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The Management Development of Kuda Kepang in Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatera

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Abstract: This study deals with the model of management development of kuda kepang in Sedang Bedagai regency, Sumatera Utara. The aim of the study is to analyze the management development in some kudang groups. Data collection uses sampling snowball with qualitative method (observation, interview, and audio visual documentation). It uses Edi Sedyawati’s theory on art development and management. The finding is kuda kepang management is closely related to Javanese rituals. Should this kuda kepang management does not have the sustainable continuity, the Javanese arts as a complete elements of selamatan rituals in Javanese society in Serdang Bedagai regency can’t be performed anymore. For these reasons, they keep maintaining it in order to survive. Besides, for other reasons, in encountering the rapid social changes the kuda kepang performance has been shortened for entertainment purposes. The continuity of kuda kepang as a Indonesian culture which is managed by kin system prevents from commercial purposes. They preserve it not merely for commercial interests but in the sake of assisting people who wants to perform kuda kepang. This, of course, makes it well developed. It can be seen from the musical equipments have been very simple. The other thing to preserve kuda kepang is to bind the sense of family bonds for strengthening brotherhood feeling among them. For the viability of it the management of kuda kepang makes cooperation with the same groups.

Keywords: kuda kepang, development, management model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Serdang Bedagai Regency (Sergai) is located 45 kilometres from Medan. Geographically, the regency borders on Malacca Straits to the North, Simalungun Regency to the South, Asahan and Simalungun Regency to the East and Deli Serdang Regency to the west at an altitude of 0-500 meters from sea surface and located on the East coast of North Sumatera Province. Serdang Bedagai Regency is divided into 17 districts; Bandar Khalifah, Bintang Bayu, Dolok Masihul, Dolok Merawan, Kotarih, Pantai Cermin, Pegajahan,
Perbaungan, Sei Bamban, Sei Rampah, Serba Jadi, Silinda, Sipispis, Tanjung Beringin, Tebing Suah Bandar Tebing Tinggi and Teluk Mengkudu. The population is 594,383 or 131,844 of families with population density on the average of 313 people per square kilometers. Based on the regency’s demographic, unemployment rate is relatively low.

Serdang Bedagai Regency’s society is divided into numerous ethnic group namely Malay (65%), Javanese (13%), Karonese (6%), Simalungun (4%), Angkola, Mandailingnese, Minangnese, Banjarnese, Acehnese, Nias and Indonesian Tionghoa. They work as government employees, private entrepreneurs, farmers, factory labors and other informal sectors. Javanese society in Serdang Bedagai particulary those who live in plantation afdeeling are mostly from Java Island. Mohammad Said (1994) conveyed that people who live in plantation afdeeling are generally from Java island. They come and live there as well as introduce their original culture and custom.

Traditional art Kuda Kepang is found and still be preserved in some districts of Serdang Bedagai Regency. Kuda Kepang is managed and developed under the artists’ and citizen's potential. Kuda Kepang may be performed in celebration of a special event, such as marriage ceremony, a boy’s circumcision or rite of passage, child naming ceremony and days on national or religion celebration. Traditional art Kuda Kepang has 3 functions namely spiritual, exhibition or social festival and entertainment (Minarto, 2007). It has particular meaning for its players and community supporting which inherited in family or its community-groups. Hildred Geertz (1982) stated Javanese people strongly keep their traditions either spoken words, kinship, social relationships and the traditional arts. The nuclear family is the most responible in maintaining a tradition. They deliver moral guidance and Javanese cultural values to their relatives.

Kuda Kepang is widely popular by larger society due to its community-groups who perform it in the form of a road show or a busker style. It is generally performed in a cordoned-off area, with the audience separated from the dancers. Kuda Kepang is a form of dance that uses “horses” made from bamboo: dancer wears a colourful horse costume such as kepanjen (high-water pants), sampur (a sarong not sewn at the edges banded in waist) and shoulder belt and accompanied by the gamelan orchestra. This portion of the performance ends when a dancer enters a trance (spirit possession), which is naturally as time as moved this dance is seen very much more for its entertainment value. In Kuda Kepang development to preserve and increase its attractiveness, recruitment of players, guidance and development management need to be done to keep this traditional art exists.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Management Development

