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Jaranan Ethnopedagogy: A Review of the Value of Christian Education from the Meaning of the Javanese Local Movement

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Abstract

Jaranan is a traditional Indonesian dance that contains magical elements and involves dancers performing dangerous acts. The purpose of this study is to examine the value of Christian religious education within the context of the local Javanese movement, Jaranan. This study investigates the values of Christian religious education manifested in Jaranan art as an integral part of the local movement in Java. Using qualitative methods with an ethnopedagogical approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with key informants, and literature review. The results indicate that Jaranan embodies fundamental values such as solidarity, social justice, and spirituality, which have significant relevance to Christian religious education. This research is expected to make a substantive contribution to the development of a contextual and transformative model of Christian religious education within the framework of the local movement.

Keywords: christian religious education; ethnopedagogy; jaranan; local Javanese movement

Introduction

Culture is something that encompasses all human life directly or indirectly. Culture itself is born from human life with the aim that humans live with a sense of security, dignity, self-respect, fairness, freedom in self-actualization, work, religion, and so on (Noorkasiani, 2009). Indonesia is a country consisting of various tribes with their cultures. The culture is also very unique both in terms of its customs, food, language, traditions, and art (Purwo, n.d.) One of the arts known in Indonesia is Jaranan. Jaranan or commonly known as Kuda Lumping (braided horse) is a traditional art that is very popular in various places in Indonesia, especially in parts of Bali, Java and Madura. This art or dance of Jaranan not only contains the meaning of being an entertainer but also contains moral, spiritual values and very important struggles (Basuki, n.d.). The art of Javanese Jaranan is one of the arts in which there is a magical element, usually dancers experience a trance and perform dangerous actions (Luthfi Samudro, 2020).

In the context of education, especially Christianity, local values such as those in the art of jaranan have great potential to be used as contextual and transformative learning media. Therefore, through ethnopedagogy, namely education based on local wisdom, Christian religious teaching can be developed to be more grounded and relevant to people's lives

without losing the essence of the doctrine of Christianity itself. But it is unfortunate that the approach to religious education is often textual and rigid. Therefore, they are less able to reach the depth of local cultural values that live in a community. That is why it is important to examine and reinterpret local values such as those in the Jaranan dance as a contextual pedagogical source in Christian religious education. This is done so that Christian religious education is not only a transfer/channeling of teaching but can also form character and faith that are relevant to the cultural context in which the student resides.

There are several previous studies that discuss Jaranan, including: Sari and Zakiyah (2025) which discusses the meaning of spiritualism in the view of Javanese ethics and religion through jaranan sekarmelati (Sumberawan Singosari Village): An anthropolinguistic study. The second research is Septiana and Rahayu (2018) which discusses the work of Javanese jaranan *segotro putro* Burengan village, Kediri city Islamic boarding school district (review of the performance structure). The research discusses the structure of the Javanese jaranan performance in the city of Kediri. The first research examines the meaning of Jaranan, but in the context of Islam. Meanwhile, the second research is a study on the structure of Jaranan performances in the city of Kediri. From the two studies, no one has discussed the value of education that can be taken and applied as a learning medium in Christian religious education. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to review the values of Christian religious education from the meaning of the local Javanese movement, namely Jaranan.

Based on this background, the formulation of the problem in this study is how the values of Christian religious education are manifested in the meaning of the local movement of Java and how its implications are for the formation of contextual Christian character. The purpose of this study is to identify the values of Christian religious education in Jaranan. The values in question are about love, justice, peace and respect for nature that may be contained in the Jaranan dance.

Methods

This research uses a descriptive-interpretive qualitative approach that aims to describe, interpret, and understand the meaning contained in the local Jaranan movement from the perspective of the values of Christian Religious Education. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on a deep understanding of social and cultural phenomena that live in society, especially related to religious, moral, and social values contained in Jaranan art. Qualitative research is used to understand meaning, experience, and social reality holistically based on the perspective of participants (Sugiyono, 2016). In the context of this research, the researcher seeks to explore how Jaranan art is understood as a medium that contains educational value, as well as its relevance in the development of contextual Christian Religious Education learning.

