

Teaching Music Based on Student's Culture in Elementary School

Ardipal^{1(*)}, Fuji Astuti², Dewi Pebriyanti³

¹*Department of Arts, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia*

²*Department of Elementary Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia*

³*Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author. Email: ardipalarly@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Researches on music education for young learners are generally uncorrelated with children's culture due to the separation between music education and the culture embodied in it. This study aims to investigate 1) children's cultures, 2) adult's arts and cultures, 3) roles of art education in shaping children's creativity, and 4) teacher's competence in teaching art education based on children's culture. Data in this study are collected from elementary students age 8-9 years old in correlation to the Art Education subject. Using a qualitative descriptive research design, this research yields 6 forms of children's culture (age 8-10 years old) including children's individuality and social life, children's relationship with adults, game with multiple toys, games involving movements and sports, imaginative and ritual games, and toys such as horse-like toys and car toys. Overall, there are only 28% of original children's culture found during the observation, indicating the domination of adult's culture towards children's game culture. Moreover, it is also discovered that teachers lack of understanding on children's cultures and integrated games. A concept of ideal music education practice needs to be invented in order to effectively reach music education goals for elementary schools.

Keywords: *Game, Children's Culture, Adult's Culture, Music Education, Elementary*

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture, classified into material and non-material culture, embodies social behavior as well as norms found in the society. According to Macdonald and Jeber (2011), material culture comprises technology, architecture and arts, while immaterial culture contains the principles of social organization, mythology, philosophy, literature, and science (both the written and the unwritten). In social science, culture is used as a means to determine the cultural hierarchy, thus categorizing the cultures into high, low, popular, and folk culture. Meanwhile, in the general term, culture refers to symbols or icons such as body modification, clothes, and accessories used by certain ethnics to distinguish themselves from other ethnics. Material culture emerges as the result of human's material possession since they need to create a condition for sustaining their lives.

In regards to human's needs towards arts in order to survive in their environment, art and culture education is taught at schools. As a matter of fact, art and culture education is embedded in the curriculum due to its uniqueness, meaningfulness, and benefits delivered using the approaches of "learning with arts", "learning through arts", and "learning about arts" which may not be attainable through other subjects. Besides, the art and culture education is relevant to be taught to school children for the sake of introducing Indonesian rich

cultural diversities. Cultural preservation can also be done while administering the lesson since it educates the students about maintaining local and national cultures especially in combating the increasing growth of popular culture worldwide. More importantly, art and culture education trains students to be independent, responsible, creative, productive, and responsive.

Furthermore, a concept of art and culture education which caters the student's needs on creativity and children's cultures is needed. As stated by Mintz (n.d.), children's culture is everything exists in children's world such as story, humour, social interaction, games, sports, video games, and popular cultures such as children's books, TV programs, and films. Thus, the learning concept should adhere to those children's culture and the parameter of creative learning components. Marsh (2010) argues that there are three things underpinning the art and culture education: 1) children's culture; 2) adult's art and culture; and 3) the roles of art and culture education in shaping the children's creativity. Those three components are interconnected to each other, although oftentimes treated differently in education sector. For instance, children live in the popular culture dominated by media and new technology such as internet and computer, and at the same time they are also surrounded by the adult's and school's cultures which affect their habits and lifestyles. Schools barely know and understand the children's culture, leading

to the less effective and vibrant learning environment for children at schools.

Research discussing the use of children's culture in teaching music education to elementary schools is underrepresented.

Several things of what this research is intended to discover are: 1) what are the children's culture (age 8 to 10 years old) like in West Sumatra as well as in Indonesia?; 2) does the traditional children's culture (especially children's games) still exist, fade away, or is it completely replaced by the new ones?; and 3) how relevant is children's culture integrated into art education?; and do elementary school teachers understand the concept of children's culture? This research is projected to yield the percentage and the forms of children's games in West Sumatra. Aside from children's games, this research also aims at figuring out the relevance of children's cultures in music education at elementary schools. Lastly, teacher's understanding towards the integration of children's culture in music education will also be examined through this research.

