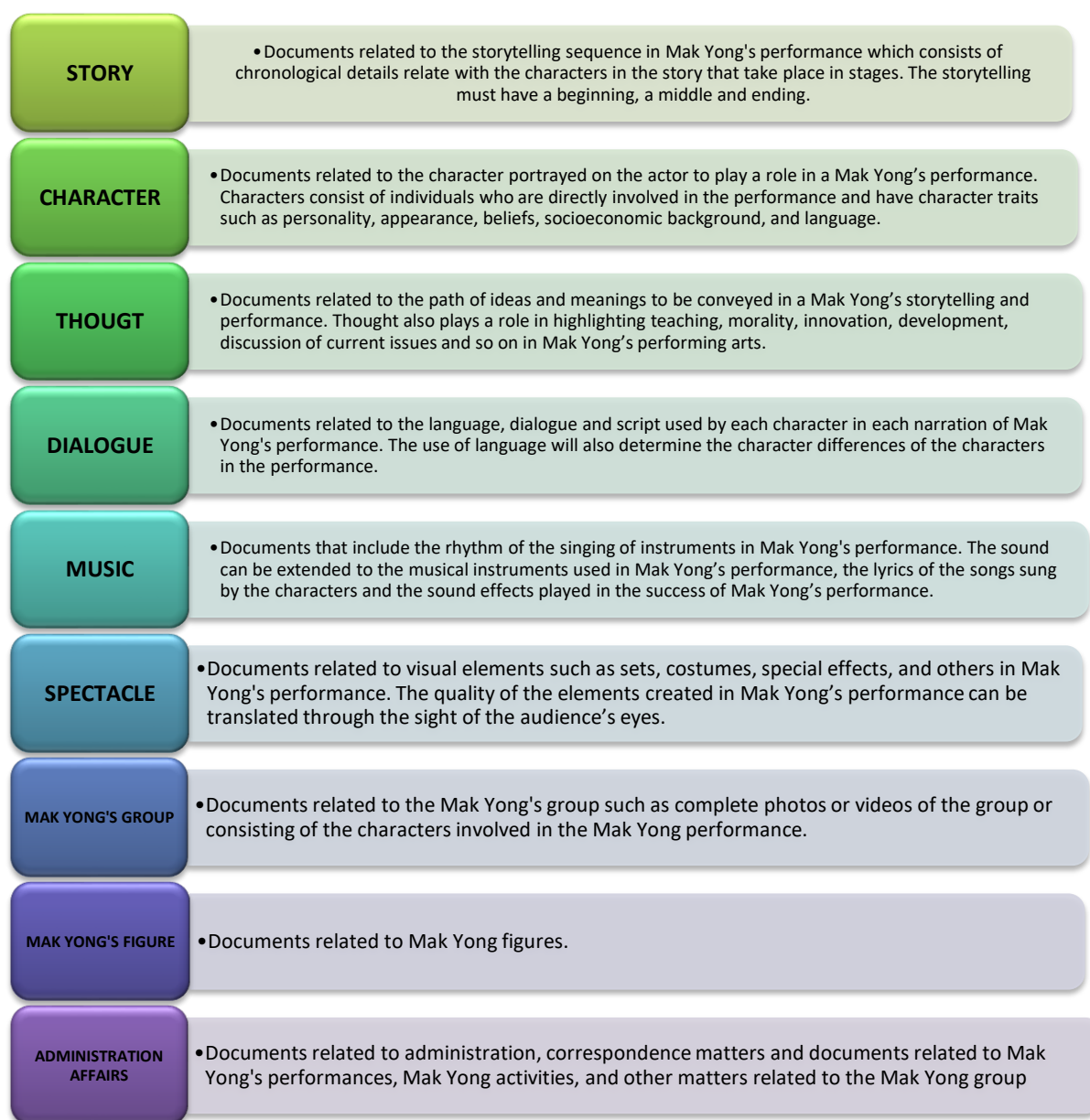


Figure 1: Elements of content analysis for Mak Yong's performing art collection


Result and Discussion

Mak Yong's stories are derived from pure Malay sources that have never been plated, adapted, or originated from India, Indonesia, or Thailand (Sheppard, 1985). Each of these stories will be acted out spontaneously and according to the creativity of each character based on the core of Mak Yong's story. Mubin Sheppard lists eleven (11) stories of Mak Yong and states that these stories were only revealed orally, and no writing (manuscript) was found (Osman, 1974). Meanwhile, Ghulam Sarwar lists 12 Mak Yong stories and considers them as a complete collection of Mak Yong stories (Yousof, 2015). Meanwhile, according to a study

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conducted by Mohamed Afandi, Mak Yong's stories are divided into five (5) groups of 12 stories which show the continuity of the stories with each other (Ismail, 1975). However, Mohd Ghouse Nasaruddin listed 15 Mak Yong stories and stated that all of them are from local legends and traditions (Nasarudin, 2000). Therefore, this study lists each of the Mak Yong stories certified by the following scholars to obtain the overall information of the Mak Yong stories and identify the differences and similarities of these stories. Here is a checklist of Mak Yong's stories:

