

## Mangkunegara X's Communication Strategy in Promoting Solo's Creative Economy through Mangkunegaran Run 2025

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the communication strategy of Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati Arya (K.G.P.A.A.) Mangkunegara X in promoting the creative economy in the city of Solo through the Mangkunegaran Run 2025. The event is a cultural-sport initiative designed to reflect his concept of Culture–Future, which integrates cultural heritage with contemporary forms of public engagement. The research focuses on how a traditional cultural institution employs strategic communication to foster public participation and support local creative economic activities.

Using a qualitative case study approach, this research collects data through direct observation, documentation, media coverage, and relevant scholarly works on cultural leadership, strategic communication, and creative economy development. The analytical framework combines the concepts of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Cultural Branding to examine how cultural values are translated into public narratives and experiential communication during the event.

The findings indicate that Mangkunegaran Run 2025 functions as an integrated communication platform by combining visual identity, experiential elements, and media publicity to convey a coherent cultural message. The event integrates several IMC elements and contributes to increased public engagement while providing economic opportunities for local creative businesses (UMKM) participating in the event.

This study demonstrates that cultural-sport events can operate as strategic communication instruments that simultaneously construct cultural meaning and stimulate creative economic ecosystems. The findings offer practical implications for cultural institutions seeking to adapt heritage-based values to contemporary communication practices within the creative economy context.

**Keywords:** *strategic communication; creative economy; cultural leadership; Mangkunegara X; cultural event*

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the creative economy has gained increasing attention as a strategic pillar in cultural and tourism development policies. Cultural institutions are no longer expected to function solely as custodians of heritage, but also as active agents capable

of generating economic value and public engagement. However, a key challenge faced by traditional cultural institutions lies in their ability to translate cultural capital into economic and social relevance through effective communication strategies that resonate with contemporary audiences. Without strategic communication, cultural events risk being perceived merely as ceremonial activities with limited public participation and economic impact.

In the city of Solo, traditional institutions such as Pura Mangkunegaran hold substantial cultural assets rooted in Javanese heritage and royal history. Despite this potential, the sustainability and public relevance of cultural institutions increasingly depend on their capacity to attract broader audiences, particularly younger generations, and to position cultural activities within the dynamics of the creative economy. Mangkunegaran Run 2025 emerges within this context as a cultural-sport event designed not only to promote a healthy lifestyle, but also to introduce Javanese culture, historical heritage, and local creative products to wider national and international audiences. According to official event documentation, Mangkunegaran Run aims to promote Solo as a destination for sports tourism while simultaneously fostering public awareness of cultural preservation and sustainable economic development through the involvement of local creative businesses (UMKM) (Mangkunegaran Run, 2025).

As a contemporary cultural leader, Mangkunegara X positions Pura Mangkunegaran within the conceptual framework of Culture–Future, which integrates cultural preservation with innovation and public participation. Culture–Future emphasizes the importance of sustaining and developing cultural heritage within the context of a rapidly changing modern society, where tradition is not treated as a static legacy but as a living foundation for present and future development. The concept reflects an understanding that the future of Surakarta is intrinsically rooted in its cultural past, positioning inherited traditions, historical narratives, and long-standing values as strategic resources for empowering contemporary cultural and creative initiatives (East Ventures, 2024).

Through this framework, cultural heritage functions not only as an object of preservation but also as a driving force for shaping public engagement and socio-economic transformation in the present. Through Mangkunegaran Run 2025, this concept materializes in the form of a large-scale sporting event that functions as a cross-generational communication platform. Beyond the running competition, the event incorporates curated UMKM exhibitions, cultural performances, and collaborative activities with local stakeholders, indicating a deliberate effort to construct an experiential communication space that connects culture, economy, and public engagement.

First held in 2023 and organized annually since then, Mangkunegaran Run has evolved into a multidimensional platform that integrates cultural representation, sports tourism, and public participation. Fauzia and Roychansyah that the event contributes to strengthening Solo's urban identity and tourism appeal by activating heritage spaces, attracting diverse stakeholders, and enhancing public engagement with

Mangkunegaran as a living cultural institution rather than merely a ceremonial site (Fauzia & Roychansyah, 2024).

Although previous studies have successfully mapped the historical, architectural, and ethical dimensions of Mangkunegaran, most of them still position Pura Mangkunegaran as a cultural object or historical institution rather than as an active agent of strategic communication within today's creative economy ecosystem. Few studies have explored how a new generation of cultural leaders, such as Mangkunegara X, employ modern communication strategies to reinterpret cultural values while simultaneously fostering economic competitiveness through collaborative, experience-based cultural events.