2. METHODS

This research investigates forms of children's games, the existence of children's traditional games, the relevance of children's culture and art education, and teacher's understanding towards children's culture in West Sumatran elementary schools. Employing qualitative and descriptive approaches, this research purpose to categorize the children's games using its qualitative approach. Further, qualitatively, this research will reveal the presence of children's games in today's society and school community, relationship between children's culture and art education, and the level of teacher's competence in culture-based teaching art education. Data in this research are collected by using both open and closed questionnaires. Those two types of questionnaires are utilized to unfold necessary information related to research questions and project the answers beyond what the researcher has predicted. Objects studied in this research are children age 8 to 10 years old in some elementary schools in West Sumatra.

Data in this research are retrieved through purposive sampling which enables the researcher to gain rich information on the availability of children's cultures and teacher's efforts in integrating them into music education at schools. As many as 9 regions in West Sumatra are surveyed to collect the data in forms of children's games and teacher's competence on integrated music education. Those regions include Padang city, Padang Panjang city, Bukittinggi city, Payakumbuh city, Solok district, Pariaman city, Padang Pariaman district, and Sijunjung district. Due to the needs on a more comprehensive data, this research distinguishes between the information obtained from urban and rural areas with the hypothesis that urban respondents will yield a more meaningful data. Informants in rural areas, on the other hand, are less informative since vast majority of children there are still heavily dependent on traditional cultures. That one of the

research questions pose an issue on the existence of children's traditional game, children who reside in the countryside is more likely to generate more accurate data of traditional games. Respondents who return their answers are accounted as many as 794 out of 1000 expected respondents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Children's Culture Existence and Roles in Art Education in West Sumatra

According to Marsh (in Ardipal, 2017), child culture is the culture existing in the children's environment as long as they are still alive. He mentioned that any culture formed through the activities that children perform in daily basis constitute some of child's popular culture. Mintz (n.d.) details the children's culture including television and video game which unfortunately have deluded children to surreal images instead of real experience. Moreover, parent's authority over children's education has been slowly reduced and replaced by children's engagement with games in their gadgets. Games are supposed to familiarize children with the freedom of expression, teamwork, rules making, and problem solving. However, due to the overwhelming virtual portraits that children are exposed to in video game and television, they are not able to be benefited fully by the game. They instead are psychologically affected by the game indicated by their negative demeanor such as passive, hyperactive, and harsh.

The existence of child culture in West Sumatra are investigated by surveying some elementary schools. Data of the survey revealed that some 288 types of popular games are recognized by the students of grade 3. Games are considered as popular if there are more than 50% respondents know them. The creativity element was also identified in those games, but there was mostly only 1 creativity element found in each type of the game. Even some types were found to have no creativity element. The assumption underlying creativity label is not permanent, and it needs further research to determine whether or not particular games contain and/ or stimulate creativity for children. Nevertheless, games such as playing a beam and drawing may be safely categorized as creative games for those involve the activities of creating, compiling, shaping, conceptualizing, explaining, and composing.

Children cultures found existing in the environment where students grade 3 of elementary schools in West Sumatra are explained below:

Children's Individualism and Social Interaction

An individual, according to Lysen, is a person/someone who cannot be divided (*in deuide*). Lysen in Tirtaharja et al. (1994) mentions that every human being has been granted potentials to be themselves, distinctive to others. As a matter of fact, there is no body found to be the same with the others for everyone is an individual with his or her own personal traits. Those characters are what drive people to show their willingness, emotions, desires, tendency, passion, and resilience. In this regards, each

children also have their own personal traits which differentiate them with one another. The diversities of children's personalities result in heterogeneous children's cultures.

Not only can children be portrayed as an individual, but they can also be identified as a social creature who constantly engage with their community. Babies have also been granted the ability to interact with others since the very first place. Social engagement initiated by children is a form of culture since it comprises values and norms practiced during the conversations. Moreover, the communication taking place among the children themselves and children with parents articulate the practice of take and give highlighting cultural values that children perform in daily activities.

