

Hybrid Design Model in Cross Cultural Collaboration: Case Study - Contemporary Bamboo-Ceramic-Batik-Silver Crafts Made by Indonesian and Japanese Artists

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Abstract: The advancement of transportation, communication and information technology become a tool of globalization in the interaction process of cross-cultural artists. The collaboration is driven by the need to find new ideas in art creation, whether for self-actualization, shared identity representation, market competition and new technical learning. The case study is the quality improvement of local craft designs (bamboo, ceramic, batik and silver) through hybridity strategy. Design innovation is needed for Indonesia's creative industry market competition at the international level. This project uses a language approach and the hybridity method. In the communication process, language has a common (langue) and contextual (parole) patterns and individual code. The visual language of hybrid art is created through a combination of signs of common, contextual and special patterns as the representations of artist identity. The collaboration of Japanese and Indonesian craft artists in making hybridity of bamboo-ceramic, bamboo-batik and bamboo-silver crafts represent dialogue between differences. The hybrid identity is the meeting point of similarities and differences vectors of cultures and each artist translation to their respective cultural patterns.

1 INTRODUCTION

Transportation, communication and information technologies are tools of globalization. With internet technology that facilitates the exchange of information and face-to-face discussions and aircraft technology that accelerates the movement of locations to experience interaction with people from different cultural spaces, we seem to live in a global space. In the world of art and design, globalization in the sense of the process of interaction of artists or designers that resulted in the exchange of information occurs in the field of cultural systems related to the exchange of belief systems, life views and ideas and material culture related to the materiality, material processing techniques, design strategies, production systems and marketing of artwork.

If transportation, communication and information technologies are globalization tools, one of the drivers or triggers of globalization is market competition, including the competition of the artwork market. Artists are demanded by the art market to always seek and produce novelty or originality in the work. In the creative process, when modern cultural codes have been exhausted, it is natural that artists turn to their traditional cultural codes to be reinterpreted or combined with modern cultural codes to produce mixed art or hybrid compounds that can be appreciated by readers or buyers who come from modern cultural context.

Another contributing factor to the creation of artwork collaboration process is the need to preserve traditional cultures with respect to represented cultural values and manufacturing techniques to produce such traditional art, to be learned by the younger generation. The interaction of cross-cultural artists, such as between Japanese and Javanese

artists, is possibly happened when both cultures that have traditional crafts culture like bamboo, wood and ceramic crafts have shared the similar problem experiences. Japan and Indonesia face the same problems associated with modern cultural dominance toward the use of traditional crafts, using plastic materials. The cooperation is rooted in the similar basic idea of naturalism in the ancient religion like Buddhism and Hinduism, to preserve nature as human is part of the nature itself. So, the using of natural material products by the society is not just because it is considered non-toxic or eco-friendly but also because the users follow the traditional belief of naturalism. So, the joint program between artists to resolve the common problems is just a natural thing.

In today's information age, when cross-cultural exchange of information takes place intensely at an individual level through internet technology, the meaning constructed in inter subject networks is no longer depend on relationships or networks among nations, ethical groups, institutions or larger formal groups. Dialogue created in cross-cultural interaction or collaboration - in the exchange of cultural space with each other takes place on an individual level. Everyone, including Japanese and Javanese artist that collaborate to make the art creation, will provide individual translations of existing cultural patterns, both of the common patterns shared by both cultural spaces and the contextual patterns that each culture has.