In this context, the present study is guided by the following research question: How are the cultural values of Mangkunegaran translated into communication strategies and public experiences through Mangkunegaran Run 2025 in the contemporary creative economy context? Accordingly, this research aims to analyze how the communication strategies employed by Mangkunegara X in organizing Mangkunegaran Run 2025 contribute to strengthening the creative economy ecosystem in the city of Solo.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW OR RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Previous studies on Pura Mangkunegaran have largely focused on its political, historical, ethical, and architectural dimensions. Research by Fawzia examined Mangkunegaran through a political-historical lens, highlighting its role in shaping power legitimacy during Indonesia's New Order period (Fawzia, 2024).

Other scholars have explored its ethical foundations, demonstrating the richness of Mangkunegaran's cultural capital. They explored the spiritual and social dimensions of Mangkunegaran, interpreting the works of Mangkunegara IV as reflections of the Javanese ethos of harmony, tolerance, and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*). These values demonstrate the existence of a moral foundation that can serve as a basis for inclusive social and cultural development (Daryono et al., 2024).

A similar perspective was presented by another scholars who examined Pura Mangkunegaran as a potential center for developing tourism based on the creative industries. Using a SWOT analysis, their study identified that the cultural strengths and economic opportunities of the institution could be optimized through digitalization, product diversification, and collaboration with the tourism sector (Mon et al., 2024).

Sunarmi, another scholar, on the other hand, analyzed Mangkunegaran from the perspective of cultural representation through a semiotic approach based on Stuart Hall's representation theory. Her findings indicate that the architectural elements of Pura Mangkunegaran embody the Javanese philosophy of *Tri Ugering Ngaurip*, *Wirya* (compassion), *Arto* (prosperity), and *Winasis* (knowledge). The study positions Pura Mangkunegaran as a cultural text rich in symbolic meaning, where ideology and aesthetics converge to form a dynamic expression of Javanese identity (Sunarmi, 2019).

Meanwhile, there is also scholars who examined the relationship between the business ethics of the Mangkunegaran royal family and the Sufi values embedded in building a spirituality-based economy. Their study revealed that Mangkunegara IV introduced a model of leadership that combined the roles of monarch and entrepreneur, placing spirituality at the core of economic and social activities. This ethos reflects a synthesis of religiosity, modernity, and social responsibility, an enduring legacy that remains relevant to the contemporary creative economy (Birsyada et al., 2017).

However, most of these studies position Pura Mangkunegaran as a cultural object or historical institution rather than as an active communicator within the contemporary creative economy ecosystem. Limited attention has been given to how modern cultural leaders operationalize strategic communication practices through experience-based events to activate public participation and economic engagement.

## METHODOLOGY

### *a. Type of Research*

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of meanings, values, and social practices constructed by cultural actors within a specific context. A qualitative approach was selected because the research does not aim to measure variables or test causal relationships statistically, but rather to explore contextualized processes of meaning-making embedded in cultural and communicative practices. According to Creswell and Creswell, qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups assign to social or human problems through data collection in natural settings and interpretive data analysis (W. Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Consistent with this perspective, qualitative research is characterized by a focus on context, process, and the perspectives of research participants. The researcher acts as the primary research instrument and engages directly with data sources through observation, documentation, and contextual analysis. The data generated are narrative in nature and are analyzed inductively to identify patterns, themes, and constructions of meaning that emerge from the field (W. Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The case study method was chosen because it enables an in-depth examination of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined. In communication research, meaning is not produced solely through messages or measurable outputs, but is constructed through social practices, contextual interactions, and lived experiences.

Qualitative research is particularly suited to examining communication as a process and practice, as it allows researchers to investigate meaning-making processes within natural settings where communication occurs. Within this approach, the researcher functions as an interpretive instrument who actively engages with the research context to understand how communicative actions are produced, experienced, and interpreted by participants. Through this methodological framework, the study

seeks to capture how the cultural values and leadership vision embodied in the Culture–Future framework are translated into strategic communication practices that contribute to the development of the creative economy ecosystem in the city of Solo (Bruhn Jensen, 2021).

*a. Research Focus and Location*

The focus of this study is the communication strategy employed by Mangkunegara X in promoting the creative economy through the cultural-sport event Mangkunegaran Run 2025. The research examines how cultural narratives, visual symbols, and participant experiences are strategically constructed and communicated to represent cultural values while simultaneously encouraging public participation in the local creative economy.

The subject of this research is Mangkunegara X as a contemporary cultural leader, particularly in his role as the initiator and symbolic figure behind the organization of Mangkunegaran Run 2025. Meanwhile, the object of the research is the strategic communication practices embedded within the event, including visual communication elements, experiential design, media narratives, and public engagement mechanisms that reflect the Culture–Future framework.

