



## The Potential of Artists' Creativity in Producing Timorese Ethnic *Juk* Musical Instruments in Oekolo Village, North Central Timor Regency

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### **Abstract**

*Juk* music is a traditional musical instrument located on the island of Timor, East Nusa Tenggara Province with strumming techniques. The purpose of this study is to determine the process of making *juk* music and analyze the potential creativity of Timorese ethnic *juk* music craftsmen in Oekolo village. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative with a focus on ethnographic methods. Data collection is carried out by observation, interview and documentation techniques. The subjects of the study were four people who had potential skills in producing Timorese ethnic *juk* music. The results showed that 1) there is a fairly high and significant potential for creativity through the five stages of the *juk* making process 2) New innovations were found in the making materials, designs, sizes and complements of attractive accessories, without losing the form of authenticity. The basic material for making *juk* music is utilizing kapok wood and plywood.

**Keywords:** *Creativity; Juk Music; Timorese Ethnicity; Cultural Innovation*

### **Introduction**

Art has accompanied human life since the beginning of his life and is at the same time an inseparable part of all life. Among certain social layers there is also known to be a variety of arts that consciously or unconsciously develop art as aesthetic expressions and statements that stimulate it in line with the views, aspirations, needs and ideas that dominate it. Art and its various forms and patterns of expression tend to be different in each culture, even in certain social layers (Rohidi Tjetjep 2000: 3-4).

Today's community groups have their own diversity of types and uniqueness that are not owned by other ethnicities, such as lute music, *Kulintang*, *Javanese Gamelan*, *Sasando*, *Malay Gambus* orchestra and *juk* which are seen from the aspects of form, value, function and presentation techniques are different. Although the existence of musical instruments has undergone changes in terms of form, design motifs, and functions, musical instruments are still often lost inhibited or buried in the process of "civilization". In this case, civilization can be interpreted as an activity that is carried out continuously so that it becomes a habit in self-actualization in a fundamental process of creativity, a potentiality that exists in all humans at birth. It has been mentioned that creativity is a member of the integration of passion that cannot be fostered by conditioning, nor can it be fostered only by ratio ability or physical ability, it exists in every

process of appreciation that has a relationship with the art of learning, the art of educating and the process of appreciation (art of living) itself (Tabrani Primadi 2006: 376-378).

Creative activity is the complexity of the creation process which goes through various stages ranging from moving the power of intuition or imagination to explore the infinite "world" in order to get meaningful ideas, constructing ideas into a concept, idea, and expressing it through the skills of manipulating media (certain materials, tools, and techniques) to become a work that can be sensed. This stage is called expressive-artistic behavior. In this context, artists have their own ways of realizing actions that will give birth to unique creative and innovative works with different styles and styles from one artist to another (Triyanto, 2017: 64-65).

Creativity is not always associated with large, high, grandiose or complicated works, but also related to simple works. In this sense, art provides an environment and practice to learners actively engaged in creative experiences, processes, and development in a particular field. Creativity comes from the basic word create which means "create" is defined as an effort to create something newer, and unique that has never been thought of by others before, even if seriously explored, art can be a source of income by utilizing the willingness of materials found in the surrounding environment.

East Nusa Tenggara has a diversity of tribes, cultures, traditions, and traditional arts consisting of musical instruments, handicrafts, regional song arrangements, and various types of dances that contain the value of local wisdom. North Central Timor Regency is one of the regencies in the East Nusa Tenggara region adjacent to the State of Timor Leste. One of the regional arts of Timorese society is *juk* music. *Juk* is a traditional musical instrument that has existed in ancient times and has a function as an accompaniment to traditional songs and dances. The technique of playing this musical instrument is the same as the guitar, namely by sitting or standing. *Juk* is very famous among fans of *Keroncong* music.

In making *juk* requires every stage process to create a new *juk*, where the first stage starts from the selection of wood types to the last stage of finishing or smoothing the surface of the *juk* body. During the process, of course, every artist has talent, creative attitude, the ability to find new ideas, and requires an attitude of sincerity. But the times have brought a shift in lifestyle and mindset that changes through everyone's perspective on life. This aspect is related between inner reality and sensory experience gained from environmental experience. With the rapid development of special technology in the field of music, cultural values contained in traditional music arts, especially ukulele music, began to slowly disappear, even rarely known by the wider community, especially the younger generation in Oekolo village.

Based on the results of initial interviews with several artists' parents in Oekolo on January 15, 2024, it was concluded that the younger generation prefers modern music and is less interested in playing traditional musical instruments in their own villages, therefore to deal with these problems, the critical effort carried out is to build competitive advantages that manifest in ethics, Science and Technology (Science and Technology), arts and skills through a learning process that is designed creatively as well.

### **Research Methods**

This type of research uses descriptive qualitative research by focusing on ethnographic methods. The location of the research was conducted in Oekolo village, North Insana District, North Central Timor Regency with the main object of research on creativity producing music "*Juk* Ethnic Timor." Data description is supported by an inductive approach and data collection methods using observation, interviews, and documentation.