Table 1. Mak Yong's Story Checklist


No.	Mak Yong's story	List by Mubin Sheppard	List by Ghulam Sarwar	List by Mohamed Afandi Ismail	List by Mohd Ghouse Nasarudin
1.	Anak Raja Gondang	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.	Andera Dewa	✓			
3.	Bedara Muda		✓		
4.	Bongsu Sakti (Dewa Bongsu)	✓		✓	✓
5.	Dewa Bisnu (Bisnu Dewa)			✓	
6.	Dewa Indera, Indera Muda		✓	✓	✓
7.	Dewa Muda	✓	✓	✓	✓
8.	Dewa Panah (Anak Raja Panah)	✓	✓		✓
9.	Dewa Pecil/Pechil		✓	✓	
10.	Dewa Samadaru			✓	✓
11.	Dewa Sakti (Raja Sakti)		✓	✓	✓
12.	Gading Bertimang	✓	✓		✓
13.	Puteri Kelepok Emas	✓			
14.	Puteri Timun Muda	✓			✓
15.	Raja Besar dalam negeri Ho Gading (Raja Besar)		✓		✓
16.	Raja Besar Sinar Matahari				✓
17.	Raja Dua Serupa	✓			
18.	Raja Kecil				✓
19.	Raja Muda La'leng / Lakleng/Laklin	✓	✓	✓	✓
20.	Raja Muda Lembek	✓	✓	✓	
21.	Raja Muda Pinang Mawang				✓
22.	Raja Tangkai Hati		✓	✓	✓
23.	Tuan Bijak Laksana			✓	
Total Mak Yong's Story		11	12	12	15

Referring to the table above, there are many differences in the stories of Mak Yong's presented by these scholars. However, the results of the analysis conducted on the collection which includes Mak Yong's stories in various formats found that only the National Archives of Malaysia (ANM) has documented all 11 Mak Yong's stories from the late Tan Sri Mubin

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Sheppard which consists of personal collections, videos, and issue. Meanwhile, Mak Yong's collection kept in the museum only consists of a collection of photographs taken during the Mak Yong show by the Mak Yong Istana Budaya group while performing Mak Yong's story "Dewa Indera Indera Dewa". Most of the collections in the library consist of monographs that only describe the side of Mak Yong's storytelling in general. The following is a chart of the number of Mak Yong's collections which includes aspects of storytelling and story.

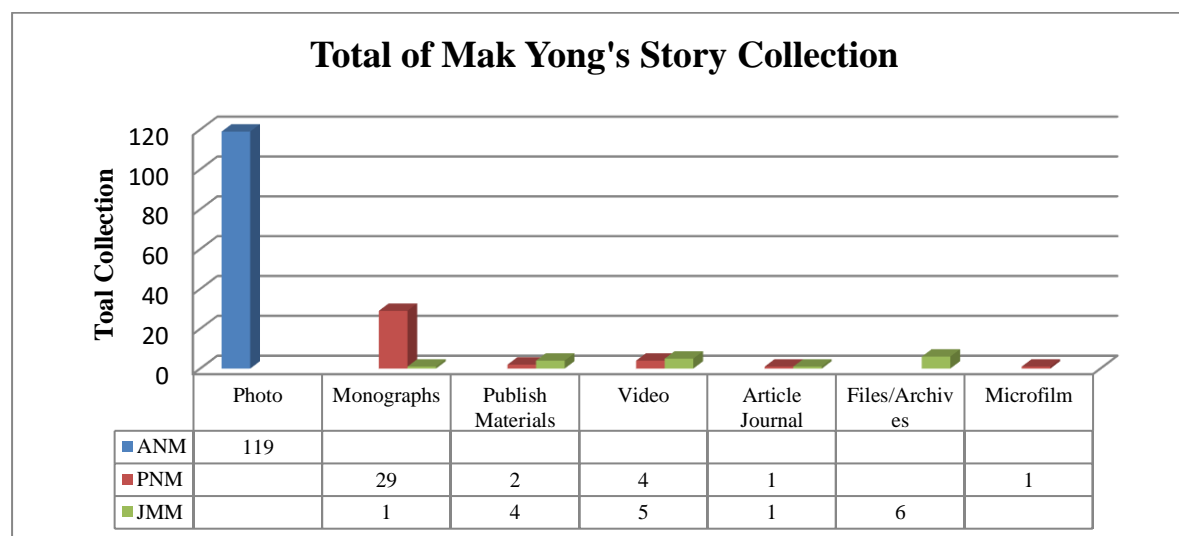


Figure 2. Total of Mak Yong's Story Collection

There are many more Mak Yong's stories that need to be documented such as Bedara Muda, Dewa Bisnu, Dewa Pecil/Pechil, Dewa Samadaru, Raja Besar in Ho Gading state, Raja Muda Pinang Mawang, Raja Kecil and Tuan Bijak Laksana. A systematic documentation strategy needs to be implemented to create a diverse collection of information for ease of reference to the community.