The research was conducted at Pamedan Pura Mangkunegaran, Surakarta (Solo), Central Java, which served as the primary venue for Mangkunegaran Run 2025 held on April 19, 2025. This location was selected because it represents the central space of Mangkunegaran's cultural activities and symbolizes the intersection between tradition and modernity envisioned by Mangkunegara X.

*b. Sources and Data Collection Techniques*

The data for this study were collected using two primary qualitative techniques: direct observation and documentation. Direct observation was conducted during the Mangkunegaran Run 2025 event at Pamedan Pura Mangkunegaran on April 19, 2025. This method was employed to examine communication as a situated social practice manifested through events, rituals, and embodied interactions.

Communication is not limited to formal media texts, but is produced through interaction, space, and participation within specific social contexts (Bruhn Jensen, 2021). Accordingly, the observation focused on identifying communication forms embedded in the event, including visual symbols (such as jersey and medal designs), spatial arrangements, interactions between participants and organizers, and the ways cultural values were communicated through participant experiences. To gain an in-depth and experiential understanding of these communication dynamics, the researcher participated directly in the 5K race category, allowing for closer engagement with the event atmosphere, audience responses, and embodied forms of public interaction.

Documentation was employed to support and validate the observational findings. Documentary data included news articles and media coverage, official social media content of Mangkunegaran Run, as well as promotional and digital materials

produced by the event organizers. These sources provided insight into how communication strategies were framed narratively and visually across different platforms, complementing the data obtained through direct observation and enabling a more comprehensive interpretation of the event as a cultural communication practice. Both techniques complemented each other: direct observation provided empirical data on communication practices, while documentation served as confirmatory evidence and validation of the findings.

The validity of the data in this study was maintained through a process of source and method triangulation, aimed at ensuring consistency between the results of field observations and documentary evidence. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing firsthand observations during Mangkunegaran Run 2025 with various supporting materials, including media publications, official social media posts, and promotional documents issued by the organizers.

#### *d. Data Analysis Techniques*

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive qualitative analysis model proposed by (Miles et al. (2014) which consists of three interconnected and cyclical components: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These analytical processes were conducted iteratively throughout the research to ensure a systematic and credible interpretation of the findings.

Data condensation involved the continuous process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming data obtained from observations and documentation. In this study, data condensation was carried out through coding, categorizing, and summarizing communication elements related to cultural narratives, visual symbols, participant experiences, and creative economy engagement embedded in Mangkunegaran Run 2025. This process enabled the researcher to sharpen and organize the data so that meaningful patterns could emerge.

Data display was conducted by organizing the condensed data into thematic narratives and analytical descriptions that allowed patterns of strategic communication to be systematically examined. Through this process, relationships between empirical findings and the theoretical frameworks of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Cultural Branding were identified, facilitating deeper analytical interpretation.

Conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the displayed data to answer the research question by linking empirical evidence with theoretical concepts. Verification was carried out through continuous comparison between observational data and documentary sources to test the plausibility, consistency, and credibility of the emerging interpretations.

Through this interactive and iterative analytical process, the study examines how cultural values are translated into strategic communication practices within Mangkunegaran Run 2025 and how these practices contribute to strengthening the creative economy ecosystem in the city of Solo.

*e. Theoretical Framework*

This study employs Cultural Branding and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as complementary theoretical frameworks to analyze the communication strategy of Mangkunegara X in promoting the creative economy through Mangkunegaran Run 2025. Cultural Branding functions as the primary framework for interpreting the construction of cultural meaning and identity, while IMC serves as an operational framework for examining how these meanings are communicated across multiple channels and experiential touchpoints.

Cultural Branding theory, as developed by Douglas B. Holt, conceptualizes brands not merely as economic assets, but as cultural symbols embedded with meanings derived from narratives, myths, and collective social practices. Holt argues that strong brands are built through the articulation of culturally resonant stories that respond to social tensions, aspirations, and identity negotiations within specific historical contexts. Rather than relying solely on functional superiority or persuasive messaging, cultural brands gain legitimacy by embedding themselves within everyday rituals, symbolic actions, and shared experiences that allow audiences to emotionally engage with the brand (Holt, 2004). In this study, Cultural Branding is applied to interpret how Mangkunegaran Run 2025 operates as a cultural narrative that repositions Mangkunegaran as a living cultural institution, translating the Culture–Future concept into symbolic meanings and public experiences that resonate with contemporary audiences.

To complement this perspective, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is employed to analyze how cultural meanings are strategically delivered through coordinated communication efforts. According to Belch and Belch (2020), IMC emphasizes the integration and consistency of messages across various communication tools, such as advertising, public relations, events, digital media, and experiential marketing, to create synergy and strengthen audience engagement. IMC views communication not as fragmented promotional activities, but as an integrated system in which all brand touchpoints work together to convey a coherent identity and reinforce brand meaning.

