

## ART EDUCATION BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM

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**Abstract :** Education as a cultural process is an effort to humanize and civilize people. Through education, individuals transfer, inherit and transmit knowledge, values, and beliefs that function as guides to fulfilling human needs in local contexts. The educational process occurs across generations through socialization, enculturation, and internalization. In this regard, education can be carried out through formal, non-formal, and informal ways. This paper argues the importance of preserving and cultivating local wisdom that is a form of culture containing knowledge, values, and beliefs that can benefit society. More specifically, this paper discusses that art education as a form of education that utilizes art as its medium has a strategic role in preserving and cultivating local wisdom.

**Keywords:** education, culture, local wisdom, heritage, art education.

### **Introduction**

Every society develops its own culture (value systems) as a guide to organizing and fulfilling various needs of life. By using their culture, individuals can respond to and interact with each other in expressing and accommodating various needs that they collectively desire or aspire (see: Budhisantoso, 1987; Suparlan, 1990; Rohidi, 1994). The guiding systems, despite their abstract nature, can be identified as follows: values concerning ways of life, worldview, belief, morality, aesthetics, and ethics.

The embodiment of culture in society can be, among other things, customs, habits or styles (ways) of life, and unique events or tradition. The presence of a unique cultural form, which contains the values or local wisdom, serves as a means of nurturing and developing a good life in a collective group. Thus, local values or commonly referred as local wisdom become invaluable and serve as social guides in a social convention to live and meet human needs.

Given its importance and value, local wisdom needs to be preserved (by maintaining, protecting, inheriting, and cultivating it) across generations. It is important to discuss the strategic and vital roles of education in preserving local wisdom. This paper specifically explores how education, more specifically art education, can play a role in preserving local wisdom across generations. By addressing this issue, this paper aims to formulate, at least, theoretical discourse that can be useful for an alternative thinking in an effort to develop strategies of preserving local wisdom that today seem to receive less attention from related parties.

### **Education in Cultural Perspective**

It is undeniable that throughout history, human beings as social and cultural creatures have carried out educational practices primarily as a way of defending, perpetuating, and developing their existence in order to adapt to the ever-changing environment and to gain a better life. Through educational process, individuals in society recognize, absorb, inherit, enter, and develop the elements of their culture, values, beliefs, knowledge and technologies that are essential to survive and thrive in their environment (see: Rohidi 1993).

Through education, further more, individuals are expected to learn social conventions and cultural symbols. They also need to use the values learned as a guide to behave meaningfully in their social lives. This means that by learning and absorbing what is learned, individuals are prepared to be able to become citizens who are aware and able to play their status and role in accordance with the socio-cultural values in their community (see: Salam, 2001; Mahfud, 2009).

For a long time, Parsons (1964) has reminded that one of the functions of education is as a medium of diversion and cultural development. In this function, education becomes an institution (social institution) that is in charge of preserving, inheriting, maintaining continuity, and developing cultural traditions from one generation to the next one. This is in accordance with what was proposed by Margareth Mead (in Budhisantoso, 1987) that one of the main functions of education is as a means to preserve and cultivate culture that is considered to be meaningful to the life of the community.

Based on that, the definition of culture arguably contains three important aspects: (1) inherited from one generation to another, in this case culture is seen as a heritage or social tradition, (2) learned, in this case culture is not a manifestation, in a certain degree, of the genetic human condition, and (3) shared and owned collectively by people (Parsons in Rohidi 1994). In that sense, it is implied that the process of cultural diversion, as models of knowledge, values, beliefs or technology, always takes place through the educational process. There is a diversionary effort (by educators) and acceptance (by learners) related to a particular substance (culture) so that culture can be a social heritage that is meaningful for community.

In that view, the success of education is characterized by the extent to which the transfer process is able to maintain and sustain the culture from one generation to another. Education here is viewed as a means of adaptation strategies in conservation efforts to maintain and develop traditional cultural traits (Rohidi, 1994: 6; see also: Chapman, 1978).

In accordance with its capacity as a social convention, education as mentioned above, can be interpreted as a process to civilize human beings to their maturity so that they can live independently and contribute to building people's life responsibly. As a cultural process, education has a mission of, at least two sides, namely preserving culture and at the same time developing culture in accordance with the dynamics of the times.