This study takes the case of the creation of bamboo craft art because bamboo has great potential to be developed due to the abundant supply of raw materials and export opportunities in the export market. Indonesia has 140 types and 18 species of bamboo which are actively developed as supporting material for bamboo handicraft household industries (Arinasa, 2013). Bamboo is categorized as a non-timber forest product. The production of Indonesia's forests consists of 95% non-timber and most of these non-timber products are bamboo (Hilman Nugroho, Directorate General of Watershed Management and Social Forestry - BPDAS-PS, at the National Congress of Bamboo in 2013 in Yogyakarta). Indonesia's export market has 7 main commodities and forest products are on the order of 5. Export value of bamboo in 2011 reached IDR 2.5 trillion (Hilman Nugroho, 2013). Based on INBAR (International Network on Bamboo and Rattan) report, bamboo and rattan international trade in 2012 reached more than 32 trillion, of which 66% is owned by RRC, 11% is owned by the European Union and 9% by Indonesia. Yogyakarta is one of

the 5 largest centers of bamboo crafts in Indonesia in addition to West Java, Central Java, East Java and Bali. In the Yogyakarta province alone, BPS reported, in 2012, the export volume of bamboo handicrafts reached 0.56 million Kg with export value of US 1.28 million. All of the above statistical data illustrate that bamboo crafts have great economic potential in the export market but in terms of design, relatively has not been much developed as there is not much research publication on the creation of bamboo art and craft.

The bamboo craft collaboration is done with the Japanese bamboo artist based on the similarity on cultural aspect that both Indonesia and Japan have a long history of bamboo culture – bamboo has a role in the community life, but Indonesia can learn from Japan in the terms of the work ethic, technology and marketing. In Japan, like in Indonesia, bamboo is commonly used as daily goods in worship and house hold operational (as a container). The similarity in both countries is also in terms of being influenced by the value of balance (in the relation between man and nature) derived from traditional Hindu-Buddhist beliefs (in Japan, it is influenced by Buddhism). The cultural value associated with the work ethic, which can be learned from Japanese craftsmen is, they tend more to dedicate their lives for weaving, to produce the qualified crafts, than weaving to earn a living, in the sense of producing the low-quality crafts in short times just to gain the money fast. This means they are not working instantly on the products but persevering to produce qualified products with the creation of personal art, so their work has a high tidiness and personal identity. This gives an advantage in a global design competition due to the high uniqueness or originality of the products; the art value of the product is viewed more important than merely its function of use.

A good craft has an artistic element, not just a function of use. The craft in Indonesia still has a great potential to develop in terms of design. The bamboo craftsmen have many inter-related problems ranging from work-ethic, lack of technological knowledge of raw material and preservation process, publicity and marketing, and lack of production capital. The craftsmen often simply copy an existing design or marketable design for economic purposes. Relatively little consciousness is found from them to develop their art of craft more than what has been inherited from generation to generation. They are simply just following the existed pattern. This is a matter of cultural values that relate to the character or work ethic. The creation of art using a hybridity

approach is oriented to novelty and the construction of the artist identity as a result of dialogue between the general patterns, contextual patterns and individual artist codes.

2 METHODS

The hybrid art and craft created by combining three groups of syntax and code were used. Syntax is a relation between signs, or in this case, the relation between art elements in a composition. Code is a familiar sign that refers to specific characters or specific narrative belong to the artist background. The first syntax group is a general pattern. In this research, the general patterns are general techniques of processing bamboo, ceramics, batik and silver. The second syntax group used is the contextual pattern. In this case, the traditional Japanese cultural code represented by Beppu as the center of bamboo crafts in Japan and the traditional Indonesian cultural code represented by the Javanese culture. The third group is the individual or group art code. The code can be generated from the way of translation done by artist towards their general and contextual patterns. Each artist has a different way of translation. For example, the way of Japanese artist translated his traditional cultural code in Beppu was different with the way of Indonesian artist did on the traditional Javanese culture.

In order to create the hybrid art involving three groups of syntax/ codes like the chart above, the data and method were collected as follow. (1) common techniques of bamboo, ceramic, batik and silver processing are studied through literature studies, surveys to bamboo museums in Beppu, surveys to Japanese bamboo craft studios, bamboo craftsmen, ceramics and batik in Banten, Yogyakarta and Solo, (2) Japanese and Indonesian cultural codes extracted from literature studies, interviews with craftsmen, visits to the bamboo museums, temples, cultural museums in Japan, museums batik and palace in Yogyakarta and Solo, (3) individual codes are created through individual artist's interpretation of their respective local cultural codes (year I) and their individual concept (year II).