Within the context of this study, IMC is used to examine how Mangkunegaran Run 2025 integrates multiple communication elements, including visual identity (jerseys, medals, and spatial design), media publicity, social media content, stakeholder collaboration, and on-site participant experiences. These elements function collectively to communicate Mangkunegaran's cultural values while simultaneously encouraging public participation and economic engagement with local creative industries (UMKM). Through the integration of Cultural Branding and IMC, this research analyzes not only what cultural meanings are constructed, but also how those meanings are operationalized and disseminated through strategic communication practices embedded in a cultural-sport event.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*a. Result*

Based on field observations and documentary analysis, the findings indicate that Mangkunegaran Run 2025 functioned as a cultural-sport event that integrated cultural values, visual symbolism, and public experience within a single event space structured around the Culture–Future narrative. Held on April 19, 2025, at Pamedan Pura Mangkunegaran, Solo, the event was among the largest cultural-sport initiatives in the city, featuring three race categories: half marathon, 10K, and 5K.

From the pre-event phase, a participatory atmosphere was evident through race pack collection activities, digital publications, and online campaigns emphasizing Mangkunegaran’s cultural identity. On the event day, the Pamedan area was populated by runners, spectators, and local creative entrepreneurs (UMKM), creating an environment where sport, culture, and economic activity intersected. These conditions position Mangkunegaran Run 2025 as an organized communication platform in which cultural meanings were actively produced, circulated, and experienced by the public.

*1. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Strategy in Mangkunegaran Run 2025*

The findings demonstrate that Mangkunegaran Run 2025 successfully integrated cultural symbolism, immersive experiences, and coordinated communication strategies to achieve dual objectives: cultural preservation and creative economy promotion. These results are further analyzed through the lenses of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Cultural Branding, which provide the conceptual frameworks for interpreting how communication strategies and cultural meanings were constructed and operationalized within the event.

**Table 1.** *Application of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Elements in Mangkunegaran Run 2025 (Source: Processed by the author)*

<b>IMC Elements</b>	<b>Application in Mangkunegaran Run 2025</b>
<b>Advertising</b>	Posters, banners, and visual designs (jerseys, medals, backdrops) highlighting Mangkunegaran’s cultural symbols and the Culture–Future narrative.
<b>Public Relations &amp; Publicity</b>	Coverage by local and national media, support from the Surakarta City Government, and official publications issued by Pura Mangkunegaran.

<b>Sales Promotion</b>	Attractive race packages, including race packs containing jerseys and medals, door prizes, early-bird registration discounts, and prizes for winners.
<b>Personal Selling</b>	Involvement of running communities and volunteers as direct communication agents who disseminate information and encourage participation.
<b>Direct Marketing</b>	Distribution of information through email, WhatsApp groups of running communities, and local runner networks to ensure active participation.
<b>Digital &amp; Social Media Marketing</b>	Intensive campaigns via Instagram (@mangkunegaran.run), the official website, teaser videos, countdown posts, and interactive content themed around culture and sports.

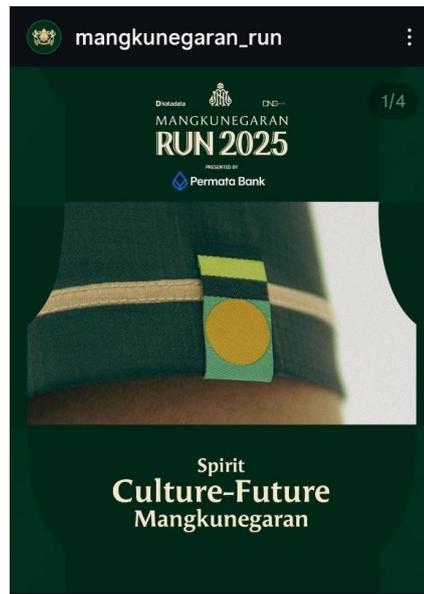
- *Advertising and Visual Communication*

One of the most prominent IMC elements identified in the event was advertising, particularly in the form of visual communication embedded within event attributes. According to Belch et al. (2020), advertising in IMC serves to deliver consistent symbolic messages that reinforce brand identity.

In Mangkunegaran Run 2025, the official jersey functioned as a key advertising medium. The placement of binary digits (1 and 0) on the left sleeve symbolized adaptability across eras and simultaneously formed the number ten, representing Mangkunegara X's leadership generation. The use of pereanom (Mataram green) and yellow conveyed cultural heritage, authority, and decisiveness, while the golden circular motif symbolized energy and continuity. These visual elements were not decorative but served as symbolic advertising devices that communicated the Culture–Future narrative consistently across participants.