The maximum possible involvement of participants in expressing views, gaining the views of others, expressing different views, and making decisions. Being in a position there is no right answer and nothing is wrong, the case is incomplete and so is the reality; Attempting to make this method as attractive as possible. Development techniques in which management teams compete with each other by using computerized decision-making systems about the real thing faced, but at the simulation (Dalimunthe et al., 2017 and Sadalia et al., 2017). Game management can be a good development tool. The best way for people to learn is to involve them in the activity itself. This method has a weakness, that is expensive to develop and implement. In addition, decision-making is forced to choose a limited alternative. An important
development method for top management to develop specific skills, eg in the areas of HR, marketing, international and general management, finance, information systems and technology, and so on (Lubis et al., 2016; Muda et al., 2016; Nasir et al., 2017 and Azlina et al., 2017). Many of these programs offer a continuing education unit for the completion of one course. Some important techniques in management development are: (Dalimunthe et al., 2016)

(a) On-The-Job Management Development Techniques

Some important techniques in on-the-job management development techniques are

(b) Job Rotation

This means moving management trainees from one department to another to expand their knowledge and understanding of all parts of the units. Some of the benefits of job rotation are Rotation of office provides a comprehensive training experience and Rotation of work helps to avoid stagnation through the constant recognition of new points of view within each department.

(c) Coaching/Understudy Approach

In this approach, every trainee works directly with the person to be replaced. The person to be replaced is responsible for coaching the trainee. With this method it will help the company to train new managers when there are vacancies in key positions caused by resignation, promotion, transfer, or dismissal. With this method will help the company in terms of development of top managers of the company in the long run. To achieve the effectiveness of this method, executives must be able to be good mentors and mentors (Gusnardi et al., 2016 and Muda, 2017). A person’s motivation to train a replacement will depend on the quality of the relationship between the mentor and the mentor.

(d) Junior Boards

A method for preparing trainees at mid-level management with experience in analyzing company issues by involving them in junior board of directors and making recommendations on overall company policy.

(e) Action Learning

An exercise technique in which the management trainee is allowed to work full-time analyze and solve problems with other departments. This action learning idea has pros and cons. The pro opinion of this method is that trainees gain real experience with actual problems and can develop skills such as problem analysis and planning (Nurzaimah et al., 2016). While the opinion of the counter is to let trainees work outside the company's project to lose full-time service from a competent manager.

(f) Off-The-Job Management Development Techniques

There are several techniques that can be used to develop managers outside of work, such as case study, game management, outside seminars, university-related programs, role playing, behavior modeling, and in-house development centers.
(g) Case Study

It is a method of return in which the manager is given a written description of an organizational problem to be diagnosed and solved. This method, aimed at giving trainees realistic experience in identifying and analyzing complex problems and the progress of their analysis is discussed.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is descriptive research, that is a research model that try to create a picture/exposure and dig carefully and deeply about certain social phenomena without intervention and hypothesis (Sirojuzilam et al., 2016). The main research approach used is qualitative approach, so the main data is qualitative. However, to complete the analysis of qualitative data, it will be displayed and reinforced also with data that is quantitative, with the understanding that this study using qualitative paradigms equipped and reinforced with quantitative data (Erlina et al., 2017; Hasan et al., 2017 and Tarmizi et al., 2017). Qualitative analysis is used is descriptive inductive, while quantitative data used is percentage in tabulation form. So in accordance with the purpose of research then for qualitative data presented in the form of inductive description. The data in this research consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data collected by questionnaire and/or interview, observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) techniques.

The technique of collecting questionnaires and/or interviews will be conducted on the research subjects of the research actors. Observation technique is done by observing the condition and situation in the research location. The data collected in this observation technique is tailored to the needs of the analysis. While the FGD technique is done by collecting all respondents in a discussion group, to provide feedback or opinion on the data that has been collected in the analysis condition. To determine the informants or research respondents from the local community, tourist and tourism business, the sampling technique used in this research is the method of accidental sampling (non-probability sampling). The method is chosen taking into consideration the unknown population size or sample factor. In practice, researchers took samples from people who happened to be in the location of research, and willing to serve as an informant. While the determination of informants from government elements, the sampling method used is search sampling, where in practice the researcher will look for individuals who are from relevant Government agencies, who understand the topic being discussed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Result

4.1.1. Development Management

Development management of traditional art *Kuda Kepang* includes the performance, supporter, community building and marketing. All parts are intertwined, thus there must be the right method to run the development program in order to improve performance quality and society awareness to continuously maintain and develop traditional art *Kuda Kepang*.

4.1.2. Performance Management

There are preliminaries activities before the performance of *Kuda Kepang* lead by the group leader and his players. It is usually started by negotiating between booker and *Kuda Kepang* group leader such as schedule,
venue and performance fund, for example at circumcision. It is important to know the event so that gambuh players or performances leader are able to adjust the prayer to be recited for the successful show. It is an obligatory requisite to be done before the performance begins. Kuda Kepang requires an ideal venue, generally performed in a cordoned-off area such as house yard, with the audience separated from the dancers because the players need to move with free. It is usually held in the day and night.