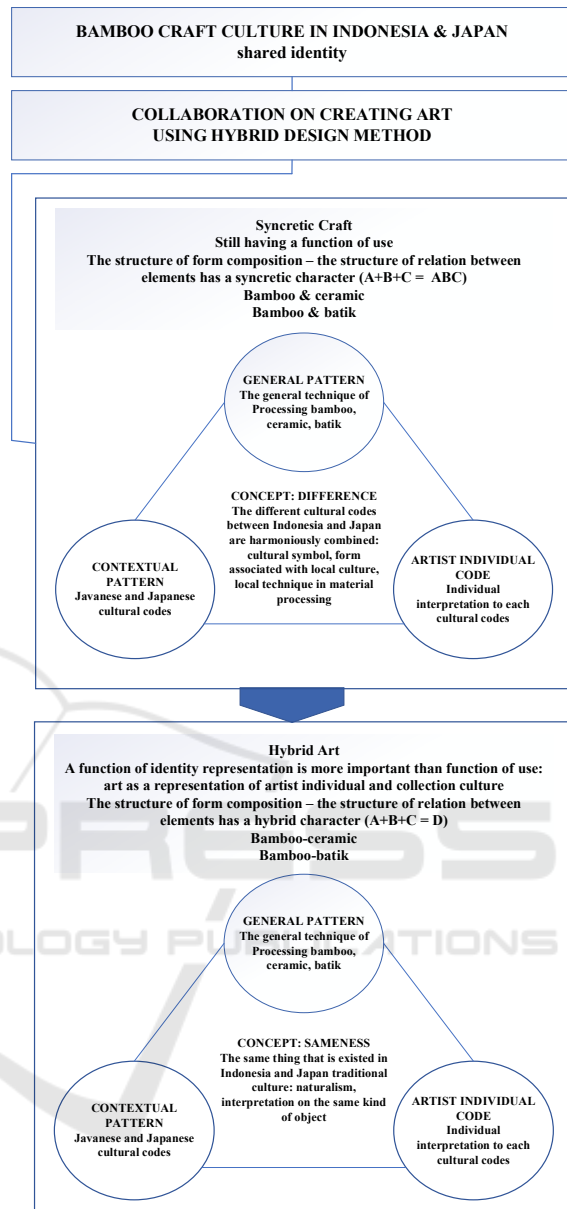


Figure 1: Method Diagram.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Bamboo Craft Culture in Indonesia and Japan: The Shared Identity

Both traditional cultures in Indonesia and Japan have a craft culture. In traditional culture of both countries, traditional crafts such as bamboo crafts, traditional ceramics and textiles, are part of everyday culture. Bamboo is used as a container for daily activities such as washing, cooking, eating,

drinking, resting, playing and art as well as music performances and religious ceremonies. Communities influenced by animist, Hindu and Buddhist syncretism such as in Indonesia or animism, Shinto and Buddhism as in Japan view human beings as a part of nature so that one source of human happiness is to maintain the balance relationship with nature by not destroying nature and using natural materials that are non-toxic and easily recycled by nature. The bamboo craftsmen in Japan and Bali who still adhere to animism believe that bamboo trees have spirits so before cutting down bamboo trees, we should pray to the bamboo tree spirit and give praise for we can cut the bamboo to use it for our needs. Both in traditional Indonesian and Japanese cultures, the position of bamboo is not only as a container but also a cultural element associated with the spiritual idea of naturalism.

Naturalism is a belief that takes the law, motion and character of nature as the source of the value of truth or value of life. Adhering to the naturalism, the material of nature is the healthiest material to be eaten and used in human life because when humans are first created, human food comes from nature and objects used by humans also come from nature. When the natural idea is made into a concept of creation of art, the form used is an organic form which is an abstraction of a form contained in nature, such as a curved, flowing and twisting form as the contrast of a geometric shape that is a man-made form.

