



Preserving Gambang Semarang Music Through The Process of Enculturation in The Society

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Abstract

This study was devoted to investigating the preservation of *gambang* Semarang music through the enculturation process comprehensively. Two basic strategies were employed in examining research problems: using theoretical approaches in traditional music, preservation, and enculturation and a qualitative approach. Further, the target and site comprised *gambang* Semarang music preservation through the enculturation process among Semarang people. The data were collected from observation, interviews, documentation, and library research. Data validity applied source, time, theory, and researcher triangulation. The collected data and information were then analyzed inductively by relying on an interactive analysis model with the following steps: data reduction, display, and verification. It was suggested that the enculturation process of *gambang* Semarang music within three generations in the *nang nok gambang* Semarang group served as the activity of cultural awareness of society, artists, and performers. It was to carry out the enculturation process towards young generations, even children, as the future generations. The approaches to the teaching and learning process were modeling, conditioning, and internalization. Such an enculturation process was proven to function effectively as the cultural mechanism and enculturation model in preserving *gambang* Semarang music as the cultural identity of *Semarang*.

Keywords: enculturation; gambang Semarang music

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INTRODUCTION

Entering the Fourth Industrial era makes various traditional arts often reported to experience alienation. Some arts being expressed for decades and even hundreds of years ago have increasingly ceased to exist, along with the decreasing number of artists and art enthusiasts. The current development resulting from modernization or industrialization makes countless traditional art go through “negative” changes towards deterioration, marginalization,

and even extinction (Harlenda, 2016; Hendriawan & Astuti, 2017; Triyanto, 2015). According to (Goertzen & Bohlman, 1991), the impact of music modernization is the loss of traditional music or folk music. This resonates with Stokes (Stokes, 2018), pointing out that music modernization is more likely to be westernization with a variety of genres that are massively spread over mass and social media, making traditional music pressed.

Gambang (a xylophone-like instrument) Semarang music as one of the Sema-

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rang arts is among the traditional arts and parts of culture that goes through unstable development. The process to become one of the Semarangan cultural identities is still carried out by the society, art performers, academics, gambang Semarang music enthusiasts, government, arts groups, and formal and non-formal educational institutions (Chasanah, 2009; Raharjo & Arsih, 2019). Several studies have always been conducted to complete literacy repertoire regarding gambang Semarang music. Danang Respati Puguh (Danang Respati Puguh, 2012), through the research in 1999, attempted to fully reconstruct the art of gambang Semarang after going through a temporary slowing of development in previous eras. Other studies from different disciplines in connection with the art of gambang Semarang have also been done, including photography, law, broadcasting program, forms of performance, creativity, existence, and culture (Annikmah, 2019; Chasanah, 2009; Linardi et al., 2013; Mayasari, 2016; Riyandri, 2016; Sadtiti, 2016; Septiyan, 2016; Wicaksono et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the aforementioned studies solely discuss gambang Semarang art in general. Meanwhile, studies that specifically examine *gambang* Semarang music are forms and functions of presentation (Mayasari, 2016), cultural hybridization process (Widjajanti & Bramantyo, 2012), and gambang Semarang music as the Semarangan cultural identity (Raharjo & Arsih, 2019).

Gambang Semarang music, if viewed from cultural concepts, is a small part of the holistic meaning of culture. Culture (or *budaya* in Indonesian) is derived from Sanskrit, i.e., *buddhayah*, as the plural form of the word *buddhi* that means intellect or mind. *Budaya* also comes from the word "culture" in English (April, 2018; Brown, 1998; Clarke, 2008; Cragoe, 2004; Koentjaraningrat, 2002; Reicher & Hopkins, 2011). Culture relates to human minds passed from generation to generation. The elements of culture consist of language, religion, belief, technology, family, economic system, government politics, art, tools and

utensils, knowledge system, skills, livelihood, and others. As part of Semarangan culture, *gambang* Semarang music is still in self-actualization through many cultural activities. *Gambang* Semarang community is a society-based activity that pays great attention to the existence of *gambang* Semarang and its music. Besides, a non-formal educational institution, Merby Semarang Club, also supports the *gambang* Semarang music by forming a group called *Nang nok Gambang* Semarang.

