

HARMONY IN DIVERSITY THROUGH SUNDANESE ART AND CULTURE

Santi Susanti

Department of Television and Film
Faculty of Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran
Sumedang, Indonesia
santisusanti2202@gmail.com

Sukaesih

Department of Information and Library Science Faculty of
Communication Science, Universitas Padjadjaran Sumedang,
Indonesia

Abstract— *School is a better place to put on the local culture. The school role as a custodian of the local culture is applied in Elementary School of Garut. It was founded by a Chinese woman descent who loves the education. This study aims to reveal the schools efforts in doing the perseverance of Sundanese culture loving to young students. This research uses qualitative method with phenomenology approach. The data collection was conducted through interviews, observation and literature review. The results is the entrepreneurial curriculum-based school are applied on the equality for indigenous children and Chinese descent by determining the composition of learners around 70 percent of children and 30 percent of Sundanese Chinese children. The school also makes Sundanese art and culture as part of the curriculum, and not included on extracurricular activities. The effort to teach “kasundaan” content is expected to embed the children awareness to appreciate the local culture as a force to unite the differences and make the difference as something wonderful that strengthen unity as Indonesia.*

Keywords: *Cultural root; Sundanese culture; equality; togetherness*

I. INTRODUCTION

Big things are formed from small things. If the foundation elements are strong, the result of the formation will also be strong. However, if the foundation elements are weak or damaged, the resulting formation will easily be fragile. Indonesia which is made up of diverse ethnic groups scattered in various parts of the archipelago. The motto of Unity in Diversity is how the diversity of Indonesia is united and extended from Sabang to Merauke. Diversity can be a potential carrying capacity for the formation to be powerful and strong Indonesian nation if the elements are taken as the wealth of diversity that should be preserved and maintained. It is not consider as a difference that could trigger inter-ethnic conflicts in this archipelago. The similarity of thoughts and feelings as a nation must be united to become crucial things to the formation of stronger Indonesian rather than ethnicities primordial.

The Indonesian culture is a combination of local culture in Indonesia. According to Garna (2008: 141), the local culture complements regional culture. Regional culture is essential in the formation of national culture. National culture provides an opportunity for local culture to fill it. The noble values of each local culture have become the nation's forming culture that reflects other nations. The strengthening of local cultural

rootedness is important for the maintenance noble values and the Indonesian people strength. One of them is Sundanese culture. It is a culture that live in the western part of Java which developed by a group of people known as “*Urang Sunda*”. The strengthening to this practice needs to be done especially in the current circumstances where many eastern cultural displaced by global culture. The displaced goes through Internet as a result of information and communication technology development.

The world of education is an appropriate place to instill the love of the children of the local culture. Schools can be a driver for the growing appreciation of local culture that many suspected eroded from the hearts and minds of children today.

Banks (1986) explained that in the early stages, students need to be introduced first with the culture values before group community values. In the next stage, the students newly introduced to the cultural global culture value. This is necessary for the younger generation not to lose their culture identity when they communicate with people outside their ethnic group.

The education based on Sundanese local culture is an educational process that is important in the schooling system in West Java. It is because people should respect the diversity in his/her region if he/she himself does not know the culture and do not know the developed tradition in the community. The children today should not to be kept out of the cultural because in order to be globalized, they do not need to leave the cultural value originality (Herman, 2012: 30-31).

The school role as a preserver of local cultural sustainability is applied by one of the primary schools in Garut. It is Bestari Utami. It was founded by a Chinese descendant named Christanti Gomulia. This schools which translated by the entrepreneurship curriculum was built by applying the principle of equality between indigenous children and of Chinese descent. They make art and Sundanese culture as part of the educational curriculum. They do not put the subjects as an extracurricular activity. Its very rarely to do in others schools because the Sundanese subject and culture are put in extracurricular activities.

Julia (2012) said that the importance of local art education has the potential to change the learners behavior or characteristics. This is because arts consist of a tradition of universal local wisdom values. The art education activities are done through various ways to instill the values of local

wisdom. The activities are lessons material comes from the local culture rather than from outside culture, art lessons are taught as an aesthetic experience effort rather than creating Sundanese artists, and the teaching of art material accompanied by the values comprehending or meaning. It is not just learning to practice and it effects to all art material that is taught must be containing the cultural meaning, especially the local wisdom values which applied globally.