3.2 The General Pattern: The General Techniques of Processing Bamboo, Ceramic and Batik

The general pattern is an information that applies in different regions as a sign, character or general trait (generally applicable). In the creation of this craft, the general pattern used is related to (1) common techniques of processing bamboo, ceramic and batik materials that are broadly the same in different regions, (2) elements and principles of visual composition used to create the composition of art and (3) the basic ideas that underlie the concept of artwork.

The basic stages in bamboo craft processing are (1) logging, (2) washing, to clean dirt and bamboo oil or called *aburanuki* in Japanese, (3) drying, (4) cutting into smaller rod size, (5) stripping the bamboo skin and bamboo meat into bamboo slats, (6) weaving bamboo.

The basic steps in the processing of clay into ceramics are (1) cultivating the clay in a process

called wedging, to remove air and make clay a homogeneous material (Peterson, 2004: p. 31), (2) pierce clods of clay on the spinning wheel then (4) first combustion (about 1000 degrees Celsius) to purify as it will burn carbon and other elements other than the clay material itself to produce a product called *bisque*, (5) glaze: weighing, mixing dye and then dyeing the first combustion product, (6) second combustion from lower temperature to higher temperature, depending on desired ceramic yield (600-1400 degree Celsius).

The basic stages in the manufacture of batik are (1) the depiction of the batik motif on the cloth, (2) the application of a heated wax or so-called '*malam*' by using *canting* to close the pores of intended area so it will not absorb certain colors, (3) color immersion, (4) wax washing, (5) drying.

3.3 The Contextual Pattern: Japanese Culture Code (Beppu) and Indonesian Culture Code (Java)

The contextual patterns are cultural codes that exist in certain areas that characterize or signify the culture in the region. In the creation of bamboo and ceramic crafts, the Japanese cultural code in the bamboo installation composition is derived from the Shinto religious beliefs held by the Japanese, the character of gods representing a natural force like a wind god called *Fujin* and a lightning god called *Raijin*. *Fujin* is portrayed through a gentle character, flowing, waving, bouncing and twisting like a wind character and *Raijin* is portrayed through a loud, stabbing and stiff character like a lightning character. In the creation of bamboo and ceramic crafts, Indonesian code in ceramic elements is represented by the Javanese culture. Characteristic taken is a *kawung* motif and green color. The green color is the symbol of fertility. The shape of *punden-berundak* on ceramics inspired by the temple structure and the application of reddish color inspired by the local material used in Majapahit era that buildings are mostly made of red brick.

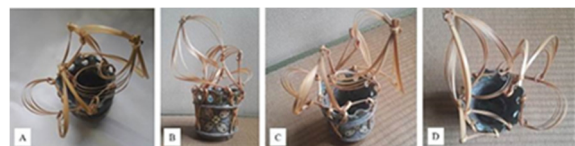


Figure 2: Bamboo-Ceramic Craft by Takayuki Shimizu and Geoffrey Tjakra (2017).

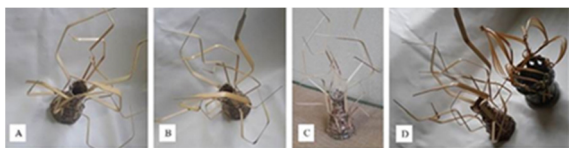


Figure 3: Bamboo-Ceramic Craft by Takayuki Shimizu and Geoffrey Tjakra (2017).

In the creation of the first bamboo-batik craft, Japanese cultural codes are displayed through the bamboo woven techniques which are a combination of two woven techniques namely *rinko* and *orikaeshi*, while Javanese cultural codes are displayed through the collages of flora batik motifs. In the creation of the second bamboo-batik craft, Japanese cultural codes are displayed through woven bamboo technique called *mutsume*, while Javanese cultural codes are displayed through the use of batik elements with a *Sidomukti* motif. It's using contains a hope for its user to be noble or prosperous.