Today, the presence of such an art group undergoes ups and downs in its development (Chasanah 2009; Septiyan 2016), given that members who join and leave the group are directly proportional to the existing students in participating in the skill courses at Merby Semarang Club. *Nang-nok* group also plays a significant role in supporting the art of *gambang* Semarang as one of the Semarangan cultural identities. This cultural phenomenon is of interest to the researchers to further discuss, despite the challenges of unmoving modern and digital art groups. This matter raises a fundamental question of how art performers in *gambang* Semarang music groups and *nang nok* group perform the cultural mechanism to maintain and preserve *gambang* Semarang art in general and *gambang* Semarang music in particular.

Drawing upon the above question, background of the study, and review on studies about *gambang* Semarang music, no studies have discussed the enculturation process in preserving such music as the Semarangan cultural identity. It is expected that the present research can produce an enculturation model in preserving *gambang* Semarang music as the Semarangan cultural identity through formal and non-formal education, or directly to the people by artists and family members.

METHOD

This study relied on a cultural approach that was operationally actualized by elaborating a qualitative method (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). It

was conducted in the city of Semarang, Central Java Province. The main target was the enculturation process of *gambang* Semarang music from the non-formal education perspective. Subjects as data sources involved students, artists, bureaucrats, prominent figures playing *gambang* Semarang instrument that consisted of the players of *bonang*, *gambang*, *saron demung*, *gong*, *kendang*, *kong ah-yan* musical instruments, and singers joined in *nan-nok* group of *gambang* Semarang music, as well as key informants (instructor, the leader of *gambang* Semarang group, and the manager of Merby Club).

The required data or information were retrieved from an involved observation, in-depth interview, individual's life history (Cohen et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2006; Patton, 2014; Sgier & Sunday, 2012; Willis, 2012), visual recording, and documents that included archives of art potential, culture, and welfare of Semarang, photos and videos of practices and performances by *nan-nok* group, along with the findings of *gambang* Semarang. In addition, the data validity test used source triangulation (Sugiyono, 2013). The collected data were then analyzed inductively by applying an interactive analysis model by Huberman (Creswell, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994) through the following stages: data reduction, display, and verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education serves as the enculturation medium carried out systemically within a family, school, and community. As the enculturation medium, every formal and non-formal educational institution is expected to inherit and instill the systems of knowledge, belief, ideas, and community cultural values where the education takes place.

Merby Semarang Club, a non-formal educational institution in Semarang, has organized some skill courses: English, Mandarin, tutoring, chess, drama, painting, dance, drawing, modeling, music, public speaking abacus, singing, and *wus-*

hu (Chinese Kungfu). Merby Club has skilled and professional instructors in their field from 2004 to these days. This is proven until this research was conducted that 500 students with different skills have joined the club. Apart from managing various skills courses, the Merby Club is also the sole non-formal educational institution in Semarang that still cares about the original Semarang art, i.e., *gambang* Semarang. It is actualized by forming an art group of *gambang* Semarang called *nan-nok* group. The members are students participating in the skill courses and having dance and music as their hobbies.

A discussion regarding *gambang* Semarang music as among the Semarangan cultural identities is undoubtedly inseparable from *nan-nok* group because it is one of the art groups of *gambang* Semarang that remains existed. *Nang-nok gambang* Semarang is a youth community with the same goal, i.e., preserving the art of *gambang* Semarang, including the music. This group is present as the regeneration of *gambang* Semarang art. *Nang nok* is an open art group, meaning that it allows all people, especially young adults, to join and have the common goal, i.e., nurturing (*nguri-nguri* in Javanese) the culture, specifically the traditional art of *gambang* Semarang. Krisna (2019, January 19) opines that the *nan nok* group does not only consist of music artists, singers, and dancers, but also the general public, particularly young adults, who take into account and want to expand the art of *gambang* Semarang. The idea of forming this group was initially from the owner of Merby Club art college, Grace W. Susanto.

In 2004, Grace met Jayadi, an artist of *gambang* Semarang art. At that time, Jayadi and other artists were performing at someplace. Grace was interested in music, and ended up talking about *gambang* Semarang with Jayadi. Being intrigued by such an art, Grace and *gambang* Semarang artists finally reformed *gambang* Semarang art by purchasing some *gambang* Semarang instruments from Jayadi and those originally from Rembang.

