
Subjects in Culture and Its Problems at School

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Abstract

Arts and culture subject plays a strategic role in establishing a harmonious individual and encouraging students to achieve multi-intelligence. The problem in arts and culture subject has been happening for a long time, even with the change of curriculum, this problem has not been solved. Arts and culture consist of 4 aspects of arts (fine arts, music, dance, and theatre), in the field, there are various combinations of the art aspects emerge. Regarding the implementation of arts and culture standardized national school examination (USBN), questions emerge on how the implementation of arts and culture according to the curriculum expectation is. All this time, the implementation still depends on the availability and compromise of the available arts and culture teachers, with various arts educational backgrounds. This research aimed at capturing the arts and culture as a subject, as well as the emerging problems in the field, related to the implementation and selection of arts aspect which needs to be obtained by the students.

Keywords: subject; arts and culture; teacher

Background of the Problems

Arts and culture subject is one of the required subjects in the elementary educational level (elementary school- junior high school) and secondary level (Senior High School- Vocational School). Although there is a curriculum change, this subject is perceived as important to be given to the students of all levels to shape student personality in terms of aesthetic potential which was believed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1994: 153) can soften the human mind, art potential can soften five senses which eventually soften the human mind, or taste sense, the condition which is significantly needed in daily life together with heterogeneous society (Kemdikbud, 2015: 2). It can be seen the importance of art subject which is unique, meaningful, and beneficial for students in developing the awareness to behave appreciatively, tolerantly in diversity so that they can live in harmony in the society (Depdiknas, 2001: 7).

Arts and culture subject has a strategic role in education, including in the esthetics subject, the improve the taste sense, ability to express and appreciative on the beauty of arts, the harmony both individual and as a society member (Sumaryadi, 2018:

103). The objectives of arts and culture education in schools are for the students to be able to: 1) understanding the concept and the importance of arts and culture, 2) showing appreciative behavior on arts and culture, 3) showing creativity through arts and culture, and 4) participate in local, regional, and global-level arts and culture (Dikdasmen, 2006: 3) which are explained through the standard of competence and basic competence.

Arts and culture consist of two different words, arts and culture, art is the beauty produced by human beings, while culture is all creation of human beings' mind power to fulfill their lives. The naming of arts and culture for arts and culture subject is actually wrong, inappropriate because, in reality, students never obtained cultural material (cultures). Meanwhile, art is one part of some cultural elements. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, arts is the results of beauty so that it moves a beautiful feeling for beholders. Therefore, human behavior which generates a beautiful feeling is art.

Literature Review

Arts and culture education can encourage students in achieving multi-intelligence, with the development of creativity in the thinking process, appreciation, or art creation (Depdiknas, 2016: 1). Art education in schools does not aim at creating artists, but for the students to experience art, both practice or merely appreciation, as an effort to foster the sense of taste, thought, and love of arts (Masunah, 2003: 249). Although, society, school, and students themselves need it. The existence of FLSSN (*Festival dan Lomba Seni Siswa Nasional*/ national student art festival and competition) demand the students' art skills including dance, vocal, music and other. As well as schools often are required to participate in regional art events. Eventually, the results of arts education are also demanded, not merely the process.

Art experience does not only change students' behavior and taste but also impacts on intellectual intelligence. Campbell in Sugiarto (2001:18) states that the students who participate in art class (music) obtain higher scores for other subjects compared to those who do not take the music class. This shows that art learning significantly influences the intellectual intelligence. This is in line with Plato's thought, that "Arts should be the basis of education". The observation conducted by Lowenfeld in Sugiarto (2015) for more than 20 years found that fine arts activities can be used to observe child development in terms of emotion, intellectual, physical, perception, social, aesthetic, and creativity. An individual's aesthetic experience supports their integrity and maturity, and eventually, it can develop creativity. All art activities including performing arts, pure arts, and literary arts always involve imagination. Creativity seeds are imaginations, therefore, with arts imagination is built and generates creativity (Broudy in Sugiarto, 2015).



Learning is an actualization of the curriculum which demand activities, creativity, and wisdom of teachers in creating and fostering student activities according to the programmed plans effectively and pleasurable (Mulyasa in BNSP, 2006: 189). The activities were planned to give learning experience which involves mental and physical processes through interaction between students, students and teachers, environment and other learning sources in order to achieve the basic competence (BNSP, 2006: 17). The most effective learning is by experiencing, trying, and searching by involving physical activity, moreover, learning arts which are added with processing tastes, physics, and thoughts. In arts learning, learning is doing (practice), by directly experiencing by seeing, exploring, and realizing, or appreciating, expressing, and ended with creation.