Figure 4: Bamboo-Batik Craft by Takayuki Shimizu and July Hidayat (2017-2018).

3.4 The Individual Code: The Artist's Translation to General and Contextual Pattern

In the creation of a combination of bamboo crafts with ceramics and batik, the individual code comes from the translation of each artist to the Japanese and Javanese cultural codes that inspired the making of the artwork. When translating, each artist is influenced by his or her cultural backgrounds such as beliefs, worldviews and education that affect the artist thinking. In the bamboo-ceramic crafts there are two different ways of abstracting local cultural elements that inspire art: the Japanese bamboo artists display the Japanese identity in the abstract way by displaying characters from Fujin and Raijin while the Indonesian ceramic artists display Indonesian identity in an iconic manner by displaying the icon of *kawung* motif. But because this craft is the result of collaboration, the actual individual code is not merely subjective but is the agreement between two artists when combining two different material elements and cultural codes.

3.5 Elevation from Craft to Art; From Sincretic to Hybrid Syntax

In the bamboo-ceramic and bamboo-batik craft composition above, it appears that between bamboo and ceramic elements, as well as bamboo and batik elements, are still separated from each other. In the bamboo-ceramic craft composition, the ceramic craft is a vase of flowers and the composition of bamboo is the art of installation on it. The composition of both is mixed. If the ceramic component is called element A and the bamboo component is called element B, then the composition of both is AB. In the composition of bamboo-batik craft, batik craft is a basic element of plates and bamboo plaited is part of the plate wall. The composition of both forms a plate but the two elements can still be separated clearly. The second bamboo-batik craft is more hybrid because the bamboo batik and woven fabric together form a bamboo basket wall so that if the batik elements are called A and the bamboo element is called B, the combination of the two is no longer mixed but more unified - like the compound character - forming a new unity which can be called C.

However, the hybrid character in an art composition can be enhanced when the crafts elevated into pure art. That is why we plan to make a craft in the first year then elevate it into art in the second year. The concept of creation of craft in the first year is generated from codes that distinguishes Japanese culture from Javanese culture represented in the contextual code. The concept of creation of art in the second year is generated from the equality of cultural codes present in Japanese and Javanese cultures that represent the basic idea of naturalism. In Japanese and Javanese culture there is the idea of a tree of life. The contextual code in the creation of artwork in the second year comes from the meaning of the tree of life in Japanese culture and the articulation of its form (icon/index/symbol) combined with the meaning of living trees in Javanese culture and articulation of its form (icon/index/symbol). The Individual translations of artists come from the interpretation of each individual artist involved in the concept of a tree of life or a living tree in each culture. Because the creation of artwork in this second year is generated from the same concept and describes a tree of life, the relation between elements of the various materials that make up the installation artwork is expected to be more hybrid.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The language approach and hybridity model is one of the methods that can be used in the collaboration of art creation project that is a cross cultural artwork. Hybridity model is a combination of common pattern (syntax), contextual (syntax) pattern and individual code. The nature of the composition created is syncretic or hybrid. The composition of the form or relation between art elements that make up the composition is syncretic when each element represents a certain function that can be separated from one another. Example: vase with decoration on top of vase. Without the decoration on the vase, the vase can still serve as a vase and can still be called a vase. The composition of the form is hybrid when each element of art forms a unity of compositions that can't be separated because when separated, each element loses its meaning. Composition in pure art is hybrid because we can't decipher an artistic composition because when it is parsed, the art composition becomes corrupted and loses the meaning or the represented message.

Apart from the problem of material composition, material processing techniques and cultural codes, the more important thing is actually the opportunity to dialogue the differences between cultural spaces in this cross-cultural collaboration. In this context, the individual factors of artists act as the independent variables that have creative, flexible and naturally fluid in responding to the different contextual codes and view translations as the opportunities to create novelty and ensure the originality of artwork.

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