

EMPOWERING CREATIVE VILLAGES THROUGH FINE ARTS AND SUBLIMATION TECHNOLOGY

Warli Haryana*, Dzul Afiq Zakaria**

*First author, **Corresponding author

*Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Indonesia), **Universiti Malaya (Malaysia)

(*warliharyana@upi.edu, **dzulafiq_zakaria@um.edu.my)

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Abstract

The Creative Village Empowerment Program in Pasirnanjung, Sumedang, integrates fine arts and digital sublimation technology to strengthen rural community capacity. Using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach with 20 participants, the program involved needs identification, training in screen printing and sublimation, Android-based graphic design practice, and evaluation through Likert-scale reflection and portfolio assessment. Results showed significant improvements in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and socio-economic impact. Findings highlight fine arts as both cultural expression and entrepreneurial empowerment. This study concludes that integrating arts and technology provides a sustainable model for creative village development, reinforcing identity and fostering culture-based entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *fine arts, sublimation technology, creative village, community empowerment, entrepreneurship*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Creative Industries

The creative industry has emerged as a strategic sector in cultural-based economic development across many countries, including Indonesia (Cunningham, 2020; Hartley, 2021). Globally, creative industries contribute not only to GDP but also to employment, innovation, and cultural diplomacy. According to UNESCO (2022), the global creative economy accounted for nearly 3% of world GDP, with fine arts, design, and digital media as major contributors. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf, 2023) identifies 17 subsectors, with fine arts and design playing a significant role in shaping national identity and economic competitiveness.

The Indonesian government has positioned the creative economy as a pillar of national development. Policies such as the *Rencana Induk Ekonomi Kreatif Nasional* emphasize the integration of cultural heritage with modern creative practices. However, despite this growth, rural communities often remain marginalized. Limited access to art education, production

technologies, and entrepreneurial mentoring creates a gap between urban creative hubs and rural

villages (Comunian, 2021). This gap is particularly visible in West Java, where villages possess rich cultural traditions but lack modern tools to transform creativity into sustainable enterprises.

From a policy perspective, Indonesia's creative economy strategy aligns with global frameworks such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Yet, implementation challenges persist. Urban centers like Bandung and Jakarta have benefited from creative hubs, incubators, and government-backed festivals, while rural areas remain underserved. This imbalance risks reinforcing inequality between urban and rural populations, undermining the inclusive vision of the creative economy (Pratt, 2023).

International comparisons highlight similar challenges. In India, for example, rural artisans contribute significantly to the handicraft sector, yet face barriers in accessing digital markets (Nair, 2021). Malaysia's *Creative Industry Masterplan* emphasizes rural inclusion, but implementation has been uneven, with urban creative clusters dominating outcomes (Zakaria, 2022). These cases illustrate that without targeted interventions, rural communities risk exclusion from the benefits of creative industry growth.

The Indonesian case is particularly compelling because of its rich cultural diversity. Villages across Java, Bali, and Sumatra hold traditions in fine arts, crafts, and performance. However, the lack of integration with modern production technologies limits their ability to compete in national and global markets. Addressing this gap requires not only technical training but also policy frameworks that prioritize rural creative empowerment.

1.2 The Concept of Creative Villages

The notion of "creative villages" emphasizes the integration of local cultural assets with modern creative industry practices. Villages are not merely sites of tradition but potential incubators of innovation. Oakley (2022) argues that art education in rural contexts can bridge cultural heritage with entrepreneurial opportunities. The concept resonates with Indonesia's vision of *Desa Wisata Kreatif*, where cultural tourism and creative industries intersect to generate local income.

Pasirnanjung Village in Sumedang exemplifies this potential. Known for its cultural richness, the village faces challenges in accessing modern production technologies. The Creative Village Empowerment Program was designed to address these challenges by equipping residents with fine arts training and sublimation technology.

Internationally, the idea of creative villages has gained traction. In South Korea, the *Creative Village Project* integrates traditional crafts with digital platforms, enabling rural artisans to sell products globally (Kim, 2020). In Japan, the *Satoyama Initiative* links rural cultural practices with sustainable development, emphasizing the role of art in community resilience (Yamamoto, 2021). These examples demonstrate that creative villages can serve as laboratories of innovation, blending tradition with modernity.