The purpose of this research is to reveals Christanti Gomulia efforts in her school she has been founded to instill the love of students to Sundanese art and culture in order to strengthen the unity of Indonesia.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Social Action Theory (Max Weber)

Max Weber is a pioneer of sociology science in Germany He defines social action as all the behavior of individuals who have subjective meaning for themselves and directed to the actions of others (Weber in Ritzer, 1975). The behavior is done intentionally and has specific purpose or motive. The action is oriented in its appearance. The behavior done by someone is the result of understanding and interpretive understanding (*Verstehen*). The theory developed by Max Weber is the basis for the emergence of subjective theories where the approach is based on social interaction (phenomenology theory is one of them).

Social Action Theory is used to analyze the motives behind Christanti to embed the *kasundaan* elements to young students The amount students composition are 70 percent of Sundanese children and 30 percent of Chinese children.

B. Phenomenology Theory

Phenomenology explained or revealed the meaning of the experience in realizing a number of individuals about the concept or phenomenon (Polkinghorne in Creswell, 1998: 51). As Kuswarno (2009) said that the meaning constructed based on individual perspective. Thus, the results of informant will vary to the same phenomena. This research will reveal how Gomulia Christanti experience in instilling the Sundanese culture values to the young students at SD Bestari Utami School in Garut.

The phenomenology theory used in this research is the theory who developed by Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz. Edmund Husserl is a German mathematician who known as the father of phenomenology. His discussion expertise is on phenomenology as a science about the essence of consciousness. Husserl's perspective is the meaning of a reality or phenomenon where can be felt by making sense through the process of contemplation of the phenomenon in question. Moustakas (1994: 25-27) describes the idea of phenomenology of Husserl as follows,

"Meaning is created when the object as it appears in our consciousness, mingles with the object in nature. What appears in consciousness is an absolute reality while what Appears to the world is a product of learning. The act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related".

In related to this research, the *nyunda* behavior which undertaken by the informant is a form of Sundanese cultural interpretation. Thus, the *kasundaan* undertaken form by the informant is in accordance with the *kasundaan* object interpretation.

Husserl's phenomenology theory is then developed by Alfred Schutz. Schutz applied the social science research. His thought is to understand how social action through the interpretation of the behavior done by someone or called an actor. When a person sees or hears what the actor says or does, he/she will understand the meaning of the action. It has the meaning called interpretive reality.

Schutz's phenomenology examines how community members describe the everyday world as a meaning of its interaction with other individuals (Schutz in Creswell, 1998:53). According to Schutz, in performing an action, human motives are guided by,"... a configuration or context of meaning roommates appears to the actor as a meaningful ground of a given piece of behavior" (Schutz, 1972: 86).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted in Bestari Utami Primary School, Cimaragas Street Number 313, Garut Kota in 2015. The method used in this research is qualitative method with phenomenological approach. The aim of the research was digging the experience of Christanti Gomulia, founder and Principal Bestari Utami in instilling Sundanese local moral values to young students through cultural arts education in schools. The activities of the research is to observe the activity of learning art and culture provided by schools to the children of students, conducted the interviews with Christanti to know about the establishment background of Bestari Utami Primary School, observed the result of education of art and culture to the students and, as well as reviewed the information related to the research through documentary review which obtained from articles, photos and video. The descriptive data were analyzed qualitatively, and presented in the form of narrative/ detailed description which leads to the inductive conclusion.

The informants were Christanti Gomulia, a Chinese descent professional educator who has a dream job to establish a quality school without distinguishing the learner's origin. The informant was selected based on the needs of purposive sampling research (Moleong, 2006: 224). Regarding the number of research subjects, Maxwell in Alwasilah (2008: 147) explains that in qualitative research, the number of informants is not a problem. The important is the informant reflects the uniqueness of the background, the individual and the activities.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

One of the cultural characteristic is that it can be studied (Hebding and Glick in Liliwari, 2011: 57). The recognition of an individual to a particular culture cannot be inherited through lineage. It is learned through a process which called cultural learning. Everyone can be the owner of a culture as long as he/she learns and makes the culture as part of self.