The data collection technique was carried out through observation and in-depth interviews with several informants who were considered to understand the practice and meaning of Jaranan art, namely Jaranan dancers, leaders of Jaranan groups, and Christian religious leaders. Observations were made to see firsthand the forms of performance, symbols, social interactions, and values that emerged in these cultural practices. Meanwhile, the interviews were used to gain a deeper understanding of the informants' views regarding the

relationship between Jaranan art and Christian Religious Education values. The data obtained was then analyzed interpretively to find meanings relevant to the formation of students' character, spiritual values, and social responsibility. With the careful and ethical use of descriptive-interpretive qualitative methods, this research is expected to be able to provide a deep understanding of the values of religious education manifested in the art of Jaranan, as well as its implications for the development of Christian Religious Education learning models that are relevant to the local cultural context.

Findings and Discussion

Defenisi Ethnopedagogues

Ethnopedagogy is an educational approach that integrates local cultural values, traditional knowledge, and social practices of the community into the learning process. This approach aims to connect education with the context of students' lives so that learning becomes more relevant, meaningful, and contextual. Ethnopedagogis helps students understand learning materials through cultural experiences that are close to their daily lives (Puspita, 2024). Thus, education is not only understood as a process of knowledge transfer, but also as a means to build cultural awareness and strengthen students' relationships with their social environment. In practice, this approach places local culture as a learning resource that has educational value for the formation of students' character and identity.

In addition to making learning more contextual, the ethnopedagogical approach also aims to strengthen the cultural identity of students in the midst of the growing trend of globalization. Ethnopedagogy-based education is able to foster a sense of pride in local culture while maintaining the sustainability of traditional values in the lives of the younger generation (Suryanti, 2025). Education is basically a complex process because it not only shapes intellectual abilities, but also builds a person's attitude, morals, and manners. Therefore, the ethnopedagogical approach is present as an educational alternative that is able to develop students holistically through the use of local wisdom as a learning medium. Jayendra (2023) emphasizing that ethnopedagogy is an educational approach whose learning practice is carried out by adapting cultural values and local wisdom that live in the community.

The ethnopedagogic approach views that education should be rooted in the cultural context in which learners live and develop. This means that the learning process needs to consider the traditions, social values, habits, and outlook of the local community so that education is not separated from the reality of students' lives. Supriatna (2023) states that ethnopedagogic emphasizes the understanding and application of cultural values, traditions, and wisdom of an ethnic group in a particular society. With this approach, students not only gain academic knowledge, but also learn to appreciate cultural identity and social values inherited by their society. Therefore, ethnopedagogic is an important educational approach in building humanistic, contextual, and character-oriented learning for students in accordance with the cultural environment in which they are located.

The Meaning of Jaranan art

The art of Jaranan is one of the traditional Javanese dances that has strong cultural and historical value in people's lives. In the performance, the dancers use props in the form of bamboo weaving in the shape of horses and wear clothes that resemble soldiers. According to Mufrihah (2018), the dancers rode the imitation horse while carrying equipment such as sprints and grongan, then performed dance movements accompanied by traditional music in the form of drums, gamelan, gongs, kenong, and trumpets. The dance movements performed follow the rhythm of gamelan music that is played dynamically so as to create a performance atmosphere full of passion and energy. This art not only functions as a community entertainment, but also as a symbol of cultural expression that is inherited from generation to generation in Javanese society.

In its development, Jaranan performances are often associated with spiritual and mystical elements, especially when gamelan music reaches the peak of the game. At this stage, some dancers usually go into a trance or trance and perform extreme attractions such as eating flowers, broken glass, or other dangerous acts. Therefore, in Jaranan performances, there is usually a handler or Gambuh who is in charge of controlling and restoring the condition of the dancers. According to Diah, Nasution, and Suhariyanti (2024), Jaranan art has existed since ancient times in East Java and has survived to this day as part of the community's cultural heritage. In the past, Jaranan was considered a sacred art because it was used in official ceremonies related to the respect of the ancestral spirits of the palace (Luthfi Samudro, 2020). Although now its entertainment function is increasingly dominant, the elements of tradition and spiritual values in Jaranan art are still maintained by the supporting community.

