# Relevance of Vernacular in the Contemporary World: Engaging the Local Wisdom Rasa Pangrasa in the Management of the Film Festival Pelajar Jogja in Indonesia

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### **Abstract**

There is no doubt that many of the vernacular practices have relevance in the Contemporary World. They range from rituals, to architecture and from managing social relations to communition. In this sense, the engagement of *Rasa pangrasa*: a form of local wisdom that exists in the Javanese society is noteworthy. It is one part of the culture that arises when communicating with others in the communities there. When inculcating *a sense of taste* is a necessity to bring about collaboration from all parties in film festival management, this loca wisdom seems to be abe to bring that about with ease and relevance. In this context, this study examines the local wisdom of *rasa pangrasa* as a unique form of local wisdom that has a role to play in organizing film festivals.

It employs a phenomenological approach with descriptive qualitative methods. The data was obtained from an in-depth interview with the initiator and founder of Festival Film Pelajar Jogja (FFPJ), Tomy W. Taslim. The analysis was conducted with an interactive model from Miles and Huberman (2014).

The findings show that local wisdom Rasa pangrasa is highly effective in the communication process of *face-to-face dialogues* with people as a condition for forming collaborations. *The feeling of taste* is seen in the habit of *sowan* to seniors, *nyrateni*, *mapping* and *profiling*, and the willingness to blend in with all those involved in FFPJ as friends. *The taste of taste* carried out by the initiator and founder of FFPJ has succeeded in exploring the taste or willingness of the parties to collaborate in the management of film festivals voluntarily by employing the local wisdom: Rasa Pangrasa.

**Keywords:** Rasa Pangrasa, Local Wisdom, Management, Film Festival, Students

# Introduction

Film is a visual and audio medium to communicate messages to the audience (Pratista, 2008). The entertaining nature of a film makes the messages conveyed through the film more easily accepted by the audience. Images or scenes in films are part of the expression of ideas, feelings and emotions of filmmakers or film artists (Pauhrizi, 2020). Sometimes, expressing the ideas, feelings or emotions through films is easier using information technology on gadgets or smartphones. These gadget hve been equipped with various applications for making videos and

editing images or videos (*video editing*), including the kinemaster application. At the same time, gadgets are also connected to social media so that the distribution process of film works such as videos or others is easier (Rahardja et al, 2020). These show that the advances in information technology make it easier for the students to create film works. This is evidenced by the increasing number of films made by students, which are generally in the form of short films.

The interest of students in making films and the number of films made by students have been facilitated by various film festivals. Film festivals are spaces for film creators to show their film works to the audience as well as meet film critics, and film business people (Wangsa & Depita, 2023). In this connection, a number of film festivals have been held for students in Indonesia, including the Jogja Student Film Festival (FFPJ), the Equator Student Film Festival, the Educational Video Festival, the National Student Art Competition Festival (FLS2N) for Film, and the National University Student Film Festival. In addition, there are several Student Film Competitions held incidentally by universities and other institutions. Of the various festivals and student film competitions, FFPJ's consistency is the most tested because it has been around since 2010 and has never stopped until now. FFPJ's sustainability proves that FFPJ has the managerial competence of the organization, its ability to adapt, and its success in ensuring support and resources as explained by Getz and Andersson (2008).

Jogja Student Film Festival (FFPJ) is a film festival with a distinctive event format because the festival is not a competition arena per se, but an arena for learning about films. This film festival is a great place for students to share their knowledge, experience, and skills in short filmmaking and critical thinking. The series of festival activities are quite diverse ranging from seminars, workhops, critical education classes, art classes, community forums, and educator forums. FFPJ has been held annually since 2010 until now. By 2022, 1,529 films have participated in the FFPJ festival (Setyawan, 2023). Thus, this film festival has become an annual routine agenda in Yogyakarta.

The success of FFPJ as an annual agenda proves that the organizers have succeeded in implementing management appropriately, namely management that collaborates many parties to be involved. Tomy W. Taslim as the initiator, pioneer and founder of FFPJ who until now is active in every FFPJ implementation says that the success of FFPJ to date is the result of collaboration with many parties voluntarily and with equality in carrying out their respective duties so that management is applied with heart or feeling. Local festivals can run because they are able to maximize local participation and engagement across the demographic spectrum (Wallin et al., 2012). People participate in non-profit film festivals because they hope to benefit from valuable experiences (Vogel, 2023).