Character

In Mak Yong's performing arts, there are several main characters and side characters that have been identified such as Pak Yong, Mak Yong, Permaisuri/Tuan Puteri, Peran (Old & Young), Inang, and also various characters who play evil characters such as jinn, giants, shamans or sorcerers, monsters, and other evil beings (Zahari & Umar, 2011). This study examines each content of Mak Yong's collection in various forms of material in identifying information about each character in Mak Yong's performing arts.

The photo collection is the largest collection source that can be referenced in obtaining information about the character. Museums and archives are the dominant agencies in storing photographs that allow information users to obtain information about the characters in a Mak Yong performance. Most of these photographs consist of personal collections and contributions from several government agencies such as the Department of Culture and Arts Malaysia (JKN) and Istana Budaya (IB). These black and white and color photographs can be classified in character information because of the physical depiction of a character in Mak Yong's performance. Among the photos that can be referenced are as follows:

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Figure 5. Photo of Inang's character dancing with Tuan Puteri



Figure 6. Photo of old and young Peran characters



Figure 3. Photo of Pak Yong's character and a Peran having a dialogue.



Figure 4. Photo of the character of the Tuan Puteri

In addition to photographs, several other collection sources can be consulted to obtain information about each character in Mak Yong's performance, including monographs, videos, publications such as journal and magazine articles, and microfilms. The following are the number of collections that can be referenced about Mak Yong's character at IWN:

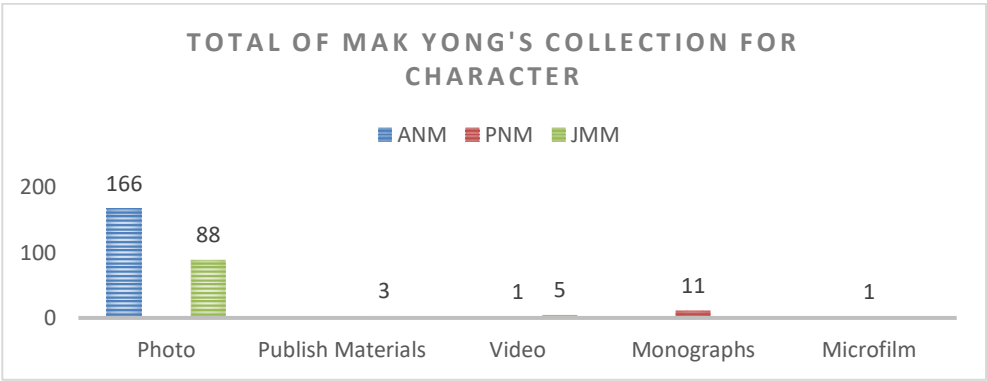


Figure 7. Total of Mak Yong’s Collection for Character

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However, there is still a need for every IWN agency in the country to develop documentation of Mak Yong's collection, especially in the aspect of character information in Mak Yong's performance. This is because most of the existing collections at IWN are now only in the form of the photo which cannot explain in more detail about a character in Mak Yong's performance. Therefore, information on the personality, appearance, beliefs, socioeconomic background, and language used by each character cannot be dissected if only referring to the collections in each IWN agency now. More detailed and geared documentation of each character involved in Mak Yong's performing arts needs to be created in the future.

Thought

Thought plays a role in highlighting teaching, morality, innovation, development, discussion of current issues, and so on in Mak Yong's performing arts. As a result of this study, only collections in libraries and archives have information on thinking related to Mak Yong's performing arts which can be obtained through writing papers in the form of books, journal articles, proceedings, magazines, and so on. The following are the number of Mak Yong collections related to aspects of thought:

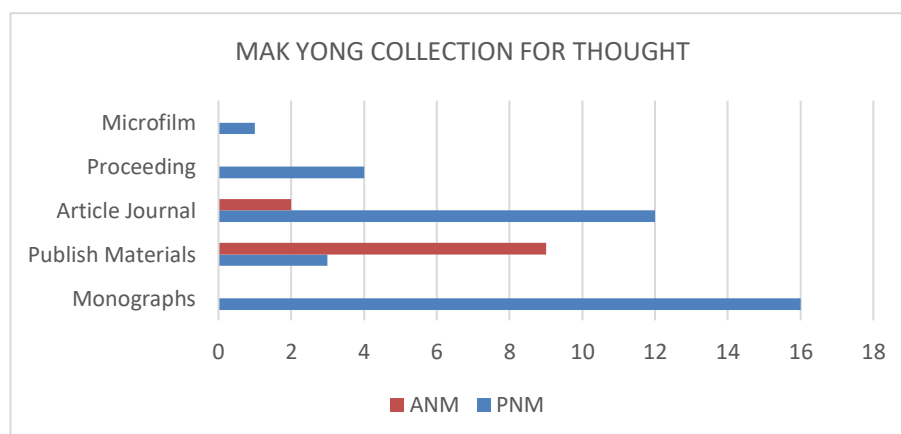


Figure 8. Total for Mak Yong's Collection for the element of Thought

Even the number of collections that can be referred to in obtaining information related to the thoughts for Mak Yong's performance is still insufficient, especially for the collection from the academic writing such articles in a refereed and high-impact journal. Such writings can elevate the art of Mak Yong's heritage to a higher level and can directly disseminate information around the world. Encouragement, as well as support, should be given to the writers to conduct research as well as writing on the importance of this cultural art thinking so that this heritage remains significant to future generations. Indirectly, the number of Mak Yong's collections that can be referenced in the thought element will also increase and can encourage more researchers and bachelors to continue working in the field of national heritage.


