

## ***KUDA DEBOG DANCE*** **FOR CHILDREN'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The pervasive distribution of online games gives new addictive things to children. Many children can spend hours of their time in front of their gadgets to access the games. It makes their social awareness decrease and become individualistic. Since, they do not need any friend to play the games. Amount to the negative impact of online games, there should be a development of traditional games. One of the potential traditional games to develop is *kuda debog* games. It can be deconstructed as *Kuda Debog* dance which symbolizes children's happiness in playing "horse" made of banana stalk (*debog*). *Kuda Debog* is a traditional game which cannot be neglected, because it gives huge influence to children's development of psychiatric, behavior, and social life. Based on those phenomenon, the problems discussed in this research is how is the form of *Kuda Debog* dance performance and how is the social development of children in *Kuda Debog* dance. This research used qualitative method with observation, interview, and documentation as the methods of collecting the data. The validity of the data was verified using triangulation. The methods of analyzing the data were domain analysis, taxonomy, and componential as well as the creation of themes to describe the meaning of the research focus. The result of the research shows the forms of the performance, including the drama, actors, movement, sounds, make up property, floor patterns, performing stage, and audiences. Children's social development occurred in the preparation of the performance as well as during the performance to the society and guest of the performance. It was also happened in the closing of the performance.

Keywords: children, social development, *Kuda Debog* dance

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Traditional games are cultural products containing many values and positive influences to the development of children in the future. Besides, children's traditional games are considered as the elements of culture providing specific characteristics or uniqueness to certain ethnics. Thus, traditional games can be said as cultural assets or social capitals to defend and preserve.

Nonetheless, in the development of time, the existence of traditional games experiences setback due to globalization which allows the entrance of foreign cultures and technological advancement. It makes the interests of children to learn traditional games

decreasing. As the decrease of traditional games played by children, the transfer of noble values in the games becomes obstructed.

Children's social life skill can be obtained by playing. Nowadays, the patterns of the game changes to home-based platforms such as play station and computer games. These games can only be played by an individual that is unable to develop children's social life skill. Online game is one of the games highly attracting children with its easy access and interesting interface making them become highly addicted.

M. Ihsan, Head of Children's Protection Board, said that the addiction to online games makes children become unaware to their surrounding (Tribunnews.-com, 6/9/2012). Besides, children like games containing violences and porn. It results many juvenile delinquency cases, such as: Elementary students who robs his friend, Elementary students who sexually abused their friends, and Elementary students who steal money for playing online games.

These costs of online games are worsened by the spreading of 24 hours operated internet café with cheap prices. Therefore, the government should act firmly to handle this (<http://tribunnews.com>, accessed in 27<sup>th</sup> November 2016). The tendency to play online games make children incapable of communicating directly to their friends. Thus, they will spend most of their time inside of their room.

The research of Hannover University found that online games can make people have multiple personalities. It is obtained after a woman playing online games for three months playing several characters of the games. After that, the characters take over her personalities and social control (Renggani 2012 in Nur 2013: 89). A similar case also happened to Zhang Xiaoyi who died after committing suicides falling from a skyscraper. Zhang left a message saying that he wanted to join the heroes inside of his favorite online games (<http://thisisputriiep.blogspot.-com> accessed in 27<sup>th</sup> November 2016).

The negative impacts of online games really contradict to children's social life. Socialization helps children adapt to their environment, how to life, placing themselves in the environment and community. In the process of socialization, children need learning media to adapt with his surrounding environment. Socialization media involves family, friends, school friends, and social media. Traditional game is one of the tools used in the process of socialization of children to their environment.

The research of Kurniati (in Nur 2013: 89) shows that traditional games can stimulate children to cooperate, adapt, interact, condition, and appreciate other people. This is why traditional games can give positive impacts to develop children's social and emotional aspects.