Sudarsa (2008: 73) states that art learning at school is the balancer between left and right brain, between creation and calculation. Activities also encourage students to optimize all their senses to learn. For example, during students learn to play *gamelan* (traditional ensemble music of Java) or dance, also during dancing, playing a role, all senses work actively. During batik or painting, the touch and visual senses are working.

Learning Arts

Human beings learn (and work) with their senses, some cannot stand still when learning because they learn using their body, touch sense and kinesthetics which move their body parts. They are called somatic learners. Some are more comfortable when learning while listening to sounds including dialog, reading out loud, or songs are called auditory learners, this is a standard learning style for all people. Moreover, there are people who feel comfortable when seeing directly what is being discussed, also touch and caress it, are called visual learners. In addition, learning with pondering, solving a problem, and developing meaning, as well as creating new meaning by connecting physical experience, emotion, and intuition, they are called intellectual learners (Meier in Harjanti, 2009: 24). The four learning styles called SAVI, the acronym for somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual (Meier, 2005: 93), are active during expressing and creating in arts and culture learning, and according to the spirit of curriculum 13, there is an emphasis on the creativity. Even though, some teachers still find confusion in implementing the scientific approach in arts and culture learning.

When people play *gamelan*, they read, listen, move, and touch at the same time, also memorizing, even feel to balance the *gamelan* interment played by a friend. Reading the *gending* notation as well as singing it make it easy to memorize, calculating while dancing as well as watching teacher and friends' movement, listen to the cues or music accompaniment makes it faster to master the movement material. Learning arts intensively packed into pleasant learning which is beneficial for other subjects and daily life. The fact shows that when someone incorporates with arts intensively, they are more



flexible in behaving, Javanese said it is not *thok-leh* (just the way they are) when scolding someone's mistake, but with a softer language, right on the target, and does not hurt feelings.

Research Method

This research method was a qualitative descriptive, used to capture the real condition of the arts and culture learning implementation in several Junior High Schools (SMP). The samples were several schools whose teachers willingly answered the researcher's questions.

Based on the simple interview utilizing the ease of telecommunication, the researcher inquired about the arts and culture learning implementation in several Junior High School through WhatsApp. The obtained results are as follows:

1. Susanti S,Pd. Teacher of fine arts at SMP Negeri 3 Kalasan, stated that the school implemented 7th and 8th grades for dance art, while the 9th grade for fine arts.
2. Karsinah, S.Pd. teacher of dance art at SMP 2 Moyudan reported that the school applied all aspects of arts for 7th grade, 8th grade for music art, and 9th grade for fine arts.
3. Ida Nurnaini, teacher of music art at SMPN 3 Gamping revealed that grade 7th is divided into two, 7th grade of ABC for music art, 7th grade of DEF for all aspects, 8th grade for music art, 9th grade for fine arts and dance.
4. Henggar Wahyuti, S.Pd. teacher of dance at SMPN 1 Minggir students of 7th grade for dance and fine arts, 8th grade for fine arts, 8th and 9th grades for dance art.
5. Sriyatun, S.Pd. stated that her school, SMPN 4 Depok provides dance art for 7th grade, fine arts for 8th and 9th grades.
6. Supartiwi from SMPN 4 Pakem stated that 7th and 8th grades received 3 aspects of arts, while 9th grade of dance art and fine arts.
7. Yanti Yudha Iriani, S.Pd, from SMP 8 Yogyakarta stated that in her school, 7th grade received dance and fine arts, 8th and 9th grades received music and fine arts.
8. Raras Mahardika, S,Pd, teacher of fine arts at SMPN 1 Gamping, stated that 7th grade received fine arts and music, 8th grade for fine arts and dance, as well as the 9th grade for fine arts.
9. Dewi Lestari, A.Md. from SMP Piri Ngaglik provided dance art for 7th grade, 8th grade for fine arts, and 9th grade for dance and fine arts.
10. Yuliana Genduk, from SMPN 3 Tempel 7th grade for fine arts and music, 8th grade for dance art, and 9th grade for fine arts and music.
11. Ririn Kuswindarini from SMPN 2 Sleman stated that the school provided music art for 7th grade, dance art for 8th grade, and music art for 9th grade.



12. SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Depok provided dance art and music for all classes.
13. SMPN 2 Ngemplak, 7th grade for fine arts, 8th grade for fine arts and music, 9th grade for music.
14. SMPN 1 Kalasan, 7th grade for dance art, 8th grade for dance and music arts, 9th grade for music art.
15. SMPN 4 Sleman, fine arts and dance art for all.
16. SMPN 3 Pakem, 7th grade for dance, 8th grade for music art, and 9th grade for music art.
17. SMP Muh. 1 Tempel, 7th grade for dance and music, 8th grade for dance and music, 9th grade for fine arts.
18. SMP Hamong Putra Pakem, fine arts and dance for all classes.
19. SMPN 3 Berbah, 7th and 8th grades for dance, 9th grade for fine arts.

Almost all the data obtained from the schools in Sleman Regency, considering the researcher works a teacher in Sleman region so that it enables the access of information on the implementation of arts and culture in schools. The implementation of arts and culture in schools is based on the compromise between arts and culture teachers within the school. In addition, it is also different inside each class depending on the creativity of the arts and culture teacher; whether they will provide 2 aspects or more, or even only one aspect of art. Some change the aspect each semester; some conduct it at the same time, 2 aspects in each semester; some change it every year. Until this article is written, there is no answer to whether during the arts and culture USBN becomes 2 aspects such as the rumor of last academic year USB. This uncertainty becomes the teacher's anxiety in facing the standardized national school examination.

The Lost Freedom

Based on the research finding in the school, initially the implementation of arts and culture in Junior High School in Curriculum 2006 there were many variations (Depdikbud, 2015: 4). Curriculum 2006 was flexible so that students were enabled to choose the aspect of arts that they were interested. In fact, the curriculum assigned the school to hold at least one aspect of art, considering the arts and culture subject has four aspects of arts namely fine arts, music art, dance art, and theater art. The school was able to implement more than one aspect of the art field, students were given opportunities to choose the arts that they participate in (Depdiknas, 2006: 3). The selection depended on the teacher's availability; if there were fine arts and music arts, then they were offered. Therefore, even if it was enabled to choose, there was a limitation. For the school which was capable (financially) can invite outside teachers if the aspect of the art chosen has no available teacher. What needs to be underlined was the readiness of human resources because if merely about facilities or infrastructure can be dealt with, depending on the art teacher's creativity. The availability of art aspects selection enables parallel classes, at the same time in one class can occur two or three arts and culture learning with a different aspect. There can be two classes join three or four arts and cultural aspects of their choice. Even though this is not a team teaching because one teacher teaches one selected learning group.



It is unfortunate that this “freedom” cannot be further implemented because of the *dapodik* system which cannot “read” if there is parallel learning, not team teaching. This is also related to the allowance of the teaching profession; there is a regulation that a subject teacher can be acknowledged their teaching hours if the students are minimum of 20 students. Meanwhile, one-class students (learning group) only consists of 32 students; if divided by two then one class only has 16 students which admittedly does not fulfill the requirement. This makes the school principal not to take risks, if the teaching hour is not acknowledged because only 16 students are taught, it is concerned that the teachers will not get the professional allowance. All educational units (school) at the end implement the arts and culture subject followed by all teachers, like it or not, students participated in all aspects of arts based on the teachers’ availability, in other words, they can no longer choose.

This proceeds during the implementation of Curriculum 13, students cannot choose the aspect of art that they are interested in. Students cannot refuse and select the asset of art according to their interest and talent. Indeed, the art education in school is not intended to create artists, but for the students to get art experience both practice or merely appreciation as an effort to foster the sense of taste, thought, and love for art (Masunah, 2003: 249). The implementation of Curriculum 13 gives a new insight, at least from the total of meetings per week becomes 3 hours per week, while in KTSP only 2 hours per week. In the previous years, arts and culture teachers lack teaching hours that they need to teach in other schools. Then, nowadays it is the contrary that arts and culture teachers have a surplus in the teaching hours. Another change is the material of 9th-grade dance art is the new creation of art, no longer overseas. The right thing, considering there are still many arts which are not yet explored, and some are almost extinct because they are not performed any longer.

For an explicit description, the illustration below can help in understanding this problem.

Sample Case:

7th-grade students get an art and culture teacher with a background of music art, 8th grade gets a fine-art background teacher, and 9th grade gets a dance art-background teacher. The question is, if during the 3 years of education, students only obtain the fine arts aspect for one year in the 8th grade, do they only get the material or basic competence from the 8th-grade material only without looking back to the 7th-grade basic competence? This means that students only received a piece of knowledge that there is no correlation with the knowledge of the previous class. This seems like a missing puzzle or whether all the materials for 3 years is compacted into one year as if a child is forced to be spoon-fed while they are not hungry. Moreover, concerning the existence



of arts and culture USBN which will enter the second year, there needs an immediate answer to the question.

