

## CHARACTER BUILDING BY MEANS OF TRADITIONAL ARTS

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### Abstract

Indonesia has been blessed with a rich cultural heritages that consequently needs to be preserved and developed by the existing and future generations. The arts education is believed to have a strategic potential in labouring human resources, who would be able in return to appreciate the arts, and to maintain cultural identity. In capacity as a corroboration of such an exegesis theory, the aforesaid figure may possess a courtesy behavior in society, as to respect the traditional values, to peacefully stepping on the heavenly stairways toward global competition, in terms of the ability to earn living through their art-works creativity. Discourse on arts education in public school will naturally implement a unique learning process described in the local contents, where students imitate the instruction and obtain the esthetical experience in making the arts into practice. It is for that reason, an adequate learning process in arts requires not only the knowledge and skill alone, but the esthetical sincerity as well, in which students will have the opportunity to develop their own personal styles, based on the values of their cultural heritages. Therefore, the esthetical experience within a traditional culture for all generations is a *conditio sine qua non* to strive for a nation and character building.

**Keywords:** *Character building, traditional arts, cultural heritage*

### A. AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Art education is presented at all levels of undergraduate education from kindergarten to higher education, in formal, non-formal, and informal education with a competency-based instructional purpose of art. The learning process of art is unique, because it contains the principle of partnership between educators and students in providing knowledge and skills in the classroom, and shared experiences in the art activities outside the classroom. The art learning by using a structured imitative method can direct the students to gain aesthetic experience in appreciating the appearance. Aesthetic experience for all children in school age is a keyword for efforts to establish the character of their future as the next generation so that they can have good behavior, commendable, and dignified.

Aesthetic experience will be embedded more deeply when each traditional art background of culture is presented as local content lesson to the students through the learning process in schools. To that end, traditional art education is believed have the potential to develop the character of the students because the principle of unity in the learning process, beside of the potential to develop the students' character who uphold the nation's culture, respect the diversity of art, have a sense of patriotism, and concern for the fate of the nation future.

Aesthetic experience through traditional arts will also develop the character that provides a starting point for those who take the direction of higher education of art in doing research and produce art works. The characters also provide opportunities for those who engage the profession as a traditional artist, so they are not only professional in the field and gain public recognition for his achievements but also able to support himself through his art.

### B. LEARNING METHOD

Art education is presented at all levels of undergraduate education requires vary teaching methods, according to the substance of the art itself, namely: (1) art as a positivistic science; (2) art as a human creation; (3) art as a hermeneutic statement (Ganap, 2011: 61). The substance of art as learning materials in public schools has more substance content of science, so that the teaching methods that are used is quantitative. The art substance as teaching materials in art schools have more artistic content in produce a humane artwork (Blacking 1974: 3-31), in the meaning of artwork are designed, created, and perceived by humans, so the teaching methods which is used are more qualitative. The substance of the highest artistic is the learning material that is presented by a master craftsman, a hermeneutic statement that the master cannot be denied or disputed, because the teaching method which is used is the interpretative method from the master himself.

Art education has a strategic role through the use of quantitative methods for communicating art in public schools, especially in provide a learning experience that contains the aesthetic to the students. When art is experienced and understood aesthetically, that experience will give you satisfaction and happiness which never be gained from other experiences in human life. Aesthetic experience intake at the school on an ongoing basis will provide balance to the development emotional intelligence and reasoning power of the students in their development (Reimer 1970: 85).

Similarly, the learning process in the art school which demands the resulting of artwork, qualitative methods can be used proportion, not limited by narrow subjectivity, and artistic distrust to the talented and

achievement students. The sincerity of aesthetic can seem from the sincerity to share all the experience and expertise of art to the students, without the ambition to achieve a hermeneutic art degree of masters. Art educators' happiness solely lies on their students' achievement as an academic artist of virtuosi, a pride sense from the heart to their students' achievement which is not impossible to far exceed the capacity of educators.