**Figure 1.** Advertising and visual communication: The philosophy of the jersey design of Mangkunegaran Run 2025 (Instagram, 2025b)



**Figure 2.** Advertising and Visual Communication: The spirit of Culture-Future Mangkunegaran on the jersey design (Instagram, 2025b)

Similarly, the medal design reinforced visual messaging. Inspired by the Mangkunegaran Legion emblem, the medal symbolized discipline and perseverance, while the lanyard's traditional color scheme referenced the samir worn by abdi dalem. These visual components extended advertising beyond conventional media, embedding brand messages directly into participant-owned objects.

• *Public Relations and Publicity*

Public relations and publicity constituted another significant IMC component in Mangkunegaran Run 2025. Media coverage from local and national outlets, along with collaborations involving municipal stakeholders, positioned the event as both a cultural and tourism-oriented initiative. The organization of Mangkunegaran Run 2025 involved collaboration with Katadata as one of the strategic media partners, strengthening the event's visibility and credibility within the national media landscape. Public relations activities play a critical role in enhancing credibility and legitimacy through third-party endorsement (Belch, 2020).

In addition to Katadata, Mangkunegaran Run 2025 was supported by a network of prominent national and local media outlets, including Bisnis Indonesia, IDN Times, Kumparan, and other print, digital, radio, and community-based media partners. This extensive media partnership ecosystem enabled consistent framing of Mangkunegaran Run as an event that revitalizes cultural heritage while contributing to Solo's urban identity. Such framing reinforced Mangkunegaran's institutional image as a living cultural entity rather than a static historical site, aligning with the broader objectives of cultural branding and creative economy promotion.

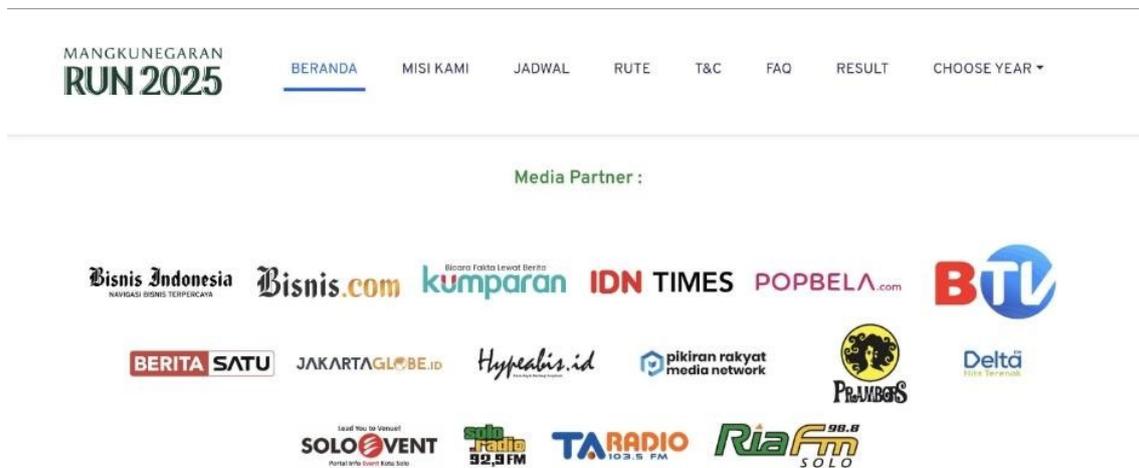


Figure 3. Media Partners of Mangkunegaran Run 2025 (Mangkunegaran Run, 2025)

The findings indicate that Mangkunegaran Run was consistently framed in media narratives as an event that revitalized cultural heritage while contributing to Solo's urban identity. This framing strengthened Mangkunegaran's institutional image as a living cultural entity rather than a static historical site, aligning with the broader objective of cultural branding.

• Sales Promotion and Experiential Incentives

Sales promotion elements were identified through the provision of tangible participant incentives, including race packs, medals, door prizes, and supporting facilities. These elements functioned not merely as participation rewards, but as experiential incentives that increased event attractiveness. In addition, sales promotion strategies were extended beyond the event space through the use of high-visibility outdoor media. Promotional content for Mangkunegaran Run 2025 was displayed on a videotron at Bundaran HI, one of Jakarta's most strategic and symbolic urban intersections, for approximately 30 days prior to the event (H-30). This prolonged exposure aimed to build awareness and anticipation among urban audiences, particularly running communities in Jakarta as a key national target market.