The arts and culture subject syllabuses of Curriculum 13 and KTSP are not significantly different. The art learning of Curriculum 13 is recreative, aesthetically and artistically beneficial to create a harmonious personality. The arts and culture subject is considered to have an important role in the development and the needs of the students due to its uniqueness, meaningfulness, and advantages. Art education in the school is multilingual, multidimensional, and multicultural. Multilingual by developing the ability to express through multiple 'languages' namely form language, sound language, movement, and its integration. Multidimensional by developing the perception of arts, knowledge, understanding, and analysis, evaluation, and appreciation, as well as balancing the function of left and right brains by combining logic, ethics, and aesthetics. The multicultural characteristic is to foster and develop the awareness and ability to appreciate, tolerant, democratic on the diversity of local and global cultures, civilized and live in harmony within the heterogeneous society (Depdikbud, 2001:7). The harmony and awareness of diversity become essential aspects because in this digital era there are so many information and provocation spreading issues on ethnicity, religion, race and between groups which threatened the nation's harmony.

Curriculum 13, such as the Curriculum 2006, still divides the arts and culture subject into four aspects of arts. The difference is the curriculum 2006 requires the school to at least provide one aspect of art, the Curriculum 13 requires the school to provide at least 2 aspects of arts to the students. The productive, creative, innovative Indonesia through the strengthening of behavior, skills, and knowledge which are integrated in the interactive, inspiring and fun learning, as well as motivating students to participate actively in giving them room for initiative, creativity, and independence according to the talents and interests of students (kemdikbud, 2016: 2). Although until this time, the talent and interest are not prioritized since the students cannot choose and also cannot refuse.

The two aspects of art that need to be offered to the students according to the requirement of the curriculum has started to be debatable. Some arts and culture teachers stated those two aspects of art during the students learning in the Junior High School. This means that it is enabled within one year, the students only receive one aspect of art only, the next year only receives another aspect of art. For example, in 7th grade is fine arts, 8th grade is theater, 9th grade is music art, or 7th or 8th grades are fine arts, 9th grade is dance art. Other arts and culture teachers stated that minimum two in each year or even in one semester, the students receive 2 or 3 aspects of arts at the same time, for example 7th grade in odd semester receive fine arts, even semester receives



dance art, 8th grade odd semester receives music, fine arts, and dance art, the same with even semester and so on.

Teacher's Educational Background

The problems occurred between the arts and culture teachers are the question on the material related to the basic competence which needs to be mastered by the students. This concerns about the educational background of the arts and culture teachers, and the depth and width of their knowledge of arts. Several arts and culture teachers claim to never get out of their comfort zones according to their educational background without paying attention to the students' interest and rights to obtain a knowledge that they expect according to the basic competence in the syllabus. Other teachers try hard to learn the aspect of art outside their educational knowledge. A case like this usually occurs in the school which has 2 or more of arts and culture teachers with different background of arts. If there is only one art teacher, they need to forcefully provide a minimum of two aspects of arts.

This case occurs in the education level of Junior High School, in which the arts and culture subject teachers mostly have an arts educational background. The more worrying thing occurs in several private schools and elementary schools. Arts and culture learning is taught by any available teachers, in other words, they do not have an arts educational background. No wonder, if in the next educational level (Junior High Schools) many students cannot memorize anthems and national anthems, if they do, they do not sing it appropriately or falls. Therefore, to improve that is not an easy thing because it has been fossilized for years. Teachers with the arts educational background do not have the deed. Therefore, they are only in the extracurricular path, seldom involve anthems and national anthem. This is actually a big problem, but it is considered unimportant if only lacking arts and culture subject teachers. The officials are more concern with the lack of national examination subject teachers than arts and culture subject teachers, who will invite them to sing, dance, draw, making batik, doing role play, and playing gamelan, which all of that will foster nationalism.

Elementary schools need arts and culture teachers whose background is in arts education. However, until now the institution generating teachers has not opened arts and culture education major, only fine arts education, music art education, and dance art education. Teachers will invite the students to play and sing (there are some child games with songs) which is appropriate with the vision of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, that is to foster and develop our own arts and culture education, (Sudarsa, 2015: 67). This is performed so that Indonesian children will get back to their own arts and culture, love traditional songs, traditional theaters, *batik*, *lurik*, *sasirangan*, as well as *songket* and so on.