Tomy explains that in the context of festival management, the key is *taste* (Tomy Taslim, interview May 27, 2021). He points out that this particular characteristic is potent in *Rasa pangrasa* (pronounced roso pangroso in Javanese) a form of local wisdom and practice that prevails in the Javanese society. He says that it seems to be the key to the success of collaborative management in organizing FFPJ for more than 12 years. Since *Rasa pangrasa* is one part of the local wisdom of Javanese people in establishing relationships with others, the engagement of this unique local wisdom in bringing about collaborations offer opportunities to understand how to employ vernacular traditions in the modern world. This study therefore aims to explore the mechanisms by which local wisdom influences communities. Its objectives are as:

- 1. To explain and analyze *pangrasa* rasa as local wisdom
- 2. To identify how pangrasa rasa as local wisdom is employed in film festival management.

# **Theoretical Framework**

Local wisdom is considered as a truth that has been traditional or established in the community in an area. It is a common norm to establish interaction and cooperation as social capital to carry out a common life (Ruslan, 2018). In fact, it can also be interpreted as a value that applies in community life to protect and manage the environment to be sustainable, so that

it is used as a principle or basis when protecting and managing the environment. Local people live, maintain, and live in accordance with the evert-day situations, conditions, abilities, and values lived in the community concerned and that is what roduces local wisdom (Njatrijani, 2018).

Sibarani (2018) points out that local wisdom can be understood as cultural values and traditional ideas that are wise, good-valued, and virtuous. It refers to knowledge derived from community experience and accumulation of local knowledge possessed by the individuals and communities (Chaiphar et al., 2013). As Vitasurya (2016) says, invariably, local wisdom is obtained through experience and initiation as well as knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

# Local wisdom Rasa Pangrasa

One of the local wisdom of Javanese people is *the taste of pangrasa*. In Javanese society, *pangrasa* is the deepest feeling in order to be able to explore the deepest feelings that exist in others. One can explore the feelings of others, when one humbles one's heart in front of others (Suwandi and Setyobudi, 2020). The process of exploring the feelings of others is intended so that he can give something best in accordance with the will or feelings of the others. People who can *feel pangrasa* will avoid people's reproach and falling self-esteem because in *their sense* of pangrasa they will behave politely employing polite manners, and ethics (Nugroho, 2021). *Pangrasa* is a feeling that is still external that appears in attitudes and behaviors (Susetyo et al, 2014).

# **Collaboration**

Management in general is a set of functions in managing a business or activity, namely the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising or evaluating. Good festival management will lead to the success of film festivals. Film festival management requires many parties to collaborate in strong team work. Collaboration is a collaboration that emphasizes the importance of a highly participatory process from stakeholders and key implementers (Page, 2004). Collaboration is formed through a gradual process. First, face to face dialoge or dialogue directly. This dialogue is essential in order to identify opportunities and mutual benefits. This direct dialogue can minimize antagonism so that stakeholders can work together in accordance with common goals and benefits. Second, trust building. Trustbuilding efforts need to be made as soon as possible when the first collaboration process is carried out. Third, commitment to process. Commitment is a motivation to get involved or participate. Commitment is the responsibility of stakeholders to see that what must be done in the cooperation is a task and responsibility that needs to be developed. Fourth, stakeholders involved must share an understanding of what they (stakeholders) can achieve through collaboration (vision, mission, goals, and so on). Fifth, intermediate outcomes. The continued results of the collaboration process manifest in the form of tangible outputs or outputs (Ansell and Grash, 2007).

# **Review of Literature**

Not much has been examined previously on engaging local wisdom in the management of the film festivals or similar events. For example, Arifianto, Budi Dwi, and Fajar Junaedi (2014) have examined the distribution and exhibition of alternative films in Yogyakarta as a form of resistance to the practice of film domination in Indonesia. They have found that the film community is the basis for the distribution of short films or alternative films in Yogyakarta. In the distribution channel, Yogyakarta film activists screen films from one place to another with festival routes, on-campus screenings and off-campus screenings. The development of internet technology makes it easier for the filmmakers to distribute it so that their films can be enjoyed by more people (Arifianto and Junaedi, 2014)

Aryanto (2015) has examined the networks of film festival governance in the Special Region of Yogyakarta and describes the film festivals held in the special region there, including the Indie Film Festival of Yogyakarta Film Week, the Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival

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(JAFF), the Documentary Film Festival (FFD), and the Jogja Student Film Festival (FFPJ). This film festival is held during the holiday season, November-December taking advantage of the momentum of the tourist visit season. At the same time, it is an effort to increase the opportunity to bring in more foreign tourists, especially in the special region of Yogyakarta. As a region that has special autonomy, the special region of Yogyakarta has the flexibility to develop film festivals as a regional flagship cultural activity (Aryanto, 2015).