### C. TRADITION AND ART EDUCATION

An arts subject in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools is integrated *kertakes* material between craft and art. The goal is to produce students which have an appreciation of art, as a complement of the knowledge that they have learned. The new paradigm of undergraduate art education in 2007 has redefined the profession in a subject of art based on competency assessment, creation, presentation, management, and formulation about teacher competencies, which include the ability to: (1) apply the principles of pedagogy and psychology; (2) master the material of the arts in public schools; (3) develop the creative potential of the students; (4) utilize many kind of art learning techniques; (5) cultural appreciation; (6) understand the creative process; (7) utilize a variety of technical documentation and presentations; (8) develop a personality and professionalism as an art teacher; (9) adaptive with change (Kunaefi et al. 2007: 23).

The diversity types of traditional arts that exist throughout the archipelago should be preserved proportionally according to their regions. If the arts subjects in the curriculum can be presented nationally, the traditional arts subjects in the curriculum should be presented as *muatan lokal*. Thus, the content of *muatan lokal* that is taught in primary and secondary schools are differ in each region, so that students in the area will get their local tradition art lesson through *muatan lokal* that is taught in schools. The learning tradition art through *muatan lokal* at school is the only alternative that is able to pass on the art traditions to the next generation, so that they are not rundown of their cultural roots itself in the center of the global culture swift with advances in information technology.

### D. TRADITION AND ART RESEARCH

Based on the observation, the study of art in Indonesia has not been able to explore the identity and the potential traditional art maximally, due to the behavior of indigenous researchers who are not productive in researching the cultural assets of the archipelago. It is not surprising that the abounding culture and the unique archipelago art tradition became an interest material object for foreign researchers. This phenomenon affects the scarcity result of the indigenous researchers which is published in the periodical international scientific. Moreover, in doing art traditions research, indigenous researchers still rely on methods of analysis and evaluation techniques from the West, so the substance of art itself is neglected, marginalized, even excluded. The native researchers too rely on positivistic thinking, so that the result of their research is only touch that skin deep and unable to communicate in intensity with the tradition spirit of the art itself. The native researchers also bound using the traditional methods to read and write, which is in contrast with the heritage cultural of oral tradition. The native researchers also obsessed levels validity of data obtained through the *etic* approach that relies on the analysis of questionnaires, rather than building a two-way verbal communication with the speakers in the field.

Art tradition has a figure that is more integrated in various symbolic forms which sometimes cannot be analyzed in academic. Art tradition is not know dichotomy between dance, drama, and music as well as in the West, because art is a tradition that held a whole dimension of verbal, kinesthetic, *sonoris*, and visually integral (Nattiez 1990: 59). During this time, it is believed that the study of science can help the literacy tradition that can be presented in the various forms of symbolic form of letters, sketches, or notation. However, the art studies that use the oral tradition requires a paradigm multicultural and indigenous ethnicity, in the sense that: (1) the researcher must analysis that each civilization of culture has a equality degrees, although differ in accentuation; (2) the researcher must come from realm of the traditional art culture where it was born; (3) the researcher must master the oral traditions and local language from the communities that have been studied; (4) the researcher must know about the habitat and local intelligence of the material object that she/he is examined; (5) the researcher must use an *emic* approach to resource as an effective field research method (Ganap 2012: 157).

### E. ART TRADITION AND CREATIVITY

The study of applied art is an essentially process of the artwork designing of the artists creativity. According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory, creativity *novelti* only be generated, if there is an interaction between the artist according to his personal background, the realm of culture, and supporter community in the field (Sternberg 1999: 315). Creativity in the traditional art is defined as a person's ability to produce creation *novelti* which is according to the rules of the realm of culture, and it can adapt to face many obstacles. *Novelti* creation with high originality begins with the transmission of information from the realm of culture with different rules contained to the individual artists. The information was then stimulates the birth of ideas and creative ideas of the artist. The idea was developed into a *novelti* according to the capacity and background

habitat and *habitus* of the artist. *Novelti* in the form of art will gain the evaluation of community supporters on the field. Society will select the artist's *novelti* artwork, and the selected creation will be received back in its original cultural domain as artwork with original *novelti* and able to create the new rules in the culture realm.