Diction

The diction aspect includes a collection related to the language, dialogue, and script used by each character in each narration of Mak Yong's performance. The use of language also determines the character of the difference of each character in Mak Yong's performance. As a result of the content analysis of Mak Yong's collection, information on diction aspects in Mak Yong is not widely presented because the collection of information that can be referenced

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consists of video sources, audio, proceedings, and some journal articles available in libraries and archives. The following is a breakdown of Mak Yong's collection which covers aspects of diction at IWN:

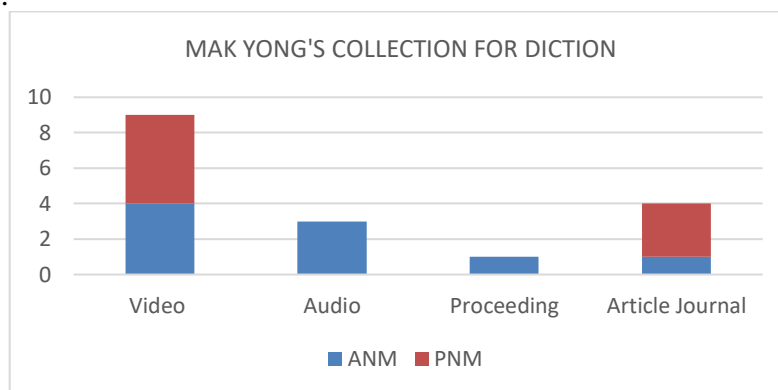


Figure 9. Total for Mak Yong's Collection for the element of Diction

Referring to the figure above, it is shown that Mak Yong's collection that can be referenced in exploring the use of diction in Mak Yong's performing arts is through video recording. However, these video collections are the same material which is each deposited by the JKKN to the library and archives. In other words, only five (5) video collections of Mak Yong's stories are documented as described earlier. While the collection of journal articles can also be referred to explore the use of diction which this article discusses and explains about some issues such as the article written by Che Mat Jusoh entitled "Yung mengadap rebab" published in 2008 which discusses the sequence of metaphorical phrases used in a Mak Yong's performance. While some articles in the archive discuss some issues in the use of diction such as pronunciation in Mak Yong's which includes improvised pronunciation, repetition, pronunciation of each in the opening speech, and so on as well as articles that attach some scripts used in a Mak Yong's story.


Music

The collection related to the music aspect includes the rhythm of singing and the melody of instruments in a Mak Yong performance. Apart from that, the sound collection element can also be extended to the musical instruments used in Mak Yong's performance, the lyrics of the songs sung by the characters, and the sound effects played in the success of Mak Yong's performance. According to [Nasuruddin \(2003\)](#), Mak Yong has many songs (repertoire) of about 30 songs that are still in use. Among the songs such as Lagu Mengadap Rebab, Lagu Kijang Emas, Lagu Sindung, Lagu Sendayang and many more. Apart from the songs sung in Mak Yong's performance, the researchers used to identify the musical instruments used by the Mak Yong group such as Rebab, Serunai, Gendang, Tetawak as well as several larger musical instruments by including Wayang Kulit instruments such as Geduk, Gedumbak, Canang, and Kesi. The following is a breakdown of the number of collections based on the form of material in the agency:

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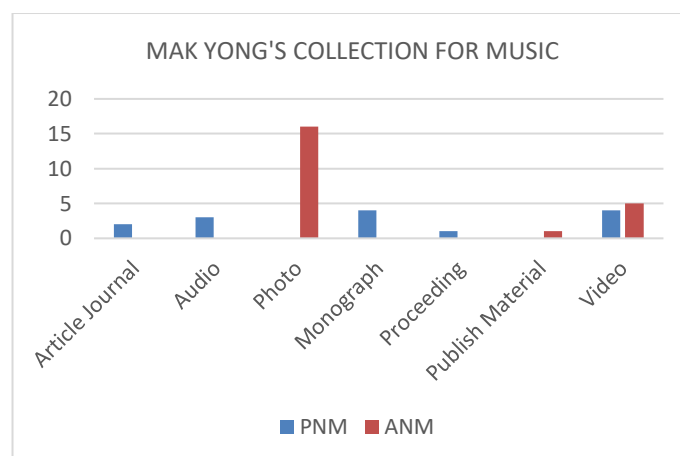


Figure 10. Total for Mak Yong's Collection for the element of Music

Most of this collection consists of photograph material which is the most common source of reference because it has a description that statically depicts the musicians in Mak Yong's group who are playing musical instruments. While the collection of video material also includes an interactive source of information on the playing of musical instruments which record the melody of the song and instrumental instruments. Apart from that, the video and audio collection are also referred to because it includes the melody and singing style for the performance of the songs in Mak Yong's. While the collection of monographs, journal articles, and proceedings also include information on the lyrics, musical notes, and a description for each musical instrument used.

