Level of Student Creativity in Arts and Culture Learning at SMP Negeri 1 Mempura Academic Year 2025/2026

Fitri Mawaddah [1], Tiya Melinda [2], Marwa Marwa [3]

[1]   Universitas Lancang Kuning; fitri12mawaddahhh@gmail.com
[2]   Universitas Lancang Kuning; tymlnd98@gmail.com
[3]   Universitas Lancang Kuning; marwa@unilak.ac.id

Abstract:
This study aims to describe the level of student creativity and the factors that influence creativity in the Cultural Arts learning process for Class VII.6 at SMP Negeri 1 Mempura during the 2025/2026 academic year. The background of this research is based on the importance of creativity as an indicator of successful art education and as a provision for students to face future challenges. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that student creativity levels vary, generally ranging from moderate to high. Students with a strong interest in art tend to be more active and original in expressing their ideas through artworks such as drawing and crafting. Internal factors such as interest, motivation, and early love for the arts significantly influence the emergence of creativity. External supporting factors include project-based learning methods, an open learning environment, the teacher's role as a facilitator, and family support in the form of praise and the provision of art supplies at home. The Cultural Arts teacher applies various teaching strategies and provides space for exploration, although challenges such as limited time and resources remain. These findings are consistent with previous studies but offer a new context at the junior high school level with concrete field data. The study recommends improving support facilities, strengthening the roles of teachers and parents, and the need for training and policies that promote creative and effective art education.

Keywords: Creativity 1; Cultural Arts 2; Supporting Factors 3

1.   INTRODUCTION

Creativity involves the ability to offer new perspectives and discover multiple solutions to problems based on available information (Indar Sabri et al., 2023). In arts education, creativity can be observed in students' ability to express new ideas, creatively combine artistic elements, and produce original works. This process heavily depends on various classroom factors, including teaching methods, peer dynamics, and the availability of supporting facilities. The use of technology, such as interactive multimedia, has been proven to foster an engaging learning atmosphere and encourage students' artistic expression (Sumarsono et al., 2024). The implementation of free-expression approaches in visual art activities also positively impacts students' creativity, particularly at the senior high school level (Anbiyah et al., 2023). These studies highlight that creativity in art learning is not solely a matter of natural talent, but can be developed through effective teaching strategies, strong teacher-student relationships, and appropriate learning media.

Arts and Culture Education significantly contributes to shaping creativity, aesthetic sensitivity, and students' self-expression (Suhaya, 2016; Sumarsono et al., 2024). At the junior high school level, arts education teaches various forms such as music, dance, visual arts, and theater, while also encouraging students to develop creative and original ideas. Therefore, creativity becomes a key indicator in assessing the effectiveness of Arts and Culture learning. Moreover, the goal of arts education at the primary and secondary levels is to foster a balance among intellectual, emotional, and sensory development (Suhaya, 2016; Purhanudin, 2019). Integrating interactive multimedia into learning can help students understand cultural values while simultaneously enhancing their creativity (Sumarsono et al., 2024). Furthermore, the arts promote critical thinking, introduce local cultural values, and build self-confidence (Apriliyanti & Rosyidi, 2024). However, challenges remain in implementation, such as limited resources and a lack of understanding regarding the importance of arts education. This necessitates the active role of teachers, support from schools, and intervention from policymakers (Apriliyanti & Rosyidi, 2024; Purhanudin, 2019).

Numerous studies on arts education in Indonesia emphasize the importance of developing creativity, character, and cultural awareness. SMP Negeri 1 Mempura, located in Siak Regency, is a suitable institution to explore how art learning processes foster students' creativity. The school environment, student backgrounds, and instructional strategies used by teachers are key aspects that can be examined directly through field-based approaches. The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) policy has also provided more space for both teachers and students to cultivate creativity, including in visual arts at the junior high school level (Paramita, 2020). To ensure

the effectiveness of art learning, teachers are required to be competent in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning activities, as shown in studies on theater learning in Marga Baru senior high schools (Ilhaq & Kurniawan, 2022).

Students' creativity in Arts and Culture Education is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, interest, motivation, psychological aspects, and cultural heritage serve as the primary triggers for creativity (Cut Putro et al., 2017; Y. Oktavia, 2014). Externally, the role of teachers, availability of resources, and the school climate significantly affect creative outcomes (Cut Putro et al., 2017; Shintawati Handayani et al., 2021). Teachers act as the main agents in stimulating creativity by delivering engaging materials and encouraging students to think critically (Y. Oktavia, 2014). Additionally, school principals can support teachers' creativity development through appropriate supervision, professional development, and a positive working environment. At the elementary level, arts education is designed to balance intellectual, emotional, physical, and moral aspects of students (Purhanudin, 2019).