Christanti Gomulia is a Chinese descent woman who was born in Sundanese neighborhood on December 19, 1972 in Garut. She is often called Tanti. She is an educator who loves *kasundaan* where she applies them in everyday life. Her proximity to Sundanese culture is influenced by family and social environment. From the family, Tanti's parent is Chinese descent who lived in Pasundan Garut Street and fused with the Sundanese people in the neighborhood. Sundanese language is regular everyday language she used with the neighbors around. Her both parents educate Tanti to always be close and get along with Sundanese with equality principle. It is because they are the closest people who live together in one environment in a long time and respect each other in order to create a positive interaction.

To be part of Sundanese community is a thankful thing for Tanti so that she does not want to live in grouping to another in Garut. She chose to mingle with the Sundanese people. Tanti feels that she is a Sundanese, although it cannot be denied her physically is a Chinese descent. Thus, the thought of the youngest of six siblings precisely know how she should do for the Sundanese people in Garut as a manifestation of her gratitude.

"I am Chinese descent by blood, but within regionally and my heart, I am Sunda people, I am Indonesian. I live here, my soul is here. Frankly, when I am socialized with people here, I am more comfortable with many natives. I do not want to classify myself with my group, because I think it will happen the gap between us. So the Love of Sunda = the Love of Indonesia. That's it!"

From the social environment, Tanti experience of learning at Education Management Master Program of Bath University, England, from 1999 to 2000, has strengthen her love to Sundanese culture. In the performing arts of student associations in Britain, Tanti appeared two Sundanese songs, *Bongan Bangkong* and *Bubuy Bulan*. She got a great welcome from the audience by standing ovation. Tanti was proud of it, because the other performers get a mediocre appreciation. Since then, the love and pride of Tanti to Sundanese culture is getting higher.

A. Bestari Utami, School Based On Equality

Teaching is part of Tanti's identity that cannot be released. Since in the high school, this mother of three children has been actively teaching as a private teacher of English and has taught in all levels of education from kindergarten to bachelor degree. The education that she took was in accordance with the interests of teaching; there are English Language Education in Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta (1991-1996), Master in Educational Management at the University of Bath, UK (1999-2000), and the British Chevening scholarship from the British Council.

Her love to Sundanese culture is embodied in the curriculum at the school. It is the result of interpretation accomplishments based on the experience of interaction with individuals or civilized society Sunda group.

As professionals' education, she has dreams to provide quality education for all children regardless of their economic

background, social, racial or religious. Her idealism to establish the school is motivated by his experiences when studying at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta. The university respects the diversity of religions and cultural diversity of its students so that they can develop without any compulsion to follow any particular religion or culture.

Her childhood experience in Sundanese society also contributes her idealism. The association with the Sundanese community in her neighborhood made Tanti feels undifferentiated and unassociated. So it contributes her desire to establish a school that implements the principle of equality in obtaining quality education without distinguishing the background of the students.

On the other hand, she sees school-aged students in Garut are quite far from their cultural heritage. The effect of global culture has led to a very subtle shift. The children are prefer to like foreign culture; such as Korea and Japan, rather than Sunda culture that is very close to them.

This condition cannot be avoided, because children cannot escape the effect of the environment in which they grow and develop. According to Parsons, families and communities have the obligation to pass on cultural values to the younger generation. The family is the first to introduce the environmental values of Sundanese culture to children. The next environment is the community, especially the playmates, then the school. (Herman, 2012: 35). This condition is the driving motive for her to establish a school that teaches arts of Sundanese culture.

In 2009 together with her husband, Tanti founded the elementary school and the paradigm of international quality to the cost of 'affordable' even free for underprivileged kids and teachers in Garut. It is SD Bestari Utami. It implements the learning models of "Entrepreneurship Education Ciputra Way" is open to anyone. Student's composition was set at 70 percent for Sunda children and 30 percent for Chinese children descent. The goal is to eliminate the difference between the Sundanese as "native" and Chinese people as "newcomer". She hope that the school can be a medium for the assimilation of Garut residents so that no stigmatization again.

Her love of "kesundaan" is realized by incorporating art and Sundanese culture into school curriculum and not as an extracurricular activity. Thus, Sundanese art and culture are assessed into the report books as it becomes a necessity for students. In this way, it is expected to foster an appreciation of Sundanese culture.