From the above phenomena, the building of children's social skill and character is decreasing, so there is a necessity to strengthen traditional games with the intention of cultural conservation. The forms of games should be identified and developed. One of the ways is deconstructing *kuda debog* games to become a traditional dance. It can be used to make children in Keji Village, Semarang Regency to build their social development. This dance can also be used as the main cultural performance for tourists. The problems discussed in this research is how is the form of Kuda Debog dance performance and how is the social development of children in Kuda Debog dance.

## **2.1 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1.1 Playing, Games, and Traditional Games**

Huizinga introduce people as *homo ludens*. It simple means people who play (Huizinga 1990: xii). According to Huizinga, games are defined more than a physiological phenomena or psychological reaction, but games can be defined as the basis of culture functioned for physical development. Vygotsky classifies games in three parts, including free play, game play, and theatrical play of performance (Holzman 2009: 31-32). Free and theatrical games allow children to actively produce their games in the aspects of coordination, perception, cognition, and emotional (Holzman 2009: 52).

In the periods of 3 to 5 years of age, children include into gaming period (Hurlock in Sujiono: 2005). Playing as an activity has practical meaning as the media to improve skills or ability (Plato *et al*, in Sujiono: 2005). Playing is one of the activities involving active characteristics and fun. Playing is also voluntarily done from internal motivation. It also has symbolic meaning for children.

Games have important impacts for children: (a) optimizing children's physical and mental ability; (b) fulfilling children's emotional needs; (c) develop children's creativity and language skills; (d) helping children's social life skills. Playing is also functioned to develop children's motoric, cognitive, affective, linguistic, and social development (Suyanto: 2005).

Playing can be defined as *dolanan* (Prawiroatmodjo 1988: 95). In this case, *dolan* means play. According to Poerwadarminto (1939: 73) *dolanan* is a game, a tool to play and have fun. Meanwhile, *dolanan* song is a song involved in a traditional game (Poerwadarminto 1976: 550).

Children's games usually involve body movements, like running, hiding, counting, and handling (Danandjaya 1991: 171). Besides, children's games are variative from the roles, actors, and players. In the end of the games, there will be a winner side and loser side. The winner will punish the loser. The characteristics of the games are recreative, attractive, or competitive which are expressed with physical movements, songs, dialogues, or riddles (Dharmamulya 2008: 8).

Playing does not only has physical symbol, it also has meaningful symbol, since playing and games are symbols with meanings, interpretation, and perception (Dharmamulya 2008: 8). It also occurs to javanese children traditional games. It transfers good moral values to children through its songs or movements. Basically, children's traditional games are not only played to spend in leisure times, but it can also be used for educating characters and developing children's social aspects.

### **2.1.2 Playing Classification**

Playing can be seen from children's social development, including: (1) Solitary games (playing indlividualy), (2) Onlooker games (playing with seeing others plays), (3) Parallel games (playing with friends parallely), playing with same materials, but working indlividualy, (4) Associative games (playing together), playing together without any association, (5) Cooperative games, with different roles of players (Mildred Parten, 1932). Playing can also be classified as: (1) Physical games; (2) Children songs; (3) Riddles; (4) Building Games; and (5) Roleplays.

Children's traditional games are divided based on its meaning, including games copying the adults' acts, games involving strengths and ability, games of senses, games with language training, and games with songs and rhythms. (Ki Hadisukatno in Krisdyatmiko, 1999).

### 2.1.3 Performance Forms

The forms of performance is all the things with artistic meaning shown and enjoyed by public (Jazuli, 2001: 72-74). In other side, Kusmayati (2006: 241) says that performing arts are aspects visualized and performed to base an art. These aspects unite in a performance intended to show artistic value. The artistic values involve actors, moves, sounds, and looks. Looks involve make up, wardrobe, and property. Meanwhile, Soedarsono (2001: 70) explains that performance is formed in scenes, actors, movements, sounds, wardrobe, make up, stage, and audiences. In this research, Kusmayati and Soedarsono's theories are collaborated to review the performance of *kuda debog* dance involving scenes, actors, movements, sounds, wardrobe, floor patterns, make up, stage, and audiences.

