



The Portrait of Kuta village Community Economic Activities and Its Application as Economic Learning Source Based on Cultural Values

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Abstract

This research aims to improve students' knowledge and understanding on pattern development of economic activity on community that retain its local wisdom. Kuta village is located at Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari District, Ciamis Regency. It is one of traditional villages which still maintains its traditions in harmony with nature. The research was a qualitative study and data were collected by using interviews, observation, and literature study. Findings show that there is a development of the community's livelihood at Kuta Village. The scope of economic activity is still in micro scale. Then, there is a technological transformation in natural resource management. Therefore, it is very clear that local wisdom is very suitable for subject materials in the form of narratives, stories, posters, or comics.

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INTRODUCTION

The cultures inherited from generation to generation and strongly attached to the society have already been conceptualized in social life that belief may not be easily faded. Hasyim (2011) says that knowledge is little by little developed by humans, the results may be extended through the limited contexts, yet not instantly. The belief which is commonly still developing in social life should be well maintained through the existing indigenous characteristics, in which those eventually turn to become wisdom which is always be strongly followed by the society.

Local wisdom is product of old time cultures that should continuously be maintained as life guidance. Suyanto (2011) states that local wisdom is the wealth of local cultures which consists of life wisdom, way of life to accommodate wisdom, and prudential life. Local wisdom does not only stop on ethics, but also norms, actions and behaviors that local wisdom may become humans' guidance in their attitudes and actions, both in the context of everyday life and in determining further human civilization. Similarly, Ambarwangi and Suharto (2014) state that "values which are believed eventually become a part of the society are often called local wisdom." Qisthy, et al., (2012) also states that the intended behaviors include knowledge, skills, and values or norms serving as controls of students' attitudes and behaviors. Those statements are based on the contextual meaning.

The values of local wisdom are commonly maintained by people who still have a strong level of belief. In Indonesia, the values of local wisdom may be shown due to the existence of various communities who still maintain the cultural heritage, one of them known as indigenous communities.

Indigenous community is a local entity occupying a certain area and continuously interact based on certain customs. Indigenous communities prefer to live with their ancestor ways of life more than following the hegemony of majority cultures. This difference makes indigenous communities are considered as minority.

Due to the current conditions, the public perception commonly think that indigenous communities are only as tourism attractions since they are 'different' with the common society. Thus, indigenous communities are categorized in "primitive" groups, regardless of the values owned by these indigenous village communities.

In addition, common people think that indigenous communities are more frequently as-

sociated with mystical activities as their knowledge is likely in verbal and *pamali* forms which are passed down from generation to generation. For example, there are many indigenous communities with forbidden forests. Due to the belief of indigenous communities, forbidden forest is something sacred that requires custody and special rituals for its preservation. Based on the perspective of common people public, those activities are irrational and unreasonable. However, due to one forest function as ecosystem to support human life, these indigenous communities have more awareness in protecting the environment since indigenous people take themselves as part of the nature.

Modern education tends to emphasize on rationality and frequently ignore the local wisdom which is rich of cultural values. The knowledge loss due to the existence of indigenous youth communities in Indonesia is something that various parties should aware. Gomez, et al., (2013) state that Traditional knowledge is declining in many parts of the world due to the complex and multifaceted reasons, including the compounding influences of land use change, integration to market economy, acculturation, and more generally, industrialization and globalization forces. In addition, there should be a new policy to protect not only the indigenous communities but also to introduce the noble moral values owned by those indigenous communities to the young generation of Indonesia. There is an anthropological term known as cultural relativity which means that every culture has different values that cultures may not be compared with the others. Meliono (2016) asserts that a system of education founded in certain culture, especially the Indonesian culture that comes from the minds of the Indonesian society, may contribute to the establishment of the significant values to develop consciousness about the substance of the culture of the Indonesian pluralism and multiculturalism. Moreover, learning is not a stand-alone activity as there are other factors which are directly involved in learning processes and results. Those factors are: 1) internal factors, including aptitude, interest, motivation, intelligence level, 2) external factors, including learning methods and environmental factors (community and family environment) (Khumaidi & Tarmudji, 2014).

To fulfill their needs, indigenous communities generally work on agricultural sectors. As farmers, most people certainly depend on farming. They cultivate the existing lands for farming and gardening. Thus, to meet their needs on food, indigenous communities rely on their own agri-

cultural products.