Supporters of Kuda Kepang group consist of a group leader, gambuh (Kuda Kepang handler), dancers and music players. The performance occupies music instruments, costume, sajen (an offering set out to appease the spirits) and masks as properties for the play. The presence of audience is also important in Kuda Kepang show, because they can give support and interaction with the performers to create more glorious atmosphere.

4.1.3. Gambuh

Gambuh is a person regarded as having spiritual and healing powers to control elements and entity by chanting and usually by having spirit servants to do his bidding. The role of Gambuh in Kuda Kepang performance are : (1) As a group leader, (2) as administrative group chairman, (3) as a dukun (spiritual conselor).

As a group leader of Kuda Kepang performance, gambuh is responsible toward performance persistence and dancers’ safety. As a chairman, gambuh is the person who invites Endang (spirit), handle the dancers’ trance and awake dancers from their trances (possession) as he is able to defeat endang. It is believed that in Kuda Kepang performance without the presence of gambuh, trance will not happen. He himself controls the possession since it is only him who is able to invite and return endang. Gambuh controls the performance with his moral force, so that the performance runs smoothly and there won’t be disturbing forces from the outside. Another way to prevent the trance dancers from being berserk is using whip. The gambuh blows the dancers’ ears and massages dancers’ toes.

4.1.4. Dancers

Kuda Kepang is usually carried by at least 6 male or female dancers. Kuda Kepang performance also incorporates trances and magic tricks. When the possessed dancer is performing the dance in trance conditions, they can display unusual abilities, such as eating glass, “flowers” dish, unhusked rice and resistance to the effects of whipping or hot coals, re-enact battles in enthusiastic gestures and vigorous action without being bashful. The dancers are ought to do several things such as “flourly bath”, night-meditation and fasting for 3 days or more in order to be able to go into a trance-like state. These aims at “cleaning” the dancers’ body so that could be possessed by endang or spirit which led and directed by gambuh (witch doctor or shaman).

The easier requirements, the less ability the dancers have, to perform the stunts during the trance condition such as eating glass and hot coal due to the invoked endang only requests for easy actions for instance asking for flowers, blessed drinking water with certain flowers, duyung fragrant oil. It is done for the invited endang as Kuda Kepang performance series and more difficult to acquire talents who are willing to do harder requirements. The dancers are recruited with the same method, but they may have different will; willing to do trance or those who do not want it. As Lauer (1989) said change may happen when human experiences the process of internalization, socialization and enculturation. These 3 processes vary among individual eventhough they live in the same place and culture.
4.1.5. Music Players

*Kuda Kepang* music players consist of 4 male players: *khendang* player, *gong* player, *demung* player and *saron* player. They also called *niyaga*. It haven’t found a female music performer in *Kuda Kepang* show. *Khendang* player controls the rhythm (tempo), *saron* and *demung* players lead the melody and *gong* player manages the *Kolotomik*. Music players have to be able to play melody of songs appropriately, specifically *Khendang* player, he must be able to play the rhythm in harmony and properly because the music accompanies the dancers. It is acknowledge by the dancers that inappropriate music accompaniment may cause they can’t dance well and anger of *endang*. The anger of *endang* brings out *Kuda Kepang* dancers’ sickness. Therefore musical ensembles plays an crucial role in helping *gambuh* controls the dancers in trance and releases the spirit at the end of performance by accelerating the show or tempo. Music troupes in *Kuda Kepang* performance is ruled and managed in accordance to the show necessities as following :

Musical ensembles —— dancers are getting ready —— *endang* invited by *gambuh* —— accelerate rhythm —— *endang* possesses dancers —— dancers perform attractions.

There is no special requirement for those who want to be *Kuda Kepang* music players except for interest and talent of playing traditional Javanese music instruments. Members of *Kuda Kepang* group gain knowledge from the older skilled Javanese art artists. *Kuda Kepang* dancers claim that it is easier to dance than playing music instruments as they have to master much more note (melody) of *gendhing*. The sense of musicality is highly needed to play *Kuda Kepang* music instruments since they have different composition. Furthermore, individual practice is not possible to do; music instruments belong to the group. It takes much more time to learn to play music instruments than to dance.