This Jaranan dance originated from Java which contained dances and featured several dancers who were symbolized as a soldier riding a horse in a war against the colonizers. Jaranan in his demonstration uses horses as a medium made of woven bamboo (Elis Setyowati, 2024). The symbolic meaning of the jaranan equipment is: first, the horse. Horses in horses symbolize strength, courage and also manliness. Horses are often associated with leaders or heroes. In riding the horse, it is expected to have an authoritative and dashing nature. Second, masks and decorations. The masks and decorations worn by the dancers in the Jaranan dance have different meanings. For example, tiger masks that symbolize strength and ferocity; knights who symbolize courage as well as heroism. The decoration on the head made of chicken feathers symbolizes purity and trust.

In jaranan, it is known for its cultural values that are very important and can be used as a lesson in life, including: first, courage. In a jaranan dance performance, a dancer dares to show their courage in performing acrobatic and very energetic movements. Second, discipline. The jaranan dance requires very high discipline from the dancers to be able to move in a compact and harmonious manner. Third, cooperation. The jaranan dance is the result of solid teamwork. In its movements, the jaranan dance has the meaning, namely: first, riding a horse. When a dancer rides a horse, it means about how a person's life travels and struggles. Second, jumping movements. Dancers who rotate in the Jaranan dance mean that there is a spirit in a human being. Third, dance movements. The movement that dances with a mask means that the human being is always experiencing changes in his life

The jaranan describes that in ancient times, the fighters in their struggle did not use cars or means of transportation as used in modern times. However, what the ancient warriors used in war was a horse as done by one of the heroes, Prince Diponegoro. The Jaranan dance is also one of the historical symbols for the Javanese people in the wars in ancient times. The Jaranan dance is used for joyful celebrations such as weddings, circumcision, August 17 events, *The Month of Ramadan* or the month of Suroh. When performing the jaranan dance, often a dancer experiences a trance or people call it demonic possession. This happens to dancers because they really enjoy the rhythm of the music being played.

In addition, the possessed dancer was also not intentional, but because there was someone who was able to make the dancer fall into a trance. In this case, the person has the ability to summon the subtle spirit so that the dancer if possessed can forget himself. When the dancer has been possessed, what is experienced is not only forgetting himself but even if he is pinched, pierced by nails, or beaten with a sharp weapon, it will not be felt. If the dancer is in a trance, they will perform a very dangerous attraction. The usual attractions are eating leaves, animal droppings, breaking glasses, and many more. A dancer can realize his trance when the subtle spirit is tired and asks his handler to come out of the dancer's body (Salmet Ngamidun, 2025).

When trance is not felt. Where, with whom and how. But after doing the dance, there was an unspeakable sense of tiredness. The whole body feels incapable of doing something and seems helpless because of fatigue. However, there is something that is felt that it turns out, not only humans exist in this world but also other beings. There is a sense of pride in being able to remember the struggle of their predecessors that in their struggle they had to ride horses and not like living in modern times that are all luxurious (Nirma, 2025).

According to one of the religious leaders, when we see this Jaranan dance, there are many things that make our logic ask, what and how and why does it all happen?. One of the things that logic questions is about dancers who if in a trance/possessed by evil spirits (in the understanding of society), can eat something that as a human being cannot be eaten because this can harm the body. Like one of them is eating broken glass. While we ourselves know that the broken glass if it is hit/pierced by the body, it will definitely bleed, especially if it is eaten. It is impossible for human logic to eat broken glasses, but that is what happens in the Jaranan dance. The Bible itself talks about humans being possessed by evil spirits, but not to the point of eating a broken heart. The evil spirit that possesses humans in the Bible is expelled by Jesus himself. However, the evil spirit that possesses the dancer in the jaranan dance version is released by the handler himself (Nn, 2025).

Contextualization in Christian Education

Education is a very important thing in human life, namely to improve morals and increase knowledge. Education is one of the most fundamental social institutions in people's lives, equivalent to family, economy and government. Christian education is not just one subject. Christian education is a paradigm or perspective from the entire educational process through the lens of faith. Christian education has unique sources, goals, and foundations and distinguishes it from secular education. The purpose of Christian education is to disciple and mature the faith (Scott, 2025). Christian education in the cultural context has a role, namely as

an agent of transformation that is able to build a society of faith and justice. Not only that, Christian religious education also plays a role in building social awareness and responsibility for others.

