



# The Use of Benjang Art Promoting Patriotic Nationalism for Indonesian Youths

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**Abstract.** Ujung Berung which is located in Bandung City, West Java Province is one of the areas that produces cultures that are still preserved art Benjang is one of the original cultures of Ujung Berung. The art of Benjang is included in the martial arts that developed from the art of dogongan, seredan, and memundingan. The local wisdom of art Benjang which is still well developed in the community opens an easy way for character education efforts for youth in Ujung Berung. This study aims to strengthen the sense of nationalism in today's young generation, especially in Ujung Berung with art-based character education. The research method uses a (qualitative). Sources of research include observations, interviews, questionnaires, and literature studies. Researchers can hope that this research can contribute to the development of science and education, especially regarding character development.

**Keywords:** ujung berung · benjang arts · character education

## 1 Introduction

Currently, the main enemy of the Indonesian nation is its own young generation. Why is it said so because the spirit of nationalism and patriotism is currently fading among the younger generation. It can even be said that today's young generation is too carried away by the flow of globalization where these young generation think that western culture is better than their own culture as well as in the Covid-19 condition which is a new challenge. This pride is born through a learning process and is learned not only from generation to generation which is inherited.

Ujung Berung, which is located in Bandung City, West Java Province, is an area that produces cultures that are still preserved. Ujung Berung itself has a very good cultural potential because in the past many artists and humanists lived and built art hermitages. Benjang art is one of the original cultures of Ujung Berung. The art of Benjang is included in the martial arts that developed from the art of dogongan, seredan, and memundingan. The art of Benjang itself is influenced by the sport of wrestling originating from the Netherlands. Initiated by Pencak Silat artists, this art is synonymous with Pencak Silat martial arts. In 1926, the art of Benjang began to be widely known by the people at the

foot of Mount Manglayang. This Benjang art is usually played at wedding celebrations, circumcisions, ngruwat, thanksgiving, and others. This art is usually performed at night. This art is synonymous with magic. There are three types of performing arts, including Benjang Gelut, Benjang Helaran, and Benjang Mask.

The local wisdom of Benjang art which is still well developed in the community opens an easy way for character education efforts for youth in Ujung Berung. From this Benjang art, we can take advantage of the values that exist in this art which we then combine with character education itself. Character education is a milestone for the development of values and character of today's nation's children. Character education is interpreted as education that develops character values in themselves so that they have character in themselves, and it is hoped that they are able to apply these character values into themselves as members of society and citizens who are religious, nationalist, productive, and creative. The existence of local wisdom coupled with the inculcation of character education values is expected to strengthen the sense of nationalism in today's young generation, especially in Ujung Berung.

## **2 Research Result s and Discussion**

### **2.1 The Existence of Benjang Art in Ujung Berung City of Bandung During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Art is all human behavior that appears and is fun, beautiful, and can move the human soul (Ki Hadjar Dewantara). The term of art has its origins from the word "sani" which means sincerity of soul or noble soul. The art becomes a form of emotional representation of a person towards the culture and traditions that have developed from generation to generation. Like the art of Benjang which is a form of hereditary reality in West Java. Generally, the art of benjang is included in the performing arts because it displays several epic and aesthetic appearances. The variety of benjang art that has developed from generation to generation include Wrestling Benjang, Helaran Benjang, and Benjang Mask.

In the development of the art of Benjang, there are 3 types, each of which has its own historical storyline. The development of art in developing countries is generally influenced by external culture or external influences, including the influence of interactions with foreign parties, especially the influence that comes from the five major religions originating from outside, namely Hinduism from India, Buddhism from India, Islam from Arabia., Catholics come from Europe, and Christians or Protestants come from Europe. The impact of this influence causes the emergence of accuracy and assimilation. Especially in the art of Benjang, which became the forerunner of a new culture in the early 19th century.

In the 19th century, Benjang was better known as a game, played by an amben/bale called "sasamben" which means a single/virgin man. Especially known as the art of Benjang Wrestling because every show displays the martial arts of the sasamben. However, during the Dutch colonial rule, martial arts (Benjang Wrestling) were prohibited from developing for fear of being radical. Although it has been banned, the art of Benjang Wrestling still exists in the 19th century by being carried out in secret by sports and arts associations under the guise of religion (Islam) such as prayers and asrokol with Islamic

humming. The influx of Islamic influence has given rise to the art of rudat, the art of Kencring or Genjring, and the art of Gedut which is a form of martial art that is rhythmic to the beat of flying musical instruments. This art is growing and even succeeded in producing Benjang champions who came from outside the region, such as Banten, Garut, Cianjur, Karawang, Sumedang, and Cirebon.