In Indonesia, creative villages are often linked to tourism. However, the Pasirnanjung case highlights a broader vision: empowering communities through fine arts and sublimation technology, not merely as tourist attractions but as sustainable enterprises. This approach

aligns with the global trend of “glocalization,” where local cultural assets are adapted for global markets (Robertson, 2020).

The integration of sublimation technology is particularly significant. Unlike traditional crafts, sublimation allows for scalable production of customized products such as t-shirts, mugs, and tote bags. This technology bridges fine arts with commercial viability, enabling rural communities to participate in the digital economy. By combining artistic creativity with production technology, villages can transform cultural heritage into marketable products, strengthening both identity and income.

1.3 Problem Statement and Objectives

The central problem addressed is how rural communities can access fine arts and sublimation technology as a foundation for creative entrepreneurship. While national policies emphasize creative industry growth, rural inclusion remains limited. The Pasirnanjung case illustrates the challenges: rich cultural traditions but limited access to modern tools, training, and networks.

The objectives of this study are threefold:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of training in enhancing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and socio-economic impact. This involves assessing whether participants not only acquire technical skills but also develop entrepreneurial motivation.
- To explore the role of multicultural collaboration in enriching learning experiences. The involvement of Malaysian practitioners provides a comparative perspective, highlighting the value of cross-cultural exchange in art education.
- To propose a replicable model for creative village empowerment. The Pasirnanjung program serves as a pilot, offering insights for replication in other villages across Indonesia and beyond.

1.4 Policy Analysis and International Comparisons

Indonesia’s creative economy policy emphasizes inclusivity, yet rural communities often remain peripheral. The *Laporan Ekonomi Kreatif Nasional* (Kemenparekraf, 2023) acknowledges the need for rural empowerment but provides limited mechanisms for implementation. Programs such as *Bekraf* incubators have focused on urban startups, leaving rural artisans underserved.

Comparatively, India’s *National Handicrafts Development Programme* provides subsidies and training for rural artisans, but challenges in digital literacy and market access persist (Nair, 2021). Malaysia’s *Creative Industry Masterplan* emphasizes rural inclusion, yet implementation has been uneven (Zakaria, 2022). South Korea’s *Creative Village Project* demonstrates a more integrated approach, combining government support with digital platforms (Kim, 2020).

These comparisons highlight the importance of policy frameworks that prioritize rural inclusion. Without targeted interventions, creative industry growth risks reinforcing urban-rural inequality.

1.5 Challenges of Digitalization in Rural Art Education

Digitalization presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, digital tools such as sublimation technology and mobile design applications expand accessibility. On the other hand, rural communities face barriers in digital literacy, infrastructure, and affordability.

In Pasirnanjung, participants expressed enthusiasm for digital tools but faced challenges in mastering software such as CorelDraw and Adobe Illustrator. Limited internet connectivity further constrained access to online resources. These challenges reflect broader issues in rural digitalization. According to the World Bank (2022), rural Indonesia lags behind urban areas in internet penetration, creating a digital divide that hinders creative industry participation.

Internationally, similar challenges exist. In India, rural artisans struggle with digital literacy (Nair, 2021). In Africa, digital art initiatives face infrastructural barriers (Okeke, 2020). These cases highlight the need for sustained mentoring and infrastructure investment.

1.6 Toward a Sustainable Model of Creative Village Empowerment

The Pasirnanjung case illustrates that integrating fine arts with sublimation technology can empower rural communities. However, sustainability requires more than technical training. It requires policy support, infrastructure investment, and continuous mentoring.

A sustainable model of creative village empowerment should include:

- Policy alignment: National policies must prioritize rural inclusion.
- Infrastructure investment: Internet connectivity and access to digital tools are essential.
- Capacity building: Continuous mentoring in digital literacy and entrepreneurship.
- Multicultural collaboration: Cross-national partnerships enrich learning and expand networks.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Arts as Empowerment

The role of fine arts in community empowerment has been widely discussed in international literature. Banks (2022) emphasizes that art and culture hold transformative potential for communities, particularly when linked to practical skills and creative enterprise opportunities. Art is not merely a form of aesthetic expression but a vehicle for social change, identity formation, and economic participation. Hesmondhalgh (2020) similarly underscores the role of cultural production in strengthening social cohesion while opening new economic spaces.