The practice space of *Nang nok gambang* Semarang is located at Jl. Mataram No.653, Wonodri, Semarang Selatan District, Semarang; the whole practice is done at the Merby Club. *Nang nok gambang* Semarang is an open group, making the members varied. This group is formed as a medium for young adults passionate about art and willing to preserve *gambang* Semarang art. From year to year, *Nang nok gambang* Semarang regenerates its members to make all people, young adults, in particular, take part to preserve it.



Figure 1. Nang nok Gambang Semarang at the workshop in Oudetrap Building, Kota Lama Semarang (Photo: Eko Raharjo 2019)

Enculturation Process

Enculturation is a gradual process, and culture is a social inheritance. Culture is passed from generation to generation through a learning process, both formally, non-formally, and informally. Formal learning is mainly carried out in educational programs of educational institutions, such as schools, academies, universities, and job and skill training centers. Here, all forms of spiritual and material culture, i.e., notions, ideas, norms, patterned activities, and any objects, are provided in lessons and curricula arranged and given systematically (Triyanto 2015).

Non-formal education, on the other hand, is for people who need educational services functioning as a substitute, addition, or complementary of formal education in order to support lifelong education. Among the administrators of non-formal education, Merby Club establishes *gambang* Semarang group called *Nang nok*.

The process of member regeneration of *nang nok* group has constantly been experiencing twists and turns. The first cross-generation in 2007 was coordinated by Anugerah. It was called cross-generation because the members contrasted starkly in terms of age; some were older adults and some were young adults. This first generation of *nang nok* was trained by Dimyanto Jayadi and Marjuri, senior artists of *gambang* Semarang.

As the ones who understood the history of *gambang* Semarang music at that time, Mr. Jayadi and Mr. Manjuri trained the employees and Merby Semarang Club each *gambang* Semarang musical instrument. They all liked music, despite different educational backgrounds. Limited insights of Mr. Jayadi on pedagogical science enabled the learning system to be done by directly giving examples of song notation being played verse by verse in each *gambang* Semarang musical instrument. The players then modeled and played the notation being taught. Further discussion about this process comprises several experts' ideas stating that enculturation can be performed with three methods, as follows: (1) conditioning, (2) modeling, and (3) internalization/learning to cope (Konnert & Tieu, 2015; Mapana, 2011; Triyanto, 2015; Zhang & Moradi, 2013) la plupart des mesures d'acculturation sont uni-dimensionnelles, avec peu de données psychométriques pour les immigrants plus âgés. Cette étude a évalué une mesure bi-dimensionnelle, l'indice d'acculturation Vancouver (IAV; Ryder, Alden, et Paulhus, 2000). The learning model explained earlier can be theoretically considered modeling learning. The next step Mr. Jayadi did was repeating the notation until the learners memorized and were ready to have other notations. Such a concept, if associated with the enculturation theory, falls under the conditioning method. According to the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (here and after, KBBI), *kelaziman* (conditioning) comes from the word *lazim*, which means being accustomed to, becoming custom, the process of making

something become accustomed, custom, and accustoming. After the players had mastered all the song notations, Mr. Jayadi exemplified how the musical instruments sounded harmonious by showing expressions or fully living and breathing the music. If this stage is adjusted to the theory, it is considered internalization; according to KBBI, internalization means inner experience.

Through the process of enculturation (Augros & Stanciu, 1991; Bing & McNeal, 1997; Hannon & Trainor, 2007; Kong & Pearson, 2005; Konnert & Tieu, 2015; Zhang & Moradi, 2013), (Schönpflug, 2008) notes that culture is learned by children who grow in the society and find how their parents and surrounding people interpret their lives. Living among the community enables the children to learn how to distinguish various matters, classifying and doing actions, evaluating the goodness and badness of something and the appropriateness of an action. (Scupin, 2012) highlights that the absence of enculturation will cause humans to not think, behave, and develop oneself to function in society.

Different backgrounds of the members lead to numerous knowledge differences in terms of arts, especially music. Based on such differences, one goal is discussed so that few creative ideas are raised (Guilford, 1957; Pope, 2005; Runco, 2007; Sternberg, 1998), and eventually resulting in enjoyable work. *Nang nok* members themselves are male and female young adults who are passionate about learning the arts and preserving traditional arts of Semarang.