"I still can not guarantee by putting it to the curriculum, my students will love Sundanese culture. It will be their option. I can not prevent cultural scourging. At least, on the basis of early age, they experienced it for three full years. I believe that they will sense the respect of their cultures. To love the culture is their option. Respecting, do not insult, feel proud of its culture, do not proud of foreign culture, that's enough for me. Hopefully they have a longing to dig more about Sunda culture. But if it is accustomed from early childhood, it will apply well. This is my thoughts. I force, honestly."

The material culture and art are more given to practical activity to make the children feel directly. Sundanese culture is taught to children in Bestari Utami elementary school students are gamelan, *ngawih* (Sunda song), flute, *angklung*, a traditional children's games and arts exhibition. Gamelan is included as subjects of art and culture for children at grade three to grade six. Meanwhile, students at first and second grade are given the material of play land Sundanese songs. This school facilitates the students to display the results of the teaching of arts and culture through weekly drama, performances inside and outside the school, as well as welcoming guests to the school.



Picture 1. Fourth grade students of SD Bestari Utami School are practicing the Gamelan
(source: writer's documentation)

Slowly but sure, the children begin to appreciate the Sundanese culture is taught in elementary Bestari Utami, through various art and cultural events they are performed. Tanti even successfully train young students to hold a staging "Kabayan The City Boy", a musical colossal English speaking children with the elements of Sundanese gamelan and playland Sundanese songs with two languages (Sunda and English) as well as the Sundanese dance. The drama is presented to the public to revive the children interest in Sundanese culture and it's presented in the 'children taste' but with the mission to unify the differences between students.

The drama has been performed twice in 2007 and 2009 which involving Bestari Utami elementary students. It is attended by 500 and 700 spectators. The success made Tanti proud to manage the blend of Chinese children and Sundanese in her school in a show. Its drama shows how wonderful togetherness and unity which does not perceive the differences in ethnicity, religion and economic level.

Her efforts to establish Bestari Utami school which does not distinguish the background of their students is the result of her meaning against Sundanese cultural values that do not discriminate people based on their background. She feels it since childhood where she does not want to see a split because of background differences. Through the school she founded, she wants to unify these differences in order to merge into a single entity as Indonesian in Sundanese culture.

The composition of the students are divided into 70 percent of children and 30 percent Sundanese Chinese children are fixed. This is done to make Chinese children mingle with their friends from Sunda.

"The ultimate goal may be small Indonesia. I really want a peaceful and progressive Indonesia. I shape the students ratio of 70-30 percent. 70 percent for the Sundanese. I keep hold it on. Even in its development, many Chinese children descendant are attracted to go to my school. Cut. The ratio should still be 70-30. The goal is, how the children used to be nationalist, should be Sunda originated. The Chinese is just on physically..like me, if you are not accustomed, not being forced by the environmental conditions. That's what inspired me so much. Chinese and Sundanese have strengths and limitations, but when they combined together, it will be synergized."

She hopes through her various efforts; the children know their identity very well. She has felt how "kasundaan" (Sundanese culture) has shaped them into a private good and able to appreciate each other. She was determined that her students, both Chinese descendants children and local Sundanese children resident should know *kasundaan* and do not forget their identity as Sunda people.

She unifies the differences between Chinese descendants children and local Sundanese children resident to emerge the awareness of togetherness as Sunda people who know their true identity well through art.

V. CONCLUSION

The local culture root becomes crucial to build a nation with more respects to differences. Christanti experience in interacting with Sundanese people in her homeland Garut where there is not discriminate ethnical has made her appreciated and considered as part of Sundanese. Her contributions providing the quality education based on equality is one her love manifestation to Sundanese culture, as well as a strengthening the unity and integrity of peaceful and strong Indonesia.

By introducing Sundanese culture to early age children is the right path to instill a love of local culture and Indonesian culture. This cultural understanding can be formed as young generation for the establishment of their Sunda identity, so that they will not lose their identity as individuals. It also makes this culture as great capital to strengthen unity as one nation, Indonesia. The coercion through this curriculum has encouraged the children to love their own culture and do not consider that foreign culture always looks better than local culture.

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