In the Indonesian context, fine arts have historically been associated with cultural heritage, from batik and wayang to contemporary design practices. However, their potential as instruments of socio-economic empowerment has only recently gained recognition. The integration of fine arts into creative industry frameworks allows communities to leverage cultural assets for entrepreneurship. This aligns with Pratt's (2023) argument that cultural industries can serve as drivers of local development when embedded in community contexts.

Empowerment through arts also involves psychological dimensions. Participation in artistic activities fosters self-confidence, motivation, and collective identity. Oakley (2022) notes that art education in rural contexts can bridge cultural heritage with entrepreneurial opportunities, enabling communities to see themselves not only as custodians of tradition but as innovators.

2.2 Creative Hubs and Community Development

The concept of creative hubs has become central to discussions of community development. Comunian (2021) defines creative hubs as spaces where cultural production, entrepreneurship, and community engagement intersect. These hubs provide infrastructure, mentoring, and networks that enable communities to transform creativity into sustainable enterprises.

In urban contexts, creative hubs often take the form of co-working spaces, incubators, or cultural centers. However, in rural contexts, creative hubs can be adapted to local needs. For example, in Indonesia, *desa wisata kreatif* integrates cultural tourism with creative industry practices. This model allows villages to showcase cultural assets while generating income through creative products.

International comparisons highlight diverse models of creative hubs. In the UK, creative hubs have been supported by government policies emphasizing cultural regeneration (Banks, 2022). In South Korea, creative villages integrate traditional crafts with digital platforms, enabling rural artisans to access global markets (Kim, 2020). In Japan, the *Satoyama Initiative* links rural cultural practices with sustainable development, emphasizing the role of art in community resilience (Yamamoto, 2021).

These examples demonstrate that creative hubs can serve as laboratories of innovation, blending tradition with modernity. For Pasirnanjung Village, the empowerment program functions as a creative hub, providing training, tools, and networks that enable residents to transform fine arts into entrepreneurial opportunities.

2.3 Digital Integration in Art Education

Digital integration has become a defining feature of contemporary art education. Samaniego et al. (2024) argue that digital tools expand accessibility and creativity, enabling learners to bypass infrastructural limitations. Sublimation technology, mobile design applications, and online platforms allow communities to produce and market creative products with minimal resources.

In rural contexts, digital integration presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, digital tools enable scalable production and access to global markets. On the other hand, rural communities often face barriers in digital literacy, infrastructure, and affordability. The World Bank (2022) notes that rural Indonesia lags behind urban areas in internet penetration, creating a digital divide that hinders creative industry participation.

Despite these challenges, digital integration remains essential. By combining fine arts with sublimation technology, communities can produce customized products such as t-shirts, mugs, and tote bags. These products not only generate income but also reinforce cultural identity. Digital tools also enable communities to document and share artistic practices, contributing to cultural preservation.

Internationally, digital integration has transformed art education. In India, digital platforms have enabled rural artisans to access e-commerce markets (Nair, 2021). In Africa, digital art initiatives have provided new opportunities for youth (Okeke, 2020). These cases highlight the potential of digital tools to democratize art education and empower marginalized communities.

2.4 Multicultural Collaboration

Multicultural collaboration enriches learning experiences and expands networks. The involvement of Malaysian practitioners in Pasirnanjung reflects the concept of connected arts learning (Review of Research in Education, 2022), which links art, community, and economic opportunities. Cross-national partnerships provide comparative perspectives, enabling communities to learn from diverse practices.

In the Pasirnanjung program, Malaysian practitioners introduced new techniques and perspectives, enriching participants' artistic experiences. This collaboration also expanded networks, connecting Pasirnanjung to international creative communities. Such partnerships align with the idea of cultural diplomacy, where art serves as a medium of international dialogue (Hartley, 2021).

International literature highlights similar cases. In Europe, cross-border collaborations have been supported by EU cultural policies, emphasizing the role of art in fostering social cohesion (Hesmondhalgh, 2020). In Asia, collaborations between Japan and Korea have enriched traditional crafts through shared innovation (Kim, 2020). These cases demonstrate that multicultural collaboration can enhance both artistic quality and entrepreneurial opportunities.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The literature suggests that creative village empowerment involves four dimensions:

- 1) Art as empowerment: fostering self-confidence, identity, and entrepreneurship.
- 2) Creative hubs: providing infrastructure, mentoring, and networks.
- 3) Digital integration: enabling scalable production and access to global markets.
- 4) Multicultural collaboration: enriching learning experiences and expanding networks.