Spectacle

As a result of the content analysis that has been conducted, the researchers identified that the collection that describes the aspect of spectacle is the second largest collection after the aspect of the character. The following are the total Mak Yong's collections available at each IWN agency from various forms of the collection;

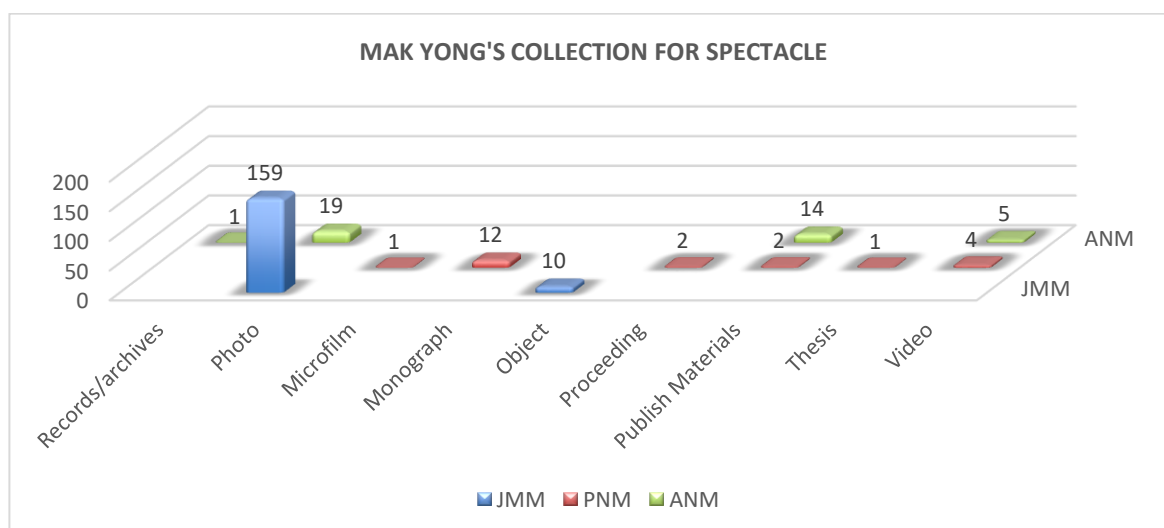



Figure 11. Total for Mak Yong's Collection for element of Spectacle

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The collection of photographs visually shows the spectacle of the appearance, especially to the aspects of costumes, accessories, make-up, and props used by each character in Mak Yong's. Apart from that, this collection of pictures can also convey the information of the admiration of the performance visually against the decorative background designed in the performance, static dance moves as well as cinematography performed. While the collection of publications also contains information about the glory of Mak Yong's in the past as well as the efforts carried out to promote this cultural art to a higher level. For example, an article from Utusan Malaysia written by Wan Ahmad Wan Hassan tells about the personality, success, unforgettable journey, awards won, and the hopes of the prima donna Mak Yong's Khatijah Awang. Such information directly impresses consumers because of the achievements achieved by Mak Yong's activists and figures to be known internationally.

Mak Yong's Group

Information about Mak Yong's group consists of the main characters played in the performance along with the musicians who play instruments in completing Mak Yong's performance. Apart from that, a collection related to activities as well as programs that can convey information about Mak Yong's groups. The following is the total Mak Yong collection that contains the information aspects of the Mak Yong's Group:

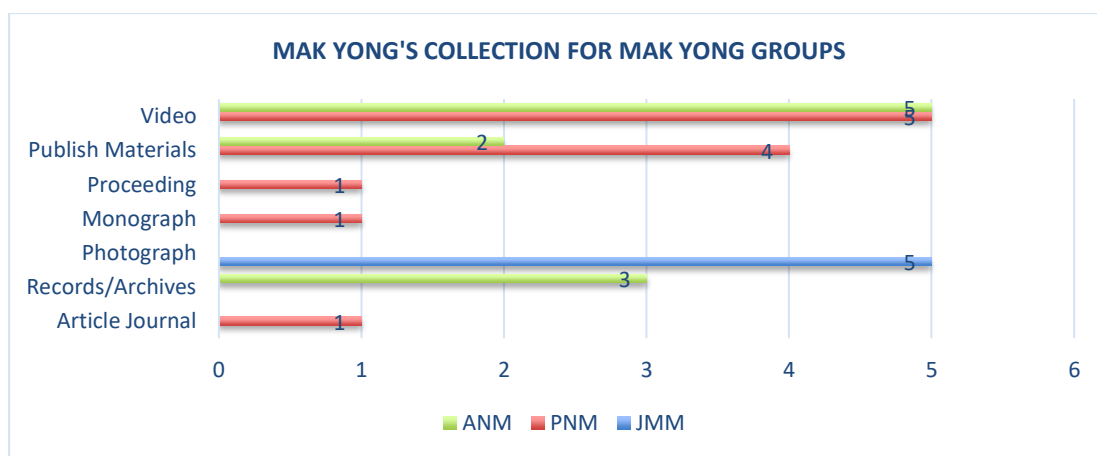


Figure 12. Total for Mak Yong's Collection for the element of Mak Yong Groups

Documentation on Mak Yong groups is very limited and too focused on a few Mak Yong groups. This can be seen with the information available in each agency, especially between PNM and ANM because they store and maintain the same information. Therefore, the documentation of information on Mak Yong groups needs to be further improved because there are still Mak Yong groups that are still active in presenting Mak Yong's heritage, especially in Kelantan and Terengganu.