Barry examines the phenomenon of the film community and says that film festivals are held in various places and have become alternative spaces to attract the filmmaking community, including amateur filmmakers. Amateur filmmakers who sometimes only have ideas, tightness, video cameras, and simple computers as editing tools are increasingly daring to produce films. The film community can be considered as an exclusive "thing", although the movement to establish the film community has spread everywhere to remote parts of Indonesia. However, at a certain level or principles, the community has its own rules of the game and culture (Barry, 2016)

Komara (2021) on the other hand discusses how the potential of short films in the internet era is seen from the distribution and exhibition scheme of short films in Indonesia. The rise of short film production among the community is also accompanied by screening activities that are very limited. The dichotomy between short films that are difficult to get exhibition space, in the internet era can be watched easily, and can also be watched alone in front of a small screen. Komara (2021) examines short film journeys, especially short films created by short film makers in Indonesia. These studies collectively show that while some spects are being examined, there is a dearth o freserach on this issue.

# **Research Methods**

This research uses a phenomenological approach directed to the field of cinematography. In phenomenological research, data collection through observation and interviews is more widely carried out in order to emphasize meaning rather than generalization. (Sugiyono, 2017). The object of study is *the sense of pangrasa* as a form of local wisdom in the management of student film festivals held from 2010 to 2021. Primary data was obtained by conducting direct interviews with Tomy W. Taslim as the founder of FFPJ, and Alexandri Luthfi as a film jury at the festival. Data is analyzed in an interactive qualitative discriptive manner according to Miles *et al* (2014) through four stages: data collection, data reduction (data simplification), data presentation, and conclusions.

### **Findings**

Festival Film Pelajar Jogja (FFPJ) has been screened every year since 2010 and it has become an annual routine agenda now. The festival involves committees, judges, curators, resource persons in *workshop* or seminar classes, infrastructure, funds and participants. An interesting concept of the festival is the principle of the festival as a learning space, not merely a competition as in most film festivals in general. The concept of this learning space is realized in the form of learning classes that equip students to think critically, exchange experiences and expand knowledge. In this case, Tomi suggests:

"The concept of this festival is a shared learning space, so the learning classes are the mainstay of FFPJ. And these classes are what make students more literate, about anything. For example, about women's classes, environmental classes, and reproductive health classes. And it was facilitated for example by the mayor of that time, and also there from Rifka Anisa. So the vision of education is indeed realized from these classes"

Tomy Taslim, interview May 27, 2021

The concept of the festival as a learning space was justified by Alex, one of the FFPJ Judges who cited the festival as an educational space for everyone including the Jury himself who learned a lot from the students. Alex said:

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"This festival is an educational festival. I learned a lot from the students and also the teachers. I learned a lot and was surprised that the works of students who should still be very basic, turned out to produce phenomenal works. Especially on their visions

Alexandri Luthfi, interview May 27, 2021

Implementation of FFPJ certainly cannot be separated from the management of all the components of the festival. Management is applied so that all the components or elements of the festival can run smoothly. Management functions such as planning, organizing, implementing and supervising in modern management are not fully applicable in organizing non-profit festivals that rely on the role of *volunteers*. A volunteer is a person who voluntarily works without material compensation or wages. He or she works with dedication because of the awareness of the importance of carrying out the role in order for an event or activity to run to achieve the goal. This means that the motivation of volunteers in doing a task is not because of the wages or compensation promised by the festival organizers. Even though the committee is a volunteer, the organizer still asks each volunteer to uphold the principle of values held by the organizer. In this case, the recruitment of volunteers to become a permanent committee goes through a selection and debriefing process. Briefing was given for one day containing the vision and mission of FFPJ, goals, job description, and good things that must be done by the committee.

I recruit *volunteers*, committees, yes from students. The hope is that this student can also teach his younger siblings. In recruitment there is a selection process. On average, there are 100 people who register to be volunteers every year and those I choose to be on the committee are around 20 to 30 people. The list is free, there are students, some are even working, some are still in high school.

Tomy Taslim, interview May 27, 2021

FFPJ applies collaborative management that has been implemented since the beginning of initiating the student film festival. Tomy Taslim says:

What I hold is collaboration, because with that collaboration the relationship is equal from parties who feel interested in FFPJ. In modern management it is difficult to explain, but it is rational sir, the rationalization is that there is chemistry and will get mutual benefits for sure. It was thought out too. One word is collaboration, but the prerequisites and process will vary from one another. If this is indeed my language mapped from the beginning. Who is he? As a condition for being able to *be successful*, ethics must still be put forward, which is roughly appropriate, and that takes time. Ever failed? Once, to collaborate, it must be as frequent as possible.

Tomy Taslim, interview May 27, 2021

*Nyrateni* means the act of following the will of others by promoting ethics. The definition of *nyrateni* is the same as the understanding of *ngemong*. As long as it adheres to ethics, *nyrateni* or *ngemong* becomes part of the taste process itself.