### 2.1.4 Social Life Skills

Social life skill is a strategy used by people to maintain social ineration (Curtis, 1988). Kelly (in Ramdhani: 1991) states that social life skills are skills acquired by individuals to interact with their environment correctly and properly. It is aimed to get the holds of interpersonal relation and reject the unhappy things.

Social life skills according to Morgan (in Cartledge and Milburn, 1995) is the ability to ask and interact positively to others. The result of the research from Early Childhood Education Center of UNY (2004) shows that there are three aspects of social skills which can be inserted to children: (1) Empathy, including: careful and tolerance (2) Affiliation and conflict resolution, including: two-way communication and cooperation (3) Positive habit development, including: norms, independence, and social responsibility.

### 2.1.5 Concepts and Media of Socialization

Socialization in daily life can be meant as hanging out. In socialization, human get the experiences, values, norms, and living patterns around their environments. Sosialization can be meant by individual learning process to know and value social norms to build individual characteristics. Meanwhile, in Indonesian Dictionary, socialization is a learning process of members of society to know and value social culture around. There are many definitions of socialization by experts (<http://khairulazharsaragih.blogspot.co.id/2012/08/socialization-proses-bentuk-media-dan.html> diunduh pada tanggal 18 Mei 2016), including :

Charlotte Buhler, Socialization is a process to help individuals to learn and adapt themselves, how to life, and how to think. Bruce J. Cohen , Socialization is human

process to know way of life, to build personality, and to build the capacity of individuals as members of society. Makionis, Socialization is a life long observation of social life to develop civilization and cultures. Peter Berger, Socialization is a process where children learn to participate in the society. Harton and Hunt, Socialization means a process where people internalize communal norms to become unique individuals. Gidden, Socialization is a process occurring from a weak baby grows actively to be a socially aware individual. Ritcer JR, Socialization is a process to obtain skills and behavior to function people as adults and active players in the society.

Socialization process influences one individual to other individuals. In this process, people will get knowledge, norms, values, behaviors, and skills. Thereby, the impact of socialization can make an individual special.

There are several processes of socialization. They are:

Internalization, a long process in human's whole life. In this process, human learns to shape their behavior through feelings, senses, and emotions. Socialization, is a process where individual forms their behavior as their group's behavior. Acculturation, is a process of people adapt to their cultures, norms, and customs. Socialization media are the stakeholders influencing, executing, or doing the process of socialization. There are several agents of socialization on humans, (Zharsaragih, 2012 [http://khairulazharsaragih.blogspot.co.id/\\_2012/08/socialization-proses-bentuk-media-dan.html](http://khairulazharsaragih.blogspot.co.id/_2012/08/socialization-proses-bentuk-media-dan.html) downloaded in 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016), including:

- 1) Family, the first socialization media obtained by children from their fathers, mothers, siblings, and relatives in their house. Children get their basic living patterns from their family.
- 2) Playing friends, socialization media from playing friends obtained by children after their family socialization. In this media, children interact with their friends in the same age. In this socialization, children can set the roles. This socialization can also make children learn social values and justice.
- 3) Schools, socialization media in school is the institution of education. This institution gives influence of knowledge, independence, achievements, values, and norms of civics and nationalism to children. These values have not been acknowledged by children from their family and friends.
- 4) Mass media, it includes printed media (newspaper, magazines, tabloid) and electronic media (television, radio, video, internet, film). Mass media will influence people regarding things never known by people generally, either it is positive or negative.

### 3.1 METHODOLOGY

This research used qualitative review with historical methods, related literature, and field observation. The approach of this research used textual and contextual analysis. The object of this research is the forms of *kuda debog* performance and socialization process of children in *Kuda Debog* dance. The data in this research includes two parts: primary data (scenes, actors, movements, sounds, wardrobe, floor patterns, make up, stage, and audiences of *kuda debog* dance and socialization process of children in *Kuda Debog* dance) and secondary data in the research location. The source of primary data is the Head of Keji village of Semarang regency, the controller of Keji village, *Kuda Debog* dance inventor, actors, singers, society of Semarang regency, Keji village, meanwhile the secondary data source is a literature or related document, and the sources is hoped to give the expected information of the researcher.