Based on its mission, education as a cultural process has two functions, namely as a means to conserve (preserve) and innovate (develop creativity to create innovation) culture. This is in line with what Unesco (2006) stated that education should be an instrument for shaping cultural awareness in one way, and in other ways building the creative capacity to anticipate the changing dynamics or development of an ever-changing environment. The estuary of these two missions is to build the civilization of the nation. Related to this, Soyomukti (2015: 21) states that education is a process to accommodate people with various situations that aim to empower themselves. Self-empowerment is carried out through awareness and enlightenment process that lead to the expected behavior change; namely the formation of human beings that are noble and capable of building civilization of the nation. Operationally, education as a cultural process can be carried out through socialization, enculturation, and internalization (see: Koentjaraningrat, 1986). In this regard, education can be carried out in three ways: formal, nonformal, and informal.

The above statement means that education must be able to prepare human resources that can appreciate their cultural roots as the foundation of nation's identity and can follow the rhythm of development or change of time. The assertiveness of education, in a cultural perspective, must be able to result in the progress of a generation that is deeply rooted in its own culture.

## **Art and Art Education**

Art is always present with human life. Its presence is universal, wherever, whenever, and by anyone. There is no culture of any society in the world that does not accommodate the presence of art as an integral part of life. This implies that art is one of human needs that have no place, time, and status boundaries.

Cross-cultural and historical studies show evidence that culture of any society always leaves room for the birth of aesthetic expression in the form of diverse artworks with various kinds, patterns or styles. That diversity is due to various factors, such as aspiration, resources, and different needs, both in the type and nature as well as quantity and quality. In addition to those factors, the diversity is due to the social layers in society that may result in a variety of art, such as pop art, peasant art, folk art, mass art, and bourgeois art (Rohidi 1993).

The presence of the art, in fact, in a broader perspective is not solely for the fulfillment of aesthetic needs, but also for the fulfillment of other primary or secondary needs. Through his field study, Muensterberger (in Otten, 1971: 110-111) points to the close connection between customs, economic demands, religious ceremonies, and artistic expression (see also Hadi, 2006). This shows that the

existence of art becomes an integral part of human life. Therefore, universally, art becomes one of the elements of culture (see Koentjaraningrat, 1986, Cassirer, 1987, Otten, 1971, Parsons, 1964).

Art, as one element of culture, is embodied in various objects and events with a packing of aesthetic forms. Such form is created to express feelings, experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and other ideas through symbols controlled by the culture that surrounds them.

Art as one element of culture is, in fact, a symbol that reflects or expresses the culture itself (see: Kayam 1981). Therefore, we can also call art as a storage of cultural meanings (Wolff, 1989: 4). The difference with the elements of other cultures, in the embodiment, is that art is always contained in a packing of aesthetic forms. The packaging of this specific aesthetic form is built in a composition that is in harmony with the taste of the creator or owner's community. In other words, art is an expressive-aesthetic symbol expressing knowledge, beliefs, and cultural values. This is because the process of behaving and behaving in art is always influenced, directed, and/or culturally controlled (Geertz, 1973).

Rohidi (2014) explained that the scope of art includes the meaning associated with its forms as an ideal culture, social system in the form of patterned behavioral activity, and object of human works. As an ideal culture, art contains vital ideas, knowledge, values, and beliefs that serve as guidelines for people in performing arts. It also comes in the form of patterned activity when humans interact or communicate with regard to beauty, in which in principle includes creative activity and appreciative activity. Art in this respect can be viewed as a creative and appreciative patterned activity that takes place through aesthetic communication. Art also manifests as a work, which shows its style, form, and structure, or as a symbol, either implying an aesthetic value or implying its expressive meaning (see: Sugiharto, 2013).

Meanwhile, art education is a form of education that uses art as its medium. When art is positioned as an educational medium, it should be able to function as a way to teach students to develop their individual, social, and cultural potential. Therefore, the vision and mission of education by using art as a medium must be laid in the framework of shaping the entire human potential towards the creation of a cultured human being. The Road Map for Art Education (Unesco, 2006) emphasizes that art education should be directed towards building creative capacity and cultural awareness (appreciative capacity) on the students who will then live their lives in the community.