The agreement or answer on the above question and the detailed regulation are not yet available, but if perceived from the flexibility of curriculum, the teachers can



interpret themselves based on the flexibility of this arts and culture syllabus, with the development of environmental-based implementation. The decryption on learning in the syllabus is only alternative activities to what has been planned. This means that teachers should plan and formulate their own learning or together with arts and culture teachers in the activity of Teachers' Consultative Council (MGMP) nearby. Accordingly, the plan is significantly contextual, accommodating the local wisdom. It will be better if the cultural element is also integrated. Considering all this time even if the name is arts and culture, however, it almost never touches any other cultural element besides arts as one of the cultural elements. Arts and culture syllabus is assigned as a source of inspiration or alternative; at least the element of language and customs. In implementing this syllabus, teachers are expected to be creative in the material development, management of learning process, using learning methods and model, which are appropriate with the situation and condition of the society as well as the level of student's development (Depdiknas, 2006: 2). Each person including teachers have different level of creative ability, not one person has the exact same creativity, what is needed is only how to develop the creativity (Supriyadi in Suminar, 2007: 87) to assemble the fun art learning so that the student's creativity can be more developed, creative potential can be fostered and developed. Creative masterpiece is not born and unintentional but through a series of the creative processes which requires proficiency, skills, and strong motivations (Piers in Suminar, 2007:87). Creative ability is essential for students to enable them to adapt in the future when going into society (Suryahadi, 2008: 19).

Answering the Needs

Curriculum 13 indeed gives a spacious space for local arts preservation. This means that in this case arts and culture which live in the environment surrounding the society are accommodated, the advances of the local arts and culture is made into one of the teaching materials. One thing should be remembered is that the arts and culture learning material needs to be appropriate with the local needs so that the local culture can be preserved and developed through the arts and culture material. It should also be adjusted with the student's needs to improve their ability and skills in certain arts field according to the local potential to be developed as regional economy such as tourism potential and entrepreneurship in the art field (Kemdikbud, 2016: 13).

The implementation technique of 2 aspects of art is fully assigned to each educational unit according to the school's condition, infrastructure, and the culture of the society (Kemdikbud, 2016: 16). The arts and culture syllabus in Curriculum 13 is flexible, contextual, and giving opportunities to teachers to develop and implement the learning, as well as accommodating the local advantages. Based on the principle, the syllabus component includes the basic competence, learning material, and learning activities. The description of learning in the syllabus is the alternative activities which



are planned based on the activities. The learning is alternative and inspiring so that it can be developed by teachers in various learning model according to the characteristic of each subject. There is a material development constructed by teachers in which the creativity is expected to emerge, primarily in the selection of arts and culture material, considering arts and culture are unique and various depending on the school environment.

The arts and culture subject of Curriculum 13 has a keyword of creativity emphasis. Creativity-based learning gives more significant results compared to intelligence-based learning. Two third of an individual's creative ability is obtained through education, or teaching/learning results, one-third of it originates from genetics, from nature or fundamental (Kemdikbud 2016: 1), according to the concept of education by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, which are *dhasar* and *ajar*. This means that education is for developing the student's nature. This is where the teacher's creativity is expected, to invite students to be creative, teachers need to be first creative, *ing ngarsa sung tuladha*, teachers give examples.

CONCLUSION

Considering the role and importance of arts and culture subject in fostering students' personality, teachers of arts and culture should obtain a certainty or answers to their problems. If there is no solution yet, teachers should be better in planning and implementing arts and culture learning. Learning activities are made attractive so that students are more enthusiastic in participating in the learning. Arts and culture teachers need to open up themselves on the arts and cultures which are not their fields; fine arts teachers should learn other arts, theater for example, or learn *gamelan*. Music art teachers should improve the art potential in the school environment, the school can participate in preserving local cultures and encourage the students to involve actively in arts and culture events in their environment.

The government is expected to immediately overcome the shortage of arts and culture teachers by holding arts and culture training for teachers who are primarily do not have an art education background.

1. Arts and culture teachers with arts major are given opportunities to expand their competence in the aspect of other arts.
2. The higher education generating elementary school students needs to be given more portion in the arts course, considering the in Senior High School, the arts materials are not much, in contrary to with the existence of SPG, all SPG can sing *nembang macapat* (singing Javanese songs) nowadays, the bachelor graduates of Javanese language education major are not many who are able to *nembang*, practicing *nembang* as well as expanding other art materials for arts major in the university. Therefore, when they enter their career, they can directly



feel more confident in teaching arts and culture outside their art educational background.

3. The art education major (music, dance, and fine arts) obtains an additional material outside their major adequately. If in the past when Diploma 2 dance was applied, there is an option to choose a minor for two semesters. Then in a bachelor's degree, it should be more than two semesters.

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