The economic system adopted by the indigenous communities is generally the traditional economic system, in which technology used is still very simple, no working divisions, barter are made or transactions, and economic activities are completely made and implemented without involving government but communities themselves. Krause et al., (2013) state that “no systematic local-level evaluation of participation, informed consent, and benefit sharing in the local communities has yet been undertaken”.

Nowadays, due to the development of the world, the lives of indigenous communities undergo many changes, including in economic activities. The outside influences impact the economic life of indigenous communities. For example, indigenous people have already known money as a exchange medium during the buying and selling transactions. In addition, the use of technology for land processing or other natural resources is widely used already.

Kampung Kuta located in Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari sub-district, Ciamis regency, is one indigenous community that until now is consistent to maintain the tradition as well as the cultural heritage. Information access, digital revolution, and other changes do not significantly influence the lives of people in *Kampung Kuta*, especially those related to their trust and belief on values of cultural heritage.

Along with the other indigenous communities, *Kampung Kuta* community focuses on agricultural sectors as their main living sources to meet their needs. However, agricultural sectors are not the only ways for people to earn for living. Due to the development of the world, people's mindset and skills are also developing. Thus, the economic activities are also improving from time to time, not only relying on agricultural sectors, but also handicrafts and tourism activities. However, the values of local wisdom and culture are well maintained. Thus, the researchers try to reveal and describe the portrait of economic activity development in *Kampung Kuta*, and to adopt the cultural values for the economic learning implementation.

METHODS

This research is conducted to the communities of *Kampung Kuta*, Karangpaningal Village, Tambaksari sub-district, Ciamis Regency by using a qualitative approach based on the related issues with a total number of primary data collected from the research subjects that are insepa-

rable from the communities' daily life. Thus, this research requires a certain amount of actual data taken from the field.

Qualitative research is an approach form taking place in post-positivism as the results of paradigm shifts which pay attention to reality, phenomenon, or symptoms in which the social reality in this approach is seen as a holistic/comprehensive, complex, dynamic, and meaningful.

The research data are collected using interview techniques with some key informants of those people who are competent and understand the arising issues under study, such as hamlet heads, indigenous village *Kuncen* (village respected elder peoples), and government institutions, such as Department of Tourism and Economic Creative of Ciamis regency. In addition, data collection is also conducted through literary studies by reading and understanding several books, literatures, scientific journals, and internet websites to obtain the theoretical framework as this research bases, as well as understanding the development of economic conditions in *Kampung Kuta* from the old periods of times up to the present.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kampung Kuta is located in Karangpaningal village, Tambaksari sub-district, Ciamis regency, West Java. *Kampung Kuta* comes from the word mahkota according to the spoken tradition, *Kampung Kuta's* name is given based on location of *Kampung Kuta* which is in a steep valley, approximately 75 meters, and is surrounded by cliffs or hills. In Sundanese, Buhun Kuta means wall fences. This indigenous village is inhabited by people who still have the awareness to preserve the natural balance that the community life may be well maintained.

Before *Kampung Kuta* people understand about agricultural face, they should first fulfill their daily needs through hunting or gathering wild herbs. Due to the systemic development in earning for a living activities and devices used to make changes taking place in a social order in meet their needs. Similarly, Koenjaraningrat (1990) earning for a living system of human life is initially made by hunting and gathering wild herbs. Regarding to the discovery of a hoe (hack), people want to dig up the soil and remove plants including to their roots, and then evolve into gardening.

In supporting their lives, *Kampung Kuta* communities may earn for a living that they have a special earning for a living than the other regions as people's identity. In this modern era,

each individual is required to have earning for a living to obtain welfare and higher position when their earning for a living is considered good by the communities. On the other hand, there are several areas which people have a very simple life, such as farming, gardening and livestock breeding.

Most people of *Kampung Kuta* earn for a living through farming, gardening and livestock farming to meet their daily needs by depending on the agricultural yields both from rice fields and plantations, including rice, banana, cassava, palm sugar, corn, secondary crop oils, and beans. Besides, people also cultivate goats and cows.