The presence or existence of art as a means of education at least reflects an urgency in shaping the personality of students in their entirety. Through art, students are taught to have sensitivity or social awareness as members of the community who respect and value the cultural values of their community. With regard to this, Salam (2001: 9-21) explains that the reason for the importance of art education is based on two main considerations, namely social and cultural justifications as well as reasons based on personal or psychological personal interests. In line with this opinion, Chapman (1978: 19) asserts that education (art) aims to meet personal needs, nurture social awareness, and preserve cultural heritage. Specifically Chapman explains that art education serves as a milestone in the personal, social, and historical development of general education. Art education can be a means of encouraging the personal fulfillment of children to respond to their world. Through learning artistic inheritance, furthermore, children can learn about art that is linked to past and present cultural endeavors. By learning about the role of art in society, children can begin to appreciate art as a way of dealing with their lives.

The statement implies that if art is used as a medium of education, then it must be a means that can thoroughly nurture and develop the potential of people as individuals, social, and cultural beings. Thus, art education is a form or system of education that uses art as a tool or means to achieve educational goals. With regard to this Salam (2001: 15) argues that art education is a medium to develop people personality in order to prepare them to become citizens.

Thus, briefly it can be argued that art education is an education that uses art to cultivate knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultural skills. Through using art as a tool or means of learning, students can be conditioned to know, live, absorb, and instill in themselves the culture of the community imparted by the parents or educators. Particularly art education is a medium of socialization, enculturation, and cultural internalization (see: Triyanto, 2017).

As a media of cultural enculturation, art education is a social convention that contains rules or norms to train (educate) children, and through that practice (or learning) children or individual members of society are integrated into their culture (see: Baker, 1990). The educational process can be formal or formal (in school), non-formal (in community), and informal (within the family) known as three education centers. Differences in the implementation of education, of course, bring different alignment systems, although the substance is directed to the same essence, which is to make the individual as a

member of society that has the personality and awareness to behave and act in accordance with the surrounding culture.

## **Local Wisdom as a Basis in Art Education**

Local wisdom is a phrase consisting of two words: wisdom and local. These two words merge into a term that contains a certain meaning or understanding. Simply put, the word 'wisdom' in English is derived from the word 'wise' that can be interpreted as the quality of having knowledge and good judgement (see: Depdikbud 1989: 48). Wisdom here contains knowledge or views, values, beliefs that have goodness and are believed to be truthful to produce something wise (bring good benefits). While the word 'local' (Depdikbud, 1989: 530) implies a limited environment (applies in the local area). Thus, simply the local wisdom is the knowledge or views, values, beliefs of a limited environment (local area) that is believed to be true to bring the benefits of a social life. Its existence is a hereditary among several generations.

As a cultural mechanism, local wisdom has several functions. First, local wisdom becomes a controlling medium for the citizens' behavior. Second, it becomes the medium to maintain the influence of outside values that are not appropriate. Third, it serves as an adaptation strategy to accommodate the influences of cultural values from the outside and integrate them in the local native culture.

The manifestation of local wisdom can be customs, life habits, styles or ways of life, or various cultural traditions, such as religious rites, life cycle rituals, and traditional arts. In other words, local wisdom is in fact the embodiment of a local culture inherited for generations to guide life towards the common good.

Indonesia as an archipelago country that is multiethnic and multicultural has a wealth of local wisdom that prevails in the respective areas of community traditions. In addition to guide life towards the common good, local wisdom also becomes one of the symbols of pride and regional identity. The few examples of local wisdom include: *Grebeg Besar* (an annual parade in Demak-Central Java), *Dugderan* with *Warak Ngendog* (an annual festival with an egg laying bird in Semarang-Central Java), *Sekatenan* (a week-long Javanese traditional ceremony, festival, fair and night market in Solo-Central Java), *Buroq Art* (a puppet of winged horse with a woman face in Brebes-Central Java), *Rambu Solok* (a typical ceremonial funeral procession from Tana Toraja), *Awig-awig* (a local customary law in Bali and Lombok), *Hutan Larangan Adat* (non-indigenous forest in Riau), *Satra Tutar Tadut* (oral tradition in South Sumatera), and *Likok Pulo Dance* (a traditional dance from Aceh).

Because the local wisdom as a form of culture is believed to have true value and bring goodness in the local area, its existence should be sustained. To preserve local wisdom, the appropriate cultural strategy chosen is through general education, which can be through formal (school), non-formal (community), or informal (family) education.