Mak Yong's Figure

The collection related to the figure involves materials that contain information about activists, artists, and experts who fought for and contributed to Mak Yong's art heritage from the past to the present. Mak Yong figures include figures who are recognized by the community, the country, and figures who make Mak Yong's name famous at the national or international level. As a result of the analysis conducted, several Mak Yong figures can be identified through

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the existing documentation in each IWN. However, most of the information of the figures from the photograph material could not be identified because the description of the collection was not implemented. The following is the number of collections that can be referred to for aspects of Mak Yong's figure:

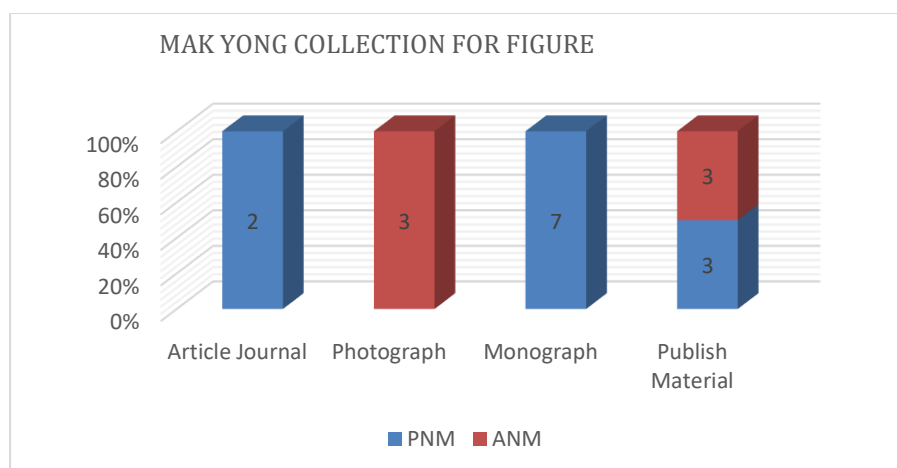


Figure 13. Total for Mak Yong's Collection for the element of Mak Yong Figure

Referring to the figure above, collections related to figures need to be given attention to document more detailed information about figures in Mak Yong heritage art because they are the primary source, and their knowledge needs to be documented so that this heritage art remains valued. The Monograph Collection is one of the collections that documents the most information about Mak Yong's figure, including a book written by Zainal Jaslan entitled 'Khatijah Awang: the 4th National Artist'. This book specifically documents all the information of Primadona Khatijah Awang. While other monographs also feature the story of the late Khatijah Awang as a major figure in the art of Mak Yong's heritage.

Mak Yong's Administration Affairs

The collection on Mak Yong's administrative affairs is material related to official, unofficial affairs, administrative matters as well as any documents related to Mak Yong's performing arts that are kept permanently in the agency concerned. This document is a primary source that presents historical value, research value, and aesthetic value to the development of Mak Yong's heritage. As a result of the content analysis of the collection conducted, the collection in this aspect is only available in the archives because this information is obtained through record materials and public archives or in the form of files. This file collection is divided into three (3) administrative subjects which consist of Mak Yong play permission, Mak Yong recording and expansion, and Mak Yong Training.

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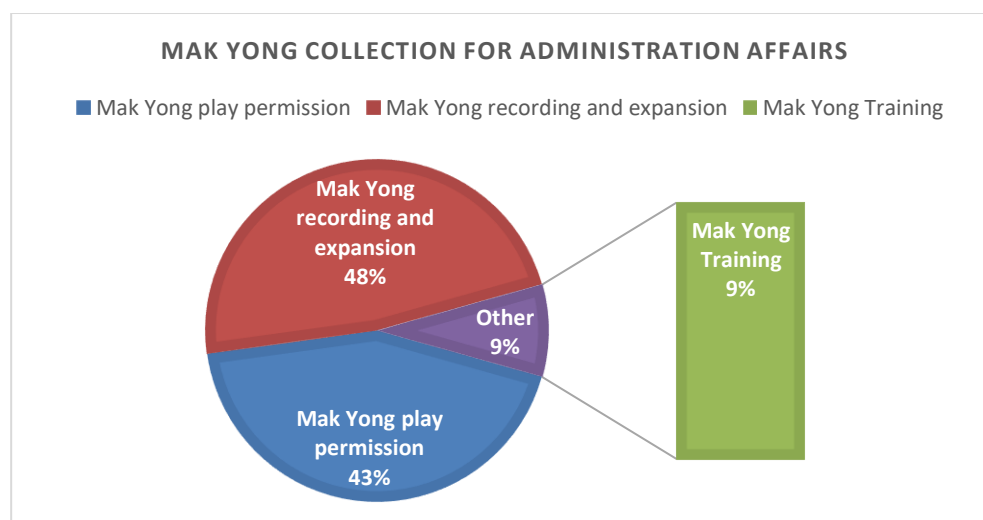


Figure 14. Total for Mak Yong's Collection for the element of Administration Affairs

The main Mak Yong's administrative affairs collection is on recording and expansion efforts. Most of these collections were created by Mubin Sheppard regarding his efforts in sustaining Mak Yong's legacy for Malaysia. Among the archives collection that obtained during the analysis were official letters sent to several parties in his efforts to document Mak Yong's stories such as letters to Professor WP Malm, a music professor from the University of Michigan, correspondence to the National Museum, several companies, publications and so on.

