

# The Development of Youth Creativity based on Local Wisdom in Surakarta

**Figur Rahman Fuad**

*Faculty of Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret*

*Email: [figurrahmanfuad@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:figurrahmanfuad@staff.uns.ac.id)*

**Adam Wahida**

*Faculty of Education, Universitas Sebelas Maret*

Received Date: 1 September 2019

Accepted Date: 4 September 2019

Available Online: 11 November 2019

## ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the mapping of the youngsters and environment potential at Joyoraharjan, Surakarta. These traditional art-based potentials are developed in the participatory design to gain new perspective on interpreting the local wisdom. The method used is under research and development (R&D) design with the following stages: 1) research and information collecting, 2) planning, 3) preliminary product development, 4) preliminary field testing, 5) main product revision, 6) main field testing, 7) operational product revision, 8) operational field testing, 9) final product revision and 10) dissemination and implementation. The data was collected through in-depth interview, participatory observation, document analysis and focus group discussion. The data is displayed in qualitative descriptive and the correlation among the variables will be analyzed using the interactive model of analysis.

**Keywords:** *Development, Youth, Creativity*

## INTRODUCTION

Surakarta is considered as one of the centers of Javanese culture. For that reason, various exemplary cultural heritages can be found there. The people in Surakarta are also close to these cultural heritages as part of their daily lives. These include *batik*, traditional dances, traditional music, *keris*, *wayang* (shadow puppet show) and literatures.

As the time passes, the fact that Surakarta is a city bound for globalization affects these cultural heritage positions along with the people's mindset which grows along the globalization that the information media and technology facilitate. In this situation, the local cultures are in a crucial position. They are about to be neglected, but on the other side they can be the basic source of the people's identity in the global era.

Meanwhile, youngsters are part of the strained situation in the community. They are the generation that lives in the local culture heritage as well as absorbing other various cultures in the global society. The young generation has to look for and find out their identity. This case must be realized by many parties. In order to keep these new identities seeking process away from the strained situation because of the conservative nature of the older generation and to keep them from being removed from their main culture.

Nevertheless, the anxiety of this condition should not be responded excessively as for each generation they have their own ways in responding to their environment and building their identity. The continuation of the old culture is in the youth's hands. What needs to be done is how to provide them with critical thinking skills and to be open minded as well as creative in interpreting the old culture into their age.

The ideas on character and identity building of a nation cannot be separated from the youth's role. They are the agents of change, having strategic roles in the exertion of national development. They will be the subjects of cultural change and development. Therefore, an understanding toward their world needs to be deepened to get them an appropriate point of view of the future without holding back their creativity and freedom.

In general, when we talk about culture, especially in Indonesia, we will be dragged into the cultural products which are essentially art expressions. This is something we cannot avoid. In fact, that understanding reduces the cultural concept. On the other hand, we can accept that in traditional arts, the values contained are part of the cultural value system in general. It means that the existence of traditional art expression is the interpretation of cultural values.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Art, Youth, and Globalization**

Art is a field that provides a wide space for creativity. Therefore, art brings a great opportunity to get the youth closer to their cultural values. Through art, the youth are hoped to be able to know the inherited local wisdom. The local wisdom contained in the traditional art expression is a good provision in facing global challenges as well as to support cultural identity that is commonly questioned in the global era. Globalization indeed contains paradox, at one side there is cultural fusion, while on the other side people or community try to find and hold authentic identity not to be carried out in this global era. Modernization and development have caused people to lose old realities and the wisdoms attached, which are supposed to be more valuable for the self-development, such as togetherness, beauty, spirituality, morality and community (Piliang, 1999: 29).

The exact same thing happens when we talk about art itself. Primadi Tabrani (1999: 1-4) states that in the global era, an art product is not enough to only fulfill the international standard, it must contain local features. It will be beneficial in preserving traditional arts and will also develop the tradition-based art in competing at the global market. It implies that art needs to strengthen the local feature in this era. Thus, local wisdom needs to be utilized as the spirit to give power and enhancement to the art itself.