The relationship between Children and Adults

Cultural changes can also be caused by the relationship between children and adults i.e. parents (Marsh, 2010). Parent's education shapes a child's character and it will portray the children's adulthood. Children tend to imitate adult's behavior and take every lessons delivered by their parents for granted. Education that children are taught with will affect how children behave in their daily social interaction. Parents who show ample of love and affection coupled with good norms and values practiced by the society where they live will grow children who who are emotionally and intellectually stable. Aside from the content of the education, facilities provided by parents for children to learn and socialize also influence their development. Those who are raised in a well-off family may be well-equipped with learning facilities, health care, good environment, and nutritious foods making them grown up very well.

Unlike those who are nurtured by a financially capable family, children coming from underprivileged family will have to struggle to get those facilities they need to study well. However, material needs may sometimes be better replaced by psychological needs. Children's needs towards luxurious bedroom, for instance, can be altered by parent's tender love and care. If the children's needs are overlooked, they might not live up to their fullest potentials. A vibrant children culture oftentimes emerges when parents can fulfill the children's needs adequately. The outcome of how parents treat their children can be observed when they have reached the age of adolescence. As remarked by a research conducted by Baylor University, children who are raised by a supportive family are luckier than those who are looked after by a rich family.

On the other hand, the relationship between children and parents in under-served families also have its own shortcomings. Although the emotional bond between children and parents is good for health, the drawbacks of social economy status are inevitable. Researches have shown that parents who have a low financial ability despite their good relationship with children also show some negative side such as the high rate of violence at homes. Aside from low financial capability, parent's low education also affects the way they nurture their children.

A coercive approach instead of a constructive feedback is oftentimes preferred by parents with a poor education background. This will eventually lead to demeaning children's personal traits. The survey conducted by the researcher support these conditions presenting that 40% of elementary school children of grade 3 mention that they are often scolded by their parents. In addition, they are given 5000 each day to be spent at school. It is also revealed in the survey that 75% of the students help their parents doing house chores at home, while 37% others admitted that they help their parents in the market. Furthermore, the communication between children and parents is identified as poor as an implication that parents are too immersed in their work that they have a considerably little amount of time to talk to their children. Of 754 respondents, there were only 10% who go to bed with bed time story, indicating that parents and children lack of emotional engagement.

Games Using Multiple Tools

Communication, as stated earlier, may take assorted forms including written words, visual images, verbal language, and gestures (Juliet, 2005). In the era of technology nowadays, communication occurs through various cutting edge technology, leaving the traditional media behind (Kress, 2005). With the digitization flourishes in all sectors, children are demanded to be introduced to the effective and prudent use of technological devices, otherwise, the children might be controlled by the technological tools on their hands. One of several ways to familiarize children with the use of technology is through playing games as Kelley (n.d.) mentions.

If students possess a couple of learning styles (multi tools), they will be benefited in terms of the ability to learn more quickly and more in-depth, thus they can be more successful in the future. Using miscellaneous learning models may also expand the student's attention span. Adapting to diversified learning styles will eventually improve your ability to learn more effectively. When you have not comprehended certain lesson, the visual representation should be able to guide students in understanding it. Alternatively, if listening to a lecture cannot help students make sense of the whole learning concept, seeing the slide presentation of the same topic or attending the study group is expected to yield a positive learning experience for students.

Based on the results yielded by the survey, there are 5 kinds of media in which games can be played through: 1) dan 2) Games Utilizing Verbal Media

Analyzed using the question of 3.B.1 "is there any game which is played through verbal media, outside home/at the garden?", the survey presented that 70% children answered "yes", while 12.5% admitted that they do not know. Games below are the games mentioned by the children in the survey:

- i. *Andok-adokan lidi* (integrated)
- ii. *Bernyanyi melingkar* (integrated)
- iii. *Berpantun ria di taman* (integrated)
- iv. *Bunga ros* (singing, dancing)