Table 1. Data of *Kampung Kuta* communities based on their ways to earn for a living

Occupation/ Profession	Total (person)
Farmer	109
Farmers' assistant	-
National Civil servant	-
Indonesian National Police	-
Indonesian National Armed Forces	-
Retirement	1
Private Employees/labors	-
Household industrial craftsmen	50
Gemyung/Terbang artist	10
Reog/ Dogdog artist	5
Gondang Buhun artist	20
Lengkong artist	2
Ronggeng artist	25
Business actors	2
Merchants	12
Craftsmen	20
Service Labors	12
Total	268

Source: Information from the Indigenous Head of *Kampung Kuta*

Based on the information above, it shows that the majority of *Kampung Kuta* people are farmers, with a total of 109 people. As the majority of people work as farmers, their daytime is used to cultivate their rice fields and gardens. The rice field areas in *Kampung Kuta* are classified into rain-fed rice fields in which the irrigation system is dependence on rainwater or rainfall that results in *Kampung Kuta's* weaknesses in agricultural system as harvests are yielded only twice a year.

In cultivating rice fields, farmers first plow

the rice fields using animals, such as buffalos and bulls. However, due to the technological development, farmers start using tractors to plow their rice field to accelerate their rice planting processes. The rice field patterns in *Kampung Kuta* hamlet are shaped like terraces or known as *sengkedan* that the irrigation system should be made in turns as the higher rice fields flows the water to the lower ones intended to evenly irrigate the entire farmers' rice fields. Thus, *Kampung Kuta* farmers are highly dependent on rainy seasons to grow paddies while in dry season farmers use their rice fields to plant corn, coarse grains, and nuts.

Lands for plantations in *Kampung Kuta* are mostly owned by groups of relatives while individual ownership is still rarely found. "In Non-Industrial society, the important lands and other resources are usually controlled by groups of relatives, such as the nomadic groups or lineage groups while individual ownership is very rare" (Haviland, 1985). Most plantations in *Kampung Kuta* grow coconut, banana, and palm trees. *Kampung Kuta* communities have a unique belief that people are not allowed / forbidden to cut down the palm tree or their life will be threatened by the angry tiger (myth). It actually means that *Kampung Kuta* communities are reminded that palm trees are their source to earn for a living which should be well preserved.

Besides, palm trees are the plantation mainstay for *Kampung Kuta* communities to take the *nira* (*lahang*) which may be produced into palm sugar while the palm fiber (*ijuk*) may be utilized as the house roofs. The male residents of *Kampung Kuta* tap *nira* (*lahang*) from palm trees before and after working in the rice fields on each morning and afternoon. There are 988 still productive palm trees with an average of 8 to 9 productive palm trees which *nira/lahang* is daily taken by each family that these palm sugar household industries may produce for about 2kg of palm tree sugar/house. They commonly sell and distribute their abundant palm tree sugar production to the nearest market while their coconuts, cassavas, corns, coarse grains and nuts are distributed to Banjar, but only on Wednesdays and Saturdays they send them to Rancah sub-district, Ciamis regency. On the other hand, if the harvest yields are only in small numbers, they will consume them for themselves.

Although *Kampung Kuta* basically owns sacred forests (*leuweung gede*) with abundant natural resources, they are not allowed to exploit those natural resources. They have to follow the rules known as *pamali* (taboos). In addition, before entering the sacred forests (*leuweung gede*), there

is a philosophy of life “*leuwueng rusak, cai beak, manusa balangsak*” which means if humans too much exploit the natures, such as forests, it may result in damages of water sources and ruin human life as well. Thus, simple life principle is applied by *Kampung Kuta* people who have the obvious fundamental bases to keep maintaining the natural sources although they still have to earn for a living due to their daily needs. Darusman (2014) states that “for balance, natural resource management and its meanings should be applied through daily simple lifestyles.

In 1990, electricity comes into the areas of *Kampung Kuta*. People are completely aware upon the benefits of electrical power in their residence. Many people’s houses previously have no electronic devices, but the presence of electrical power make those houses are equipped with electronic devices to support their daily activities, such as radio, television, fan, cell phone, etc. In 1994, the road to *Kampung Kuta* may only by accessed on foot starting from Tambaksari village taking for about a half day walk. Due to the road access revitalization to *Kampung Kuta*, people may perform their economic activities by utilizing two-wheeled transportation.