Several studies show that arts education can effectively develop students' creativity, especially when supported by suitable methods. Project-Based Learning (PBL) has proven to enhance students' creativity in various artistic activities (Mulyati, 2023). Constructivist approaches are also effective in encouraging students to create innovative handicrafts (Karmila & Husna, 2017). At the senior high school level, the free-expression method in two-dimensional visual arts provides students with greater space to create (Anbiyah et al., 2023). Artistic techniques such as collage, drawing, and other visual media have been shown to increase elementary students' creativity (Yunianti & Maknun, 2024). Overall, arts learning developed through innovative approaches has the potential to be an effective means of fostering creativity, shaping character, and enhancing students' emotional intelligence.

Previous research also examined the essential role of teachers in building active and enjoyable learning environments through creative approaches (Muhajir, 2021). The use of project-based learning can direct students to actively participate in arts activities (Mulyati, 2023). Furthermore, interactive multimedia has shown a positive impact on students' understanding of culture and their creativity enhancement (Sumarsono et al., 2024). Teachers' creativity is influenced by various aspects, such as personality, learning processes, cultural environment, and the outcomes they produce (Virdha et al., 2022). Despite existing challenges, these findings indicate a significant potential to improve the quality of arts education through appropriate strategies and approaches. Most of these studies applied qualitative methods using observation, interviews, and documentation for data collection.Permasalahan yang terjadi di SMPN 1 Mempura masih banyak siswa yang menunjukkan tingkat kreativitas yang rendah dalam proses pembelajaran seni budaya. Hal ini ditandai dengan ketergantungan siswa pada guru, kurangnya ide orisinal dalam menyelesaikan tugas, serta minimnya partisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan yang menuntut pemikiran terbuka dan inovatif. Kondisi ini menjadi perhatian penting karena kreativitas berkaitan erat dengan kesiapan siswa menghadapi tantangan masa depan, termasuk dunia kerja yang semakin kompleks. Apabila kondisi ini tidak segera diatasi, maka siswa akan sulit mengembangkan potensi dirinya secara maksimal, baik dalam bidang akademik maupun non-akademik. Oleh karena itu peneliti merasa sangat tertarik untuk melakukan penelitian dengan tujuan : (1) untuk melihat tingkat kreativitas peserta didik dalam pembelajaran seni budaya bervariasi, (2) untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kreativitas peserta didik, dan (3) untuk menganalisis strategi guru dalam mengembangkan kreativitas.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to describe and explain in depth the level of students' creativity and the factors that influence it in the learning process of Cultural Arts. A descriptive qualitative approach allows researchers to obtain rich and in-depth data through direct field interactions, and to describe phenomena as they are, in accordance with the actual situations and conditions occurring during the research process (Sugiyono, 2017).

2.2 Time and Location of the Research

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Mempura, located on Perjuangan Street, Mempura District, Siak Regency, Riau Province. The research was carried out from May to July 2025.

2.3 Research Subjects

The subjects in this research were the Cultural Arts teacher and the seventh-grade students of class VII.6, consisting of 29 students. The Cultural Arts teacher served as the primary source of information regarding learning strategies and efforts to develop student creativity in the classroom. Meanwhile, the students of class VII.6 were the main focus of the research, as their level of creativity and the influencing factors were investigated and described.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted directly by the researcher in class VII.6 to observe the learning process and student behavior in expressing their creativity. The observation was non-participatory, meaning the researcher only recorded

the phenomena occurring during the learning activities without direct involvement. In-depth interviews were conducted with three groups of informants: The Cultural Arts teacher, to obtain information about teaching methods, student characteristics, and learning challenges; Parents or guardians, to explore students' learning habits at home and the nature of parental support; Students of class VII.6, to understand their interests in the learning process, difficulties they face, and their opinions on the Cultural Arts lessons. Meanwhile, documentation techniques were used to collect various visual and administrative evidence such as photos of learning activities, students' artworks, teacher notes, and other relevant documents to complement and reinforce the research findings.

2.5 Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

Data processing in this research followed the steps of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data display, and verification or conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and simplified the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation to focus on the core issues of the study. In the data display stage, the reduced information was organized systematically in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, or visual documentation to facilitate analysis. The final stage involved verification and conclusion drawing, where key research findings were formulated inductively based on the analyzed data.

2.6 Data Validity Techniques

To ensure the validity of the data, this research employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from various informants, such as teachers, students, and parents. Methodological triangulation involved comparing results from interviews, observations, and documentation. The use of triangulation aimed to ensure consistency, validity, and credibility of the data obtained during the research process.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The level of creativity of students in learning arts and culture varies

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, it was found that the level of creativity of class VII.6 students at SMP Negeri 1 Mempura was classified as varied, with a tendency to be medium to high. This can be seen from the active participation of most students in Arts and Culture learning activities, such as drawing, making handicrafts and displaying other works of art. Several students demonstrated the ability to innovate and originality in expressing their ideas, both visually and verbally. This information is based on the results of an interview with Ananda Hafivah Husna "I really like Arts and Culture lessons, especially when drawing or making crafts. I can freely express my ideas, and the teacher always gives me the opportunity to try new things."

The results of this interview are supported by several documentary evidence which are the artwork of class VII.6 students as follows:

Figure 1.1: Interview Documentation, Tuesday/10 June 2025 with colleagues, Arts and Culture Teacher.