Joyoraharjan, one of the regions in Surakarta, has similarities to the nearby regions. This implies that it equally inherits the Javanese tradition as the other regions do. However, Joyoraharjan has several specific potentials to be developed. The geographical location, history and sociological aspect of this region make it possible to be the model of creative *kampung* (region) in Surakarta. Therefore, an investigation was carried out in mapping out the potentials of this region. The elder generation was the resource person for the historical information, while the youth were to convert the values of the traditional wisdom in the region into a new form.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Surakarta. Specifically, the art creation process during the study took place in Joyoraharjan. Participatory observation and document analysis were used to gain deeper information on the creative potentials of the youth and the local culture values in Surakarta, especially those that are connected to various traditional arts. The results of the investigation become the source for creating a model on youth creativity development. The design of this study is a research-based development that applies the following steps: 1) information collecting, 2) preliminary form of product development, 3) preliminary product testing, 4) main product revision, 5) main field testing, and 6) dissemination (Borg and Gall, 2003: 775).

## FINDINGS

### The Dynamic Development of the Community in Surakarta

A city consists of housing area (*kampung* or village), working area (industry, market and service), cultural social activity area (education, health, worship place and government) and recreational area, which are connected one to another through roads, rivers and other public spaces. Those areas with their locality can be explored and empowered to be a generator in running a city's development (Priyatmono, 2013: 69).

The Surakarta City Government has accommodated the creative potential of the community by holding various festivals such as the *Jenang* Solo Festival, *Gethek* Festival, *Cultural Kirab*, *Solo Menari* (dancing festival) and others. However, if the exploration of creative potential does not touch the creative potential of the grassroots community, then the activities have less impact on increasing the creativity of the community. The majority of the population will only become spectators.

The orientation towards the form of festival becomes the main foundation for the community involvement. These efforts are mainly based on the branding interests of Surakarta. Although the organizers have made efforts to empower the community by holding workshops to the community (Rizqino, 2015: 10), while from the aspect of branding and tourism these workshops may be an effective approach, from the point of view of empowering people's creativity, the approach is unidirectional and does not make the community the initiator of their own artistic activities. The community wants to participate in mapping out their own potential and needs. In this way, the efforts to build the characteristics of the city are not only oriented towards imaging problems but also touch the root of the problems that exist in the society.

Efforts to develop creativity in the village of Joyoraharjan were carried out collaboratively by villagers who were dominated by teenagers and a research team consisting of students. The team of researchers in this case acts as facilitators. The concepts and ideas for developing creativity are entirely left to the results of joint discussions conducted with the community members. This approach aims to make citizens aware and active subjects in developing their own creativity so that the results achieved are in accordance with their abilities and needs. The results of the collaboration resulted in several activities that have been carried out as part of efforts to develop creativity.

## The *Kampung* History in Mural Project

Joyoraharjan village is located adjacent to Ledoksari and Jebres Station. The majority of the people work as traders in the market. The location of the village is very strategic because it is located not far from the city center, therefore from time to time people arrive and bring colors to the village.

The location of the settlement in Joyoraharjan is quite dense with alleys as a flow of traffic for its inhabitants. In the discussions that existed between the researcher and the villagers, the possibility of working on a mural project to change the image of the village visually was discussed. This idea was agreed upon and the area to be worked on was the walls along the alley, both from the west side close to the Ledoksari market and from the south side.

After a mural technical workshop for village youth, interviews were conducted with village elders to explore the history of the village. The process was accompanied by several students who were also street artists in Surakarta. The process resulted in an agreement that at one point of the wall, at the entrance to the south, a mural would be made depicting K.R.H. Kusuma Tanoyo who is a central figure in the history of Joyoraharjan village.

This history begins with K.R.M.A. Purwodiningrat who was an advocate at the Surakarta Hadiningrat palace government office had great power and influence in the reign of Sri Susuhunan Pakubuwana X which in Javanese was called Sampeyandalem Inggang Sinuhun Kangjeng Susuhunan Pakubuwana X (Raja Kasunanan Surakarta Hadiningrat who ruled between 1893 – 1939). Despite having a tough task from the palace, he always paid attention to the lower class people around him. The village he led is called Purwodiningratan, which is now the name of a village which covers ten RWs (groups). In order to improve the welfare of his citizens he also moved Kawedanan from the old place to the new place which is now located at Jalan Suryo No. 55 (Nur Fathoni, 2017: 28).