The increasing tourism visits of academicians make *Kampung Kuta* as a research destination for cultural, geographical, anthropological, sociological, and other relevant sciences, as well as for community services conducted by several educational institutions. Meanwhile, the roles of government are to take a part in the economic growth and development of the society through the efforts made by the local government, such as on character building, construction supports on *Kampung Kuta* Gate and Sawala Hall to welcome the tourists. In addition, other activities such as handicraft trainings are conducted to improve *Kampung Kuta* people’ skills that those efforts may provide opportunities for people to be the craftsmen and produce various handicrafts, such as room border weaving crafts, *kemuti* bags, baskets, mortars, traditional hats (*caping*), winnowing try (*tampah*) and others. However, weaving handicraft businesses are still limited due to the less optimal management as the current production is only t fulfill the needs of local people. The production is increasing only due to the tourists’ and local governments’ orders.

Due to the development of social institutions and intensive information exchanges of *Kampung Kuta* communities with others, those may result in occupational changes made by many people. *Kampung Kuta* people have freedom to access information and technology for their daily

life benefits. *Kampung Kuta* indigenous rules do not prohibit people to own and use technology as long as it does not negatively influence the surrounding local communities’ orders of life.

During the lectures, majority of students receive a lot of materials/studies on economic activities in modern society, such as those materials concerning on economic activities in European countries and international trades. Thus, a teaching material innovation is not only based on knowledge and perspectives on economic activities, but it is also necessary for students dealing with the cultural-based economic learning materials due to the formation of character building and cultural values.

The cultural values adapted in economic learning cover people’s behaviors in the management of production factors, such as natural resource management without exploitation, human resource management consisting of working divisions and salary systems, skill improvements which are realized through their independent businesses of handicraft production to gain profits for the surrounding communities. Mariyaningsih (2012) mentions that learning process is “one effort made by having direct practices to the learning objects and utilizing the environment as the learning resource that students may obtain more concrete knowledge and understanding”. Learning may pass through various ways, such as environment, the existing cultures and local wisdom in the society.

The economic activities of *Kampung Kuta* communities may become a reflection of the developing traditional economic activities in which people keep highly respect local wisdom although the people are facing the economic needs to fulfill by each individual. Due to the availability of easily accessible information and various on-line media to offer goods, *Kampung Kuta* people may utilize them to fulfill their daily needs, yet selections (filters) should be made that *Kampung Kuta* people may not adopt hedonism and consumerism. The results above are in line with the opinions stated by Yineger, et al., (2013).

Mory is hence lost forever. Traditional healers dwelling in the three districts varied significantly in their indigenous knowledge on management of human ailments. This could on the one hand be attributed to the individual knowledge differences as a result of their background or indeed the depth of indigenous knowledge inherited. On the other hand it could be because of the ecological and environmental variations of the three districts, in other words there may be variations in species richness of the three districts.

CONCLUSION

In educational world, the economic activities of *Kampung Kuta* may be utilized as materials or studies for lecturing activities although there are income developments and the present of information transformation of daily technological utilization to support the economy. People tend to stay in feminism to nature by maintaining a natural balance without exploiting the nature to create mutual relationship between humans and nature.

Kampung Kuta people are classified into non-industrial communities in which they mainly earn for a living through farming, gardening, livestock breeding, and weaving. In meeting the daily needs, *Kampung Kuta* people still consider the benefits and the arising impacts due to the violation against the nature.

Depending life on nature is one characteristic of traditional economic activities in which the majority *Kampung Kuta* people are still dependent on farming in the rice fields belonging to the category of rain-fed rice field areas. In addition to farming, they also rely on plantation yields, such as banana, coconut, cassava, corn, coarse grains, nuts and palm trees. Palm trees are the mainstay of household production in the plantation field in which *nira* (liquid sap from the palm trees) may be produced into palm sugar. Meanwhile for livestock breeding, they only raise goats and cows. Of all agricultural, plantation, and livestock breeding commodities, *Kampung Kuta* people sell them to Rancah, an area in Tasikmalaya regency as well as to Banjar City. Meanwhile, the craftsmen are producing very limited woven handicrafts in numbers. However, they still have difficulties in marketing the products due to order-based production processes only.

Technological transformation and information development encourage the economic life changes of *Kampung Kuta* communities, in which the development of technological utilization in agricultural fields, household electronic devices, and two-wheeled transportation are taking place. However, *Kampung Kuta* communities still believe the great values of local wisdom in which public interactions with nature in their daily activities are similar to the two sides of a coin which may not be separated and will always be a unity.

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