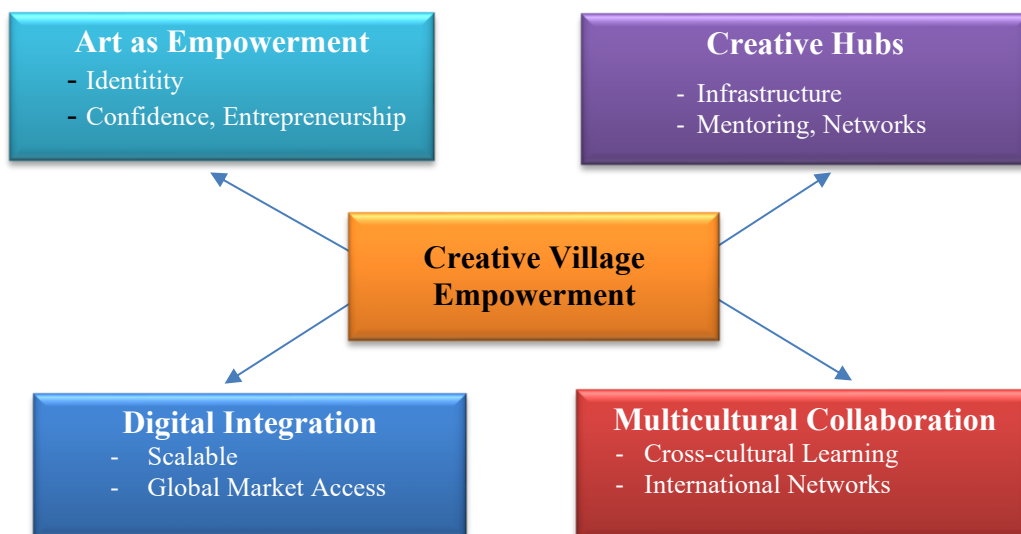


Figure 1 illustrates the main concept of Creative Village Empowerment

These dimensions provide a theoretical framework for analyzing the Pasirnanjung program. By integrating fine arts with sublimation technology, the program addresses both cultural and economic dimensions of empowerment. By functioning as a creative hub, it provides infrastructure and mentoring. By integrating digital tools, it enables scalable production. By involving Malaysian practitioners, it enriches learning through multicultural collaboration.

2.6 Synthesis

The literature highlights that fine arts can serve as instruments of socio-economic empowerment when integrated with creative industry practices. Creative hubs provide infrastructure and networks, enabling communities to transform creativity into sustainable enterprises. Digital integration expands accessibility and scalability, while multicultural collaboration enriches learning and expands networks.

For Pasirnanjung Village, these insights provide a foundation for empowerment. The program integrates fine arts with sublimation technology, functions as a creative hub, incorporates digital tools, and involves multicultural collaboration. This approach aligns with international trends while addressing local needs.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which emphasizes active involvement of community members throughout all stages of the research process. PAR is particularly suitable for empowerment programs because it positions participants not as passive subjects but as co-researchers who contribute to problem identification, action planning, implementation, and evaluation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2014).

The cyclical nature of PAR reflection, action, and evaluation ensures that outcomes are contextual and sustainable. In the Pasirnanjung program, PAR allowed residents to articulate their needs, participate in training, practice new skills, and reflect on outcomes. This iterative process fostered ownership and motivation, aligning with the empowerment goals of the study.

Unlike conventional research designs that prioritize objectivity and detachment, PAR emphasizes collaboration, reflexivity, and social transformation. It is grounded in the belief that knowledge is co-created through dialogue and practice. For rural communities, this approach is particularly relevant because it respects local knowledge while introducing new skills and technologies.

3.2 Location and Participants

The program was conducted in Pasirnanjung Village, Cimanggung District, Sumedang Regency, West Java. The village was selected because of its cultural richness and potential for creative industry development, yet limited access to modern production technologies.

Participants were purposively selected to ensure diversity. A total of 20 individuals joined the program, consisting of:

- Youth (10 participants): representing the next generation of creative entrepreneurs.
- Parents (6 participants): providing intergenerational perspectives and stability.

- Community leaders (4 participants): ensuring alignment with local governance and cultural identity.

Selection criteria included active involvement in local activities, interest in fine arts, and willingness to participate in creative industry development. This diversity ensured that the program addressed multiple perspectives and fostered collective ownership.