There are three basic aspects from human experiments in arts research, (1) the invented or appreciated arts, (2) the activities involved in arts activities, (3) something done in certain events or environment in certain times or places (Rohidi 2011: 180). The methods of collecting data involves (1) direct observation to the location of the research, the forms of performance of *kuda debog* dance, and socialization process in *Kuda Debog* dance, (2) the interview with Head of the village and dancers of *Kuda Debog* about the forms of the performance and socialization process of children in *Kuda Debog*, (3) the documentation of *Kuda Debog*, socialization process of children in *kuda debog* dance and research location.

The improvement of data validity in this research was measured using triangulation. The analyses of the data were using data reduction, classification through domain analysis, taxonomy, and componential, and the determination of themes to describe the meaning of research focuses.

### 4.1 FINDINGS

#### 4.1.1 Research Location

Keji village is a village in Ungaran Barat district, Semarang regency. It is located under the foot of Ungaran mountain, 5 km from Semarang regency's capitals and 25 km from Central Java's capitals. It can be reached by bus from Ungaran city centre to the north of Gunungpati. After facing Sisemut bus station, Mapagan housings, turn left in 2 km to Keji

village. The borders of the village are Sumurejo sub-district on the north, Kalisidi village on the west, Lerep village on the south, and Lerep village on the east.

Since 2007, this village is promoted to become a centre of tourism. It is initiated by the establishment of Yoss Traditional Center, Keji village, as the platform to develop local potentials. The tourist destinations in this village are under the theme of Javanese Nostalgic to natural environment and Javanese culture. Thus, the tourisms offer traditional arts, games, and foods. Ever since, Keji village starts to attract tourists from institution, schools, or government officials. Foreign tourists from Australia and France are also come to the place. It is reported in *Suara Merdeka* in 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008. Later, it is officially acknowledged from the acknowledgment of Youth, Tourism, and Sports Officials through charter of endorsement No.556.41/238/2010. This village is maintained by its governance through tourism awareness group of Keji village.

#### **4.1.2 The Performance of *Kuda Debog* dance**

*Kuda Debog* dance is a welcoming dance in YTC of Suruhan, Keji village, Ungaran Barat district, Semarang regency. *Kuda Debog* dance is performed to welcome tourists visiting YTC. It si usually performed on Sunday from 09.00 until 11.00 wib. The forms of the performance of *kuda debog* dance are in line with the theory of Soedarsono and Kusmayati, including scenes, actors, movements, sounds, wardrobe, floor patterns, make up, stage, and audiences.

The scenes of *kuda debog* dance does not have specific storylines. It is merely related to the dance as originally was a game of children to play a “horse” made of banana stalk. The actors of this dance are eight to twelve boys from elementary school. It has been adjusted to the stage and the number of audiences.

The dance started with the entrance of Mbah Rajak to the stage as the initiate performer or as the *Cucuk Lampah*. The function of *Cucuk Lampah* is replaceable, since in some circumstances *Cucuk Lampah* does not join the performance. *Cucuk Lampah* only exists to give initial signal. When *Cucuk Lampah* has said “yooo”, the dance begins. The movements of the dance started from *ongklang* and *sembahan*. In *sembahan*, Mbah Rajak walks around the performers. Then, the performers will take a bow to Mbak Rajak as seen in **Figure 1**.