- v. *Dore* (integrated)
- vi. *Guessing your friend's names* (at the garden)
- vii. *Mentioning the names of regions* (country)
- viii. *Puak ami-ami* (integrated)
- ix. *Tabao kata* (integrated)
- x. *Teng-teng buku* (integrated)
- xi. *Ular naga panjang* (integrated)
- xii. *Yaoma-yaoma* (integrated)

a. Games Utilizing Written Media

This question is comprised in the questionnaire of 3.B.3 “is there any game played through writing outside home/in the garden preferred by the children?”. A vast majority of them (70%) answered “yes” and 25% stated that “they do not know” (appendix 3). The children’s answers were as the following:

- i. *Look for foods*
- ii. *Cerita tentang diri*
- iii. *Policeman*
- iv. *Tebak-tebakan* (guessing)
- v. *Lanto* (menulis)
- vi. *Menulis pohon*

b. Games Utilizing the Media to Sing or to Dance

This question is categorized in 3.B.5 “is there any game played using songs outside home/at the garden preferred by the children?”. A large number of them answered “yes” and 12% replied “do not know” (appendix

All answers written by the children are detailed as follow:

- i. *Train*
- ii. *Mikado* (singing)
- iii. *Nyanyian salawat* (singing at the garden)
- iv. *Om pim pa* (singing)
- v. *Sambuung ayat* (singing)
- vi. *Ular bergansing* (singing at the garden)

c. Games Utilizing Images

Questions stated in 3.B.7 of “is there any game requiring children to draw outside home/at the garden?”. A large proportion (82%) mentioned “yes” and 12% stated that they do not know (appendix 5).

- i. *Bermain warna*
- ii. *Bermain A, B, C*
- iii. *Mencari harta karun* (peta)/tulis tanah
- iv. *Menulis* (misal pohon, dinding)
- v. *Menulis tubuh* (misal tangan, kaki)

d. Games Utilizing Verbal, Writing, Singing, and Dancing as well Visual Images

As stated by Psychologist, playing games may help to train children’s sensory cells. Those games can be:

- i. Gently rub the baby
- ii. Whispering and singing to baby
- iii. Carrying baby while moving the body
- iv. Role play to induce children’s capability in speaking and in communicating their thoughts
- v. Delivering messages through whispering to stimulate children’s listening skill

- vi. Exposing assorted food tastes to stimulate children’s senses
- vii. Climbing, jumping, and bicycling to stretch their muscle
- viii. Playing with soap bubbles, using cubical soap, wash lap, and shower puff to train children’s senses
- ix. Playing on the grass, on the sand, or playing with pets
- x. Introducing children to various smells of flowers, fruits, plants, and foods to train children’s smelling sense
- xi. Playing with colors help to train children their visual ability
- xii. Playing “cilukba” may stimulate children’s visual ability
- xiii. Playing the shoe laces can train children’s physical endurance

Referring to the list of games above, it can be concluded that regardless of its simplicity, a game will be beneficial for the children physical and emotional development. The games must not be costly for what matters much is the impact it gives to children’s development progress.

Furthermore, to figure out the percentage of games employing speaking, singing, and dancing outside of house/at the garden, the survey reveals that 57% of respondents know this integrated game, while 22% others proclaim that they have no idea.

Games Played through Movement and Sports

Sport makes up one of the most fundamental human’s needs to live healthily, hence children are highly recommended to do it as one of the basic activities in their life. However, adults have to assist children in choosing the appropriate sports according to their age and their physical development stage. In addition, the aim of doing sport for children and adults are also different. While adults doing sport to burn the fat on their body, children do it to support their physical well-being and development. The right way to do sport is also critical to be taught to children because it slow-down or even impair their development progress. Conversely, if the children do sport based on the legitimate methods, they may evolve good behaviors and habits which later can take them to a fulfilling and healthy life. The character of hardworking, highly responsible, relentless, and optimistic are the instances of personalities they can grow up with in the future.