During his reign there were community leaders and servants of the charismatic Surakarta Hadiningrat Sunanate who became the role models of the people named Mbah Joyoraharjo so that his name was made into the name of a village in RW X (Kampung Joyoraharjan). The name has the intention or hope that his descendants and the entire population will be prosperous forever. Tracing the history to a figure named K.R.H. Kusuma Tanoyo as someone who is still relatively well known by the older generation living in Joyoraharjan village, his figure and role for the Joyoraharjan community made the residents agree to make it part of the village history mural.

The historical mural painted on the entrance wall to the southern village besides portraying the character K.R.H. Kusuma Tanoyono, it also describes the art of *lesung*, the atmosphere of the market and the village environment. Not only murals of village history, teenagers also made murals with other themes such as education and tolerance. They also cleaned the shoulders and rivers that flow in their village.

The joint mural activity drastically changed the face of Joyoraharjan village. The walls of people's homes look full of various interesting images. The mural opened a new dialogue space among the residents. It is not only the communication space that is opened, but also the physical space. Cleaning the river and decorating it with murals and parks makes the previously dirty riverbanks an attractive and comfortable place as a shared space for leisure time.



Figure 1 The mural project

### **Kampung Tradition Heritage as the Inspiration**

Joyoraharjan has an art called *GejluK Lesung*. The history of the *GejluK Lesung* art in Joyoraharjan village was initiated by K.R.H (Kanjeng Raden Haryo) Kusuma Tanoyo. He is a pioneer and activist of *GejluK Lesung* music in his village (now Joyoraharjan RW X). He often holds *Ruwatan* events to get rid of *sukerta* (problems). *Ruwatan* version K.R.H. Kusuma Tanoyo did not play *wayang kulit* like a *ruwatan* known to the general public, but the *wayang kulit* play with the play 'Murkala' was replaced with dances of the same title accompanied by the music of *GejluK Lesung*. He invited young people and local residents to preserve the art of *GejluK lesung* music so that it would not disappear in the Joyoraharjan village. Their enthusiasm was shown during the practices led directly by K.R.H. Kusuma Tanoyo. This in itself becomes the pride of Joyoraharjan residents who have potentials that need to be passed on to the next generation so that this heritage will be preserved.

*GejluK Lesung* is music that is played by hitting *lesung* (mortar) with *alu* (pestle). *Lesung* is a traditional tool for separating rice from its skin. *Lesung* is made of solid wood with varying lengths. Usually *lesung* measures between two to three meters. The wood that is often used as a material for making it is tamarind wood, jackfruit and sapodilla wood. On the other hand, *alu* or the pounder is made of hard wooden sticks, resilient so as not to break easily. Wood that is often used for *alu* is tamarind wood, sapodilla, *lamtoro* (Chinese *petai*) and teak. Stick-shaped *alu* is one and a half to two meters with approximately 8-10 cm diameter and a dented part so it is easy to handle. The strains of *alu* and *lesung* collisions are very harmonious when combined with *dolanan* songs sung by teenagers.

To this day, *GejluK Lesung* is still preserved by village youth. In general they do not know the organology of *lesung* itself. Based on their habits they found out the differences in the sounds produced by *lesung*. They also learn how to produce certain sounds with special *alu* blows and all of them are self-taught.

This music is always played in various joint activities such as independence commemoration, welcoming guests and *Karangtaruna* activities. It is indeed an unusual sight to see a musical performance with *alu* and *lesung* that is a typical culture of the farmers in the central city village that does not have any fields. However, with this simple music still being played, residents of Joyoraharjan village always feel connected to the history of their village in the past.

The efforts of adolescents to preserve the tradition of *gejluk* were also developed by looking at the visual aspects of *lesung*. The results of discussions with researchers made a group of teenagers want to make a miniature *lesung* with fiberglass. In order to achieve this goal, a workshop for making miniature *lesung* statues with fiberglass was held. This miniature is projected as one of the leading souvenirs produced by the community as a result of the development of craft-making.