While the second aspect is about permission to play Mak Yong where this information is about the application for permission from the performers and organizers of the Mak Yong show to present Mak Yong to the local authorities. This is because permission from the authorities was needed in the past to ensure the smooth running of a Mak Yong show. The last administrative aspect is about the official documents for Mak Yong's performance training activities. These documents are indicative of correspondence to apply for permission to conduct performance rehearsals in several places such as at a stage in Kampung Tawang Kelantan, Kuala Berang Terengganu, and several other locations. Apart from that, these documents also relate to the appointment of a coach and the application for a license to teach Mak Yong.

Discussion

The objective of this study is to identify Mak Yong's performing art collection documented in each IWN, realized by performing content analysis of Mak Yong collection through the identification of Mak Yong collection content based on Aristotle's performing art evaluation principles. The content analysis of the Mak Yong collection in this study is a thematic collection analysis according to the format and form of the collection as conducted by several scholars in heritage documentation strategies (Chan, 2012; Crofts, 2010; Mahina, 2004; Mohamad et al., 2012; Sah, 2006).

The results of the content analysis of Mak Yong's collection are guided by six (6) principles of Aristotle's performance art evaluation and three (3) additional elements in this study found that most of the collection information content is still unbalanced and more active documentation is needed to ensure this performance art. The content of Mak Yong's collection available at each IWN mostly describes information about Mak Yong's character, admiration, and story. But most of this information can only be obtained through the source of the

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photograph which is well known that the photograph is static material and there is no complete description. While the collection on diction and Mak Yong's figure is the least information and needs to be considered to ensure that this information needs to be documented. Referring to the figure below shows the breakdown of the condition of Mak Yong's performing arts heritage information available in the country now:

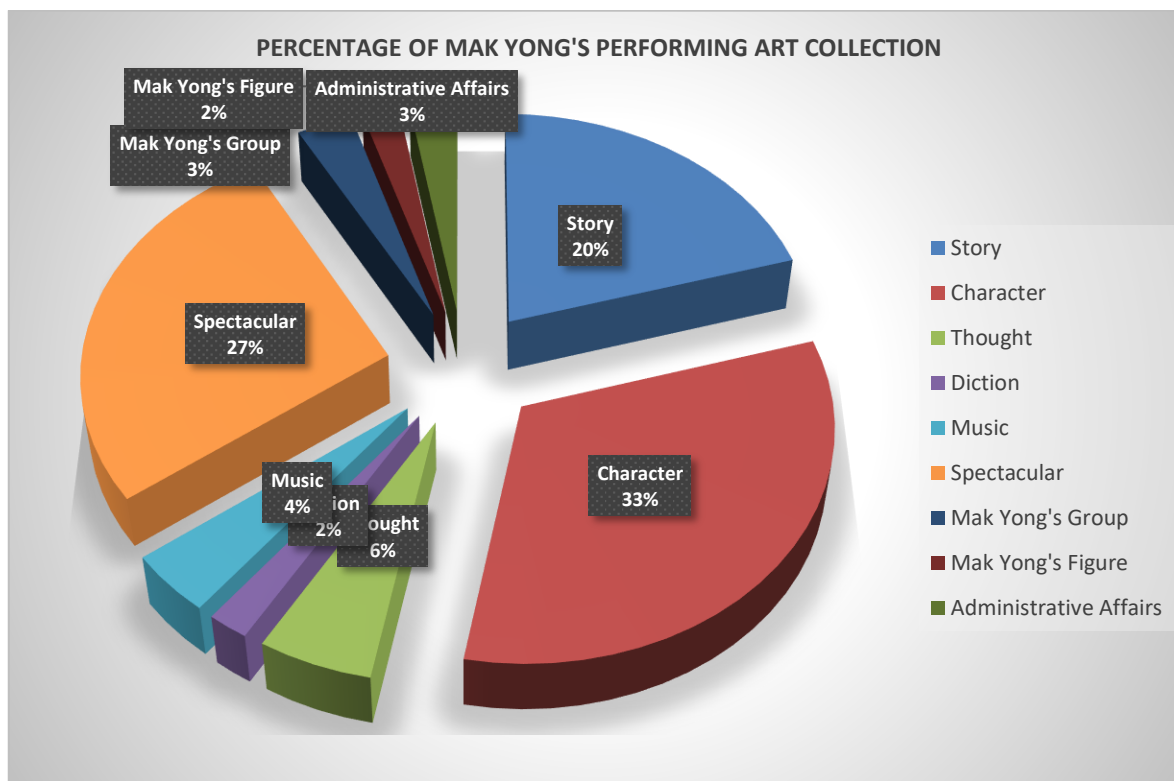


Figure 15: Breakdown of Mak Yong's performance art heritage information condition at IWN