Demographically, participants ranged from 18 to 50 years old, with varying educational backgrounds. Some had prior exposure to art practices, while others were beginners. This heterogeneity enriched the learning process, as participants could share experiences and support each other.

3.3 Tools and Materials

The program utilized a combination of traditional art tools and modern digital technologies:

- Screen printing kit: frame, squeegee, ink, printing table.
- Digital sublimation press machine: enabling transfer of designs onto t-shirts, mugs, tote bags, and other media.
- Laptop and Android smartphones: equipped with graphic design applications such as Ibish Paint, Canva, CorelDraw, Photoshop, and Adobe Illustrator mobile.
- Digital camera: for documentation of training and products.
- Materials: sublimation transfer paper, sublimation ink, screen-printing ink, plain fabric, and blank merchandise items.

The integration of traditional and digital tools reflects the program's dual emphasis: preserving fine arts as cultural expression while introducing modern technologies for commercialization.

3.4 Research Stages

The PAR process unfolded in four stages:

- 1) Needs Identification:
 - Conducted through interviews and participatory observation.
 - Participants articulated challenges such as limited access to technology, lack of entrepreneurial mentoring, and difficulties in marketing creative products.
 - This stage ensured that the program addressed real community needs rather than imposing external agendas.
- 2) Technical Training:
 - Introduction to fine arts concepts, screen printing techniques, and digital sublimation.
 - Hands-on practice with Android-based graphic design applications.
 - Training sessions were facilitated by local artists and Malaysian practitioners, ensuring both local relevance and international perspectives.
- 3) Practice and Production:
 - Participants applied skills by producing creative products such as customized t-shirts, mugs, and tote bags.
 - Emphasis was placed on quality control, creativity, and marketability.
 - Collaborative projects fostered teamwork and collective identity.

4) Evaluation:

- Conducted through Likert-scale questionnaires and portfolio assessment.
- Reflection sessions allowed participants to share experiences, challenges, and aspirations.
- Evaluation emphasized both technical outcomes (skills, knowledge) and socio-economic impacts (entrepreneurial motivation, community identity).

3.5 Instruments

The primary instrument was a *questionnaire* containing 16 items across four aspects:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes & Motivation
- Socio-economic Impact

Responses were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). Reliability testing yielded Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78\text{--}0.89$, indicating good to excellent internal consistency.

In addition to quantitative instruments, qualitative data were collected through:

- Observations: documenting participant engagement, creativity, and collaboration.
- Interviews: capturing personal experiences, challenges, and aspirations.
- Portfolio assessment: evaluating the quality and creativity of products produced.

This mixed-methods approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of outcomes, combining statistical analysis with narrative insights.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using mean and standard deviation. Interpretation categories ranged from very low (1.00–1.80) to very high (4.21–5.00). This allowed for clear categorization of outcomes.

Qualitative data were thematically analyzed, identifying recurring themes such as enthusiasm, challenges in digital literacy, and aspirations for entrepreneurship. Triangulation of data ensured validity, as findings from questionnaires were corroborated by observations and interviews.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were upheld throughout the study:

- Informed consent: participants were briefed about objectives, processes, and outcomes.
- Confidentiality: personal data were protected, and findings were reported collectively.
- Respect for local culture: training sessions integrated local traditions and values.
- Reciprocity: participants benefited directly from training and production opportunities.

By adhering to ethical standards, the program ensured trust and sustainability.

3.8 Methodological Significance

The methodological design reflects the dual emphasis of the program: cultural preservation and socio-economic empowerment. By adopting PAR, the study ensured contextual relevance and sustainability. By integrating mixed methods, it captured both quantitative outcomes and qualitative experiences. By emphasizing ethics, it fostered trust and ownership.

This methodological framework provides a replicable model for creative village empowerment, adaptable to diverse contexts across Indonesia and beyond.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis of 20 respondents revealed significant improvements across four aspects: knowledge, skills, attitudes & motivation, and socio-economic impact.

Aspect	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category
Knowledge	4.15	0.45	High
Skills	4.00	0.50	High
Attitudes & Motivation	4.75	0.30	Very High
Socio-Economic Impact	4.05	0.52	High

Interpretation:

Knowledge: Participants demonstrated strong understanding of fine arts concepts, screen printing, sublimation processes, and Android-based graphic design. The mean score of 4.15 indicates that training effectively transferred theoretical and practical knowledge.