### **Kampung Festival: Local Wisdom in Youth Creativity**

Seeing the various potentials that exist in Joyoraharjan village, the direction of the development of creativity based on local wisdom that has been carried out by conducting workshops to villagers continues to be improved. The workshop participants consisted of various ages. The workshop was held based on the results of discussions between villagers and researchers in mapping out the village's potential. Finally, a number of discussions and workshops were held in the Joyoraharjan village. Among the workshops held were screen printing workshops, sculpture-making with fiberglass workshop, painting and mural workshops, as well as workshops to build parks in the village environment. All workshops held in the village besides aiming to improve the technical abilities of the villagers also aim to increase the aesthetic sensitivity of the villagers in seeing the potential of their environment. All activities are carried out in a participatory manner by giving space to the village community to convey their ideas.

The result of the workshop was an increase in the ability of residents to produce art products. For this reason, an idea was mooted in the direction of holding a village festival, namely the *Kampung Festival*. This was described as a village festival that was held mainly aimed to strengthen solidarity among the villagers. This festival also aimed to open a network in order to add strength to get the target to be addressed. Social relations are the driving factors needed for joint activities to take place.

The movement to build social relations in community-based communities began to emerge as a result of the needs of the community itself. One way is to hold an event both in collaboration or to hold an event in an independent manner. In this initial activity, residents of Joyoraharjan village held an internal event. The main purpose of the movement of Joyoraharjan villagers is not to achieve an existence recognized by the outside world. They consider this merely an effect as the most important thing for them is the development of new social relations between villagers through various artistic activities. At the same time they have tried to unite a common idea whose expression can be read as part of their community's identity.

This village festival involved almost all residents by displaying works of art made by residents such as paintings, murals, musical performances as well as several handicraft products which are the results of several workshops held. In addition to the products in the form of arts and crafts, the festival also intended to show that the village has opened a new public space that focuses on the interests of community learning in the form of public libraries, art workshops and environmental improvement by cleaning up the river and building parks along the river banks. The festival targeted visitors from surrounding villages and also from government and educational institutions. This is expected to be the beginning of a mutually supportive relationship for the continuation of the community empowerment process at the grassroots level so that it can continue and develop well and sustainably.



**Figure 2 Kids playing traditional games at the festival**



**Figure 3 The art exhibition during the festival**

## **CONCLUSION**

In the global association and looking for cultural boundaries, the community effort through improving local wisdom-based creativity which took place in Joyoraharjan has become a challenging choice. Putting the traditional art which is full of the locality as the base for creativity is the right choice. It will all connect the community with their own history and the important values to preserve which are togetherness and mutual cooperation.

Adopting the local wisdom as the guidelines in working does not mean to stay conservative and closed. Instead, it is more expressive in a different way and it is also be able to prove that despite the fast development of information and technology, local wisdom does not lose its relevance as long as it is studied and understood as a dynamic matter. With creativity, the local wisdom that has been embedded within the community can be the source of the way of life and the way people conserve it is rather a unique thing.

## REFERENCES

Borg, W. R and Gall, M. D. (2003). *Educational Research: An Introduction (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Boston: Pearson Education.

Nur Fathoni, E. (2017). *Bersama Merawat Sejarah*. In Buku Dokumentasi Art Educare #8: Side by Side. Surakarta: Unpublished.

Piliang, Y. A. (1999). *Sebuah Dunia yang Dilipat Realitas Kebudayaan Menjelang Millenium Ketiga Dan Matinya Posmodernisme*. Bandung: Mizan.

Priyatmono, A. F. (2013). Dari Wisata Kreatif Menuju Solo Kota Kreatif.. *Sinektika*, 13 (2), 69.

Spradley, J. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York; Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Tabrani, P. (1999). *Menggali Konsep Kriya Tradisi untuk Keunggulan Seni Rupa Indonesia Masa Depan*. Conference Article of Kriyadan Rekayasa at ITB Bandung.