Christian education has a close relationship with culture because the process of faith education never takes place in a space separate from the social life of the community. The relationship between Christian education and culture is an important theological study, because Christian teachings need to be understood, applied, and lived in diverse cultural contexts. Each student lives in a certain cultural environment that influences the way they think, act, and understand the values of life. Therefore, Christian Religious Education not only serves as a means of conveying religious doctrine, but also as a process of faith formation that is able to dialogue with the local cultural reality. Through a contextual approach, gospel values can be translated in a more relevant way so that they are easy to understand and apply in students' daily lives.

The main goal of Christian Religious Education is to form the character and faith of students so that they are able to live Christian values in all aspects of their lives. In this process, culture has an important role because it helps determine learning methods, interaction patterns, and how students interpret Christian teachings. A growing culture demands Christian Religious Education to be adaptive and responsive to social changes that occur in society. If religious education is not able to understand cultural dynamics, then learning can lose relevance for today's generation. Therefore, Christian Religious Education needs to present a contextual, creative, and transformative learning model so that students not only grow in faith, but also have social responsibility, tolerant attitudes, and the ability to become agents of change in society (Silitonga, 2025).

Based on the results of the research, the local Javanese movement through the art of Jaranan can be used as a contextual learning medium in Christian Religious Education. Jaranan art is not only understood as a form of entertainment or cultural tradition, but also contains social values that can be integrated in the process of learning faith. Through this approach, students are invited to understand that Christian Religious Education is not only about conveying the teachings of the Bible theoretically, but also instilling life values such as love, tolerance, respect for others, and moral responsibility in community life. These values are very important in the context of Indonesian society which has cultural and religious diversity, so that students are able to build an attitude of life that is inclusive, peaceful, and respectful of differences.

On the other hand, this research also affirms the importance of theological understanding in looking at local cultural practices such as Jaranan. From the perspective of the Christian faith, it is necessary to affirm that only God has supreme authority over all creation, including power over evil spirits and all forms of spiritual manifestation. This understanding is the basis for students to have a solid faith and not be trapped in fear or a misunderstanding of mystical elements in culture. However, such a theological stance does not mean rejecting or demeaning the local culture. On the contrary, Christian Religious Education needs to teach a wise attitude in respecting culture as part of the social identity of society. Thus, students can have a balance between the steadfastness of the Christian faith and appreciation for the cultural heritage that lives in society.

Implications

The results of this study provide important implications for the development of contextual and transformative Christian Religious Education in Javanese society. The integration of Jaranan artistic values into the learning process shows that local culture can be an effective pedagogical medium to instill Christian values such as solidarity, courage, justice, social responsibility, and peace. Thus, Christian Religious Education teachers not only play the role of conveying theological material, but also as learning facilitators who are able to connect the Christian faith with the cultural and social realities of the local community. This approach encourages students to have a critical awareness of social issues while building an open, inclusive, and relevant faith identity to the context of their lives.

In addition, this research also has implications for the importance of collaboration between educational institutions, art communities, churches, and social activists in building culture-based local movements. Jaranan art can be used as a means of public education and social transformation that is able to convey moral messages and human values creatively and easily accepted by the public. Therefore, Christian educational institutions need to be more open to an inculturative approach in ministry and learning so that local culture is not only seen as a traditional heritage, but also as a space for the actualization of Gospel values in social life. In this way, local arts can be a medium of community empowerment that strengthens social harmony, cultural preservation, and character development of the younger generation.

Conclusion

This research shows that Jaranan art contains Christian religious educational values that are relevant to local movements in Java. These values can be integrated into transformative Christian religious education to empower students to become agents of positive social change. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that Christian educators develop innovative learning models that integrate Jaranan values in the context of local movements. Jaranan artists are also encouraged to continue to preserve and develop Jaranan art as an effective medium of education and advocacy. In addition, local movement activists can use Jaranan art as a means to articulate messages of justice, peace, and social transformation.

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