The first generation of *Nang nok* lasted until 2013, along with the decline in Mr. Jayadi's health as the main instructor. However, the long process of enculturation brought forth the successors of great artists of *gambang* Semarang. Besides practicing in Merby Semarang, the members of *Nang nok* group also practiced at an art group "Sobokart" Semarang, under the coordination of Mr. Totok Pamungkas.

For approximately three years, *Nang Nok* group went through ups and downs in its development. The "sobokarti" art group was also completely devoid of art activities, causing the members to only practice at the Merby Club on Saturdays and Sundays.

In 2016, *Nang nok* group formed the second generation coordinated by Johanis Adityawan. The members included university students, Catur as the *kendang* instrument player and majoring in mechanics, Johanis Adityawan as the *gambang* instrument player and studying at the department of communication, Wulan as the *demung* player and majoring in psychology, Maya as the *saron* player and studying at the department of marine, Resa as the *bonang* player and majoring in fine arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang. The process of learning or enculturation of *gambang* Semarang music in the second generation was the same as of the previous generation with the following order: modeling, conditioning, and internalization/learning to cope) (Downey, 2008; Kong & Pearson, 2005; Triyanto, 2015)

The enculturation process in non-formal education at Merby Semarang Club did not stop here. In 2018, the third generation of *Nang nok* group was formed by involving course members interested in music. The club also spread out its range to schools to introduce *gambang* Semarang art, specifically the music, to the students as the future generations. By this, they could love their own traditional arts and strengthened *gambang* Semarang music as one of the Semarangan cultural identities. *Nang nok gambang* Semarang group exceptionally maintains solidarity. Until today, the group members participate and uphold a sense of community by regularly practicing on Saturdays and Sundays. On that ground, the enculturation process of *gambang* Semarang music within the *Nang nok* group can be depicted as an enculturation model in preserving *gambang* Semarang music (see Figure 2).

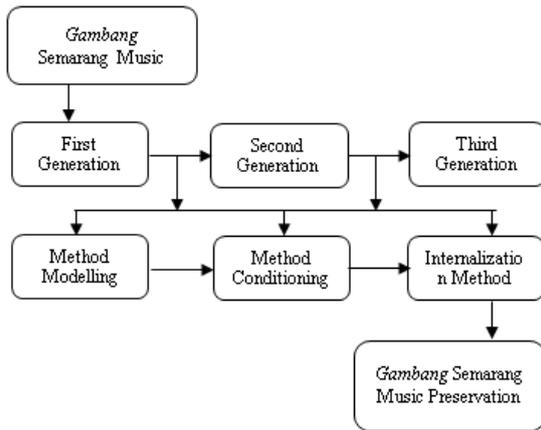


Figure 2. Enculturation Model in Preserving Gambang Semarang Music

Nang nok as a cultural group under non-formal education is excellent that is also supported by the well-managed art group. This is proven by a large amount of performance by *Nang nok* group since its establishment until now, e.g., performance at Trade Office of Central Java, Warung Semawis (2007), Anniversary and Launching of “Berapung-apung” Book by Dr. Abu Suud at Great Mosque Convention Hall of Central Java, Medical Symposium and Seminar on Neurosurgery at the hotel (2008), presidential inauguration of Jokowi at MCC (2014), Art Market at Raden Saleh Cultural Park, Mikom UNDIP Gathering, Exhibition Opening of The Life and Work by Thomas Karsten (2016), Performing with the *Gambang Semarang* Gambang Group on one stage “Srawung Semarangan”, GKI Youth Gathering (2017), and enlivening the launching of “Peranakan Tionghoa Indonesia, Sebuah Perjalanan Budaya” book, Collaborative performance of *Gambang Semarang* art, Mini concert of *Gambang Semarang* (2018),

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that the enculturation process of *gambang* Semarang music within three generations in the *nang nok gambang* Semarang group serves as the activity of cultural awareness of society, artists, and performers. It is to carry out the enculturation process towards young generations, even children, as the successors. The approaches to the teach-

ing and learning process are modeling, conditioning, and internalization. Such an enculturation process is proven to function effectively as the cultural mechanism and enculturation model in preserving *gambang* Semarang music as the cultural identity of Semarangan.

It is suggested that all parties who concern the preservation of traditional art potentials can adopt the inheritance pattern as a development strategy towards performing arts in their regions.

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