## Discussion and Results

Elements of art have become part of the life of people in certain tribes or nations, through means used to express a sense of beauty of one's soul. An artist creates works as a result of learning from the community around him (Irianto, 2017). In general, among the people of North Central Timor, especially in the village of Oekolo, refer to *juk* as *bijol ana* (small *juk*). Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Anselm Ili (60) on January 22, 2023, *bijol ana* (small *juk*) literally comes from the regional language dawan R which consists of the word *bijol* which means violin, and *ana* means small. People call it *bijol ana* because it has a small shape and size like a violin. The way the music is played more applies strumming techniques to four strings or strings. Usually played by parents, teenagers in the form of small groups of two people or even more at night. The distinctive result of this *juk* sound sounds beautiful and calms the soul of the connoisseur.

*Juk* music acts as an accompaniment to songs from several genres of music such as keroncong music, pop music (memorable songs), and folk songs in accompanying the dance of welcoming newlyweds, grand guests, and used in entertainment arts performances. But in today's reality it is rarely found, this is because local people prefer the accompaniment of songs produced by modern musical instruments to carry out dance activities, or as a mere entertainment medium, besides that pessimistic attitudes are very impactful in the process of increasing knowledge of the procedures for the process of making musical instruments.

Based on the results of observations that occurred in Oekolo village, that the 4 Timorese ethnic *juk* craftsmen have a fairly high and significant talent and creativity ability in producing new *juk*, which can be seen from the design of the shape, size and provision of accessories in the form of motifs, carvings, and some interesting symbols on the body of the *juk*, by conditioning the situation and the experience and knowledge that has been possessed. One of the inhibiting conditions is the availability of inadequate supporting infrastructure, so that the work on *juk* music is still going on at home. The follow-up of innovations in supporting the preservation of Timorese ethnic *juk* music arts, undoubtedly continues to race into the future so that it needs to get good support from the local government so that the sustainability of *juk* music and other traditional music arts is maintained. With the works of these craftsmen not only maintain the culture of local traditions, but have innovated by combining traditional and modern elements in the design and process of making *juk* music.

A process is a series of systematic steps or stages that are clear and can be taken repeatedly, to achieve the desired result. According to Gibson and Donnelly, (2011) defines the process as follows: process is a life-source activity in the organizational structure and common processes include communication, decision making, socialization and career development. The potential ability of artists in working to produce *juk* music through 5 stages, consisting of the process of selecting wood types, cutting, carving, boring, and finishing (sandpaper). At stage 1 is the selection of wood types that have good quality and are not easily damaged. Usually using kapok wood that has been dried in the sun for 1-2 weeks with supporting materials including term, bar, pencil and white nylon strings measuring 0.6 mm.

Stage 2 is cutting and cleaning the outer bark of kapok wood with a machete imitating the shape of the guitar body but the size is smaller, where the width of the *juk* body is 25-50 cm and the length is 40-100 cm. Furthermore, the 3rd stage of the activity of carving kapok wood by first smoothing the shape of the surface of the *juk* body using a wooden scaf. The beginning of the work starts from the head, namely drilling according to the circle where the *juk* tuning is located. After that, re-engraving, the goal is to flatten the former drilling of the circle. This carving is carried out on the outside and inside of the *juk* through the initial stage using a strip chisel and the next stage using a carved chisel to obtain a smoother result.

In stage 4 this comes to drilling, which is using a machine drill with drill bit number 14 to speed up and avoid damage during the drilling process. During the drilling time always follow the diameter of

the circle. This drilling is carried out from the outside and inside of the right adjusting hole with a straight position to the inside, then in stage 5 there is finishing (sandpaper) which is a smoothing of the surface of the *juk* body. The first sanding uses a rough wooden eye grinder, and the 2nd uses a cloth sandpaper eye, then makes carvings of natural motifs and other interesting symbols. The results of the carving of motifs or symbols are drawn first with a pencil, following the use of machine grinders to clarify the pattern of carving motifs and symbols to make them more clearly visible on the body of the *juk*.

After the stage of the manufacturing process, install nylon strings on the tuner wood according to the location of each tone. The number of strings on the *juk* is four with the first string producing note 7 (si), the second string producing note 5 (sol), the 3rd string producing note 3 (mi), and the 4th string producing note 1 (do). This 4-string function can produce good sound quality when played with strumming techniques, namely the technique of sounding the strings simultaneously using fingers from bottom to top. The strumming technique is also known as *genjrengan*. According to Bano, (2003). *Game technique* means a way or technique of touching a musical instrument on a certain note according to its instructions or notation if taken each stage consistently leads to the desired result. The work on Timorese *juk* music, not everything is manual or traditional so it is easy and quickly completed within 2-3 days. Innovation with new designs and manufacturing techniques has opened up opportunities to introduce Timorese *juk* music on a wider scale without losing its form of authenticity.

### ***Conclusion and Suggestions***

Based on the results of research conducted in Oekolo village, North Insana District, North Central Timor Regency, it can be concluded that: *juk* is a traditional musical instrument made of kapok wood, but the times have been replaced with plywood. From the results of the potential and creativity of *juk* music craftsmen, have contributed and developed local cultural heritage specifically in Oekolo village by maintaining a form of authenticity in the era of globalization. During the process of making this *juk* music, there is a fairly high and significant creative attitude that can be seen from the different skill levels of each craftsman.

In the process of making *juk* music using a number of tools and materials that are easily obtained by working as a whole is no longer manual or traditional both from the beginning of the selection of basic materials to the end of the finishing results (sandpaper) and the provision of carvings, motifs and symbols - which contain aesthetic elements. Efforts to foster a love for the local culture of Timorese ethnic music art, starting from motivation and curiosity to continue working, innovating to produce simple works.

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