Figure 1.2: Interview documentation, Thursday/12 June 2025 with one of the students at SMP Negeri 1 Mempura.

The Arts and Culture teacher revealed that students who have a high interest in art tend to show their creativity more easily in learning. The results of interviews with students also support this finding, where the majority of students stated that they felt free and motivated when given the opportunity to create work according to their imagination.

3.2 Factors that Influence Student Creativity
Based on data analysis, there are several main factors that influence students' creativity levels, namely:
   a.   Internal Factors
   Students' intrinsic interests and motivation play an important role in fostering creativity. Students who have high curiosity and interest in art are more likely to show initiative and new ideas in the assignments given. "Because I've liked art since I was little. It feels good to be able to express what's on my mind through drawings or crafts. So it's not because the teacher told me to, but because I really like doing it." Results of an interview with Ananda Hafivah Husna
   b.   External Factors
   A supportive learning environment, such as varied learning methods and a non-pressure classroom atmosphere, has also been proven to encourage the development of student creativity. Teachers use an approach that gives students freedom of expression, which is reflected in project-based learning strategies and open assignments.
   Support from parents is also an important factor. Based on interviews with several parents, students who received encouragement from their families, such as providing art tools at home or praise for their work, showed higher enthusiasm than other students. "We often praise his work, even though it's simple. Sometimes we stick his drawings on the refrigerator or the wall of the house. That makes him even more enthusiastic. He once said, "I want a better drawing so I can display it again." Said one of the student's parents.

3.3 Teacher Strategies for Developing Creativity
Arts and Culture teachers apply various learning strategies aimed at exploring students' creative potential, such as project-based learning, the use of digital media, and providing space for individual exploration. Teachers also act as facilitators who encourage students to think critically and be open to various forms of artistic expression.
However, teachers also admit that there are challenges, such as limited learning time, inadequate facilities, and a lack of active participation from some students. This is an important note in efforts to develop more effective arts learning in the future. "The biggest challenge is that time is very limited. For activities that require a creative process, one class hour is often not enough. Facilities are also lacking - art tools are limited, not all students have access to technology. And there are still students who are not actively involved, especially those who have not yet discovered their interests." Results of interviews with Arts and Culture Teachers.

Discussion
This study found that the creativity levels of students in Class VII.6 at SMP Negeri 1 Mempura are varied, generally ranging from moderate to high. This is reflected in the active participation of most students in Cultural Arts learning activities, particularly in drawing and crafting. These findings align with previous research by Anbiyah et al. (2023), Karmila & Husna (2017), and Mulyati (2023), which state that student creativity tends to increase when learning approaches allow for free expression and are project-based. The main difference lies in the context and educational level; earlier studies were mostly conducted at the senior high school level and focused

on specific techniques, whereas this study offers a more contextual depiction by presenting empirical observations at the junior high school level through direct observation and interviews.

Furthermore, the factors influencing student creativity in this study are divided into two categories: internal and external. Students' intrinsic interest and motivation are the primary drivers of creativity, as also highlighted in studies by Cut Putro et al. (2017) and Oktavia (2014). External factors such as learning methods, teacher support, and a supportive learning environment further enhance students' artistic abilities. A unique aspect of this research is the inclusion of personal narratives from students and parents, which concretely illustrate how praise and family attention can significantly boost students' motivation in the arts. This serves as a valuable complement that is rarely explored in depth in previous studies.

In terms of instructional strategies, the Cultural Arts teacher at SMPN 1 Mempura applies varied approaches such as project-based learning, the use of digital media, and providing space for individual exploration. These strategies are in line with the perspectives of Virdha et al. (2022) and Muhajir (2021), who argue that teacher creativity plays a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of arts education. However, the teacher in this study also faces several challenges, including limited time, inadequate facilities, and low active participation from some students. These obstacles provide important insights into the on-the-ground realities that are often underexplored in previous studies, which tend to be more conceptual in nature.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the level of student creativity in Cultural Arts learning at SMPN 1 Mempura is quite diverse, but overall shows significant potential for further development. Student creativity is influenced not only by internal factors such as interest and motivation, but also strongly shaped by external factors, particularly teacher strategies, parental support, and a conducive learning environment. This study also shows that innovative learning methods, such as project-based and free exploration approaches, are highly effective in encouraging student engagement and creativity. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including limited time and inadequate facilities.

Based on these findings, the authors offer several recommendations. First, teachers should continuously develop and apply creative and varied teaching strategies, while providing greater space for student exploration. Second, schools are expected to provide facilities and infrastructure that support arts education, and to create spaces for appreciation through student art exhibitions. Third, parents are encouraged to be more actively involved in supporting their children's artistic interests at home, whether by providing materials or offering simple forms of appreciation. Lastly, the government and education policymakers are urged to give greater attention to arts education by providing teacher training, improving facilities, and strengthening curriculum policies that support creativity development in schools. Furthermore, future research is recommended to explore different educational levels and contexts in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of creativity development in Cultural Arts learning across Indonesia.

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