# Local Wisdom Rasa Pangrasa

Viewed from the perspective of local wisdom, the application of *mapping* and *nyrateni* requires the ability to *taste pangrasa* from Tomy W. Taslim. As a Javanese, Tomy W. Taslim is aware that although he, as the initiator of FFPJ personally has a closeness with the people from the Indonesian Institute of Arts (ISI) Yogyakarta or the Jakarta Institute of Arts (IKJ), he does not position himself as the initiator of the festival. When he started the festival in 2010,

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he *went* to his seniors at ISI Yogyakarta to ask for support for the implementation of the festival he initiated. *Sowan* has shown Tomy W. Taslim's taste to his seniors.

Rasa pangrasa in the Javanese concept means using feelings or feelings, from heart to heart so that it can be nyrateni in the sense of not offending people who are expected to perform an action or activity. In the context of communication, feeling pangrasa means diving into the feelings of others in order to understand the will of the person being spoken to so that there is a mutual understanding of one thing that is expected together. Judging from the initial process of collaboration, namely face to face dialoge (Ansell and Grash, 2007), a sense of compassion determines the success of building mutual trust.

As part of the *feeling of feeling with* the parties, Tomy from the beginning has carried out *profiling* or *mapping* (mapping the character and competence of people) of each person who will collaborate. Another form of *compassion* is to appreciate the competence, dedication, seniority or experience of people who deserve respect, for example by *sowan*, asking for blessings or support from more senior people as expressed in the following quote.

"The main preparation for FFPJ to be carried out, yes, I am sowan, ask for blessings from the two main institutions, I *sowan* to the leadership of IKJ and *sowan* to the leadership of ISI. This is my handle, I don't ask for money, I just ask for support and blessings."

Tomy Taslim, interview May 27, 2021

The feeling of pangrasa is also articulated by echoing the feelings of FFPJ participants, volunteers, or others by calling them friends. The word 'friends' means equality with one another. Being equal is the main requirement for any collaboration. With a feeling of equality, each party such as the committee, participants, judges and curators will find it easier to explore the feelings of the other party so that familiarity, mutual understanding, and mutual trust are built and then a joint commitment is formed, namely the success of FFPJ. Indeed, getting deeply involved with the other party makes them feel understood, recognized, respected, and valued. Conversely, sense of taste also provokes other parties to understand, acknowledge, respect and appreciate the FFPJ organizers.

"With this collaboration, the relationship is equal from parties who feel interested in FFPJ. I asked to call the participants friends. I also affirm always that we are servants, servants of participants, servants of the community."

Tomy Taslim, interview May 27, 2021

The mention of servants, servants of participants and community service shows a deeper *sense of compassion*, namely trying to humble in order to understand the will of the participants or the will of the community. His willingness to be humble makes it easier for him to experience the feelings of others (Suwandi and Teguh, 2020). The speech, respect and appreciation shown by the organizers ultimately attracts the participants and also the community to understand the will or circumstances of the FFPJ implementation.

### **Discussion**

As seen, a sense of taste is the foundation for building collaboration. The festival organizers, committees, participants, resource persons, and other stakeholders feel as a network bound by the same feelings. Departing from this taste, collaborative management can be applied because collaborative management can only be done to people in one network. The form of collaboration, namely coordination, integration, simplification, and synchronization is a management function carried out through the role of communication between personnel in the divisions and / or organizational units in a network (Dahlan & Darwis, 2017). Tomy and the judges, curators, accompanying teachers, and other stakeholders already know each other. As a result, Tomy's communication with all the elements of FFPJ makes the implementation

effective and efficient. *The sense of taste* is a solid foundation so that collaboration in the implementation of FFPJ runs well and is sustainable until now.

### Conclusion

This Analysis and discussion of pangrasa pangrasa in FFPJ management shows that rasa pangrasa is being employed as a part of the communication process or face-to-face dialogue with people as a condition for forming collaboration in this film festival. The feeling of taste is seen in the habit of sowan to seniors, nyrateni, mapping and profiling, and the willingness to blend in with all those involved in FFPJ as friends. FFPJ management requires the involvement of many parties voluntarily in carrying out their respective roles, whether the committee, curator, jury, or festival participants. As this research demonstrates, the taste of taste carried out by the initiator and founder of FFPJ has succeeded in exploring the taste or will of the parties to collaborate in film festival management.

Its in-depth approach to the concept of "sense of feeling" in the context of FFPJ management. This research successfully identifies and explains how sense of smell plays an important element in building communication and collaboration among various parties involved in the festival. The research also provides insights into relevant cultural practices, such as sowan and nyrateni that support the creation of harmonious relationships and effective cooperation.

However, this study has some weaknesses. One of them is the lack of quantitative data that can support the qualitative findings that have been described. The use of quantitative data can strengthen the argument and provide a more comprehensive picture of the influence of sense in FFPJ management. In addition, this research is also limited to the context of FFPJ, so generalizing the results of the research to other festivals or organizations may require additional studies to confirm the relevance and application of the concept of sensory taste outside of FFPJ.

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