#### F. TRADITION AND RELIGIOUS ART

The consideration of religious principle is very important for traditional artists, because art has a tradition of involvement in religious services, but with a different understanding. Christian view believes that sing well in worship has twice the value of prayer, according to the fatwa of St. Augustine in the 5th century (Jay Grout 1980: 27). Fatwas were successful in improving the quality of worship and make the Church music as the roots of Western classical music. Islamic view distinguishes between art for the purpose of worship and the arts for the benefit of mankind. Art for worship is a manifestation of man's relationship with Allah (*hablum min Allah*), vertical relationships supported by *aqidah* which only justifies the art for the purpose of worship, like the art of reading the word of *qir'ah kalam Ilahi*, the call to prayer (*adzan*), the calligraphy art as an embodiment of the command *Iqro Qur'an*. Islamic Art according to Isma'il and Lois Lamya can only be expressed by the human voice in worship known as *Handasah Al-Shaut*, in contrast to the term *Musiqqa* connotes as Arabic music (Al-Faruqi 1986: 474). Art for humanity's benefit is the embodiment of human relationships with humans (*hablum min annas*), horizontal relationships are supported by logic elements, ethics, and aesthetics Islamic. At this level, art profession which is dominated by aesthetics element cannot be separated from ethics and logic elements. Aesthetics a *pesindhen* or *pendandang* in bringing local language song with nasal vocalization, related to the ethics of a woman according to oriental custom to sing while performing prostration and do not open mouth widely in public. Some Muslim scholar forbids all forms of artistic expression besides comes from word of *kalam Ilahi*, but in the Islam context as a religion that *rahmatan lil alamin*, most scholars have given recognition to the arts as a profession that is kosher, though sometimes require the protagonist, antagonist, and misogynistic characterization (*acting*) to support the script or the score that will be held in the performing arts.

#### G. ART TRADITION AND TOURISM

Based on the art development theory of Jacques Maquet, there are two categories of art based on the purpose of why the art was produced, such as: (1) *art by destination*, group of people who produce art works for their own needs; and (2) *art by metamorphosis*, the people who produce art works that deliberately created for the needs of others (Graburn 1976: 3). This traditional art nuances are more appropriate when presented to the tourists, so it can be called a tourist art. This theory can be applied to ethnic groups in the archipelago, but must go through the consideration of local community leaders, the basic foundation for artists to compose or reconstruct traditional art that originally was intended for ceremonial needs of local customs and traditions in the form of *kitsch* or tourist art packaging. The characteristics of tourist art is: (1) miniature; (2) a copy of the original; (3) short and concise; (4) not sacred; (5) full ornamentation; (6) reasonable price according to the size of the travelers budget (Sudarsono 1999: 100). This theory can be offered after a special study to avoid the adverse effects of traditional arts that are consumed by people as well as tourists.

#### H. RECOMMENDATIONS

Related to the Local Autonomy Law, the college may recommend to the Local Government to publish regional regulations about the preservation of Art Tradition in their respective regions through Education and Tourism sector, as an effective effort to build the nation's character. Preservation through Education sector is implemented the learning process in primary and secondary schools. The procedures that must to be undertaken are: (1) formulate artistic traditions and cultural heritage identity of each region; (2) develop learning materials art traditions of each region as local content in the primary and secondary schools curriculum; (3) organize workshops for art teachers to understand and master the art traditions will be taught; (4) complete the process of learning the art tradition by *waditra* and of the properties that are required base on the *muatan lokal*; (5) requires all primary and secondary schools in the region to teach the traditional arts to all students. It is hoped that the younger generation will have an understanding of the region artistic traditions, and not cut off from their cultural roots, as one of the key elements in order to form the character of the nation.

Universities also need to work with local government in preparing the packaging art tours to be presented to the tourists who visit the area. The procedures that must to be undertaken are: (1) formulate the art tradition as a cultural heritage that can be presented to the general public; (2) develop the traditional art packaging package for tourism purposes; (3) provide the location of the central tourist destination in the arts center form and crafts of traditional arts area; (4) develop a calendar of events for tourists who visit the area; (5) presents the traditional art as the travelers identity. It is hoped that the tradition of artists will increase an in

well-being, can support himself through his art, a souvenir craft, dance, music, and theater area. Wellbeing of traditional artists is important in the effort to build the nation's character.

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