Skills: Practical abilities were established, with participants able to produce creative products using sublimation technology. The mean score of 4.00 reflects high competence, though with minor variations due to differences in prior experience.

Attitudes & Motivation: Enthusiasm was very high, with a mean score of 4.75. Participants expressed strong motivation to pursue creative entrepreneurship, indicating program sustainability.

Socio-Economic Impact: The mean score of 4.05 suggests positive perceptions of entrepreneurial opportunities. While direct economic effects varied, participants recognized the potential of creative products to generate income.

Reliability testing confirmed the validity of these findings, with Cronbach's α ranging from 0.78 to 0.89.

4.2 Qualitative Insights

Beyond numerical data, qualitative findings provide deeper understanding of participant experiences. Observations and interviews revealed several themes:

- Enthusiasm for Creativity: Participants expressed excitement about learning new skills. One youth participant stated: "*Kami merasa seni bukan hanya ekspresi, tetapi juga peluang usaha.*" This reflects the shift from viewing art as hobby to seeing it as entrepreneurial opportunity.
- Challenges in Digital Literacy: Some participants struggled with graphic design applications, particularly CorelDraw and Adobe Illustrator. Limited prior exposure to digital tools created learning curves. However, peer support and mentoring helped overcome these challenges.
- Intergenerational Collaboration: The involvement of youth, parents, and community leaders fostered intergenerational dialogue. Parents appreciated the entrepreneurial potential for their children, while youth valued the cultural insights of elders.
- Identity and Pride: Participants expressed pride in producing creative products that reflected local identity. Sublimation technology allowed them to integrate traditional motifs into modern merchandise, reinforcing cultural heritage.
- Entrepreneurial Aspirations: Several participants discussed plans to establish small businesses, selling customized products in local markets and online platforms. This reflects the socio-economic impact of the program.

4.3 Interpretation of Findings

The findings affirm that fine arts can serve as instruments of socio-economic empowerment in rural communities. The high enthusiasm among participants reflects strong motivation to pursue design-based enterprises, consistent with Banks (2022).

The variations in skills highlight the need for continued mentoring, particularly in digital literacy and product quality standardization. Pratt (2023) emphasizes that cultural industries require sustained support to ensure competitiveness. Without ongoing mentoring, rural entrepreneurs risk producing low-quality products that struggle in competitive markets.

The socio-economic impact, while positive, remains preliminary. Participants recognized entrepreneurial opportunities but had not yet fully realized economic benefits. This reflects the early stage of the program. Long-term impacts will depend on market access, digital marketing literacy, and product innovation.

4.4 Comparative Analysis with International Literature

The Pasirnanjung case aligns with international literature on arts-based empowerment. Banks (2022) highlights the transformative potential of art when linked to enterprise opportunities. The enthusiasm and entrepreneurial aspirations of participants reflect this potential.

Hesmondhalgh (2020) emphasizes the role of cultural production in strengthening social cohesion. The intergenerational collaboration observed in Pasirnanjung illustrates this, as art served as a medium for dialogue between youth and elders.

Comunian (2021) discusses creative hubs as spaces for community development. The Pasirnanjung program functioned as a creative hub, providing infrastructure, training, and networks. This aligns with global trends where creative hubs serve as laboratories of innovation.

Samaniego et al. (2024) highlight the importance of digital integration in art education. The challenges in digital literacy observed in Pasirnanjung reflect broader issues in rural contexts. However, the enthusiasm for digital tools demonstrates potential for growth.

International comparisons further contextualize the findings. In South Korea, creative villages integrate traditional crafts with digital platforms, enabling rural artisans to access global markets (Kim, 2020). In Japan, the *Satoyama Initiative* links art with sustainable development, emphasizing community resilience (Yamamoto, 2021). Pasirnanjung shares similarities with these cases, particularly in integrating tradition with modern technology.

4.5 Social Impact

The program had significant social impacts:

- Strengthening Identity: Participants integrated traditional motifs into modern products, reinforcing cultural heritage.
- Fostering Collaboration: The involvement of diverse participants fostered intergenerational dialogue and collective ownership.
- Building Confidence: Artistic participation enhanced self-confidence and motivation, empowering individuals to pursue entrepreneurship.

These impacts align with Oakley's (2022) argument that art education bridges cultural heritage with entrepreneurial opportunities.

