

## Adaptation Strategies of Pemuda Kreatif Art Studio in Preserving Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin as the Malay Traditional Art in Tanjungbalai City in Modern Context

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### Abstrac

Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin is a traditional music which is used by sailors before sailing. They sing and hit the drum as a ritual to get a lot of fish. They believe that the lyrics and the music which they sing can call the wind which lead them to the fish. This research projects the adaptation strategies of Pemuda Kreatif art studio in preserving the tradition. It employed qualitative method with interdisciplinary approach. The data were collected from observation, interview, and literature review. Then, they were validated by source's triangulation. The analysis of the data use Miles and Huberman's technique. The findings unveiled that the strategies planned by Pemuda Kreatif in preserving Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin in Tanjungbalai city was through (1) learning process and (2) cultural modification.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tanjungbalai is a city in the northern part of Sumatera. This city has various culture to offer. One of the traditions is called as Sinandong. Sinandong came from Tanjungbalai's Malay dialect of Sinandung, of which the "a" or "u" is changed to be "o". It is derived from "andung" which means tears. Kayam (1981 : 38) affirms that tradition is inseparable from the society. It is an important element of culture, since, since art is the expression of culture itself.

Talking about art, it is a universal element of culture which is systematically related to other elements of it, including (1) language and communication, (2) knowledge, (3) technology, (4) economy, (5) social organization, (6) religion, and (7) art itself (Koentjaraningrat in Rohidi, 2000 : 72). Art is divided into fine arts, literature, dances, and music. Senandung is a musical art which is performed with singing lyrics of rhymes which are arranged in Tanjungbalai's Malay dialect. Senandung is a unique piece of art ever performed by the locals of Tanjungbalai.

Senandung is originated when the princess of Sultan Iskandar Muda suddenly listened an andungan which is companied by flutes and drums. Later, she found that the sound came from the sailor which was going to sail. They sang and hit the drum as a ritual for getting a bunch of fish. They believe that the lyrics and rhymes can bring the wind to lead them to go to where the fish exists. According to Koentjaraningrat (2007: 466), reality in Malay culture is formed by religion and custom which upholds the joy of the believer. Therefore, they entitle the senandung as "Bertelur Kau Sinangin". Gazalba says (1989) that from religious activity, art is made. Praying and preaching the spell with full concentration with specific rhyme and notes will grow musical arts. It is beautified with mesmerizing sentence to form a literature.

Lately, Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin is no longer used as the ritual for offering things to the sea. It is shifted to become an

entertainment. It is still preserved as the inheritance of local ancestors with wonderful value to the life of the community in Tanjungbalai.

List (in Supanggah 1995: 3) defines ethnomusicology as the study of traditional music which is inherited orally with no written materials and constantly changing. The art is preserved orally and changes from its performance and function. The shifts of features are initiated by the community of musicians or local art studio. Prior research relevant to Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin was done by Takari (2009) which is entitled as "Sastra Melayu Sumatera Utara". The substance of this research discuss historical development and the malay literature forms starting from their habit to the variety of dialect in Malay literature. The relevance of art in the tradition is seen from the aspects of structure and form as well as how is the development of senandung in Melayunese people.

A studio which actively maintains the existence of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin is Pemuda Kreatif studio. It is because the founder of the studio is the descendant of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin performer. Through nonformal education, Melayunese people continuously dig and protect their culture. The preservation is inherited through oral teachings in Pemuda Kreatif studio.

This cultural conservation in Tanjungbalai also shows the transformation of the Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin. Globalization tends to be apatethic which makes modern art more interesting and lessen the originality of the tradition. The entrance of foreign culture and society decrease the appreciation of cultural art. Therefore, Pemuda Kreatif adapts strategies to maintain the existence of it in the modern era. The previous research relevant to the adaptation strategy is conducted Triyanto (2015) which is entitled as "Perkeramikan Mayong Lor Jepara (Hasil Enkulturasasi Dalam Keluarga Komunitas Pengrajin)". This research discusses the mechanism of cultural assimilation by artists to

maintain and continue the traditional fine art of ceramics.

Pemuda Kreatif formulates the strategies to protect the art to be more interesting among the society which always in need of upgrade. Since, local culture already planted values, morals, and behavior to its community. Jazuli (2016: 110) opines that art is an integrative need which becomes a part of social culture as a personal or collective expression.

From the phenomenon of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin in Tanjungbalai raised awareness to the researcher to unveil the adaptation strategies planned by Pemuda Kreatif studio to preserve the existence of the art in modern context. Then, this research aimed to describe the strategy of the studio to attract local people in conserving the tradition and protect it from extinction.