The beginning of the 20th century in the development of the art of Benjang continued to develop. Not only related to martial arts, but the art of Benjang also displays the aesthetic value and traditional locality of the community. In the 1930s wrestling contests (Benjang Wrestling) were often held at night with a large public watching. Local people know it as Benjang Weweran by performing a pair of kesweh (two men who play grandparents) and a pair of lumping horses accompanied by music. So in 1938 the appearance of the kesweh was used as a procession for child circumcision which is now known as Benjang Heleran. Then at the end of 1939 the art of Benjang was developed into the art of mask dance by a group of Sundanese Classical Mask dancers by changing the pattern of the Sundanese Classical Mask from patterned to unpatterned and later called the Benjang Mask. Generally Mask Benjang is played in the afternoon. So the success of Benjang can be seen from its activities carried out for 24 h with the division of time, namely Benjang Heleran (morning), Topeng Benjang (afternoon), and Benjang Wrestling (evening - dawn).

The art of Benjang is a local culture of Ujung Berung which is currently being preserved as a typical tourism icon of Bandung. The elements that consist in the art of benjang include dance, music, and martial arts. Therefore, the rich art of Benjang which is located in Ujung Berung has the potential for tourism based on local culture. The establishment of the Ujung Berung Traditional Cultural Tourism Area (KPBTUB) is one of the tourism destination development strategies in article 14 of the Master Plan for Regional Tourism Development (RIPPARDA) of Bandung City for 2012–2025. Developments in the preservation of the cultural arts of Benjang are also carried out with the assistance of the local government. This effort was carried out by constructing a gazebo as a venue for performing arts such as the Benjang festival in Ujungberung and Cibiru.

Efforts to preserve the art of Benjang in Ujung Berung to maintain its existence in the current era also involve the role of art actors, organizations, and the community. Performers of the arts and organizations have played a role in maintaining the cultural arts of Benjang in the current era of globalization. Like the role of PSOBI (Indonesian Benjang Sports Arts Association) in Ujung Berung by displaying Benjang Heleran and Benjang Wrestling as attractions. Based on an interview with PSOBI in Ujung Berung, it was stated that for some time it was scheduled to hold performances and traveling festivals with Benjang Heleran as an object to be seen by the surrounding community, but also PSOBI in performing Benjang Heleran was in a child circumcision event which is usually a procession by riding a jampana (bebarongan). The Covid-19 pandemic that has occurred for 2 years has also had an impact on the development of Benjang art. Activities that must be carried out by WFH (Work From Home) have had an impact on the planning of the Benjang festival which will be held by Regional Tourism (RIPPARDA) in Bandung City to be postponed to overcome the emergence of crowds in the community.

## 2.2 Content of Locality Values in Benjang Art Performances Traditional

Art exists and develops closely with meaning, function, and culture that underlies the life and activities of the community itself. In the midst of globalization, traditional arts are seen as a means of cultural strategy in the midst of the determination of communication technology. As a result of globalization which leads to the impact of economic globalization, it has an effect on the meaning and existence of traditional arts where there is a clash between the values contained in an art that clashes with the globalization of communication technology. With the determination of this communication technology will be able to change the perspective of society in social activities. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen locality values as an effort to strengthen the cultural identity of the community [1].

Locality through this Benjang art is an illustration of the cultural identity of the Ujung Berung community in art. According to Mr. Abdul Gani Benjang is an original art that was born in Ujung Berung. Benjang itself at that time functioned as a gathering place between residents. As an art that has existed for a long time and is still developing today, of course, Benjang has local values that make Benjang survive to this day. Benjang art is certainly a performing art and a forum for social interaction. Through this art, we can see what social traditions exist in Ujung Berung. Benjang itself as an art of various forms, both wrestling, martial arts, and performances certainly provides a lot of color in the local values of community life in Ujung Berung, including:

- Religious value, as an art that was born as a medium in ritual ceremonies, this performing art is usually analogous to a ritual ceremony that functions as a symbol or expression in communicating with what they believe.
- The value of hard work, where the existence of techniques in this art makes you inevitably have to practice hard if you want to be able to master it.
- The value of sportsmanship, as a place for self defense, of course, benjang has matches. There are also rules in this art, one of which is that there must be sportsmanship or behavior among wrestling players, in which case if a player loses, he must accept his defeat gracefully and admit the opponent's victory in a sporting manner.
- Cultural Values, as an art that was born from a community culture, there is no doubt that this art has been able to elevate and pass on the Ujung Berung culture through the Benjang Arts. For example, the culture of friendship, with the existence of the Benjang Art show, it could be a place for friendship between residents.
- Value of Discipline, many Benjang Arts colleges apply many rules for students or students to be disciplined. Because if you are not disciplined, it will be difficult for someone to be proficient in the art of benjang.
- Entertainment Value, if in the past this art was born as a medium for performing rituals, but for now this art has turned into a performing art where this art presents entertainment and spectacle for the community as well as insight for the community about the culture and art that exists in Ujung Berung.

Of course, the values contained in this Benjang art cannot grow if there is no belief in this art by the residents of the owner of this culture. As we know, many traditional arts and cultures are starting to disappear at this time due to the erosion of modernization. However, with the locality values, it is hoped that young people and

the next generation will be able to interpret and preserve traditional arts like this as a local genius that can be a hope for the future growth and development of an area. Not only that, the values in this art can give birth to an interaction called social interaction which for now can be said that social interaction between these communities has begun to disappear [2].

### **2.3 The Influence of Character Education Through Benjang Art on Strengthening the National Identity of the Young Generation in Ujung Berung**

Culture-based character education is the main foundation for the younger generation in an effort to form the national identity of the Indonesian nation, this is because culture is a unity consisting of knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, and all the capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society, it can be said that culture arises because of the influence of the habits of the people who live in an area which then creates a work [3]. The stages of culture-based character education are felt to be able to foster a love for local wisdom, shape character, and strengthen the identity of nationalism in the younger generation. It can be said that character education is a solution to the problems that exist in this country. Based on this explanation, we can conclude that the advantages that exist in every region in Indonesia can be used as the basis for forming national identity.

In this discussion, the application of culture-based character education, especially the art of benjang among the younger generation of Ujung Berung is one of the right things to be applied in the era of transformation and globalization. Because with the preservation of the art of benjang through character education, it is hoped that the younger generation in the Ujung Berung area can maintain the stability of regional traditions and the morality of the younger generation in Ujung Berung. Based on the results of a survey that we conducted to the younger generation living in the Ujung Berung area, there are some young people who are pro with the preservation of Sundanese culture and arts, especially the Benjang Arts and vice versa there are also those who are against it. This should be our consideration that the position of traditional culture and arts is quite threatened due to the influence of transformation and globalization, thus triggering the emergence of two camps, namely the pros and cons. All young people in Indonesia want to preserve their culture.

The emergence of pros and cons among the younger generation of Ujung Berung regarding the art of Benjang is caused by the lack of preservation and the introduction of art that does not follow developments in the current era, this then makes some of the younger generation think that this art is out of date. To overcome the problems of pros and cons among the younger generation of the Ujung Berung area regarding the art of Benjang, Benjang art activists then established an association that aims to bring together the Benjang community at the City, Regency, West Java region, to Indonesia. Indonesian Benjang Sports Arts (PSOBI). The association facilitates the Benjang community/art studio that is spread throughout West Java to Indonesia to carry out Benjang art preservation activities for the younger generation, as for the preservation carried out by the association, namely by holding a Sundanese Cultural Festival every year but for the usual schedule of events always changing according to existing conditions.

Apart from the emergence of pros and cons among the younger generation in the Ujung Berung area, it must be acknowledged that actually the application of Benjang art-based character education to form a nationalist identity is considered very appropriate. This can be seen in the type of art, especially benjang wrestling. It should be noted that benjang wrestling is a branch of art from benjang, in practice benjang wrestling does not apply magical elements, this is because in the game, benjang wrestling displays the physical strength of the players. In this case, physical strength in Benjang Wrestling is an art that contains character education content, because in Benjang Wrestling it learns about instilling a sense of love for the homeland, a sense of courage, discipline, hard work, mutual respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, tolerance, honesty, sportsmanship and can form fitness and maintain physical and spiritual health.