4.6 Economic Impact

While direct economic impacts remain preliminary, participants recognized entrepreneurial opportunities. Customized products such as t-shirts, mugs, and tote bags have market potential in local and online contexts.

Challenges include:

- Market Access: Limited exposure to digital marketing platforms.
- Quality Control: Ensuring product quality meets consumer expectations.
- Sustainability: Maintaining motivation and innovation beyond initial training.

Addressing these challenges requires sustained mentoring and infrastructure support.

4.7 Multicultural Collaboration

The involvement of Malaysian practitioners enriched artistic experiences. Participants valued the comparative perspectives, learning new techniques and expanding networks. This reflects the concept of connected arts learning (Review of Research in Education, 2022).

Multicultural collaboration also reinforced Pasirnanjung's identity as a creative village with international networks. This aligns with Hartley's (2021) argument that cultural science fosters international dialogue.

4.8 Implications

The findings have several implications:

- Policy: National policies must prioritize rural inclusion in creative industry development.
- Practice: Programs should integrate fine arts with modern technologies to enhance entrepreneurial potential.
- Research: Future studies should examine long-term impacts, particularly economic outcomes.

4.9 Synthesis

The Pasirnanjung case demonstrates that integrating fine arts with sublimation technology can empower rural communities. The program enhanced knowledge, skills, attitudes, and socio-economic impact. While challenges remain, particularly in digital literacy and market access, the enthusiasm and entrepreneurial aspirations of participants reflect strong potential.

By functioning as a creative hub, integrating digital tools, and involving multicultural collaboration, the program aligns with international trends while addressing local needs. This provides a replicable model for creative village empowerment.

5. Multicultural Reflection

5.1 The Value of Cross-National Collaboration

One of the distinctive features of the Creative Village Empowerment Program in Pasirnanjung was the involvement of Malaysian art practitioners. This collaboration was not incidental but strategic, designed to enrich the learning process by introducing comparative perspectives and fostering intercultural dialogue. Multicultural collaboration in art education has been widely recognized as a catalyst for innovation, creativity, and social cohesion (Review of Research in Education, 2022).

By engaging practitioners from Malaysia, participants in Pasirnanjung were exposed to new techniques, aesthetic sensibilities, and entrepreneurial strategies. This broadened their horizons beyond local traditions, enabling them to situate their creative practices within a wider Southeast Asian context. Such exposure is critical in an era of globalization, where cultural products must compete in diverse markets.

5.2 Enriching Artistic Experiences

The collaboration enriched artistic experiences in several ways:

- **Technical Innovation:** Malaysian practitioners introduced alternative approaches to sublimation and design, expanding participants' technical repertoire.
- **Aesthetic Diversity:** Exposure to Malaysian motifs and design philosophies encouraged participants to experiment with hybrid styles, blending local and regional identities.
- **Entrepreneurial Insights:** Discussions on market trends in Malaysia provided comparative perspectives, helping participants envision cross-border opportunities.

These experiences resonate with Hartley's (2021) notion of cultural science, where stories and practices are shared across borders to generate new forms of knowledge and creativity.

5.3 Strengthening Identity through Dialogue

Paradoxically, multicultural collaboration not only introduced external perspectives but also reinforced local identity. By comparing their practices with Malaysian counterparts, participants in Pasirnanjung became more aware of the uniqueness of their cultural heritage. This reflexive process strengthened pride and motivation to preserve local traditions while adapting them for modern markets.

Hesmondhalgh (2020) argues that cultural production fosters social cohesion by linking local identity with broader networks. In Pasirnanjung, dialogue with Malaysian practitioners created a sense of belonging to a regional creative community, while affirming the distinctiveness of local traditions.

5.4 Implications for Cultural Diplomacy

Beyond local impacts, multicultural collaboration has implications for cultural diplomacy. Art serves as a medium of international dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation (Banks, 2022). The Pasirnanjung program exemplifies this, as collaboration with Malaysian practitioners created informal networks of cultural exchange.

Such initiatives contribute to Indonesia's broader efforts in cultural diplomacy, positioning villages not only as sites of local empowerment but also as nodes in international creative networks. This aligns with global trends where cultural diplomacy is increasingly decentralized, involving communities and grassroots initiatives rather than solely state institutions (Pratt, 2023).