**Figure 4.** Promotional videotron display of Mangkunegaran Run 2025 at Bundaran HI, 30 Days Prior to the Event (Instagram, 2025b)

To further enhance engagement, the organizers introduced a participatory challenge encouraging the public to take photographs in front of the videotron and share them on social media. This approach transformed conventional outdoor advertising into an interactive promotional activity that combined visibility with audience participation. In IMC terms, sales promotion encourages immediate participation while reinforcing brand engagement. In the context of Mangkunegaran Run 2025, the integration of symbolic race attributes, experiential rewards, prolonged high-visibility promotion, and interactive challenges strengthened participants' emotional attachment to the event and amplified its cultural meaning beyond the local context (Belch, 2020).

- *Personal Selling and Community Engagement*

Personal selling was observed through the involvement of running communities, volunteers, and event ambassadors who acted as direct communicators between organizers and potential participants. These actors functioned as informal opinion leaders, disseminating information and persuading peers within social networks. The enthusiasm for Mangkunegaran Run 2025 was deliberately cultivated as early as three months prior to the event through a series of Road to Mangkunegaran Run 2025

activities. These initiatives included community gatherings and group running sessions that enabled direct interaction between organizers and running communities.

The Road to Mangkunegaran Run 2025 activities were conducted not only in Solo but also in major urban centers such as Jakarta and Yogyakarta, extending interpersonal engagement beyond the local context. This interpersonal dimension reinforced trust and authenticity, particularly within niche communities such as running groups, where peer influence and face-to-face interaction play a decisive role in participation decisions. Through sustained community-based engagement, personal selling functioned as a strategic communication tool that strengthened relational ties and encouraged active participation in the event.



**Figure 5.** Community event called Road to Mangkunegaran Run 2025 in Jakarta (Instagram, 2025b)

- **Digital and Social Media Marketing**

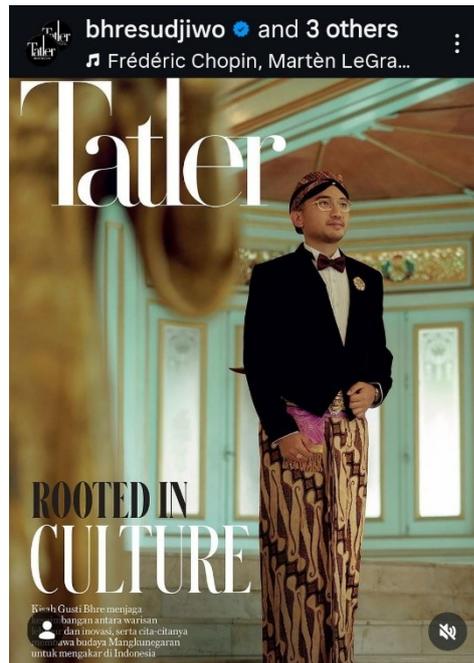
Digital and social media marketing emerged as a dominant communication channels not only for promoting Mangkunegaran Run 2025, but also for communicating the broader cultural vision and philosophical foundation underlying the event. Digital platforms were strategically used to bring the Culture–Future concept closer to the public, enabling audiences to engage with the deeper cultural meaning behind Mangkunegaran Run rather than perceiving it solely as a sporting event. Official Instagram accounts, websites, and video content consistently articulated the Culture–Future narrative through visual storytelling, countdown campaigns, and post-event documentation. These digital platforms functioned as key touchpoints for disseminating cultural symbols and reinforcing the event’s identity to a wider audience.



**Figure 6.** *The Culture–Future Vision Promoted Through the Official Pura Mangkunegaran Account (Instagram, 2025a)*

Beyond institutional accounts, Mangkunegara X actively utilized his personal digital presence to promote Mangkunegaran Run 2025 and amplify public engagement. This included sharing promotional content through Instagram Stories and reposting user-generated content from participants and community members who tagged him in their posts related to the event. Such practices strengthened the visibility of the event while fostering a sense of closeness and interaction between cultural leadership and the public.

In addition, Mangkunegara X consistently communicated the Culture–Future vision through formal dialogue forums, talk shows, official social media channels of Pura Mangkunegaran, and media publications profiling his leadership and cultural initiatives. According to IMC principles, digital platforms enable message repetition, interaction, and audience engagement across multiple contexts. The findings indicate that digital communication extended the event experience beyond physical space, allowing the Culture–Future narrative to circulate continuously before, during, and after the event, There by strengthening public familiarity and emotional connection with Mangkunegaran’s cultural identity.



**Figure 7.** *The Culture–Future vision communicated by Mangkunegara X in Media Publications (Instagram, 2025a)*

• *Event Experience as Cultural Branding Practice*

Beyond individual IMC tools, the findings reveal that participant experience itself functioned as a central communication medium. The integration of UMKM bazaars, traditional and contemporary music performances, photo spots, and ritual elements such as Umbul Donga transformed participation into an immersive cultural encounter. The running ticket was also bundled with access to a music concert titled Laras Hati, featuring nationally recognized artists such as Bernadya, Souljah, and Maliq & D'Essentials. This bundling strategy extended the event experience beyond sport, positioning it as a cultural festival that combined physical activity, popular culture, and local identity.