## METHODS

This research used qualitative method. The design of this research was a case study. It means that the finding of this research can only be applied for the same characteristic and phenomena. The target of this research is the adaptation strategy of Pemuda Kreatif adaptation strategy in protecting the art of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin for Malays of Tanjungbalai. The research was done in M.T Hariono street of Tanjungbalai.

The data were obtained through observation, interview, and literature review. Observation was done to observe the rehearsal and the performance. The interview was conducted with the founder of Pemuda Kreatif art studio to know the art, adaptation process, and the literature study of documents, pictures, videos, and documents related to the tradition. The data were validated using triangulation by verifying the data from multiple sources. The techniques of triangulation were explained as: (a) comparing the interview with the observation, (b) comparing the information of the interviewees to the researcher, (c) comparing the information of the interviewees during the whole research, (d) comparing the perspectives

and the opinion of the condition with other people, and (e) comparing the interview with the content of the related document. Then, the technique of data analysis used the analysis of Miles and Huberman which consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and verification.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Insights of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin

A relevant research reviewing cultural arts conducted by Arifni (2007) under the title of "Masyarakat dan Kesenian Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam". This research reveals the art of Acehnese which always be influenced by globalization. In relation with Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin, there is no any information which can confirm the origin of senandung. According to Zein, a Senandung performer, this art has the same age with the beginning of first Malay civilization in Tanjungbalai. This information puzzles the history of the art itself.

Senandung is believed to be originated when the princess of Sultan of Tanjungbalai, namely Sultan Tengku Rahmadsyah, which sat on the terrace of the palace suddenly listened an andungan which is accompanied by flutes and drums. Later, she found that the sound came from three sailors which was going to sail. They sang and hit the drum as a ritual for getting a bunch of fish. They believe that the lyrics and rhymes can bring the wind to lead them to go to where the fish exists. Since, in the past, people did not use machine to move their boat and detect the fish.

From an interview, the sailors believed that the senandung which is followed by Gubang music can lead them to the wind which also bring them to the rich sources of fish. Thus, they entitled this senandung as "Bertelur Kau Sinangin" (interview with Zein, April 2018).

Recently, in the development of modernity and advancement of technology, the ritual is no longer used in fishing. However, the culture remains preserved until the current era. Pemuda Kreatif studio is an active art studio

where locals can maintain the existence of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin.

The focus to this art is on the strategies done by Pemuda Kreatif studio which protects the art to the current condition. The studio can formulate strategies to attract people's attention to this tradition aside from the rising needs of update and upgrade; as this art already implanted the values, norms, and behaviour in relevance to society's life.

### **Adaptation Strategies of Pemuda Kreatif Studio**

A research in line with the topic of adaptation strategy was done by Mukarrom (2017) which entitled "Bentuk dan Struktur Musik Gambus Sanggar Mozaik Kota Palembang: Strategi Adaptasi Pencarian Identitas". This research focuses on the collaboration of culture and learning process as the part of adaptation strategy of modern gambus performance in Mozaik art studio. In relation to this research, the theory and concept by Roy Ellen (1892) of adaptation was employed to conceptualize the adaptation as learning process and modification of culture.

Beside the main theory, there are some supporting concepts to discuss the second problem. Thus, the researcher use literature and other materials to discuss the problem completely. The presentation of the findings will be elaborated using the perspective of ethics and emics based on the concept and theories used by the researcher.

Pemuda Kreatif studio is the most active and developed studio in Tanjungbalai. As the effort to reveal the adaptation strategy and the attempts to it that it is accepted by Tanjungbalai community, it can be explained that the discussion is divided into two divisions adapted from Roy Ellen, which are Learning Process and Modification of Culture.

### **Learning Process**

A relevant research regarding learning process was done by Candra (2013) which entitled "Interaksi Sosial Guru dan Siswa dalam Pembelajaran Sosiologi di SMA". This research

shows that the inharmonious social relation between teacher and students in sociology class will result less motivating atmosphere in learning. Thombroni and Mustofa (2013: 16) says that learning is a humane activity which is vital and life-long. Human is no longer to live as a human without being educated by other humans. Then, learning is internal which is abstract. The process happens internally in people's mind.

Based on the fields' data on observation and interview, it can be seen that the steps planned by Pemuda Kreatif studio were mostly aimed to improve the self awareness in following the development of the era. It is seen from the phenomena which youngsters in Tanjungbalai tend to neglect traditional music that they enjoy the modern music more than it. This change will threaten the social role as the supporting factor of tradition in Tanjungbalai.

In relation to the change of culture, It specifically happens under the social needs, including the update and newest innovation, modernity, and efficiency (of music) which is oriented to the improvement of creative acts. The studio understands the change by observing and responding it as an opportunity. This understanding pushes the studio to adapt with the changes in relation to develop Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin as a crative, modificative, and innovative art.