5.5 Challenges and Opportunities

While multicultural collaboration offers significant benefits, it also presents challenges:

- Communication Barriers: Differences in language and terminology occasionally created misunderstandings.
- Cultural Sensitivities: Balancing respect for local traditions with openness to external influences required careful negotiation.
- Sustainability: Ensuring continuity of collaboration beyond initial training sessions remains a challenge.

Nevertheless, these challenges are outweighed by opportunities. Multicultural collaboration fosters innovation, expands networks, and strengthens identity. For Pasirnanjung, it provided a foundation for future partnerships, potentially extending to other countries in Southeast Asia.

5.6 Synthesis

The multicultural dimension of the Pasirnanjung program illustrates that empowerment is not only local but also transnational. By engaging Malaysian practitioners, participants enriched their artistic experiences, strengthened local identity, and contributed to cultural diplomacy. This reflects the concept of connected arts learning (Review of Research in Education, 2022), where art serves as a bridge between communities, cultures, and economies.

Ultimately, multicultural collaboration transforms creative villages into nodes of international dialogue, positioning them within global creative networks while reinforcing local identity.

6. Conclusion and Implications

6.1 Conclusion

The Creative Village Empowerment Program in Pasirnanjung, Sumedang, demonstrates that integrating fine arts with sublimation technology can serve as a sustainable model for rural community empowerment. Through a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, the program successfully enhanced participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and socio-economic awareness. Quantitative findings revealed high mean scores across all dimensions, particularly in attitudes and motivation, while qualitative insights highlighted enthusiasm, identity reinforcement, and entrepreneurial aspirations.

The program illustrates that fine arts are not only a medium of cultural expression but also a strategic instrument for socio-economic transformation. By equipping participants with technical skills in screen printing, sublimation, and digital design, the program bridged the gap between tradition and modernity. The involvement of Malaysian practitioners enriched learning experiences, fostering multicultural collaboration and positioning Pasirnanjung within international creative networks.

Overall, the findings affirm international literature that emphasizes the transformative potential of art when linked to enterprise opportunities (Banks, 2022; Hesmondhalgh, 2020). The Pasirnanjung case contributes to theoretical debates on creative industries by demonstrating that empowerment requires not only technical training but also participatory approaches, digital integration, and cross-cultural collaboration.

6.2 Practical Implications

The program offers several practical implications for community development:

- **Policy Alignment:** National creative economy policies must prioritize rural inclusion. Current frameworks often emphasize urban creative hubs, leaving rural communities underserved (Kemenparekraf, 2023). Programs like Pasirnanjung illustrate the need for targeted interventions that integrate cultural heritage with modern technologies.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Sustained empowerment requires infrastructure such as internet connectivity, access to digital tools, and affordable production technologies. Without these, rural communities risk exclusion from digital markets (World Bank, 2022).
- **Capacity Building:** Continuous mentoring is essential to ensure sustainability. Training should extend beyond technical skills to include digital marketing, quality control, and entrepreneurship. This aligns with Pratt's (2023) argument that cultural industries require sustained support to remain competitive.
- **Multicultural Collaboration:** Cross-national partnerships enrich learning and expand networks. The involvement of Malaysian practitioners in Pasirnanjung demonstrates the value of multicultural collaboration in fostering innovation and cultural diplomacy.

6.3 Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to theoretical debates on creative industries and empowerment by highlighting four dimensions:

- 1) Art as empowerment: fostering identity, confidence, and entrepreneurship.
- 2) Creative hubs: providing infrastructure, mentoring, and networks.

- 3) Digital integration: enabling scalable production and market access.
- 4) Multicultural collaboration: enriching learning and expanding networks.

This framework provides a replicable model for analyzing creative village empowerment in diverse contexts.

6.4 Future Directions

Future research should examine long-term impacts, particularly economic outcomes. While participants expressed entrepreneurial aspirations, direct economic benefits remain preliminary. Longitudinal studies could assess sustainability, market penetration, and income generation. Comparative studies across villages and countries could further enrich understanding of creative village empowerment.

6.5 Synthesis

In conclusion, the Pasirnanjung program illustrates that integrating fine arts with sublimation technology, supported by participatory approaches and multicultural collaboration, can empower rural communities. This model bridges tradition with modernity, reinforcing cultural identity while opening entrepreneurial opportunities. By aligning policy, investing in infrastructure, building capacity, and fostering collaboration, creative villages can serve as engines of socio-economic transformation, contributing to national and international creative industry development.

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