In addition, the event featured a culinary exhibition titled Makan Makan, showcasing traditional food and beverages characteristic of Solo, alongside a main entertainment stage presenting various traditional dance and music performances. These performances were organized in collaboration with the Surakarta City Government and surrounding regional authorities, reinforcing institutional support for cultural preservation. From a Cultural Branding perspective (Holt, 2004), these experiential practices functioned as ritual actions through which cultural meaning was enacted rather than merely communicated. The event enabled participants to live the

Culture–Future narrative, bridging tradition and modernity through embodied and multisensory experiences.

Overall, the results demonstrate that Mangkunegaran Run 2025 operated as an integrated communication system in which advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, digital marketing, and experiential engagement functioned synergistically. These IMC elements collectively conveyed cultural symbolism while simultaneously promoting creative economic participation through UMKM involvement.

The findings confirm that Mangkunegaran Run 2025 was not simply a sporting event, but a strategic cultural communication practice that translated heritage-based values into contemporary public experiences and economic opportunities.

## *2. Cultural Branding and the Construction of the Culture–Future Narrative*

From a Cultural Branding perspective, Holt's framework provides an interpretive lens to understand how the cultural values of Mangkunegaran are transformed into a distinctive cultural brand identity. The Culture–Future narrative promoted by Mangkunegara X does not operate merely as a slogan or promotional tagline, but as a cultural myth that responds to contemporary tensions between tradition and modernity. In Holt's terms, strong cultural brands emerge when they articulate meanings that resonate with collective anxieties and aspirations within a specific historical context. In this case, Culture–Future positions cultural heritage not as a relic of the past, but as a living foundation for present-day creativity, innovation, and public participation. This narrative reframes Mangkunegaran as an institution capable of engaging modern audiences while remaining grounded in inherited values.

The construction of this cultural brand is reinforced through symbolic and experiential practices embedded within Mangkunegaran Run 2025. Visual symbols such as binary digits, pereinom color schemes, and circular motifs function as cultural signifiers that translate abstract philosophical ideas into tangible forms. These symbols are further activated through participant experiences, including involvement in the running event, interaction with UMKM bazaars, attendance at cultural performances, and participation in ritual elements. Rather than being passively consumed, cultural meaning is enacted through embodied experience, allowing participants to internalize the Culture–Future narrative. In line with Holt's argument, these ritualized practices transform Mangkunegaran Run 2025 into a cultural arena where tradition and modernity are negotiated and reconciled. Consequently, the event succeeds in constructing a cultural brand identity that carries both emotional resonance and commercial relevance, strengthening Mangkunegaran's position within the contemporary creative economy.

**Tabel 2. Cultural Branding framework based on Douglas Holt (Holt, 2004)**

<b>Key Aspect</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>General Example</b>
<b>Cultural Ideology</b>	The brand promotes specific cultural values or a vision that is relevant to society.	Harley-Davidson promotes an ideology of freedom and rebellion.
<b>Myth (Cultural Narrative)</b>	Stories or myths constructed by the brand to connect products with social identity.	Coca-Cola's narrative of happiness and togetherness.
<b>Cultural Icon</b>	The brand's product or symbols become visual representations of cultural values.	Apple as an icon of creativity and innovation.
<b>Consumption Rituals</b>	The ways consumers use products as part of everyday cultural practices.	Starbucks' coffee-drinking ritual as an urban lifestyle practice.
<b>Public Engagement</b>	Consumer participation in strengthening brand narratives through communities and media.	Lego fan communities creating creative works.
<b>Emotional Resonance</b>	The brand builds emotional bonds with audiences through symbols and experiences.	Nike's Just Do It slogan motivating personal achievement

Based on the key aspects of Cultural Branding proposed by Holt, the following analysis applies these conceptual dimensions to the case of Mangkunegaran Run 2025. Rather than treating cultural branding as an abstract framework, this study examines how each aspect, cultural ideology, myth, cultural icon, consumption ritual, public engagement, and emotional resonance, is operationalized through concrete communication practices and participant experiences within the event. This comparative approach enables a systematic assessment of how Mangkunegaran Run 2025 functions as a cultural brand by translating inherited cultural values into contemporary forms of meaning, interaction, and public participation.