The questionnaire cites children’s sports in group 3.D. stating “is there any game at home/at the garden? About 85% children mentioned that they like doing sport outdoor, but few others (7.5%) mention that they do not like it. Overall, the answers given by the children are as follow:

- i. *Base ball*
- ii. *x. Aerobic sport*
- iii. *Basket ball*
- iv. *xi. Push up*
- v. *Football*
- vi. *xii. Tug of war*
- vii. *Plastic ball*
- viii. *xiii. Hula hoop*
- ix. *Crocodile-movement like*

- x. xiv. Volley ball
- xi. Jogging
- xii. xv. Roller coaster
- xiii. Karate
- xiv. xvi. Cycling
- xv. Chasing goats movement

Toys Including Dolls, Horse, and Cars

Dolls or puppets are universal toys appropriate for both boys and girls. Children, naturally, are interested to play with the human-like dolls and animal-like ones. Through playing, they do not only kill their time, but they also have some fun with their friends. Activities during the play may appear in forms of negotiation, lobbying, trading, giving sympathy, calculating, and other relevant forms. These will encourage the children's brain development cognitively as well as emotionally. At times, role play also take place during children play dolls. This activity helps to foster the student's creativity and imagination better since it demands students to be actively engaged with the sequence of the activities. A role play of being a doctor, for example, will stimulate children's creativity and intelligence in acting as a doctor.

Not only does playing dolls guide the regular students but it also promotes entertaining learning to impaired students (e.g. children with autism and other forms of disability). Toys give ultimate freedom to children with disabilities in expressing their feelings and associating with things they wish to touch and play with. In spite their intense obsession towards their possession, the needs of children with autism are still well accommodated when playing dolls. Thus, this learning media plays a significant role in helping teachers managing the class. Furthermore, parents are also aided in looking after their children at home with relatively less risks of harming the children's safety.

Overall, playing with toys benefit children with several things such as training their motor and partial skill, developing their linguistics and communication skills, spatial intelligence, the ability to imagine things, spacial competence, and character building. First, children's motor and partial skills are the largely influenced by their activities in playing games. Playing with car toys, for example, encourages children to utilize all of their senses to ultimately enjoy the game. Beyond that, children's partial skill is also trained well through their activities of directing their car toy, deciding where and when to stop, increase its speed, and to pause. That way, children are actually synchronizing the functions of their senses altogether. Second, since playing hastens children to communicate with their peers or parents, their linguistics as well as communication skills are also enhanced. They can communicate using verbal and non-verbal language, by which children's linguistics and communication skills are furnished.

Third, children's capacity in imagination--highly correlated with creativity-- is enhanced by the activities during playing with their toys. Playing will spur on children's creative minds due to its stress-free activities, which enables children to be brave, to initiate actions on

their own interest, and to take risks. Activities in playing various toys with different features, for example, teach children to creatively find out strategies, take the advantage of resources they have around their neighborhood, and develop methods to solve issues they encounter during playing. Fourth, children also learn norms, morals, and regulations apply in the community they live through playing activities.

Adult's Arts and Culture and How They Affect Children's Culture

Adult's cultures are inevitably intertwined with children's for they live side by side, however the children's is affected more significantly since they tend to imitate the adult's behavior. Among many forms of adult's cultures found in the society, some of them are identified to be adapted by the children when they play with their friends. Those games are as follow:

1. *Jualan* (acting like the sellers)
2. *Dokter-dokteran* (acting like a doctor)
3. *Sekolah-sekolahan* (acting like a teacher)

The three games above belong to a role play functioning as to prepare children for necessary skills they need when they get older. Skills in financial management, trading, teaching (not as a teacher, but rather as an educator), and giving a good treatment to others (by looking up to how doctors serve their patients) are fundamental to be honed by every adults. The earlier these skills are learned, the more well-formed they will be later when they reach adulthood.