4.1.6. Audiences

*Kuda Kepang* audiences are not only Javanese people but also other ethnic groups who live in Serdang Bedagai Regency. According to *Kuda Kepang* group members, there has never been a single performance with no audience. It is relevant to the purpose of *Kuda Kepang* tradition to make the hearts of the audience captivated and fulfill public interest. Based on the observation of *Kuda Kepang* performance in Serdang Bedagai, the audiences consist of various ages ranging from kids, teens and adults. When there are babies, *gambuh* of *Kuda Kepang* will give “prevention” by rubbing Bunga Kantil (white frangipani) or rose mixed with fragrant oil on the babies’ head and all over the entire body so that they won’t get sick by the presence of *endang* since it is believed that babies have “pure” bodies whom easily possessed. Everyone has their own objective in watching *Kuda Kepang* performance: to enliven the show, to know further about how the show runs, to satisfy their huge interest or to learn to be a member and seek for players’ experience. The audiences would be the next generation of traditional art *Kuda Kepang*. This has been proven from former generation’s experience. Children who become members of a *Kuda Kepang* group are they who often watch performance *Kuda Kepang*. There are various motivation in supporting *Kuda Kepang* performance as it happens in Medan (Dewi, 2007). The development of knowledge improves people’s rationality for instance in deciding whether doing trance or not for dancers because it may disturb students’ focus at school. Therefore, leader group of *Kuda Kepang* permits any student who want to be a dancer without interacting with *endang* (spirit).
4.1.7. Management Model of Traditional Art Kuda Kepang

*Kuda Kepang* group members is established by its descendants since they are always invited to watch and involved to help prepare the performance. Their sense of interest is getting appear along with the more intense of watching and helping the *Kuda Kepang* performance. As their interest grows up in the form of hobby, then they are eager to learn to be a member of *Kuda Kepang* group to preserve the art. Edi Sedyawati (1981) explained that traditional art performance is hold to preserve tradition. Traditional art does not only comprise of aesthetic activity, but maintain togetherness among local society. *Kuda Kepang* artists don’t strive for material value obtained from the performance because of their desire to their ancestor’s heritage. Performing traditional art *Kuda Kepang* is the activity of finding outlet for hobby and interest. The amount of money earned from performing *Kuda Kepang* is not a matter for the artists because of their love on the art. That fact makes *Kuda Kepang* still exists up to now. Jenifer Lindsay (2006) stated that traditional art has less relation to the market, it has stronger relation to social context. There are undeniably particular pride and immeasureably happiness when passing down the ancestors’s art to younger generations through the nuclear family and relatives.

*Kuda Kepang* group establishment is done by gathering former in-active members who get used to playing music instruments and dancing and recruiting new members to be trained. A *Kuda Kepang* group at least consists of 6 dancers, *khendang* player, *saron* player, *demung* player, *gong* player and a *gambuh*. During the groups’ existence, there are always inactive fellow job issues for example, the member’s job makes him to move out of town or due to restricted working deadline to take part in events settled. In order to overcome such situation, this group decided to ask favor from *Kuda Kepang* group they have known to enlist the quota. Usually the place is replaced by other group of one or two, probably a dancer or a music player.

This *Kuda Kepang* group is not only consisted of Javanese members, 6 of them come from Banjar. Their interest to become *Kuda Kepang* performers began since they were the in the same fellow work. Nowadays, it’s almost impossible to gather for all the *Kuda Kepang* artists to do routine due to working deadline. However they keep in touch one to each other. It is shown from the way they hold monthly gathering, every *Suro* month in which they burn of *kemenyan* (benzoin) around *Kuda Kepang* performing stuffs, such as music instruments, horse-mades, and masks. This routine has to be done to keep *Kuda Kepang* alives and incase they are invited for a show, everything is all set. Another objective is also to maintain the health of the dancers to be ready to be possessed by spirit called *endang*.

To perform *Kuda Kepang*, there are rules to follow. It begins with the preparation phase. In this phase, beside music instruments and dance, they have to prepare for a *Sajen* made by *Kanti* flower, burned *Kemenyan* (benzoin), and fragrant oil. This preparation is to facilitate *endang* to come and return. The next phase namely welcoming dance. This dance imitates the horse-riding moves and throwing courteous to all four directions, North, East, South, and West. After the welcoming dance finishes, show continues to the playing phase. This phase constructed with phenomenon called trance and other attraction such as humour. Trance (*mabok*) as in *Kuda Kepang* performance is a usual phenomenon found in South-East Asia particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia (Mohammad, Kipli Abdurrahman, 2006). To enclose the performance, all dancers are awaken from their trance by the help of *Gambuh* in various ways, for examples make all the dancers to bow or hug *Khendang*, or by blowing dancers’ ears. This rules are never changed eventhough the contents of the play have turned into variation with new elements to entertain people.
4.2. Discussion

Traditional art Kuda Kepang model development management will survive through some guidances and breakthroughs. Up till now, Kuda Kepang community still exists, manages their routine schedule everytime new community is established. Once members are considered as performers, the regular training oftenly dismiss, that is why their talent does not improve either. Under the presence of traditional art of Keyboard Music, as a new alternative of entertainment for wedding party, circumcision, and so on, leaves Kuda Kepang has no choices but to upgrade and enrich their performance with elements that never been performed before such as comedy action scene (pipe or wooden weapon) with funny sound effect to return people’s interests.