First, the step of learning by the studio is by participating in many events held by the Council of Arts. Tanjungbalai's council of arts also care with the development of traditional music. It is emphasized with the statement of Twalid Mingka, the leader of the council, who expresses that the council shall become the place for artists to develop and it has a task to arrange artistic program to improve their productivity (interview with Twalid, April 2018).

From Figure 1, the studio participates in a festival organized by the council. The enthusiasm of the studio can be seen from the decoration of the stands. They are very serious in promoting the message of preserving Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin.



**Figure 1.** Pemuda Kreatif studio participates in the festival held by Tanjungbalai city

Next, as a feedback, the studio does not only acquire materials and knowledge, it also learns and develops the creative potentials. This is portrayed in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Pemuda Kreatif studio in training Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin for local youths

Based on the figure above, it is interpreted that some of the group member, namely Ryan and Taufik, were trusted by the founder of the studio to introduce and train the community regarding the art of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin to Malay community in Tanjungbalai. It shows that the result of the learning process does not only stop to knowing but also to training and expressing the creative skills of the youth.

In Figure 3, the activity was done to know how intense the interaction between Pemuda Kreatif and the locals in learning the presentation and techniques of playing instruments or becoming an innovative musician in exploring tones. Besides introducing, protecting, and developing the tradition, it also

unites the society of Tanjungbalai, especially the Malay there. It raises the awareness to preserve the tradition and implant the morals of it.



**Figure 3.** The process of learning by Pemuda Kreatif studio in Tanjungbalai

### Modification of Culture

A research regarding cultural modification is done by Dariyo (2003) entitled "Menjadi Orang Kreatif Sepanjang Masa". This substance explores how people can become creative in long term that they can develop their potential since the beginning. Besides learning, improving self-capability in preserving Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin is also a strategy to adapt the culture with local wisdoms which is oriented to open-mindedness and cultural conservation.

In this context, Pemuda Kreatif is brave to make a breakthrough of music by combining the music with modern elements of melayunese drum and arrange it with rhythmic tone that it becomes a harmonious and interesting composition. Tolah (2014: 44) emphasizes that composing a song has an analogy of making producing a thing or new formula from the existing materials. It means that producing a song is related with writer's creativity. Pemuda Kreatif makes Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin different than the beginning. The initial condition only performed the song with drum and flute. Somehow, the studio innovates that. Hayati (in Catharsis, 2016) states that creativity is located in the backing sound of the performance, composing a new song, and

planning interesting presentation. The studio can be different with uniting all elements of music.

For Pemuda Kreatif, the modification of culture does not include the whole changes to the art. This bravery action is done to develop the creativity from the long learning process. It also means the performers adapt the culture with modern music environment. Pudentia (2015: 333) explains that art is not a light thing without goal, space, time, and community. It is a material, social, and historical activity which plays important role in procuring arts. If the society has already needed the change, people will be afraid in modifying the art of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin. They deem that traditional music is ancient and old.

From another side, the development of creativity to the art is done to attract the attention from locals. The studio does this by modifying the culture with modern instrument and delivery. For Pemuda Kreatif, the modification is under the urgency of rescuing the culture from extinction. This action is a form of giving a new touch to the Senandung.



**Figure 4.** The performance of Pemuda Kreatif in Tanjungbalai

Based on the fields data, the studio tried to add the nuance of modernity by adding the variation of modern instrument, such as electric bass, electric guitars, keyboard, and drum without taking out the traditionality of it. This way collaborates the original culture with sophistication from western music. This thing creates uniqueness of the studio among other art studios in Tanjungbalai.

The new modification does not only cope the western culture, but also the tradition of

other places. It is hoped that after this combination, the composition of the songs will be accepted by the society well.

Pemuda Kreatif take long process in getting this. They take the risk of modification without losing the originality of the culture. They reflect their mindset and understanding of cultural development by adapting the influences of modernity to the environment. From these efforts, the studio can maintain its existence and also the culture in Tanjungbalai. They consistently project the creativity and creative ability in their performance.

## CONCLUSION

Adaptation is conceived in two steps, which are learning process and culture modification. The strategies of adaptation done by Pemuda Kreatif art studio aims to secure the existence of Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin in Tanjungbalai. The effort is done that local Malay people can be attracted to preserve the existence of it from the flow of modernization.

The creative studio preserves the art through learning process and culture modification. They learn it by participating in the activity held by Council of Arts and doing routine rehearsal with local youths in Tanjungbalai. Meanwhile, the modification of culture was done by adding the variation of modern instrument, like electric bass, electric guitar, keyboard, and drum to the composition of music without losing the traditional sense. These attempts can maintain the existence of the studio as well as develop the Senandung Bertelur Kau Sinangin to date in Tanjungbalai.

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