Nevertheless, poor adult's cultures may also impact negatively on children. There are at least three forms of bad implications poor adult's cultures may affect children: the use of violence, the lack of intimacy, and bad character building. The former frequently occurs in the families with financially underprivileged parents. Parents are often easily agitated when they are too exhausted after working extra hours in order to earn more money to fulfill the family's necessity. As much as 40% children are accounted to have been scolded by their parents. Lacking of intimate relationship, on the other hand, is caused by seldom communication between parents and children. This situation is also generally rooted in the family with busy parents. Survey shows that only 1 out of 10 children maintains a good communication with their parents. In the other words, there are only 10% children who communicate well with their parents. The last form happens due to the parenting method used by parents in raising their children. Children nurtured with ample support emotionally as well as materially will develop good behaviors compared to those who are raised through a poor emotional intimacy.

Roles of Culture-Based Art Education in Shaping Children's Creativity

Art education is intended to develop the children's creative ideas and imagination through entertaining as well as educative teaching contents. However, the teaching has to be pertaining to children's culture so that those two developments may happen as they are expected to be.

Game, among other forms of child culture is thought to be one of the most effective strategies to stimulate children's creative and critical thinking when incorporated into classroom activities. The rationale beyond this notion is that game supplies a vibrant, stress-free learning environment. Creativity emerges better at the time children are given stress-free environment, ample material and psychological supports, and enough learning facilities. When playing game, children's cognitive skills develop maximally and so does their creativity. Sylve, Bruner, and Genova (1976) mention that playing game is closely related to the improvement of children's cognitive, thus it also leads to children's better creativity.

Child culture is found to play several roles in art education both to guide teachers in delivering lesson materials and children in understanding as well as practicing music. Those roles are as follow:

1. Assisting teachers in specifying the lesson materials appropriate with the children's needs
2. Shaping children's creativity
3. Preparing children to live in the society with all norms and culture apply there

Those 3 roles are necessary to reach the purpose of art education.

In regards to the development of children's creativity, music education taught based on child culture plays some important roles in promoting creative thinking. First, it grants the students freedom to express themselves fully. With a full granted freedom, students will feel at ease in applying their creative ideas into concrete actions. Second, it trains children's to have a powerful imagination to yield a creative product of their thought. A good imagination will result in beneficial and valuable products which may increase their economical values. Third, there is a sensitivity development through which the student's artistic as well as fictive visions are shaped. Fourth, music education develops the student's intellectual capacity, creativity sensitiveness, and the skills needed to find jobs (especially for adolescence).

Teacher's Competence in Teaching Art Education based On Child Culture

Among other factors, teacher's competence plays the most significant role in art education. Based on the survey on teacher's understanding towards child culture, it shows that 56.6% art teachers have a good understanding on it. In other words, more than a half of total samples are expected to perform well in art teaching based on child culture. However, there are some artistic skills that teachers have yet to possess in order to be skilful in designing and maintaining the classroom activities. Those skills include singing skill, composing song lyrics in accordance to the lesson theme, and reading the song notation. Art teachers, meanwhile, are lacking of the ability to create the song lyric (40.8%), reading the notation (43.4%), and singing skill (25%).

Although the proportion of teachers who lack of those abilities is not that denotative, the drawbacks towards music education at elementary schools cannot be avoided. Lacking in the ability of composing song lyrics, for

instance, may hamper teachers in delivering meaningful lesson experience to the students through singing a song. Values, norms, and character education taught to the students are mainly embedded in the song lyrics. Hence, the capacity in composing lyrics is necessary to be acquired by art teachers in order to reach the goals of art education.

4. CONCLUSION

While some teachers admit that they have a good comprehension on teaching music based on child culture, others are still lagging behind due to lack of artistic skills in delivering the lesson materials. Providing teachers with enough artistic skills will overcome the aforementioned issue. Moreover, the survey conducted on this research signifies that the child culture such as traditional child games can still be found in West Sumatra. Forms of the child culture exist in society are children's individualism and social interaction, games with multiple tools, toys such as horse-like and car-like, multiple tool games, and games through movements and sports. In addition, parents and children relationship tend to influence the later culture. Finally, a music education learning concept based on child culture should be defined and designed for the sake of a more comprehensive and effective music education for elementary school.

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