**Figure 1.** Mbah Rajak as *Cucuk Lampah*  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

#### 4.1.3 Movement, Make Up, and Costumes

The movements of *kuda debog* dance includes *terecet*, continues with *sembahan*, *kiprahan*, *junjungan*, *kiprahan*, *junjungan*, *ulap-ulap*, *pondongan*, *ulap-ulap*, *pondongan*, *junjungan*, *tumpang tali*, *pondongan*, *junjungan*, *kesatrian*, *junjungan*, *hentak bumi*, *jaran ngombe*, *jaran nakur*, *terecet*, *serampangan*, *terecet*, *drat*, *laku telu*, *jaran ngombe*, *drat*, *jaran ngombe*, *timpangan*, *jaran ngombe*, *drat*. The songs used as the backsound of the dance are: *Padang Mbulan*, *Ladrang Kijing Miring*, *Iilir-ilir*, *Randu Kintu*, *Ketawang Puspa Warna*, *Ketawang Pamukir*, and *Ketawang Puspa Giwang*. One of the movements of *kuda debog* dance can be seen in **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2.** The Dancers doing *Trecet*  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

The make up of the dance is inspired from the childhood of mister Yoss who played “horse” with face streaked with charcoal. As what mister Yoss said in an interview, “The make up is very innocent with marcks on the nose. It is actually using *angus* not marcks” (7

Juli 2016). *Angus* is the char under used pan. Somehow, the idea to use *angus* is changed to use normal *make up*.

The use of make up in *Kuda Debog* is not difficult. It only uses solid marcks, powder, black eyeliner, lipstick, eye shadow, and blush on. The make up gives quite funny impression with thick parts under the eyebrow, pink eye shadow, pick blush on, red lipstick, and a fake moustache. This is the liable make up for the performers before the performance. The used make up are 1 foundation, 2 milk cleanser, 2 face tonic, 1 powder, 2 solid marcks from different brands, 1 lipstick, 2 blush on from different brands, 2 eye shadow from different brands, 1 black eyeliner, 1 brown eye liner, 2 packs of cotton, and 2 combs. The make up can be seen in **Figure 3**.



Figure 3. Make Up of *Kuda Debog* performer  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

The used costumes are very simple. It used banana leaves which was changed as tassels. The addition was black pants. There was also a headband, shoulder bracelet, and *binggel* from jackfruit's leaves. The accessory was a slingshot which is as wide as the dancer's chest. The costumes of the dancer is portrayed in **Figure 4**.



Figure 4. The Costume of *Kuda Debog* dance  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

The used property in this dance is “horse” made of banana stalk. The banana stalk was made big formed as human’s ear. For the body, the stalk then was formed as “U” letter. The wasted leaves then were changed as tassels for performer’s accessory. The property used in *kuda debog* dance is described in **Figure 5**.



Figure 5. The property of *Kuda Debog*  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

#### 4.1.4 Stages, Floor Patterns, and Audiences

The stage of *kuda debog* performer is an open stage outdoor. It is Si Seret field in Keji village. This place is used since the dance need wide and spacious place to perform. The stage can be seen in **Figure 6**.



Figure 6. The Stage of *Kuda Debog*  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

The floor pattern of the dance is not very complicated. Since, the dancers are mostly children which still need to struggle in memorizing the movements. The floor patterns of the dance is only limited on two small groups on the right and the left of the stages. It is adapted with the number of the children. If the total of the children is 8, then the children will be divided to 4 on the left and 4 on the right side. The change of position only happens in *timpangan* movement where all performers make one big line.

The audiences of this dance come from different ages, like children, teenagers, adults, and elders inside and outside of the place. Even if the dance is quite long (13 minutes) and done under the heat, the children are still highly spirited in entertaining the audiences. After the children make a line, they approach the audience and shake their hands after the dance. The audiences feel entertained with the dancers. It is not rare to see the audience take a photo with the dancers.

## 5.1 DISCUSSION

### 5.1.1 Socialization process of children in *kuda debog* performance

Children's socialization in the performance is seen in the fields. It is in line with the statement of Zharsaragih (2012) stating that socialization involves family, friends, schools, and mass media. Whereas, children will do that to their friends through the interaction and learn the roles of each person. They generally learn social values and justice from that.

Children will do socialization in the fields of Keji Village playing their roles in *kuda debog* performance. The process includes 3 steps, including internalization, socialization, and enculturation.