Another improvement applied to manage Kuda Kepang is by recruiting young members and creating group of male and female at the age of 14-30 years old. All newbies will have a routine dancing and playing music training. If members decide not to have trance, they will always welcome and participate during the show. It is expected to help Kuda Kepang keep their existence. Budiono (1984) declared that the rapid development of knowledge and modern technology affect society mindset of the way to preserve tradition. Its rationality and symbolic sign has changed to only as an identical symbol. As time goes by, it is possible for the members to change their mind and willing to be in trance. If it happens, they just ask the gambuh to qualify them as trance dancer. This method is considered fresh in term of newbies recruitment to support traditional art Kuda Kepang. However, so far female trance dancer is still unusual because the Kuda Kepang group leader does not allow them to have one. According to their belief, it is such an inappropriate to treat women carelessly.

Another way to keep Kuda Kepang exists, is by performing it in their original hometown or travelling out of town to introduce their new formation at the same time receive “saweran” (money as a gift from audience) complimental. The money collected is spent on fixing and maintaining the damage equipments or buying new one. Operational maintanance is also done spiritually, for instance “feeding” Kuda Kepang on Keliwon Friday by burning Kemenyan (benzoin) around a bunch of Kuda Kepang to keep the spirits endang cooperates and stays in the group. Once in a year, every Suro month kemenyan (benzoin) is burned during a gathering (kenduri) of every Kuda Kepang artist. For this gathering, various kinds of food is served including rice, chicken and porridge. While Kuda Kepang is served (sajen) with burned kemenyan (benzoin). All of the instruments and horse-made are assembled. Kuda Kepang management development needs fund which one of obstacle in improving Kuda Kepang’s artists creativity. According to Jame D, Galli (2011), less attention of traditional art is due to insufficient support from the government to fulfill material need in traditional art performance.

There is obstacle in getting young new players by conducting management development, that is most of teenagers who still students don’t have permission from their parents since it might disturb their study or school activites. Besides, according to former performers, it is not called Kuda Kepang art without the trance scene. Another problem in expanding Kuda Kepang in Serdang Bedagai, they only have Kuda Kepang show with spiritual part. Thus, the dancers who are not willing to do trance only perform at welcoming scene. Change is a normal social phenomenon since human has their own borderless business. The change can be in the shape of progress or decreasment (Abdul Sani, 1994). The number of the dancers is increasing to complete the performance, eventhough not all the dancers want to do the trance. Salamun Kaulam (2012) stated that values in Kuda Kepang performance has shifts; the show does not only deal with spiritual side but also as an entertainment.
Another approach applied is by establishing cooperation between one Kuda Kepang community to another from the same district to the one outside. The form of teamwork is exchanging performer to another group needed. This kind of exchange was uncommon in the past since there is a level of competition among communities to make their team stands out but today it is considered as necessary due to the lack of interest to become Kuda Kepang performer. Unfortunately, such teamwork is available among known group.

Last but not least, to keep traditional art Kuda Kepang alive is by showcasing another form of play, for example to insert Ludruk art as Hanoman, complete the music instruments and performing Javanese folk song sung by sinden (Javanese singer). This is in accordance to Umar Kayam’s statement (1981) that art is a creative expression of certain culture. Thus, local society create, offer opportunity to develop, preserve, persuade other and develop the tradition.

5. CONCLUSION

Traditional art Kuda Kepang is handled by its supporter. Its management carried out by building cooperation among Kuda Kepang groups among districts. One of the teamwork is exchanging player from other group to play in other groups if it is needed. Substances found in playing phase is enriched with Ludruk adopted scene, completed the music instruments, and added with touch of humour. The development of Kuda Kepang preservation, its magical elements by keep inviting endang on every show, that is why dancers who are willing to lose consciousness to be controlled by gambuh still demanded to exhibit attraction. To fulfill the need of dancers, they keep welcoming newbies eventhough they refuse to the trance scene.

REFERENCE


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