Therefore, the researchers found that there are many gaps in heritage information especially Mak Yong performing arts in the country. Several Mak Yong information spaces need to be documented such as Mak Yong's stories, in-depth information for each of the characters in Mak Yong's performance, documentation of the songs and utterances in Mak Yong's performance, information on the development and admiration of Mak Yong's performance art, gathering information on groups, Mak Yong figures as well as national administrative records in upholding this world heritage art. As a result of these findings, the IWN agency needs to create a strategy for documenting heritage information, especially WTK to ensure that this heritage information can be the country's main bull in protecting and saving cultural heritage art from being lost and forgotten in the future.

This study proposes that a comprehensive program of documenting the Mak Yong performing arts collection be conducted by each IWN agency considering a systematic and uniform documentation strategy with each other. Several previous researchers developed several models for collection documentation strategies that can be applied in documenting WTK collections especially Mak Yong (Cox, 2003; Hackman, 2009; Samuels, 1986). Several elements need to be considered in implementing heritage information documentation strategies such as documentation analysis, cooperation between agencies, cooperation between activists

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and communities, and respond to change.

The results of the collection analysis conducted by this study, enable IWN agencies to identify the shortcomings and gaps of their respective information sources. After that, formal inter-agency cooperation needs to be established for information cooperation as well as professional cooperation in managing and adding to the collection of missing performing arts information. Collaboration between performers and the community in Mak Yong's performing arts is also an important documentation strategy effort to ensure the validity and reliability of the information documented. This needs to be considered because the resources obtained from the community and Mak Yong activists can cover the existing information gaps. Finally, agencies need to constantly respond to current changes whether heritage changes or changes in the form of information to enable each collection source maintained to be always accessible to the public.

Through systematic documentation, the program can help agencies in managing heritage information more actively, especially towards electronic information management systems (database) to heritage collections, especially Mak Yong as this heritage has gained recognition at the world level. Some previous researchers have voiced this suggestion such as (Mansor, Jaafar, & Manaf, 2013; Dharmarajan et al., 2006; Amin et al., 2011; Shariff et al., 2008; Manaf et al., 2013) but this proposal is still not considered by those responsible because the source of this collection is not documented overall.

This database is important because it can directly improve and facilitate access to heritage information digitally and indirectly show the world body UNESCO as one of our country's initiatives in information packaging (information packaging) of all information about Mak Yong which can further improve documentation heritage information in the country. Apart from that, this database requires centralized cataloging of materials and electronic collection storage that can be developed as an academic reference source and reference center by linking all the collections in each IWN. With this initiative, all collections related to Mak Yong's collection can be managed centrally and systematically in one platform that allows information users to obtain correct and authentic information.

Limitation of study

This study has two aspects of limitations, first because this study is a multi-disciplinary research that combines two main areas, namely information management and heritage studies which to ensure the scope of this study can focus on the elements heritage preservation through the implementation of information management practices. The boundaries of the study need to be identified so that the researcher can connect and harmonize these two areas in a research.

While the second limitations of the study is focused on the documentation of heritage collections in certain government departments only. The selection of departments is guided by compliance with the respective agency acts which are centered on the conservation and preservation of information and collections of national heritage treasures. Branches for this organization are not touched on in detail. The explanation of the selection of IWN is only by examining and identifying resources through scientific research, the same organizational function in storing, managing, disseminating and preserving national information resources as well as organizational governance functions under the same ministry.


Suggestion for future research

The results of the study obtained from this research are very important in describing the current status of national heritage information management systems especially in the context of

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ICH. The findings of this study can be used as a starting point in the development of more systematic and comprehensive heritage information management in the future. However, due to the limitations of the research scope of this study, further research can be carried out in several areas that can be given priority such as:

a) This study only examines one scope of ICH, namely Mak Yong's performing arts only in institutional memory headquarters. Therefore, complete studies are proposed for other WTK cultures such as folk games such as wayang kulit, Mak Mulong, Jikey and others, traditional dances, traditional games and other elements within the ICH that require more information resource management. comprehensive in every information agencies in every corner of the state.

b) The data of this research study was obtained from interviews and information content analysis only. Factors from time constraints resulted in data acquisition through observation in exploring the practices carried out by officers in acquiring heritage collections in their respective agencies. Data obtained from observations can provide a more thorough understanding of the documentation of national heritage collections.

Conclusion

Archives, museums, and libraries are the parent institutions responsible for collecting collections and information from primary sources, preserving and conserving these collections so that they can be accessed by the public and at the same time can pass on heritage information to future generations. However, the publication of professional papers discussing how these institutions implement such initiatives is very limited especially in documenting heritage collections. The collection of collections from primary sources such as documents and artifacts that narrate a heritage, ethnicity, society or culture is particularly important as these agencies manage materials that are unique and vulnerable to extinction factors. Yet many of the heritage materials especially the collections related to Mak Yong are still incomplete and in private hands facing the risk of damage and loss forever.

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