### 5.1.2 Internalization Process of Children in the Performance of *Kuda Debog*

Internalization can happen in the dance during the preparation, execution, and closing. The preparation of *kuda debog* dance includes training, property making, costumes making, make up, and costumes wearing. Children learn to shape their character by controlling their feelings, desires, and emotion in socializing with their friends. The social values of children in the performance are (1) Empathy (careful, understanding, and tolerance), (2) Affiliation and conflict resolution (two-way communication, cooperation, conflict resolution), (3) Positive Habit (norms, independence, and responsible).

### 5.1.3 Children's socialization in *Kuda Debog* dance

Socialization processes in the performance happen since the preparation. Children do the training together and making the properties from *debog* together. In the process of training, they cooperate to remember the movement, unite their movement, making the floor patterns together, and follow the commands of Mbah Rajak as the *Cucuk Lampah*. In the process of making the properties, children cooperate, discuss, choose, and determine the right *debog* to be used as the property of the dance. The cooperation continues in preparing, cutting, measuring, and arranging the *debog* to become a *horse*. They looked fun, playful, cheerful, and happy in making the properties. It shows that children have done a good socialization process to their friends.

The above phenomena are called by Peter Berger as the process where children learn to participate in the society. This thing is similar to Ritzer JR, saying that the process of acquiring skills and behavior can make people being considered as adult and active actor of certain roles in the society.

The next step is the process of the performance. It is started by children's lining led by Mbah Rajak. Children has learned their own roles that they will not change their position. Since, the position has been set before the performance. It shows that children become discipline and tolerance to their friends. After getting the signs from Mbah Rajak, they come into the stages and set into the ordered position with no rush. After that, they project the movement happily and dynamically. **Figure 7** shows the children lines to show *ongklang* movement together.



Figure 7. The Dancers do *Ongklang*  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

The closing of the performance is signed by children’s socialization to the guests by inviting them to dance. They approach the audiences with no shame feeling at all, thus they are really engaged to the audiences. The performance was really finished after the performers shake their hand to each performer, audiences, and music director. This thing is projected in **Figure 8**.



Figure 8. Dancers shake their hands to audiences  
(Documentation of Eny, August 2016)

#### 5.1.4 Enculturation of Children in *Kuda Debog* performance

Children experiences enculturation in learning the dance. They become interested to the dance. As stated by one of the dancers, Rudi Irawan (10 years old), he said that he wanted to join the group of *kuda debog* performers because he likes the dance, and he was invited by mister Yoss to join. In the learning process, children do not find significant difficulties. In addition, Rudi said that the movement was easy as he only needed to observe it several times. In other side, Ananda Nur Abadi (8 years old) said that Mbah Rajak taught them easy

movement of the dance, thus, it was not really difficult. In conclusion, those statements prove that children like to do the dance and they can socialize to their environment because of it.

Children do the training once a week. It is on Sunday evening starting from 19.00 to 21.30 WIB. Before the training, Mbah Rajak plays the *gamelan* to invite the children to start the training. As children performers, they are enthusiastic to perform *kuda debog* dance although they did not get much payment. As Rudi said, the payment as the performers is enough for him to buy some foods. In details, Rudi did not want to say how much he was paid. He said that he did that because merely he liked it. This dance is proven not only to become the platform of children's socialization, but also their place to play with their friends, society, and audiences.

The phenomenon of enculturation in *Kuda Debog* dance is correlated to Zharagih (2012), saying that the process of enculturation to individual makes them learn and adapt their minds to the culture, norms, customs, and rules around them.

## 6.1 CONCLUSION

The performance of *kuda debog* dance involves scenes, actors, movements, sounds, wardrobe, floor patterns, make up, stage, and audiences. The socialization media of the research includes internalization, socialization (preparation, onset, closing), and acculturation. The last method occurred on influencing children's interest to become *Kuda Debog* dancer, even if they get small payment for it.

## 7.1 Acknowledgments

The researcher wants to thank to the Head of Keji village, Semarang regency, Central Java province for permitting the research. The researcher also would like to thank to Mbah Rajak as the source of the research as the inventor of *Kuda Debog* dance.

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