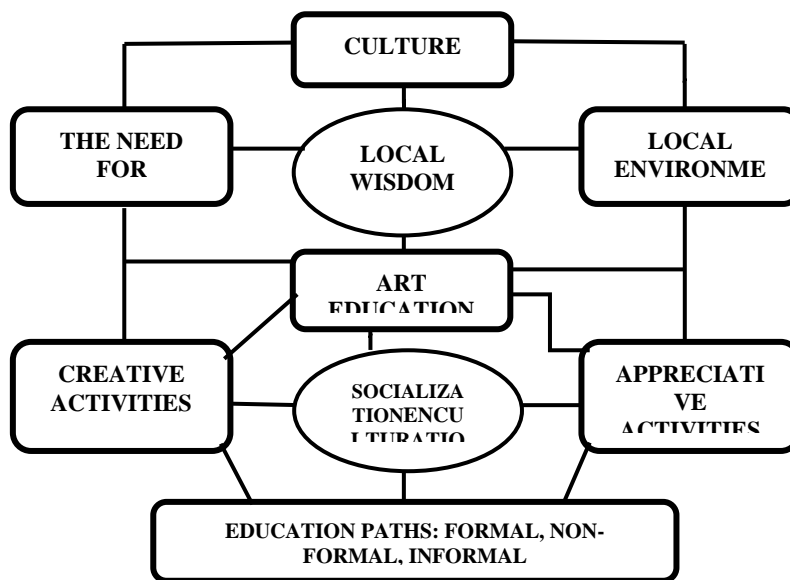
In that context, art education has a role in conserving local wisdom. By making local wisdom as a base in art education, local wisdom operationally must be used as a source or subject matter in the learning process, both in the realm of creative activity and appreciative activity.

In the path of formal education (school), art education based on local wisdom, students through creative activities are conditioned to create works of art with the content of local wisdom in their respective regions. They are conditioned to learn, understand, and appreciate the content of local wisdom as the source of ideas in creating their artwork. Students are given the opportunity to grasp and explore art with their understanding of the essence of local wisdom that is given as a learning theme. Meanwhile, through appreciative activities, students are introduced to a particular local wisdom phenomenon where they to see and discuss together in groups in order to understand and appreciate artistic elements, especially on the intra and extraesthetic values.

In non-formal education, through various art studios or cultural communities, local wisdom can serve as a source of inspiration in training its members to create works of art. The results can be competed through an annual event or festival. Through this event, the encouragement or motivation to know and learn the values of local wisdom will be embedded in the participants' memories. In appreciative activities, stage works of art on local wisdom in various events can be organized as a means of socialization to the wider community. This socialization is necessary so that community members over generations can resist "forgetfulness" of their local wisdom. Of course, for the implementation of this activity, the participation of community leaders and local bureaucracy elements as facilitators is required.

In informal education, mainly in families, parents should ensure that their children cultivate and internalize the values of local wisdom, especially in the form of local art. Through day-to-day activities, children need to be introduced and given opportunities to engage in local arts activities. Through those activities, children will be able to recognize, inherit, and instill in themselves local artistic values (see: Triyanto, 2015).

These explanations can be described in the following model picture.



Picture: Local Wisdom-Based Art Education

## 5. Conclusion

As has been noted, education is seen as a social convention that serves as a medium to divert or inherit cultural continuity. Through education, the traditional natures of culture can be maintained, guarded, preserved and developed over generations.

Local wisdom as a form of culture is a cultural mechanism that serves as a guide to organize, control, and direct the attitudes and behavior of citizens in fulfilling their needs in order to have a good life as society. Local wisdom as a legacy of tradition containing knowledge, views, values, beliefs, and ways of life of society is necessary to be passed on to its citizens over generations. At this point, education as a social institution has a strategic role in carrying out the preservation of local wisdom.

In that process, art education as a form of education that uses art as a medium has an important role in manifesting the process of inheriting local wisdom. Through socialization, enculturation, and internalization in the realm of creative and appreciative activities, both in formal, non-formal, and informal education, a local wisdom can be preserved and developed. In short, if art education is used as a means to achieve that objective, local wisdom should be the basis of its operational level.

To manifest these interests, awareness and participation of all stakeholders are necessary where they can synergistically support and facilitate the process. The intended parties are schools, studios, cultural communities, public figures, and bureaucratic elements.

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