**Table 3.** *Implementation of the Cultural Branding Framework Based on Douglas Holt in Mangkunegaran Run 2023 (Source: Processed by the Author)*

<b>Key Aspect</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
<b>Cultural Ideology</b>	The Culture–Future vision that integrates tradition and modernity.
<b>Myth (Cultural Narrative)</b>	The running event as a symbol of a cross-generational cultural journey.
<b>Cultural Icon</b>	The jersey, medal, and Mangkunegaran’s visual symbols.
<b>Consumption Rituals</b>	Participation in the running race and UMKM bazaar as modern cultural practices.
<b>Public Engagement</b>	Running communities, volunteers, and UMKM as communication agents.
<b>Emotional Resonance</b>	A festive cultural atmosphere that fosters local pride and collective identity.

The IMC and Cultural Branding in Mangkunegara X's communication strategy demonstrates a model of cultural leadership that is adaptive to modern dynamics. IMC explains the mechanisms of consistent cross-channel communication, while Cultural Branding emphasizes how cultural values are transformed into a strong brand identity. Together, these frameworks complement each other in explaining the success of Mangkunegaran Run 2025 as a cross-generational communication platform that not only reinforces the image of Javanese culture but also stimulates the growth of the local creative economy.

Accordingly, this discussion confirms that the study of Mangkunegara X's communication strategy is relevant both academically and practically. From an academic

perspective, this research contributes to the literature on cultural communication that adapts to modernity. From a practical perspective, the findings offer insights for traditional cultural institutions and creative economy actors regarding the importance of integrated communication strategies in promoting cultural values while simultaneously supporting economic growth.

*b. Discussion*

From the perspective of IMC, communication effectiveness is achieved when visual elements, experiential components, and media publications operate consistently to reinforce a unified identity message. The findings of this study demonstrate that Mangkunegaran Run 2025 successfully integrated physical attributes of the event, such as jerseys and medals, with experiential components including UMKM bazaars, stage performances, and curated photo spots. Together, these elements conveyed a coherent message positioning Pura Mangkunegaran as a cultural institution that remains relevant in the modern era while actively contributing to the local creative economy. This confirms the IMC principle that cross-channel integration, encompassing both offline experiences and digital communication, generates message synergy that enhances audience awareness and engagement (Belch, 2020)

These findings extend the work of Mon et al (2024) who identified the potential of Pura Mangkunegaran as a creative economic attraction through product diversification and collaboration within the tourism sector. While their study emphasized strategic recommendations derived from SWOT analysis, it did not examine how communication components within cultural events function as integrative instruments. This research addresses that conceptual gap by demonstrating how IMC tools, advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, and digital marketing, operate collectively within a single event to activate cultural meaning and economic participation.

From a Cultural Branding perspective, Mangkunegaran Run 2025 functioned not merely as a promotional platform, but as a cultural arena where meaning was constructed and enacted through symbolic and experiential practices. The design of the jersey featuring Culture–Future symbols, the medal inspired by the Mangkunegaran Legion emblem, and the integration of traditional and contemporary performances exemplify brand storytelling processes that transform abstract cultural values into lived experiences. In line with Holt's (2004) framework, these elements operate as cultural myths and rituals that enable participants to internalize the Culture–Future narrative, positioning Mangkunegaran as a living cultural brand that bridges tradition and modernity.

Beyond symbolic construction, the event also generated tangible socio-economic outcomes. Mangkunegaran Run 2025 attracted more than 5,000 participants, contributing to increased economic activity for local businesses in Solo. Data from the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) Solo Chapter indicate that hotels, particularly two- and three-star establishments near the event area, experienced full occupancy during the event period. These findings suggest that cultural-sport events,

when strategically communicated, can function as effective instruments for stimulating local creative economies alongside cultural preservation (Prabowo, 2025).

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations. As the analysis primarily relies on observation and documentation, insights into the internal motivations and strategic decision-making processes of the communication team remain inferential. Future research incorporating in-depth interviews with event organizers, cultural leaders, and key stakeholders would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how strategic communication decisions are formulated and implemented.

For cultural policymakers and practitioners, Mangkunegaran Run 2025 offers a valuable model of how integrated communication strategies and experiential design can enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of the local creative economy. Structural support in the form of policy alignment, funding mechanisms, and empowerment of small and medium enterprises (UMKM) is therefore essential to amplify the long-term cultural and economic impact of similar initiatives.

### CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Mangkunegaran Run 2025 functions as an effective cultural communication platform through the integration of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Cultural Branding strategies. The findings demonstrate that Mangkunegara X successfully translates cultural values into a coherent communication practice that combines symbolic representation, immersive public experience, and cross-channel messaging. Through this integrated approach, Mangkunegaran Run 2025 not only reinforces the relevance of Javanese cultural identity in a modern context but also contributes to the stimulation of the local creative economy. Overall, the study confirms that strategic communication plays a critical role in enabling traditional cultural institutions to adapt to contemporary dynamics while sustaining cultural meaning and economic value.

### BIODATA

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