Although until now the art of Benjang still raises pros and cons among the younger generation of Ujung Berung, this art still exists and continues to develop. Based on the results of an interview with Abdul Gani as the chairman of PSOB and a Benjang art activist, he said that until now in the Bandung City area there are approximately 400 Benjang associations. In addition to the Bandung City area, Benjang art has also spread to Bandung Regency, West Bandung Regency, and even throughout West Java and is currently starting to develop to several regions in Indonesia. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the development of Benjang art began to experience obstacles because the Indonesian government currently prohibits carrying out activities that trigger crowds, the pandemic has hampered the process of introducing and preserving Benjang art to the younger generation.

### **3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Benjang art is a form of reality that has been passed down from generation to generation in West Java. Generally, the art of benjang is included in the performing arts because it displays several epic and aesthetic appearances. The variety of benjang art that has developed from generation to generation include Wrestling Benjang, Helaran Benjang, and Benjang Mask. Its history in the 19th century has made Benjang better known as a game played by an amben/bale called "sasamben" which means a single/virgin man. In particular, it is known as the art of Benjang Wrestling because every show displays the martial arts of the sasamben. The next stage in the early 20th century in the development of the art of Benjang continued to develop. Not only related to martial arts, but the art of Benjang also displays the aesthetic value and traditional locality of the community. Therefore, the Art of Benjang which is a local culture of Ujung Berung which is currently being preserved as a typical tourism icon of Bandung.

The value contained in the art of Benjang is rich in local culture as a national identity. Benjang itself at that time functioned as a gathering place between residents. As an art that has existed for a long time and is still developing today, of course, Benjang has local values that make Benjang survive to this day. Benjang art is certainly a performing art and a forum for social interaction. Benjang itself as an art of various forms, both wrestling, martial arts, and performances certainly provides many colors in the local values of community life in Ujung.

The application of culture-based character education, especially the art of benjang among the younger generation of Ujung Berung is one of the right things to be applied

in the era of transformation and globalization. Because with the preservation of the art of Benjang through character education, it is hoped that the younger generation in the Ujung Berung area can maintain the stability of regional traditions and the morality of the younger generation in Ujung Berung. Based on the results of a survey that we conducted to the younger generation living in the Ujung Berung area, there are some young people who are pro with the preservation of Sundanese culture and arts, especially the art of Benjang and vice versa there are also those who are against it. This is also reinforced by the results of an interview with Abdul Gani as the chairman of PSOB and a Benjang art activist, he said that until now in the Bandung City area there are approximately 400 Benjang associations. In addition to the Bandung City area, Benjang art has also spread to Bandung Regency, West Bandung Regency, and even throughout West Java and is currently starting to develop to several regions in Indonesia. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the development of Benjang art began to experience obstacles because the Indonesian government currently prohibits carrying out activities that trigger crowds, the pandemic has hampered the process of introducing and preserving Benjang art to the younger generation Berung, including: religion, hard work, sportsmanship, culture, discipline, and entertainment.

Based on the results of research on the art of Benjang that has the potential to grow local culture-based characters. Benjang art has had a long history, has values that can be imitated by the younger generation, and even has the potential to be an applicative means of implementing character education in schools with Benjang art. First, history proves that the establishment of Benjang art is a longstanding custom or tradition. Until finally, various kinds of Benjang art developed from generation to generation, including Wrestling Benjang, Helaran Benjang, and Benjang Mask. Therefore, the Art of Benjang which is a local culture of Ujung Berung which is currently being preserved as a typical tourism icon of Bandung. Second, the values contained in the art of Benjang are rich in local values, including religion, hard work, sportsmanship, culture, discipline, and entertainment. The three Benjang arts can be used in the implementation of character education in Indonesia, especially for the development of the personality and attitudes of the younger generation in the era of modern globalization.

It is hoped that because of that, the development of this research can be used as material in designing a character problem for the younger generation in Indonesia. Especially in developing the positive character of the younger generation in facing the currents of globalization, modernization, and westernization. The application program can be applied in the school environment in the form of intracurricular and extracurricular activities. First, infiltration into the school's intracurricular can be done by integrating Benjang art material into local content such as Sundanese culture and language. Second, in extracurricular activities at school, it can be applied in student organizations such as the martial art of Benjang Gulat as a local martial art typical of Bandung. It is implied that this research can be useful for theoretical development to contribute to the development of science and education, especially regarding character development through the Art of Benjang (Ujung Berung's local wisdom) as a means of forming a sense of nationalism and local identity.

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